



FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

MUSIC FOR TECHNOLOGY

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This evaluation was only possible with your participation.

*The authors of this evaluation are **Nour Roumani** & **Hassan Tarabah**.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ET

Evaluation Team

FGD

Focus Group Discussion

PSS

Psycho-social Support

M4T

Music for Technology

F

Frequency

PSS

Psycho-social Support

RTP

Right to Play

Qtd

Quotes

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Contextual Brief

Music for Technology (M4T) is the fourth phase of a scale-up series of music-based interventions implemented by Right to Play International in Lebanon since 2018. Each phase served a unique set of complementary objectives with a focus on 'vulnerable and at-risk' adolescents' - between the ages of 12 and 18 years old - through musical tools.

With this in mind, the main objective of this phase was to give youth full agency to lead change using technological music tools to express their understanding of social and human rights issues. The main outcomes of this particular phase were:

- Improving life skills through music for development and tech for youth coaches and children,
- Addressing rights and advocacy issues through the use of music,
- Creating safe interactive spaces through eco-friendly and environmental approaches.

Evaluation Objective

This report is a product of collaborative efforts between Right to Play International in Lebanon and external evaluation experts contracted to partially conduct and report on the evaluation findings.

The overall objective of this evaluation was to measure the level of **impact** of these interventions on its participants. Hence, this evaluation sought to delve into the perception and feedback of the project's young participants, and explore their individual & collective experiences with the M4T project. It also aimed to report on the factors/elements that contributed to its success and explore any challenges faced for future project improvement.

Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation ran during the month of **April 2023**. It applied a participatory qualitative research approach utilizing a non-traditional data collection tool called "River of Life". As such, focus group discussions (FGDs) were set up with young project participants to capture their unique project experience(s) in a descriptive and storytelling manner.

This approach allowed the Evaluation Team (ET) to: (1) Gain deeper insight into the young participant's lives prior the project, (2) Develop a comprehensive understanding of the stages that are most relevant to the participants' project experience(s), and (3) Ascertain the fundamentals that allow these stages to resonate with the participants after project finalization.

Main Evaluation Findings

The Evaluation Team concluded that M4T had a **significant positive impact** on its participants. As such, divergent socio-cultural differences i.e. educational background, labor & physical safety, and social & mental wellbeing ascertained their individual connections to the project along with the specific areas of their lives that were predominantly influenced by their involvement. Subsequently, these unique relationships determined the key turning points of the adolescents throughout their project journey whereby the project's launch, technological music knowledge & musical crafting as well as the preparations for the final project event were amongst the common key milestones of the project from the participants' point of view.

Finally, project passion/fondness, self appreciation, and the motivation to pay forward what was learned to other adolescents were the central themes that showcased the project's overall imprint on the participants.

Main Evaluation Recommendations

The ET finds that the project should be **replicated in full form** but with **minor** considerations:

1. Securing a more spacious center or renting a different venue for future events due to overcrowding experienced during the final event.
2. Employing activity monitoring systems to document behavioral patterns and ensure proper conduct of staff and participants.
3. Practicing open communication regarding any issues that may affect the adolescents and their experience in the project, particularly in terms of activity and event implementations.

I. PROJECT CONTEXT & OVERVIEW

Right to Play¹ is an international organization committed to improving the lives of children and youth affected by conflict, disease, and poverty. Established in 2002, Right to Play (RTP) has pioneered a unique play-based approach to learning and development that focuses on quality education, life skills, health, gender equality, child protection, and building peaceful communities. It recognizes the important role that sports and creative play have for bringing communities together and provides children and youth with the opportunity to participate in structured music for development programs to help them learn how to drive community advocacy on social issues they care about².

In Lebanon, Right to Play International has implemented several iterations of music-based interventions since 2018, targeting adolescents and children affected by conflict and poverty. These interventions aim to build social cohesion, improve life and organizational skills, and empower adolescents to become leaders of positive change in their society. Evidence-based research was embedded throughout the phases, with mid-term analysis, needs assessments, and neurological clinical research studies conducted to ensure the effectiveness of the interventions and inform the project on key protection and advocacy issues to tackle.

