



RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

Advancing Cohesion in Communities through Engagement in Structured Sports (ACCESS) Project

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2022

"Sport gave me the opportunity to make friends"

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Acronyms

ACCESS	The Advancing Cohesion in Communities through Engagement in Structured Sports Project
CBO	Community Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MoE	Ministry of Education
PE	Physical Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RTP	Right To Play
SfD	Sport for Development
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Executive Summary

Right To Play (RTP) Jordan implemented the ACCESS Project with the intention to enhance social cohesion for vulnerable children and youth in Jordan. In addition, the ACCESS Project sought to improve protection outcomes through supporting Ministry of Education (MoE) schools to create safer and more secure learning environments for students. RTP aimed to achieve this through facilitating social networking opportunities and gradually transforming traditional social norms, which ultimately have negative implications for girls, to positively engage with peers from different backgrounds within their schools and wider communities.

The objectives of the end-of-project evaluation were to determine the extent to which the ACCESS Project made progress towards the intended outcomes and objectives. A mixed-methods research was employed to inform the evaluation process drawing both qualitative and quantitative data from sources, such as: questionnaires, focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews (KII), and observation checklists with students, teachers, school principals, and community-based organization (CBO) management.

This end-of-project evaluative report has been prepared following data collection activities in a selected sample of schools and CBOs in across four locations in Jordan - Amman, Mafarq, Zarqa and Irbid - involving 330 students, 22 school principals and CBOs heads, 49 teachers and coaches, and 12 students FGDs spanning from 25 May 2022 until the 6th of June 2022. In addition, 12 systematic observations were undertaken in schools to provide a lived experience of the ACCESS Project activities in action. The data collection process took place over 10 days with no major delays experienced.

Overall, the ACCESS Project strategies, approach and activities implemented by RTP (Jordan) have resulted in the successful engagement of female and male children and youth in sport and physical activities in their schools and communities. The majority of the target cohorts successfully demonstrated sustained attendance in schools due to meaningful engagement in the ACCESS Project activities. Overall, the evaluation respondents reported that the sport and physical activities contributed significantly in creating safe learning environments in schools, developing the skills needed to improve social cohesion, and generally shaping positive attitudes amongst students from different backgrounds towards others, their school and the wider community.

The intended outcomes of the ACCESS Project were two-fold:

1. Schools provide a protective learning environment for students from all backgrounds; and
2. Children and youth, especially girls, positively engage with peers from different backgrounds through football for peaceful community coexistence.

In striving to have an impact in these two areas, the overall findings from this evaluation can be summarised as follows.

Finding 1: The ACCESS Project enabled children and youth to develop their knowledge and skills in relation to leadership, peacebuilding, and best practices in health and well-being to support school and community social cohesion.

The ACCESS Project activities were organized and executed with care as the teachers were well prepared, well organized and equitable in their support and encouragement of all students. The teachers were professional at all times and encouraged their students in the sense that they enhanced their overall morale by following up after the games and physical activities with questions on their newly developed skills. This attention to detail results in the students presenting as confident to be part of the physical activities and sharing their feedback and learning with their teachers.

School leaders highly commended the project on the development and resourcing of safe sporting facilities, increasing teaching quality, and improving the nature of student-student and student-teacher interactions. Significantly, the participation of girls in sports and physical activities after the project was positively impacted as a result of this school-level intervention.

Overall, the ACCESS Project was evaluated as having a positive psychological effect on the participating students in terms of an increased sense of safety, increased use of psychosocial supports, improved mental health and a stronger sense of belonging. This meaningful influence was largely as a result of the adequate levels of prior teacher training to successfully deliver the sports and physical activities with high levels of student engagement and sportsmanship.

The evaluation results indicated that 80% of teachers and coaches achieved an increase in their knowledge and implementation of Football for Development (FfD) methodologies. Based on observations, 56.3% of participating teachers improved their knowledge of Football for Development strategies, while 43.7% of participating coaches made a notable improvement, which per sex equates to 59.2% of females and 40.8% of males. Moreover, another assessment method used to measure this indicator was a pre and post training assessment tool, which applied to measure the level of improvement in the teachers and coaches' knowledge and implementation of Football for Development methodologies. Results indicated that there was a slight improvement (13%). However, this small amount of improvement has been recorded due to the challenges encountered during the implementation of the project due to COVID-19 where online techniques have been used in the assessment which usually implies less reliability.

Finding 2: The ACCESS Project supported physical education teachers in increasing their capacity to encourage students in their personal development while maintaining a protective school environment.

The social cohesion and integration of students with different nationalities, including from Jordan and Syria, was identified by a range of evaluation respondents as having been positively impacted by the ACCESS Project. Sport and physical activity were designed and developed in close cooperation with teachers, school principals, and students who reported by the end of the project that it was an effective vehicle in increasing harmony and connection between students. Influencing the social composition of student collaborations and friendships, however, is a challenging endeavour. While students generally engaged in sport and physical activities with a great spirit of sportsmanship, this impact was not preserved and sustained at all times and in all circumstances.

Overall, contributors to this evaluation indicated that the ACCESS Project contributed to the organization and management of sports and physical activities in their schools that resulted in positive empowerment of both PE teachers and students. By and large, this change meaningfully contributed to reducing disagreement and increasing problem solving and growth mindset amongst students, individually and collectively.

Background

Context Overview

The Syrian crisis, which began in 2011, has led to a significant increase in the needs of children, both in Syria and in host communities, such as Jordan where about 1.3 million Syrians have migrated to. Many refugee children have missed the crucial years of early education. For example, about 40% of registered school-age Syrian children are out of school or have few opportunities to interact with each other.¹

In Jordan, many schools operate in a double-shift system that separates the nationalities, with one group attending school in the morning and the other in the afternoon.² Such a learning environment usually undermines the development of social cohesion, resulting in refugee children feeling like they don't belong and are excluded from the community, as well as tension and distrust between different groups in the school community.

Right To Play (RTP) in Jordan

Right To Play (RTP) is an international not-for-profit organisation with a mission to protect, educate and empower children to rise above adversity, such as the effects of war, poverty and disease, using the power of play. RTP Jordan was established in 2006 to support children and young people living in the most disadvantaged areas of the country to become educated, build key life skills, and contribute meaningfully to their schools and communities. In particular, RTP Jordan provides transformative learning opportunities to Jordanian, Palestinian and Syrian children, youth, caregivers and teachers through play-based programming and sport for development learning and teaching approaches. With the second highest per capita concentration of refugees globally, recent estimates suggests that Jordan is hosting around 1.3 million Syrian refugees and more than two million registered Palestinian refugees. Refugees from Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen have also been displaced and found refuge in Jordan. Census data suggests that of the 3.8 million children and youth in Jordan 30% have non-Jordanian backgrounds.

ACCESS Project

To address children's needs and enhance a healthy and friendly learning environment in which Syrian and Jordanian children and youth feel safe and welcomed, RTP Jordan was funded by the Olympic Refuge Foundation to enact a three-year project broadly aimed at improving protection

¹ ACAPS, [Syrian Refugees](#), 2021.

² Jordan Ministry of Education, [Education Strategic Plan](#), 2018 – 2022.

outcomes for vulnerable children and youth through enhancing social cohesion. The *Advancing Cohesion in Communities through Engagement in Structured Sports* (ACCESS) Project utilised Football for Development methodologies and pedagogies as the key tool for achieving the proposed project outcomes. Local teachers and coaches were trained to implement these strategies in their schools and communities. The intention of this approach is that the regular and consistent delivery of a suite of specifically designed Sport for Development (SfD) activities will assist in promoting protection and life skills for peace and social cohesion in participating children, young people, their families and their wider community. Alongside their planned programming the ACCESS Project has been chosen to trial the *Sport for Protection: Programming with Young People in Forced Displacement Settings* toolkit. This collaborative effort (UNHCR, IOC and Terre Des Hommes) represents the next step in ongoing efforts to more deeply understand the role that sport can play in protection, particularly in relation to the wellbeing and connectedness of refugee and internally displaced children and youth.

RTP Jordan intended for the following cohorts to be the key beneficiaries of the ACCESS Project:

- Children, youth, teachers and coaches living in Amman, Zarqa, Irbid, and Mafraq - Jordanian localities with significant refugee populations;
- 100 physical education (PE) teachers and 100 coaches (with a participation target of at least 50% female) from the schools and organisations in these communities;
- 4,500 children and youth benefiting from the ACCESS Project across these four locations (with a participation target of at least 50% girls);
- 1,800 children and youth participating across 15 sport tournaments; and
- 1,600 children and youth engaging in 16 scheduled Play Days.

It is important to note that the beginning of the ACCESS Project coincided with the start of the global pandemic. The government approval to instigate the initial phase of this project took over a year to be finalized with the timing, unfortunately, coinciding with the beginning stages of COVID-19 infections in the country and the introduction of lockdown measures. As result, the most significant adjustments that RTP Jordan was required to make to accommodate this changing landscape, while still delivering on the agreed upon project outcomes, included: altering the timing on some deliverable and, perhaps most notably, moving the training program to an online delivery mode rather than face-to-face.

Key Achievements

The overall goal of the ACCESS Project was that vulnerable children and youth in Jordan experience improved protection outcomes through enhanced social cohesion. In achieving this goal, RTP identified two key outcomes.

The following activities were implemented by RTP across 2020/21 to inform project outcomes.

Outcome 1: Schools provide a protective learning environment for students from all backgrounds

- To use the lockdown periods of 2020 productively, 65 public schools, five community-based organisations and four youth centres participated in a partner mapping exercise and needs assessment with the findings used to inform the development of the future training programs.
- In 2020, 110 Physical Education teachers (53 males and 57 females) from across 65 schools participated in a four-day online training program to improve their knowledge and skills around RTP Football for Development methodologies to improve social cohesion in their schools.
- In 2021, 104 of these Physical Education teachers (50 males and 54 females) engaged in a 3-day refresher training program, which was informed by areas of improvement identified from the evaluations of the 4-day programs.
- 1733 students (868 males and 865 females) attended one of sixteen Play Days (eight for each gender), which incorporated Sport for Development play-based activities to promote social cohesion with peers from different backgrounds. The project ideas and activities were co-designing and co-development at school in close cooperation and consultation with teachers, school principals, and students.
- Introduced alongside the Play Days was 10 Family Game Days, which were attended by 29 female parents, 16 male youths and 50 female youths.
- 10 parental engagement activities were held with local Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) to inform and support families in promoting social cohesion amongst their youth with 107 participants (34 males and 73 females) attending.
- To support teachers and coaches in the delivery of the *ACCESS Sports for Pedagogy* approach, an online toolkit was launched in August 2022. This resource contained 19 videos reflecting the content of the toolkit with each video narrated by a local community influencer, athlete or public figure.

