WhatWorks TO PREVENT VIOLENCE
A Global Programme To Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls

RIGHT TO PLAY

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

UKaid from the British people

Harnessing the Transformative Power of Play for Violence Prevention in Hyderabad, Pakistan

Background

Gender equality is fundamental to whether and how economies and societies thrive. While many countries are highly gender unequal, the situation in Pakistan is dismal: Pakistan's ranking on Global Gender Gap Index is 143 out of 144.[1] Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and other kinds of violence are socially normalized in Pakistan.

Right To Play Pakistan (RTP) worked with Aga Khan University to implement and evaluate a play-based transformative programme in Hyderabad, Sindh. Violent behaviours among children are common as our research reported 85% girls and 94% boys had experienced peer violence (both perpetration and victimization) within 4 weeks from the time of interview.[2]

The Right To Play programme used the power of play based learning approach to empower boys and girls to improve mental health, reduce peer violence, and ultimately change social norms.

Right To Play intervention

Boys and girls are engaged in structured and interactive play-based learning activities, which aim to provide them with opportunities to understand different perspectives and social norms and how these can be detrimental.

Our 20 coaches offer 120, 35 minute play-sessions over a two year period. Each session had three steps discussion: Reflect on the activity, Connect the activity to daily life and Apply the learning. We provide leadership training for 120 selected children who will become junior leaders.

In addition, the children participate in community based thematic play days, tournaments and summer camps.

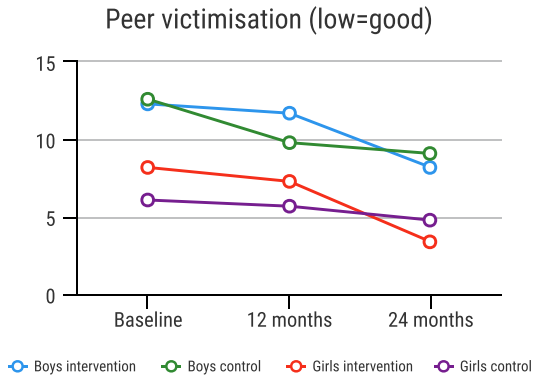


Beneficiaries

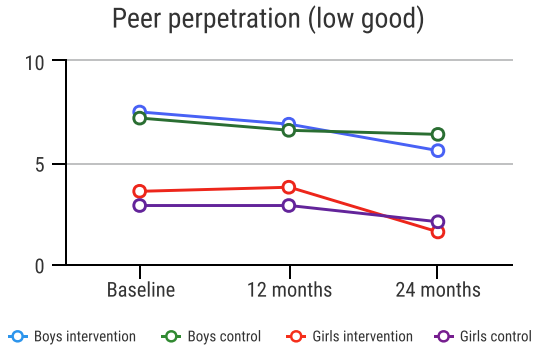
- Right To Play reached to 8,000 children in 40 public schools
- 1752 children in grade 6, average age 12, participated in the Randomized Control Trial (RCT).
- 20 intervention and 20 control schools, with equal number of boys and girls' schools

Research Findings

We found significant reductions and differences between the intervention and control arm in peer violence perpetration and victimization reported by boys and girls.

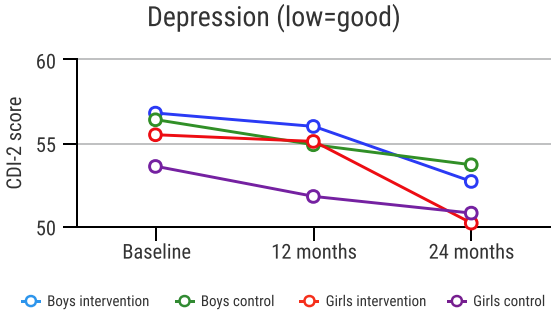


Peer Victimization scores reduced by 33% in boys and 59% in girls



Peer Perpetration scores reduced by 25% in boys and 56% in girls.

We found significant reduction between the intervention and control arm in depression reported by boys and girls.



Depression scores reduced by 7% in boys and 10% in girls.

QUOTES

A 13 year old girl stated: "I never had courage to talk to my father. I have shed off all fears now. Now I can sit with my father and talk to him comfortably about school and my friends. He values my opinion now, and we have grown much closer as a result,"

A Teachers from partner school shared "before, programme girls were usually submissive and remained silent, now they dare to ask questions, it means [that the] programme improved their critical thinking.

A 14 year boy stated: "I did not know girls can play too! I thought it was just for us boys. Now participating in RTP games I have slowly understood that [girls can play too]. Now I play the same games with my sisters back home so that they get a chance to play as well.

A 14 year old Junior Leader (girl) stated: "I am very excited to be a junior leader not because I will become a leader but because I am going to be an agent of positive change in this society".

A 13 year old boy admitted at one of the debrief sessions: "I wouldn't even get up to drink a glass of water on my own before, now I realize this is wrong – we all must do our part, even in household chores. I share the chores equally with my sisters now."



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Implications

Violence against and among children is a global public health problem that annually affects billions of youth worldwide with major impacts on key child development outcomes.

This research demonstrates that investing more in "Right To Play", play based learning in schools and communities could lead to an overall reduction in violence and help young people to lead healthy lives in future.

Scaling up Right To Play to national level in Pakistan will ensure non-violent peer relations among children, better mental health, and foster positive social norms for boys and girls that can close the global gender equity gap in Pakistan.



Acknowledgments

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References

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2. Karmaliani R, Mcfarlane J, Somani R, Khuwaja HM, Bhamani SS, Ali TS, Gulzar S, Somani Y, Chirwa ED, Jewkes R. Peer violence perpetration and victimization: prevalence, associated factors and pathways among 1752 sixth grade boys and girls in schools in Pakistan. PloS one. 2017 Aug 17;12(8):e0180833.

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