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EVO/2022/12

Evaluation on the Relevance and Effectiveness of Sport Programming for Refugee Inclusion and Protection

EVALUATION REPORT: VOLUME A

APRIL 2022

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UNHCR Evaluation Service

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Published by UNHCR

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Evaluation information at a glance	
Title of the evaluation	Evaluation on the relevance and effectiveness of sport programming for refugee inclusion and protection
Time frame covered	January 2017 to December 2020
Expected duration	Projects completed in Rwanda in December 2019, and Mexico in December 2020.
Type of evaluation	Decentralized
Countries covered	Mexico and Rwanda
Evaluation manager/ contact in UNHCR	Nick Sore
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Acknowledgements

The evaluation was jointly commissioned by the UNHCR Sport Section, in the Division of External Relations, and the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF), and led by Donna Leigh Holden Consulting.

As Evaluation Director, Donna would like to acknowledge the commitment, humanity and quality orientation of the team of researchers, all of whom have a voice in this document: Jennifer Lynne (The Contact Project), Kirsten Pontalti, Jeanine Mawazo Balezi, Leon Habineza and Juventine Mujawase (Proteknôn Rwanda), Amaranta Acosta, Cecilia Vales and Karla Gutierrez (SportA Consulting), and Pia Karlberg.

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge the leadership and guidance provided by the reference group: Nick Sore, Megumi Aoyama (UNHCR Sport Section), Kathleen Latimer (ORF), Jeroen Carrin (ORF), as well as Nabila Hameed and David Rider Smith (UNHCR Evaluation Service). We thank UNHCR field teams in Rwanda and Mexico for engaging with us, and particularly Arum Cho and Diego Morales Barco for field coordination.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge UNHCR partners, Save the Children and Plan International in Rwanda, Programa Casa Refugiados (PCR) and Refugee Education Trust (RET) International in Mexico, and the persons of concern and local community members who were involved in programme delivery, for their time in engaging with us, sharing their experiences and offering valuable insights. We trust we have done them justice.

[Commissioned through the UNHCR Evaluation Service](#)

[Evaluation Quality Assurance provided by UNHCR Evaluation Service](#)

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AGD	Age, gender and diversity
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FGD	Focus group discussion
IDP	Internally displaced person
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KEQ	Key evaluation question
KII	Key informant interview
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex plus
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MIS	Monitoring information system
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOC	National Olympic Committee
OECD- DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
ORF	Olympic Refuge Foundation
PCR	Programa Casa Refugiados
RET	RET International
QoE	Quality of Evidence
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Definitions

Where used in this report, the following definitions apply:

Refugee: A person who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Sport: All forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport, indigenous sport and games.¹

Sport for Protection: The work of UNHCR, the International Olympic Committee (IOC)/Olympic Refuge Foundation (ORF) and partners to harness the power of sport to strengthen the protection, development and empowerment environments for vulnerable children and youth.²

Sport actors: Organizations that deliver sport, including sports organizations, federations, associations, the Olympics and Paralympics movements, and Sport for Development organizations.

Young person: The United Nations defines “youth” as those **persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years and adolescents as persons between the ages of 12 and 17 years**. For the purposes of this document, “young people” refers to both youth and adolescents. Furthermore, we have chosen to use the gender-neutral term “young person” rather than “youth”; where “young person”/“young people” is used, this refers to both young women and young men.

Coaches: For the purposes of this document, “coaches” refers to both employed and volunteer project actors, including project-funded coaches and staff, community members and peer leaders who provide a leadership and coaching function within the projects.

¹ Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 2006, [Sport for Development and Peace: From Practice to Policy](#) (see) p.7

² UNHCR, [Sport for Protection Toolkit](#), p.6

LGBTI+: For the purposes of this document, “LGBTI+” refers to all people of diverse gender identity and/or sexual orientation and extends beyond lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex to include queer, questioning, two-spirit and other identities.

Executive summary

Background

Sport and physical exercise can play an important role in combating some of the challenges of forced displacement by enhancing protection, well-being and social development, and bringing together refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) with host communities to support peaceful coexistence and reduce the psychological distress of isolation, conflict, trauma and loss.

Since 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC)³ have worked together to develop a Sport for Protection approach that aims to increase the protection and inclusion of forcibly displaced persons through the vehicle of sport. A portfolio of projects has been delivered in refugee situations, including (among others) in Rwanda and Mexico, aiming to:

- support the creation and rehabilitation of sport and recreational facilities;
- train volunteer coaches
- deliver safe and inclusive sport experiences that:
 - integrate behaviour change communications;
 - build life skills;
 - provide leadership opportunities;
- support the participation of young women and girls;
- bring together young refugees and host communities to break down barriers and share experiences
- strengthen resilience, psychosocial well-being and a sense of safety.

The evaluation

The evaluation was designed to use the case studies of UNHCR/IOC programming in Rwanda and Mexico to contribute to the limited knowledge of the sport and humanitarian sectors regarding sport-based interventions for the protection of young people in refugee situations. It explored three **key evaluation questions** (KEQs):

1. **Enhanced protection:** Do organized sport and sport-based activities contribute to increased protection space for displaced (and host community) children and youth as part of the broader protection architecture? If so, how? What have been the main intended and unintended outcomes?
2. **Contributing factors:** What are the key factors that contribute to and/or hinder the ability of organized sport activities to increase protection space, and how can these factors be practically supported and/or mitigated? Who are the key stakeholders in the process, how can they be further supported to maximize any positive outcomes?
3. **Lessons learned for future programming:** What does the evaluation tell us for future programming in relation to the Sport for Protection approach outlined in the *Sport for Protection*

³ This work is now led through the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF).

*Toolkit*⁴ – particularly in terms of what specific practices could be scaled up, scaled down or piloted elsewhere. What are the key recommendations for Sport for Protection programming in displacement situations moving forward?

The evaluation was led by Donna Leigh Holden Consulting, working with local research partners SportA Consulting LLC and Proteknôn Rwanda, which led field consultations in Mexico and Rwanda respectively.

Designed to access the reflections and experiences of a wide range of actors, including UNHCR and implementing partners, refugee young people, host communities, coaches, sport organizations and local government, the evaluation engaged with 303 people (141 women, 162 men).

Several factors, including the post-completion nature of the evaluation, COVID-19 and significant gaps in project documentation, impacted on the quality of evidence and indicate some challenges with bias that should be considered when reviewing the evaluation findings.

Findings

Overall, the UNHCR/IOC Sport for Protection projects in Mexico and Rwanda made progress on their objectives.

The evaluation has identified evidence that sport-based activities have **contributed to increased protection space for refugee young people and their host communities** as part of the broader protection architecture in both countries.

However, the evaluation also highlights some additional factors that have hindered the extent to which projects have been able to contribute to protection outcomes, which are further elaborated in Section 4.3.

KEQ #1: Enhanced protection

The projects succeeded in some part because, in environments of scarcity and where many young people are living with experiences of trauma, loss and abuse, the projects gave them an opportunity to do physical activities in age-appropriate and safe settings, to make new friends, have fun, access information and support networks, and develop life skills. The projects have also, to some extent, strengthened the protection systems around these young people, making them visible to duty-bearers, and increasing young people's awareness of their rights and the protection mechanisms available to them.

Specifically, the projects in Mexico and Rwanda supported outcomes for young refugees by:

- creating safe spaces for play;
- creating constructive leisure options;
- building confidence and a sense of well-being;
- creating and strengthening relationships between young refugees and their host communities;

⁴ The IOC, UNHCR and Terre des hommes collaborated in the development of the *Sport for Protection Toolkit: Programming with Young People in Forced Displacement Settings*, as a guide to future Sport for Protection programming. Both projects in Rwanda and Mexico were implemented prior to publication of the Toolkit.

- creating opportunities for young women and girls to access their right to play;
- increasing children and young people's awareness of their rights;
- creating leadership opportunities – coach training and volunteer youth leaders;
- supporting child protection and safeguarding systems.

The key impact of these early investments in Sport for Protection for UNHCR and the IOC/Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF) is that they have **succeeded in making sport more relevant in the refugee protection space**. This is not only demonstrated by the positive feedback from young participants and recognition of parents, communities and local leaders of the contribution sport has made to improving the well-being and engagement of young people in their communities, but perhaps most significantly by the unanimous recognition among the staff and leadership of project partners and UNHCR that these investments have made an important contribution to their protection work.

KEQ #2: Contributing factors

The evaluation sought to determine the key factors that contribute to and/or hinder the ability of organized sport activities to increase protection space. The following factors are identified as necessary elements of Sport for Protection programming that should be enhanced in UNHCR/IOC programmes:

- Ensure that all Sport for Protection programmes are grounded in **best practice safeguarding** and have minimum standards in place.
- **Use integrated programmatic approaches** that focus on programme quality, including through locally led, outcome-focused design, appropriate resource planning, and strong monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems.
- Work with and through local capacities that strengthen systems, including through **partnerships with diverse actors** such as local sport and Sport for Development organizations, civil society, rights-holder organizations, and government programmes.
- **Invest in gender equality approaches that move beyond the participation and empowerment of women and girls** and work to engage all actors, including young men, to address gendered socio-cultural norms and power dynamics.
- Promote inclusion for all by **engaging with rights-holder organizations** (for example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex plus (LGBTI+), disability and women's rights organizations) to design appropriate programmes and messages that support people with disabilities and other marginalized groups (such as ethnic and religious minorities, women, and the LGBTI+ community) to access their rights to participation and protection, and which transform relationships and bias.
- **Position coaches as key actors** and ensure that systems are in place to recruit, develop and retain them.

- **Build capacity and make resource materials** available to support quality Sport for Protection programmes such as MEL resources and tools, curricula, teaching modules and drills that utilise sport to impart targeted and tested behaviour change communications.

KEQ #3: Future actions – recommendations for programming

Evidence from the evaluation highlights the potential of structured sport to enhance the protection space and contribute to protection outcomes in situations of forced displacement. Together, UNHCR, with mandate in situations of forced displacement, and the ORF, as the mechanism through which IOC support to refugees and displaced people is channelled, have the necessary reach and resources to enhance global Sport for Protection programming. The evaluation brings further evidence that this work can be strengthened through ongoing investment and quality improvement in eight key areas, as follows.

Recommendation 1: Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a first principle and sport should be safe for all young people. UNHCR and ORF should agree a safeguarding standard to be applied to all Sport for Protection activities and ensure that MEL plans include monitoring and reporting mechanisms **for safeguarding** to ensure that the systems designed to protect children and young people are in place, implemented and monitored.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 2: Gender equality

To benefit young women and girls in a meaningful way, programming approaches must move beyond participation and be designed to affirm young women's agency and right to protection, challenge gender norms and harmful masculine behaviour, and not reinforce negative stereotypes.

Future investments should move towards a gender equality approach that moves beyond simply targeting young women and girls, to affirmatively addressing the barriers that prevent their participation and leadership and engaging all programme actors to address the gendered issues experienced by women and girls. This should include undertaking gender analysis at the project design and inception phase, ensuring that there are gendered indicators to monitor the safety of women and girls, assessing changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, as well as the achievement of gendered outcomes.

At a practical level, both ORF and UNHCR should ensure that funding criteria, grant management arrangements and contracts establish clear standards for gender-inclusive design, MEL and reporting, and funding resources must be available to ensure that these are implemented.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 3: Inclusion for all

3a: Future programmes should ensure that strategies are in place to support social inclusion. They should:

- focus on behaviour change strategies that seek to transform social relationships;
 - remove the barriers that exclude specific groups from participating in project activities;
 - ensure that anti-bias training and inclusive policies are integrated into recruitment and at all stages of the programme cycle to ensure safe spaces for all stakeholders;
 - demonstrate engagement with rights-holders and rights-holder organizations to ensure that appropriate strategies and safeguards are in place to enable vulnerable and excluded groups
-

to benefit equitably from programmes, and build the capability of implementing partners and coaches to create safe and inclusive environments for all;

- monitor for inclusion outcomes, safety and risk.

3.b Future investments need to plan more effectively for disability inclusion. They should:

- apply Universal Design Principles to all construction and reconstruction works;
- engage rights-holder organizations such as disabled persons' organizations and disability sport organizations to inform needs assessment, activity design and implementation;
- support twin-track approaches that provide targeted activities for people with disabilities while concurrently making reasonable accommodations that address the exclusion of people with disabilities from routine programming activities, and promote their rights to participation and protection;
- equip programme staff, coaches and volunteers with the confidence and skills to support disability inclusion;
- adopt disability-focused indicators and MEL approaches.

At a practical level, both ORF and UNHCR should ensure that funding criteria, grant management arrangements and contracts establish clear standards for inclusive design, MEL and reporting.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 4: Partnership

Sport for Protection programming will have the best chance for success when implemented through partnerships between different and complementary actors, including sport and humanitarian actors, when the attributes of both come together.

Sport for Protection partnerships should be designed locally and seek to engage diverse sport and non-sport actors (such as government, rights-holder organizations, civil society, the Olympic movement, sport, and Sport for Development organizations) to work towards the expected protection outcomes through a quality sport experience.

For the UNHCR–ORF partnership, this requires an intentional investment in exploring the variety of ways in which they can support and incentivize engagement and partnerships with diverse actors, to use sport to increase the protection space for young people in refugee and other displacement situations.

