



RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

Refugee Education in Emergencies: Responding to Beirut blast Project Evaluation Report

Right To Play – International
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Acronyms

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
RTP	Right to Play
PSS	Psycho-social Support
KII	Key Informant Interview
MHPSS	Mental Health Psychosocial Support

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Executive Summary

Right to Play (RTP) is a global organization committed to improving the lives of children and youth affected by conflict, disease and poverty. Established in 2000, Right to Play has pioneered unique play-based approach to learning and development which focuses on quality education, life skills, health, gender equality, child protection and building peaceful communities.

The Refugee Education in Emergencies as a response to Beirut blast project is implemented in Right to Play Lebanon in Beirut, to improve access to children and youth to safe and supportive environments and improve the overall psychosocial wellbeing of targeted children and youth. The project focuses on rehabilitating WASH material to five different organizations (schools/centers) that are situated in Beirut area, provide educational kits (backpacks and tablets) that include material to be used for educational purposes to these organizations with booklets on the importance of internet safety, train 23 coaches/facilitators/teachers on play-based PSS content in order to conduct PSS sessions to targeted children and youth. Sessions' content and activities were based on the Psychosocial Wellbeing Through Play Games Manual developed by RTP.

The total reach of the project is around 2,271 individuals benefiting from the projects' main aims and objectives. This evaluation report aims to assess the extent to which the project contributed to its outputs and outcomes, the extent to which the project improved access to safe and supportive environments for targeted children and youth, and the extent to which the project improved the overall psychosocial wellbeing of targeted children and youth. A mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative data is used to measure findings.

All in all, results indicated that the program was able to successfully ensure an improved access to safe facilities and learning environment among the children and youths between 6 and 14 years old.

The received tablets and educational kits were highly useful and were beneficial for their children. There was also an improvement in the access to a supportive learning environment among the children given that an improvement in the psychosocial skills of the children and youth was noted. Results also pointed that the training that the coaches/facilitators received regarding PFA, PSS and PBL approaches succeeded in improving the coaches' knowledge and skills in these domains. This was translated into the positive outcomes that the children and youths experienced. A few recommendations for future program improvement are documented.

Introduction

Desk Review

Beirut Blast

August 4, 2020 marks the day of the explosion of massive quantities of Ammonium Nitrate detonated at the port of Beirut. The blast damaged hundreds of houses, roads, schools, and centuries-old cultural heritage sites. Beirut's residents witnessed a vast amount of destruction and loss of friends and family members. According to WHO reports, damage that impacted health infrastructure, businesses, and educational facilities generated a new humanitarian emergency in Lebanon leaving the country in a fragile state ¹.

The Beirut blast occurred at a time in which Lebanon is dealing with an economic crisis and political turmoil thus leaving the people experience collective suffering and distress. The aftermath of the blast calls for mental health response in which interventions should target social distress and advocate recognition of the diverse hardships the people living in Lebanon are facing².

RTP conducted a Beirut Response project one year post the Beirut blast as an intervention to address the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals affected by the blast. Findings from the evaluation report on the project showed that play-based PSS interventions have improved well-being, resilience and psychosocial life competence skills for children and youth affected by the blast.

Nonetheless, empirical evidence on the efficacy of mental health interventions targeting affected individuals remains scarce. Research on interventions targeting the psychosocial wellbeing of people affected by the Beirut blast is minimal and thus research on both short-term and long-term benefits of early and later interventions is needed.

Psychosocial Support (PSS)

Mental health is now perceived as being of great importance to the individual's overall health. WHO defines mental health as including "... subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, competence, autonomy, self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, and intergenerational dependence"³. Awareness on the psychosocial wellbeing factor in the overall mental health is on the rise among humanitarian actors. Different conceptual frameworks focus on a diversity of resource domains that are affected in times of conflicts (e.g. wars, natural disasters, epidemics, famine...) such as human capacity, social ecology, local values and culture, and material and physical environments ⁴.

¹ Abouzeid, M., Habib, R. R., Jabbour, S., Mokdad, A. H., & Nuwayhid, I. (2020). Lebanon's humanitarian crisis escalates after the beirut blast. *The Lancet*, 396(10260), 1380-1382.

² Kerbage, H., & Elbejjani, M. (2021). Mental health in the aftermath of the beirut blast: Community healing and the quest for justice. *Psychiatric Services* (Washington, D.C.), 72(2), 234-235.

³ WHO.2001. *The World Health Report 2001, Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

⁴ Fiona Samuels, Nicola Jones, Bassam Abu Hamad, Psychosocial support for adolescent girls in post-conflict settings: beyond a health systems approach, *Health Policy and Planning*, Volume 32, Issue suppl_5, December 2017, Pages v40–v51

Psychosocial support has been increasingly recognized as an essential need to emergency response and crisis management. PSS plays a vital role when dealing with humanitarian emergencies that exacerbate distress, social suffering, and long-term problems among individuals ⁵.

Since the 1980's, there has been a good deal of focus and research on the development of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs that address psychosocial and well-being needs of communities affected by conflict or crisis ⁶. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) standards define MHPSS as 'any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental disorder' ⁷. One study shows that community-based MHPSS interventions increases solidarity and encourages participants to share their common experiences. Engagement and sharing of experiences plays a vital role in the treatment of negative elements due to conflict-related experiences ⁸.

Play-based PSS Games Manual

The Psychosocial Wellbeing Through Play manual is a games manual developed by RTP that includes a collection of previous and new play-based resources and activities. The manual includes 116 play-based activities that promote learning and growth and at the same time fun, effective, safe, and tailored for different age groups.

