



Jesuit Worldwide Learning  
Higher Education at the Margins

## Research Report

#09 / July 2023

# Sports to Promote Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion

## The Youth Sports Facilitator Programme



This report presents the findings of the Youth Sports Facilitator programme impact study, a 6-month blended learning professional programme, accredited by the Metropolitan State University of Denver (USA) and the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Germany) and delivered by Jesuit Worldwide Learning. Through the analysis of graduates' voices, the study shows the development of a social entrepreneurial mindset and the nurturing of two key existential competences: sense of community and leadership. These result in building self-confidence and initiatives to promote inclusive and cohesive communities, in a virtuous circle of self-and community empowerment.

---

Mélotie Honen-Delmar, Research Manager, Jesuit Worldwide Learning  
Carolina Miranda Futuro, Research Assistant, Jesuit Worldwide Learning  
Dr Isabella Rega, Global Research Director, Jesuit Worldwide Learning



## Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>II</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.1 COUNTRY PROFILES	5
1.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	5
1.3 OVERVIEW	6
<b>2 A NEW MINDSET FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET	8
2.1.1 <i>Project management skills</i>	8
2.1.2 <i>Critical thinking</i>	10
2.2 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COHESION	11
2.2.1 <i>Girls and women</i>	12
2.2.2 <i>Persons with disabilities</i>	13
2.2.3 <i>Diverse cultures and religions</i>	14
<b>3 EXISTENTIAL COMPETENCES</b> .....	<b>17</b>
3.1 SENSE OF COMMUNITY	17
3.1.1 <i>Empathy</i>	17
3.1.2 <i>Responsible to others</i>	17
3.1.3 <i>Bringing people together</i>	18
3.2 LEADERSHIP: COACHING LEADS TO SOCIAL INCLUSION	19
3.2.1 <i>Coach: a leader caring for the team</i>	19
3.2.2 <i>Solving issues in the community</i>	21
3.2.3 <i>Role models: leading by example</i>	22
<b>4 SELF-CONFIDENCE</b> .....	<b>24</b>
4.1 DEFINING SELF-CONFIDENCE	24
4.1.1 <i>Communication skills: advocacy and public speaking</i>	25
4.1.2 <i>Beyond challenges: resilience and resourcefulness</i>	26
<b>5 THE ROAD TO EMPOWERMENT</b> .....	<b>28</b>
5.1 SELF-EMPOWERMENT	28
5.2 EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY	30
5.2.1 <i>Sport</i>	30
5.2.2 <i>Gender equality</i>	31
5.2.3 <i>Community wellbeing and sustainability</i>	32



5.2.4	<i>Peacebuilding</i>	33
6	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>35</b>
7	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>37</b>
8	<b>AUTHORS</b> .....	<b>38</b>



## 1 Introduction

The Youth Sports Facilitator (YSF) programme is a 24-week course to train people who want to learn how to mobilise the benefit of sports for young people. Since 2019, this course has been delivered 10 times, both in English and Arabic, by Jesuit Worldwide Learning and accredited

by the Metropolitan State University of Denver (USA) and the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Germany), to 661 participants across 30 community learning centres in 7 different countries. In 2023, a total of 432 learners graduated from the programme. This impact study analysed the voices of 25 graduates who completed the programme before September 2021 (totalling 330).