RTP also launched in 2021 the ACCESS CRe Program, which contributed directly to **Outcome 1**, with a particular focus on the protective elements of this goal.

- 10 psychosocial support training sessions were held for administrators (three male and two female), teachers (50 male and 50 female) and coaches (52 males and 59 females).
- 30 Leaders (15 males and 15 females) attended one of four child protection training workshops.
- Following the workshops, 28 observation sessions were held with the leaders trained in child protection.

- As a result of youth-led action, 20 female public safety initiatives were undertaken with female students (160) and teachers (80).
- The intentions behind creating protective learning environments were shared with community members (11 males and 19 females) across four interactive community meetings.

Outcome 2: Children and youth, especially girls, positively engage with peers from different backgrounds through football for peaceful community coexistence

The following activities were implemented by RTP across 2020/21 to inform **Outcome 2**:

- Four schoolyard football pitches were constructed to ensure that the children and youth had access to safe sporting facilities.
- In 2020, 121 coaches (59 males and 62 females) from across nine community-based organisations and youth centres participated in the four-day online training program.
- In 2021, 109 of these coaches (51 males and 58 females) engaged in the 3-day refresher training program.
- These training activities were followed up with observations undertaken with 70 coaches.
- 10 football tournaments were held with 1200 youth (720 males and 480 females) to support the regular participation in football activities that promote social cohesion with peers from different backgrounds.
- Community influencers were informed about their role in promoting social cohesion among their youth across eight community meetings with 168 community members (38 males and 130 females) in attendance.
- In addition, three awareness sessions were held with 43 (14 males and 29 females) participants from local schools and their extended community.

Project Reach

The ACCESS Project initiated a total of **119 events** across 2020/21.

- 16 Play Days;
- 15 sport tournaments;
- 38 parental engagement sessions;
- 19 stakeholder meetings;
- 1 coach certification session;
- 10 workshops for teachers and coaches;
- 10 refresher workshops for teachers and coaches; and
- 4 rehabilitation activities.

Across these events, there were a total of **3173 participants** which comprised:

- 430 adult males (teachers, coaches, parents, community members) (37% total participation rate)
- 717 adult females (teachers, coaches, parents, community members) (63% total participation rate)
- 936 male children and youth (46% total participation rate)
- 1090 female children and youth (54% total participation rate)

Figure 1 presents the overall beneficiaries of the ACCESS project were:

- **233 teachers, coaches and leaders** - 51% female and 49% male
- **5795 children and youth** - 52% female and 48% male

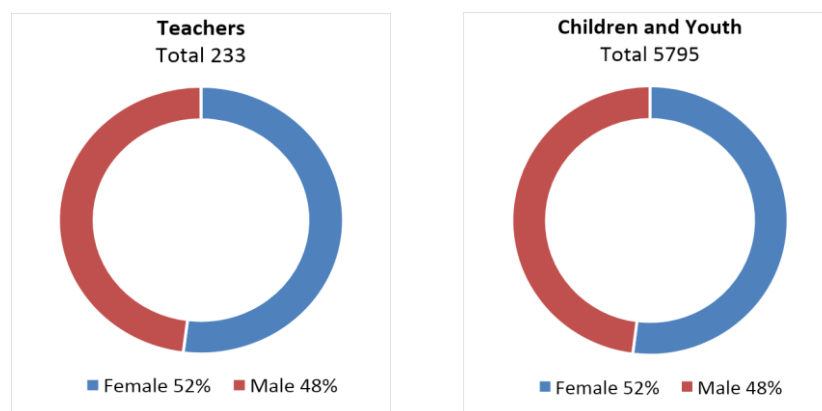


Figure 1: Distribution of Project's Beneficiaries Per Sex

Evaluation Methodology

Approach Overview

The Study Team used a mixed methods approach to inform this End-of-Project Evaluation of ACCESS. Quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to develop a holistic understanding of the project's impact. Analytical techniques were adopted to help determine the extent to which ACCESS supported vulnerable children and youth in Jordan to experience improved protection outcomes through enhanced social cohesion.

Data was collected from schools across the four locations using five data collection tools:

- Questionnaires completed by teachers and coaches;
- Questionnaires completed by children and youth;
- Key informant interviews (KIIs) with school leaders/school principals;

- Focus group discussions (FGD) with teachers and coaches; and
- Field-based observations of an activity, where possible.

Data was collected during the period of May 25th to June 6th, 2022. It is important to note that after the completion of the first day of data collection, the instruments were reviewed by both the RTP (Jordan) and the evaluation team. This piloting process assisted in identifying any major issues with the data collection tools and helped to reduce any possible issues during the data collection phase.

Sample Size

In the context of this project evaluation, the sample size was calculated based on the size of the target beneficiaries. The sample size has been calculated using a sample size calculator based on a specified level of precision. The minimum sample size based on a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level are listed in Table 1, as well as the actual sample size that the evaluation team was able to cover.

For the purpose of this evaluation, sample schools were identified and selected in each location as per the following three criteria:

1. *School type*: elementary and secondary, at least one school from each jurisdiction per location.
2. *Gender*: at least one school for male and one school for female students per location.
3. *Volume of workshops and classes*: participation in at least two workshops and one class per school.

Table 1 documents the number of participating schools in each location along with the final sample size of schools from which data was collected.

Table 1: Participating schools and sample size per location

Location	Number of schools	Sample Size
Al Mafraq	17	5
Amman	24	6
Irbid	15	4
Zarqa	13	4
Total	69	19

Sample Demographics

Teachers, coaches, and leaders

Table 2 outlines the number of participants who contributed to data collection via the five tools in each location.

Table 2: Sample size of Teachers, coaches, and leaders per location

Data Collection Tool	Location				Total
	<i>Amman</i>	<i>Al Mafrqa</i>	<i>Zarqa</i>	<i>Irbid</i>	
Questionnaire: Teachers and Coaches	15	11	15	4	49
Questionnaire: Students	117	93	71	50	330
Key Informant Interviews (KII)	7	6	5	2	22
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	6	5	4	1	16
Observation checklists	4	4	4	0	12
Total					423

The selected sample included 49 teachers and coaches (25 males and 24 females), distributed over the four target areas (12 from Al Mafrqa, 16 from Amman, 4 from Irbid, and 17 from Zarqa). The sample of leaders included 22 school principals or CBO heads (11 males and 11 females). The total teachers, coaches, and leaders is 71 which represents 30.5 % of the total targeted of the project.

Student

Table 3 provides the distribution of students and youth reached during the data collection phase, by sex for each location of the project. Their distribution in the sample is 27.9% from Al Mafrqa, 35.5% from Amman, 15.2% from Irbid, and 21.5% from Zarqa. From all locations, more female beneficiaries participated than males, the highest percentage was in Amman where there were 71.8% females.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by location and gender

Sex		City				Total
		Al Mafrq	Amman	Irbid	Zarqa	
Male	Count	35	33	24	24	116
	% of Total	10.6%	10.0%	7.3%	7.3%	34.8%
Female	Count	56	84	26	48	214
	% of Total	17.0%	25.5%	7.9%	14.5%	64.8%
Total	Count	92	117	50	71	330
	% of Total	27.9%	35.5%	15.2%	21.5%	100.0%

8.5% of the 330 interviewed students was non-Jordanian, mainly Syrians.

Nationality	Number	%
Jordanian	302	91.5%
Other nationalities	28	8.5%
Total	330	100%

Data analysis

The data analysis for this End-of-Project evaluation was conducted using three main steps.

1. Gathering and consolidating data

The Study Team cleaned the data and consolidated the findings from the field data collection. The international consultant synthesized the results and offered concrete lessons learned and actionable recommendations that identified areas to improve and opportunities for RTP (Jordan) to capitalize on. The Study Team selected the evidence-based findings according to clear criteria and conducted the review using a standardized protocol. Following the aggregation of all relevant data, the Study Team appraised the quality of the information using the clearly defined criteria and drew conclusions only from the data that met the quality standards.

2. Organize findings

Data that met the defined criteria was analyzed and grouped per project objectives, questions, and type of service delivered. This was determined in consultation with RTP (Jordan) after fieldwork was completed.

3. Data coding

The Study Team developed a coding framework, which consisted of a list of codes used to index and divide material into descriptive topics.

Ethical considerations

The Study Team adhered to the following ethical practices as they collected data to inform this End-of-Project Evaluation:

1. Trained the enumerators/research team on ethical issues to ensure utmost respect for different cultures, traditions, knowledge, and customs.
2. Child-safe practices were implemented through the Study Team being orientated in and abiding to RTP's Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding policy requirements
3. Provision of information and explanations were given to all participants in the evaluation process about the purpose, objective and privacy criteria and other related issues.
4. Consent agreements were signed before participation.
5. Protocols were enacted around informed verbal and/or written consent, participant anonymity, and confidentiality of respondents to ensure legal codes governing this area of research were adhered to.
6. Communication to all participants about their right to partake in or withdraw from the evaluation process at any stage.
7. Confidentiality of the information provided by respondents with any soft copies being stored securely and no RTP and beneficiary information will be shared with third parties without explicit written approval.
8. Caution was taken to avoid raising any unrealistic expectation of participants.
9. The Study Team had a reporting mechanism so that any safeguarding concerns were identified during the evaluation they were reported in a timely way and acted on promptly.

Potential Challenges

The impacts of COVID-19 pandemic are still a daily reality and therefore a mitigation strategy (see below) was developed to ensure that the data collection processes were not delayed if face-to-face options were not possible at any given location.

Please note that while this strategy did not need to be activated during the data collection process, but COVID-safe protocols were instigated as a precaution regardless.

Mitigation Strategy

The following options for online data collection processes were proposed:

Option 1: The use of online communication channels (Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp groups, Skype, Viber, IMO, etc.), if respondents can use these technologies

Option 2: Collecting individual responses using online applications, such as Kobo Toolbox.

Option 3: Phone calls with respondents

COVID-safe protocols, particularly in relation to personal hygiene and social distancing, were applied during high-risk activities, such as the KIIs and FGDs.

Evaluation Findings

This section is structured around the two ACCESS Project outcomes:

1. Schools provide a protective learning environment for students from all backgrounds
2. Children and youth, especially girls, positively engage with peers from different backgrounds through football for peaceful community coexistence

In evaluating how effectively the ACCESS Project has achieved these outcomes, the findings from the data have been triangulated from several sources to provide holistic insights into what has been achieved.