The manual is designed to equip users with a holistic experience on how to lead the activities, provide instruction, lead creative and free play, master diverse forms of play, and address different developmental milestones with different abilities. Each activity component includes key learning, goals, material needed, number of children required, opening discussions, and more detailed instructions. A specified section addresses adaptation of the activities into different cultural contexts to ensure a wide scope of users.

The main theme of the manual is teaching life skills for psychosocial wellbeing through play-based activities. The targeted three focus areas are: myself, my social relations with others, and my role in the community. Each focus area includes a sub-set of skills that are embedded in different activities. The 'Myself' area supports children to recognize and develop different aspects of the self through focus on self-awareness, self-esteem and self-confidence, managing emotions, working memory, creativity, and attention and concentration. The 'My Social Relations with Others' area supports children to interact with others through focus on communication, collaboration, respect for similarities and differences, empathy, and managing negative interactions. The 'My Role in the Community' area supports children to understand the environments that they live in and to influence these environments through focus on accountability, sense of belonging, goal-setting, responsible decision making, and agency and self-efficacy.

The main key element of this program is to allow children develop skills through games and play-based learning by providing them with a holistic experience that focuses on joy, hope, and critical reflection.

Project Objectives and Reach

The Refugee Education in Emergencies is a project conducted with RTP as a response to Beirut blast. The objective of the project is to improve access to safe and supportive environments of children and youth that were affected by the blast. The main targets of the project are rehabilitating a

⁵ Trinidad, A. C., & Protacio-De Castro, E. (2020). The institutionalization of mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies in Indonesia. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 51, 101918.

⁶ Alford, C. C., & Otake, Y. (2021). Participants' experiences of engagement in community-centred mental health and psychosocial support programmes in conflict-affected communities within sub-saharan africa: A qualitative systematic review. *BMJ Global Health*, 6(12)

⁷ IASC guidelines on mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. Inter-Agency standing Committee (IASC)

⁸ Betancourt TS, Meyers-Ohki MSE, Charrow MAP. Interventions for children affected by war: an ecological perspective on psychosocial support and mental health care. *Harv Rev Psychiatry* 2013; 21: 70.

number of schools and educational centers, distributing education kits and tablets to educators and children and youth training coaches/teachers on play-based PSS learning, and implementing PSS sessions with affected children and youth.

Total Reach: 2,271 individuals

➤ Rehabilitation

Objective: improve access to safe and supportive environments by focusing on WASH facilities (WC, sinks, plumbing...), fixing schools' kitchen and playgrounds, providing access to people with special needs at entrances, painting of walls and doors, installations of LCD projectors, providing electrical works and more depending the site evaluation in each location.

Reach: Rehabilitation in Beirut targeted 5 organizations (schools/centers) situated in different areas in Beirut (Figure 1). The process of rehabilitation involved site visit, evaluation, site evaluation report, and implementation.

Total Reach: 1,170 individuals

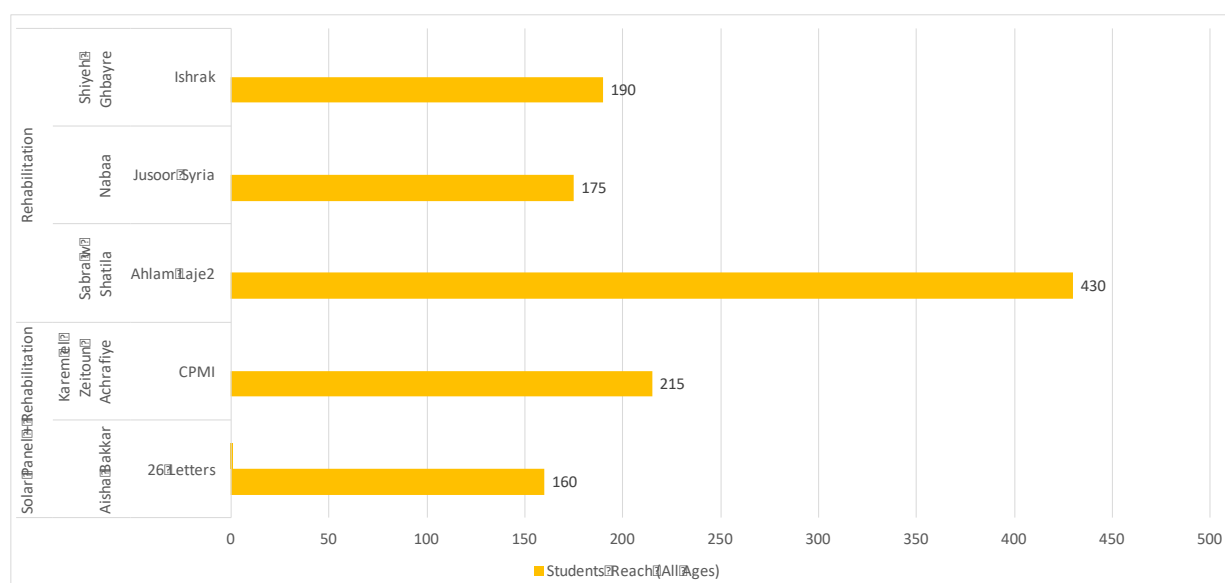


Figure 1. Project Reach – Rehabilitation

➤ Educational Kits

Objective: provide a supportive environment to enhance quality of education for both teachers and staff and children and youth.

Reach: Distribution of kits targeted 5 organizations (schools/centers) situated in different areas in Beirut (Figure 2). Backpacks included different items (Tables 1 & 2) that assist learners in their education. One organization benefited from the distribution of tablets that promote awareness on internet safety. 450 'Safety of the Internet booklets' (in Arabic, French and English) were distributed.

