



# PEACEPLAYERS CYPRUS

## EVALUATION REPORT

NOVEMBER 2018



PEACEPLAYERS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation examines the outcomes achieved by the PeacePlayers-Cyprus (PeacePlayers-CY) programme and explores key issues such as wider institutional change. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, including focus groups, participatory focus group activities, key informant interviews and survey and monitoring data. Programme participants, specifically youth in the Leadership Development Programme (LDP), parents, staff and institutional partners were consulted for the evaluation. Non-participant, demographically comparable youth were surveyed as a comparison group. PeacePlayers' Director of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and M&E Specialists conducted the evaluation; the PeacePlayers-CY Managing Director serving as evaluation manager.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Youth are attracted to and remain in the programme because of its basketball activities. They also particularly enjoy the programme's bi-communal activities, which is notable because for most participants, PeacePlayers is their first involvement in a bi-communal programme or event.
- PeacePlayers-CY youth generally have more positive views of the "other" side than youth not in the programme. The amount of time spent interacting with youth from the other side has a direct correlation to the positivity of youth perceptions: the longer participants remain in the programme, the more positive their views. LDP participants, who interact with youth from the "other" side most intensively and most often, hold the most positive views.
- The main takeaways LDP youth gained from their trainings are self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and respect for other people. Participants gain confidence in their leadership skills the longer they remain in the programme and far outstrip youth who do not participate in PeacePlayers. LDP participants also demonstrate much greater leadership capacity than youth not involved in the PeacePlayers-Cyprus programme.
- The principle of repeated, long-term engagement can be applied to perception change among parents and local institutions, as the parents and local partners who have been most involved in the programme saw the greatest perception change. However, there are many challenges to making a broad-scale impact, and the programme cannot be said to have affected much institutional change on the island.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering these findings, the evaluation recommends the following:

- Because perception change is sped by increased interaction, PeacePlayers-CY should facilitate as much as possible the same youth seeing each other repeatedly and over time. Increase the frequency of twinings and/or schedule them so the most children can participate. If possible, hold a camp or retreat for non-LDP youth so they also have a chance to form strong bonds.
- PeacePlayers-CY should dedicate a resource to increasing the programme's visibility and forming connections with local institutions and officials. The program should also more actively engage alumni to realize their potential support and influence. Sending updates via email or social media, offering coaching certifications and organizing periodic alumni events are good first steps.
- Increasing parent touch points with the programme will help overcome concerns and nervousness. Engaging coaches to share their point of view can encourage parents and parent events can increase touch points with parents from the "other" side and keep them connected to PeacePlayers' mission.



## INTRODUCTION

Cyprus has been physically divided by a UN Buffer Zone since an inter-ethnic war in 1974 split the island into separate communities. For thirty years, there was no contact between the two sides; the buffer zone opened for the first time since the war in 2003. To this day, Greek-Cypriots generally live in the south of Cyprus, and Turkish-Cypriots in the north. Travel between the two sides of the island is relatively rare and requires passing through a checkpoint. People in the north and south also speak different languages—Greek and Turkish.

As the only year-round bi-communal sports organization on the island, PeacePlayers-CY brings together Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth to build positive relationships that overcome generations of mistrust and formidable physical barriers to interaction. Most youth cross the UN Buffer Zone for the first time to take part in programme activities.

The programme's goal is for "youth to be engaged and mobilized to become advocates of peace within their communities." To accomplish its intended outcomes, PeacePlayers-CY provides integrated, year-round sport programming, leadership development and professional training activities, including single-identity practices, bi-communal twinings and tournaments, a leadership development programme, overnight retreats and assistant coaching opportunities.

This report presents the key findings and recommendations from an evaluation of PeacePlayers-CY. The evaluation examines the impact of the programme on participants and their family and friends, outcomes and impact achieved by the programme (e.g. perception change and leadership skills) on both participants and the wider Cypriot community, and key organizational issues such as participant recruitment, retention and alumni engagement. The evaluation compares data collected from participants to non-participant but otherwise demographically comparable youth (the "control group") to further understand the programme's impact on Cypriot youth.

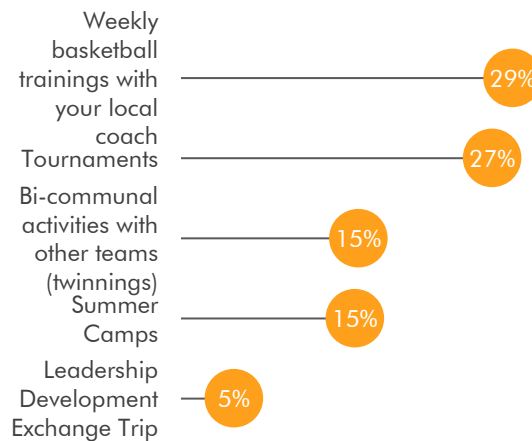
# FINDINGS

What motivates youth to join and remain in the PeacePlayers-Cyprus programme over the long term? By offering basketball activities, is the PeacePlayers-Cyprus programme attracting youth participants who might otherwise not engage in peacebuilding or bi-communal events?

**Finding: Youth are attracted to the programme because of the basketball activities it offers, and remain because they are enjoying the programme activities, including (and especially) bi-communal events. For many, PeacePlayers is their first involvement in a bi-communal programme or event.**

The vast majority of youth (85%) joined PeacePlayers-Cyprus because they were interested in playing basketball. Many parents said their children were recruited to join by PeacePlayers coaches or they heard about it in school, though only about a quarter of the youth surveyed said they joined because of a PeacePlayers coach; more youth said they joined because they had friends in the programme than because a coach recruited them.

When asked what their favourite PeacePlayers-CY activity was, participants preferred basketball-related activities, as well as opportunities to interact with people from outside of their own communities



While this interest in basketball was a big draw to join the programme, it is also a main reason youth remain. When youth were asked which PeacePlayers-CY activity was their favourite, top responses across all four years were basketball-related: weekly basketball training sessions and tournaments came first (29% each), followed by bi-communal activities and summer camps (15% each). Basketball training sessions claimed the top spot 3 out of 4 years, with tournaments coming second 3 out of 4 years.

Aside from basketball activities, youth said most often that they had stayed with PeacePlayers because of its positive atmosphere, the close relationships they have with their coaches and friendships they have made. Multiple LDP participants and parents who took part in focus group discussions described the relationships formed in PeacePlayers as being “like family.” Parents repeatedly expressed that their children are happy and having fun during their time at PeacePlayers-CY.

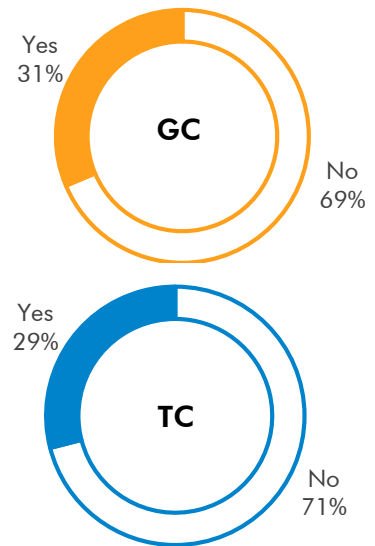
These positive relationships extended to members of “the other side” as well as their own teammates, and both LDP youth and parents said that they wanted the PeacePlayers programme to include more joint activities with members of other community. This desire to increase contact and interaction with youth from “the other side” is significant in the Cyprus context: the LDP respondents said that generally Cypriot youth

do not do bi-communal activities and can hold very negative views of these sorts of activities. Often, youth are often influenced by family members holding negative views on reconciliation.

The LDP responses are supported by responses from the youth control group. When asked how often they participate in peacebuilding programmes, only 22% of control respondents said they had ever participated. 66% of control participants also said they “never,” “very rarely” or “rarely” crossed the buffer zone to the other side of the island.

It is therefore also unsurprising that most participants had also not participated in peacebuilding/bi-communal events before PeacePlayers-CY. 69% of respondents said they had not participated in peacebuilding activities before joining the programme, and only 2 parents said that their children had previously participated in bi-communal activities. Notably, most youth also do not participate in bi-communal events outside of PeacePlayers-Cyprus. Turkish-Cypriots (TCs) and Greek-Cypriots (GCs) were equally unlikely to participate in other bi-communal events (69% of TCs and 68% of GCs responded “no” when asked).

Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots who had participated in peacebuilding activities before joining PeacePlayers-CY



To what extent does the PeacePlayers-CY programme contribute to perception change amongst its participants? Specifically:

1. Do PeacePlayers-CY youth have generally positive perceptions of the “other” side?
2. Is the level of interaction between Greek Cypriot (GC) and Turkish Cypriot (TC) youth enough to contribute to perception change? Of the existing PeacePlayers-Cyprus activities, which are the most effective for creating perception change?
3. How do youth and coaches perceive the single identity (SI) component of the programme? Are SI practices seen differently than twinnings or other bi-communal events, and do participants still feel connected to the PeacePlayers mission when they are in their local communities engaging in SI practices?