At the project level, this will require both UNHCR and ORF to reflect on their capabilities, strengths and limitations, and explore what additional capabilities they require and where these can be sourced from locally to maximize relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. It also requires UNHCR and ORF to invest in strategic partnerships and ensure that these diverse actors are engaged in the design of activities and at all stages of the project cycle.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 5: Quality systems, and monitoring, evaluation and learning

The changes that Sport for Protection programmes aim to bring about are both complicated and complex. Quality frameworks must be in place and resourced to better equip programmes for success and guide progress towards behaviour change and systems change outcomes.

ORF, as the funding agency, should ensure that quality standards and guidance for the design, MEL, reporting and implementation of Sport for Protection programmes are in place and reflected within contractual obligations. These should include:

- a project-level Theory of Change that describes the pathways of change in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, interactions and capabilities of various actors that lead to the desired outcomes;
- costed MEL plans that include both output and outcome indicators and targets, which bring forward robust evidence to support a deeper analysis of how changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and capabilities of individuals, organizations and of communities have been brought about and, in turn, of how these contribute to improved protection, inclusion and cohesion;
- reporting arrangements that focus on analysing how change was brought about.

Where UNHCR or other partners subcontract this work, the standards established in the head contract should be vest in any subcontracts.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 6: Resource planning and mobilization

The sustainability of Sport for Protection programming requires a realistic and effective funding strategy that enables partners to implement activities while building the relationships that can support future capital investment and recurrent funding requirements.

6a: Sport for Protection funders such as ORF and UNHCR should review their funding models to ensure that these are fit for purpose and adequately provide for the various inputs required to deliver the intended outcomes, including activity resourcing, technical capacity, coaching and training, capital, depreciation and recurrent costs of sport equipment and facilities.

6b: Sport for Protection implementers such as UNHCR and its partners must take a medium-to-long term view of the design stage and ensure that their budgets provide both capital and recurrent funding for: the maintenance, replacement and management of equipment and sport facilities; the recruitment, training and retention of coaches; and the delivery of regular Sport for Protection activities. They should work concurrently to secure longer-term arrangements for the supply of and access to equipment and facilities.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 7: Coaches as agents of change

7a: Coaches are central agents of change and should be positioned centrally with Sport for Protection theories of change. Systems for recruiting, developing, incentivizing, retaining and refreshing the coaching pool should be explicit and adequately resourced.

7b: UNHCR and ORF should consider investing in piloting, researching and documenting effective community-based coaching systems in resource-poor development contexts, with a view to developing guidance for those implementing Sport for Protection programmes.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 8: Capacity development, tools and learning resources

UNHCR and ORF should continue to explore opportunities to develop accessible and targeted knowledge products, and tools to support capacity-building and learning in the Sport for Protection space. This should include consideration of how to create local learning networks (or communities of

practice) in project locations to support partners to exchange knowledge, tools and resources to improve practices, and how to make existing communities of practice more accessible to local actors.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

1. Introduction

Sport is always a feature of refugee settings. As early as the Second World War, the International Refugee Organization worked with refugees to organize sport activities in European refugee camps. More recent archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) clearly show that sport activities have been widely present in refugee situations but have not necessarily been recognized as having a direct humanitarian benefit.

In recent decades, a deeper understanding of the relationship between sport and well-being has emerged. It is now widely believed that sport and physical exercise can play an important role in combating some of the challenges of forced displacement by enhancing protection, well-being and social development, and by bringing together refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) with host communities to support peaceful coexistence and reduce the psychological distress of isolation, conflict, trauma and loss.

This evolution in understanding has led UNHCR, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and now the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF)⁵ to pursue the potential of sport to meaningfully contribute to UNHCR's core mission and protection mandate, and to the IOC's mission to build a better world through sport. Since 2014, these organizations have worked together to develop a Sport for Protection approach that aims to increase the protection and inclusion of forcibly displaced persons through the vehicle of sport. A portfolio of projects has been delivered in refugee and IDP situations in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Rwanda and Turkey. The projects aim to:

- support the creation and rehabilitation of sport and recreational facilities;
- train volunteer coaches;
- deliver safe and inclusive sport experiences that:
 - integrate behaviour change communications;
 - build life skills;
 - provide leadership opportunities;
- support the participation of adolescent girls and young women;
- bring together young refugees and host communities to break down barriers, share experiences and strengthen resilience, psychosocial well-being and a sense of safety.⁶

Building on this experience, the IOC, UNHCR and the non-governmental organization (NGO) Terre des hommes collaborated in the development of the *Sport for Protection Toolkit: Programming with Young People in Forced Displacement Settings*. Intended as a guide for future Sport for Protection programming, the toolkit has a distinct Theory of Change that focuses on three protection outcomes: social inclusion, social cohesion and psychosocial well-being. The aim is to provide young people with a safe and supportive environment in which they have opportunities to build their skills and bring about a positive change in their lives and the lives of others.

With projects initiated by UNHCR and the IOC in Rwanda and Mexico now completed, UNHCR and ORF commissioned an evaluation to generate evidence of the contribution that Sport for Protection projects can make to protection objectives for young refugees, and to inform future programming approaches.

⁵ The Olympic Refugee Foundation supports the protection, inclusion and empowerment of young people affected by displacement (including displaced people and their host communities). It was founded by the International Olympic Committee in 2017.

⁶ Text drawn from the Terms of Reference.

2. The evaluation

2.1. Purpose and key evaluation questions

The evaluation is intended to contribute to the very limited knowledge base of the sport and humanitarian sectors regarding sport-based interventions, specifically for the protection of young people in refugee and IDP situations. This will potentially allow for course correction in ongoing projects, informing future project and programme development and potentially contributing to the strengthening of the *Sport for Protection Toolkit*.

The evaluation explored three **key evaluation questions** (KEQs) outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR – see Annex 1):

4. **Enhanced protection:** Do organized sport and sport-based activities contribute to increased protection space for displaced (and host community) children and young people as part of the broader protection architecture? If so, how? What have been the main intended and unintended outcomes?
5. **Contributing factors:** What are the key factors that contribute to and/or hinder the ability of organized sport activities to increase protection space, and how can these factors be practically supported and/or mitigated? Who are the key stakeholders in the process, and how can they be further supported to maximize any positive outcomes?
6. **Lessons learned for future programming:** What does the evaluation tell us for future programming in relation to the Sport for Protection approach (as outlined in the *Sport for Protection Toolkit*) – particularly in terms of what specific practices could be scaled up, scaled down or piloted elsewhere. What are the key recommendations for Sport for Protection programming in displacement situations moving forward?⁷

The primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNHCR Sport Section, IOC and ORF, UNHCR field offices delivering Sport for Protection projects, including in Mexico and Rwanda. Secondary audiences include the National Olympic Committee (NOC) in both countries, the UNHCR Education Section and Child Protection and Youth Unit, the broader Olympic movement, Sport for Development and Peace Community, and UNHCR and IOC operational and implementing partners.

2.2. Scope

The evaluation examined UNHCR/IOC-ORF Sport for Protection projects in two countries – Mexico and Rwanda – focusing on relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. Efficiency was considered in the extent to which it supports effectiveness through relevant partnerships, appropriate resourcing and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

The evaluation aimed to access the reflections, observations and experiences of a wide range of actors, including UNHCR and implementing partner staff, participants, including young refugees, host communities and their families, coaches and volunteers, sport and civil society organizations and local government.

⁷ It should be noted that both programmes in Mexico and Rwanda were designed **before** the *Sport for Protection Toolkit* was published.

2.3. Evaluation methodology

2.3.1. Limitations and evaluation design

A scoping and evaluability study undertaken at the start of the evaluation identified a significant set of challenges associated with data collection, as follows.

1. UNHCR/IOC-ORF Sport for Protection programming was completed in Rwanda and Mexico in December 2019 and 2020 respectively. The **post-completion** nature of the evaluation presented challenges in accessing informants due to onward movement and resettlement, and, in the case of UNHCR and partner staff, transition to new roles, organizations and countries. It also raised concerns regarding the reliability of young people's recall about their experiences.
2. **COVID-19** meant that the lead researchers were unable to travel internationally. Furthermore, the feasibility of using remote methods was affected by insufficient access to technology, poor internet connectivity, the high cost of data, inability to track contact details of key informants, and ethical considerations around conducting online consultations with adolescents.
3. Beyond UNHCR reporting, **significant gaps in project documentation** – including financial reports, design documents, MEL frameworks and monitoring information system (MIS) data – have had a significant impact on the quality of evidence. In particular, the absence of MIS data means that the evidence of outcomes for young people derives almost exclusively from the evaluation's primary data collection of a relatively small sample.

While these factors informed the selection of evaluation tools and methods outlined within the evaluation plan, they also contributed to the likelihood of considerable bias – recall, convenience, selection, positive response – which should be borne in mind when reviewing the findings.

2.3.2. Evaluation methods

The evaluation commenced with a desk review of all available project documentation. The evaluation team developed a document tracker tool and made significant efforts to work with UNHCR field offices and their partners to track key documentation at all stages of the evaluation. A list of documentation both available and not available to the Evaluation Team is provided in Annex 2.

To address the limitations outlined in Section 2.3.1, the team identified local research partners (see Annex 3) to support data collection in the field and methods were designed to work within COVID-19 regulations.

The evaluation methods (see Figure 1) were designed to engage UNHCR and partner staff to collaboratively map timelines, activities and outcomes at the outset of consultations in each location. These were then triangulated across locations and across data gained through other methods to establish a consistent and plausible narrative. The team made significant efforts to trace UNHCR and partner staff who had been engaged in project design and implementation in order to gain their insights and engage them in sensemaking.

Other data collection and consultation methods included a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) designed for different stakeholder groups (refugee young women and young men; coaches and volunteers; parents; community leaders; host community, including young women and young men; and key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders such as the NOC in each country, sport and

civil society partners, and municipal and government representatives. Copies of these tools are provided in Annex 4.

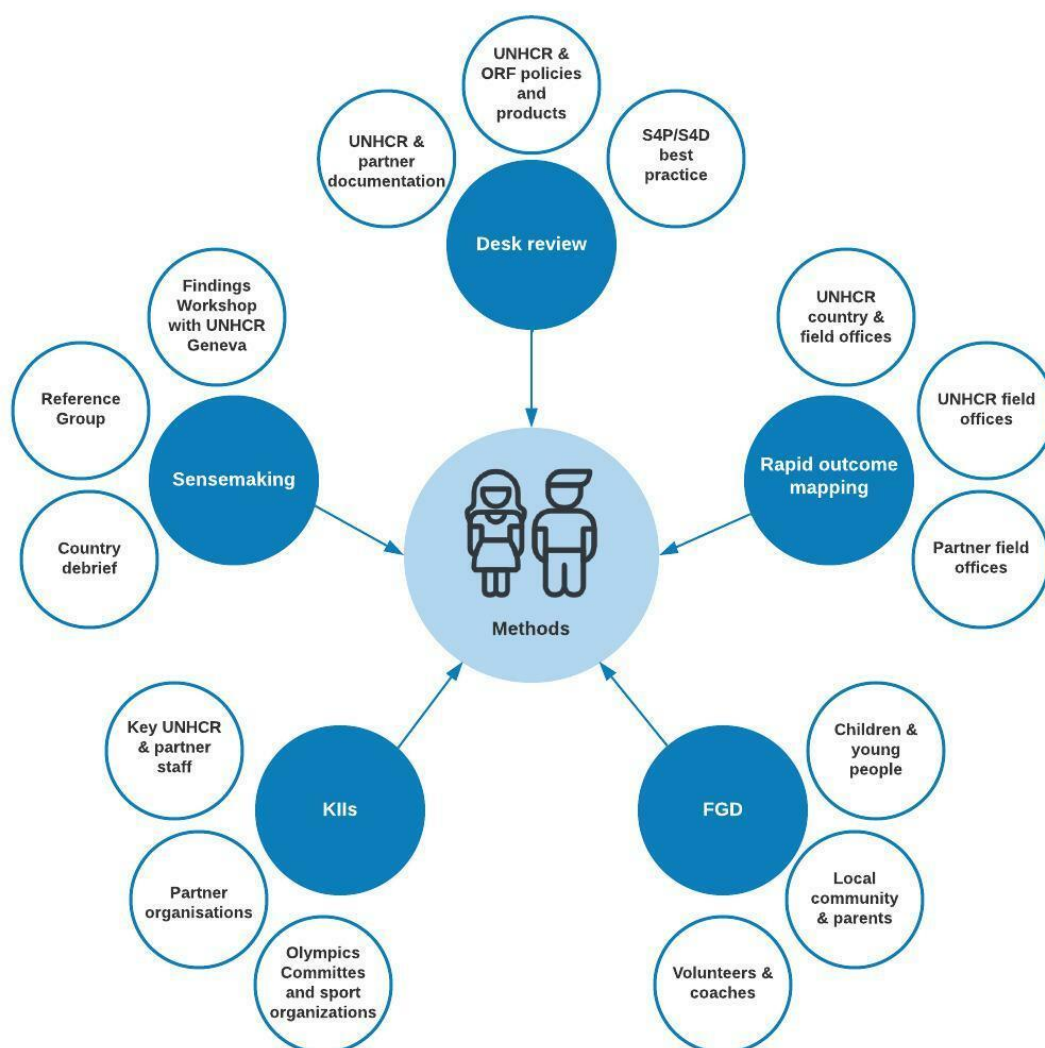


Figure 1: Evaluation methods

The evaluation engaged with 303 people (141 women and 162 men).