Safety of the Internet Booklets included:

- Awareness on security, site credibility, and scams
- Awareness on the importance of being genuine and mindful of the things that we post online
- Emphasis on kindness, positive comments, reporting of harassment, and setting a good example

- Importance of strong creative passwords and avoidance of posting personal information

Total Reach: 785 Kits and Tablets

- Backpacks: 632
- Tablets: 150

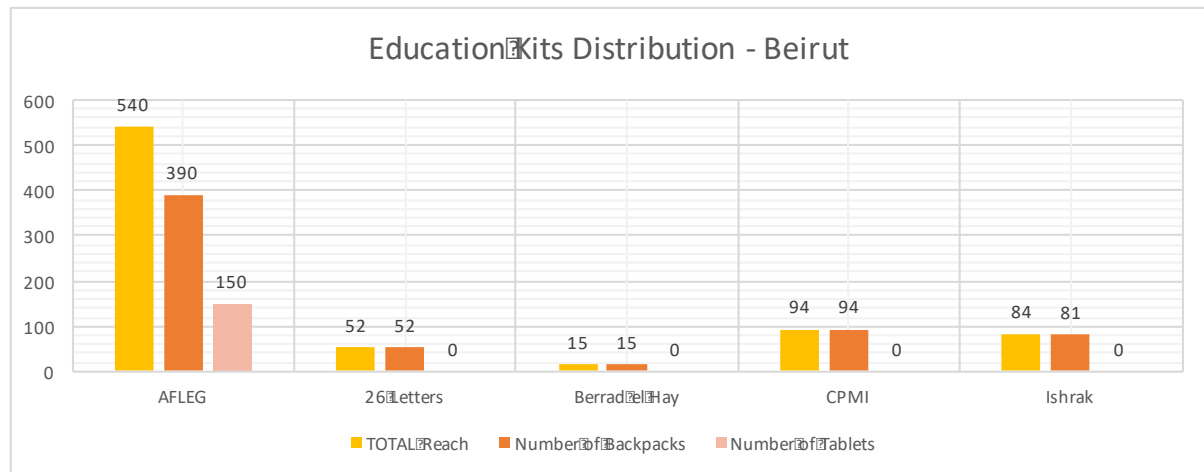


Figure 2. Project Reach – Distribution of Education Kits

176-360 Educational Kit: 6-8 Years Old		
Item	Description	Quantity
Backpack	Regular, medium size, gender neutral color (simple or double zipper)	1
Pencil Case	Regular, medium pencil case, gender neutral color	1
Pencil	Pack of 12 pencils, HB grade, black lead	1
Eraser	Soft, for pencil, plastic or rubber, dimension 4.5x2x1.5cm	2
Sharpener	Plastic or metal, single hole regular pencil sharpener w. container	2
Multi Pen	4 in 1 Ball-point: blue, black, red, green	1
Scissors	Scissors suitable for children, metallic round edge, 13cm stainless steel	1
Glue Stick	Solid glue stick, 10g	2
Aquarelle Paint	A tablet of 8 colors and a paint brush	1
Canson Papers	Booklet of 16 sheets, size A4, 300g/m2	2
Coloring Pencils	A set of 12 coloring pencils	1
Ruler	Plastic or wood regular (20cm or 15cm)	1
Copybooks	A4, 48 sheets copybook, 70 to 90g (white papers, simple lines, colored covers)	5

Table 1. Distribution of Educational Kits – Ages 6-8

180 Educational Kits: 9-14 Years Old		
Item	Description	Quantity
Backpack	Regular, Medium Size, Gender Neutral Color (double zipper)	1
Pencil Case	Regular medium pencil case	1
Pencil	Pack of 12 pencils, HB grade, black lead	1
Eraser	Soft, for pencil, plastic or rubber, dimension 4.5x2x1.5cm	2
Sharpener	Plastic or metal, single hole regular pencil sharpener w. container	2
Multi Pen	4 in 1 Ball-point: blue, black, red, green	1
Scissors	Scissors suitable for children, metallic round edge, 13cm stainless steel	1
Glue Stick	Solid glue stick, 10g	2
Aquarelle Paint	A tablet of 3 colors and a paintbrush	1
Canson Papers	Booklet of 16 sheets, size A4, 800g/m2	2
Coloring Pencils	A set of 12 coloring pencils	1
Corrector	Type-X	1
Geometric Set	Regular (Compass, Semi-circle, Rule 15cm, Triangle ruler)	1
Scientific Calculator	Small FX-95	1
Stylo Pen	Stylo Pen	1
Stylo Bullets	Recharge pack, blue ink for the stylo pen	1
Sub-divided Copybook	A4, 30 sheets copybook, 160g white papers, square	1

Table 2. Distribution of Educational Kits – Ages 9-14

➤ Play-based Psychosocial Support

Objectives:

- Improve overall psychosocial wellbeing of targeted children and youth.
- Train coaches/teachers/facilitators on play-based PSS learning
- Conduct and implement activities selected from the Psychosocial Wellbeing Through Play Games Manual developed by RTP

Reach: Coaches/teachers/facilitators from three different organizations situated in different areas in Beirut were trained on the PSS content and evaluated on their skills using a pre and post assessment. Students and youth attending these three organizations received sessions on play-based PSS (Figure 3).

