

NATIONAL COALITION ON SPORT FOR PROTECTION: A Policy Framework

INTRODUCTION

This policy brief should be read in conjunction with the policy brief [Sport for Protection through Education: Conflicting Policy Frameworks](#) that identified policy gaps to institutionalize Sport for Protection through educational activities in Jordan, and advocated for Jordanian stakeholders to invest in Sport for Protection programmes within formal and nonformal education activities.

Responding to this need, this policy brief details implementation mechanisms to establish a National Coalition on Sport for Protection. The Coalition would align the national protection framework with Jordan's commitments to international sport guidelines to institutionalize Sport for Protection in Jordan.

Two concepts are crucial in this discussion: Sport for Protection and Safeguarding in Sport, but they serve distinct purposes. Sport for Protection focuses on using sport as a tool to support and protect vulnerable populations, particularly in humanitarian contexts like refugee camps or conflict-affected areas. It aims to provide psychological, social, and physical protection to those at risk of violence, exploitation, or marginalization. Safeguarding

in Sport is concerned with ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants within sports environments. It involves implementing policies and practices that prevent and respond to abuse, harassment, and other forms of harm to make the sport environment itself a safe space for all.

The suggested mechanisms for the Coalition are based on a detailed discussion at a Policy Analysis Meeting, organized by GFP, with eight stakeholders in the fields of sport, protection, and education on June 27, 2024. An in-depth discussion on the suggested mechanisms took place in two interviews with UNHCR and the Ministry of Education on 6 and 14 August 2024 respectively.

This policy brief is part of Riadati / رياضتي Programme, funded by the Olympic Refugee Foundation and implemented by Generations For Peace since 2022. The programme seeks to improve the psychosocial well-being of 15,000 vulnerable refugee and Jordanian children through sport activities delivered in UNICEF's Makani Centres and summer camps in public schools. The analysis in the policy briefs builds on identified policy design needs in programme activities.

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STRATEGIC INSIGHTS AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

The policy brief [“Sport for Protection through Education: Conflicting Policy Frameworks”](#) has documented the positive impact of sport activities, conducted as part of Riadati, on the psychosocial well-being of Jordanian and refugee children on few key indicators. The discussion highlighted key concerns related to the alignment of national protection framework and guidelines of international sport agencies that the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) and other sport actors adhere to, hence the recommendation to establish a national Coalition co-headed by the JOC, which manages the sport scene, and the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA), as the main umbrella of child protection.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has a distinct role in the Coalition, and the Directorate of School Counselling at the ministry estimates that the Coalition will help address critical protection needs within the educational system.¹ This includes material, innovation, and capacity building needs. For example, sport infrastructure in schools remains weak with low ability to accommodate inclusivity needs, particularly for students with disabilities. Likewise, the number of physical activity classes in schools should be increased, to include traditional and innovative sport activities to allow all students to participate, regardless of physical excellence, thereby enhancing their physical health and development.²

¹ Interview with the Directorate of School counselling at the Ministry of Education, Amman, 14 August 2024.

² Ibid.

However, schools cannot account for all protection needs. Therefore, the Coalition will offer a framework for coordinated efforts to meet protection needs of children in sport outside of schools, such as in sport clubs or through e-sport. Any protection-related issues encountered in these settings could negatively impact a child's psychosocial well-being.³ For example, Meera, a child participant in Riadati summer camp, notes:

“The extensive use of social media caused me to feel lonely and sad..., which led me to a cycle of laziness and an addiction to screens. However, the Summer Sports Camp forced me out of my comfort zone. I had to get dressed every day, meet new people, and play sports I had never tried before. I realized that on days I attended the camp, I felt better – more energized, happy, and active. It positively affected my mood and how I feel about myself.”⁴

INSIGHTS FROM OTHER MODELS

A few existing models can guide the design, structure, and activities of the proposed Coalition. The discussion is limited here to the two most relevant examples.

THE SPORT FOR REFUGEES COALITION (SFRC)

The Sport for Refugees Coalition (SfRC) offers a blueprint for the proposed National Coalition on Sport for Protection in Jordan. Established in 2019 around the first Global Refugee Forum,

³ Ibid.

⁴ Meera Dmour, 14 years old, Riadati Summer Camp participant.

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and led by UNHCR, the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF), and the Scort Foundation,⁵ SfRC has brought together over 120 entities from various sectors, including sport organizations, civil society groups, and both public and private sectors.⁶ This broad coalition demonstrates how a comprehensive network can enhance support and protection for refugees through sport.