Snapshot of Key Indicators

Figure 2 highlights that there were varying levels of improvement across all nine key indicators as a result of the interventions introduced through the ACCESS Project. A positive trend in all areas is certainly indicative of the overall successful development and implementation of the ACCESS Project.

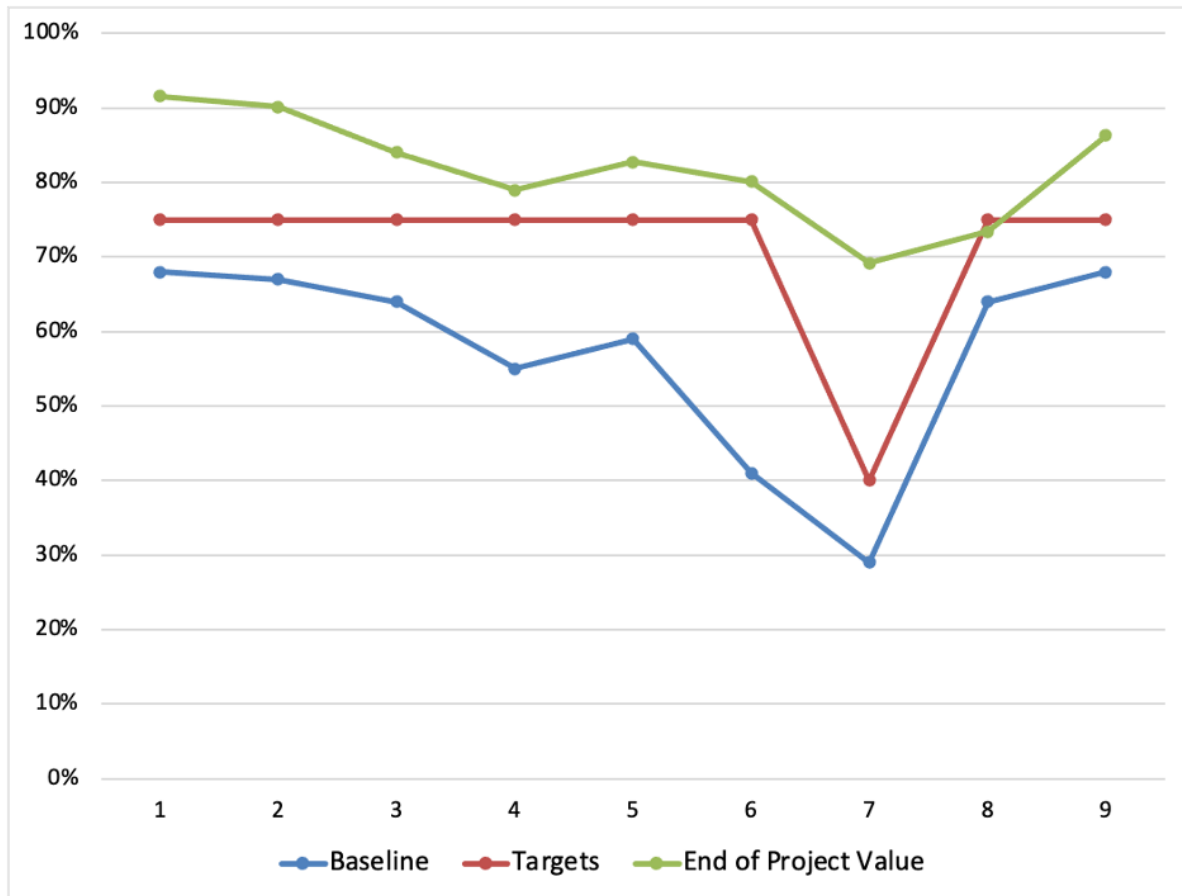


Figure 2: Differences in project indicators between baseline values and end of project values

In interpreting Figure 2, it is important to recognise that a higher percentage represents an upward trend in terms of the indicator and is positive in terms of the ACCESS Project achieving the stated outcomes.

Of particular note are the significant levels of improvement achieved in relation to access to safe sporting facilities (e.g., football pitches) (95.4%) and the use of peaceful solutions to solve issues with others (138.6%), as shown in Table 4. These two areas are directly connected with the two outcomes identified as shaping this project and are further elucidated with qualitative data later in this report.

Table 4: Comparison between project indicators in baseline study and end of project evaluation

#	Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target	End of Project Value	Difference	Improvement
1	% of beneficiary children and youth (disaggregated by background and gender) reported increased social networks and community support mechanisms	68%	75%	91.6%	23.6%	34.7%
2	% of beneficiary students (disaggregated by background and gender) reported protective and inclusive access to social networks in schools	67%	75%	90.2%	23.2%	34.6%
3	% of children and youth (disaggregated by background and gender) reported peaceful engagement and co-existence with peers from different backgrounds	64%	75%	84.1%	20.1%	31.4%
4	% of children, youth and parents who indicated to have more tolerance towards other communities	55%	75%	79.0%	24.0%	43.6%
5	% of children, youth and parents who indicated to have more trust towards other communities	59%	75%	82.7%	23.7%	40.2%
6	% of children and youth (disaggregated by background and gender) reported access to safe football pitches	41%	75%	80.1%	39.1%	95.4%
7	% of children and youth who reported using peaceful solutions to solve problems with other children and youth	29%	40%	69.2%	40.2%	138.6%

#	Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target	End of Project Value	Difference	Improvement
8	% of children and youth who reported no incidence of peer to peer violence	36%*	75%	73.4%	37.4%	58.4%
9	% of children that demonstrated life skills	68%	75%	86.3%	18.3%	26.9%

* The baseline value for this indicator has been recalculated to present the percent of children and youth who reported **no incidence of peer-to-peer violence** in order to make the measurements of all indicators in same direction, which means that the increase in any indicator value indicates the level of improvement that has been achieved.

Also worthy of particular attention is the change achieved in terms of improved levels of tolerance (43.6%) and trust (40.2%) from students and their families towards their wider communities with this positive shift in Outcome 2 contributed to by the ACCESS project. . Smaller positive shifts were noted in relation to increased demonstration of life skills (26.9%) and decreased incidences in peer-to-peer violence, which may highlight a possible area of opportunity that the ACCESS Project could further explore to have more significant influence in these areas into the future. It is worth mentioning here that the decrease in incidences in peer-to-peer violence has been measured by the average of responses received from students on the following two statements:

1. I fight with other children or bully them.
2. I'm picked on or bullied by other children.

Table 4 shows that there was a significant improvement (58.4%) where the percentage of students **who disagreed** with these statements increased from 36% measured in the baseline study to 73.4% measured as part of the end of the project evaluation.

Outcome 1: Schools provide a protective learning environment for students from all backgrounds

Seven facets have been drawn upon to develop an in-depth understanding of how a protective learning environment was fostered for all students in participating schools through the ACCESS Project.

These facets are:

1. Participation
2. Motivation
3. Attendance

4. Safety
5. Psychosocial support
6. Mental health
7. Mental health support

Multiple sources of data have been woven into a narrative below to provide insights into each of these facets. An overview of what was achieved through this outcome is provided in the *Evaluation Summary* section of this report.

Participation and Motivation

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- From the perspectives of both students and teachers, school participation doubled following engagement in the ACCESS Project.
- School leaders and field observations confirmed that collaborative and competitive participation in sporting activities increased student enthusiasm and a range of ‘soft’ skills.
- Well organized and carefully executed activities by Physical Education (PE) teachers supported high levels of student participation.
- While football remains a popular sporting activity as a result of the ACCESS Project training school leaders and teachers were seeking to diversify their activity base to increase student participation and improve the inclusion of all students.
- The ACCESS Project supported school leaders and teachers to use sporting activities to increase student participation through improved access to resources, increased confidence and development of a wider repertoire of games.
- From the perspective of students, motivation to attend school following engagement in the ACCESS Project doubled, while from teachers it nearly tripled.
- Perceptions around the rewarding of achievement also shifted by a third in students and around half in teachers.
- Most student focus group respondents identified that their schools had incentives or rewards programs to improve student motivation to participate in sporting activities.
- These same respondents identified that sporting activities and opportunities to exercise were in themselves good incentives and motivators for a range of reasons, including to decrease stress, increase energy levels and improve a range of personal affective qualities.
- The sporting activities implemented in the participating schools were observed as stimulating student interest and motivation.

- Even though few percent of other nationalities participated in the evaluation interviews, it has been observed that the project activities were productive opportunities for both Syrians and Jordanians to interact with each other and among other helped encouraging and respecting gifted students, mainly the skills of Syrian students.
- It was evident that combining different nationalities (Jordanians, Syrians, and others) in sports and physical activities resulted in different benefits, not only improving social cohesion but also encouraging students to continue with their schooling.

Prior to engagement in the ACCESS Project, around half of students (54%) and their teachers (47%) provided positive feedback about their participation in class. There was a marked change in student participation at school based on the questionnaire responses following their involvement in the ACCESS Project from both the students (91%) and their teachers (96%). Largely, this increase in participation was driven by team-orientated sporting activities (particularly football, basketball and handball) that school leaders identified through the key informant interviews (KII) as being fun, enjoyable, promoting cooperation, and improving a range of 'soft' skills for their students. From the field observations, students at all 12 school sites were noted as 'enthusiastic' and clearly wanted to participate in the sporting activities in a cooperative, competitive and inclusive way. These observations also identified that most schools had high student turnout for their sporting activities and that there was active participation across student groups, inclusive of gender and nationality. This high level of participation was certainly supported by effective and efficient Physical Education (PE) teachers with observation notes including insights such as:

- [The activity] was organized in a clear and engaging way, and the skills of teachers were evident in supporting the performance of students on the field in terms of their organization and professionalism.
- [The activities] were executed with care and enthusiasm.
- The teachers' interest and their prior organization was evident as well as their effective distribution of roles among students.

As reported in the baseline study, football remains a popular physical activity in Jordanian schools. However, there was evidence in the KIIs following the ACCESS Project implementation with 20 school leaders (91%) stating that they were seeking to broaden and diversify their activity base to increase student participation. Their ideas included:

- Better integration with the interests of the PE teachers (e.g., volleyball, basketball);
- Investment in a weight loss program that would productively employ the knowledge and experience that the PE teacher gained from ACCESS Project training;
- Carrying out activities that involves the cooperation of various stakeholders, youth leadership programs, and the local community; and
- Initiatives that promote and enable participation in sporting activities after-school, on weekends, and during school holidays.