Training manuals and workshops were developed to guide the implementation of each phase, and a total of 39 coaches underwent training to enhance their technical knowledge and skills. External experts and educational companies, such as Strawbees - a Swedish EdTech company - and a Lebanese renowned rapper, were contracted to further guide the youth coaches and participants throughout the intervention's timeline. These interventions resulted in community initiatives led by the participants, including video campaigns, economic and environmental initiatives, and eco-friendly and sustainable spaces.

Overall, Right to Play's music-based interventions in Lebanon aimed to improve the psychosocial well-being, resilience, and life skills of children and adolescents affected by conflict and poverty, while empowering them to become agents of change in their communities.

¹ Right to Play in Lebanon. Accessed on 11th January 2023. <https://www.righttoplay.nl/nl/countries/lebanon/>

² Right to Play. Accessed on 24th April 2023. <https://righttoplay.com/en/countries/lebanon/>

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Objective & Audience

The objective of this evaluation was to assess the extent of the interventions' impact on the participants. To achieve this goal, the evaluation focused on examining the perceptions and feedback of the young participants who took part in the M4T project, as well as their individual and collective experiences. Additionally, the evaluation aimed to identify the factors and elements that contributed to the project's success and to identify any challenges that were faced so that improvements could be made in the future.

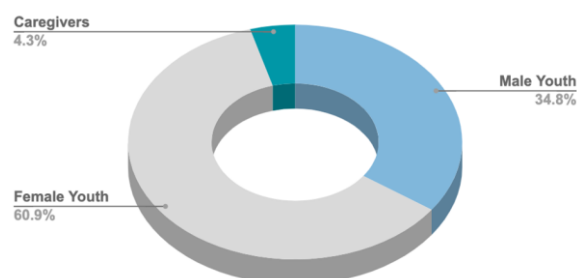
Hence, the primary audience of this evaluation is Right to Play International in Lebanon. Recommendations from the study will inform current and future programming in Lebanon.

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation adopted a qualitative research approach. This approach was guided by the “River of Life” - a descriptive and participatory tool - which was utilized to gain insights into the ways through which the interventions had influenced the lives of the participants, and the extent to which it had been a catalyst for change. Additionally, the tool aimed to identify key milestones, events, and/or phases of the young participants' lives that were associated with the music-based interventions whilst understanding further the unique attributes of each stage, the lessons derived from them, and the current feelings of the participants towards them.

Thus, this tool was administered on **April 7 & 14, 2023** to a total of **22 young participants** (between 12 & 18 years old) who were involved in the music interventions for over 4 years as well as **1 caregiver**. On April 7th, a digital storytelling training was given by RTP to a total of 4 young participants and 1 caregiver. This training employed the “River of Life” tool to help participants to devise, share and summarize their stories in a 1-minute video.

On April 14th, the tool was used to guide 2 focus group discussions with young participants. Each group was asked to pair up and draw a river that represented their journey within the project whilst identifying its main stages. They also individually reflected on the knowledge and skills gained that fostered a tangible and intangible change within their lives. Figure 1 provides more insight into the training & FGDs which were carried out.



The training and the FGDs were all conducted in person and were audio recorded with prior consent from the participants so that no information was missed and/or misrepresented.

Data Analysis

The evaluation framework was guided by the project's defined outcomes and the evaluation's criteria of assessment i.e. impact. Thus, qualitative data were coded and entered with respect to the above in the form of a matrix created on Excel. This ensured that all relevant data were adequately integrated and covered the evaluation's line of inquiry and the project's respective outcomes, allowing for the emergence of themes or additional information.

