

## Preface

The purpose of this paper is to make people aware of the fact that many children in this world are not free to play. This ISU focuses on the United Nations "Convention on the Rights of the Child". Specifically the focus is on Article 31, "... to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

In 1959 the declaration of the rights of the child was adopted by a UN General Assembly resolution. The United Nations declared the following:

### Section 4

The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end, special care and protection shall be provided both to him and his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation, and medical services.

## Section 7

The child shall have the full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities, shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of this right

(Declaration of the Rights of the Child Adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 1386(XIV) of December 1959).

This ISU will examine the child's right to play in developing countries across the world.

## *Part 2*

### Significance of the Issue (Why we should care?)

Through sport and play, children can learn many life skills and values. They can learn to be leaders. They can learn right and wrong. However, in the world today, many children may never have the chance to play and participate in sport. Many children are expected to earn money for their families. Due to the Aids epidemic in Africa, some children are relied on to look after younger family members. Some children are even forced to become child soldiers. Children must grow up quickly without experiencing a childhood. It is estimated that there are 246 million child laborers in our world (Shah).

The largest demographic of workers in Sub-Saharan Africa are children. Nearly one-third of children age fourteen and under (48 million children) are forced to work. The Asia-Pacific region holds the largest number of working children age 14 and under totaling 127 million (Shah).

In Sierra Leone, children have been traumatized by the wars that have persisted in their country. Many boys aged eight to ten years have been child soldiers. Amidst this turmoil, the country now is trying to rebuild. The goal of Right to Play is to show these children how to develop team work

and respect. Instead of playing with guns they are playing with soccer balls. This allows children to reintegrate into society. It is an investment in the human spirit. Children need to be involved in sport so that they will not slip back to being involved in conflict. Employment for children in Sierra Leon could be breaking stones all day for a two dollar weekly wage (Shah). In a sport and play program, children can have fun and experience childhood again. The program allows child soldiers and refugees to experience new opportunities for positive reinforcement (Right to Play). Another problem that the World Health Organization has identified is the number of children in the world who do not show normal physical development. Exercise and diet is essential for healthy developing children. However, "around 27-28 percent of all children in developing countries are estimated to be underweight or stunted. The two regions that account for the bulk of the deficit are South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa." (Shah).

Based on enrolment data, about 72 million children of primary school age in the developing world were not in school in 2005; 57 per cent of them were girls. Unfortunately, these are regarded as optimistic numbers (Shah).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has also stated that obesity is a problem in children and adults. Even in developed countries such as Canada and the United States, the health of children is at risk due to obesity. These children will grow and become unhealthy adults. “The (World Health Organization)’s latest projections indicate that globally in 2005, approximately 1.6 billion adults (age 15+) were overweight; at least 400 million adults were obese. WHO further projects that by 2015, approximately 2.3 billion adults will be overweight and more than 700 million will be obese. At least 20 million children under the age of 5 years are overweight globally in 2005” (WHO Factsheet).

Families in North America are eating fatty foods that contain empty calories. These foods are not nutritious. In addition, families do not exercise enough to burn off the calories that cause people to become overweight. People who are overweight develop cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke), diabetes, osteoarthritis and some types of cancer. Children who are obese will experience a poor quality of life due to illnesses. They will end up living shorter lives. The cycle will be repeated when children grow into an unhealthy adulthood and have children of their own. These infants experience a mother that is not healthy due to abuse of diet and lack of exercise.

Sport and play can also improve mental health. Sport can be used as a tool for the development of children and for education about peace. For example, using sport can help children with disabilities. Sport can enhance socialization and enable independence and participation. Also, sport promotes social inclusion by building trust and establishing bridges between groups in conflict. It also promotes a culture of peace. Sport gives children the ability to connect with each other in a positive way. Since sport is a very social event, it gives children the ability to identify with adults as their coaches. Sport also creates gender equality which improves mental health. Sport enhances girls' and women's health and well-being. It also provides opportunities for leadership and achievement (Right to Play).

