

# RIGHTTOPLAY

## Newsletter

January - March 2016



When Children Play,  
the World Wins.

**RIGHT**  
**TOPLAY**



## Message

# From Vice President, Middle East & Asia Programmes Right To Play

During my first visit to our programs in the field with Right to Play, I visited one of our schools in Saïda, South of Lebanon. It was in celebration of Global Dignity Day, where I met a young Palestinian refugee talking about what dignity means to him. He told me in very simple terms “dignity is about having a place to call home. I consider this school my home. I love coming to it and I wish every child I know has a place like this one to call home.” His words struck me not just because of their truth but because he defined, in very real terms, what we aim to achieve at Right to Play, every day. Every day, we strive to ensure that every child enjoys his or her right to a safe and welcoming space where they can thrive, learn and realize their full potential. I know this is what each and every one of us gets up in the morning thinking about. How is it that we can make this simple truth and meaningful dream a reality for young men and women in the Middle East and Asia? I have not yet had the honour of meeting you, my colleagues in Pakistan, but after meeting Iqbal Jatoui, Pakistan’s long-standing and dedicated Country Manager, all I can say is that his passion and commitment to this vision must be both contagious and inspiring. Our work together is not just about a vision that we seek for others. It is also once what helps us define who we are and what we are willing to do to change this world for the better. Today, Right to Play is going through a significant transformation process, and one that requires of all of us to strike a fine balance between what we want to achieve and how we achieve it. Your leadership in steering this ship is both welcome and expected.

One of my favorite quotes about leadership is this. “Leadership is all about integrity, which I define as choosing what’s right over what’s fun, fast, or easy. Practicing our values, not just professing them. Choosing courage over comfort. To me, that means having hard conversations, making tough decisions, and paying attention to the emotional lives of

the people who work around us and paying attention to our own emotional life. If you and I can’t have tough conversations, you and I can’t lead.”

I want to thank you for your leadership, demonstrated by everyone in every post across RTP in Pakistan. Your leadership, during times of change, is one that I fully appreciate. I want us to be a regional team that is ambitious in its strategies, keeps the quality of our programs for children front and center of everything we do, is able to speak out on rights issues that impact the lives of children, connect with the right partners and stakeholders to demand for the attainment of these full and basic rights, and in the end, ensure that we are doing it in the service of those who deserve it most. Coming together as a newly configured regional team to achieve all this is a learning process. I am very honored to be on this journey together with you. I know we will learn, innovate, make mistakes, and grow together.

Thank you for your leadership of RTP in Pakistan.

**Sherine Ibrahim**



## Training Teachers to Improve Quality Education

In Pakistan, teacher trainings often focus more on content of curriculum and rarely on quality and variety of teaching methodologies. Right To Play's training programme is unique in nature, as it is designed to improve teaching practices, learning environment and development needs of the child in the classroom and school.

Right To Play uses play-based learning approaches to improve quality education. The approach contributes towards achieving curriculum outcomes requirements especially in numeracy and literacy.

The teachers training will contribute towards improved teaching practices and learning skills of children in the classroom. The ultimate outcome of the training is to improve numeracy and literacy skills of children.

Initially, 57 primary school Master Teachers were trained in March 2016 with the support of Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Wing (BOCEW) and Directorate of Curriculum and Teachers Education (DCTE) in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

These teachers were trained on Right To Play's child-centered and play-based learning methodologies. The training will contribute towards improved educational attainment with an approach to learning through play and help ensure an engaging, participatory and learning environment at school.

These trainings are part of the play for Advancement of Quality Education (PAQE) programme which is being implemented in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with generous support from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. The PAQE programme has received enthusiastic support from education department and teachers in both provinces.