Beyond the ACCESS Project, the KIIs (school leaders) shared that most of teachers (77%) had continued using the knowledge and skills they had gained through the project training and subsequent experiences to increase the amount of collaborative and competitive activities on offer to their students. This increase was as a result of:

- Improved access to appropriate equipment and resources, including cleaning materials (which was a key element of the ACCESS core project);
- Increased confidence in knowing how to promote student participation meaningfully, including with students with diverse needs;
- Having a wider repertoire of engaging activities and games to draw upon; and
- Improved relationships between students and their teachers.

Increased student participation at school is directly connected with an increase in student motivation to attend. Incentivising participation, such as through engaging learning activities and increased positive peer interactions, is one approach to improve student motivation. After completion of the ACCESS Project, the questionnaire data shared that the majority of students (92.7%) were rewarded for their achievement by their families as shown in Table 5, while just under half of the teachers (45%) identified rewards for achievement as a common school practice.

Table 5: Students responses on the motivation questions per city in the Endline Evaluation

Item		City				Total
		Al Mafrq	Amman	Irbid	Zarqa	
My family rewards me for achievement	Count	85	106	44	71	306
	% of Total	25.8%	32.1%	13.3%	21.5%	92.7%
I like going to my school	Count	74	90	41	68	273
	% of Total	22.4%	27.3%	12.4%	20.6%	82.7%

Following the ACCESS Project, there was a significant shift in this statistic to over 90% agreement that rewards for achievement were being actioned for students by their families (93%) and their teachers (96%). There was an equally significant shift before and after the project implementation in terms of students' liking to come to school.

From the perception of the students, this enjoyment of attending school nearly doubled (from 52% to 82.7%) and nearly tripled from the perspective of their teachers (33% to 96%). This result revealed that the enjoyment of attending school is that teachers respect different lived experiences and cultural backgrounds of students by implementing culturally responsive

activities and teaching strategies. Moreover, when teachers participated in the ACCESS activities they became closer to emerging areas of best practice for them to take advantage of as they built their professional growth plan, which is directly linked to teachers' practices and student academic achievement.

16 student focus group discussions (FGD) (89%) identified that their schools provided incentives or rewards programs aimed at recognising and increasing participation in a range of activities. These FGD also identified that in general (83%) the opportunity to participate in sporting activities at school was a good incentive and that the chance to exercise at school was a good motivator. Reasons for these responses include:

- Increased stress release;
- Increased energy levels and memory capacity;
- Improved personal capacities, such as: cooperation, communication, self-confidence, and self-control; and
- Generally feeling happier and more connected to other students and staff.

The field observations corroborate that the implementation of sporting activities across participating schools acted to stimulate interest and motivate students in very visible ways (in 75% of the observed settings).

Attendance

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- Both school leaders and students agreed that the frequency of student truancy from classes reduced following participation in the ACCESS Project.
- Students identified that the opportunity to participate in physical activities at school increased their desire to attend for a variety of reasons, including breaking up school routines and an increased sense of encouragement and enthusiasm.

Inextricably linked to the changes in levels of student participation and motivation, school attendance was also examined through the evaluation process. School leaders identified that student retention was an issue in their schools with around half of the KIS respondents (55%) noting significant student absenteeism (e.g., dropping out of school and not returning). While most school leaders noted that the ACCESS Project did not impact the current dropout rate in their schools (64%), they did identify that the frequency of students missing classes did decrease in many schools. These insights were echoed from the students in the FGDs with 16 groups (89%) agreeing that following the implementation of the ACCESS Project in their school that there had been a positive difference in wanting to come to school because of the opportunity to engage

in sporting activities. The students expressed this change in their desire to attend school in the following ways:

- Participation in physical activities, changing the school routine and assists with relieving study pressure;
- Extra efforts were made to not miss games time at school;
- There was a sense of more encouragement and enthusiasm across staff and students, which provided more motivation to attend school; and
- Interactive classes involving activities, such as sports and arts, increased participation.

Safety

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- Awareness around student safety raised dramatically for both students and teachers.
- While students overwhelmingly expressed a change in their safety at school, which was experienced as increased cohesion, social networks and confidence in sporting infrastructure (e.g., safe football pitches) as a protective factor, they continued to experience some safety concerns connected with bullying and challenging behaviours.
- Nearly all school leaders identified that their students felt safe at school, but only half connected the ACCESS Project with influencing levels of safety through improved facilities, resourcing and maintenance.
- Improved safety, in some cases, was one outcome of the project with leaders raising other outcomes that supported improved protective and inclusive access such as financial gains, increased integration, improved academic achievement, and greater commitment to physical activity.
- School leaders were motivated to add to the safety of the school environment following participation in the ACCESS Project through a range of measures, such as the installation of security cameras, improved emergency plans, and teacher professional development.

The baseline study revealed concerns around student safety with more than two third of students (80.9%) identifying that they felt safe in school and approximately half of the school leaders (47%) agreeing with this claim.

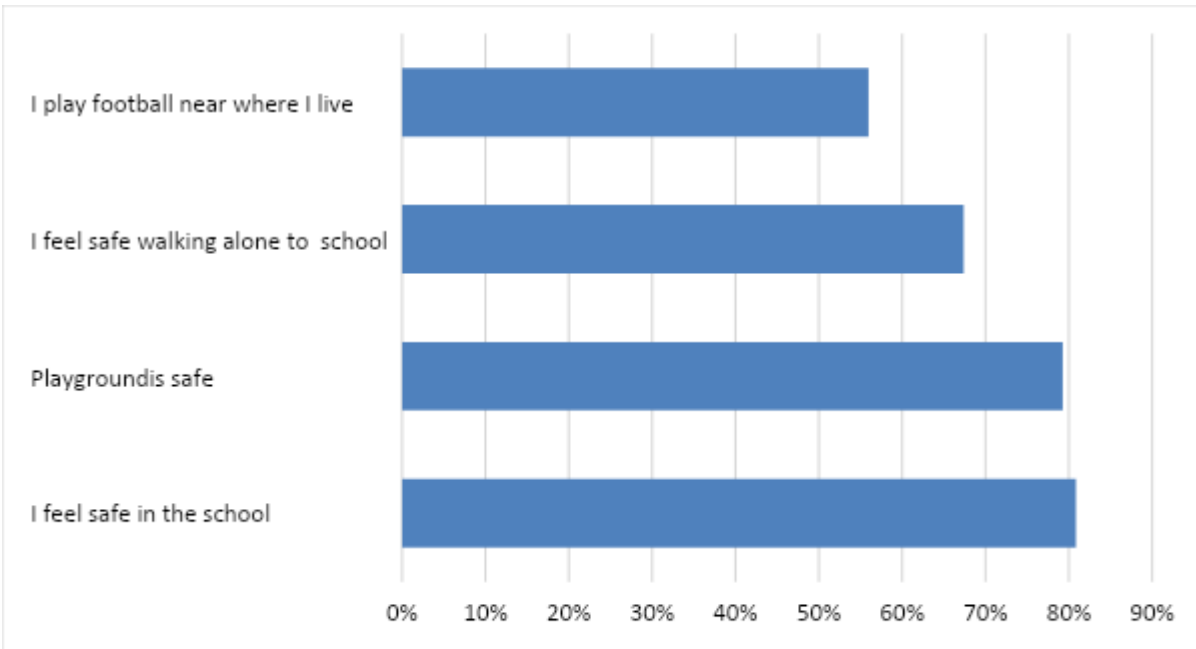


Figure 3: Percentages of Students Responses to Safety Questions in the Endline Evaluation

Safety concerns were particularly evident in two key areas: school playgrounds and walking to school. For example, more than two-third of students (79.3%) and their leaders (32%) believed that the school playgrounds were safe for student use also two third of students (67.4%) and school leaders (27%) reported it being safe for students to walk to and from school alone, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Students' Responses to Safety Questions in the Endline Evaluation

Item		City				Total
		Al Mafrq	Amman	Irbid	Zarqa	
In this school I feel safe	Count	70	92	38	66	266
	% of Total	21.3%	28.0%	11.6%	20.1%	80.9%
The playground I play in is safe	Count	67	95	34	64	260
	% of Total	20.4%	29.0%	10.4%	19.5%	79.3%
I feel safe walking alone to or from your school	Count	49	83	31	58	221
	% of Total	14.9%	25.3%	9.5%	17.7%	67.4%

I play in the football field near where I live	Count	55	69	18	41	183
	% of Total	16.8%	21.1%	5.5%	12.5%	56.0%

There was a significant shift in these findings following school participation in the ACCESS Project with the majority of students (80.9%) and teachers (81%) reporting an increased sense of feeling safe at school, including improved safety in the playground and while walking to and from school.

Many of the student FGD groups (72%) suggested that, in general, students do feel more safe and secure at school following the implementation of the ACCESS Project, which led to an investment in a number of protective factors. There was an overwhelming sense that there were changes that were as a result of increased cooperation and cohesion amongst students as well as between teachers and students. Improvements in sporting infrastructure also increased student confidence that they could engage in physical activities without fear of injury. While there were notable improvements, there were, however, still safety concerns expressed that the students believed that the project activities could not address, such as insecure and unmonitored access to school grounds and disruptive student behaviours (e.g., smoking, bullying, expressions of sexuality, etc.). The continued sources of possible conflict and tension amongst students were identified as the following:

- Poor communication skills;
- Undermining and damaging behaviours (e.g., bullying, gossip, exclusion);
- Lack of supervision of shared spaces (e.g., around the canteen at key times, classroom seating arrangements); and
- In some instances, theft of personal property.

Overwhelmingly, a significant difference measured in the school leaders' perception about students' feeling safe and secure. In this endline evaluation 95% of school leaders believe that their students felt safe and secure in their schools, while according to the baseline study only 46.6% of leaders believe students feel safe at school. On the other hand, half of leaders (50%) did not connect the ACCESS Project with influencing levels of safety in their schools, the other half identified the following inclusive and protective factors:

- Improved playground facilities;
- Provision of COVID-safe sanitation resources (e.g., face masks, hand sanitizer, etc.);
- Maintenance of school grounds, including access to safe football pitches;
- Increased teacher motivation; and
- Expansion of physical activities.

For the schools that did receive football pitch rehabilitation support through the ACCESS Project, the leaders were satisfied with the improvements in the equipping and safety of their sporting

facilities as well as the ongoing maintenance of these resources. Alongside improvements in safety, other self-reported outcomes for the schools include:

- Financial gains (e.g., no longer needed to rent sporting facilities;
- Increased student integration across nationalities and ability was widespread;
- Improved academic achievement; and
- More interest and commitment to sports.