The team conducted 21 FGDs (see Figure 2):

- six with 73 young men;
- six with 48 young women;
- four with parents (33 women and 20 men);
- five with 48 coaches and volunteers (15 women and 33 men).

Nine outcome mapping sessions included 35 UNHCR and partner field staff.

The team held 46 KIs (20 women and 26 men) with local leaders, representatives of NOCs and sporting partners, and UNHCR and IOC Geneva staff.

More than 100 documents were reviewed.

	Rwanda		Mexico		Total
	M	F	M	F	
Refugee young people	24	21	21	3	
	45		24		69
Host community young people	24	19	4	5	
	43		9		52
Refugee parents	10	14	0	0	
	24		0		24
Host community parents	10	14	0	5	
	24		5		29
Coaches	25	6	8	9	
	31		17		48

Figure 2: FGD participation by country

All consultations were governed by principles of informed consent and assent (see Annex 4).

The evaluation team developed a quality of evidence (QoE) tool (see Annex 5) to support a uniform assessment of evidence, especially given the absence of indicators and the anecdotal nature of reporting. An assessment of the QoE has been integrated into the discussion of the evaluation findings.

2.3.3. Changes to the field plan and evaluation methods

COVID-19 outbreaks in both countries involved in this study resulted in the need to change some field sites mid-way through the fieldwork. A volcanic eruption in the DRC also placed significant pressure on UNHCR and its field partners, which meant that the evaluation team had significantly less access to current UNHCR and partner staff. Consultations with the current UNHCR Rwanda leadership team were not undertaken, and outcome mapping sessions with the UNHCR Rwanda Representative Office and some partner field teams were undertaken as paired interviews. The evaluation was, however, able to undertake KILs with UNHCR Rwanda staff and leaders who had been in place at the time the project was implemented.

While the same evaluation methods and tools were used in both Mexico and Rwanda, the profile of informants and subsequently the focus of analysis in each location differed. In Rwanda, the evaluation drew more heavily on data gained through consultations with refugee and host communities, including young people, coaches, and community leaders. In Mexico, where many refugees had moved on, data collection and analysis focused more on outcome mapping sessions with UNHCR and partners.

As highlighted in the evaluation plan, contribution analysis is most successfully applied to programmes that have a clearly articulated Theory of Change, which enable a robust exploration of the pathways of change and causal factors that lead to that change. Despite efforts by UNHCR Geneva and ORF to support the evaluation by developing a retrospective Theory of Change, which provided an overview of how the projects were conceptualized at UNHCR and IOC Headquarters, the Theory of Change was insufficiently detailed to enable meaningful contribution analysis. Furthermore, UNHCR and implementing partners in both countries did not share the same understanding and worked to a set of activities/outputs rather than a shared Theory of Change. These factors, as well as the fact that sport activities were also conducted within wider programming initiatives, meant that the evaluation team was unable to undertake a meaningful contribution analysis.

2.3.4. Analytical frameworks

Tools and data analysis were undertaken in line with the evaluation matrix, lines of inquiry and analytical frameworks established within the evaluation plan and provided in Annex 6.

2.3.5 Ethical considerations

The Evaluation was guided by the principles of impartiality and independence, credibility usefulness, partnership and participation, forward planning and donor cooperation which reflect the OECD-DAC Guidelines for Evaluating Development Assistance as the standard and governed by UNHCR's Evaluation Quality Assurance (EQA). This means maintaining a high standard of professional integrity and ethics and hold paramount the following research principles:

- Transparency: ongoing and frequent consultation with UNHCR/ORF as the client;
- Informed Consent: interviews bound by principles of informed consent for ALL people interviewed. Written and verbal consent collected. Written parental/guardian consent and verbal assent forms collected for all children and young people under the age of 18 years.
- Confidentiality: of documents and information, secure storage of data and all data to be destroyed six months after the final report is accepted by UNHCR;
- Anonymity as a first principle unless the interviewee requests to or agrees to be quoted;
- Respect for and mindfulness of differences in values and culture to support inclusion and human rights;
- Research merit and integrity ensuring work is conducted by those with sufficient expertise and competence

Specific approaches included:

- participatory, assets and strengths-based approach that sought to build upon the existing knowledge and collaboration between UNHCR and their partners;
- gender and socially inclusive approaches to affirmatively explore non-discrimination and the different experiences of and benefits to both women and girls, men and boys; an
- a child-centred approach aimed to engage children and young people in articulating their experience and aspirations for the future, and in undertaking this approach ensuring that children and young people are protected from potential forms of abuse by ensuring that appropriate safeguards are implemented.

2.4. Evaluation management

The evaluation was co-managed by the UNHCR Evaluation Service, ORF and UNHCR Sport Section, with the latter responsible for day-to-day management and liaison with the evaluation team.

A reference group comprising two representatives each from UNHCR and ORF was established to guide the evaluation, engage in sensemaking, and provide strategic feedback on key deliverables (see Reference Group ToR at Annex 7).

3. The projects

The case studies of Rwanda and Mexico offer an opportunity for the evaluation to explore how Sport for Protection projects have been implemented in two very different displacement contexts that present very different challenges. Rwanda represents a classic, protracted, camp-based refugee setting, whereas in Mexico, young people and their families tend to be on the move and often living among host communities, in precarious legal situations, in rural, peri-urban or urban environments.

Sections 3.1 and 3.2 provide a snapshot of the scope of activities to provide context to the discussion of the evaluation findings. Case studies for both countries (see Annex 8) provide more detailed analysis of the evaluation findings and inform the synthesis discussion later in this report.

3.1. Rwanda

The Rwanda project was implemented in six camps. It was fully funded through an IOC grant of \$494,604 and delivered by Save the Children and Plan International. UNHCR provided an un-costed contribution for design, project management, procurement, and some child protection training.

The project responded to identified issues for young refugees in Rwanda, including unaccompanied young people, young parents, young people who have experienced violence, abuse and neglect, young people who have experienced extreme poverty, substance abuse, domestic labour or poor access to basic services, recreation, and employment opportunities.⁸ While camp-based, the project worked with both refugee and host communities in all locations.

The objectives⁹ of the Sport for Protection work in Rwanda are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Objectives of Sport for Protection project in Rwanda

Project objectives	Toolkit protection outcome
Ensure the participation of adolescents and young adults in dedicated sports programmes – through the lens of the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach – with a special focus on the inclusion/ participation of adolescent girls and young women as well as young people with disabilities so they can achieve equal access to rest and leisure through sport activities	Well-being Social inclusion
Sensitise adolescents and young adults, their parents and community on the benefits of sport (including how sport can replace negative coping mechanisms) and the available sports activities in the camps	Well-being
Ensure and enhance adolescents and young adults’ safety and security by rehabilitating existing sports grounds, providing them with adequate sports equipment and ensuring appropriate maintenance	Well-being
Provide opportunities for adolescents and young adults to be active and valued members of their community and enhance their resilience by helping them acquire life skills and competencies through organized and structured sports activities	Social inclusion Well-being

⁸ UNHCR Rwanda, 2016 Assessment of Youth Needs for Sport for Protection Programming, unpublished document.

⁹ UNHCR Rwanda Sport for Protection Proposal, unpublished document.

Strengthen the relationships of adolescents and young adults with their peers, families and other members of the refugee and host communities to enhance peaceful coexistence and develop a community-based protection mechanism, especially against abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence

Social inclusion
Social cohesion
Well-being

The project ran from January 2017 and ended in December 2019 (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Rwanda project timeline

The project focused on creating and rehabilitating safe places for sport activities. It also engaged with and trained coaches who ran regular and structured sport activities that supported the project objectives through integration of key messages on issues of concern (such as sexual and gender-based violence, substance abuse and child protection). This facilitated engagement between young refugees and their counterparts among host communities, providing referral to other services and the organization of wider awareness campaigns.

Key outputs include:

- Almost 6,960 adolescents and young adults (1,669 females, 5,290 males) aged 12–25 participated in the sport project across the six camp locations.
- One hundred football coaches and 60 dance coaches were trained through partnerships with Scort Foundation and MindLeaps.¹⁰
- Twelve sport grounds were created or rehabilitated (two in each camp location).
- Refugee teams participated in national and international competitions.

¹⁰ These partnerships were fully funded by the Scort Foundation and MindLeaps but complemented and added value to the UNHCR/IOC–ORF programme.

The case study brings evidence¹¹ that the project made **progress against its objectives and made sport more relevant in the refugee camp protection space** in Rwanda by contributing to:

- promoting a sense of well-being;
- promoting behaviour change and enhancing the life skills of young people;
- protecting young refugees against abuse, exploitation, neglect and violence;
- creating and strengthening relationships between refugee family members and between refugees and their host community.

However, the project was significantly impacted by budget constraints and challenges with the retention and training of coaches, as well as equitable opportunities for young women.

3.2. Mexico

The Mexico project was delivered by Programa Casa Refugiados (PCR) in four locations in Mexico City and by the Refugee Education Trust (RET) International in five locations in the southern states of Oluca, Acayucan, Palenque (Veracruz), Tenosique (Tabasco) and Tapachula (Chiapas).

The total budget of \$828,336 comprised a grant of \$420,403 from the IOC, and a \$435,436 co-contribution from UNHCR.

In a context of highly transitory populations of refugees from multiple countries, the project aimed to strengthen the protection space of young refugees through four objectives (see Table 2).¹²

Table 2: Objectives of Sport for Protection project in Mexico

Project objectives	Toolkit outcome protection
1. Provide opportunities for adolescents and young adults to engage in activities that can have a positive psychosocial impact, enhance new and existing life skills, and reduce risk factors for violence	Well-being Social inclusion
2. Create and sustain safe environments, ensuring that adolescents and young people have access to sport facilities and can play safely, with a special focus on the inclusion/participation of female adolescents and young women, LGBTI+ adolescents and young people, and adolescents and young people with disabilities	Social inclusion Well-being
3. Strengthen relationships between adolescents, young adults and families as well as other members of the host communities as a protection mechanism	Social cohesion Social inclusion
4. Raise awareness among the community at large on the situation of asylum-seekers and refugees, their rights, and protection services	Social cohesion Social inclusion

The project ran from January 2018 and ended in December 2020 (see Figure 4).

¹¹ Within the constraints and limitations of the evaluation as highlighted in Section 2.3.1.

¹² Programme objectives as stated in the Mexico proposal, unpublished document.



Figure 4: Mexico project timeline

Sport activities in Mexico were largely event-based with a wide range of activities commencing in 2019 (see Table A5 in Annex 8b). Consolidated data relating to the total number of participants and achievements has not been collected and, as a result, the evaluation is unable to confirm the reach of the project beyond confirming the stakeholder groups engaged.

The evaluation found that the project in Mexico made some progress against each of the objectives and supported an improved protection space for young refugees by:

- creating and strengthening relationships between refugee family members and between refugees and their host community;
- raising awareness on the issues facing refugee and displaced communities;
- acting as an entry point for UNHCR and its partners to identify vulnerable and at-risk young people and refer them to protection services.

However, progress towards these outcomes was severely affected by a range of factors: the event-based nature of the project; the impact of the global pandemic, which resulted in late-stage adaptations in the final year of programming and significant challenges in accessing young refugees; and the absence of an MEL framework and set of indicators and tools for partners to measure and report participation and progress.

4. Analysis and findings

The following discussion responds to the first two KEQs and explores the evaluative evidence on the contribution of sport and sport-based activities to increasing the protection space for young refugees (KEQ #1) as well as the factors that hinder or contribute to success (KEQ #2).

The evaluation findings should be read in consideration of the limitations relating to bias, and the quality of evidence (QoE) discussed in Section 2.3.1.

Overall, the **QoE brought to the evaluation is rated as medium**, and QoE ratings for each observation are integrated within our discussion, based on the QoE tool provided in Annex 5. Furthermore, as sport has been delivered as an add-on to existing protection projects of all partners, the evaluation findings speak to the **contribution of organized sport** and sport-based activities, but **cannot be wholly attributed to the Sport for Protection projects**.

4.1. Headline findings – the key message

Overall, UNHCR/IOC-ORF **Sport for Protection projects in Mexico and Rwanda have made progress on their objectives**, which were strongly aligned with the three outcome areas detailed in the *Sport for Protection Toolkit*, namely:

- **social inclusion:** the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights;
- **social cohesion:** the ties that hold people together within a community, including the degree to which they interact, share common cultural and religious beliefs and other features and interests, and are able to minimize disparities and avoid marginalization;
- **psychosocial well-being:** the positive state of being that allows an individual to thrive.¹³

The evaluation has identified evidence that sport-based activities have **contributed to increased protection space for young refugees and their host communities** as part of the broader protection architecture in both countries.

The key impact of these early investments in Sport for Protection projects is that they have **succeeded in making sport more relevant in the refugee protection space** in both countries. This is not only demonstrated by the positive feedback of young participants and the recognition from parents, communities and local leaders of the contribution sport has made to improving young people's well-being and engagement, but also, and perhaps most significantly, by the **unanimous recognition among the staff and leadership of partners and UNHCR that these investments have made an important contribution to their protection work**.

These observations aside, the evaluation has surfaced numerous factors that have hindered the extent to which projects have been able to contribute to protection outcomes, or indeed impacted the extent to which evidence on the improved protection space can be brought to bear on the discussion.