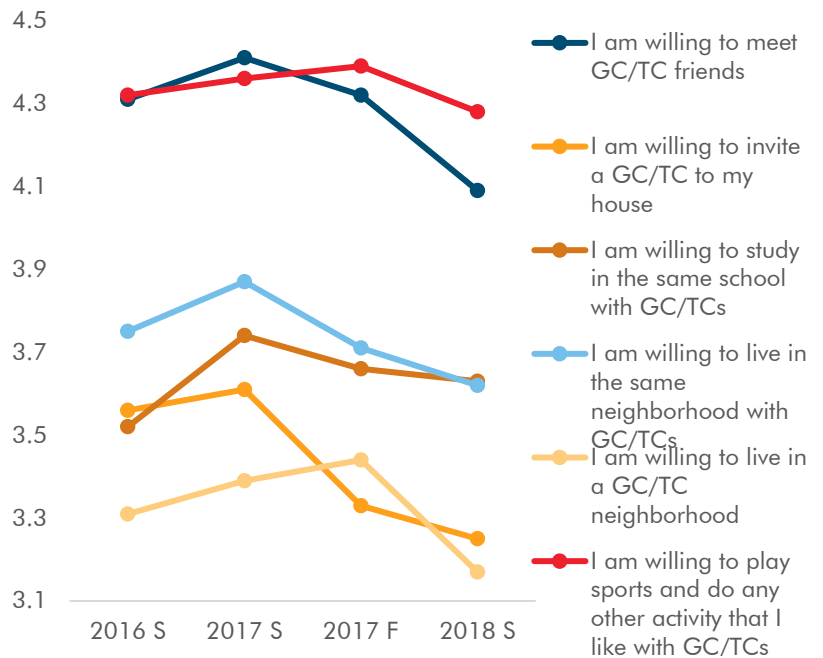
**Finding: PeacePlayers-CY youth generally have more positive views of the “other” side than youth not in the programme. The amount of time spent interacting with youth from the other side has a direct correlation to the positivity of youth perceptions. The longer participants remain in the programme, the more positive their views; the LDP, who interact with youth from the “other” side most intensively and often, have the most positive views of all.**

PeacePlayers-CY youth do have generally positive views of the other side in that they are willing to interact, at times quite personally, with people from the other community. When asked how well a series of words describes their feelings towards people from a different community, participants agreed most with “respectful,” which received a 3.49 average score out of 5 (1=“strongly disagree” and 5=“strongly agree”). They were neutral or tepidly agreed to “warm,” “positive” and sympathetic,” while they strongly disagreed with “suspicious.”

TCs felt more positive than GCs across the board, although the difference was slight. The same was true when respondents were asked to characterize their interactions with the other side, with TCs being more positive; however, scores for this series were quite positive in general.

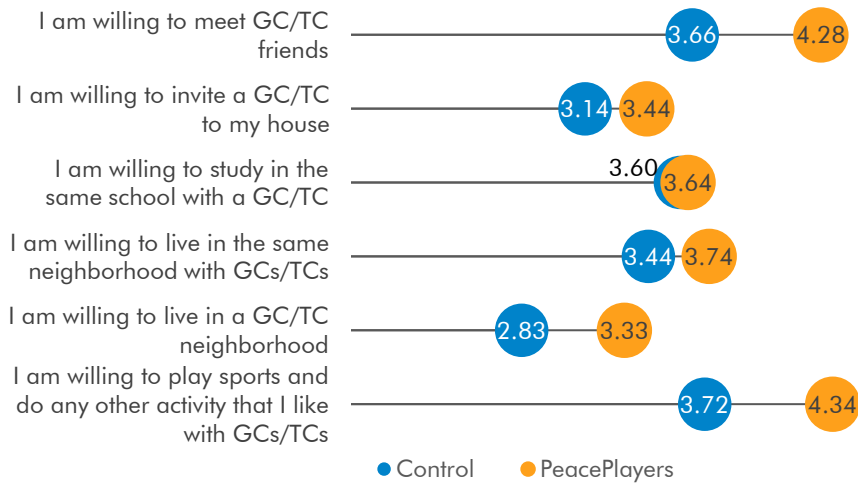
Multiple positive characteristics scored near, at or above a 4.0 for programme participants as a group: “pleasant” (4.17), “natural” (4.02) and “cooperative” (3.91). When asked a series of questions about how willing they are to be in various situations with people from the other community, their scores were most positive for the statements, “I am willing to play sports and do any other activity that I like with GC/TCs” (4.34) and “I am willing to meet GC/TC friends” (4.29).

Attitudes toward the other side trended positively over the first year, then declined.



Generally, GC scores began at a high and decreased slightly over time, whereas TC scores started low and rose over time. TC scores continued to be slightly lower than GC scores, with the exception of “I am willing to meet GC/TC friends.” In the control group, TC scores were generally lower than GC scores.

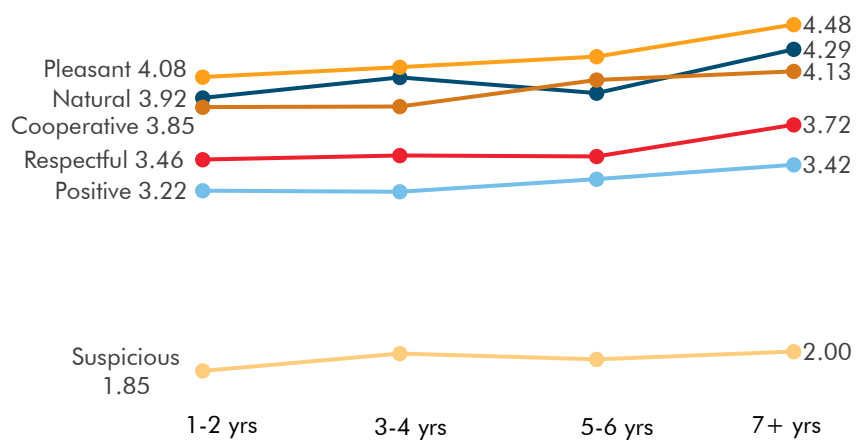
PeacePlayers-CY youth have more positive attitudes toward “the other side” than Cypriot youth who do not participate in the programme



Female participant scores were generally higher than male scores; disaggregating the participant scores by team confirms the general pattern, with the highest scores across the board came from Team #9 (Mike/Larnaca girls) and the LDP. The lowest scores tended to be among male TC teams, specifically Team #14 (Bahar/Boys) and Team #16 (Lapta Boys). However, these trends were also seen among the control group and may simply reflect the island overall rather than being specific to PeacePlayers-CY.

Notably, scores were higher/more positive for PeacePlayers-CY participants than for control group respondents across the board. All participant average scores across all data collection periods were at least 7% higher than the control group scores, with the exception of “I am willing to study in the same school as a GC/TC,” for which the scores were equal. Averaging the scores across all data collection periods produced wide gaps in the scores between participants and control for many activities, with PeacePlayers participants being much more willing to interact with the other side.

The longer the participants remain in the PeacePlayers programme, the more positive their attitudes become. The chart displays how much they agree that interactions with the “other side” would be characterized by the following descriptors.



LDP participants, parents and coaches commented on seeing the change in the participants’ attitudes for the better, and partners reported that seeing the positive ways in which the youth interact give them hope for reconciliation. Parents, both TC and GC, remarked that the most important lesson children gain from PeacePlayers is in the bi-communal relationships, including “positively altering” their perception about the other community, including stereotyping less and building friendships.