SfRC strategic roadmap integrates sport into the global conversation on refugees, offering opportunities to emphasize sport's role in fostering protection and inclusion.⁷ The Jordanian Coalition can strategically plan its activities, leverage significant events, and enhance its visibility and impact as part of a broader global movement. The Coalition can leverage global events, such as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, to showcase its efforts. This can also enhance the Coalition's visibility and impact by positioning it as part of a broader global movement, attracting support from international stakeholders and donors. It can facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaboration with global partners, ensuring the adoption of

best practices and innovative approaches in Jordan.

SfRC's strategic commitments, such as ensuring access to safe sporting facilities, increasing organized sports opportunities, and promoting participation in events,⁸ offer a structured approach to achieving goals and tracking progress. The Jordanian Coalition can adopt similar pledges, focusing on enhancing access to sports facilities for refugees and local communities, and promoting organized sports programs.

Establishing measurable objectives will help demonstrate impact. The Coalition could draw inspiration from Turkey's "Sports for All" initiative, which integrates Syrian refugees into the local community by establishing shared sport fields and organizing leagues that include both refugees and Turkish citizens.⁹ Similarly, by creating sports fields in areas with large refugee populations in Jordan and organizing joint leagues, the Coalition could enhance social cohesion. Success could be measured by increasing participation from both groups, which would also strengthen support from stakeholders and the international community.

⁵ The International Platform on Sport and Development. "About the Sport for Refugees Coalition," The International Platform on Sport and Development, (n.d.). Retrieved August 12, 2024. <https://www.sportanddev.org/thematic-areas/sport-and-refugees/about-sport-refugees-coalition>.

⁶ Sport for Refugees Coalition. "Sport for Refugees Coalition Members," The International Platform on Sport and Development, March 2024. https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Sport%20for%20Refugees%20Coalition%20Members%202023_clean.pdf.

⁷ Sportanddev.org Community, Sport for Refugees Coalition. "Sport for Refugees Coalition: 2024 – 2027 kick-off meeting," The International Platform on Sport and

Development, 11 April 2024. <https://www.sportanddev.org/latest/news/sport-refugees-coalition-2024-2027-kick-meeting>.

⁸ The International Platform on Sport and Development. "About the Sport for Refugees Coalition," The International Platform on Sport and Development, (n.d.). Retrieved August 12, 2024. <https://www.sportanddev.org/thematic-areas/sport-and-refugees/about-sport-refugees-coalition>.

⁹ Brendon Knott, "Sport and Development in Emerging Nations," Academia.edu, November 14, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/109172655/Sport_and_Development_in_Emerging_Nations?auto=download.

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Integration with broader platforms and initiatives has been a key factor in SfRC's effectiveness. By aligning with the International Platform on Sport and Development and managing events like the "Week of Action,"¹⁰ the SfRC has enhanced its outreach and coordination.¹¹

The Jordanian Coalition can learn from SfRC's strategic commitments by promoting access to safe and inclusive sporting facilities, increasing organized sport initiatives tailored to diverse needs, and ensuring equal participation in events. Additionally, fostering collaboration and advocacy among local organizations could strengthen Jordan's efforts. Replicating awareness campaigns, can raise awareness on sport role in supporting the well-being of refugees and Jordanians.

UNHCR Sport Strategy (2022-2026)

The UNHCR Sport Strategy (2022-2026) offers another example that reflects the strategic stance UNHCR has taken in the relation between sport and protection. The strategy emphasizes the positive impact of sport in psychosocial protection for individuals and communities, highlights the need for a cohesive and aligned approach within the sport ecosystem, to ensure that actions across

various areas collectively contribute to meaningful results.¹²

In line of this approach, the formation of a national Coalition would coordinate efforts and amplify these benefits and offer a national framework for UN agencies and INGOs to meet locally identified needs and pathways.¹³

The Coalition can draw on several steps from UNHCR Sport Strategy. First, the Coalition should encourage inclusive sport- and play-based programming that ensures participation for all individuals, regardless of age, gender, or disability. This requires tailored sport initiatives to address local and refugee populations needs.

Enhancing communication and advocacy efforts is crucial for raising awareness and mobilizing support. The Coalition should leverage sport as a platform for advocacy by organizing events that highlight refugee protection needs and the benefits of sport for protection. Developing a comprehensive communication strategy that engages media and stakeholders will increase visibility and support for Sport for Protection.