School leaders noted that significant attention was now being given to the cleanliness of the school yards and that this was enacted by both students and teachers, which does lead to some budgetary and resourcing considerations. 17 of the school leaders (77%) were also implementing a range of different measures to ensure a safe school environment for students following the ACCESS Project, such as security cameras, improved emergency plans, increased monitoring of students, equipping of a first aid room, and the introduction of guidance sessions and educational workshops.

Psychosocial support

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- Students reported some improvement in the levels of support they received at school and in the community following the ACCESS Project.
- From the perspective of students, instances of bullying were reduced or changed as a result of increased friendships, improved social networks, better understandings of difference, and a more collaborative and collegial school environment.
- Relationships between teachers and students improved with increases in mutual respect, trust and acceptance.
- Teachers reported more significant levels of change in their perceptions of student support at school.
- More than half of school leaders identified a reduction in bullying behaviours in their school that they believed were as a result of the school participating in the ACCESS Project.
- Most school leaders were more likely to consider the use of collaborative physical activities to support students and resolve conflict in the future.

Alongside improvements in school safety, the ACCESS Project made gains in the levels of psychosocial support that students received following the project implementation with a shift from half the students (47%) feeling supported by their school community to around two-thirds (69%), as shown in Figure 4. This change also was shared by the comments from FGD students with half (50%) the groups identifying levels of bullying had decreased in their school and the other half noting no change in these behaviours.

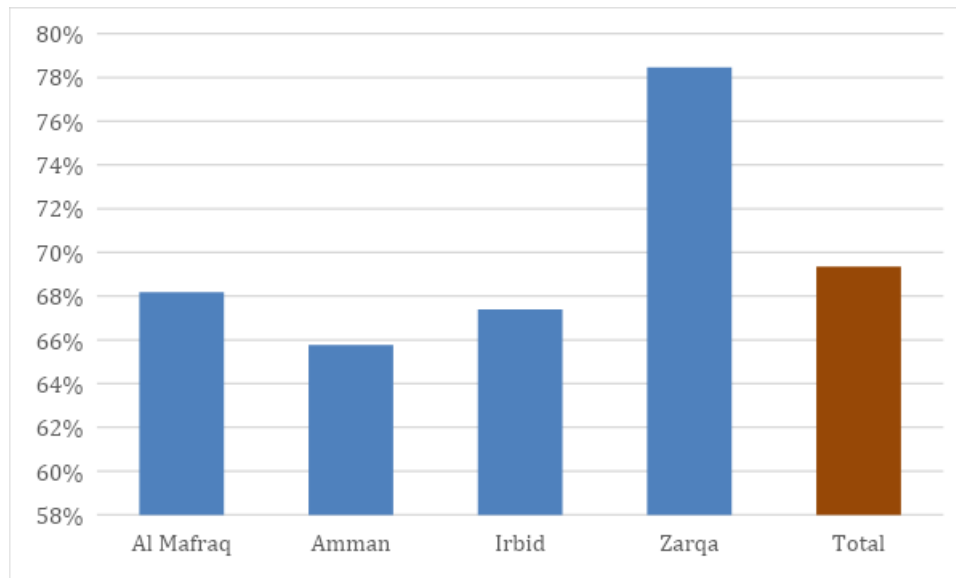


Figure 4: Psychosocial support received by students from their perspectives

For the student groups that did experience a reduction in bullying, this outcome looked like:

- Physical activities provided opportunities to get to know other students better, form friendships and increase social networks;
- Having a shared experience that required students to collaborate despite their differences;
- A more comfortable and collegial school environment;
- An increased understanding of differences and being able to consider the feelings of other students; and
- Reduced loneliness amongst the student cohort.

Another element of improved psychosocial support following the ACCESS Project was strengthened relationships and social networks between students and their teachers. The FGD students overwhelmingly agreed that this connection had been improved and that this was as a result of:

- Increased teacher motivation;
- Improved harmony, communication and interactions between teachers and students;
- Increased shared respect, trust and acceptance; and
- Improved leadership skills in teachers.

The students expressed a greater appreciation and affection for their teachers involved in the ACCESS Project.

The participating teachers reported a much larger shift in their perception around school safety following the ACCESS Project from around a third of teachers (29%) believing students were safe and supported at school to nearly complete agreement (89%). The interviewed school leaders

acknowledged that there had been some reduction (59%) in levels of bullying at their schools and that these changes had been as a direct result of the ACCESS Project (68%). The differences noted in the levels of conflict amongst students were:

- Greater unity through participation in group physical activities;
- An incentivization of sport as a tool for behaviour management;
- A reduction in a focus of differences and a fostering of shared values; and
- Greater levels of excitement and engagement for being together at school.

As a result of these positive impacts, school leaders identified that by and large they were more likely to consider the use of physical and collaborative activities as a means of supporting students and helping to resolve conflict between students (77%). This method of support would be used alongside other approaches to increase community-based support through:

- Meetings with parents and carers;
- Activation of discipline measures;
- Educational workshops and awareness raising lectures;
- Mentoring initiatives;
- Targeted initiatives with specific cohorts of students; and
- Working with an educational advisor and/or counsellor on reconciling actions.

Mental health and mental health support

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- The overall mental health status of students experienced a significant shift following participation in the ACCESS Project from the perspective of both students and their teachers.
- All student focus groups reported the presence of mental health and/or psychology trained professionals on the school site.
- Field observations played a significant role in confirming that the quality organisation and implementation of ACCESS Project activities by PE teachers was leading to positive student experiences that were improving social cohesion and overall wellbeing through collaborative and competitive participation in physical activities.

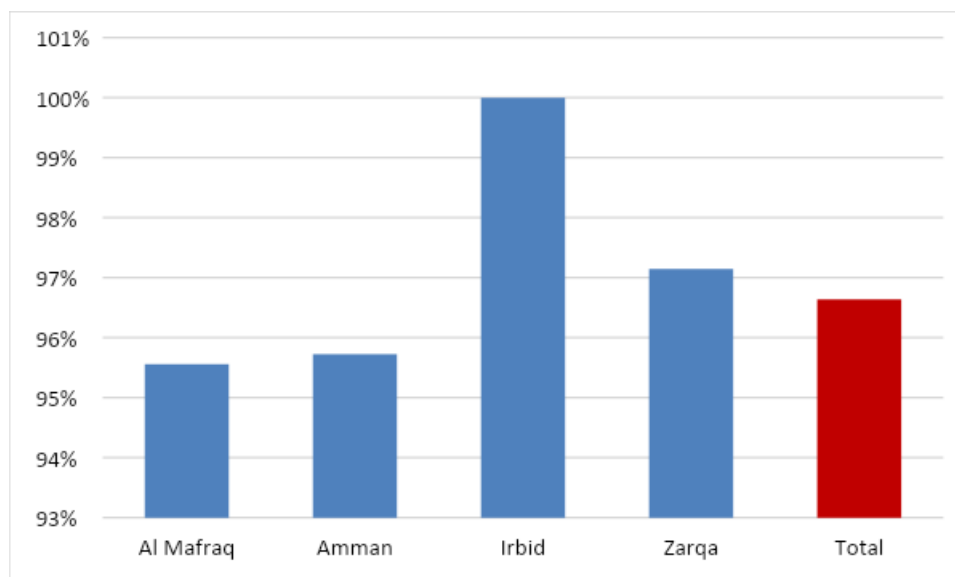


Figure 5: Mental health support: Based on Vermont Child Health and Behavior Endline Evaluation Questionnaire

As shown in Figure 5, the overall mental health status of the students, particularly in terms of their levels of happiness and living conditions, improved from the perspective of both students (from 38% to 97%) and their teachers (from 7% to 92%) following the implementation of the ACCESS Project. It is acknowledged that this pre- and post-questionnaire data identifies a very significant shift in the self-perceptions of the students and teachers to the items connected with mental health and mental health support. It is important to note that the data was self-reported and captured the respondents' overall wellbeing at a particular time and place. The perception of high levels of general student happiness were, however, echoed in the comments from the student FGD too (83%). The questionnaire responses also revealed a significant shift in the perceptions of students and teachers regarding other elements of mental health and wellbeing, such as sporting and academic skills as well as care for others. In this area, student agreement moved from around one-third (37%) to nearly unanimous consensus (97%), while the shift in teacher perception was even more substantial with a move from around one-quarter agreement (23%) to nearly complete agreement as well (96%). All student FGD respondents (100%) confirmed that each of their schools have mental health and/or psychology trained professionals present on-site to offer mental health support and guidance as required.

Field observations play a significant role in corroborating these findings, which indicate a sizable change in perceptions around the mental health status of students that participated in the ACCESS Project. From observing the students engaging in ACCESS Project activities, the activities were experienced as enjoyable (very visible in 75% of the schools); the activities were generally well organized and aligned with program objectives (very visible in 75% of the schools); and the majority of participating students presented as confident when participating in the physical activities (very visible in 83% of the schools).

Some highlights from the field observations include:

- The obvious desire, enthusiasm and commitment from the students to participate in the ACCESS Project activities.
- The levels of interest, care and organization of the teachers to deliver quality and inclusive versions of the ACCESS Project activities.

Outcome 2: Children and youth, especially girls, positively engage with peers from different backgrounds through football for peaceful community coexistence

Five facets have been identified as influencing how children and youth can engage with peers from different backgrounds with a focus through the ACCESS Project to use sport, particularly football, as a vehicle for promoting peaceful community coexistence.

These facets are:

1. Social integration
2. Emotional inclusion
3. Belonging
4. Sport cohesion
5. Building peaceful communities

Again, several data sources have been connected to form the narrative below to provide insights into each of these facets. An overview of what was achieved through this outcome is provided in the *Evaluation Summary* section of this report.

Social integration

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- The value that students and teachers placed on the importance of friendships and inclusion through friendships and social networks changed markedly after participation in the ACCESS Project.
- The ACCESS Project improved connectedness through nurturing behaviour change, such as increased awareness of supporting others, dealing with difference and conflict as it arises, and improved collaboration skills.
- Girls faced particular challenges where sports and physical activities exacerbated feelings of exclusion and isolation.

- School leaders attributed positive changes in social cohesion in their school to the ACCESS Project due to quality programming, appropriate levels of support, and meaningful skill development in students.
- Improved cohesion and connectedness manifested as a number of changed behaviours, but of particular note was a decrease in the ‘culture of shame’ around girls’ participation in sports and physical activities.
- School leaders did note that some positive changes in social cohesion did diminish when the delivery of ACCESS Project activities ceased.