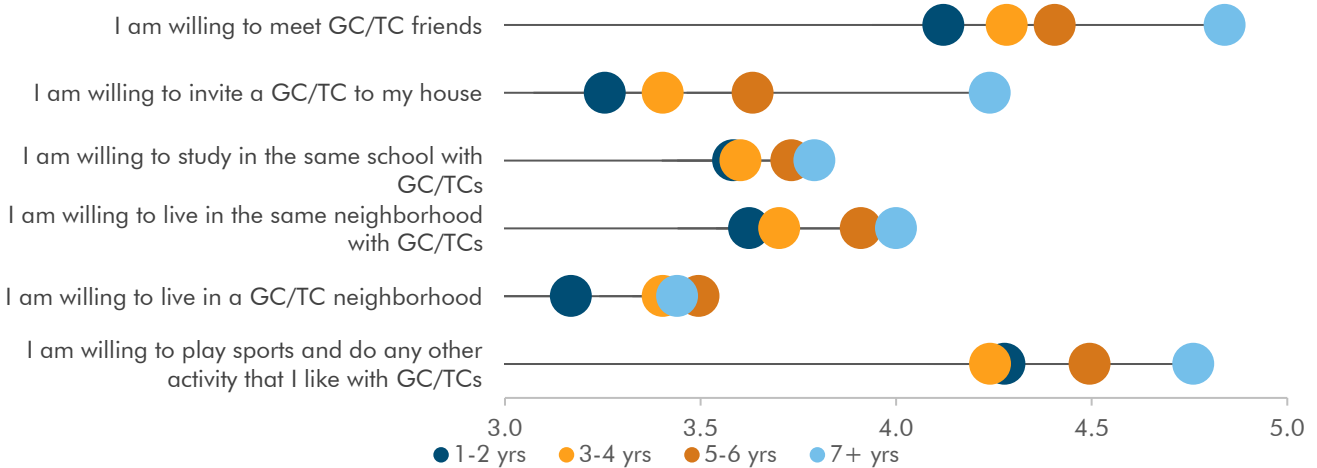
Furthermore, the longer the youth remained in the programme, the more positive their feelings toward the other side. LDP scores were particularly high, scoring above a 4.0 on all statements except “I am willing to



live in a GC/TC neighborhood,” which scored a 3.95. LDP scores were significantly higher than Twining participants for all questions, with the greatest gap coming for “I am willing invite a GC/TC to my house” (19.4%) and “I am willing to live in a GC/TC neighborhood” (18.7%).

All LDP focus group respondents (both TC and GC) said they have very good relationships with the participants from the other side, characterizing them as “friends” and “like family.” Respondents also mentioned that their perceptions were changed for the positive since they joined PeacePlayers. Participants from both sides said that although they sometimes are able to organise trips to get everyone together, they would like to see their friends from the other side more in their everyday life outside of PeacePlayers.

PeacePlayers-CY youth feel more positive about being in various situations with people from the other side of the island the longer they remain in the programme.



The discrepancy in the LDP and twinning scores, coupled with LDP feedback, suggests that because LDP participants have had the opportunity to spend significantly more time with participants from “the other side” over more years, they are quite comfortable with the idea of interacting with them in a more personal way. Indeed, attitudes toward the other side became more positive as the participant’s years involved in PeacePlayers-CY increased regardless of programme.

**“The project just gave me more hope. I think children are the future, so it has changed my views in terms of how they can be the catalyst and help us to overcome the prejudice that we have.”**

–GC PeacePlayers-CY board member

Those close to the programme (LDP participants, coaches and a board member) said that they believed that the level of interaction the youth have through the was enough to cause perception change, because they had seen it amongst themselves and/or the other youth in the programme. Given the above results, the data strongly support that sentiment.

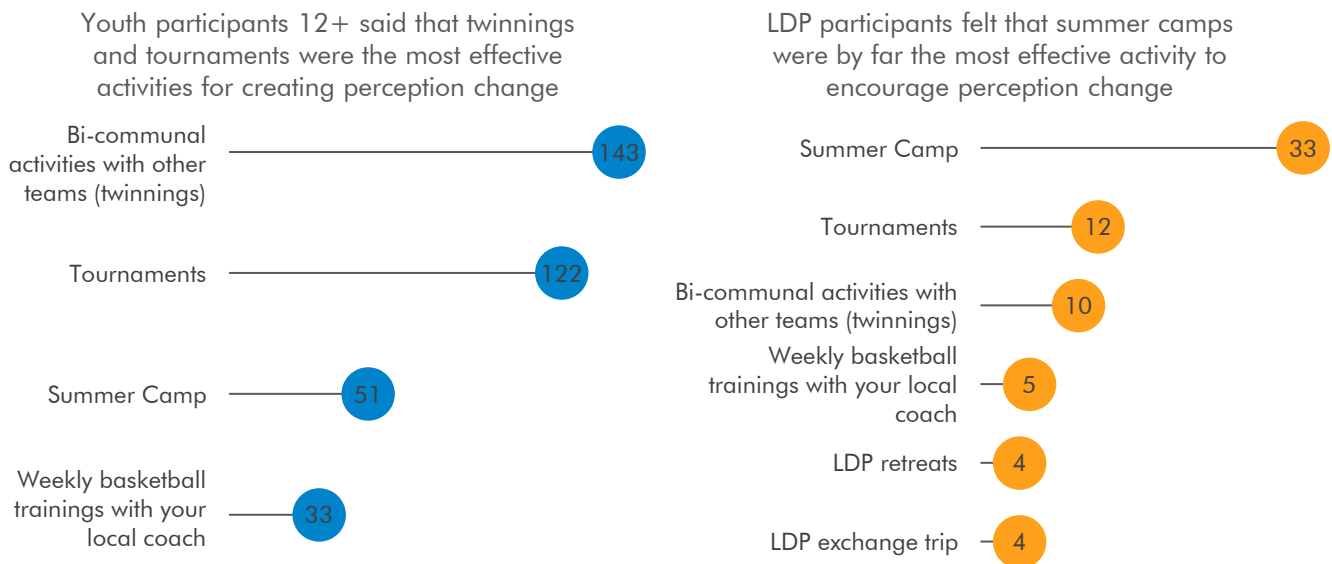
Interestingly, 60% of partners interviewed did not believe the level of interaction was enough, though half of those seemed to interpret the question in terms of reach—they noted that the project has done well with its participants but questioned

the broader effect. All respondents, when asked, agreed that more opportunities to interact can only increase and hasten perception change.

Wanting to interact more was also echoed by participants who reported the most positive perceptions, the LDP. Despite having certainly changed their perceptions for the better, they and their parents requested

more interaction with the other side. 100% of LDP focus group participants agree that they want more bi-communal events to be held, and parents—especially GCs—expressed that they wanted more bi-communal events, especially ones in which the parents can be involved, and to change the time and place of existing bi-communal events so that more children can attend.

More interaction between the two sides was a common theme when discussing perception change. When asked which PeacePlayers-CY activities they felt were most effective for creating perception change among participants, summer camps were the most popular answer overall—in their survey, nearly half (48%) of LDP participants chose it, it ranked third among 12+ participants, and in focus groups of LDP participants, coaches and programme staff, it was commonly the highest-ranked and most-discussed activity.



The reasoning given for ranking it so highly was consistent among all groups and underpinned their other choices as well: the more time that participants spend together, the deeper the connections become and the more perceptions change.

***“With the help of bi-communal projects like PeacePlayers, the perception has started to change. I believe that if more bi-communal projects are run, perception among people will change more easily and quickly.”*** –TC LDP participant

In summer camps, the participants spend a number of days together, and they are together constantly during those days. Some coaches did not rank summer camps as their first choice simply because not as many youth could participate in them, and therefore their effects were not widespread throughout the programme. This reasoning also explains why it ranked behind twinnings and tournaments for the 12+ youth—simply not enough of them had the opportunity to participate. Erasmus exchanges were also chosen by LDP focus group participants and coaches, with the same pros and cons.

Twinnings were also ranked very highly across the board, namely for staff and LDP focus group participants. 12+ participants were especially positive about them, as were staff. Staff lauded a newer system of twinnings in which the same teams were paired together over time that had worked particularly well to enable perception change because youth spent more time with each other and were therefore able to develop deeper relationships. Twinnings are also much more accessible to the bulk of the participants.



Single-identity trainings (asked in data collection as “weekly basketball trainings with your local coach”) also received a mention, though they weren’t ranked as highly. Coaches felt most favorable about the trainings, as they ranked them among the activities that contribute most to perception change. Coaches argued that the practices allow the youth to build a strong foundation and prepare them for bi-communal activities by teaching them not only the basketball skills they need to participate in twinnings, tournaments, etc. but also life skills such as teamwork, self-confidence, leadership, fair play and respect for others. The coaches’ sentiments were echoed strongly by parents, who said they have noticed that the sessions have helped their children outside of PeacePlayers as well.

The youth participants themselves also very much enjoy the single-identity trainings, and believe they are an important part of the PeacePlayers-CY mission. While only 60% of LDP focus group respondents said single-identity trainings are important (with 30% responding neutrally), 98% of youth participants say they like going to basketball practice, and 89% feel that the trainings prepare them for bi-communal activities. The true effect coaches have on their players is indicated by so many youth feel that the trainings prepare them for bi-communal activities. For the players to enjoy bi-communal activities, to be successful at them and to truly experience perception change, their coaches must impart all the necessary skills and sentiments to the youth in their single-identity sessions. That the children responded so positively clearly shows that the coaches have had a profound impact on their players.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Attitude and perception change take time, but prolonged and repeated interaction with the “other” side speeds and deepens the change. Therefore, PeacePlayers-CY should try to facilitate as much as possible the same youth seeing each other, as often as possible and for as long as possible. Increase the frequency of twinnings and/or schedule them so as many children as possible can participate. If possible, hold a camp or retreat for non-LDP youth—even just a weekend—so they can truly build personal relationships.