Spot & play program has benefited during past **8** years

Over  
**400,000**  
Children and Youth



Network of over  
**3,665**  
Junior Leaders

more than  
**50%** girls



**15**  
Districts



Over  
**3000**  
Teachers Trained

Over  
**1000**  
Coaches



**50%**  
are women

Over  
**1300**  
partners schools

## Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow

Pari enjoys playing with her peers at the school and endeavours to participate in play-based learning activities. She makes little talks with other children and asks her coach questions.

But just two months back, she was an entirely different child — a child with Down syndrome and timid responses.

Since Right To Play has commenced its activities in the school under its "Play for the Advancement of Quality Education" programme, Pari is a regular participant of the play activities.

Her mother shared, "Pari was a silent child at home and school but I am observing a big change in her personality. She talks to me about play-based learning activities and asks questions after the school is over. Pari eagerly waits for next day and regularly comes to the school."

When Haleema Bushra, Right To Play's Field Facilitator, talked to Pari and asked what she was going to do in the school, she replied: "To play".

Haleema continues to work with Pari, so that not only she enjoys being part of play but uses this learning for better comprehension and listening skills in classroom and beyond.



Pari is explaining her class-mates how to play "Call Ball".



Girls practicing Reflect-Connect-Apply after a play based activity

## Play Promotes Experiential Learning

In my interaction with children and classroom visits I have witnessed that play-based approach brings a strong educational power with it; engagement of children in play-based learning activities not only develop their cognitive, physical, social and emotional life skills but also improve their learning outcomes as they perform better academically than those who are taught through traditional approaches. For example one of the important feature of play based methodologies is Reflect-Connect-Apply(RCA) discussion, during RCA children are encouraged to share their experience of the learning activity, connect it with their daily life experiences and make strategies to apply it in their future life. This discussion helps them to realize that whatever they have experienced during the play they can also apply it to meet the challenges of their everyday life. In this way the process of critical thinking, ability to reason and understanding the links between ideas develops and strengthens. As a result children become active learners rather than passive recipients of information. I saw children (girls and boys) equally and actively participating in RCA and other classroom discussions rigorously communicating and questioning ideas rather than accepting them at face value. This enhancement in critical thinking and ability to express ideas concisely and clearly which is an important life skill also helps them to learn academic concepts better as well as analyze and solve problems systematically in Mathematics and other subject areas.

**Lalarukh Rafi,**  
Education Specialist, Right To Play - Pakistan

## Play Inspires to Dream Big

Maryam is a class III student at Government Girls Primary School, Mushtaqabad, Peshawar. Hailing from a family that struggles hard to make ends meet, Maryam wants to be a doctor.

She regularly participates in Right To Play's activities and helps the Coach to lead activities with other school children. After school, she plays and repeats the activities with peers in her community.

She thinks teamwork is a great skill that helps to achieve goals. Maryam told the Coach: "I've learnt that we should help and cooperate with others. Now I try to help others in school and at home".



# Pledge for Parity

**Right To Play celebrated International Women's Day in Karachi, Hyderabad, Thatta, Umerkot, Mardan, Mansehra and Peshawar**