Total Reach: 253 individuals

- Coaches: 23
- Children and Youth: 230

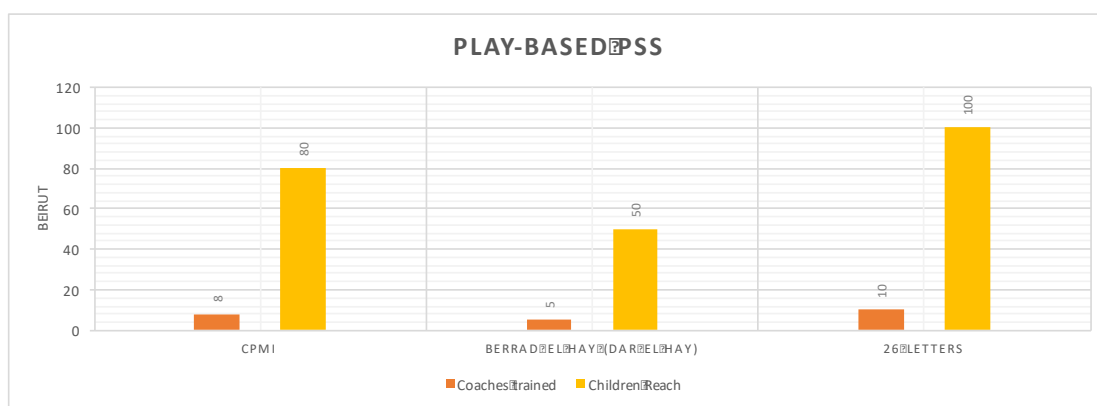


Figure 3. Project Reach – Play Based PSS

Purpose of the evaluation study

The conducted evaluation study aimed at assessing:

- The extent to which the project contributed to its outputs and outcomes
- The extent to which the project improved access to safe and supportive environments for targeted children and youth
- The extent to which the project improved the overall psychosocial wellbeing of targeted children and youth

Evaluation Design and Methodology

A mixed methodology approach of quantitative and qualitative methods was used in the conducted evaluation.

Tools and sample characteristics

Quantitative tools

1. **Children and Youth survey [Items from ISELA- International Social and Emotional Learning Assessment and Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)]** were self-administered to a randomly chosen groups of children upon availability on field, at pre-intervention (before they started sessions), and post intervention (after they finished their last session).
66 children and youths participated in the baseline surveys, out of which 52.3% were males and 47.7% were females, and 34.8% whose age ranged between 6-9 years old and 65.2% between 10-14 years old. As for post-intervention, 51 children and youths participated in the surveys. 43.1% were males and 56.9 were females. As for percentage of age groups, 38.2% were between 6-9 and 61.2% were between 10-14.
2. **Pre- and post-training assessment tool** was administered to all 23 coaches/facilitators before and completion of the first training on PSS.

Qualitative tools

3. **FGDs with coaches/facilitators:** 1 FGD was conducted with 5 coaches [4 females and 1 male] from both areas Bekaa/North and Beirut online through zoom.
4. **Semi-structured interviews with parents:** The semi-structured interviews with parents were divided into three parts.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 randomly selected parents to investigate whether children and youths psychosocial levels skills improved following the training.

- **8 random calls** for tablet recipients
- **5 random calls** for backpacks 6 to 8 years old recipients
- **5 random calls** for backpacks 9 to 14 years old recipients

For **26 letters:**

- **5 random calls**

5. **Key Informant Interviews (KIs) with administrators:** 2 KIs were conducted with 2 center administrators.

Data analysis

In order to measure the improvement and change in the development level of social and emotional skills of the youths, percentage and mean descriptive of youths' responses at each assessment point were calculated. Additional analyses investigating the differences in the mean scores between the pre and post-tests were calculated using the dependent sample t-tests (t). Independent sample t-tests (t) were further implemented to examine whether the level of the social and emotional skills differed across gender and age. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS.

Regarding qualitative analysis, thematic analysis was used to code for the emerging themes. The analysis was done manually. Preliminary codes were generated after completing the open coding phase. Codes were then grouped into broader categories based on similarities, and themes were generated based on emerging patterns.

Ethical considerations and limitations

Participation in this study was voluntary. Parents of the youths were informed verbally of the use of pre and post-tests with their children. Children were also presented with an assent form in order to attain their approval on participating in the pre and post-tests. Oral consent from parents to participate in semi-structured interviews was sought through the phone. Oral consent was also obtained when conducting focus groups with the facilitators and semi-structured interviews with the partners. All participants were informed of their rights to withdraw anytime they want, privacy of information and answers, and confidentiality measures were ensured. No names were mentioned in any documentation forms.

Findings

Survey Results

Social and emotional skills and Resilience - Pre and Post Intervention

At the beginning and at the end of the play- based PSS sessions, the level of children and youths' social and emotional skills as measured by items selected from ISELA and Resilience as measured by items selected from "Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)" were recorded. This was done in order to investigate and note if any improvement in the resilience levels as well as the social and emotional skills took place following the children and youth's enrollment in the program.

Resilience

Regarding resilience, an increase in the resilience levels of the children and youth was noted; the overall mean score for resilience was higher at the end of the program ($M=2.43$, $SD=.47$) compared to the beginning of the program ($M=1.74$, $SD=.69$). The difference was significant, $t(94)=-8.019$, $p=.000$. More specifically, an increase in the resilience levels was noted based on a considerable higher average mean recorded for the following items: (1) ability to cooperate around people (2) ability to behave in different social situations (2) knowing where to go in the community to seek help (4) the feeling of belonging to the center (5) becoming aware of one's own strengths (6) importance of helping out in the community (7) development of skills that are useful in later life. No significant differences for the mean resilience scores were found across age and gender.