Data Integrity & Ethical Framework

Informed Consent - Participants and respondents were informed of the evaluation that was being conducted. The purpose of the informed consent was to allow participants to make informed decisions about whether to participate in the evaluation. Therefore, participants and respondents were made aware of the following:

- The purpose of the evaluation and/or activity they were participating in
- How the information provided would be used
- Who would review or access their responses
- That they could ask questions before, during or after the interview, and that answers to their questions would be provided in a clear, coherent, and respective manner

Voluntary Participation - Participants and respondents were made aware that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to refuse to answer any questions that might make them feel uncomfortable and/or withdraw their participation at any time, without any negative implications on their future involvement within the project and their relationship with project staff and researchers. In the case of withdrawal, participants and respondents were not required to provide any explanations.

Do No Harm - The evaluation took particular care to show sensitivity to cultural values and respect the dignity and rights of every interviewed individual. Furthermore, the team assessed the likelihood of physical and/or psychological harm (Stress, pain, anxiety, diminishing self-esteem, etc.) as a result of their direct participation in the evaluation. If any intended or unintended risks arose, the team took the necessary and appropriate preventive actions.

Confidentiality - Any identifying information that could be traced back to the participant or respondent was not collected. During the focus group discussion recordings, the ET only asked for the participants' first names to facilitate participation and the flow of information.

Professionalism & Goodwill - The evaluation team promoted professionalism and goodwill through open communication, honesty, transparency, and respect. Consequently, this allowed respondents and participants to share their opinions and thoughts on the program comfortably, honestly, and seriously.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Socio-Cultural Background

In order to establish the foundation on which to assess the project's impact, the ET examined the participants' lives prior to their enrollment into the interventions. As such, it is important to note that all of the participants belong to the same age group (12-18 years old) and come from vulnerable economic backgrounds. However, despite these similarities, the ET denoted **divergent socio-cultural** differences mainly in terms of their:

- 1. Educational Background** - Data collected on participant backgrounds indicated that the participants' education ratio approached equal distribution; whereby 55% of respondents were enrolled in an education facility (school and/or vocational training center) prior to their project participation while the remaining 45% were considered to be out-of-school adolescents.
- 2. Labor & Physical Safety** - Moreover, 60% of the out-of-school adolescents expressed that they were working prior to their participation in the project. These youth reported that their societal norms, traditions, and parental influence were the main reasons why they were not able to pursue their education, with female participants revealing that they were street-vendors who worked day/night shifts (midnight) selling tissue papers and flowers to pedestrians in unsafe and dangerous areas.
- 3. Social & Mental Well-being** - This particular variant manifested itself differently for both in and out-of-school adolescents. As such, the remaining out-of-school adolescents reported that their time was mainly spent at home, with female participants expressing a lack of social experiences. In contrast, in-school participants indicated that the absence of certain life skills and their negative social experiences - cultural norms/traditions, school peers bullying, and racism - were the primary source of their deteriorated social & mental wellbeing at the time (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency table on in-school participants limitations that affected their social & mental well-being

REF.	CODE	# OF QUOTES
1.	Life Skills - Coping ³	11
2.	Life Skills - Interpersonal ⁴	9
3.	Cultural Constraints / Negative Social Experiences / Bullying	5
4.	Life Skills - Self Management ⁵	2

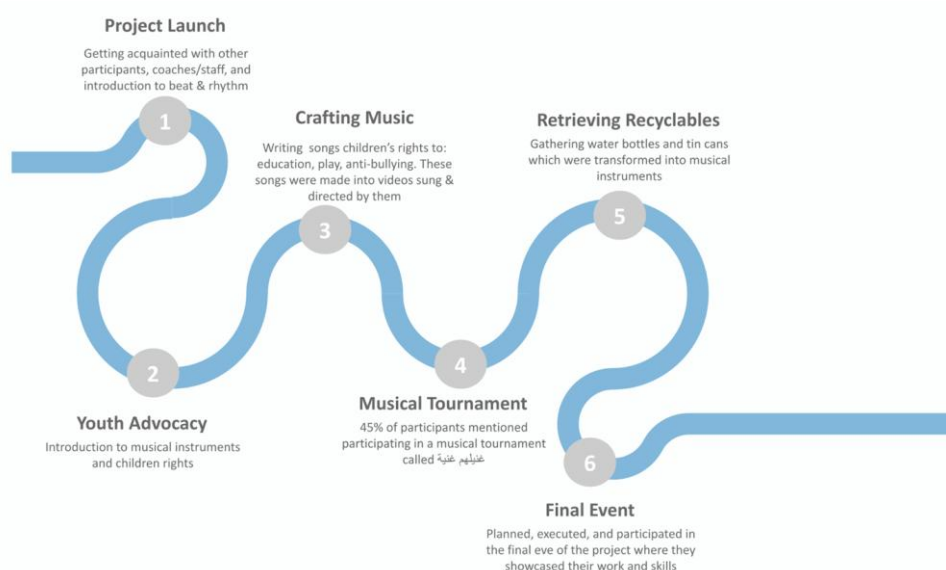
As such, these varied circumstances of the adolescents determined their individual connections to the project along with the specific areas of their lives that were predominantly influenced by their involvement. Consequently, while the majority of the adolescents provided similar responses when prompted to recognize the most significant M4T activities and events, the rationales underpinning their choices drew attention to each adolescent's distinct and unique relationship with the project.