Prior to the implementation of the ACCESS Project, students and teachers had disparate perceptions of the levels of social inclusion amongst students. While around two-thirds of students (64%) identified having connections with and opportunities to socialize with friends in and out of school times, only around one-third (37%) of teachers perceived these social connections for students in the same way. Following project involvement, nearly all students (96%) and their teachers (96%) unanimously agreed that social inclusion through friendships, including with students from diverse backgrounds, was strongly evident, as shown in Figure 6. These sentiments were echoed through the insights of the students in the FGD with all 18 groups (100%) agreeing that their peers are able to form friendships with a range of people.

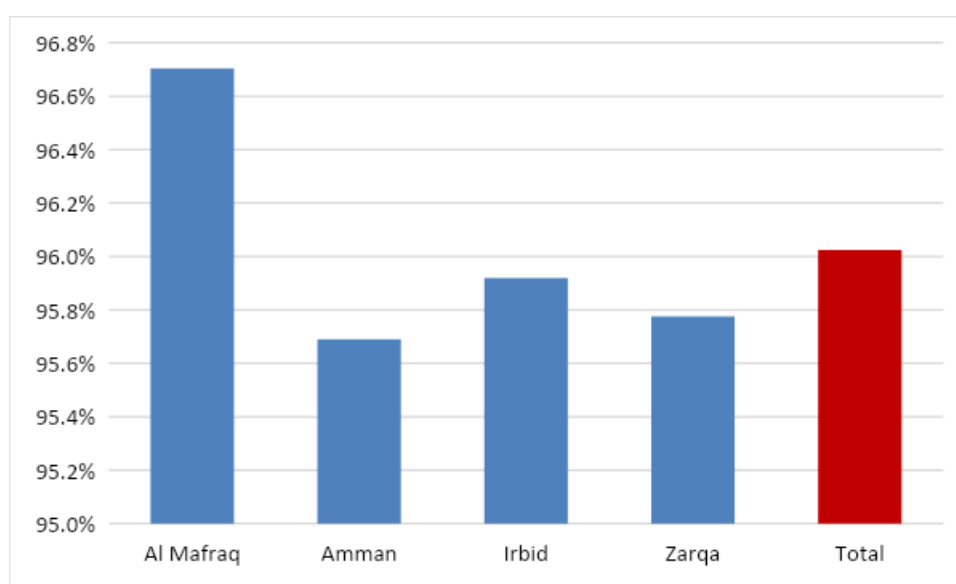


Figure 6: The Level of Social Integration from Students’ Perspectives

The student FGD generally had positive perceptions around the social integration of students in their school as a result of the ACCESS Project. Some of the changes in the behaviour described to improve connectedness include:

- Increased awareness of supporting other students, particularly those new to the school;
- Improved ways of managing difference and dealing with conflict if it arises;
- Supporting each other to get to and from their homes and school safely;

- Higher levels of mutual respect and trust between students and between students and teachers;
- Increased opportunities for students from different classes to collaborate and better understand each other; and
- Increased community awareness about how to support and enhance social integration amongst their youth.

Alongside these improvements in social cohesion, however, there were some concerns raised, particularly by female oriented FGDs, that identified some inconsistencies in how integration was experienced. These experiences centered around interactions that result in exclusion and isolation for students with diverse cultural backgrounds (e.g., Iraqi, Syrian, etc.) as well as Jordanian students.

From the perspective of school leaders, they overwhelmingly (95% of the KII) believed that the ACCESS project contributed to affecting positive change in their school communities around social cohesion and connectedness. These changes were manifested due to the following:

- Appropriate preparation, support and tools for teachers to enact the activities in an organized and well managed way;
- Opportunities for students to improve their problem-solving capacities, communication skills and commitment to attending school;
- The ability to draw on a quality program to reassure parents of its appropriateness and safety; and
- Targeted awareness sessions through appropriate channels (e.g., Parents Teachers Association (PTA)) to promote the role of the wider community in promoting social cohesion.

Some of the changes in the behaviour described by the KII to improve connectedness include:

- Increased energy levels and enthusiasm of staff and students, which was of particular note given the recent experiences during the global pandemic;
- Valuing play as a way to develop skills to assist in better understanding self and others;
- Improved team spirit, cooperation, organization, and school attendance amongst students;
- Decreased the 'culture of shame' around girls' participation in sporting activities; and
- Increased parental approval for student participation in physical activities; and
- Improved harmony and connection between students of Jordanian and Syrian nationalities.

Six KII (27%) noted that these positive changes (as listed above) to social cohesion and connectedness tended to diminish in both students and teachers when they were no longer delivering and participating in the ACCESS Project activities. However, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they have acquired during the life of the project will be retained for a longer time, and they will reuse it whenever they have another opportunity or circumstances that require these learning outcomes.

Most of teachers (79.6%) indicated that Jordanian students have at least 3 Syrian friends.

Number of Syrian friends	Number of Teachers	Percentage
0 to 2	1	2.0%
1 to 2	9	18.4%
3 to 5	20	40.8%
6 to 8	12	24.5%
9 or more	7	14.3%
Total	49	100.00%

During the observation of school activities, I have been observed school that teachers try to include Syrian children in project activities, to the extent possible in the visited schools. It has been noted that teachers were explicit while saying ‘students from other nationalities’ and avoiding labeling Syrian students or specific nationality or (e.g. Syrians or refugees). It seems that these practices lead to disappearing tensions among students and highlighted the solidarity of the class.

Emotional inclusion and Belonging

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- Following the ACCESS Project implementation, there was nearly unanimous student and teacher agreement around the importance of friendships as a form of emotional inclusion and belonging to foster community coexistence.
- School leaders recognized positive changes in their student body that were somewhat connected with the ACCESS Project, such as decreases in behavioural issues, increased homogeneity in friendship groups, and improved sense of identity and connectedness as a school community. School leaders usually evaluate the impact of any intervention on students’ academic achievement and the school environment. This result revealed that students’ engagement with the activities of the ACCESS Project improved their school belonging which plays an important role in students’ academic achievement. It has been observed in many discussions with school principals that due to their engagement in the project activities, students feel safe to come to school without feeling like they have to act like someone else for acceptance. Moreover, the project activities created a truer school community in which students and teachers are more engaged and excited to interact with one another under positive connections that increase engagement and

establish a caring school culture. Student-teacher relationships improved through the ACCESS Project as evidenced by, for example, a reduction in reported issues and increases in mutual trust, which enhanced a sense of emotional inclusion and belonging at school.

Approximately two-thirds of students (68%) and their teachers (62%) believed that having friends, treating them well and bringing others along was important before their participation in the ACCESS Project. These perceptions increased to nearly unanimous agreement (98% of students and 100% of teachers) around the importance of friendships for community coexistence following project implementation.

Table 7: Students' Responses to Emotional inclusion and Belonging Questions

Item		City				Total
		Al Mafrag	Amman	Irbid	Zarqa	
It is important for me to have friends	Count	91	112	47	66	316
	% of Total	98.9%	96.6%	95.9%	93.0%	96.3%
Other children are pleased for me to join their games	Count	82	111	44	65	302
	% of Total	89.1%	94.9%	88.0%	91.5%	91.5%

Most school leaders (86%) recognized positive change in their students and their interactions following their participation in ACCESS Project activities. Of these leaders, 14 (74%) correlated these changes as being a direct result of the ACCESS Project. These changes were observed as:

- Fewer behavioural issues in the classroom or in the yard;
- Higher levels of enthusiasm and sense of fun in being at school;
- Increased homogeneity across friendship groups;
- Shared sense of identity and connection as a whole school community;
- Improved teaching quality through the application of more engaging pedagogies; and
- Improved interactions and sportsmanship between the students.

There were also a number of positive changes noted by the school leaders in the ways that teachers and students related to each other. Some key themes include:

- A reduction in reported issues;
- Stronger teacher-student relationships characterised by friendship; and

- Increase in mutual familiarity, connection and trust.

Sport cohesion

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- The project activities were designed and developed in close cooperation with teachers, schools principals, and students.
- One of the most significant changes in student and staff perceptions as a result of the ACCESS Project was in relation to the use of sport and physical activity as a tool for cohesion designed to prevent violence and discrimination.
- Cohesion through sport, specifically Sport for Development play-based activities, was observed to strengthen social bonds and networks between students alongside improved skills and a supportive environment to enact these connections.
- Some caution was flagged that identified that sport may have had more of an impact on decreasing student tensions (e.g., disagreements) rather than increasing student cohesion (e.g., harmonious relationships) and that while there was some positive impact, more challenging behaviours were difficult to shift.
- The ACCESS Project developed specific skills to promote student cohesion through sport, including collaboration, communication, and sportsmanship.
- Physical education (PE) teachers are critical to the success of the ACCESS Project with school leaders reporting an average of three PE teachers per school along with increases in their knowledge and implementation of the Football for Development methodologies.
- Recruiting more PE teachers is challenging due to Ministry of Education quotas and therefore creative approaches, such as working with volunteer trainers from the local community, are required.
- Students, teachers and school leaders overwhelmingly agreed that involvement in the ACCESS Project positively affected student cohesion in their schools in a number of ways, including improving collaboration skills and creating an inclusive environment.
- While sports played a key role in improving social cohesion, there were concerns raised by school leaders around access to safe facilities, privacy particularly for girls, parental approvals, and timetable scheduling.

Participating in the design, implementation and monitoring of the interventions

The final evaluation investigated to what extent was project management flexible when developing project ideas or methodologies and adapting to the specific context, for example in co-designing or co-development of projects or activities at school or local levels. Participants in FGD explained that the project management team was open to new ideas to achieve their objectives. Moreover, the project management team indicated that they were welcoming

suggestions from partners and designed the project activities in close cooperation with teachers, schools principals, and students.

A key premise of the ACCESS Project is the use of sports and physical activity as a tool for promoting cohesion across cohorts of students with different backgrounds and cultural identities. To achieve this outcome, PE teachers required significant training in how to improve social cohesion through the RTP Football for Development methodologies and approaches. Prior to the program, less than half of the students (42%) and their teachers (41%) believed that there were meaningful connections between students and that they had the skills to foster these connections. Concerningly, less than a third of students (29%) and an even lower number of teachers (11%) identified that students at their school got along with each other. Following their involvement in the ACCESS Project, these sentiments around cohesion through sport doubled in both the student (96%) and teacher (90%) cohorts. These improvements in student cohesion were also largely echoed by the student FGD (83%).

Increased knowledge and implementation of Football for Development methodologies

In order to evaluate to what extent, the project contributed to increasing the knowledge and the quality of implementation of Football for Development methodologies, teachers' systematic observations have been applied. On average, it has been observed that 80% of teachers and coaches have achieved an increase in the knowledge and implementation of Football for Development methodologies. Based on observations, there was an improvement in knowledge about and the quality of the implementation of Football for Development methodologies amongst 56.3% of the participating teachers and 43.7% of the participating coaches.