Play is fundamental to all aspects of child development and is a key component in community and culture. Physical exercise is important in a child's normal growth and development. Children playing together present opportunities for social, moral and emotional development. Play helps to develop a child's personality and their ability to handle stress and conflict. With play children are able to develop social skills for later in life.

Religion can be a contributing factor in children's right to play. For example, Muslim women have, in the past, been internationally discriminated against for playing sports. However, there are several

examples of Muslim women participating in international competitions and recreational activities on their own terms. The Islamic religion can be discriminatory against women.

Religious Rights are also set out in the UN Convention (OHCHR)

Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights.

Article 2 states that children should not be discriminated against based on the religion, political opinion or status of their parents. Article 14 states that the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is to be respected. Parents need to be respected for the way that they provide direction for their children to exercise their rights. The freedom to one's rights and beliefs are limited by law in order that public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others are protected.

### *Part 3*

#### How is this a Global Issue?

The organization called Right to Play is a non-governmental organization that is an effective voice for the Rights of a Child as outlined by the United Nations convention on the rights of the child.

In 1924 children were at last considered important enough to be mentioned in a resolution passed by the Assembly of Nations endorsing the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In 1948, following WWII, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was discussed in Geneva, Switzerland. This document was passed by the United Nations. The document said that forced labour and genocide were against human rights for both adults and children (Volpe).

UNICEF was formed in 1946 to help children with emergency relief following World War II. UNICEF today helps children in underdeveloped countries.

In the UN convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and at the World Summit in 1990, children were recognized as having the same rights as adults and they were recognized as being vulnerable (Volpe).

### 1<sup>st</sup> Case Study Burmese Refugees in Thailand

In 2009, there were many children and youth that were living in refugee camps. There were also negative impacts due to discrimination, violence and lack of education for these refugees.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Case Study Rwanda

In 1994, there was a civil war and genocide in Rwanda. It was and remains one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. During the civil war, the education system was destroyed and now is in the process of being rebuilt. Additionally, HIV AIDS is a major problem. Therefore, children's games promoting peace building and co operation are important.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Case Study Azerbaijan

Large numbers of people live in poverty. When girls reach a higher level of education there are fewer girls that attend school. Uneducated people can be susceptible to extremism because they do not know how to break the cycle of poverty. People living in poverty can be vulnerable (Right to Play).

#### *Part 4*

##### Renowned Expert

Probably the greatest expert in the area of 'Right to Play' is Johann Olav Koss. Johann Olav Koss (born 29 October 1968) is a former speed skater from Norway, and he is said to be one of the greatest speed skaters in history. Johann Olav Koss was named the greatest Norwegian Olympic athlete ever (Right to Play).

The Organization Right to Play was founded by Johann Olav Koss in 2003. Johann Olav Koss is the President and CEO of 'Right to Play'. It brings sport to under-privileged youth in 23 countries around the world. Johann Olav Koss wanted to use sport and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. He also set out to teach children about teamwork, fair play, conflict resolution, self-esteem, communication, commitment, respect, and integrity. Johann Olav Koss has contributed a lot to Right to Play.

Another key person for 'Right to Play' is Robert Witchel, the National Director for Canada.

As the head of the Canadian National Office, Robert Witchel is responsible for leading Canadian revenue development, athlete and sports alliances, communications and stewardship activities. He possesses 15 years of

multi-disciplinary business experience in international business development, sales, marketing and operations in Canada, USA, Latin America and Europe. After extensive experience with technology and financial services companies, he entered the not-for-profit sector, where he worked with Canada's leading children's hospital for four years prior to joining Right to Play. Mr. Witchel worked with fundraising for Sick Kids Foundation (Right to Play).

Many high profile athletes volunteer their time with Right to Play. They travel to foreign countries to help to promote the programme. Canadian athletes such as Wayne Gretzky, Simon Whitfield, Hayley Wickenheiser, Adam Van Koeverden and Clara Hughes endorse Right to Play.