In particular, the absence of clear, locally contextualized project designs based on a Theory of Change meant that programming approaches were heavily projectized and outputs-based, and failed to implement carefully designed and sustained behaviour and systems change approaches. Poor

¹³ *Sport for Protection Toolkit*, pp 13–17.

resourcing and resource planning further contributed to the unrealized ambition and outcomes of projects in all locations, including the maintenance of facilities and the formation of partnerships with sport organizations to support the quality and sustainability of the sport experience. Finally, the absence of MEL frameworks, indicators and tools to systematically collect data with which to monitor progress and analyse outcomes suggests that programming decisions were not informed by evidence.

4.2. KEQ #1: Enhanced protection space

The evaluation identified eight contributions that projects have made to increased protection space for young people affected by displacement in Mexico and Rwanda (see Figure 5).

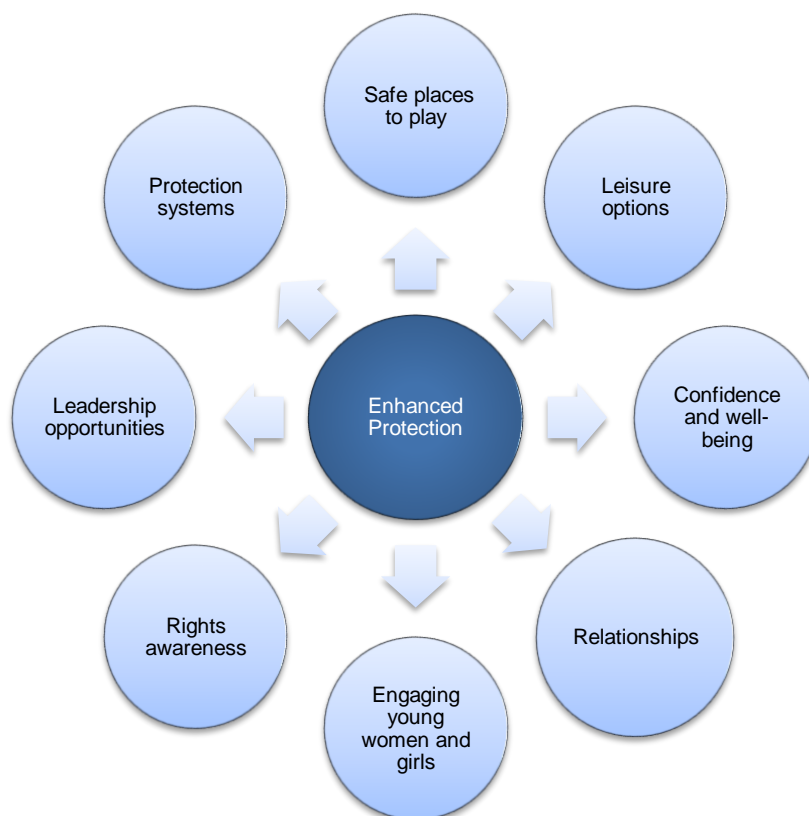


Figure 5: Contribution of Sport for Protection projects to enhanced protection space

i. Creating safe spaces for play

Observations: The renovation and construction of playing fields enhanced the protection space for young refugees by creating a space for play and an opportunity for young people to spend time in structured, supervised games and sport activities with coaches and peers, with whom they felt safe.

Twenty-four facilities were improved in locations of displacement to provide access to sport facilities and equipment for young refugees and their local communities. This included 12 multipurpose playing fields in six camps in Rwanda, and 12 sites (including a swimming pool, basketball courts and football fields) in three regional cities in Mexico.

In Rwanda, parents and community leaders reported that playgrounds and playing fields were accessible and prevented accidents by diverting children away from more dangerous spaces such as rivers and watering holes. In the non-camp context of Mexico, access to facilities was variable.

Limitations and challenges: The extent to which safe play spaces were created was significantly impacted by slow disbursement of funding and limited resources, including the absence of recurrent funding to support the maintenance of facilities. Further project planning and operational arrangements in both locations did not incorporate arrangements for continued management and maintenance of facilities, which meant that many fell into disrepair once the project had ended.

Overall quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – medium: Mexico – low-to-medium

ii. Creating constructive leisure options

Observations: In contexts of extreme scarcity and very limited opportunities for young people, sport activities increased the protection space simply by providing alternative and constructive ways for young people to spend their leisure time, and preventing them from engaging in higher-risk activities due to boredom or lack of opportunity.

In Rwanda, young people and parents said that young people frequently got involved in high-risk activities because they “wandered”, with nothing to occupy their time. Young refugee boys and men dealt with the stress of their situation by getting into fights, stealing, and resorting to substance abuse, whereas girls reported taking sexual risks (or experiencing harassment and/or coercion), frequently leading to pregnancy and early marriage.

In Mahama, for example, implementing partners anecdotally reported that: "*Sexual abuse was reduced... [before the project] girls were exposed to sexual and gender-based violence due to a lack of being occupied.*" Young people and parents noted that since the project began, young people appeared much happier, less stressed, and less involved in negative coping mechanisms. Now that the project has ended and, at the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has closed off other opportunities, respondents say that these problems – such as early pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse – have started again.

The positive changes in young people’s behaviour and psychosocial well-being, and the strong performance of refugee sport teams in different competitions and tournaments inside and outside the camps, appear to have changed parents’ attitudes about sport. Key informants unanimously reported that before the project, most parents thought of sport as a waste of time for children, feeling that they would have greater opportunity through pursuing educational opportunities or exerting pressure for young people to contribute to household income. While these pressures continue, there is some indication that parents are more likely to view sport as good for their children’s behaviour, well-being and skills development, and are more inclined to allow them to participate. As a result, children feel more supported, and there are reports of positive behaviour change, reduced intergenerational tensions, and strengthened relationships between young people and their families and communities.

Limitations and challenges: Sport for Protection activities were largely run by community volunteers and NGO workers who had limited coaching and mentorship. The limited engagement of sport organizations in designing and implementing activities means that projects have not been able to mobilize the capabilities of sport – for example, coach and volunteer development pathways, trained coaches and sport administrators, training and skill development capability, and infrastructure. This means that the quality of sport activities in most cases is questionable.

Quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – medium: Mexico – medium

iii. Building confidence and a sense of well-being

Observations: The Sport for Protection projects played a role in improving young people's sense of well-being by reducing stress and helping them to cope with the emotions and mental health challenges of their situation.

Key informants attributed this to the positive benefits of physical exercise, including a greater sense of well-being, enjoyment and relaxation, and reduced levels of substance abuse, as well as the safety and confidence associated with feeling supported by coaches and team members.

"We developed various skills like self-confidence, making friends. For instance, before I joined this programme, I was so shy that I could not talk in public, but now I can do that."
Girl, host community, Nyabiheke

Playing sport also increased children's confidence and their communication with parents and other adults in the community, which made them more able to communicate their own needs/concerns and have their voice heard.

"I liked most the opportunity to meet and build relationships with people of different nationalities, including Mexicans. The coaches were super friendly and respectful and that helped me to improve myself because I used to be shy."
Young man, Tapachula

Limitations and challenges: There is limited evidence that this outcome was achieved through any means other than participation. Sport for Protection activities were largely conducted as stand-alone events or added to existing community events, run by community volunteers and NGO workers. In a few cases, they offered sustained support to address psychosocial well-being over the medium to long term, particularly for young people who have experienced trauma and/or mental health issues. The evaluation team was unable to identify any evidence that information, education and communications (IEC) materials had been developed to support behaviour change, and there was no MEL around changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours at either the individual or community level.

Quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – medium: Mexico – medium

iv. Creating and strengthening relationships between young refugees and their host communities

Observations: The most clearly demonstrated success of programming in both locations is its contribution to improving relations between young people, parents and the host community through breaking down cultural barriers, building tolerance and identifying common goals.

Women, men, girls and boys from host communities in both locations reported positive changes in their view of refugees and an increased willingness to include them. Refugee communities reported that these relationships gave them a stronger sense of safety and security.

In Mexico, particularly where refugees come from a range of different countries and cultures, are relatively transient, and live among the host community, community-based protection through building social cohesion is a central strategy for UNHCR and its partners. The projects provided an opportunity to convene diverse communities in a safe and non-threatening way through fun, organized sport events such as races, tournaments, and regular mixed sport activities. International Children's Day and Christmas events and community projects were also organized to build person-to-person relationships and foster tolerance and a greater understanding of each other's culture, fears and needs.

Community leaders reflected that these efforts provided host communities and young refugees with **positive opportunities to interact** and **work toward common goals**.

“...[the mural project] united the host community with the refugees because everyone was there painting and helping better this common public space.”
Community leader, Tapachula

Three adolescent refugee participants from Acayucan reflected that they made a lot of friends from Mexico and other nationalities, and that they **appreciated the multicultural exchange** during the activities where they learned different traditions while exchanging football skills.

In the protracted camp-based situation in Rwanda, when young refugees and young people from the host community and their parents began to meet and engage with each other through competitions and tournaments inside and outside the camps, their relationship slowly changed. They attributed this primarily to their time playing together and socializing at events (see “Change narrative” in Box 1). Key informants explained that the project helped to ameliorate significant tensions, violence (such as rape, assaults and fights), and prejudice and fear that existed between the refugee and host community population. Young people, parents, coaches and project implementers in all locations reported that the project had brokered friendships across the two communities, improving social cohesion, unity and safety.

Limitations and challenges: The evidence, while very consistent across all consultations and stakeholder groups, is largely self-reported. There was no effort to measure cohesion beyond observation and anecdotal evidence. While partners confirmed that these efforts contributed to wider social cohesion projects of UNHCR and partners, there was no effort to measure shifts in attitudes and the quality of relationships. As a result, UNHCR and partners were unable to provide evidence that these changes in relationships were having an impact outside of sport events or that they were sustained after the project ended.

Quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – medium-to-high: Mexico – medium-to-high

v. **Creating opportunities for young women and girls to access their right to play**

Observations: The evaluation found that sport offered young women opportunities to engage with others outside of the home, and that when they were able to engage in sport-based activities, young women reaped both psychosocial and physical benefits of participation. They also gained knowledge about rights and child protection.

Both projects set affirmative targets for the participation of young women and girls, which provided opportunities for young women to access their right to play. In Rwanda, young women represented 24 per cent of total participants compared with Mexico, where women’s participation was estimated to be around 46 per cent.¹⁴

In Rwanda, the participation of young women was brought about almost exclusively by the creation of women’s and girls’ teams and the (late) inclusion of activities targeting women, such as martial arts and dance.

“We got women’s teams where they did not exist before. By the end of the project, we had 25 girls playing football, 68 girls playing basketball, and 46 girls playing volleyball regularly; 29 girls in modern dance; 20 girls in karate; and 42 girls in traditional dance.”
Child Protection Coordinator, Nyabiheke

¹⁴ There is no data on participation for the Mexico projects. This figure is derived from an analysis of participation of some discrete activities as well as anecdotal data from FGDs and outcome mapping sessions held as part of the evaluation.

This is similar in Mexico, where a number of women-only teams and events were organized, such as a women's cycling race in Mexico City and women's football tournaments in Tapachula, and where activities such as yoga and martial arts were added in response to feedback from women about the activities they wanted to do. Socio-cultural factors, the (on-off) events-based nature of activities, and the fact that some of these included other leisure activities such as youth camps and community art events may also account for the higher participation levels of women and girls in Mexico.

In Rwanda, the evaluation gathered anecdotal evidence that girls who participated in sport felt that they were safer than girls who did not because they had a wider social network they could go to for support, and had gained new knowledge on how to protect themselves. However, this is not supported with robust data.

In both Mexico and Rwanda, the complementary (self-funded) partnership with the Scort Foundation facilitated the training and recruitment of young women coaches to support Sport for Protection activities. Of 41 coaches trained by the Scort Foundation in Mexico, 27 (66 per cent)¹⁵ were women; in Rwanda, of 85 coaches, 22 (27 per cent) were women.¹⁶ Subsequent reporting does not indicate whether these coaches remained engaged in the project, or the extent to which they recruited and trained other young women coaches.

Limitations and challenges: There is limited evidence from projects in both countries to support improved protection spaces for young women and girls. Neither project was informed by a gender analysis, and project design did not clearly articulate how the project (in each context) would address the different protection concerns of young women and girls and young men and boys.

In Rwanda, young men and boys benefited simply by means of having greater access to the project activities and the safe spaces created by the projects. The significantly low rates of girls' participation mean that not only did girls and young women have poorer access, but there was no evidence that gender-sensitive strategies were put in place to address the complex vulnerabilities and protection concerns of young women and girls; nor did UNHCR and its partners monitor for gender outcomes or risk.

Quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – low: Mexico – medium

vi. Increasing children's and young people's awareness of their rights

Observations: Increased awareness of their rights equipped young people with a deeper understanding of their rights as well as child protection issues, and how to identify and report unsafe areas and inappropriate behaviour.

In Mexico, UNHCR and its implementing partners used sport activities as an entry point to access a transient community to disseminate information about the range of services available to them. The implementing partner, Programa Casa Refugiados (PCR), reported that a significant outcome of their work in the shelters in Mexico City was an increased awareness among young refugees about the legal, health and social support services available to them.¹⁷ Similarly, UNHCR staff at the Mexico Country Office and in field offices reported increased awareness and uptake of services among young refugees.

Implementing partners used a range of strategies to deliver key messages on issues affecting young people, including substance abuse, child protection, well-being, tolerance, and violence, including gang violence and sexual and gender-based violence. Across project locations, most coaches had

¹⁵ Scort Foundation Mexico Monitoring Report 2019–2020, unpublished report

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ PCR Mexico City Country Staff Outcome Mapping.

some level of training on children's rights and child protection, and there was evidence of protection messages being integrated into sport activities and events such as tournaments and races.