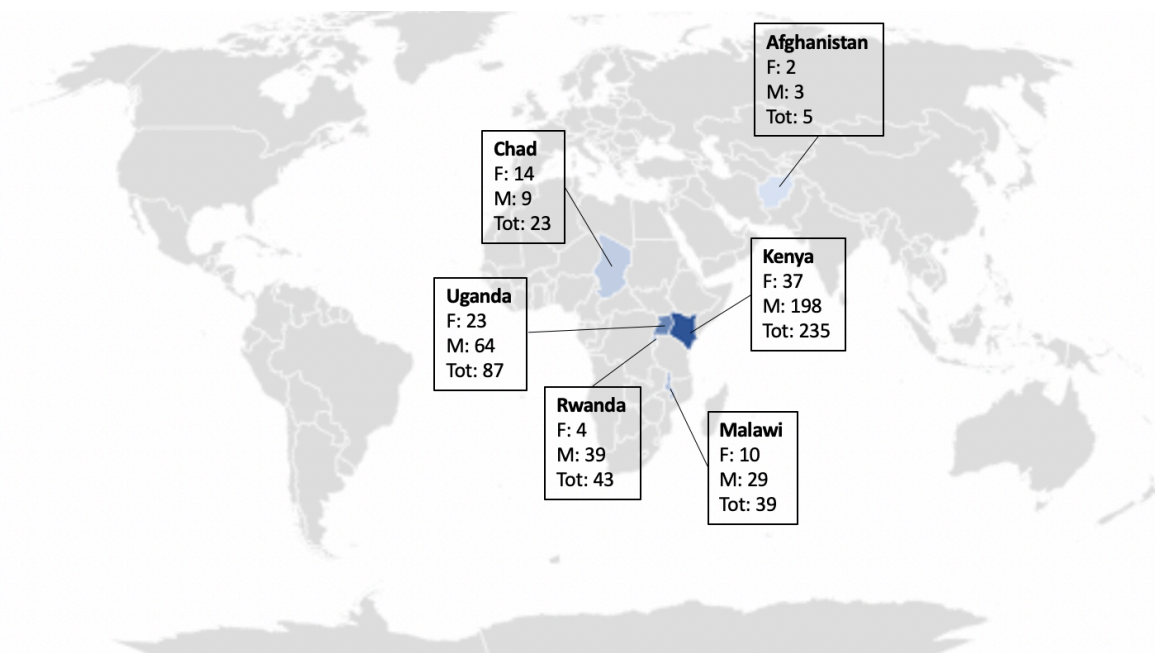


Fig 1: Map of Youth Sports Facilitator graduates until September 2021

The Youth Sports Facilitator programme is delivered in a blended learning format, with both online and onsite support. The course content is accessible in a web-based training platform, the JWL Learning Management System (the Humanitarian e-Learning Platform - HeLP) or in the JWL Global E-learning app, which has an offline component. Throughout the programme, students must submit weekly assignments designed according to the experience, reflection, and action model, which is core to the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (ICAGE, 1993). Assignments often invite students to share their experience in a global community of

learners, bringing students together from different community learning centres in a virtual global classroom. As part of this exchange, students are invited to reflect on their experience and apply their learning takeaways in one project work – the practicum. This project calls upon students to apply their knowledge by building sustainable youth sports initiatives in either formal or non-formal education settings within their communities. Throughout the programme, students are guided by an online facilitator – an expert in this field who provides academic guidance through online feedback and grading assignments.



Students also benefit from the support of an onsite facilitator whose role is to facilitate discussions twice a week, at the community learning centre. During these meetings, students discuss relevant topics with their classmates in the centre, to contextualise and develop a greater understanding of these.

## 1.1 Country profiles

This section provides a brief overview of the locations where the graduates who participated in the research studied: Afghanistan, Kenya, and Malawi were chosen because they are countries of operation of JWL, while Chad, Rwanda and Uganda were part of a one-off offer sponsored by UNHCR between 2020-21.

Kakuma Refugee Camp is situated in a semi-arid area in the North of Kenya, near the South Sudanese and Ugandan border. Established in 1992, Kakuma hosts refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and the Great Lakes region. With more than 200,000 refugees,<sup>1</sup> mainly from South Sudan and Somalia, it is the second largest refugee camp in Kenya and one of the oldest refugee camps in the world. JWL began implementing the first pilot online programme in Kakuma Camp in 2010. Today, Kakuma is JWL's largest learning centre, welcoming over 1,500 students since 2020 for 3 academic programmes, 6 professional certificates and 5 English courses.

Dzaleka Refugee Camp, just forty kilometres outside Malawi's capital city, Lilongwe, was the second pilot site for the Diploma in Liberal Studies, the first programme offered by JWL. The camp dates back to 1994 and was set up in light

of the influx of refugees from the African Great Lakes region. It has since developed into a camp akin to a rural city of mud houses, hosting over 80,000 refugees, mainly from Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>2</sup>. Since 2020, about 1,250 young men and women have followed their courses every day, connecting with peers at the JWL learning centre and with the rest of the global community of learners, changing their outlook on life and that of their whole community.

Bamyan and Herat in Afghanistan saw new JWL community learning centres open in 2015, under the JWL graduates-run local partner, New Horizon. Bamyan is a small town in the central mountainous part of Afghanistan. Students came from as far as a one-day journey from neighbouring Daikundi Province to participate in the English Language programme and to join the higher education programme. The first graduates belonging to the Hazara community returned to their villages in Daikundi and Gore Provinces and opened new learning centres, teaching English and enabling some to enrol in JWL professional and academic courses.