The results also indicated that most teachers and coaches (88.3%) considered all students to have equal access to participation and are treated equally. Moreover, 84% of teachers and coaches indicated that lessons that encouraged life skills and activities were appropriate and engaging for the students' level of development, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Teachers and coaches' observations with regards to the project contribution to the increase in teachers and coaches' knowledge and implementation of Football for Development methodologies.

Statement	Percentage
All students have equal access to participation and are treated equally by coaches.	88.3%
The lesson encourages the following life skills.	84.0%
The lesson activities are appropriate and engaging for the students' level of development.	84.0%

Equipment has been prepared in advance	83.6%
The teacher provides enough time for students to respond to questions	83.1%
The main component of the lesson includes an effective skill development activity	80.8%
The teacher's encouragement towards children	80.8%
Coach praises students for positive acts and provides encouragement.	79.3%
The content of the training is technically sound, and is developed with the goal of improving the skills of the students	77.5%
The teacher ensures the site is physically safe, within his/her control.	77.0%
The teacher has developed a lesson plan ahead of the lesson.	76.5%
The coach opens the lesson with an opening discussion linked to a relevant social topic & closes the lesson with a closing discussion that makes use of the 'Reflect, Connect, Apply' methodology	76.5%
Participatory learning/ Active vs. passive learning.	75.1%
Problem Behavior Management.	74.2%

According to the evaluation team, the quality of communication and interaction that teachers are practicing with students was observed and highly evident and the impact of teachers' knowledge and skills were clear on the performance of students in terms of students' commitment to the teacher's instructions and the harmony and cooperation between players and trust in the teacher's decisions.

Moreover, another assessment method used to measure this indicator where a pre and post training assessment tool has been applied to measure the level of improvement in the teachers and coaches' knowledge and implementation of Football for Development methodologies. Results indicated that there was a slight improvement (13%). However, this small amount of improvement has been recorded due to the challenges encountered during the implementation of the project due to COVID-19 where online techniques have been used in the assessment

which usually implies less reliability. Consequently, the ACCESS Project has implemented refresher training workshops on Sport for Development and Sport for Protection, benefiting 99 teachers, 5 public school administrators, and 109 coaches.

As a result of the ACCESS Project, all student FGDs (100%) recognized that sports participation had positively affected student cohesion in their school by engaging students from different backgrounds in a range of Sport for Development play-based activities. From their perspective, cohesion through sport broadly looked like a shared and strengthened bond between students alongside improved skills and a supportive environment to enact these connections. Two FGDs (11%) provided some additionally insightful commentary, which highlighted that:

- Sports in their school decreased the amount and level of disagreements between students rather than increased cohesion; and
- While sports generally had a positive impact on student cohesion, sports alone were not enough to alter challenging behaviours, such as bullying.

The specific skills to promote student cohesion through sport that were developed through the ACCESS Project were identified by the FGD students as:

- Collaboration;
- Communication;
- Cooperation;
- Mutual respect;
- Putting the needs of others first; and
- sportsmanship.

In fact, these skills listed above are aligned with the Football for Development and Social Cohesion manuals used in the ACCESS Project.

Overwhelmingly, the student FGDs (94%) believed that as a result of this skill development that students generally get along during sporting activities at their schools. Three additional insights provide important counterpoints for consideration:

- Students cohere during the physical activities, but not necessarily beyond that context into the classroom, playground or outside of school;
- In one instance for a female student, competition resulted in the loss of friendships; and
- The sense that coexistence was being ‘forced’, which resulted in inauthentic connections that were not sustained.

Sport and collaborative activities were reported as now being used in most schools (78%) as a tool for resolving conflict between students and disciplinary-related developing skills, which are designed to lead to the prevention of violence and discrimination. Despite this proactive approach to cohesion, half the student FGDs (50%) revealed that difficulties continued to be

experienced as a result of students engaging with sports at their school. These challenges included:

- Issues with personal safety due to inappropriately equipped sporting facilities, including overcrowding and risk of injury;
- Leadership and competition being leveraged to impose control over others; and
- Team sport heightens divisive and exclusionary practices between cohorts.

Physical education (PE) teachers are critical to the successful implementation and continuation of the ACCESS Project in schools. Ensuring a critical mass of PE teachers was necessary to ensure that the training around the RTP Football for Development methodologies was going to be able to have a meaningful impact on the school community. According to school leaders, they employed between none to six PE teachers in their schools with the average being three. A number of leaders pointed out that employment decisions in their schools were informed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) guidelines and while most schools would have valued more PE teachers they had reached their allocated quota. School leaders approached this hurdle creatively with a number citing that they would seek to recruit volunteer trainers and coaches from their local community.

Like the student FGD, the school leaders overwhelmingly (100% of the KII) agreed that involvement in sport and physical activities had positively affected student cohesion in their schools. They believed that this cohesion was achieved due to:

- The development of effective skills to form and foster productive teams;
- Increases in student self-confidence, personal resilience and social skills;
- Creation of an environment that values and promotes inclusion; and
- The provision of a platform to positively channel student energy.

While the school leaders noted significant positive changes in the levels of cohesion across their schools, aligned with student FGD feedback, there were still some concerns raised regarding students playing sports at their school (32% of the KII). These issues are related to:

- Safe sporting facilities, including:
 - privacy of students when exercising in outdoor spaces
 - privacy for female students when changing from sports to school uniform
 - the need for transportation to off-site sporting facilities
- Not enough scheduled time to enact meaningful sports classes; and
- Parental approvals for their students to participate in sports and physical activity.

Building peaceful communities

FINDINGS SNAPSHOT

- Another noticeable change in student and staff perceptions, especially for girls, as a result of the ACCESS Project was the development of attributes required to authentically contribute to peaceful school communities.
- After the ACCESS Project, students and their parents believed that students in their school as well as the wider community generally trusted, helped and were more considerate of each other.
- The impacts of striving for a peaceful community can be observed in a number of ways, including increased confidence in forming positive friendships, higher levels of kindness towards others, and increased willingness to own behaviours.
- Increases were noted in the levels of interest from students to participate in volunteerism and voluntary activities that are both school-based and community-focused.
- There was a significant reduction in the amount and level of conflict between students following participation in the ACCESS Project activities.
- More peace-oriented approaches to conflict resolution were being adopted in schools after the ACCESS Project in the following ways: group restorative practices, teacher facilitation, understanding the cause of problems, and being solution-focused.

Initially, overall perceptions of student skill to express their feelings productively and be considerate of others differed greatly between students (47%) and their teachers (22%). Consequently, there was a significant shift for both cohorts (74.2% students and 94% teachers) in belief in the attributes required to authentically construct peaceful school communities following the implementation of the ACCESS Project. The student FGDs were the key informants in understanding this shift and what it looks like in practice.



Figure 7: Students' Responses to the questions related to Building peaceful communities

By and large, the FGD students considered that students in their school generally trusted (72%), helped (89%) and were considerate (94%) of each other. These interactions were identified as being demonstrated through:

- Increased confidence in the formation of positive friendships;
- Higher levels of kindness towards and cooperation with other students, particularly those experiencing hardship, crisis or trauma;
- A school environment that values fun and encourages enthusiasm;
- Students helping each other with their academic lessons;
- Increased commitment to volunteerism and use of initiative within the school;
- Increased willingness to own behaviours and recognize the impact it has on others; and
- Echoed in the sentiments of their parents and throughout their school communities.

As touched on above, the FGD students (89%) noted an increase in volunteerism in their schools as a result of the ACCESS Project. These voluntary activities were both school-based (e.g., cleaning and decorating the school, cleaning the yard, breakfast club) and community-focused (e.g., winter clothing campaigns, food packages, bread distribution, donations to the poor).

As result of the interactions detailed above, the student FGDs (78%) observed a marked reduction in the amount and level of conflict and tension between students in their schools after engagement in the ACCESS Project sports and physical activities. They explained that conflict resolution in their schools had evolved to more peacefully oriented strategies and processes, such as:

- Group restorative sessions that enable all sides to be respectfully heard;
- A focus on understanding the cause of a problem and solve problems respectfully;
- Teachers facilitating restorative sessions and encouraging students to take an active role in identifying possible solutions; and
- Implementation of awareness raising sessions to proactively improve skills, such as conflict resolution and communication.

It was obvious that teachers and school principals could take an active role to ensure that these changes to conflict resolution strategies are sustained beyond the end of the ACCESS project. The correct preparation and training is applied in each target school to make sustainable conflict resolution possible. Teachers and school principals indicated that they have received a wide variety of strategies to prepare the school for sustainable resolution, including pre-sessions, brainstorming, skill building, coaching, workshops, and orientations are some possible preparation tactics that have been implemented and contributed to the sustainability of conflict resolution strategies.

Evaluation Insights

This section provides a high-level overview detailing the overall contribution of the ACCESS Project in relation to the two identified outcomes along with a set of recommendations to potentially inform future practice.

Summary of Project Impact

The following summaries draw from the evaluation findings to consolidate and articulate the contribution of the ACCESS Project.

Outcome 1: Schools provide a protective learning environment for students from all backgrounds

The critical factor in the ACCESS Project, that was essentially the foundational element to creating a protective learning environment in this case, is the utilization of physical activities, particularly group sports (e.g., football). The activities are a vehicle for improving student participation, motivation, and attendance at school. By being present, engaged and encouraged while at school, the students' mental health and wellbeing was able to be nurtured and to flourish. In general, opportunities to engage in sports and exercise at school was highly desired by most students, however, expansion of activities to include those not inclined to participating in physical activities may be an avenue worthy of further exploration.

For the physical activities to be successfully implemented, three elements are required: (i) appropriately trained teachers, (ii) supportive school leaders, and (iii) well-equipped facilities. By and large, the participating teachers were well prepared and themselves motivated to implement the ACCESS Project activities as intended. School leaders were similarly positive about the activities and the influence that quality programming was having on the students and teachers in their school community. Resourcing for activities and of appropriate facilities was experienced as inconsistent by school leaders and CBO heads across the focal schools participating in the evaluation process. Maintenance and ongoing risk management also emerged as new safety considerations.

Physical activities are the protective factor that underpins improvements in social cohesion amongst ACCESS Project participants and ultimately leads to the creation of a protective learning environment. Social cohesion was achieved through this approach in three key ways: (i) initiating authentic opportunities for integrating students with diverse cultural backgrounds,

(ii) providing an 'even playing field' to reduce and better understand individual difference, and
(iii) facilitating an environment that enables meaningful friendships to form and flourish.