"Our sector priority for child protection is to create peace and a safe environment where children are well developed and reduce the high rate of early pregnancy and drug abuse among youth. So, this project has helped a lot through behaviour change education. The rate of pregnancy and drug abuse has decreased due to greater awareness in the community."

UNHCR Protection Officer, Rwanda

In both Mexico and Rwanda, young people, coaches and parents who were interviewed as part of the evaluation could remember key messages related to child protection and harm prevention, which increased their overall sense of belonging and security. Key informants in Rwanda reflected that by sharing these messages at public events, community members not only became aware that sport can promote child protection but also that they themselves must be involved in keeping children safe.

The strategy of working with youth clubs in Mexico also offered young people opportunities to engage in youth leadership programmes and camps, which acted as vehicles to educate young people on their rights and build their capacity as peer leaders.

As a result of their learning, many young people became child protection actors by keeping themselves and their friends safer and finding better ways to deal with risks:

"Children who don't participate in sport activities are more likely to be abused because they didn't have a chance to get skills on how to protect themselves from any risks."

Young woman, Mahama camp

Limitations and challenges: While the evaluation consultations surfaced an increase in children's and young people's awareness of their rights, neither project established indicators or MEL tools that enabled them to demonstrate any change in knowledge and understanding, or evidence that this has resulted in changed (and sustained) behaviours such as a reduction in high-risk behaviours, reduced rates of early pregnancy, reduced involvement in gangs, and reduced levels of sexual and gender-based violence. Similarly, partners were unable to provide data to support claims of increased access to services, which would have constituted evidence of sport acting as an entry point to more integrated service delivery.

Quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – medium: Mexico – low-to-medium

vii. Leadership opportunities – coach training and volunteer youth leaders

Observations: Training opportunities provided some young people with opportunities to develop leadership skills and take on peer leadership roles within their communities.

In Mexico, youth camps were used to conduct leadership training and to bring together young refugees with young people from host communities to plan community events and undertake community service activities.

In Rwanda, young coaches were selected from refugee and host communities and trained to support organized sport activities and events. Given that opportunities for young people are scarce, this was highly valued by young people and parents alike, and, in some cases, resulted in young people accessing (rare) educational scholarships.

UNHCR staff and partners consistently reported that the trusted relationships young people built with coaches, volunteers and peer leaders were important for their sense of well-being. They highlighted that coaches and partners often acted as a first point of contact and played an important role in identifying young people in crisis or at risk and referring them to partners for support and on-referral.

In Mexico, where refugee communities are diverse, transient, and widely dispersed throughout the community, using volunteer leaders from refugee and host communities was an important strategy to support UNHCR and partners to disseminate information about the legal and support services available to refugees.

Limitations and challenges: Coach training was largely conducted through international Sport for Development partnerships such as the Scott Foundation. This meant that there was limited ongoing training and mentorship for young coaches and insufficient resources to provide incentives for them to continue in their roles. This contributed to high turnover and absenteeism among volunteer coaches.

Quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – low: Mexico – medium

viii. Supporting child protection and safeguarding systems

Observations: The Rwanda project supported child protection and safeguarding systems through building community responsibility and awareness of child protection, and reinforcing safeguarding systems.

Evaluation respondents in Rwanda reported that the project strengthened child protection reporting and case management, and there were anecdotal reports that child protection incidents had significantly decreased while case management had improved.

The project was thought to have built protection capacity through training for coaches and refugee trainers on child protection and related issues. There is some evidence that follow-up training was provided by UNHCR, Save the Children and Plan International in some locations.

Awareness-raising efforts succeeded in helping young people, parents and community members to better understand protection risks, as well as how to prevent, respond and report child protection concerns. Advocacy work made the community realise that child protection is everyone's responsibility.

Linkages between the project and children's coordinators in the camps also meant that there was better coordination between different duty-bearers within children's community of support.

"If at school we identify a child who participates in sport activities and the child has poor performance, we share the information with Plan International so that they can identify the cause and follow up on why this child is failing in school. This can be done by coaches during the sport activities on the field. Then together we can help that child."
Camp leader, Mugombwa

Limitations and challenges: The evaluation team found no evidence that the project in Mexico contributed to strengthening child protection systems. Neither coaches, nor parents nor young people were able to describe local protection mechanisms or how to report protection concerns.

The evaluation further identified some significant risks brought about by poor practice relating to the use and management of safeguarding systems for Sport for Protection activities in both locations. While some coaches had been trained in child protection and safeguarding at the beginning of the project, there were no mandatory training requirements or due diligence checks in place in either country. In Mexico, young people and some project staff who were interviewed were unable to explain the safeguarding systems in place during Sport for Protection activities, whereas the situation was somewhat better in Rwanda.

Quality of evidence ranking: Rwanda – low-to-medium: Mexico – low

Box 1 : Change narrative – Mahama camp, Rwanda

Discussions with the Mahama Sports Association revealed that the relationship between the Burundian camp population and their Rwandan host community was less than ideal. While relations were not too bad overall, there were allegedly cases of refugees who stole from the host community. There were also reports of some girls being raped by host community members when they went to fetch firewood outside the camp, and some refugee children being killed after being accused of wrongdoing outside of the camp.

Girls in Mahama also explained that there was a lack of familiarity and understanding between the Rwandan and Burundian communities, which remained isolated from each other.

When Save the Children started the Sport for Protection project, this situation began to change. With support from UNHCR and IOC/ORF, a playing field was built in the host community, and events and competitions were organized for refugees and the host community. Rwandans were able to come and play inside the camp and Burundians were able to join events outside in the host community. Young people from the different communities trained together and played on the same teams. When the host community had *umuganda* (community service days) each month, they were impressed that the refugee youth joined in.

The change in relations was dramatic. Asked what they learned from each other when they played together, one young woman in the host community remarked:

"Burundians are very social! ... They are very talented in basketball. In general, we can say that Burundians helped us to improve our talents."

In both communities, young people, parents and coaches remarked that through sporting events, children and parents built friendships, learned to cooperate, and improved their skills in sport. One girl from the host community noted:

"We liked the way that we are all equally treated in the same ways without any discrimination."

One parent noted:

"We parents from the camp and those from outside of the camp visit together, and that is the result of the friendship of the children who became friends from sport activities."

One issue that young people did not like was that Burundians were not allowed to play in some school competitions (because they were refugees), even though they had trained and were very talented.

For some young people in the host community in Rwanda, their new Burundian friends have now returned home. Asked how the skills they gained will help them interact with new refugee arrivals, one girl in Mahama responded:

"We will approach them and tell them the importance of teamwork and welcome them to the team."

4.3. KEQ #2: Contributing factors

While the evaluation found that sport-based activities made some contribution to the enhanced protection space for young refugees and their host communities in both Mexico and Rwanda, several issues emerged that had affected the quality of outcomes and sustainability of interventions.

Seven factors (see Figure 6) that contribute to and/or hinder the ability of organized sport activities to increase the protection space for young refugees and host communities surfaced throughout the evaluation. These offer important lessons for the design and implementation of future Sport for Protection programmes.

The following discussion explores the role of these factors in the implementation of the UNHCR-IOC/ORF projects, the impact they had on the quality of outcomes, and how they can be practically supported and/or mitigated to maximize positive outcomes in future.

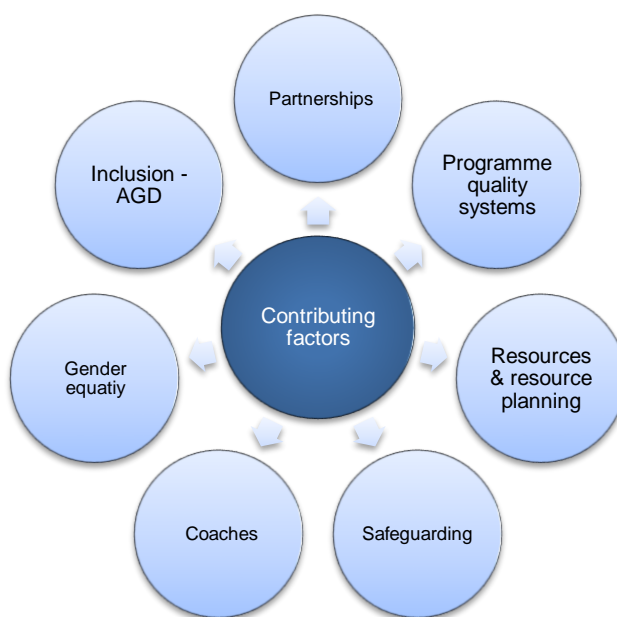


Figure 6: Contributing factors

4.3.1. Partnerships – mobilizing the capabilities of sport and humanitarian actors

Observations: Partnerships between humanitarian and sport actors are critical for quality Sport for Protection programmes and for bringing enhanced protection outcomes to scale. As an emerging sector, strategic attention and resources need to be allocated for building both technical capability for Sport for Protection programming and partnerships between sport and humanitarian actors.

Beyond the funding arrangement, there was no clear role identified for either the UNHCR Sport Section or IOC (and subsequently ORF) once projects became operational. This meant that neither were able to capitalize on the assets and capabilities brought about by their global partnerships, including relationships with sport organizations. Human resource constraints further meant that there

was no capacity for the UNHCR Sport Section in Geneva or IOC/ORF to offer technical support, monitoring and capability-building.¹⁸

UNHCR systems do not easily enable UNHCR staff to engage in contracts outside of existing and pre-approved partnerships. In both countries, UNHCR engaged its protection partners to deliver the Sport for Protection activities, despite none having experience in delivering sport-based programming or understanding how to integrate sport-based activities within their protection work. These partners did not appreciate the importance of engaging with sport actors, and project designs were approved in the absence of partnerships with sport actors and without budget to support their engagement.

Box 2: UNHCR and partner capacity for Sport for Protection programming.

UNHCR staff and partners were poorly equipped to deliver Sport for Protection projects.

When asked the question, “With hindsight, what is the thing that you would make sure you had planned for if you were to deliver this project again?”, UNHCR and implementing partners consistently and without exception responded:

- capacity-building in sport and Sport for Protection;
- partnerships with sport organizations to support implementation and strategy.

In Mexico, UNHCR and IOC held a roundtable with a range of sport actors such as the NOC, Sport Ministry, sport federations and Sport for Development organizations. In Rwanda, the then IOC President Jacques Rogge attended meetings with UNHCR and the NOC to raise awareness of the UNHCR-IOC partnership. However, there is no evidence that either of these resulted in meaningful programmatic collaboration.

Consultations indicated that in Mexico, the narrative around this inability to establish partnerships speaks to the rapid onset of the refugee crisis, which completely overwhelmed UNHCR and its partners, and the election, which led to changes in relationships at all levels of government. In Rwanda, the narrative is around the absence of sport organizations in areas where camps are located. While these factors are valid to some extent, they do not sufficiently account for the limited effort of field teams and implementing partners to establish partnerships with sport organizations.

What is clear is that UNHCR field teams and implementing partners face many pressures, which means that sport-based programming receives far less attention over life-saving elements of humanitarian response such as food, shelter, and water and sanitation, and there is little incentive to invest in developing partnerships where sport programming is unfunded.¹⁹

“Funding is limited, you have to prioritise where does the money go... shelters that are crumbling, crowded schools, lack of nutrition... As such it is hard to allocate mainstream funding to youth and recreation activities. This has been a major challenge. UNHCR needs other partners to support this work through funding or partnerships, otherwise it will be very hard to prioritise it.”

UNHCR Executive

¹⁸ The UNHCR Sport Section at the time of project implementation comprised a single team member to support UNHCR’s global sport partnerships. Similarly, the IOC comprised a single person to support the partnership. However, with the establishment of the ORF, this situation has now changed.

¹⁹ With 50 per cent of UNHCR’s global programme unfunded, there is significant pressure and competition for resources within UNHCR, especially where “soft activities” are seen as discretionary or competing with resources available for survival.

Consultations in both countries and with the UNHCR Sport Section in Geneva raised the limited absorptive capacity of UNHCR staff to take on technical roles to support Sport for Protection as a new programming sector/approach. UNHCR's field staffing structure relies on "generalist staff"²⁰ who oversee multiple multisectoral programmes, and there is a relatively high rotation of officers, particularly during surge times. This high demand on non-technical staff, combined with high turnover, presents challenges for UNHCR field teams to build technical capacity for sport-based programming. UNHCR staff at field level tend to fulfil project management functions. They have limited capability and opportunity to work strategically in leveraging UNHCR's recognized status as a committed actor in the Sport for Development and Peace global community, nor leveraging its institutional strengths including access, advocacy and convening power to support improved protection through sport.

Considerations for future programming: Partnerships are critical for enhancing protection space through sport, ensuring quality sport experiences, and bringing Sport for Protection initiatives to scale. However, this cannot be achieved through discrete one-off or stand-alone projects. It takes time to build mutual understanding and trust, to co-design and to work through how best to mobilize and leverage capabilities and share resources to ensure both the quality of the sport experience and of protection outcomes. Establishing partnerships to support Sport for Protection initiatives therefore requires a commitment to invest over time; building relationships that add value should be considered just as important as implementing projects.