Resilience Items – Pre & Post results	Mean Score (M, SD)	
	Pre (%)	Post (%)
I cooperate with people around me	1.63 (.52)	2.66 (.13)
I know how to behave indifferent social situations	1.55(.18)	1.97 (.27)
I am proud of my community	1.13 (.62)	1.25 (.22)
I know where to go in my community to seek help	1.66 (.44)	1.98 (.45)
I feel I belong at my Center	1.12 (.65)	2.02 (.61)
I am treated fairly in my community	1.79 (.12)	1.65 (.34)
I am aware of my own strengths	1.10 (.18)	2.03 (.23)
I think it is important to help out in my community	1.54 (.19)	2.33 (.62)
I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others)	1.97 (.64)	2.54 (.21)
I enjoy my family's traditions	1.33 (.41)	1.40 (.12)
I enjoy my community's tradition	1.66 (.42)	1.87 (.16)

Table 3. Pre and Post Resilience scores

Social and Emotional Life Skills

There was an increase in the percentage of items related to psychosocial life skills. There was a higher percentage of children and youth who responded “yes” to asking for help when having a problem with a friend, when working on something difficult, recognizing when someone is feeling sad, asking adults and parents for help when facing with a problem with a friend or working on something difficult for the post test scores. Additionally, there was a higher percentage of correct responses as recorded in the post test results when children and youths were instructed to indicate how the child was feeling in the photo presented in the exercises, and what can be done to calm oneself and others when feeling sad and upset. No significant differences for the mean resilience scores were found across age and gender.

ISELA Items – Pre & Post results	<i>Response Percentages to “YES”</i>	
	Pre (%)	Post (%)
Do you talk to anyone at home when you are sad?	68.9	51.4
Do you ask anyone at home for help when you have a problem with a friend?	55.7	75
When working on something difficult, do you ask anyone at home for help?	70.5	86.5
Do you know when someone in your home is feeling sad?	90.2	97.3
Do you talk to any of your friends when you are sad?	59.1	62.2
When having a problem with a child, do you go to any of your friends for help?	52.5	43.2
When working on something difficult, do you ask any of your friends for help?	55.7	89.2
Do you know when your best friend is feeling sad?	72.1	83.8
Do you talk to any adult other than your parents when you are sad?	63.9	37.8
Ask adult other than parents for help when having a problem with a friend?	36.1	59.5
An adult other than parents for help when working on something difficult?	41.7	66.7
	<i>Response Percentages to “Incorrect”</i>	
How do you think this child is feeling right now?	47.5	59.5
A thing you do to help yourself calm down when you are angry or upset?	57.4	97.3
What would you do to help her feel better?	63.9	70.3
Child completed 1 st drawing or was still drawing at the end of 60 seconds	85	94.4
Child completed 2 nd drawing OR was still drawing at the end of 60 seconds	83.3	94.3
Child completed 3 rd drawing OR was still drawing at the end of 60 seconds	79.7	91.7

Child completed 4 th drawing OR was still drawing at the end of 60 seconds	78	88.9
What would you do when “availability of one toy & presence of others”?	90.2	91.7
Is there anything else you would do?	23	21.6
What would you do “when another child takes away your toy”?	52.5	40.6
Is there anything else you would do?	19.7	18.9

Table 4. Differences in the percentages of the ISELA items between pre and post

Training Evaluation of Coaches

Coaches were evaluated on their knowledge and skills pre and post receiving the training. Coaches had to rate themselves as either Excellent, Good, Average, or poor on a set of presented skills and knowledge areas before attending the training and afterwards. On average, results indicated that coaches experienced an improvement on all knowledge and skill categories with a mean average pretest score of $M=2.56$ (.33) as compared to a higher mean average posttest score of $M=3.64$ (.28). The table below shows a more detailed improvement in the coaches' self-perceived knowledge and skills.

To investigate whether change in the average scores between the pre and posttests was statistically significant, dependent sample t-tests were performed. Results indicated that change and improvement in coaches' knowledge and skills prior and post training intervention was significant ($t(15) = -9.675, p = .000$).

Item Categories	Beirut	
	Pretest (M, SD)	Posttest (M, SD)
Your ability to communicate with children and young people	3.43 (.50)	3.68 (.47)
Your ability to lead a group while participating in an RTP activity	2.91(.79)	3.56(.51)
Your ability to provide corrections (constructive criticism)	2.86 (.81)	3.50(.51)
Your ability to present a session in front of a group of people	2.86 (.62)	3.75 (.44)
Familiarity with the safety procedures that must be followed	3.08 (.84)	3.81 (.40)
The ability to include people with special needs in RTP activities	2.73(.68)	3.43(.51)
Ability to contribute to improving the personality of the child/youth	2.95 (.56)	3.56 (.51)
knowledge of characteristics and capabilities of different age groups	2.60(.49)	3.50 (.51)
Apply social ethics (equality, respect, teamwork) during activity	3.39 (.65)	3.81 (.40)
Ability to adjust as appropriate in the study material and resources	2.86 (.45)	3.56 (.51)
Your knowledge of life skills components	2.91(.59)	3.62 (.50)
Ability to combine life skills & psychosocial support into one activity	2.86(.54)	3.68 (.47)
Your knowledge of RCA	1.21(.51)	3.93 (.25)

The difference between the skills and recipes of the activator	2.65 (.77)	3.68 (.47)
Your knowledge about PFA	1.47(.73)	3.62 (.50)
Objectives of providing psychological first aid	2.56(.78)	3.62 (.50)
Principles of work in psychological first aid	2.17 (.83)	3.62 (.61)
My knowledge of the indicators of abuse	2.82(.65)	3.62 (.50)
My knowledge of the Five Principles of Child Protection	2.13(.96)	3.75 (.44)
Your knowledge about child protection	2.73(.86)	3.75 (.44)
My knowledge of the importance of PSS	2.78(1.0)	3.56 (.62)
Knowing how and when to provide psychosocial support	2.73 (.81)	3.68 (.47)
My knowledge of risk factors affecting children's well-being	2.47(.79)	3.56(.51)

Table 5. Differences in the Pre –Post percentages for items measuring Coaches improvement following Training

Semi-structured Interviews with Parents – PSS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 randomly selected mothers to collect data on how they perceived their children’s psychosocial life skills changed post program intervention.