Utilizing sport for policy engagement is also important. The Coalition should host high-profile sport events and conferences that bring together policymakers and sport leaders to promote sport as a tool for protection and

¹⁰ "A week of activities on the sportanddev platform dedicated to the intersection of sport and refugees. It provides opportunities for interested organisations to exchange and learn from each other about working with refugees, raise awareness of the role of sport in responses to forced displacements, and promote coordination across the sport ecosystem." <https://www.sportanddev.org/thematic-areas/sport-and-refugees/about-sport-refugees-coalition>.

¹¹ UNHCR. "The Sport for Refugees Coalition Explores the Innovative Role of Sports in Advancing Refugee Self-

Reliance at the First High-Level Officials Meeting: The Global Compact on Refugees." Retrieved August 20, 2024, <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/sport-refugees-coalition-explores-innovative-role-sports-advancing-refugee-self-reliance-first-high>.

¹² UNHCR. "UNHCR Sport Strategy 2022 – 2026," UNHCR, November 2022. <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/our-partners/sport-partners/unhcr-sport-strategy-2022-2026>.

¹³ Associate Child Protection Officer at UNHCR, Group Discussion, Amman, 27 June 2024.

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inclusion. Sport diplomacy initiatives can improve advocate for stronger national and international protection policies.

Resource mobilization strategies are vital for sustaining the Coalition’s efforts. The Coalition should develop a resource mobilization plan that includes fundraising from private sector sponsors, securing grants from foundations, and forming partnerships with development banks. Leveraging the sport ecosystem to obtain in-kind contributions, such as equipment and facilities, will enhance program delivery and reach.

The Coalition should build alliances with national sport federations, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and refugee support agencies to ensure a coordinated approach. Coordination efforts will help align with national protection policies and leverage collective expertise and resources.

Finally, prioritizing capacity-building and localization will ensure sustainability and effectiveness. The Coalition should invest in local organizations and leaders by providing training and support for managing and implementing sport-based initiatives. Promoting community involvement in the planning and execution of programs will help ensure they are locally relevant and sustainable.

SUGGESTED STAKEHOLDERS

For the suggested Coalition to succeed, research on Sport for Protection in Jordan, as well as consultations with eight key stakeholders on 27 June 2024, has identified

sport, protection, and education sectors as the core pillars of the envisaged national Coalition.



Figure 1: Main actors in the field of sport, protection, and education.

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IMPLEMENTATION PHASES

The main purpose of the Coalition is to align the national protection framework with protection guidelines followed in the sport sector as per Jordan's international sport commitments. This would entail agreeing on a definition for protection, and for Sport for Protection. The Coalition would then enable more efficient coordination and cooperation between concerned stakeholders, who voiced concern on limited, or at times, non-existent coordination.¹⁴

More specifically, the envisaged Coalition will:

- Unify efforts of stakeholders working towards child protection in Jordan;
- Establish and enforce protection standards;
- Foster a culture of protection within two crucial sectors: education and sports;
- Facilitate policy reform and design to encourage Sport for Protection programmes within educational and sport activities.

To achieve these goals and instrumentalize sport as the successful and desired tool for protection, the Coalition can follow four key steps (Figure 2) under the joint leadership of the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) and the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA).




Figure 2: Implementation phases of a National Coalition on Sport for Protection.


¹⁴ Several stakeholders, Policy Analysis Meeting at GFP, June 27, 2024.

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The following breakdown of the four phases reflects the collective vision for the Coalition's impact and strategic objectives that were outlined for each phase during consultations with stakeholders.

 <p>Phase One Establishing Commitment</p>	<p>Formal Agreements to Solidify Commitment of Coalition Members</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assign and agree on leadership responsibilities between NCF and JOC as the head of the Coalition. 2. Clearly define the expectations, responsibilities, and contributions of each stakeholder. 3. Promote accountability by delineating distinguishable responsibilities for Coalition members with specific roles and duties, for Coalition members. 4. The structure of the Coalition will include roles on three main areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of Sport for Protection - Strategic communication - Inclusivity 5. The Coalition will also establish internal working groups that focus on school students, athletes and children in sports, refugees, and people with disabilities. 6. Work with the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities and the Paralympic Committee to support the integration of child protection guidelines as part of the participation of persons with disabilities into sport.
	<p>Referral System for Psychosocial Support</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish clear guidelines and procedures for the existing referral system. 2. Clarify roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder within the referral system and publicise it among the public and the educational and sport sector. 3. Establish and maintain effective communication channels through appointed liaison officers. 4. Establish regular coordination channels between liaison officers and the UN Expert Working Group on Protection to speed up referral on urgent protection cases.