As their partnership matures, UNHCR and ORF are exploring new ways of working and mobilizing their respective capabilities most effectively. As they move forward with this, it will be valuable for UNHCR and ORF to: better assess field-level capabilities and gaps for sport-based programming; consider how to establish and maintain country-level partnerships with sport actors and with whom these relationships should sit; and how to effectively build local capability and partnerships for quality Sport for Protection initiatives.

4.3.2. Programme quality management systems – design, and monitoring, evaluation and learning

Observation: Robust programme quality management systems, and particularly evidence-based design and MEL, are vital if programmes are to achieve social and behaviour change outcomes.

The evaluation found that programme management was largely compliance and outputs-based, and that UNHCR and IOC/ORF had not put in place programme quality systems to support the achievement of outcomes.

- **Design**

UNHCR-IOC Sport for Protection projects were funded as stand-alone activities based on proposals developed by country teams with the support of the Sport Section in Geneva. There was no overarching contract and no programme design, Theory of Change or MEL arrangements in place for Sport for Protection programmes at global level.²¹

The projects in Mexico and Rwanda were designed around a set of broad and poorly defined objectives (combining outputs and activities) rather than a Theory of Change that articulated the intended outcomes and pathways to achieving these. This lack of focus, combined with financial

²⁰ Key informant interviews with senior staff in Rwanda and Mexico report this was a significant barrier to building Sport for Protection capability.

²¹ While UNHCR and ORF created a retrospective Theory of Change to support the evaluation and this provided a high-level framework for thinking about Sport for Protection programmes, it provides insufficient detail for project-level interventions.

constraints (created by poor budgeting and resource allocation) and partner inexperience in working on sport-based approaches, meant that projects were opportunistic and output-focused, and paid insufficient attention to facilitating change through effective targeting and investing in behaviour change approaches.

For Sport for Protection projects to be able to plan for and demonstrate the intended outcomes for young refugees, they need to focus on the changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices/behaviours of the different actors and systems, as well as the pathways through which these will lead to sustained outcomes.

- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning**

UNHCR and IOC did not invest in MEL at the global level or project level. Contracting arrangements between UNHCR and IOC did not outline MEL arrangements. Neither UNHCR Geneva nor IOC required partners to undertake project monitoring, which meant that the projects were not incentivized to draw on external technical expertise, and reporting requirements were light touch.

The absence of MEL frameworks meant that there was no attention paid to the systematic collection of data against indicators that could provide evidence of outcomes and a deeper understanding of how these were brought about.

In Mexico, UNHCR consistently reported that implementing partners did not have sufficient MEL capability to collect and analyse data, and UNHCR MEL systems required them to report against indicators in the Country Operating Plan rather than project-specific indicators. There was no financial allocation to MEL in Rwanda, whereas in Mexico, \$30,000 initially budgeted for MEL was reallocated to implementation.

This absence of MEL arrangements means that UNHCR and partners did not develop, collect or report against project-level indicators. The evaluation made significant efforts to access UNHCR and partner management information system (MIS) records to support verification and triangulation of data.²² Neither UNHCR nor its partners were able to provide disaggregated participation data, referral data or any indicator tracking that could verify and substantiate reported outcomes²³.

There is no evidence of partners undertaking assessments of knowledge, attitudes and practices or surveys on perceptions of safety to understand how these changed over time. As a result, UNHCR and its partners have been unable to generate robust evidence to demonstrate the contribution that sport can make to protection space for young refugees, or to aid understanding of which approaches are effective, and why. Given that these projects were early efforts to learn about how to implement effective Sport for Protection programming, the absence of MEL arrangements is a significant lost opportunity.

- **Adaptive and agile programming systems**

UNHCR programming systems do not always support agile and adaptive project delivery. Contracting arrangements provide limited flexibility for course correction, and finance and procurement systems can be slow, which can result in delays or lost opportunities. In both Mexico and Rwanda, UNHCR was directly responsible for the contracts related to the rehabilitation of sport facilities and the procurement of equipment. Delays in procurement meant that despite these activities being planned and budgeted in year one, they were in many cases not delivered until year two. This meant that the projects in both countries experienced significant delays in commencing sport activities, which

²² The 2018 and 2019 interim reports highlighted that implementing partners were not able or equipped to demonstrate evidence of impact other than anecdotally, as MEL expertise and resources did not exist.

²³ Note Annex 2 which highlights the data sought by the Evaluation and the data made available.

shortened the programming period in practice. Further programming and funding arrangements need to ensure that quality standards are in place, and that UNHCR and partner capability to support these is built into programme design and budgets. Specifically:

- MEL systems should clearly articulate expected outcomes in terms of behaviour and systems change and pathways to deliver these must be clearly established, along with indicators for how to measure progress. MEL and reporting arrangements should be established through contracting arrangements and resources allocated.
- Programme planning should ensure that ongoing support for access to and maintenance of facilities is in place.
- Monitoring systems need to be in place to track progress and enable course correction.

4.3.3. Resourcing and resource planning

Observation: Inadequate resources and poor resource planning impacted the quality and sustainability of projects.

Each project location received a very small proportion – between 1.6 per cent and 3.6 per cent – of total project resources for activities: training, tournaments and events, regular sport activities, and project and coaching staff:

- In Rwanda, 78 per cent of total funding was allocated to the construction and rehabilitation of sport facilities and playing grounds in the first year of programming, leaving only \$6,800 for project implementation in each location each year (or 3.6 per cent of total funding per location for the duration of the project).
- In Mexico, 27 per cent of the total budget (52 per cent of the IOC grant) was used for rehabilitation of sport facilities and purchase of equipment in the first year. With staffing costs representing 63 per cent of the total project funds (of which 71 per cent was an in-kind contribution from UNHCR staff), only \$80,000 (or 8 per cent) of total project funds were allocated to direct project costs in the five programming locations.

Furthermore, resource allocations for the rehabilitation of playing fields were only budgeted in the first year of each project and there were no clear plans for the continued management and maintenance of rehabilitated assets, or for the ongoing supply and maintenance of sport equipment. Field visits to rehabilitated spaces showed that some were not adequately maintained. For example, two of three basketball courts visited in Tapachula (Mexico) were no longer usable as boards and hoops were damaged or missing; in Rwanda, playing fields were overgrown due to lack of use and maintenance after the end of the project, as well as a hiatus in public activities due to COVID-19.

Limited resourcing also meant that some equipment was not available, and this had a direct impact on participation. Some of the girls and boys in Rwanda reported having to share uniforms, while some young women reported that they stopped participating because their coaches did not show up.

The evaluation highlights that it can be very difficult in resource-constrained environments to resist the temptation to stretch resources beyond the point to which they are used effectively to deliver the intended outcomes. Several factors may come into play that affect resourcing decisions. In conflict-affected areas, for example, a decision to work in one location or with one community over another can exacerbate underlying tensions. The UN team in Rwanda explained that they needed to make trade-offs at the project design stage:

“We ended up applying for double the anticipated funding amount and we got it, but even then, we still knew that resources were not enough. We had a lot of discussion, and we did not feel that we could work in some camps at the exclusion of others, or with refugee young people at the exclusion of local communities, so we included all camps.”
UNHCR field personnel

Considerations for future programming: The way that resources are budgeted and allocated will have a direct impact on the delivery of outcomes. Stretching resources too far can mean that there are not enough resources in each location to enable the anticipated participation numbers and/or frequency of activity; or that funds are not available to replace assets such as worn-out sport equipment to enable ongoing activities. Budgets should be realistic and aligned to the delivery of activities that will achieve, and hopefully maximize, the intended outcomes over time.

4.3.4. Safeguarding

Observations: The absence of clear standards for safeguarding present an unacceptable risk to young people involved in the projects. There should be a minimum safeguarding standard for any Sport for Protection programme.

Appropriate safeguards have not been uniformly applied to Sport for Protection activities. While in Rwanda, programming was able to work within existing child protection systems established within camp communities, which provided greater attention to safeguarding, in Mexico there was limited evidence that appropriate safeguarding systems had been put in place.

There were no mandatory training or due diligence requirements for coaches and volunteers to be able to work with children. Reporting systems varied from partner to partner and were not always transparent to the young people involved in the projects. Furthermore, not all coaches, volunteers and staff were trained in child protection, and some were unaware of safeguarding systems in place and of their obligations. **The absence of clear standards for safeguarding presents an unacceptable risk to young people, as well as UNHCR-IOC/ORF and partners.**

Considerations for future programming: Ensuring that robust safeguards are in place to protect children and young people from abuse is non-negotiable. There must be a minimum standard for safeguarding in place for all Sport for Protection programmes and actors. Meaningful safeguarding systems should not only include policies and procedures but ensure that due diligence mechanisms are in place to assess partner capability for safeguarding, monitor compliance, and train staff and partners. A range of international safeguards have been developed for humanitarian programmes and for safeguarding in sport, which offer strong frameworks to ensure that UNHCR-IOC/ORF and partner obligations are met.

4.3.5. Engaging, developing and retaining coaches

Observations: Recruiting and developing a cohort of coaches is central to the logic of both projects. Not only are coaches responsible for running sport activities, training young athletes, and organizing and refereeing tournaments, but they also play an important role in protection by acting as role models for young people, providing peer support, and delivering behaviour change communications and referral. As such, coaches are the central actors and critical agents of change for Sport for Protection programmes.

UNHCR staff and partners consistently reported that the trusted relationships that young people built with coaches and other volunteers were important for their sense of well-being. Coaches, along with

partner staff, often acted as the first point of contact and played a role in identifying young people in crisis or at risk, and referring them to appropriate partner organizations for follow-up support.

UNHCR partnered with the Scort Foundation,²⁴ which conducted training for coaches in Rwanda and Mexico and returned to deliver three further modules to the same cohort within the first year. The Scort training integrates good practices in Sport for Development, focusing not only on developing sport-based skills for coaches, but content on values (including around gender and social inclusion), child protection and safeguarding, and peer support and mentoring skills. Only coaches who complete a final assessment are certified; they are then expected to train other volunteer coaches. Scort also offers follow-up support for coaches by email and text.

In Mexico, coaches trained by Scort included project staff from UNHCR, RET International and PCR, volunteer and community coaches, and some coaches from local football associations. In Rwanda, Scort trained volunteer coaches recruited from the refugee and host communities who had a role in implementing the project.

UNHCR and partners ran training on child protection in both countries. In Rwanda, coaches who were interviewed for the evaluation were able to talk about how they identified children at risk, and how to report, and said that they were trained in how to communicate with young people. Furthermore, young people who were interviewed said they had positive relationships with their coaches, and they could go to them because they would know what to do in a certain situation. There was less evidence that this was the case in Mexico. Fewer coaches reported that they had received training, and few were able to speak about child protection and safeguarding systems.

The evaluation was unable to identify ongoing training, development and mentoring of coaches in either country beyond the Scort training. Given the important role of coaches in providing behaviour change communications and acting as mentors for young people, this is a weakness in the approach and may bring about some risk in terms of safeguarding and incorrect or misleading messaging.

The retention of coaches was a significant challenge in both countries. Resources were not allocated for payments (or non-monetary incentives) to coaches, and many coaches reported that they could not always attend as they had to prioritise their livelihoods and earnings. Others indicated that they stopped coaching because there was no longer equipment, or that activities had ceased as the project had ended.

Considerations for future programming: Building a cohort of trained and engaged coaches is highly challenging, especially in resource-poor contexts of displacement, yet it is central to the success and sustainability of Sport for Protection projects.

Future programmes need to identify and develop partnerships with sport organizations locally so that they can draw on their assets to strengthen the quality of the sport experience and the ability of projects to leverage the best elements of sport practice. This includes drawing on sports infrastructure, values and systems such as coaching systems, integrated development pathways, and curricula to build sporting and personal development, leadership capability, etc.

4.3.6. Gender equality – women and girls

Observations: Sport-based programmes can have positive impacts on promoting gender equality. While projects in both countries claim to have implemented an age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach, there is little evidence that – beyond encouraging the participation of women and girls – a gender equality approach has been implemented. This means that young women have not benefited equally from the programmes.

²⁴ In Mexico, Scort worked with local football clubs through the Football Club Social Alliance (FCSA).

Consultations with project staff from both UNHCR and partners indicated that while gender and social inclusion was a stated priority, there were limitations on resources (including staff) with which to monitor gendered interactions during sport activities, as well as inadequate MEL systems. This meant that gendered approaches were not implemented, and the barriers preventing women and girls participating in sport activities were not addressed.

While partners and UNHCR undertook participatory appraisals at the project design stage that sought women's views, these did not sufficiently explore the gendered dimensions of the experiences of young women and girls and young men and boys, and the different development challenges they face. Neither UNHCR nor any of its implementing partners in either country undertook a gender analysis to inform programming interventions. Monitoring systems and gendered indicators were not established to track and analyse the participation and experience of women and girls in the project and to inform course correction.

In Rwanda, for example, UNHCR reported that the participation of young women was decreasing each year. This was attributed to "cultural issues", and neither UNHCR nor its partners undertook an analysis to understand why projects were unable to retain young women and girls. Consultations with young women during the evaluation indicated that girls were able to engage in sport activities but stopped attending for various reasons. These included the absence of coaches and equipment, being overlooked for teams, being denied opportunities to play or being sidelined during games,²⁵ feeling physically intimidated by boys on the field, having nowhere to change in privacy, and having to share uniforms with boys.

