

Right to Play  
(formerly known as  
Olympic Aid)

UNHCR recognises the important role sport and recreational activities can play in assisting refugee children and youth to overcome the stresses of conflict and displacement. Sport allows them to take part in enjoyable, healthy activity with others, and is a way to assist children to cope with trauma.

Right to Play is one of UNHCR's partners in this area of assistance to refugee youth. It is an international, athlete-driven, non-profit organisation which uses sport and play to enhance child and youth development and to build community capacity. Its vision is a "world in which every child and young person enjoys the right to play and where sport and play are internationally accepted tools for development".

In March 2001, Right to Play began the [Refugee Coach2Coach Programme, a training module for young adults](#). This programme focuses on holistic child development and incorporates community development tools as a key component of delivery. The programme began in Angola and Côte d'Ivoire and has since expanded to cover over 30 refugee camps in 12 countries.

Through the Refugee Coach2Coach Programme, Right to Play has created and facilitated sport councils and leagues, play days and programmes for children and adolescents. It has also developed the sport infrastructure of communities, such as the laying out of playing fields. The programmes foster community dialogue and understanding of the importance of allowing and encouraging children and young people to play.

[The Refugee Coach2Coach Programme uses sport and play activities to advance child development](#). The programme builds community capacity by training local volunteer members to deliver these activities. A team of two 'In-field Volunteers Coaches' implements each Refugee Coach2Coach Programme. Right to Play recruits these volunteers from Europe, Canada, Australia, South Africa and the United States.

Sources:  
• [www.olympicaid.org](http://www.olympicaid.org)

Two of Right to Play's key values are **inclusion and sustainability**. Children and young people of all ages are included in the programmes. **Right to Play seeks to make sure that its programmes are sustainable after three years**. To achieve this, a main responsibility of the volunteer team is the training of local volunteer coaches. These coaches are trained to teach sport. They are crucial people in the formation of Sports Leagues and Sport Councils, and it is they who ensure that the programme continues for years to come. Sustainability measurements include the success of **local coaches in finding careers and paid employment**, and increasing the number of volunteers for the programme. **Establishment of sports council and leagues** are also considered as indicators of success.

The **5 Rings Programme** is the principal child development component of the Refugee Coach2Coach Programme. It is an integrated approach by which all aspects of child development are connected and affect each other. The In-field Volunteer Coaches in each country are responsible for implementing this initiative.

The five rings symbolise five aspects of healthy child development: Mind, Spirit, Body, Health and Peace (social co-operation). A curriculum of play and physical activities has been designed to fit under each ring with specific goals. These specific activities are provided for coaches in the Coach2Coach Programme Book, to which coaches add material to incorporate local games and activities.

Through experiences in the field, aid workers have come to understand the importance of play in young people's social life. Games and the roles youth play within them can help them understand such important concepts as decision-making through due process, tolerance, compromise and conflict resolution.



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