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 <p>Phase Two Structuring the Coalition</p>	<p>Formation of Specialized Working Groups</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish four thematic working groups on school students, children in sports, refugees, and people with disabilities to tailor Coalition initiatives to the specific needs of these groups. 2. Invite sports federations to join the working groups to incorporate safety protocols and protective into their activities. 3. MoE reports semi-annually to working groups on detected concerns on psychosocial well-being among students (including e-gaming, addiction to social media, sport-related violence) and establish a pre-emptive process for timely and coordinated responses within MoE structures.
	<p>Training Programs (Curriculum)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coalition members review JOC Safe Sport Policy and the national protection framework and policies with the support of the four working groups. Once finalized, JOC will be responsible for delivering these training materials to teachers, coaches, and social workers involved in formal and non-formal education and sports activities. This will build their capacity to provide age-appropriate guidance and referrals within the context of Sport for Protection. 2. Provide physical education teachers with essential training on safeguarding and protection in sports. This training will enable them to recognize, prevent, and respond to issues such as harassment and abuse within the sports environment. 3. Develop evaluation mechanisms to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of both the Sport for Protection training materials and the safeguarding and protection in sports training programs.
	<p>Community Engagement</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With the support of MoE and in cooperation with NGOs, the Coalition is to organize community engagement campaigns to raise awareness on psychosocial protection benefits of sports targeting parents to encourage children enrolment in sport activities. 2. NCFA and the Coalition members regularly administer surveys with school counsellors, coaches, and social workers, as well as Focus Group Discussions and public consultations to identify emerging protection needs, and design relevant intervention in consultation with Coalition members.

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 <p>Phase Three Putting Plans into Actions</p>	<p>Policy Development and Review</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Coalition to starts by unifying definitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examine protection definitions used in child protection, sport, and refugee sectors to identify common elements and sector-specific differences. This will include a clear distinction between Sport for Protection, which uses sport to protect vulnerable populations (e.g., refugees, asylum seekers, children, women, minorities, and people with disabilities), and Safeguarding in Sport, which focuses on ensuring the safety and well-being of all sport participants. Based on this analysis, the Coalition will suggest a unified and precise definition of Sport for Protection in Jordan. - Integrate the Sport for Protection definition in the agreed upon policy (point 2 and 3 below) after soliciting approval from Coalition members on its clarity, applicability, and inclusivity. 2. Map current national and NGOs’ protection policies, then align these with JOC’s international commitments. This process will involve integrating both Sport for Protection principles, which address broader social and humanitarian challenges, and safeguarding policies, which focus on the internal safety and well-being of sport participants, ensuring a cohesive and comprehensive national protection framework 3. NCFA, MoE, and JOC develop guiding principles in simple non-technical language to be followed by teachers, coaches, social workers engaged in Sport for Protection activities. They will clarify the distinct responsibilities related to protecting vulnerable groups through sport, as well as safeguarding the overall safety of all sport participants. 4. The NCFA and the relevant authority within the Coalition should develop and implement a monitoring mechanism to ensure adherence to standardized policies across all involved entities, conducting reviews every six months to adjust as needed and maintain a robust protection framework. 5. Coalition members agree on corrective tools to be used when NCFA monitoring results prove discrepancy in practice the agreed-upon guiding principles. This will ensure that both the broader protective objectives of Sport for Protection and the safety-focused safeguarding measures are effectively enforced.
	<p>Strategic Communication</p>	<p>The JOC, in cooperation with NGOs and Un agencies, introduces media campaigns to highlight the positive impact of Sport for Protection by showcasing success stories and create engaging content, including articles, videos, and infographics.</p>