The qualitative thematic analysis yielded the emergence of five themes related to the improvement of psychosocial life skills for the participants following the play-based PSS intervention: (1) Self-esteem, (2) Problem solving skills, (3) Social engagement, (4) Age-appropriate responsibility, and (5) Setting goal and realistic plan. All parents reported that they witnessed positive changes in their children after they attended the program.

➤ Self-esteem

Almost all parents reported witnessing an increase in their children’s levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. Some mothers mainly emphasized how their children gained the ability to take decisions and express their emotions and needs. They also witnessed their children being able to stand for themselves and protect their rights. Additionally, almost all parents reported that they have also perceived their children to have become more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses; however, younger children were less likely to experience or practice this awareness as reported by parents who had children attending the program from both age groups [6-9] and [10-14] and witnessed the difference.

“My son had a weak personality and didn’t know how to take decisions and say no to others. He would spend most of his time secluded and alone. However, after the program, I realized how my son’s self-esteem increased as he became stronger in his interactions with others and in his ability to take decisions in his day to day activities such as choosing a place that he like to go out to.”

➤ Problem solving skills

After the training, parents observed their children to be able to deal with their problems and obstacles in a new and mature way. Specifically, when faced with a problem, they would seek help from adults like from their mother or teacher if need be. Children have acquired problem solving

skills when encountered with any conflict or distressing event, such as solving any conflict or dispute with negotiations rather than aggressive physical acts like hitting; children and youth developed a higher ability to manage their emotions. “My son used to hit others a lot, and he would curse others. However, following the program attendance, I realized that he started to come to me and express his discontent with any disputes with others. He started to engage in more reflection before reacting aggressively.”

➤ Social engagement

Almost all mothers reported that their children acquired the skills to be able to interact with others in a healthy way and communicate more effectively. Some mothers particularly emphasized that their children became more sensitive to the needs and the feelings of others as their own needs and emotions. In other words, they were observed to be able to formulate an understanding of what the other might be feeling or going through. In addition to this, almost all parents realized that their children developed a sense of understanding and acceptance to people from different backgrounds given that the sessions allowed the children and youth to build relationships with new people. One parent indicated: “After my son attended the program, I realized that he started to smile more to the Syrian kids who live in our neighborhood.” In others words, youth formed new friendships and formed more peaceful ties with other. “My son didn’t have friends before attending the program. He would stay home most of the time playing alone. But now, he goes out into the neighborhood, and has become friends with few boys.”

➤ Age-appropriate responsibility

Some youths and children as observed by their parents exhibited increased independency, responsibility towards chores and aged appropriate actions and self-awareness. This was less observed by parents whose children are between 6-9 years old given that children at this age still need their parents’ guidance in dealing with day to day activities. As reported by one mother: “Before attending the training, my son would always need my help and my presence in his day to day activities. However, now he is able to do things by himself, such as going to the supermarket alone and knowing how to act with strangers.” Another mother indicated that: “My son acquired the skills to behave more appropriately in social settings, such as waiting for his turn to come and controlling emotional reactions that are accompanied when losing a game.”

➤ Setting goal and realistic plan

A number of parents reported that their children started to set realistic plans on how to achieve their future goals regarding their career. They have become enthusiastic towards future career role to undertake and prospects. One mother reported: “Following the sessions and the activities that my son attended, he would come home and tell me that he wants to become a soldier in the Army. He would tell me that he would work hard to achieve this by studying well at school to have good grades and by practicing sports every day to become physically strong and pass the physical examination exam.”

FGD with Facilitators/ Coaches

The focus group included coaches from both Bekaa/ North and Beirut so as to ensure diversity and a more entrenching discussion arising from the differential experiences of both areas.

➤ Interactivity of the youths with the sessions

One of challenges that the coaches faced were related to the ability to calm the children and youths especially in activities that required attention and focus. Most of the youths were not able to concentrate given the country unrest that they lived through like Beirut Blast, economic crisis and Pandemic. The sessions that were most challenging were the RCA because the activities required focus and attention and active listening. The activities also had to be related to children's real life incidences and experiences. So it was difficult to get the message through in a situation where the youths were not able to focus. There were age differences among those who were 10-11 and 13-14. Those who were between 13 and 14 were more likely to exhibit focused behavior and were more willing to concentrate and listen. However, those whose ages are between 10-11 were more interested in activities that included more physical activity. Also, the activities that included writing and emotion expression were more applicable and more implemented by those in bigger age groups. Also, there were gender differenced in those activities with girls being more likely to exhibit obedience and attentiveness in comparison to boys.

➤ Timing of the sessions

All facilitators also indicated that the duration of the sessions was not enough. The duration of the sessions was short and needed more time to be able to deliver the message. One facilitator indicated that she would try to incorporate a lot of physical games to attract the attention of the participants. Even if mild activities like jumping. One facilitator also indicated that children wanted the sessions to continue especially that they had formed good relationships with their peers and found new friends. Some of the learners indicated that especially for children who live in conflicting areas, they need more time and more activities to benefit from the sessions and express their emotions. Another facilitator also specified that 45 minutes per session and an overall of 16 sessions was not sufficient to achieve the goals, and the sessions need to be not less than 1 hour.