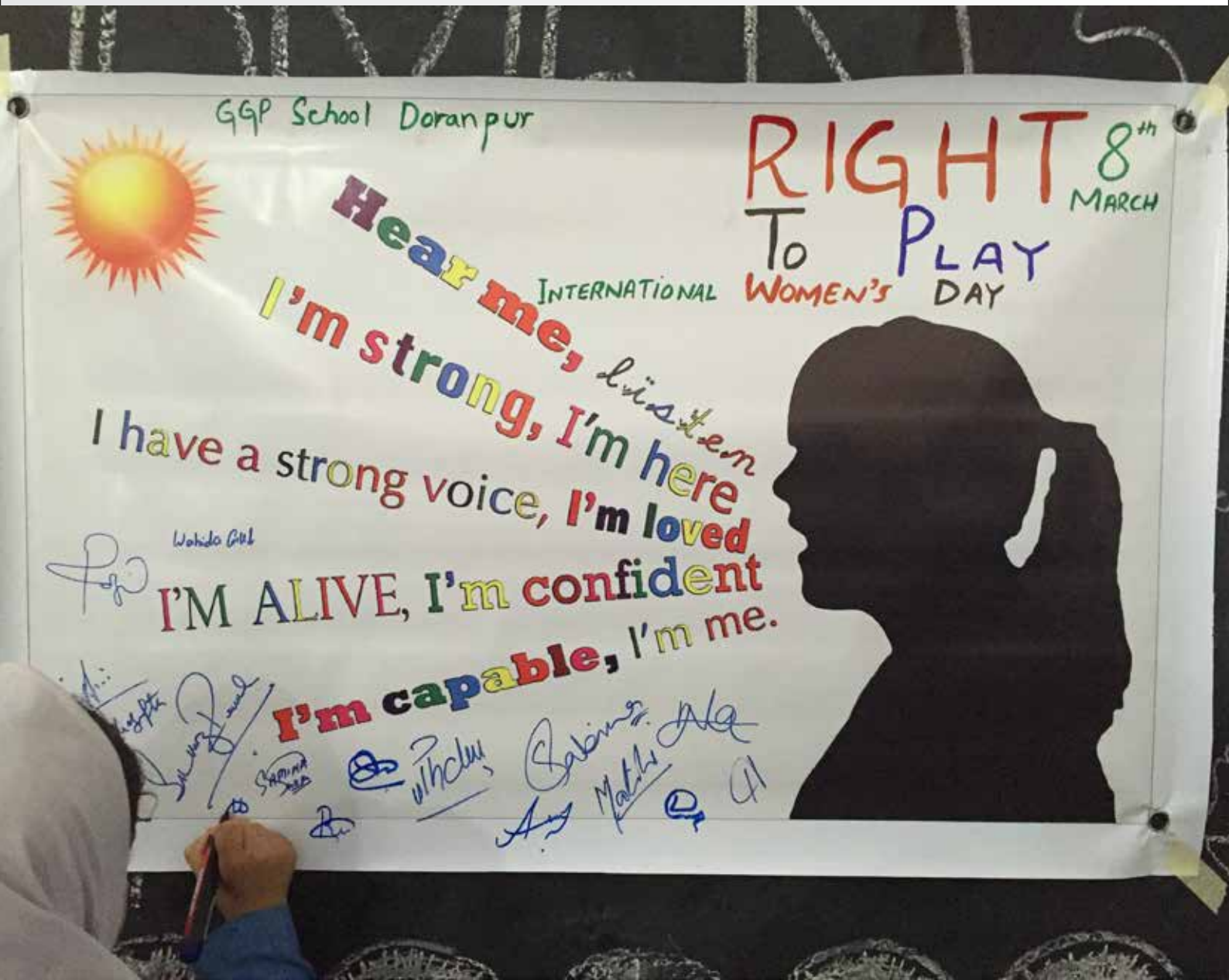
Girls make over 50% of all of Right To Play programmes and are learning about how to stay safe from exploitation, violence and discrimination through the power of sport and play.

In March, Right To Play celebrated International Women's Day 2016 in Peshawar, Mardan, Mansehra, Hyderabad, Thatta, Umerkot and Karachi by engaging over 14,000 children and youths (more than 50% were girls) in different activities around IWD 2016 theme "Planet 50-50, Step It Up for Gender Equality".

Different educational sessions were conducted with the school children to sensitize them to their rights and significance to observe the IWD and its theme.

Sport matches and Play Days were organised in schools and community to disseminate the message at a broader level.

Junior Leaders and Coaches of Right To Play led weeklong sessions in different schools and involved children in activities to raise awareness about women and girls' rights. Early morning school assembly sessions "We Say Pledge for Parity" for children and teachers were organised in some schools.