## 1.2 Research design

This study follows a consolidated research design used for evaluating the impact of JWL programmes (Honen-Delmar & Rega, 2021), based on a participatory approach (Hall, 1992) and aimed at fostering research skills within the graduate body and staff. The interview protocol was adapted from the one conceived to investigate the impact of the Diploma in Liberal Studies (Honen-Delmar & Rega, 2021) and is based on a participatory

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/KEN/796>

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/mwi>



workshop conducted with key stakeholders within the organisation, which led to the identification of 6 fundamental impact dimensions: critical thinking, leadership, empowerment, self-confidence, sense of community and intercultural and interreligious sensitivity.

The semi-structured interview protocol was organised as follows:

- An initial section to identify what happened in graduates' lives after completion of the Youth Sports Facilitator programme.
- A section examining the learning journey and the changes it produces.
- A section studying the 6 identified dimensions, focused on capturing how the graduates define these dimensions and concrete examples in graduates' lives and their involvement in the community.
- A section exploring the societal impact and graduates' involvement in the community.
- A section to capture the dimensions which graduates deem most important in terms of impact on their lives.
- A final section identifying possible negative outcomes and undesired impacts the programme had on the lives of graduates and their communities.

Country	Site	Interviews
Afghanistan	Bamyan	2
Kenya	Kakuma	17
Malawi	Dzaleka	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>

*Table 1: Participants by country and community learning centres*

In line with JWL's transformational approach to research, this project was an opportunity to work on the capacity building of JWL students and graduates; therefore, we selected research assistants to conduct interviews in Dzaleka Refugee Camp (Malawi), Kakuma Refugee Camp (Kenya) and Bamyan (Afghanistan). The research assistants attended a one-day online training course on data collection and research ethics. The research team met each week to report progress and challenges, as well as create a peer learning environment, establishing a community of practice during the data collection period.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) was used to analyse the data with the help of the Dedoose software. The two main limitations of the research design are already acknowledged in Honen-Delmar & Rega (2021) and refer in primis to the nature of the research, which is commissioned by JWL itself and conducted by JWL staff (the Global Research Team). This may have inhibited the participants' ability to fully express themselves and report possible negative impacts of the programme on their lives. Secondly, although all interviewers had the same training, the heterogenous group of interviewers may have had different approaches to some questions, which could have resulted in emphasising some aspects more than others during the interviews.

### 1.3 Overview

According to graduates, the Youth Sports Facilitator programme nurtures two main existential competencies: a sense of community and leadership skills, and a social entrepreneurial mindset. Graduates explain how, through the course, they learnt how to develop business models



and project management plans and implement a project. This is also paralleled by the development of a critical thinking mindset which allows graduates to address social issues within their communities. As graduates become skilled in building community sports projects, they are able to develop a constant interest to promote social change within their communities, particularly encouraging social inclusion and cohesion. This ultimately nurtures a sense of community which is anchored in empathy, a sense of responsibility towards others and a willingness to bring people together. Lastly, students learn about leadership through the sports initiatives they develop during the programme. This implies that as coaching methods are also transmitted, students are able to develop conflict resolution skills geared towards providing solutions and care for the community, while also serving as role models in their community.

These lessons, skills and outcomes, furthermore, are enabled and embedded in more general sentiments promoted by the course in graduates themselves. Namely, graduates are able to develop a self-confidence and belief that they are able to act for the benefit of others, demonstrating their advocacy skills, resilience and resourcefulness in their community. This, in turn is more broadly embedded in graduates' personal development and empowerment, with the desire for the wellbeing of their community as the underlying driving force. As explained by a graduate in Kenya, the main impetus of the Youth Sports Facilitator programme is:



“How to understand, how to solve the problems of youth, and how you interact with the youth, [...] from different diversity [...] ... how you can transform the society basically.”

– KK\_YSF\_G7\_J

This impact of the course on the graduates and the community is, consequently, seen as mutually empowering as graduates share their commitment to being agents of positive change in their community which, in turn, empowers community members and ultimately fosters peaceful and harmonious communities.