➤ Content

The content of the sessions included in depth and large amount of information. Large topics were presented that needed more in depth explanations. One facilitator indicated that the sessions seemed more as introductory, because more time and more delving in the subject was needed. Children between ages 6 and 9 faced difficulty in understanding concepts in activities that included more abstract notions such as the need to take decisions. However, facilitators reported that with constant follow-up and revisions, they were able to secure the understanding of the youths regarding these concepts.

➤ Distribution of Youth across games

Regarding division of children and youths among groups, some facilitators expressed that including an additional number of youths would have been more feasible for implementing the physical activities.

Quotes from facilitators/coaches

'Kids showed a lot of enthusiasm and joy during the activities and did want to leave when sessions ended.'

‘At first, it was difficult for kids to mingle and get comfortable around each other. During sessions that focused on relationship with others, kids showed a lot of improvement in their social skills and were able to develop new friendships.’

KII with managers of organizations (schools/centers)

The KII included managers of organizations from Beirut to generate information on their feedback on the rehabilitation process.

➤ Contribution of outcomes

All managers of organization reported that outcomes were reached successfully. Managers reported that all of the items on the checklist were taken into consideration, fixed or implemented, and repaired. Some organizations received additional repairs as they were found needed along the process.

Managers reported great content with the work and the rehabilitation process as both their needs and expectations were met.

➤ Communication with stakeholders

Managers reported that communication with contractors and representatives of the project from RTP was very smooth. Contractors who were responsible of the rehabilitation process were viewed as cooperative, understanding, and very professional.

Questions, inquires, and suggestions, were well received, discussed, and taken into consideration from the responsible stakeholders.

The flexibility of the communication between both parties allowed the work to be smooth and go as planned.

➤ Efficiency and time management

In terms of time and efficiency, managers found that the allocated time to address the whole framework of the suggested plan was suitable.

➤ Influence of rehabilitation on staff and students

Managers reported that improving WASH facilities saved the students and attendees a lot of time since the toilets are now good to use. One manager reported that the availability of working and clean toilets provided him a lot of ease since he used to experience worry when children went back and forth to their houses to use the toilets.

Managers also reported that the cleanliness of walls, playgrounds, kitchens, and halls is encouraging for kids. Their centers were full on the same day they opened the registration as parents were encouraging each other to enroll their kids in the programs.

It was reported that adding more colors to the walls provided positive energy and excitement to the kids.

Staff/teachers/coaches exhibited excitement as LCD projectors made the learning process much easier and more interesting.

➤ Reflection on the organization pre and post rehabilitation

When asked to compare between the centers, before and after the rehabilitation process, all organization managers reported great joy and satisfaction with how the centers turned out to be. They claimed that they used to work and conduct activities in very poor and difficult conditions that affected both the staff and students in a negative way.

Lack of cleanliness, organization, hygiene, and water leakage made it very difficult for staff and students to feel comfortable and encouraged for the teaching and learning process.

Rehabilitation to playgrounds and halls allowed managers to receive a larger number of kids due to the availability of a larger and safer space.

Managers reported a lot of appreciation to RTP for offering them an opportunity to enjoy the teaching and learning process despite the dire situation the educational sector is facing in Lebanon.

Quotes from staff and managers of organizations

“Overall experience was great. Staff members were efficient, helpful, and cooperative. Everyone on board was trying their best!”

“It is so nice to be able to work in a clean and organized center. One student told me that he feels like he is in a hotel which made me see how kids are proud of their center. This makes me so happy.”

“RTP made our school look presentable. We feel like we are going to a new place now!”

Distribution of Tablets Evaluation – Parents

All parents reported that the tablets were used for educational purposes and for their children's studies. Examples of Table use ranged from opening emails and g-mails, school agendas, google search, navigating the internet to collect information. Parents emphasized that the tablets were not used for games and that the usage of the tablets was always supervised by them. In addition to this, parents indicated that the tablet will be used throughout the upcoming educational years. Overall, parents were very pleased with the receiving the tablets for their children especially that the school systems are incorporating online tasks from their children and the availability of the tablet ensures this feasibility. All parents that were contacted for this semi-structured interview indicated that they did not go over the internet safety posters.

Distribution of Education kits [Backpacks] Evaluation – Parents

All parents expressed gratitude for receiving the backpacks. Based on the parents' responses and the items that they remembered to be included in the backpacks, the following were the mentioned items: (1) pencils (2) pencil case (3) erase (4) sharpener (5) scissors (6) glue stick (7) coloring pencils (8) glue stick (9) scientific calculator (10) sub-divided copy book (11) aquarelle paint. All parents expressed that the items were sufficient, were all useful and were all needed. Some parents expressed that the items were used and shared with all children. In other words, the kit was useful for the all the family members [siblings]. One parent considerably emphasized the importance and usefulness of the calculator given that it is an expensive item. Additionally, all parents indicated that they didn't believe that any of the items were missing. All parents also indicated that the back pack

is used by their children and will be very helpful in allowing to enroll their kids in school next year. All parents also emphasized that the items were of good quality.

Conclusion

All in all, based on the obtained results, the program was able to successfully ensure an improved access to safe facilities and learning environment among the children and youths between 6 and 14 years old. The received tables and education kits were highly useful and were beneficial for their children. There was also an improvement in the access to a supportive learning environment among the children given that an improvement in the psychosocial skills of the children and youths was noted. Results also pointed that the training that the coaches/facilitators received regarding PFA, PSS and PBL approaches succeeded in improving the coaches' knowledge and skills in these domains. This was translated into the positive outcomes that the youths experienced.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations were suggested by different groups as categorized below:

Facilitator/Coaches recommendations:

- Increase the period of the project, change the length of the sessions to more than an hour and increase the number of sessions per week.
- An additional number of youths would have been more feasible for implementing the physical activities. Larger number of youths and children.