³ Definition: Stress management - anger, sadness and anxiety - and impulse control including positive thinking.

⁴ Definition: Verbal and nonverbal communication - expression of thoughts & feelings.

⁵ Definition: Self awareness, self confidence, and self esteem.

Figure 2 - The common key milestones of the project from the perspective of the participants



M4T Mapping

This section illustrates the **common key milestones** that were deemed impactful by the adolescent participants. The figure below summarizes the key milestones mapped by the project participants.

Consultations with the participants of digital story-telling training revealed that their first interaction with the project was pivotal in determining their continuation whereby it was expressed that their perception of the project was influenced by their former social and mental states. However, 3 out of 4 adolescent training participants relayed that they decided to enroll in the project due to: (1) receiving support from friends or family members or (2) being acquainted with others enrolled in the project. Additionally, it was indicative that the first sessions with the coaches allowed the adolescents to gain a sense of motivation towards the project due to their play-based and interactive approach (F: 6 Qtd FGDs) and the amount of support received from the staff with two digital training participants expressing:

At the beginning, I received tremendous support from the staff/coaches and they told me this is not the way that I am (the way I thought of myself). They told me that I was beautiful and encouraged me further. Because of that support, I had the drive to continue within the project.

Digital Storytelling Participant 4

During these sessions, I felt the love and care that was given to me. So, I started to open up more [...] I considered it was a gateway to let go of all the negativity that I felt/was feeling. I felt safe and comfortable sharing my thoughts and feelings.

Digital Storytelling Participant 3

FGD participants spoke about their improvements in technological music knowledge, especially in Beat & Rhythm and the use of PictoBlox⁶ (F: 11 Qtd FGDs) - a coding education software that uses both graphical block-based coding and Python programming - which

Figure 3 - Technological music instruments created by adolescent participants through the utilization of "Miki-Miki"



⁶ Miki-Miki as referred by adolescent project participants.



allowed them to make interactive animation and music through coding and object detection⁷ (Figures 3). Additionally, the participants reflected on the awareness raising sessions they took part in, which introduced them to their rights (education, play, health, etc.) as children as well as protection issues & techniques (exploitation & abuse awareness & protection). Furthermore, they relayed that the song composition activity was particularly effective in empowering them and fostering teamwork as they worked on writing songs on topics such as children rights, anti-bullying and racism.

Finally, the ET observed that the most important milestone cemented in the participant's minds was the preparation phase of the final event (F: 9 Qtd FGDs) followed by the implementation of the same event (F: 7 Qtd FGDs & Training). The ET notes that the final event showcased all of the

knowledge, skills and experiences that these participants partook in. Thus, it is not surprising that the preparation phase - preparation of children's rights videos, musical instruments, interactive presentations, and recyclable music projects - was deemed to be rich, diverse, and subsequently most impactful by the adolescents.

It is worth mentioning that the documented experiences of the music interventions participants effectively complimented and achieved all outcomes of the M4T project. This was validated throughout the consultations made with all project participants as demonstrated below and in Figure 4.