The evaluation was also unable to surface any information from teams in Rwanda and Mexico about how particular behaviour change communication messages were designed to respond to the different contexts of young women and men, or how they nuanced messaging accordingly. Evaluation informants frequently said that they imparted messaging on issues such as sexual and gender-based violence; however, these were most commonly framed in terms of "telling girls how to protect themselves", "how to avoid rape" or "not to engage in early sexual activity" and "telling girls not to waste their lives" rather than a discussion framed around "working with boys on issues of masculinity, gender norms, respect and violence against women and girls". If future programming is to have significant benefit for young women and girls, then these programmes need to be designed to affirm young women's agency and right to protection, and to challenge harmful gender norms and masculine behaviours. **Most importantly, they should not reinforce negative stereotypes that make women and girls responsible for the bad things that happen to them.**

Considerations for future programming. Meaningful gender equality programming that moves beyond equal opportunities for the participation of women and girls requires attention to power-based gender analysis and monitoring at all stages of programming. Undertaking gendered analysis at the design/inception stage, combined with gender-sensitive monitoring during implementation, can provide a deeper understanding of how a project is responding to the specific needs of young women. It can also enable course correction (such as reallocation of resources, increased training and supervision of coaches, or challenging young men's behaviours) to facilitate a safer and more equitable engagement of young women.

4.3.7. Inclusion for all – age, gender and diversity

Observation: Meaningful social inclusion programming works to transform relationships between community members and address inequality and barriers to people accessing their rights. This requires strong attention to programmatic interventions that address systems, and cultural and behavioural norms and biases that exclude certain groups at the expense of others. It is critical that these approaches not only address the specific concerns and needs of excluded groups such as

²⁵ Girls observed that often, when they played, boys would arrive and take over the playing fields and force them away.

people with disabilities and gender and sexual minorities, but concurrently recognize the intersectionality of an individual's multiple identities (for example, based on gender, age, capability, race, religious belief or ethnicity). The engagement of rights-holders in designing, monitoring and implementing these approaches is critical.

Despite the AGD approach outlined in the design of both projects, the evaluation found no evidence of meaningful efforts or investments to include diverse groups such as people with disabilities, unaccompanied children, ethnic minorities, gender and sexual minorities or LGBTI+ persons.

Apart from an ongoing relationship with Humanity & Inclusion in one camp in Rwanda, there is no evidence of consultation with people with disabilities or disabled persons organizations in the planning of the project, or of specific events or activities in either country. Rehabilitation of sport facilities did not consider or make modification for disability access and procurement of specialized equipment was extremely limited. Coaches and peer leaders did report that they were trained to "include everyone" but did not receive specific training in disability inclusion or how to make reasonable accommodations or modify sport activities to meet the needs of people with disabilities:

"We were trained to teach them. But there are limited special kits and materials for disabled children. Therefore, they were not included at all."
Coach, Mugombwa

In Mexico, key informants confirmed the participation of some LGBTI+ young people in some activities, but there is no evidence of needs assessment, targeted approaches, or efforts to recruit LGBTI+ coaches and mentors. Nor was there evidence of any anti-bias training for project staff, coaches, or volunteers on LGBTI+ inclusion and protection. Finally, despite the high numbers of unaccompanied children in both countries, the evaluation was unable to identify any efforts to engage these most vulnerable of children and young people in protection activities. Similarly, the evaluation was unable to identify targeted efforts for other groups, including religious or ethnic minorities.

The **absence of affirmative approaches to support marginalized and specifically vulnerable groups is significant** given their low psychosocial well-being and exclusion, and their increased risk of sexual and physical abuse, exploitation and neglect:

"... some parents do not understand that those children have the same right as others".
Young woman, Mahama host community

The result is that the projects were not positioned to address the specific vulnerabilities of some of the most marginalized young people within the refugee community.

Considerations for future programming: Meaningful social inclusion programming needs to move beyond facilitating opportunities for people to simply come together but should seek to understand the complexity of social relationships and the intersectionality of individuals and communities and create opportunities to transform relationships through addressing inequality and barriers to some people from accessing their rights.

The engagement of rights-holders in designing, monitoring, and implementing these approaches is critical to this success. MEL systems should seek to actively measure the participation and experience of specifically vulnerable and/or excluded groups. Ongoing anti-bias training and clarification of values for all implementers should be integrated into programme recruitment and quality approaches.

4.4. KEQ #3: Lessons learned

Emerging evidence highlights the potential of structured sport to enhance the protection space for young people and contribute positively to protection outcomes in situations of forced displacement. Together, UNHCR (with mandate in situations of forced displacement) and ORF (as the mechanism through which the IOC channels support to refugees and displaced people) have the necessary reach and resources to enhance global Sport for Protection programming. This work can be strengthened through ongoing investment and quality improvement in eight key areas (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: Lessons learned and informing recommendations

4.4.1. Safeguarding

There are some risks to children and young people that are unique to sport, including increased risks of all forms of abuse. These risks are further exacerbated in humanitarian contexts where already highly vulnerable children and young people have been affected by violence, abuse, trauma and loss, and may have very little awareness of their rights or trust in reporting systems.

Sport should be safe for all young people. All donors and implementing partners are obliged to ensure that programmes take place in safe environments. This means that Sport for Protection programmes must have robust, transparent, accessible, and highly visible safeguarding systems in place that include mandatory screening for all persons who will have direct contact with children and young people, as well as regular training, and reporting and referral systems.

Key standards such as the International Safeguards for Children in Sport and the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action can be applied alongside UNHCR and ORF's own safeguarding policies and procedures.

4.4.2. Gender equality

There is a significant and compelling evidence base that demonstrates the role that sport can play in empowering women and girls and improving their well-being and social inclusion, by enabling them to develop leadership and negotiation skills, build confidence and physical capability, and challenge harmful gender norms. Sport can mobilize action towards the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence through implementing safeguards and creating safe environments, connecting women with their wider community, engaging men, promoting respectful relationships, and providing professional pathways.

While gender mainstreaming must be standard for all programmes, investing in gender equality means moving beyond a focus on the participation of women and girls to approaches that take action to eliminate inequality. This may be through appropriate behaviour change communications that support the rights and agency of women, engage men and boys as agents of change, challenge exclusionary behaviours on the field of play; ensure that women have equal access to assets and opportunities, and ensure that women and girls are safeguarded in all activities.

Programmes and interventions must be based on an analysis of the different gendered experiences of women and girls and men and boys, and designed to deliver nuanced messaging and information that transforms the knowledge, perceptions and behaviours of both women and men on gender roles. Programmes should be supported by MEL frameworks that include disaggregated participation data and gendered indicators, so that it is possible to measure progress and the extent to which changes in knowledge, perceptions and behaviours have been brought about and gender outcomes achieved. To ensure that this happens, grant-making systems need to establish expectations, standards and resources for ensuring that gender equality is addressed at all stages of programming.

4.4.3. Social inclusion

Transformative social inclusion programming requires that activities not only create opportunities for people to come together and communicate positive inclusion messages, but that they consider the systems, policies, and cultural and behavioural norms and biases that exclude certain groups at the expense of others. Not only should these approaches address the rights of young refugees and their communities but they should also seek to address the barriers that prevent inclusion of other excluded groups such as people with disabilities, gender and sexual minorities, female-headed households, ethnic and religious minorities, and unaccompanied children, among others.

Engaging rights-holders and rights-holder organizations in designing, monitoring and implementing programmes will improve outcomes for vulnerable populations by ensuring that programmes are effectively targeted and address priority needs in an informed and appropriate way. MEL systems should seek to actively measure changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices that are the foundations of social relationships, as well as the participation and experiences of specific vulnerable and/or excluded groups.

It is also critical for programmes to acknowledge dominant norms and stereotypes as well as unconscious bias – including on the part of programme staff and volunteers – and ensure that appropriate training and policies are in place to build safe spaces and mitigate the risk of unintended harm.

With specific reference to disability inclusion, in line with the principle of “nothing about us without us”, as well as UNHCR guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement²⁶ and the Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action,²⁷ programmes should

²⁶ UNHCR, 2019, [“Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement”](#).

²⁷ HelpAge International, 2015, [Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action](#).

engage with rights-holder organizations such as disabled persons' organizations and the Paralympic Movement to draw on their knowledge and expertise in designing and implementing disability inclusive initiatives. They should also draw on their experience in accessing people with disabilities, identifying coaches with lived experience of disability, and training coaches, programme staff and community members on disability inclusion.

Efforts that create opportunities for targeted disability inclusive activities should be combined with efforts to include people with disabilities in mainstream activities, and the reconstruction and rehabilitation of sport facilities should utilize Universal Design principles.²⁸

4.4.4. Partnerships

When considering the role of sport in humanitarian contexts it is important to recognize that while sport is generally viewed as valuable, **not all sport automatically delivers wider gains**. In the same way that sport organizations are not skilled, structured or equipped to deliver on protection or development outcomes, development and protection organizations are not skilled, structured or equipped to deliver sport outcomes. Furthermore, sport organizations have established infrastructure, systems for recruiting, developing and training players, coaches and administrators, and offer a range of player, coach and professional pathways that can add significant value to development and humanitarian programmes.

To deliver on protection objectives, the key characteristics and assets of sport need to be mobilized effectively, with intent, and combined with specialized expertise in human and social development – including, for example, protection, peacebuilding and behaviour change.

Successful sport for development and peace programmes work to realize the rights of all members of society to participate in sport and leisure activities. Effective programmes give to priority to development objectives and are designed to be inclusive. These programmes embody the values of sport while upholding the quality and integrity of the sport experience.

*Strong sport for development and peace programmes combine sport, physical activity and play with other non-sport components to enhance their effectiveness. They are delivered in an integrated way with other local, regional and national development and peace initiatives so that they are mutually reinforcing.*²⁹

Partnerships between sport-based organizations (including the Olympic Movement and sporting codes from the international to local levels) and other actors working in the social development and humanitarian space (such as governments, civil society, rights-holder organizations, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and other non-traditional actors) are central to making this formula work. However, this requires a commitment to build on shared objectives, extending beyond any specific project or funding opportunity.

4.4.5. Quality systems, and monitoring, evaluation and learning

The changes that Sport for Protection programmes aim to bring about are both complicated and complex. They rely on a combination of social, cognitive, behavioural and systems changes; they are often undertaken in highly dynamic and insecure contexts, and work with young people with complex needs. There is no “one size fits all” approach to this type of programming; approaches need to be

²⁸ In line with UNHCR guidance on Working with Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

²⁹ See https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/what_is_sport_for_development_and_peace.pdf

carefully planned to bring about change while at the same time being sufficiently agile to be able to adapt.

“To enable sport to unleash its full positive potential, emphasis must be placed on effective monitoring and guiding of sport activities... This requires professional and socially responsible intervention tailored to the respective social and cultural context.”³⁰

It is vital that programme contracting and subcontracting arrangements outline clear design standards and expectations for the collection, analysis and reporting of programme data. There should also be a clearly defined role for the donor and lead agency in routine monitoring and evaluation arrangements, ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to these functions.

Quality design should clearly articulate the outcomes the project is intending to achieve, and MEL arrangements should establish targets, indicators and methods for data collection, analysis and learning/sensemaking. Where capabilities for MEL do not exist, arrangements for building and/or outsourcing this capability should be put in place.

The *Sport for Protection Toolkit* already provides some solid examples of indicators that could be developed. Moving forward, UNHCR and/or ORF may also consider developing some practical tools and guidance for implementing partners on MEL specifically for Sport for Protection projects, such as draft indicators, survey guidelines, perceptions of safety tools, and gender assessment and analysis tools.

4.4.6. Resource planning and mobilization

The way that resources are budgeted and allocated directly impacts the delivery and quality of project outcomes. Stretching resources too thinly can mean that they are insufficient to achieve the anticipated levels of participation and/or frequency of activities. Short-term funding rounds (such as 12-month funding cycles) provide limited opportunity to bring about and sustain behaviour change and other outcomes. Furthermore, lack of attention to resource planning in the medium-to-long term can result in funds not being available for the maintenance and replacement of sport equipment and facilities, the development of coaches, or the design of curricula. This will, in turn, negatively impact sustainability.

However, developing an effective funding strategy for Sport for Protection programmes is challenging. On the one hand, sporting equipment and infrastructure are not cheap; they require replacement and upkeep and may be unavailable in some contexts. On the other hand, programme funds are finite; many funders prefer to see funds go to direct programme implementation and are rarely prepared to fund recurrent costs of either capital or equipment.

This situation requires Sport for Protection programming to take a medium-to-long term view of funding. It should consider the amount of time required to deliver behaviour change outcomes, and how to ensure adequate resourcing for recurrent costs.

In some cases, partnerships with sport organizations, local government or the private sector may be established to support resource mobilization. Sponsorship is another possibility. However, these relationships can take time to develop and can be time-consuming to service. They may also be less successful in resource-constrained contexts where there are competing priorities and needs.

This is an important challenge that is specific to Sport for Protection programming. As such, it requires Sport for Protection funders to consider whether their own resourcing models, funding criteria and regulations are fit for purpose to enable implementers to deliver on the intended objectives.

³⁰ The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace.

4.4.7. Coaches as agents of change

Sport for Protection programmes could not be delivered without a cohort of engaged and trained coaches. Coaches have multiple responsibilities, including:

- designing and delivering sport activities;
- ensuring that young people in their care are protected from harm and abuse (safeguarding);
- delivering behaviour change communications on a range of issues, including health and well-being, violence and gender equality;
- referring young people to services;
- acting as positive role models, leaders and mentors.