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 <p>Phase Four: Measuring Success</p>	<p>Establish a Biannual Monitoring System</p>	<p>NCFA, in partnership with the JOC and Coalition members, develops and implements a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework to systematically track the Coalition’s progress towards its goals. This M&E framework will include the following key components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. NCFA establishes specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned with the Coalition’s objectives to assess the impact of digital platforms, the effectiveness of strategies, and adherence to the Sport for Protection guiding principles.2. Both quantitative and qualitative data is collected from Coalition activities and digital platforms. NCFA oversees data analysis to evaluate progress, identify gaps, and determine the need for strategic adjustments.3. Based on the data collected, NCFA conducts periodic reviews to assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies. Where discrepancies or challenges are identified, NCFA will propose necessary corrective actions and adjustments to enhance the Coalition’s impact.4. NCFA produces quarterly reports that detail the Coalition’s achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future actions. These reports will be shared with all Coalition members and donors to ensure transparency, informed decision-making, and continuous improvement.
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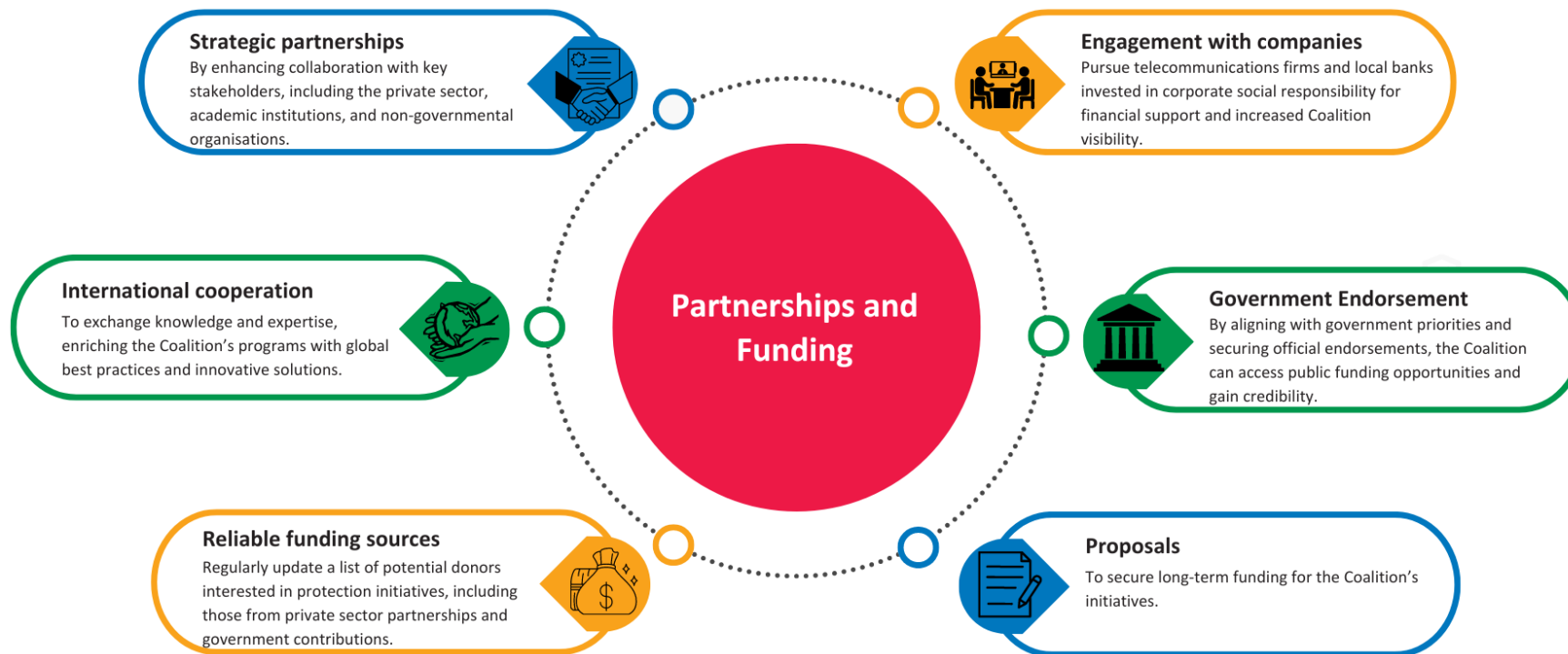


Figure 3: Partnerships and funding approach.

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PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

Funding the envisaged Coalition is an overarching question. However, with the emerging drive towards localization, stakeholders have all acknowledged the need for the Coalition to be a national effort headed by national organizations. Figure 3 above clarifies the envisioned approach that will align with localization efforts and streamlined fundraising efforts towards multi-faceted partnerships and cooperation with national actors/entities.

CONCLUSION

This policy brief completes earlier policy analysis that advocates for institutionalizing Sport for Protection in educational activities in Jordan for the benefit of the psychosocial well-being and social inclusion needs of Jordanian and refugee children in Jordan. This policy brief detailed implementation plan with key mechanisms to establish a National Coalition on Sport for Protection to align efforts in the education, sport, and NGO sector. The suggested phases and mechanisms are based on consultations with key stakeholders. This policy brief offers a guiding document for the actualization of this national Coalition for the benefit of national key stakeholders, donors, and international actors invested in Sport for Protection goals.

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