# Right To Play Junior Leaders meet with KP Minister for Education



A group of 16 Right To Play Junior Leaders from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shared their experiences of learning in schools with provincial Minister for Education Mr. Muhammad Atif Khan. A Junior Leader made a presentation on the role, responsibilities and life skills which they acquire through play-based learning activities.

## Irfa becomes 'Baji

Irfa, from a remote village of Umerkot district of Sindh, had never been to school until she was 12. She was notorious among the children of her community for her tempestuous reactions and fights. Peeping through the broken wall of school in her village, she would often fasten her eyes on the Right To Play's activities. Fortune smiled on this young girl when one day the Right To Play Coach invited her to join in activities. Later the Coach, Ms. Attia-tul-Shafi, with the help of Head Teacher also convinced Irfa's parents to enrol her. Irfa got enrolled and started participating in play-based learning activities. She was not shy but couldn't make friends because of her mercurial disposition. Children used to call her 'Pepsi' because of her occasional outbursts. The teachers also had complaints about her behaviour in class. Ms. Shafi strongly focused on engaging her in activities from Red and Yellow Balls.. She also motivated other children to be friendly and respectful to her. Irfa was slow to respond but Ms. Shafi did not lose heart. Her efforts bore fruit after a few months when the class teacher shared a positive feedback on Irfa: "Not only has the pace of her learning improved, but also she is behaving well in the classroom." Irfa stopped fighting and bickering with her peers. Now children would call her 'Baji' (elder sister) out of respect though earlier

they would call her all the names under the sun. The same year, Irfa attended training for Junior Leaders of Right To Play and became a Junior Leader due to her responsible behaviour and active participation in activities. It was a new horizon for Irfa and she was exploring new avenues. She became friends with children during activities in school and community. When Field Facilitator of Right To Play, Ms. Sakina, asked what she liked the most about Right To Play's activities, she replied: "Responsibility". It was amazing for Irfa that the Coach trusted her and gave her a chance to prove her mettle. Irfa blazed a trail for scores of girls of her community. Irfa shared with the Coach: "It was heart-breaking for me to be disliked by my peers. Sport & play gave me confidence and skill to make friends. I am glad to be a Junior Leader and want every girl of my village to go to school and play".



## One Leader With One Ball Can Save the Society *Sindh Leaders Convention Thatta*

For last three years, Right To Play has been organising an annual convention in Thatta to celebrate the success of Coaches from entire Sindh.

This fourth year, a convention was organised to celebrate and acknowledge the efforts of all its leaders in the field including Coaches, trained Teachers, Youth Leaders and Junior Leaders from all project districts in Sindh.

The Sindh Leaders' Convention was organised on February 4, 2016 which was participated by a large number of participants including government officials from education and sports departments, civil society partners, students, Right To Play team and groups of Leaders from Karachi, Hyderabad, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Khairpur and Thatta.

The objective was to reflect on the progress of four years, discuss a way forward after the project and create linkages between the groups of Leaders for sustainable change.

Since 2011, the programme has helped hundreds of children and youths [of Thatta] to gain leadership and life skills through sport and play. During these four years, over 80,000 children were engaged in sport and play activities of which 44% were girls. Similarly, more than 600 teachers were trained out of which over 50% were females.



I am hopeful that your work else where will also document the same powerful and positive impact, as this programme is making here, *Dr. Rachel Jewkes, South African Medical Research Council*



Youth is the future and change maker. Young leaders of Right To Play have marked examples of positive change in schools & community, *Mushtaque Ahmed Shahani, Director BOC&EW, Govt of Sindh (3rd from right)*



Right To Play has a unique methodology and our education system can benefit through teachers training and curriculum designing, *Abdul Majeed Bhurt, Executive Director, STEDA, Govt. of Sindh*



Participants of Sindh Leaders Convention 2016 in Thatta, Sindh with Hockey Olympian Mansoor Ahmed

Our **MISSION** is to use sport and play to educate and empower children and youth to overcome the effects of poverty, conflict and disease in disadvantaged communities.

## Acknowledgements:

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