The development and retention of coaches is therefore a key pathway for delivering and sustaining outcomes within the Theory of Change of any Sport for Protection programming.

Most coaches engaged in the projects are volunteers, themselves local community members, and many come from refugee contexts or are young people themselves. As a result, they do not always have the diverse set of competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) to support young people effectively. Coaches need ongoing training, mentoring and capacity development to be equipped to fulfil these roles.

Furthermore, volunteerism comes at a cost. Keeping coaches engaged in resource-poor contexts – particularly when they may be experiencing hardship or have limited control over their time and resources – is a significant challenge, and contributes to high turnover, especially where there are no funds to support retention.

Retention of coaches is therefore a significant challenge for the design and implementation of Sport for Protection programmes. It relies on getting the balance of incentives right – whether financial or personal incentives, or around professional development, motivation and satisfaction.

Developing an understanding of coaching systems and investing in partnerships that enable Sport for Protection programmes to draw on the assets of sport organizations (in terms of their systems for coach recruitment, development and support) should be a priority, as it is likely to strengthen the quality and sustainability of Sport for Protection programming.

4.4.8. Capacity development, tools and learning resources

The *Sport for Protection Toolkit* provides a comprehensive guide for a range of actors considering and/or implementing Sport for Protection programmes. It was intentionally designed in a context of limited resources and presents considerations for Sport for Protection across the programme cycle.

Given that Sport for Protection is an emerging field for UNHCR, ORF and partners, there will be an ongoing need to build understanding and capability to deliver, upscale and improve sport-based protection programming, both internally and with partners, into the foreseeable future.

The Toolkit, while valuable, is just one resource. It needs to be complemented by a range of products that speak to the wide range of humanitarian, sport and Sport for Protection practitioners, and provide insights, skills and resources to assist them in their work.

Throughout the evaluation, different stakeholders identified that they have different information needs. Coaches and project staff are seeking curricula and drills that can be adapted to different sports to support behaviour change programming. Programme managers are seeking guidance and tools with which to monitor and evaluate Sport for Protection initiatives. Others are seeking ongoing learning opportunities such as training and/or engagement in communities of practice so that they can pursue continuous learning to strengthen their programming.

5. Summary and conclusions

The evaluation brings evidence to support the understanding that **sport and sport-based activities**, when combined with structured efforts to provide information, develop life skills, and build positive relationships with their peers and communities, **can increase the protection space for young people living in displacement contexts**.

Enhancing protection space

The projects in Mexico and Rwanda succeeded in some part because in environments of scarcity, and where many young people are living with experiences of trauma, loss and abuse, **the projects provided young people with an opportunity to do physical activities in age-appropriate and safe settings, make new friends, relax, have fun, access information and support networks, and develop life skills**. They have also, to some extent, strengthened the protection systems around these young people, **making them visible to duty-bearers and increasing their own awareness of their rights and the protection mechanisms available to them**.

Specifically, the projects in Mexico and Rwanda supported positive outcomes for young refugees by:

- creating safe spaces for play;
- creating constructive leisure options;
- building confidence and a sense of well-being;
- creating and strengthening relationships between young refugees and their host communities;
- creating opportunities for young women and girls to access their right to play;
- increasing children's and young people's awareness of their rights;
- creating leadership opportunities – coach training and volunteer youth leaders;
- supporting child protection and safeguarding systems.

The key impact of these early investments in Sport for Protection for UNHCR and IOC/ORF is that they have **succeeded in making sport more relevant in the refugee protection space**. This is not only demonstrated by the positive feedback of young participants and the recognition by parents, communities and local leaders of the contribution sport has made to improving young people's well-being and engagement, but also, and perhaps most significantly, by the **unanimous recognition among the staff and leadership of project partners and UNHCR that these investments have made an important contribution to their protection work**.

Contributing factors

The evaluation identified a range of factors that contribute to the success of protection programming, namely:

- ensuring that all Sport for Protection programmes are grounded in **safeguarding best practice** and have minimum standards in place;

- **using integrated programmatic approaches** that focus on programme quality, including through locally led, outcome-focused design, appropriate resource planning, and strong MEL systems;
- working with and through local capacities, which strengthens systems, including through **partnerships with diverse actors** such as local sport and Sport for Development organizations, civil society, rights-holder organizations and government programmes;
- **investing in gender equality approaches that move beyond the participation and empowerment of women and girls**, and work to engage all actors, including young men, to address gendered socio-cultural norms and power dynamics;
- promoting inclusion for all by **engaging with rights-holder organizations** (such as disabled persons' organizations, organizations representing LGBTI+ individuals, and womens' rights organizations) to design appropriate programmes and messages that support specifically vulnerable and/or exclude groups to access their rights to participation and protection, and which transform relationships and bias;
- **positioning coaches as key actors** and ensuring that systems are in place to recruit, develop and retain them;
- **building capacity and making resource materials** available to support quality Sport for Protection programmes, such as MEL resources and tools, curricula, teaching modules and drills that utilise sport to impart targeted and tested behaviour change communications.

Future actions

The evaluation also found that **when the projects started**, UNHCR and IOC had limited financial and human resource capability to provide support. The UNHCR Sport Section comprised one person, the ORF was not yet established, and the IOC did not have an established grant-making system that embedded programme quality standards within design, appraisal, management and reporting arrangements.

For UNHCR, this meant that the responsibility for implementation was vest to field offices and partners who had limited experience in implementing sport-based programmes, and limited resources to establish the types of partnerships required or procure specialist expertise. Furthermore, there was no role established for external monitoring of projects or provision of technical assistance, either by the UNHCR Sport Section or IOC.

Since then, both UNHCR and IOC have undergone further organizational development. The UNHCR Sport Section has grown and there is increased recognition – both internally and externally – of the role that UNHCR can play in the Sport for Protection space. ORF has been established as the mechanism through which IOC channels support to refugees and displaced people, and there is increased capability in that team for technical support, partnership development, MEL and programme quality.

This means that together, UNHCR and ORF now have increased capability to work together to strengthen protection of young refugees and IDPs through sport.

The evaluation provides a range of recommendations designed to support UNHCR and IOC/ORF as their partnership moves forward. They should help the organizations to reflect on their respective

capabilities, and consider how these are best mobilized to support and add value to their Sport for Protection work by strengthening attention to:

- safeguarding;
- gender equality;
- social inclusion;
- partnerships;
- quality MEL and design systems;
- improved resource planning and resource allocation;
- investing in coaches as agents for change;
- capacity-building.

Specifically, this requires analysis and reflection on their individual strengths and weaknesses and strategic analysis of how each organization can, individually and collectively:

- use their **convening power and advocacy capabilities** to support access of refugee and displaced communities into the sport ecosystem;
- explore **alternative ways of mobilizing their resources**;
- become **co-collaborators with other Sport for Protection partners**, sport and Sport for Development organizations, civil society, rights-holder organizations and local governments;
- continue to **bring evidence** of the contribution of sport to human development and protection outcomes;
- **contribute to growing the pool of technical resources** to contribute to improved Sport for Protection capabilities within the global Sport for Peace and Development community of practice.

6. Recommendations

Evidence from the evaluation highlights the potential of structured sport to enhance the protection space and contribute positively to protection outcomes in situations of forced displacement. Together, UNHCR (with mandate in situations of forced displacement) and ORF (as the mechanism through which IOC channels support to refugees and displaced people) have the necessary reach and resources to enhance global Sport for Protection programming. The evaluation brings further evidence that this work can be strengthened through ongoing investment and quality improvement in eight key areas, as follows.

Recommendation 1: Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a first principle and sport should be safe for all young people. UNHCR and ORF should agree a safeguarding standard to be applied to all Sport for Protection activities, and ensure that MEL plans include monitoring and reporting mechanisms **for safeguarding** so that systems designed to protect children and young people are put in place, implemented and monitored.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 2: Gender equality

To benefit young women and girls in a meaningful way, programming approaches must move beyond participation and be designed to affirm young women's agency and right to protection, challenge gender norms and harmful masculine behaviour, and not reinforce negative stereotypes.

Future investments should move towards a gender equality approach that moves beyond simply targeting young women and girls, to affirmatively addressing the barriers that prevent their participation and leadership and engaging all programme actors to address the gendered issues experienced by women and girls. This should include undertaking gender analysis at the project design and inception phase, ensuring that there are gendered indicators to monitor the safety of women and girls, assessing changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, as well as the achievement of gendered outcomes.

At a practical level, both ORF and UNHCR should ensure that funding criteria, grant management arrangements and contracts establish clear standards for gender-inclusive design, MEL and reporting, and funding resources must be available to ensure that these are implemented.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 3: Inclusion for all

3a: Future programmes should ensure that strategies are in place to support social inclusion. They should:

- focus on behaviour change strategies that seek to transform social relationships;
 - remove the barriers that exclude specific groups from participating in project activities;
 - ensure that anti-bias training and inclusive policies are integrated into recruitment and at all stages of the programme cycle to ensure safe spaces for all stakeholders;
 - demonstrate engagement with rights-holders and rights-holder organizations to ensure that appropriate strategies and safeguards are in place to enable vulnerable and excluded groups to benefit equitably from programmes, and build the capability of implementing partners and coaches to create safe and inclusive environments for all;
 - monitor for inclusion outcomes, safety and risk.
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3.b Future investments need to plan more effectively for disability inclusion. They should:

- apply Universal Design Principles to all construction and reconstruction works;
- engage rights-holder organizations such as disabled persons' organizations and disability sport organizations to inform needs assessment, activity design and implementation;
- support twin-track approaches that provide targeted activities for people with disabilities while concurrently making reasonable accommodations that address the exclusion of people with disabilities from routine programming activities and promote their rights to participation and protection;
- equip programme staff, coaches and volunteers with the confidence and skills to support disability inclusion;
- adopt disability-focused indicators and MEL approaches.

At a practical level, both ORF and UNHCR should ensure that funding criteria, grant management arrangements and contracts establish clear standards for inclusive design, MEL and reporting.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 4: Partnership

Sport for Protection programming will have the best chance for success when implemented through partnerships between different and complementary actors, including sport and humanitarian actors, when the attributes of both come together.

Sport for Protection partnerships should be designed locally and seek to engage diverse sport and non-sport actors (such as government, rights-holder organizations, civil society, the Olympic movement, sport and Sport for Development organizations) to work towards the expected protection outcomes through a quality sport experience.

For the UNHCR–ORF partnership, this requires an intentional investment in exploring the variety of ways in which they can support and incentivize engagement and partnerships with diverse actors, to use sport to increase the protection space for young people in refugee and other displacement situations.

At the project level, this will require both UNHCR and ORF to reflect on their capabilities, strengths and limitations, and explore what additional capabilities they require and where these can be sourced from locally to maximize relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. It also requires UNHCR and ORF to invest in strategic partnerships and ensure that these diverse actors are engaged in the design of activities and at all stages of the project cycle.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 5: Quality systems and monitoring, evaluation and learning

The changes that Sport for Protection programmes aim to bring about are both complicated and complex. Quality frameworks must be in place and resourced to better equip programmes for success and guide progress towards behaviour change and systems change outcomes.

ORF, as the funding agency, should ensure that quality standards and guidance for the design, MEL, reporting and implementation of Sport for Protection programmes are in place and reflected within contractual obligations. These should include:

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- a project-level Theory of Change that describes the pathways of change in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, interactions and capabilities of various actors that lead to the desired outcomes;
 - costed MEL plans that include both output and outcome indicators and targets, which bring forward robust evidence to support a deeper analysis of how changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and capabilities of individuals, organizations and of communities have been brought about and, in turn, how these contribute to improved protection, inclusion and cohesion;
 - reporting arrangements that focus on analysing how change was brought about.

Where UNHCR or other partners subcontract this work, the standards established in the head contract should be vest in any subcontracts.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 6: Resource planning and mobilization

The sustainability of Sport for Protection programming requires a realistic and effective funding strategy that enables partners to implement activities while building the relationships that can support future capital investment and recurrent funding requirements.

6a: Sport for Protection funders such as ORF and UNHCR should review their funding models to ensure that these are fit for purpose and adequately provide for the various inputs required to deliver the intended outcomes, including activity resourcing, technical capacity, coaching and training, capital, depreciation and recurrent costs of sport equipment and facilities.

6b: Sport for Protection implementers such as UNHCR and its partners must take a medium-to-long term view at the design stage and ensure that their budgets provide both capital and recurrent funding for: the maintenance, replacement and management of equipment and sport facilities; the recruitment, training and retention of coaches; and delivery of regular Sport for Protection activities. They should work concurrently to secure longer-term arrangements for the supply of and access to equipment and facilities.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 7: Coaches as agents of change

7a: Coaches are central agents of change and should be positioned centrally with Sport for Protection theories of change. Systems for recruiting, developing, incentivizing, retaining and refreshing the coaching pool should be explicit and adequately resourced.

7b: UNHCR and ORF should consider investing in piloting, researching and documenting effective community-based coaching systems in resource-poor development contexts with a view to developing guidance for those implementing Sport for Protection programmes.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR

Recommendation 8: Capacity development, tools and learning resources

UNHCR and ORF should continue to explore opportunities to develop accessible and targeted knowledge products and tools to support capacity-building and learning in the Sport for Protection space. This should include consideration of how to create local learning networks (or communities of practice) in project locations to support partners to exchange knowledge, tools and resources to improve practices, and how to make existing communities of practice more accessible to local actors.

Responsibility: ORF and UNHCR