Table 2. Select anecdotes from adolescent FGD & Training participants reflecting on their experiences and skills gained during the project

LABEL		QUOTE
LIFE SKILLS INTERPERSONAL (OUTCOME 1)	-	"During the event, there were a lot of people who came that I did not know but I was able to answer their questions - about the project, what they did, and how they were able to develop themselves. These are questions that I was not prepared to answer but I was able to do so during this event."
ADVOCACY CHILDREN'S RIGHTS (OUTCOME 2)	-	"It made me know more about myself and my rights especially as a child and with regards to work. I've also developed a love for music. [...] Before we used to always say that it is impossible to change this community. But, today, we can see and feel that this is just the beginning of change."
INTERACTIVE SPACES (OUTCOME 3)	SAFE	"What I liked most about the project was the anti-bullying activities as well as the fact that during the song composition activity and event preparation activity, we were all equal. All of our voices were heard and everyone's opinion mattered"

Impact Analysis

Generally, the ET notes the emergence of three **common themes** throughout data collection that further demonstrated the impact of the project:

- 1. Project Passion/Fondness** - It was previously established that the initial perception of the project was somewhat distorted. However, additional data gathered further illustrated that the adolescents' initial understanding of the project was varied. As such, FGD adolescent and digital training participants iterated that the following notions instigated their enrollment in the project: (1) Existing interest in music/musical instruments (F: 15 Qtd FGDs & Training), (2) Due to parental, sibling or peer encouragement (F: 8 Qtd FGDs

⁷ STEMpedia. PictoBlox. Accessed on 30th April 2023. <https://thetempedia.com/product/pictoblox/>

& Training), (4) Misconstrued idea on the project i.e. aware of the musical elements of the project only (F: 5 Qtd FGDs). Despite these predisposed notions, all participants involved in the data collection process displayed a sense of fondness or passion towards the project and all its components (musical and capacity building) after enrollment - even those who believed it to be strictly about music adapted to the project's approach and expressed appreciation for everything they learned from its activities:

I heard about the project and told her to register. At first she refused but later on we were able to enroll her. She then started to take the sessions and at first she told me that there are no musical instruments and that they are only teaching her some things [...] She was a bit reluctant but later on, she grew to love the coaches and sometimes she would discuss what she took back home and she would tell me if she loved a certain thing and wanted to apply it.

Digital Storytelling Caregiver Participant

2. **Self Appreciation** - This impression was denoted from descriptions made by adolescent participants on their perceived self transformations. Consequently, increased self management skills (Confidence & esteem), interpersonal skills, and increased knowledge on child rights - (F: 22 Qtd FGDs & Training) - attributed to new found sense of worth and appreciation amongst the participants, as one FGD participant highlights:

I had absolutely no idea that there's such a thing as child's rights and that someone like me actually possesses these rights

FGD Female Participant

3. **Chain Reaction** - Finally, discussions on prospective future endeavors - especially with digital storytelling training participants - revealed that adolescents would like to pay forward what they have learned and gained through their participation in the M4T project to other children. This is exemplified by:

I hope that I have the ability to build an NGO that would listen to children and maintains their rights and help them in expressing their thoughts and feelings like this project did with me

Digital Storytelling Participant 1

I hope to coach a lot more children and groups so I would be able to transfer all the knowledge that I gained throughout this project. I hope that I can help other children further develop themselves and not feel incomplete or lacking.

Digital Storytelling Participant 3

To be able to create our own song with a video-clip, and have the video posted online so that other children can be motivated to participate in similar projects.

FGD Female Participant

IV. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

After analysis of data collected during this evaluation, which encompassed gaining insight on the project from the lens of the adolescents, the evaluation concludes that RTP's M4T project was successful in achieving its intended outcomes & objectives which contributed to it leaving a **tremendous impact** on the lives of its participants.