## What effect has the PeacePlayers-CY programme had on the wider community, including families and peers of participants and Cypriot institutions and officials?

**Families and peers: Most families and peers that are impacted by the programme have been affected positively and are very supportive of the programme. However, the extent of the change is unknown and the youth are not confident that their families have changed their minds. In any case, it is clear that positive perception change among family and friends takes time to develop.**

Participants speak with their friends and family quite a bit about the PeacePlayers programme: 91% of youth participants and 100% of LDP focus group participants indicated that they have these conversations. However, depending on with whom they are speaking, these conversations can have different outcomes.

**“Hasmet encouraged us [to join] the programme because he saw my child’s interest in basketball. My daughter and I participate in every activity... and always in both Hasmet and Bahar’s trainings. Both coaches have different vision, style of teaching and views. My daughter made new friends and has a new social environment in this programme... We started because of coach Hasmet and improved ourselves.”**

–TC parent

after their children have participated in these activities for an extended period of time do the parents truly have a change in attitude towards the programme and the youth participants from the other side of the island. One female LDP participant said that her father had held very extreme negative perceptions towards those from the “other side” because of personal experiences. However, since seeing his daughter interact with and befriend the other young people through the programme, she said these perceptions have totally changed.

Coaches in particular have a strong effect on recruiting youth to the programme and convincing parents of the benefits of the programme once the children are enrolled. Almost every parent who took part in focus groups said that their child originally joined PeacePlayers because he or she was recruited by a PeacePlayers coach, and all the parent participants noted the positive relationship between their child and his or her coach, as well as the fact that their child has learned so much from the coaches.

Parent support aside, all the LDP participant, youth participant and GC parent focus group respondents said that some family members and friends can also react very negatively to the young people participating in the PeacePlayers programme. This is reflected in the fact that despite 100% of LDP participants saying they speak about the PeacePlayers programme, only 40% think their experiences in the programme have

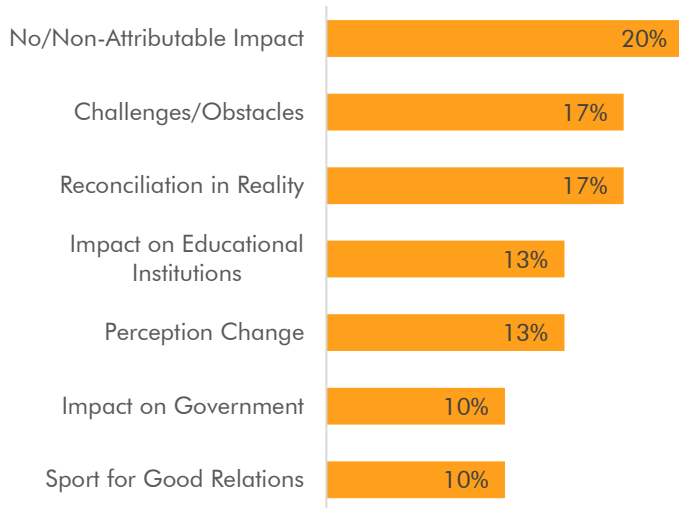
Parents appear to be the most supportive of participation in PeacePlayers, as out of the 91% of youth focus group participants who speak with them about PeacePlayers, 75% say their family thinks it is a good programme. GC parents said that the bi-communal aspect of the PeacePlayers programme in particular is interesting for them. Some said they feared for their children’s safety during their children’s first bi-communal activity because of the unknown, but this fear soon disappeared once their children participated in the activities and/or crossed the buffer zone as part of the programme.

This scenario appears to be the norm. Only

**“Our children have a special relationship with their coaches who help them in personal matters as well as giving them a lot of positive energy.”**

–GC parent

Key informants talked most often about a lack of impact and associated challenges. However, when they did note an impact caused by the PeacePlayers-CY programme, they noted positive changes and expressed support.



viewpoints of it and recognize the impact it is having on the island. However, the impact is very limited as the PeacePlayers-CY programme is both limited in scope and is also not widely known throughout Cyprus.

The biggest impact that the PeacePlayers-CY programme seems to have on local Cypriot institutions or officials is that it gives people a sense of hope and inspiration for the future. 38% of key informants discussed in interviews that the programme shows them *reconciliation in reality*, which inspires them to see that reconciliation is possible.

31% of key informants specifically mentioned perception change and impact on educational institutions. PeacePlayers-CY staff talked about their relationship with a local school that provides facilities, food and participants for the PeacePlayers spring tournament (a bi-communal activity) and also said that these institutions—which had never been involved with any bi-communal activities before PeacePlayers—expressed a desire to do more with the programme. These key stakeholders noticed the change more broadly than simply institutional change; 23% of key informants noting the use of sport to improve relations between the north and south, including noting that PeacePlayers’ use of sport was very different to how sports clubs in the South usually radicalise children.

Government institutions in Cyprus are paying attention to the programme as well. 23% of key informants mentioned the project having an impact on government officials, and the impact is best represented through the Cypriot Ministry of Education giving official approval to PeacePlayers-CY programming to enter schools. This action “can be considered a huge success” as PeacePlayers-CY was the first bi-communal organisation to gain their approval.

Despite these successes, it appears that it is exceedingly challenging for PeacePlayers-CY to have any level of institutional impact. Nearly half of key informants (46%) said that they had seen no impact at all or that it was difficult to attribute any change directly to the PeacePlayers-CY programme; over one-third of the

influenced the opinions of their families and friends on bi-communal relations in Cyprus. However, it must be noted this may be because parents already had positive viewpoints—a sort of self-selecting to the PeacePlayers programme.

**Local institutions or officials: PeacePlayers-CY has had somewhat of an impact on local educational institutions and officials, and especially on those who work closely with the programme. However, there are many obstacles and challenges to making an impact on a broader scale.**

The situation as it relates to Cypriot institutions and officials is quite similar to the situation with parents. Those institutions with the most contact and interaction with the PeacePlayers-CY programme espouse the most positive

**“I have started to think more positive (about reconciliation) because in this project we have seen that reconciliation is possible in practice as well.”** –TC key partner

content of discussions with key informants centred around this lack of impact and the challenges or obstacles the PeacePlayers-CY programme faces.

A big issue for PeacePlayers-CY is simply that increasing awareness of the programme is very difficult. Jotun, a company with a 3-year standing relationship with PeacePlayers-CY, helps to try and combat the challenge of awareness by encouraging their global sites to support the work of PeacePlayers-CY; however, widespread knowledge of the programme is still slow coming. Furthermore, the programme must contend with the difficulties that come with trying to change the opinions of people on a 40-year-old issue. Combining these entrenched opinions with institutions' financial struggles—and therefore less of an ability or willingness to change or focus on other things—makes it very difficult for PeacePlayers-CY to progress towards having an impact on them.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall, one of the main barriers to support by parents and local institutions alike is a lack of knowledge of the PeacePlayers-CY programme and its activities. PeacePlayers-CY should dedicate resources and time to speaking with and engaging parents in the programme, as well as working to increase the visibility of PeacePlayers on the island and making more connections and partnerships with local institutions and officials. An employee dedicated to public relations would be an important position within the programme.

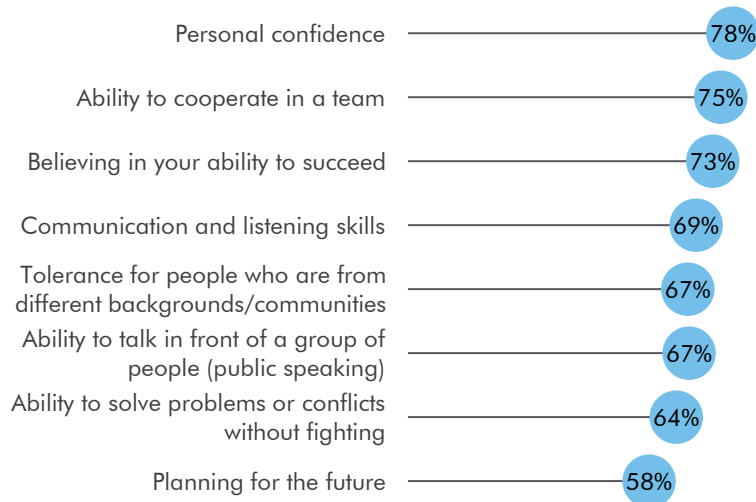
With parents, employing coaches to talk with parents regarding their experiences and the programme's goals, as well as ongoing bi-communal activities and developments. A barrier to parent and family support is nervousness of the unknown and society's negative attitudes toward both bi-communal activities and "the other side"; because parents are acutely aware of how much their children trust and love their PeacePlayers coaches, having coaches share their point of view, reassure and encourage parents can help them develop more positive attitudes towards people from "the other side." Additionally, involving parents in bi-communal activities and allowing them to meet and interact with their children's friends and their families will also help to break down barriers.