### *Part 5*

There appears to be many elements of 'Control' that affect this Global Issue of a Child's Right to Play. At the International level the United Nations, through UNICEF, has their own sponsored programmes with athletes like soccer star David Beckham. These programmes are very similar to Right to Play. There are many (non government organizations) NGO like Right to Play that have regional chapters and different programmes all around the world. The NGOs base their fundraising in certain countries around the world that they choose, not the government. For example, the government of Canada can not tell the organization Right to Play where to send athletes. But, somewhere there has to be overlap with government organizations and other NGOs. There is a lot of money that international governments put into funding the children's right to play. It would be interesting to analyze how efficiently these programmes are organized. The Right to Play mission statement states that it is, "To improve the lives of children in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world by using the power of sport and play for development, health and peace." These non government organizations have a desire to find places

in the world where they can help and where they are welcome (Right to Play).

There are many factors that could prevent non government organizations from effective work. These could include:

- Governments – Not allowing the activity
- Governments – Potential interference, profiteering, campaigning.
- Government Change – Policy changes / Priority Changes
- Items 1-3 could be considered for Canada as a sponsor, or a support-receiving country
- Competing with other NGOs- There are hundreds of NGOs fund-raising and securing volunteers for their focused cause. (Child poverty, Child health, Human Rights)
- Religious objections
- Prejudice – Cultural prohibitions. Children are not allowed to participate based on ethnicity and demographics.
- External Organization conflicts. The Vancouver Olympics VANOC did not allow Right to Play into the athlete's village. (Canadian Press)
- Availability of high-profile athletes willing to participate

### *Part 6*

Religious and spiritual views do in fact play a large role in a child's right to play for many reasons. Some interpretations of specific beliefs would prevent women from being able to participate in sport. Some cultures believe that a woman's whole body needs to be covered in clothing. There may be customs and behaviors where children have certain limitations in how they can interact with others, and this may have negative effects on sports or group exercises.

Usually, the non government organizations work with the local religions and try to stay unbiased. However, some global activities would be sponsored by a particular faith and have an element of participation in that faith.

Right to Play does not pick and choose countries based on religious aspects (Right to Play).

### **PART 7**

Thailand is a country that lies in the heart of Southeast Asia. Thailand has a population of approximately 64 million people. About 75% of the population is ethnically Thai, 14% is of Chinese origin, and 3% is ethnically

Malay. The rest belong to minority groups including Mons, Khmers and various hill tribes. There are approximately 2.2 million legal and illegal migrants in Thailand. (Central Intelligence Agency Thailand) Thailand has also attracted a number of expatriates from developed countries. The country's official language is Thai.

Right to Play entered Thailand in June of 2002. They set out to start sport programs in Burmese Refugees camps in Tham hin and Ban Don. Today, the Burmese government continues to exploit its people through forced labor and conscription, excessive taxation, physical and sexual abuse, and restrictions on political and economic freedom. The military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), is extracting the country's natural resources and using the proceeds for excessive military and security programs, expensive capital projects and corruption, while decreasing support to health, education and food production (Burmese Refugees).

This has caused thousands of refugees to leave Burma and move to Thailand. Unfortunately, life in Thailand is not much better. The refugees are faced with discrimination from the Thai people. Seeing this disruption, Right to Play has gone into the camps to help the children and youth through this tough time (Right to Play).

Right to Play set out to reach 13,000 children and youth in five refugee camps across Thailand. There are more than 150,000 refugees living in Thailand today. In order to be successful in refugee camps, Right to Play sought connections with other programs in Thailand. These included the Karen Education Department and the Royal Thai Government. While working in the refugee camps, Right to Play set up different variations of sport to develop the minds of the children and youth. The first approach was to work with The Karen Education Department in primary schools. This approach was meant to instruct teachers in how to play certain games in The Red Ball program. The goal was to get physical education teachers to train their colleagues so eventually weekly play days would be a regular part of a child's week. Also, both boys and girls were allowed to participate in these weekly activities.

The second approach was a specialized training program where Right to Play would train community volunteers so that they could become leaders in sports such as soccer and basketball. Through specialized sport training, leaders learn important coaching principles in addition to management skills required to effectively run sport leagues, plan and implement special events such as play days and manage the use of equipment and resources (Right to Play).

Without the training of leaders there would be no structured Play days.