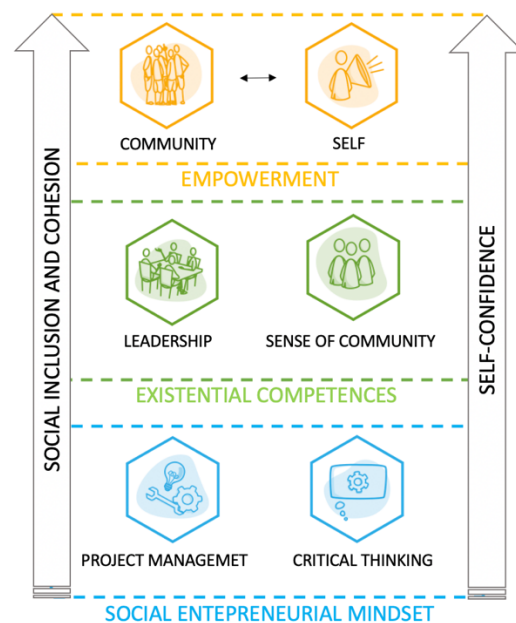


Fig 2. The conceptual model



## 2 A new mindset for social inclusion and social cohesion

### 2.1 Social entrepreneurial mindset

Graduates highlight the role of the YSF programme as means to build project management and critical thinking skills, essential to build initiatives which promote social change.

#### 2.1.1 Project management skills

Key to an entrepreneurial mind, project management skills are perhaps the main takeaway recounted in the interviews. Graduates highlight that they are now able to implement their own initiatives in their communities, usually starting their own sports team.<sup>3</sup>

Graduates frequently refer to behaviours learnt through the programme as helpful in this respect. Here, abilities like fundraising are recounted by interviewees as something they learnt during the course and identified as crucial to put in place an initiative of their own. For example, a graduate in Malawi explained:

*"This course has so much knowledge in how you can find sponsors, how you can interact with the CBOs [Community Based Organisations] or the organisations that surround you, so it helps me to have so much knowledge on how I can go here and there and find my own life." (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

Moreover, graduates identified how this course helped them develop a financially sustainable initiative, as explained by this graduate in Malawi:

*"I used to even sacrifice myself to offer to buy the football for the team sometimes, so, instead of increasing the financial of the team, I increase anything in financial for the team [...] So, after that I was discouraged a bit, though I used to spend a lot of time there [...] to make sure the kids are well trained and become who they want to be [...] I can say what I have changed at least right now am running a business in the business model cover that I gained in Youth Sports [Facilitator], if they couldn't choose me or take the course today [...] I couldn't run my business using those strategies of business model cover[ed during the course]." (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P)*

Therefore, learning about project management helps graduates establish an organised and financially sustainable initiative of their own. Similarly, planning and time management abilities are also mentioned as necessary for the implementation of a project (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J; KK\_YSF\_G20\_G). One graduate explains that:

*"Time is everything. [...] we were told that, no matter what we can do, time is always at first consideration. We were taught how to plan time starting with big things, then with small things." (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

Teamwork is another ability which graduates refer to. In Afghanistan, for example, a graduate stated:

*"My best friend, we are working on a project, when I talked to her, she got the idea, she really liked what I wanted to do. She's like fundraising something from people again she's always doing [something] to gain some budget to our new project." (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)*

Other abilities, such as IT (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P) and project design skills (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)

<sup>3</sup> KK\_YSF\_G7\_J, MD\_YSF\_G2\_P, AB\_YSF\_G28\_F, KK\_YSF\_G2\_G, KK\_YSF\_G19\_G, MD\_YSF\_G7\_P, KK\_YSF\_G12\_J, KK\_YSF\_G13\_G, MD\_YSF\_G11\_P, MD\_YSF\_G6\_P





are also mentioned as enabling graduates to turn their ideas into reality. Ultimately, what most graduates reflect is that the course helped them manage projects<sup>4</sup> and “have the ability of creating something” (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P).

Management and professionalism are also noted as part of entrepreneurial skills developed during the course (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J, AB\_YSF\_G30\_F). One graduate in Kakuma affirms that:

*“After completing my studies, I tested the nature of my professionalism and I formed a small team that’s a very young team and I was testing on the ability of management and [...] so [...] with this team, we bought a ball, we bought uniform, we conducted some of the friendly matches and it was moving away.” (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J)*

Hence, learning these entrepreneurial skills leads to the development and implementation of initiatives which serve graduates’ communities, most commonly in the form of sports teams. Graduates share an entrepreneurial ambition to engage with their communities through projects, as illustrated by a graduate in Kenya:

*“I want to add another team yes. [...] and I can open [...] my small company or organisation or small club [...]. Yeah, my wish, you know we live in a bad place and a bad life, but my wish is more. I want to be the good coach even if am here.” (KK\_YSF\_G14\_J)*

This ambition to create initiatives using entrepreneurial skills for the benefit of the community are attributed to a change in mindset, notably critical thinking, as articulated by this graduate in Malawi:

*“It really increased my critical thinking, because [...] it changed the way I used to think before that’s why I found it very easier and also possible to enter into the community and create something new out of my community which was not existing. For example, in the area maybe where I am based, there are different teams, but my team it’s totally different from other teams whereby it’s like based on discipleship and sport also goes together so, it’s really chasing my thinking and it’s something new of different ideas of my community.” (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P).*

Fuelling this entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking appears as a key impact of the course and this is further elaborated in the next section.