Evaluation findings found that the project should be repeated in full form but with few/minor considerations:

- 1. Securing a more spacious center/venue** - Very few adolescent participants considered that the newly operational center in Ain El Remmaneh was small in size which ultimately contributed to the overcrowding experienced during the project's final event. Thus, the ET recommends either finding a more spacious center that could hold more prospective adolescent participants or renting a different venue for future final events.
- 2. Activity Monitoring** - During data collection, it came to the ET's attention that some focus group discussion participants expressed a certain degree of dissatisfaction with a specific coach. Hence, the ET advises that RTP strengthen its project monitoring activities through which RTP can monitor and assess the sessions with participants, document behavioral patterns (staff/participants) and ensure proper conduct and overall knowledge transfer. Also, the ET recommends conducting these monitoring activities in a consistent yet unpredictable manner so that the assessment could capture real time data.
- 3. Open Communication & Transparency**- Particularly in terms of activity/event implementations as some participants denoted during data collection that they were guaranteed to perform during the final event but were not able to due to unknown reasons. Hence, the ET recommends that RTP practice open communication and transparency regarding any issues that might affect the adolescents and their current/future experience(s) in the project.

V. ANNEXES

ANNEX 5.1 - RIVER OF CHANGE TOOL & QUESTION GUIDE

Objective:

The general purpose of this session is to open space for adolescents to share about their experience in the project. We will be assessing the areas of improvement they can identify, in terms of gained life and psychosocial skills, as well as their perceived ability to become agents of change in their communities.

Administrative Information		
Date of data collection:	Time:	Location:
Location:	Facilitator:	Note Taker:
Number of children:	Males:	Females:
Age range:	Coaches' name:	

Introduction & Informed Consent (5 mins)

Hello. My name is ... and my colleague is ... from Right to Play.

Since you have participated in the music interventions for the past 4 years, we would like to take your feedback on the project until this point.

The purpose of the exercise we will be doing today, is to assess the impact the project has left on your lives on several aspects. It will allow us as a team to evaluate the project and consider your feedback for improving it further.

The activity will take around 1.5 hours. Nothing that you tell us today will be shared with anybody outside this team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name unless you allow us to. All answers will stay confidential, and the privacy of all participants will be kept.

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers, so feel free to give us your opinion without hesitation.

Please know that your participation in this activity is fully voluntary, you can choose not to participate, and this will NOT affect your participation in the project now, or in future projects. You can stop the questions whenever you want or refuse to answer any question if you do not want to.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Do you agree to participate in this activity?

Do you agree that we take an audio recording of the interview to take notes later?

Icebreaking activity (5 mins)

Before I start the recording (if they agreed), we will play a small game to get to know each other.

(Samar to give us a game to play)

Start audio recording.

Activity instructions and Guiding questions:

- Divide the group into pairs, allow adolescents to choose the partners they are most comfortable working with (5 mins).
- Distribute the materials (papers, cardboards, colored pens, and sticky notes) on the floor according to the number of pairs.
- Tell the groups that the activity name is "River of Life".
- Ask each pair to draw and color a river on the cardboard that represents their experience in this project (5 mins).

- Ask each pair to put a timeline on the river starting from the time they started participating in the music intervention till now (5 mins).
- Ask each pair to plot the main activities they have passed through in this project (10 mins).
- Think back to four years ago. How would you describe yourself and your context?
- Ask them now, (each pair alone according to what they plotted as stages) to imagine themselves go back in time to each stage and write/draw (30 mins).
 - Why was this activity important for you? What did you like or not like about it?
 - What have you learned from it?
 - What do you feel now thinking back of this stage in your life?
- After all teams have finished writing or drawing down, ask them to present what they've written if they want to (30 mins).
- At the end of each presentation ask the adolescents to think of themselves at the beginning of the project (2019) versus now (2023),
 - In few words tell us, how have your lives changed in these 4 years?
 - How have you as a person changed and developed?
 - What was the role of this project in those changes? How do you think your life is going to be like after 4 years?
 - If you were to design a project like the project you participated in, what would you change in it to make it better?

Digital Storytelling Training (By Yasmine) – **only for the 5 children who will be doing videos.**

It was great meeting you all and taking your feedback.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION! 😊