## What specific leadership skills are LDP youth learning? What additional tools and resources do they need to further develop their leadership skills?

**Finding: The main takeaways from LDP trainings are self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and respect for other people. Participants gain confidence in their leadership skills the longer they remain in the programme and far outstrip youth who do not participate in PeacePlayers.**

While there was variance amongst LDP participants' sense of which leadership skills they had developed, every leadership skill listed was chosen by at least half of participants across all data collection periods. Consistent with PeacePlayers' focus on "inside-out transformation," the greatest number of LDP participants (78%) across all data collection periods said they had developed greater personal confidence; almost three-quarters of LDP participants also believed in their ability to succeed. Interpersonal skills, including communication and listening skills plus the ability to cooperate in a team, were also cited by the vast majority of LDP participants.

The average number of LDP participants across all data collection years who indicated having developed various leadership development skills. Interpersonal skills and personal confidence were the two most-cited skills.

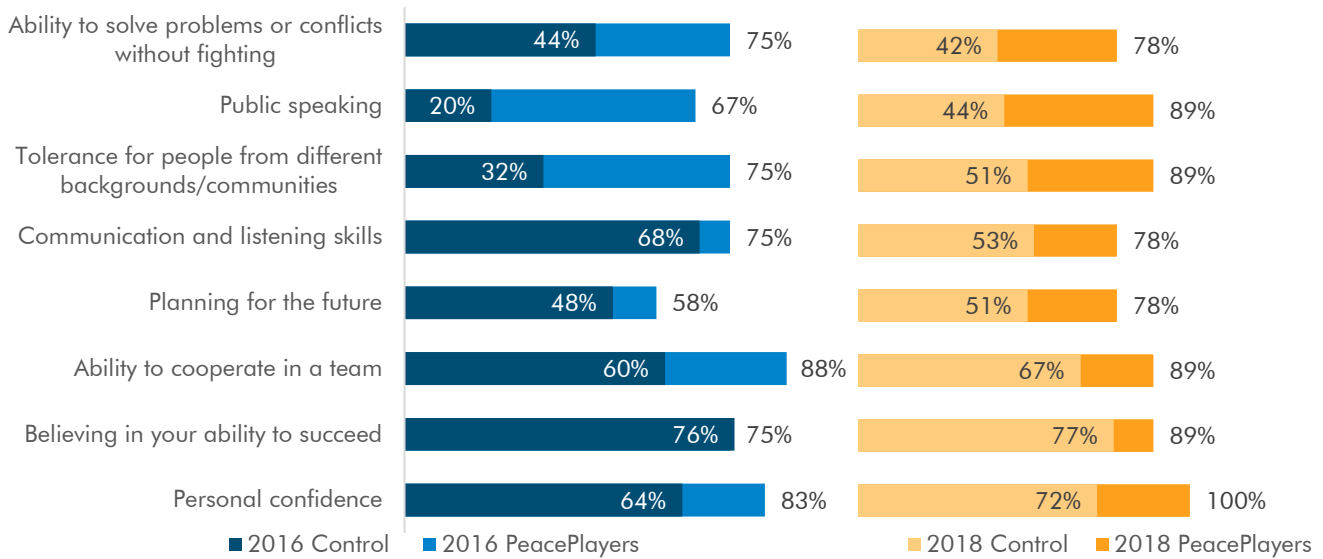


While the most common responses were related to interpersonal skills and personal confidence, roughly two-thirds of LDP participants still voiced respect for other people from different cultures and the ability to solve conflict without fighting. Interestingly, when asked what the most important lesson or idea they had taken away from their participation in the LDP programme, the most popular responses related to being inclusive and supportive in addition to personal confidence. The most-cited lesson by far was that they learned to support and respect everyone regardless of their age, sex and nationality (31% of respondents), followed distantly by the

importance of making everyone part of the group and that all people are equal (9% each). In focus groups, LDP respondents mentioned that they had "eliminated prejudices" and "developed empathy," which increased their understanding of how to be better people both on and off the court. The high number of LDP participants saying that they developed communication skills and personal confidence, as well as learning to be inclusive of everyone, supports their statements in focus groups about their increased ability to approach things in a positive manner; it also indicates their ability stand firm on their opinions when faced with challenges.

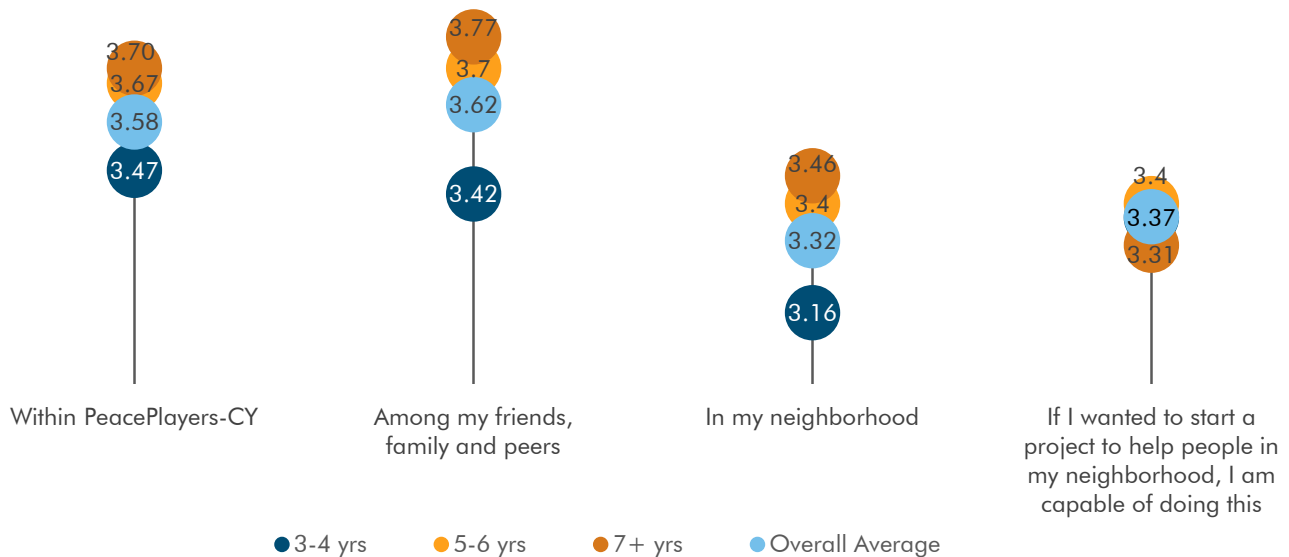
Notably, LDP responses far outstripped those from youth in the control group in every category. Across the board, PeacePlayers-CY LDP participants reported having developed various leadership skills at a much higher rate than control group respondents. 78% of PeacePlayers LDP participants said they were able to solve conflicts without fighting vs. only 48% of control respondents, and 89% of LDP youth said they had tolerance for people from different backgrounds/communities, vs. only 51% of control youth.

The chart below compares the PeacePlayers LDP responses to control responses for the 2016 and 2018 data collection periods, where the disparity can clearly be seen, with more LDP agreeing with every skill.



LDP youth were quite confident in their leadership skills. When asked on a scale of 1 to 4 how much they agreed with statements about their leadership (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree), they rated well above a 3 in every instance. They were the most confident in their leadership skills among their friends, family and peers, followed by feeling the most confident within PeacePlayers-CY. They were the least confident regarding situations within their neighbourhood, though it bears repeating that they still “agreed” that they felt confident in this setting. There was very little difference in the responses between GC and TC youth, though TCs tended to be more confident in their neighbourhoods (TCs scored 3.4 vs. GCs’ 3.24 for “being a leader in my neighbourhood” and 3.48 vs. 3.27 for “starting a project in my neighbourhood”); females had higher leadership confidence scores than males across the board.

Generally, the longer LDP youth were in the programme, the higher their leadership confidence scores. However, length of time seems to have no impact on their confidence of starting a project in their neighbourhoods.





The self-confidence and development of leadership skills can certainly be put down to the curriculum being taught, but a huge impact on the development of their leadership skills can be attributed to their coaches providing a good example for them. LDP participants often spoke about “being a good leader” and what it means to be one, and often cited their coaches as good, positive role models and examples to follow. Participants talked at length about how they look up to their own coaches and learn from watching them, even mentioning their names alongside people like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. when asked to name their favourite leaders. Learning from these real-life role models is reflected in their request to have different leaders brought to their LDP trainings to speak to them, showing them leadership in various contexts and through different lenses.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The LDP themselves had suggestions for improving their programme, including increased discussion related to the Cypriot conflict itself and helping youth determine ways to overcome barriers associated with bi-communal relations. In so doing, the programme can concretely relate the content of the LDP curriculum to the participants’ lives. Furthermore, the programme should bring leaders to LDP trainings to speak to the participants in order for them to meet and learn from leaders from different contexts and situations.