Parents' recommendations:

- Have groups of similar ages be grouped together and not include any of the youths from different age groups in the group.
- Be more inclusive of children with disabilities
- The need to extend the program, lengthen the sessions and provide a continuity to the program in order to ensure that the skills remain consolidated and ensure sustainability of the positive program effect.
- The need to provide transportation for youths especially in winter time.

Evaluator's recommendations:

- Given that children between ages 6 and 9 faced difficulty in understanding concepts in activities that included more abstract notions such as the need to take decisions and what future career roles to take, activities can incorporate activities that translate the abstract concepts into physical activities such as role play or drawing concepts [career roles – decisions] on a board.

- Providing techniques for the coaches to facilitate the smooth transition for the youths to accept and adapt to the collaboration with new peers since the start.

Annexes

Annex 1- Pre-post training assessment tool

Annex 2- ISELA (minimized)

Annex 3- FGD with coaches/facilitators

Objective: To generate information on the coaches/facilitators feedback on the content of the play-based PSS activities, implementation process, challenges, and recommendations.

Questions:

- 1- What challenges did you face while implementing the activities?
- 2- Was the PSS content age appropriate?
- 3- Was the PSS content relevant to the participants?
- 4- Did you see any changes within the participants regarding the three main focus areas: self, peers, and community?
- 5- In what part of the program were the participants most interactive?
- 6- In what part of the program were the participants least interactive?
- 7- Was the allocated time for the program sufficient to address all targeted objectives?
- 8- Were the group sizes and distribution appropriate?
- 9- Do you have any suggestions and recommendations for the future?
- 10- Do you think the learned objectives will allude to consistent outcomes? If yes, Why? If not, what do you suggest? (e.g. Do you think you need to conduct follow-up meetings with parents? Do you think you need to conduct further evaluation to ensure success of outcomes?)

Annex 4- KII with managers of schools/centers

Objective: To generate information on the rehabilitation process in terms of efficiency, effectiveness on both staff and children and youth, outcomes, benefits, and recommendations.

Questions:

- 1- Was the scope of work done by the contractor and his team in alignment with the checklist provided in the site evaluation report?
- 2- How do you evaluate the communication and cooperation with the contractor and the team among the different stages of the rehabilitation process: evaluation, implementation, and finalization?
- 3- Was the rehabilitation process efficient in terms of time management?
- 4- How do you reflect on the condition of the school/center pre and post intervention?
- 5- How did/would the rehabilitation process affect the staff working in the school/center?
- 6- How did/would the rehabilitation process affect the children and youth attending the school/center?
- 7- What is the relation between the rehabilitation process and the psychosocial well-being of the children and youth?
- 8- Do you have any comments on the rehabilitation process?
- 9- Do you have any recommendations for similar future projects?

Annex 5- Semi-structured interviews with parents of children and youth – play-based PSS program

Objective: To generate information on the parents' feedback on the psycho-social well-being of their children after receiving the play-based PSS program in terms of evidence of comprehension, understanding, reflection, changed behavior, and application of taught life skills among their children.

Questions:

- 1- Did you see any general changes in your child after receiving the program?
- 2- Did you see any changes regarding your child's self-confidence level?
- 3- Did your child become more aware of his own strengths and limitations?
- 4- Does your child find a way around obstacles that arise?
- 5- Does your child ask for help appropriately?
- 6- Does your child solve problems successfully?
- 7- Does your child interact appropriately with peers, relatives, and family members?
- 8- Does your child communicate effectively?
- 9- Does your child show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings?
- 10- Does your child exhibit a sense of understanding and acceptance to people from different backgrounds and cultures?
- 11- Does your child feel accepted in a community of different backgrounds and cultures?
- 12- Does your child carry out age-appropriate tasks without being told? In other words, does he show age-appropriate leadership?
- 13- Does your child hold responsibility for own behavior and manage consequences that arise?
- 14- Does your child have the ability to identify a goal and set a realistic plan to achieve it?

Annex 6- Semi-structured interviews with parents of children and youth – Education Kit (tablets)

Objective: To generate information on the parents' feedback regarding the educational kits that include tablets in terms of usage, benefits, and changes regarding level of awareness on internet safety among their children.

Questions:

- 1- Was the Tablet used for educational purposes? Give an example?
- 2- Did you receive a booklet that explained how to be safe on the internet?
- 3- Do you think your children were influenced by the posters related to internet safety?
- 4- Do you believe your children developed awareness on internet safety regarding privacy and sharing personal information?
- 5- Have you noticed any change in the content and messages that your children share online?

- 6- Do you believe this kit will help you to enroll your kid in school next year – (To be asked to Parent)
- 7- Do you believe you will use this kit next year? – (To be asked to Children and Parent)

Annex 7- Semi-structured interviews with parents of children and youth – Education Kit (backpacks)

Objective: To ensure recipient of all items included in the backpacks and to generate information on parents' feedback regarding usage and benefits of the backpacks.

Questions:

- 1- What were the items you received?
- 2- Which items were the most useful?
- 3- Which items were least useful?
- 4- Are there other education items that you think could have been useful too and are missing in the kits?
- 5- Do you believe this kit will help you to enroll your kid in school next year?
- 6- Do you believe you will use this kit? – (To be asked to Children and Parent)