There may be discrimination between the boys and girls. For example, the boys might not let the girls join in their games. Additionally, without the training in the management of the use of equipment many of the soccer balls could get lost or stolen and the lack of equipment would hinder the play days. After the leaders have been trained, Right to Play comes back to check up with the new leaders. By doing this, Right to Play is checking to make sure that the leaders are correctly carrying out the play day and they are also looking to make sure that the new youth leaders are not discriminating against children in any way. Right to Play wants to make sure everything is working well by providing constructive feedback.

Right to Play focuses on four key activities in the refugee camps in Thailand. These are Community Capacity Building, Child and Youth Participation, Stakeholder and Community ownership and Basic Sport Equipment Provisions, and Light Infrastructure development. It was impressive that the Basic Sport Equipment Provisions and Light Infrastructure were funded by Right to Play, because the cost of equipment and playing areas can be expensive.

As of 2009, the program has been successful. These successes include training over 400 youth leaders and teachers that will continue to organize play days in the future. Also, regular check-ups on equipment have been

carried out. The 2009 program reached many children in the Burmese Refugee program. Over 13,000 children and youth have been reached with an almost 50/50 split between boys and girls. The thousands of children that have been helped with this program have received more than just fun through sport. They have benefited mentally as well as physically. For example, children that have lived their whole life inside a refugee camp without a stable home now have something that they can rely on and trust. Children can have fun with their friends despite what their families may be going through.

Right to Play has also helped children in Rwanda. Rwanda is known as 'the land of a thousand hills'. The country has an area of 10,169 square miles and a population of approximately 9 million. Rwanda is, by all measures, a poor country (CIDA). The 1994 war destroyed the country's economy, social fabric, human resource base, and institutions. Almost 90 percent of the population lives on less than US\$2 per day and half of its population live on less than US\$1 per day. (National Encyclopedia)

Government statistics indicated that 65.3 percent of the people lived below the poverty line in 1998.

Though the Rwandan government reports that 87 percent of the population lived within 2 hours walking distance of a health care facility in 1996, the quality of the Rwandan people's health is quite poor. Life expectancy is low, and malnutrition is high. Malaria and respiratory diseases, which are rarely the cause of death in more developed countries, are the biggest killers in Rwanda. Not only are the people unhealthy, they are also poorly educated. According to government reports, only 46 percent of Rwandan teachers are qualified. Teaching materials are poor, and drop-out rates are high. Only 7 percent of eligible students were enrolled in secondary schools in 1998. (National Encyclopedia)

Right to Play began its operations in Rwanda in 2003, in Kigali. Right to Play went into Africa to further its reach and begin operations in that country. Although Right to Play had one office in Rwanda already, they decided to open a second office in a town called Gisenyi. Because of this, Right to Play now has a very good relationship with the local authorities in both Kigali and Gisenyi. One of Right to Play's goals in Rwanda is peace building, since Rwanda has had a history of being a violent nation and also, HIV and AIDS are causing many people to die in the country. Right to Play started the Live Safe, Play Safe program. This program was put in

place to make sure that children know the effects of these viruses and learn how to prevent them (Right to Play).

In 1994, when the genocide happened, all of Rwanda was devastated. After the genocide Rwanda has had problems rebuilding infrastructures such as schools. Children that are not able to go to school may never know what it feels like to have fun as a young child. Since these children do not have a moral voice telling them what is right or wrong, they may take the wrong path, potentially becoming child soldiers. 54% of children enrolled in the primary education system do not go on to complete grade five. (Canadian International Development Agency). Fortunately, the Government of Rwanda, by 2015, will make sure that every child, especially girls, will have access to free education. (Right to Play). Right to Play wants to help this country. Right to Play has three major objectives in Rwanda.

Play to Learn Program Objectives:

1. Leaders enhance the quality of formal and non-formal education for girls and boys in Right to Play target communities.

2. The athletes from Right to Play counsel children to become aware of preventative measures against HIV and AIDS through the use of sport and play.

3. Leaders Increase sensitization and awareness of importance of sport and play as a tool for learning at community and national level.