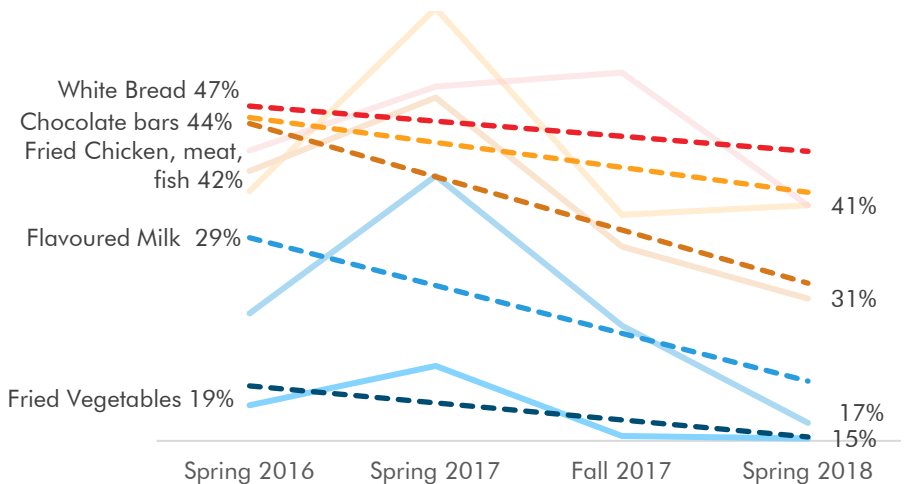
## What did youth and their parents learn from the nutrition sessions? Did this change the way that they prepare, serve and eat food? Why or why not?

**Finding: Overall, the nutrition sessions had a vaguely positive effect on the youth participants' dietary habits. While neither the participants nor their parents drastically changed the way they prepared food or the food they ate, they did remark that nutrition sessions provided a good reminder of healthy eating habits and made them more conscious of their nutritional behaviour.**

71.2% of the youth who participated in the nutrition sessions said they changed the way they eat and drink after participating, and feedback between GCs and TCs was almost identical. Parents said they did not change the way they prepared and served food, because they already tried to eat healthily. Some did note, however, that they began to decrease the amount of junk food they consumed.

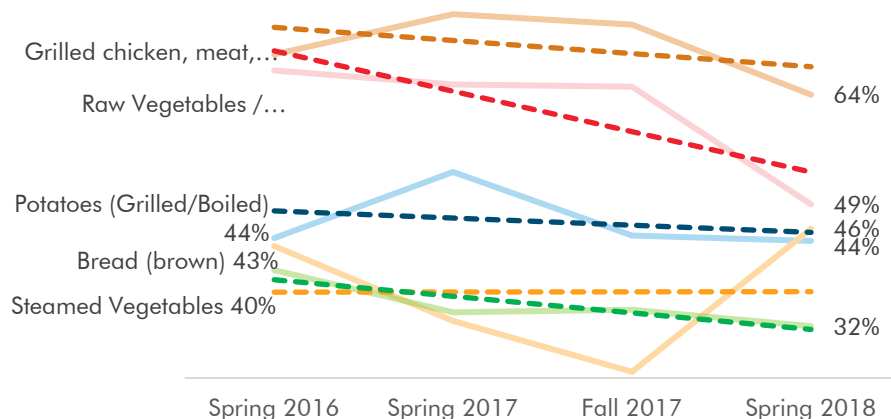
Many of the participants said they now drink more water, eat more vegetables and fruits, and reduced their consumption of junk food. Participants reported eating fewer chocolate bars for snack at school, decreasing from 44.4% in spring 2016 to 30.5% in spring 2018. They also consume less flavored milk, which dropped by 11.9%, and less white bread, which fell 6.0%, over the same period.

PeacePlayers-Cyprus nutrition session participants decreased their consumption of unhealthy foods across the board, most notably decreasing their consumption of chocolate and flavoured milk by 13% and 12%, respectively.



Positive changes were not seen across the board, however, and some nutrition session participants still eat unhealthily on a regular basis. For example, the share of survey respondents saying they consumed fizzy drink increased from 3.3% in spring 2016 to 13.6% in spring 2018. Despite reporting that they eat more vegetables and fruits, when asked what they consumed on a regular basis and during school breaks, the share of respondents reporting that they ate any kind of vegetable decreased.

Despite saying they are eating more healthily, self-reported consumption of healthy food items decreased on the whole for nutrition session participants



Parent feedback related to their children's eating habits mirrored the youth responses. Parents said that while the children did not dramatically change their eating habits, they noticed that they were more concerned about what they ate, especially

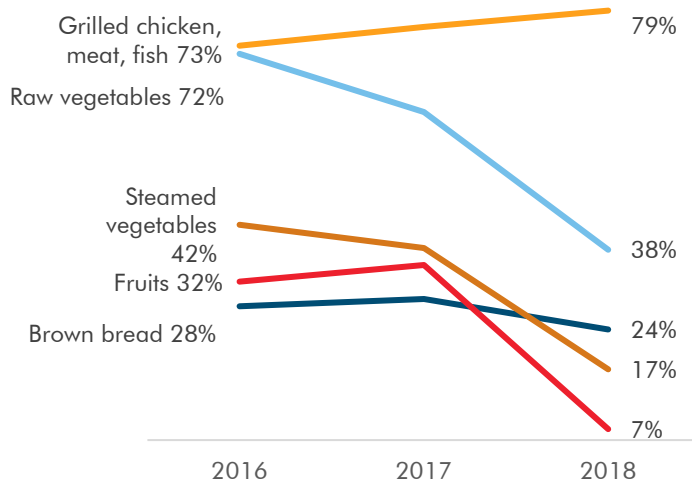
before a match. Among the changes that they did notice were that their children drank fewer sodas and more milk, and ate less junk food and more vegetables.

Despite not seeing drastic change, the changes wrought by the PeacePlayers nutrition sessions were both more positive and more pronounced than for the control respondents. On the whole, despite attending nutrition sessions themselves, control group respondents' consumption of "bad foods" stayed rather consistent—for example, consumption of french fries went up 7%, but consumption of fried chicken, meat or fish dropped 10%—and their consumption of healthy foods decreased.

To ensure the nutrition teaching makes a lasting impression and to prevent lapses, both LDP and parents focus groups requested that nutrition trainings happen for longer periods of time. While all the parents who participated in focus groups expressed satisfaction with the nutrition sessions, one respondent noted that her child had become more aware of his eating habits when he was participating in the nutrition trainings, but when the trainings ended the parent noted that the child stopped being conscious of his dietary choices.

Indeed, 90% of youth respondents also said that they would like to receive further nutrition training. When asked where they would like to receive the trainings, the most respondents said during basketball practices (32%), followed by in school (22%). Parents also said they wanted to be more involved in nutrition sessions.

Control group consumption of healthy foods decreased notably despite participation in nutrition sessions.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

As almost all the youth participants would like to receive further nutrition training and their parents viewed them favorably, PeacePlayers-CY should continue to hold the sessions and for longer periods of time, even if sessions are not as frequent. Regular reminders of what good nutrition looks like seem to help the youth stick to healthier eating habits. Having special sessions involving parents can also help give the parents new ideas for preparing food and challenging existing preconceptions of what foods are healthy.

## How can PeacePlayers-CY keep LDP graduates and/or alumni engaged in the programme?

***Finding: Alumni currently remain engaged with the programme only if they pursue coaching. However, the overall view of programme stakeholders is that with a little more outreach by the programme, alumni will remain engaged because they enjoyed their experience in PeacePlayers.***

The prevalent view within the PeacePlayers-CY programme around graduate/alumni engagement is that participants who want to stay involved with the programme will find a way to do so. This is indeed so, but the only alumni who remain engaged are those who become coaches within the programme itself, and PeacePlayers-CY does very little (if any) active alumni outreach. When programme stakeholders, including LDP participants, coaches and staff, were asked about alumni engagement, respondents were unable to name ways alumni were engaged outside of coaching.

However, all these focus groups plus 64% of key stakeholders who were interviewed felt that most PeacePlayers-CY alumni would want to remain involved in some way, even after military service, due to their good experiences in the programme and the “good character” that they have learned. There are just currently no avenues for them to easily remain involved.