The connectedness between students and their teachers, particularly those delivering the activities (e.g., Physical Education teachers), was also strengthened through increased levels of mutual trust, respect and acceptance. The importance of having teachers that students feel they can connect with, especially if they are experiencing issues or hardship, cannot be underestimated in building protective learning environments. There were also some more unintended outcomes of the ACCESS Project that also have protective qualities for individuals, such as: decreased levels of stress, increased amounts of energy, and improved 'soft' skills (e.g., communication, collaboration, resilience, problem solving etc.).

In contributing to a protective learning environment, a sense of personal and psychological safety is paramount. Students, teachers and school leaders acknowledged an improved perception of safety due to two elements of the ACCESS Project: (i) increased social cohesion due to supported and scaffolded opportunities to connect with a range of people, and (ii) enhanced confidence that with access to better equipment, resources and/or facilities that they would not be hurt or injured playing sport. While instances of bullying have certainly reduced following implementation of ACCESS Project activities, student concerns around more challenging and disruptive behaviours (e.g., smoking, theft, sexual activity, etc.) were raised.

The ACCESS Project intended to provide a protective learning environment for students from all backgrounds. Efforts were certainly made by both the Project Team (led by RTP Jordan) and the Evaluation Team (led by SRD) to ensure inclusion of students from a range of nationalities and representation of a diversity of voices, respectively, was valued across all activities. In reality, genuine inclusion and diversity can be challenging to manufacture and measure. For example, a sizable proportion of the questionnaire respondents can be characterised as female-identifying, Jordanian students aged from 10 to 15 years from a two-parent household and with no sports membership. Consideration of improved mechanisms to ensure representation across all activities may be useful in striving for a protective learning environment for all.

Outcome 2: Children and youth, especially girls, positively engage with peers from different backgrounds through football for peaceful community coexistence

Having the skills to both form and foster friendships is the key element underpinning peaceful community coexistence. This skill set is characterized by attributes, such as: collaboration, communication, cooperation, and being considerate of others. The ACCESS Project enabled those skills to develop and flourish with the implications being that students started to feel a sense of inclusion and belonging within their school community. As identified in relation to

Outcome 1, sport and physical activity was a catalyst for bringing about this change in a meaningful way and providing a context from which friendships could grow. Football was certainly the most popular way to achieve this but other sports, such as handball and volleyball to name a few, were also effective vehicles for developing skills to support peaceful coexistence across diverse student groups and school communities.

While sporting activities embedded in the ACCESS Project were certainly a tool for cohesion, they were not without their challenges. Firstly, it is important to note that overwhelmingly students, teachers, and leaders across a range of participating schools and cohorts credited the ACCESS Project with wide ranging positive outcomes, including diminishing disruptive behaviours, improving levels of engagement, creating more homogenous friendship groups, increased sense of school identity, and improvements in teaching quality. While concerns were raised by a small pocket of respondents, they are worthy of further consideration to assist in further improving future iterations of the ACCESS Project. Concerns arising from the project fall into three broad categories: (i) competitive sport leading to exclusion and division; (ii) reduction of tensions between students rather than an increase in cohesion; and (iii) cohesive skills not being applied beyond the project context. It is noteworthy that it was girls that raised several times their concerns that competitive activities acted against nurturing friendships and fostering cohesiveness across culturally diverse groups.

The positive engagement of students from different backgrounds through sport and physical activity would not have been possible without a quality program acting as a guide. The ACCESS Project was widely considered as being of a high standard, which were evident through three key outcomes: (i) wide scale improvement in skills intended to foster cohesiveness; (ii) improvements in teaching quality and teacher practices; and (iii) approval from parents and community. It was identified that the implementation of the ACCESS Project and its engaging pedagogical approach were particularly welcome after the isolating experiences of COVID-19. One challenge emerging from conversations with school leaders was a recognition that once the program ceased being delivered in a school, many of the positive elements it spawned started to diminish. School leaders are actively wanting to employ more physical education teachers to continue to grow the ACCESS Project in their schools but are hampered by Ministry of Education quotas around staffing. The emergence of creative practices, such as bringing in volunteer trainers and coaches into the school, were one way to counter this structural barrier.

As one respondent commented, the ACCESS Project has a significant role to play in diminishing the 'culture of shame' around girls' participation in sports and physical activities. The findings from this evaluation suggest that significant steps have been taken towards achieving this outcome. There are, however, some limiting factors hampering these efforts, particularly concerns around privacy for girls when exercising outdoors and in using change room facilities.

Conclusions and Lessons Learnt

This section presents conclusions in line with the objectives of the evaluation and highlights the lessons learnt.

Theory of Change

The evaluation team adopted a Theory of Change (ToC) model, which works from the premise that outcomes are expected to be realized. The ACCESS Project used sport and play-based pedagogies as effective tools for creating more enjoyable learning environments that encourage communication, social connectedness and foster learning. These conditions enable children and youth to reflect on what they learnt from a game, to connect this learning to their wider life experiences and to think about how to apply the learning in similar situations to benefit others.

As demonstrated in the evaluation findings outlined above, the enabling conditions for the expected outcomes of the ACCESS Project were, at times, not sufficiently in place to optimize the planned interventions. Elements of the project did not go as planned due to external factors, such as delays in approvals from the MoE at the beginning of the project and rolling COVID-19 related school closures. Partnerships with community groups was also an important aspect of this project, however, only access to parent groups was possible at this time. While the RTP implemented parent-teacher awareness sessions, it was noted that parental engagement in the ACCESS Project was less than expected.

In short, the ToC approach to this evaluation process did recognize the role of government agencies and the community groups in improving social relations and enhancing social cohesion within the target areas in Jordan. However, there is a need during ACCESS Project implementation for more intensive activities to ensure their active and meaningful participation.

On the other hand, the rehabilitation works were a key component of the project which fostered collaboration between RTP, MoE, and the schools, which has had positive flow on effects in terms of capacity building and the provision of an enabling school environment. MoE was involved in selecting the beneficiary schools and in the approval of the rehabilitation works. However, minor modifications and change orders due to COVID-19 lockdowns. This component is vital to schools in Jordan and should be continued and expanded in future phases of the project to include upgrades to all sporting facilities, resources and equipment.

Lessons Learnt

The following lessons were learnt through the end-of-project evaluation process, particularly from conversations with the RTP (Jordan) project team:

- Longer training was perceived to have more impact on ACCESS Project outcomes than short-term interventions. Training over a sustained period, involving practice, coaching,

and mentoring, leads to more substantial and sustained changes in habits and levels of understanding. While five MoE supervisors were trained in this program (two in Amman and one for each of the other three governorate), further opportunity to extend this service beyond PE teachers and coaches to include more classroom teachers and educational supervisors at the MoE-level should be considered.

- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the teacher training element of the ACCESS Project was moved to an online format as an alternative option. The online model proved to be efficient in overcoming the challenges associated with a global pandemic even though most of the project activities were of practical nature (e.g., teaching games). The adaptation of project practices to make the training delivery flexible and accessible to meet teacher needs during the pandemic should lead to a blended learning model that involves some aspects of training delivery online, other approaches include the hybrid model which is a combination of online course delivery with face-to-face sessions. However, all teachers need to attend both modalities while giving teachers the freedom to decide how to participate.
- Several factors contributed to challenges in implementing quality sport activities at a school level. These include lack of clarity from the MoE around the deployment of teachers, lack of facilities, and teachers overloaded in their work allocation. These aspects should be factored into the next iteration of the ACCESS Project.
- The ACCESS Project's overall approach revolved around building the capacity of teachers and coaches to be prepared to address the issues faced within their local communities. This approach has increased teachers' understanding of steps toward innovative educational methodologies, sport, and child protection by using Football for Development (FfD) methodologies and Sport for Development (SfD) activities. However, this approach requires further development to truly achieve the project objectives through enhancing the school-level feedback system, improving achievement assessment systems, and linking PE with other school subjects.
- The project was successful in achieving an equity of inclusion for both female and male students with the sport and PE activities positively contributing to overcoming a general challenge in Jordan: the marginalization of females in sporting and physical activities.
- To increase the motivation for teachers and coaches to continue the delivery of ACCESS Project activities, a pathway to formalize their qualifications is needed. This includes teachers and coaches, who are newly recruited to the program. These teachers and coaches often are in need of further training to enable them to be able fulfil the basic PE methods required to implement the ACCESS Project as well as how to then successfully implement these methods for social cohesion and to address the issues faced in their communities at large.

Recommendations

Emerging from the findings and key learnings are five recommendations for consideration in terms of how their incorporation into future iterations of the ACCESS Project could assist in further achieving the two intended outcomes.

1. *Resourcing*

Provision of seed funding opportunities to assist schools in:

- Maintaining and upgrading the quality and safety their existing equipment, resources and facilities
- Improve levels of privacy for students in outdoor spaces and changing rooms

2. *Student motivation*

Improvement of social cohesion for students not motivated by sports through:

- Diversifying the kinds of activities to engage with (e.g., crafts, art and/or cultural activities)
- Improving teachers' skills and strategies to more effectively engage all learners through professional development workshops
- A campaign or a sport hackathon for a large number of children, youth, and parents to reinforce sport and physical activities among them and people engage in collaborative sport games would be a useful tool to break down social and cultural barriers off the field and shaping positive attitudes amongst students from different backgrounds towards others

3. *Personal safety*

Address increasingly challenging and complex student behaviours by:

- Developing targeted awareness campaigns to promote open and honest dialogue between students and teachers
- Increasing teacher awareness of the impact of complex childhood trauma on behaviours and appropriate support strategies

4. *Integration*

Ensure greater inclusion and diversity of students through:

- Tailoring programs to align with interests and motivations of minority and/or disadvantaged groups, including activities less competitive in nature
- Facilitating focus group discussions with minority and/or disadvantaged groups to more genuinely understand their experiences and needs

- Engaging in longer term interventions with particular cohorts to support a shift from reduced tensions to increased cohesion
- Scaling up the awareness sessions for all parents on the benefits of participation in the project activities and the importance of education

5. Professional learning

Support continued program implementation by:

- Offering opportunities to teachers to further develop their pedagogical knowledge and skills
- Forming ‘communities of practice’ with clusters of schools to create sustainable learning opportunities for teachers
- Expand training opportunities beyond PE teachers to other classroom teachers to assist in the application of cohesive skills beyond the realm of sport and physical activity.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Data collection tools

Appendix 2: List of selected schools

Appendix 3: Detailed schedule of data collection activities