With these program objectives in place Right to Play can now focus on the training of new leaders and the overall fun for the children (Right to Play).

In 2008, Right to Play had trained 625 new youth leaders. Also, Right to Play had reached over 50,000 children with 48% of those participants being female. This is an outstanding achievement.

The third case study is in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is located at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Azerbaijan has a population of nearly ten million people. Despite an increasing economy from the oil rich natural resources, Azerbaijan is still a lower middle class income country. About one third of Azerbaijan population lives on one or two dollars a day. This causes many kids to drop out of school early to work or to help with their families back at home (Right to Play).

Right to Play has been in Azerbaijan since 2004 and began activities in 2005. Their goal was to reach over 15,000 youth in three years. Over the three years Right to Play worked in cities such as Ganja, Guba, Lenkaran and many others. Through sport Right to Play wanted to train youth leaders from Azerbaijan. The idea was that when the organization leaves, the next generation of children will have role models to look up to and aspire to so they can also become successful like the youth leaders have been. A few ways that Right to Play does this is through games and activities. These activities' are unique to Right to Play in Azerbaijan. They include:

*Red Ball Child Play* (ages 6 – 12): This is a sport and play-based activity set that promotes intellectual, physical, emotional and social development in children

*Youth As Leader* (ages 13 – 20+): This program develops leadership skills and attitudes through sport and play based games and activities. The interactive resource engages youth in meaningful activities and develops in youth a sense of efficacy, pride, confidence and belonging. Activities in this resource will develop knowledge, leadership skills and positive attitudes (Right to Play).

Right to Play uses sport in these cities to gather the entire community to let them know the important issues that affect the children and youth. It also promotes and works towards building safe, supportive, and inclusive environments at the family, school and community level.

Right to Play has set values in Azerbaijan that include:

1. Programs enhance educational, emotional, and social development of children.
2. Programs encourage meaningful participation of children, especially female children, and youth in their own development.
3. Programs increase the capacity of teachers, especially female teachers in child-centered learning and holistic child development
4. Programs raise awareness of the benefits of sport and play, holistic child development, and female participation in the community (Right to Play).

Right to Play is working with other organizations in Azerbaijan such as UNICEF, Youth clubs and Internally Displaced Personal schools. These organizations help with the issue of social exclusion. Social exclusion is the failure of society to provide certain individuals and groups with those rights and benefits normally available to its members. This is an issue that the government of Azerbaijan has admitted to needing help with. This is mostly seen with gender related disparity. Although school enrolment in

Azerbaijan is roughly the same for boys and girls, most girls drop out at a young age and get married or help with work back at home. Many young people also lack basic life skills which would enable them to lead healthy lives. There are few opportunities for young people to meet socially. Young people face an uncertain future, and many, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, are left feeling passive, wishing to leave the country or vulnerable to extremism' (Right to Play).

Right to Play wants to make a difference in these social issues. Right to Play estimates that approximately 15,000 children and youth will benefit from this project. Almost all of these kids have been reached through the school programs. These school programs have been set up by Right to Play in local schools in Azerbaijan. The citizens, to date, that have benefited from Right To Play include 400 trained youth leaders, 10,000 children from Child Friendly Schools, and 3400 Internally Displaced children, 200 children from Special Schools/Institutions, and 1500 youth and children reached through Youth Clubs. Right to Play has played a major role in Azerbaijan and has certainly met the goals they originally set out to reach (Right to Play).

Recent results in the past year in Azerbaijan have been very good. The program has received positive feedback from the communities and has

also achieved great growth in the overall program. Even more leaders have been trained in the communities and the program has also expanded into more cities across Azerbaijan. All the equipment continues to be monitored by Right to Play to make sure that all the students and leaders have access to it. The program will continue to run for the next two years with even better results expected to happen each year.

## PART 8

Non-government organizations (NGOs) often have established relationships with local communities and organizations. They need to have great support from the local community so they can be successful because they do not receive any government funding. Even though non-government organizations have the right intentions they are not guaranteed to always work in the interest of communities.