Since coaching is the biggest draw for alumni to remain engaged, providing an added incentive to do so, while increasing their capacity, was a popular suggestion among respondents. Over 50% of interviewees and one coach focus group said that one way to encourage continued engagement is by providing opportunities for alumni to develop skills and earn certifications to support their future career aspirations. It was also suggested that having alumni mentor current participants through “peer-to-peer education” and volunteering at events would give them a purpose to return.

Basketball is also seen as a way to keep alumni engaged in the programme because, as the report noted earlier, participants remain in the programme because they have fun and enjoy the basketball activities, and “participants will [not] give up the project, as the activities they have [become] their hobbies.” Organizing social activities around basketball, including weekend pick-up games, alumni reunion nights and inviting them to twinnings, could all have an impact as well. Outside of basketball, organizing annual or semi-annual cook-outs or alumni reunions could be a low-pressure, easy way to keep them engaged.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

PeacePlayers-CY should, at a minimum, keep in touch with alumni by email or social media (Facebook group) in order to keep them up-to-date with the latest happenings in the programme. They should also invite them to bigger events (twinnings, tournaments etc.) to attend or even volunteer.

The programme should offer coaching trainings and recognised accreditations and/or certifications, which they can use in their future careers and/or to coach with the PeacePlayers-CY programme.

Finally, the programme should arrange social events for alumni. Since alumni, especially ones at university or in the military, can be very busy, focus on simple events like semi-annual gatherings (summer excursion, cook-out, etc.) or weekend pick-up basketball games.



# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This evaluation of PeacePlayers-Cyprus was conducted with the goal of improving the effectiveness of programming and understanding the impact of the programme on participants as compared to non-participating youth. The evaluation also focuses on the effect on the greater community—namely, the parents of participants, as well as local institutions. The results of the evaluation will be used to improve the design and delivery of future PeacePlayers-Cyprus activities, as well as enhance participant recruitment and retention, and engagement with parents and partner organizations.

A Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) approach was used for the evaluation. In keeping with the principles of UFE, the findings are targeted towards PeacePlayers-Cyprus staff and are intended to inform decision-making about the programme, though results will also be shared with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (ERBD) and PeacePlayers staff in other programme sites and in Washington, DC. The evaluation focused on three major criteria, with corresponding evaluation questions for each:

### **Relevance: The extent to which PeacePlayers-Cyprus programming is responsive to the needs and priorities of participants**

1. What motivates youth to join and remain in the PeacePlayers-Cyprus programme over the long term?
2. By offering basketball activities, is the PeacePlayers-Cyprus programme attracting youth participants who might otherwise not engage in peacebuilding or bi-communal events?
3. How do youth and coaches perceive the single identity (SI) component of the programme? Are SI practices seen differently than twinings or other bi-communal events, and do participants still feel connected to the PeacePlayers mission when they are in their local communities engaging in SI practices?
4. How can PeacePlayers-Cyprus keep LDP graduates or alumni engaged in the programme, particularly following military service?

### **Effectiveness: The extent to which PeacePlayers-Cyprus has achieved its intended objectives**

5. Do PeacePlayers Cyprus youth have generally positive perceptions of the “other” side?
6. Is the level of interaction between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot youth enough to contribute to perception change?
7. Of the existing PeacePlayers Cyprus activities, which are the most effective for creating perception change?
8. What specific leadership skills are LDP youth learning from trainings? What additional tools and resources do LDP youth need to best develop their leadership skills?
9. What did youth learn from the nutrition sessions? Did this change the way that they eat? Why or why not?
10. What did parents learn from the nutrition sessions? Did this change the way they prepare and serve food? Why or why not?

### **Impact: Intended or unintended changes brought about through participation in the programme**

11. How are youth affected by their relationships with their coaches? What kind of changes, if any, do youth experience as a result of these relationships?
12. How are families and/or peers of participating youth impacted by the PeacePlayers programme? Do they experience changes in perception, attitudes, etc.?

13. Has the PeacePlayers programme had an impact on any local institutions or officials in Cyprus (for example schools, local government or administrative officials, etc.)? If so, what have been the results of this, especially in terms of structural change?

## DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected from PeacePlayers participants, coaches and staff, as well as from non-participating youth (the control group). The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, including focus group discussions (FGDs), participatory focus group activities (PFGs) and survey and monitoring data. Initially, the evaluation was conducted externally, but data collection among PeacePlayers participants, staff and coaches became internal in October 2017, for the final two rounds of data collection. The external firm continued to conduct data collection from the control group. Data collection took place throughout the north and south of Cyprus, specifically: Kiti, Larnaca, Engomi, Dali, Aglatzia, Faneromeni, Lapta, Iskele and north Nicosia.

Control group data collection consisted only of a survey. The survey was distributed to children and youth at a Turkish-Cypriot primary school and high school in North Nicosia, and Greek-Cypriot schools in South Nicosia and Kyrenia.

**Focus group discussions:** Two FGDs were conducted with PeacePlayers coaches and staff. The staff FGD had 4 participants and was held at the PeacePlayers office in Nicosia, while the coach FGDs had 7 total participants and were also held in Nicosia.

**Participatory focus groups (PFGs):** PFGs were conducted with 112 youth and 10 LDP participants. Three distinct exercises were included in PFGs: 1) "Raise Your Hand," 2) "Line Game" and 3) "Activity Ranking." Raise Your Hand was conducted with all participants, while Line Game and Activity Placement were conducted with LDP participants only.

- **Raise Your Hand:** The key objective of this exercise was to understand the relationship between participants and their coaches. The coach was asked to leave the room and participants covered their eyes so as not to see others' responses. The facilitator then read aloud a series of statements; if the participant agreed with the statement, he/she raised his/her hand.
- **Line Game:** The key objective of the Line Game was to understand from older participants why youth join PeacePlayers and how programme activities contribute to changes within participants and their families/peers. To complete this exercise, the facilitator established a line by placing two large pieces of paper on the ground, one at the left end of the floor labelled "disagree very much," and the other at the right end labelled "agree very much." The facilitator then read aloud a series of statements; after each one, participants moved to the point on the line that best corresponded to their opinion on that statement. The facilitator concluded the exercise with a debrief discussion.
- **Activity Ranking:** The key objective of this exercise was to identify the activities that are most effective for producing positive perception change among PeacePlayers-Cyprus participants. To complete the exercise, the facilitator provided a pre-determined list of programme activities conducted by PeacePlayers-Cyprus; each of the activities on the list were pre-assigned a unique shape. First individually and then as a group, participants ranked each asset in the order of importance. The facilitator concluded the exercise by leading a debrief discussion with participants.

**Participant Surveys:** Distinct surveys were developed for PeacePlayers-Cyprus youth participants (ages 12-18), LDP participants (ages 15-18) and the control group. Surveys were initially developed by the external evaluator and refined by the internal evaluation team. Four rounds of participant surveys were

conducted, in Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2017 and Spring 2018. Three rounds of control surveys were conducted, in Spring 2016, Spring 2017 and Spring 2018. Surveys were distributed by teams of two enumerators, drawn from PeacePlayers-Cyprus staff and the Evaluation Team. Surveys were translated from English into Greek and Turkish by the external evaluator and PeacePlayers-Cyprus staff.

FGD and PFG questions were developed by the lead evaluator in consultation with the evaluation manager and were conducted by the evaluation over four periods of two weeks in September 2017 and April 2018. Discussions took place in English, with translation to Greek or Turkish as needed by PeacePlayers-Cyprus staff. Monitoring data from the 2016 and 2017 programme cycles were used for the evaluation; PeacePlayers-Cyprus coaches and staff collected this data.

Respondent demographics are as follows:

Data Collection Tool	Total #	Identity Group			Sex	
		TC	GC	Other	Male	Female
<b>Spring 2016</b>						
12+ participant survey (PeacePlayers)	118	57	61	0	59	59
LDP survey (PeacePlayers)	24	11	13	0	11	13
12+ participant survey (Control)	183	120	63	0	74	109
LDP survey (Control)	26	10	16	0	7	19
Stakeholder interviews	11	6	5	0	7	4
LDP Focus Group	?	7	?	0	3	4
Parent Focus Group	13	6	7	0	7	6
<b>Spring 2017</b>						
12+ participant survey (PeacePlayers)	114	72	42	0	58	56
LDP survey (PeacePlayers)	21	11	10	0	12	9
12+ participant survey (Control)	102	53	49	0	39	63
LDP survey (Control)	--	--	--	--	--	--
LDP Focus Group	5	?	?	0	?	?
Parent Focus Group	9	4	5	0	5	4
<b>Fall 2017</b>						
12+ participant survey (PeacePlayers)	82	58	24	0	37	45
LDP survey (PeacePlayers)	21	7	14	0	13	8
Staff focus group	3	1	1	1	1	2
Coach focus group	7	4	3	0	4	3
LDP participatory focus group (PFG)	10	5	5	0	4	6
Youth focus group	112	70	37	5	52	49
<b>Spring 2018</b>						
12+ participant survey (PeacePlayers)	112	78	34	0	57	55
LDP survey (PeacePlayers)	9	4	5	0	6	3
12+ participant survey (Control)	75	44	31	0	30	45
LDP survey (Control)	87	77	10	0	28	59
Stakeholder interviews	1	2	0	0	2	0

## ANALYSIS

FGDs and key informant interviews were recorded, transcribed and entered into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software. PFG results were recorded by hand and entered into Excel after the data collection period, along with the monitoring and survey data. Data were analysed, and report tables and charts created, using Excel.



## EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team included PeacePlayers' Director of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) (lead evaluator) and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists. See below for evaluation team biographies:

- **Julie Younes** joined PeacePlayers in 2015 as the Director of M&E after serving as a Fellow in the Middle East from 2008-2010. Previously, she worked as a Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist for Search for Common Ground, a peacebuilding non-profit organization. She received her master's degree in 2012 from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where her studies focused on conflict resolution and monitoring and evaluation in international development.
- **Nora Summerville** joined PeacePlayers in July 2017 as an M&E Specialist. She holds an M.A. in International Affairs with a double concentration in development and global gender policy from The George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.
- **Laura Agnew** is an M&E Specialist at PeacePlayers. She became involved with PeacePlayers when undertaking her university placement year and took on a full-time position after graduating from Ulster University. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Business Studies with Marketing.

## LIMITATIONS

There were various limitations to this evaluation, many of which related to changes in formatting between the surveying done by the external evaluators and the internal Evaluation Team.

- The independent consultant giving out the Greek version of the survey changed the formatting of questions 5 and 6; therefore, these questions were presented differently for the Greek language surveys in spring 2016 and spring 2017.
- The Likert scale for questions 12 and 13 was presented inversely from other Likert scales in the first two waves of surveying. This discrepancy was corrected for the last two waves.
- Translation errors were found in the spring 2016 and spring 2017 versions of the Turkish surveys; these errors were corrected to match other versions in fall 2017 and spring 2018.
- The LDP survey was not given out to the control group in the 2017 wave, resulting in some questions only receiving two waves of answers.

Other limitations related to correspondence and delivery of results by the external evaluators.

- For Greek-Cypriot surveys from the first two waves, the internal Evaluation Team received pre-coded open responses and were not able to get the original text.
- The LDP and parent focus groups in 2016 and 2017 were delivered to the Evaluation Team with responses already summarized by the external evaluation team; the Team was not able to get transcriptions.

Finally, the Evaluation Team did not get translations for any open-ended questions on the surveys from spring 2018; thus, data for these questions is not included in the report analysis.

# APPENDIX B: PEACEPLAYERS-CYPRUS PROGRAMME MODEL

**GOAL:** Youth are engaged and mobilized to become advocates for peace within their communities

**OUTCOME 1:**  
Improved inter-group  
attitudes among  
Greek-Cypriot and  
Turkish-Cypriot youth

**INTERMEDIATE  
OUTCOME 1.1:**  
Greek-Cypriot and  
Turkish-Cypriot youth  
are willing to interact  
with each other

**OUTCOME 2:**  
Increased capacity of  
youth to serve as  
leaders within their  
local communities

**OUTCOME 3:**  
Increased awareness  
by youth and their  
families of healthy  
nutritional habits

**ACTIVITIES:**

Single-identity practices  
Bi-communal twinnings  
Bi-communal tournaments  
Summer camp  
LDP sessions  
LDP retreat  
LDP community service projects  
LDP youth serve as assistant coaches  
Nutrition trainings

# APPENDIX C: PARTICIPATORY FOCUS GROUP (PFG) TOOLS

## Tool 1: Line Game

### Methodology:

- Bring out two pieces of paper labeled “agree very much” and “disagree very much.” Place the “disagree” paper on the floor to the left of the “agree” paper, allowing significant space; the idea is to establish a line, with the two papers serving as the end points of that line.



- a) Explain to participants that you will read a series of statements, and they should **move to the point along the line that best corresponds to their opinion on the statement read**. The closer they move to the “agree very much” sign, the more strongly they agree; the closer they move to the “disagree very much” sign, the more strongly they disagree. Standing in the middle indicates a more “neutral” opinion.
- b) Begin the exercise by reading aloud 2-3 example **warm-up statements**, to make sure that the participants understand the exercise. Following the warm-up, the facilitator should read the rest of the statements aloud, pausing after each allow participants to choose where to stand. Once participants have selected where to stand, the **facilitator should ask follow-up questions, including having participants describe why they chose to stand in a particular area**. The facilitator should make sure to ask both those who express majority opinions and those who demonstrate different views.
- c) **Line Game Statements:**
  - i. Warm-up: Facebook is better than Snapchat
  - ii. Warm-up: Tzatziki tastes better than hummus
  - 1) I wish that the PeacePlayers programme had more frequent bicomunal activities such as twinnings or camps
    - Why/why not?
    - Do you think the current number of bicomunal activities held each year is enough to achieve the mission of PeacePlayers?
  - 2) I think that basketball practices in my local community are an important part of the PeacePlayers programme
    - Why/why not? What do you think is the main benefit of basketball practices?
    - Compared to twinnings or camps, do you still feel part of the PeacePlayers programme when you are taking part in basketball practices in your community?
    - Would the PeacePlayers programme be more effective or less effective if there were no basketball practices, and instead just twinnings or camps?

- 3) Not all youth who join PeacePlayers experience a positive change in their attitudes towards the other community
    - Why do you think some youth experience positive change and others do not?
    - What, if anything, can PeacePlayers do to increase the likelihood that youth experience positive attitude change?
  - 4) I think that being in the Leadership Development Programme (LDP) has helped me be a better leader
    - What aspect of LDP has most helped you be a better leader?
    - Besides leadership, is there anything else you have learned or gained through LDP?
    - What can the programme do to better help you develop leadership or other skills?
  - 5) For PeacePlayers to achieve its mission, it is important that coaches have a good relationship with their teams
    - Why/why not? How does a player's relationship with his/her coach affect his/her experience in PeacePlayers?
  - 6) Coaches are important to the leadership development of their players
    - Why/why not?
  - 7) Coaches are important to creating positive attitude change towards the other community among their players
    - Why/why not?
  - 8) I often talk to my family and friends about my experiences in PeacePlayers
    - What are the reactions of your family and friends when you talk about PeacePlayers with them?
  - 9) I think that my experiences in PeacePlayers have influenced the opinions of my family and friends on bicomunal relations in Cyprus
    - Why or why not?
    - What, if anything, can PeacePlayers do to positively influence their opinions?
  - 10) Once youth graduate from PeacePlayers, they do not remain in contact with the programme
    - Why/why not?
    - How can PeacePlayers Cyprus keep LDP graduates or other alumni engaged in the programme, particularly following military service?
- d) After the last statement has been read aloud, the facilitator should debrief with participants by asking their opinions of the activity:
- i. Was it difficult to decide where to stand?
  - ii. Did you ever change your mind and want to move positions? If so, why?

## Tool 2: Activity Ranking

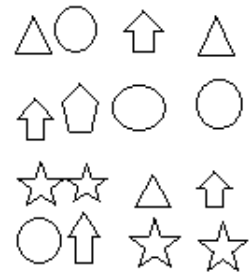
**Time Needed:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Materials:** Flipchart paper, tape, pre-cut/labeled shapes, markers and pens

**Preparation:** Distribute pre-cut, labeled shapes to participants; each participant (or participants can be grouped into pairs) should have one of each activity. Prepare and hang a large sheet of paper with the following written in English and either Turkish or Greek (depending on team):

### Methodology:

1. Instruct participants to read over the shapes labeled with PeacePlayers activities:
  - **“PeacePlayers does programming to achieve certain positive changes among participants. For this exercise, we want to look specifically at how various activities contribute to participants experiencing positive attitude change towards the other group”**
2. Instruct participants to rank the different activities according to how much each contributes to achieving positive attitude change among PeacePlayers youth. Activities should be ranked by placing them in a vertical line, with the one that contributes the most at the top, and the one that contributes least at the bottom. This should be first done individually (or in assigned pairs).
3. Once participants have individually ranked the activities, they should tape them in order on the wall, with the most important activity placed at the top, and the least important at the bottom (the facilitator can post signs labeled “Most contributes/least contributes” as needed). Instruct participants to tape their list of ranked activities side-by-side on the wall (see image on the right).
4. Debrief the exercise, noting any patterns regarding how activities are ranked:
  - **“Why did you place the shapes where you did? Why do you think X activities contribute most? Why do Y activities contribute less?”**



*Ranked Activities*