Along with Right to Play there are many other organizations that assist the relief effort for children. These groups recognize that all over the world children have the rights to play and have an education system that will support them in their overall achievements in life.

A major international organization that promotes children in poverty stricken countries is UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). UNICEF gets kids to participate in sports such as soccer to raise awareness for things such as HIV and AIDS. Also, UNICEF has a long history of bringing child soldiers back to their families and communities. After the children have experienced the horror of war, they need to be rehabilitated. This is done by various steps. Using sport is one of the ways considered (UNICEF).

In 1989, the United Nations signed the Convention on the rights of the child. Not only does the movement allow children the right to play, it also restricts governments allowing children in various military outbursts.

Additionally, it stops the sale of children. This shows the improvements that have been made in recent years regarding a child's right to play. The provisions that have been made are optimistic.

Around the world, an estimated 300,000 children under the age of 18 are currently participating in armed conflicts in approximately 30 countries.

Recent studies have shown in 2002, Burma had the most child soldiers in the world and the numbers were continuing to rise. At one point there were over 70,000 child soldiers in Burma. "The Burmese army is forcibly recruiting children to cover gaps left by a lack of adult recruits "(United Nations). Unfortunately as of 2007, this practice was still continuing. The provisions that the United Nations have put in place seem to have not taken place. It seems that a lot of focus has been put into Africa and less interest on other countries. So clearly not everything that the United Nations has done has completely helped but it has put a light onto these problems and maybe it's just a matter of time before the rights of a child will be fully maximized.

Non- government organizations have a responsibility to be accountable to the communities in which they work. The best way to do this is to build

relationships with those communities and to seek to make aid unnecessary.

Non- government aid should:

- Empower people and strengthen community processes;
- Be based on respect, dialogue and long-term partnership;
- Be poverty-focused;
- Be sustainable;
- Work in solidarity with local communities for social justice;
- Be mutually transparent and accountable;
- Actively seek to address unequal power between international and local staff and the organization and the communities they work with (Right to Play).

Right to Play works with many different non-government organizations around the world. For example, in Azerbaijan, Right to Play uses orphanages, boarding schools and schools for children with special needs to run their programmes. Without these non- government organizations, it would be harder to identify the various problems in Azerbaijan.

There are also many faith based NGOs that play a large role in the development of children globally. Faith based organizations operate under religious values or teachings.

Although the intention is sound, there are a lot of people that are very skeptical, or at least cautious, of non-government organizations that operate under religious views. Another consideration is whether the religious foundations of an organization potentially impede a non-government organization's ability to participate in vital development activities. For example, the Catholic Church's anti-contraception stance might hinder its involvement in HIV/AIDS prevention programs (Right to Play).

Right to Play may be the most well known in Canada. It is not the only organization of its kind. Laureus is also a non-government organization. Laureus' core concept is to create global awards that recognize the achievements of today's sports heroes. They work by supporting a message that can help social projects around the world that are using sport as a tool for social change. Laureus was the first to attempt to enhance a child's mind through sport (Laureus).

Non government organizations are needed all around the world and Right to Play depends greatly on non-government organizations that are based in the countries that they work in.

## PART 9

Right to Play has a large role in Canada. Although Canada is overall a very wealthy nation there are citizens that still suffer from poverty. Canada represents a different case when it comes to Right to Play. For example, Right to Play does most of its work in poverty stricken countries where children receive little education and have few opportunities in life.

However, in Canada, all children receive free education and have many more opportunities. With child obesity becoming a great concern the Canadian government wants children to start getting more active so that they can live longer and healthier lives. It has now been said that the latest generation of children will be the first generation that will not outlive their parents. In Canada, approximately 5% of the budget is spent on sport programs, while 25% of the budget is spent on persons over 65 (Volpe).

This leaves many families not able to enroll their children in sports programs. For example, most families cannot afford to enroll the children in hockey because of the cost of the equipment, the cost of the fees and the cost of travel. Hockey is too expensive for the majority of Canadians.

Additionally, many families on native reserves across Canada are unable to afford to play hockey.

In January 2010, the government of Ontario started a new partnership with Right to Play to promote healthy lifestyles with Aboriginal youth (Bock).

This new project is also known as the P.L.A.Y. project. It is meant to promote healthy lifestyles through sport and recreation. On native reserves 36% of children are considered obese. This is a huge problem that the government is trying to remedy.

Johann Olav Koss, President and CEO for Right to Play stated:

"This is a ground breaking venture for Right to Play as it marks the first time our programming will be implemented in Canada. We are honored to have Ontario's Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs' trust in our organization as we embark on working in concert with First Nations communities where we hope to improve the lives of children through the power of sport and play. Our experience throughout the world is that building life skills in youth is one of the best investments a community can make in improving the social conditions for the future. Sport, recreation and play based activities inspire children and youth to become healthier, more confident and leaders in their own communities. We look forward to working with children and their communities in Ontario's north" (Right to Play).

This is the first time Right to Play will be carrying out a project in Canada.

This first location that Right to Play will be working at is the Moose Cree First Nation located on James Bay in Northern Ontario. Right to Play plans to bring hockey to the first nation people in James Bay, Ontario. If successful, the program will expand to other first nation peoples across Canada.

Obesity is a serious problem all over Canada. In 2004, approximately 6.8 million Canadian adults, ages 20 to 64 were overweight, and an additional 4.5 million were obese (Public Health). Measures can be taken to change this problem. First, we must start by instilling in young people's minds that they must be active in order to live a long and healthy life. Obesity substantially increases the risk of developing some of the most debilitating chronic diseases like, type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. Obesity also affects physical health, and can have an effect on a person's mental health (e.g., poor self esteem) (Public Health).

The Canadian government needs to have more programmes that will make children want to become active. They need to pay attention to this because it will affect the government's health care costs. Direct and indirect costs associated with obesity have been estimated at \$4.3 billion in 2001.

Lack of physical activity is not the only contributor to child obesity. In recent years food prices have dropped significantly and the incomes for

families have increased. Many families in Canada are buying better tasting, high fatty food because they can afford it. In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food. In 2000, they spent more than \$110 billion. Child obesity will remain a problem in our society if we keep eating food that is bad for our bodies. If Canadian children can eat healthier and live a more active lifestyle then child obesity will no longer be an issue (Public Health).

Along with Right to Play there are others who try to make a difference in the Native communities all across Canada. Joe Juneau, who is a retired NHL player, uses hockey as a tool to keep Native children enrolled in school and teaches them the importance of education at a higher level.

Joe Juneau's approach is different from Right to Play's because his main focus is not just on keeping Native children active. He focuses on using hockey to motivate Native children to become successful in school.

Currently Joe Juneau is working in Kuujjuaq with 14 different villages.

Kuujjuag is located in remote northern Quebec. His program recently had over 1000 participants. All Native children must follow the three rules.

These rules are that they are required to attend school without fail, behave while in class and put out a maximum effort. Failure in meeting these three requirements results in loss of hockey privileges for a week. In return each

child has practices from trained coaches after school. Joe Juneau's efforts, thus far, have been a success. (Canadian Council)

## PART 10

### Possible Solutions?

Right to Play is an organization working with volunteers and partners to use sport and play to enhance child development in disadvantaged areas. Agencies can enhance child development across the world. It would only cost \$50 a year to support a child with weekly sport and play activity (Right to Play).

One possible solution is for western government aid to be sent to developing nations to support child sport and play activities. If Canada and the USA were to support child sport and play activities in an effort to enhance child development in poverty stricken countries it would surely have a positive effect on children and youth around the world. But with western government aid some countries may be left out of the financial support due to foreign policies. Also, with changing governments in western countries, the countries that receive the support may also change. Foreign aid supports employment in the donating countries' industry. For example, CIDA (Canada International Development Agency) looks for a large percentage of Canadian content when they provide aid to a country.

Also, when donating materials to support play activities, CIDA must be wary of the misuse of the materials.

Another possible solution is for religious based missions to use sport and play as a tool to reach specific populations. This is an opportunity for religious groups to help a greater cause. The only negative to this could be various faith elements could become a priority and begin to over look why they are there in the first place. Also some faiths may refuse to work in certain areas of the world where work is needed the most.

Another solution is to let various non-government organizations like Right to Play, Laureus, and the International Play Association help with the development of children through sport. For example, Right to Play brings sports heroes from all over the world into various countries to meet face to face with the children. This could inspire kids to achieve greater goals in life. Some negatives with non-government organizations may be, that to manage on a day to day basis a lot of donated money goes towards wages and expenses. The money does not go directly to helping children. Also, different organizations may compete with each other for the most fundraising money and may drift away from the original goal of helping children.

In conclusion, the purpose of this paper was to create awareness to the fact that many children in this world are not free to play. Many children have to deal with the effects of not living a normal childhood and growing up without a proper education about the world that they live in. Right to Play will continue in the future to help children in developing countries live healthy, active and happy lives. Right to Play will also promote healthy living by continuing to help children in developed countries, like Canada, to overcome child obesity.

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## Appendix I - Letter to Robert Witchel

March 1st, 2010

To: Robert Witchel

[rwitchel@righttoplay.com](mailto:rwitchel@righttoplay.com)

Right to Play - National Director  
Dominion Square, 468 Queen Street East, LL1  
Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1T7

Hello Mr. Witchel,

My name is Thomas Pigden, and I am a Grade 11 student enrolled at Innisdale Collegiate in Barrie, Ontario.

Currently, I am studying in a programme called "Global Perspectives"; this integrated course blends History, Literature, Art, Political Science and Religious studies. The course is also linked to the City of Barrie's Global Ambassadors programme, and we will have to opportunity to represent our school, and our city, in an exchange to Zweibrücken, Germany, in June 2010.

As part of the course, each student must select a significant Global issue, and produce a major paper/presentation outlining and discussing the issue. I have chosen to work on the United Nations "Convention on the Rights of the Child". Specifically, I plan to focus on Article 31, "... to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts." I am an active part of the sporting community here in Barrie, playing hockey, soccer, and competitive basketball. This subject is something that pulls together both academics and sports.

Your organization, "Right-to-Play" is a great fit for this project and I hope I can reach out to your organization for some support and understanding.

If possible, I hope to be in contact with your team and create a small list of questions that will help support the project.

Examples,

- Right-to-Play Canada's role in developing nations
- Some thoughts on how you deal with other similar organizations (like Laureus)
- Perhaps a question relating to nutrition and obesity in children
- Right-to-Play Canada, and activities in Canada, Ontario, and small cities like Barrie.

Many thanks for your time and interest.

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## Appendix II

KEY FIGURES	2008	2007
Active Leaders	240	Project not active
Leaders Trained	467	
Child Reach	15,000	
Play Days Held	32	
Participation in Play Days	1,832	
Rehabilitated Play Spaces	2	
Female Participation	N/A	

Azerbaijan Project Snapshot <http://www.righttoplay.com/switzerland/our-impact/Pages/Countries/Azerbaijan.aspx#involvement>

## Appendix III

Key Figures	2008	2007	2006
Active Leaders	625	492	145
Leaders Trained	1,041	783	
Child Reach	50,141	32,748	4,092
Play Days Held	4	3	
Participation in Play Days	6,573	3,084	
Rehabilitated Spaces	3	1	
Female Participation	48%	45%	

Rwanda Project Snapshot <http://www.righttoplay.com/switzerland/our-impact/Pages/Countries/RwandaPSD.aspx>

## Appendix IV

<b>Key Figures</b>	<b>2008*</b>	<b>2007*</b>
Active Leaders	484	178
Child Reach	11,123	4,700
Play Days Held	3	2
Participation in Play Days	600	270
Rehabilitated Play Spaces and Equipment Sets Provided	129	101
Female Participation	50%	45%

\*Reflects beneficiary reach in Trang, Krabi, Satun, Songhkla and Yala. In 2009 beneficiary reach will expand to include Phuket, and include reduced numbers in Trang, Satun and Songhkla.

Thailand Project Snapshot <http://www.righttoplay.com/our-impact/Pages/Countries/ThailandSouthern.aspx>