<sup>4</sup> MD\_YSF\_G11\_P, AB\_YSF\_G30\_F, AB\_YSF\_G28\_F, KK\_YSF\_G16\_G, KK\_YSF\_G8\_J



Figure 3: Youth playing football in Kakuma Camp, Kenya

### 2.1.2 Critical thinking

Throughout the interviews, graduates were asked to reflect on critical thinking and the impact of the course on this competence. Generally, graduates defined critical thinking in terms of investigating facts before forming an opinion (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P), brainstorming (MD\_YSF\_G6\_P), coming up with solutions (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J, MD\_YSF\_G7\_P), or being creative and thinking outside the box (AB\_YSF\_G30\_F, KK\_YSF\_G13\_G). Critical thinking appears as an essential takeaway from the course, as it helps graduates develop analytical skills that translate into them feeling more in control of their decisions and better able to assess situations.

Interestingly, graduates tend to highlight one specific aspect of the course as

particularly helpful in cultivating their critical thinking: the practicum. As part of the YSF course, students are asked to apply what they have learnt by forming groups and designing and implementing an inclusive sports programme in their community. This practicum is viewed by graduates as helping them to think critically as they have to establish networks, solve problems, and learn how to circulate in the community in order to achieve their goals (KK\_YSF\_G20\_G). One graduate in Afghanistan explains:

*"[...] we needed to have a project and implement our project and evaluate. So, we need[ed] to share an idea which was practical, [...] we need[ed] an idea to work, so we have chosen [a] place where a lot of refugees, we work and help them, so it was [because of] critical thinking that we finally could [achieve] success to this project."* (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)



In effect, many graduates state that the ability to think critically makes them see “the world in a different lens today” (KK\_YSF\_G20\_G) and often translates into seeking to solve community challenges (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J). For this graduate in Kenya:

*“The course of Youth Sports Facilitator has helped me to identify and notify some of the challenges, some of the weaknesses, some of the incapacitated ways of how we can be able to deal with the challenges, or how we can be able to provide some solution to the community, on how we can be able to maybe widen our minds [...] and intervene, or we can invent, or we can bring more useful resources into government.” (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J)*

Critical thinking is understood as an integral component to graduates’ growth during the course and this ultimately helps them to create projects which serve the community at large.

## 2.2 Social inclusion and cohesion

Many graduates demonstrate active efforts to include diverse members of the community in their initiatives despite the challenges posed by differing cultural habits. This willingness to create social harmony around them fits into the two pillars of UNHCR’s Sports for Protection approach, namely social inclusion and social cohesion.<sup>5</sup> Defined respectively as the process in which participation for all members of society have the space and are encouraged to participate to increase opportunities, access to resources and improve human rights, and as the process in which various community are brought together to live harmoniously, regardless of shared characteristics or differences

within the different social groups, these two pillars of the Sports for Protection approach encompass a set of skills which graduates demonstrate and strengthen throughout the course. For instance, their critical thinking skills are applied through reflective analysis on social and cultural habits (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J) to identify ways to create social change. A graduate in Kenya illustrates this point as he was able to reflect on cultural practices and gender equality in sports:

*“Let me take for Sudanese majority [...] they say, girl she can’t stand with a boy. Tell them no [...]. It is not good. All of them are people. Maybe I have a good word, I want to talk and then it will help others to change. [...] Our Somali religion say women can get married at 16 years. Women they don’t go to school, they just learn Quran. For me I say no. I say no every day I fight with them; I said no, go to school.” (KK\_YSF\_G14\_J)*

A noticeable pattern can be seen here, in that students who develop critical thinking begin to examine their communities’ cultural practices and see the need to change certain habits. This realisation goes beyond a growth in critical thinking mindset, as graduates also tend to take action and become agents promoting social inclusion and cohesion in their communities (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P). This can be observed in graduates’ wish to foster social inclusion through their sports initiatives, which they usually do by reaching out to and uniting groups commonly excluded from sports, such as girls and disabled youth, and individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds, in a single team.

How they include each of these groups is addressed separately in the sections below.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/media/sport-protection-toolkit>



## 2.2.1 Girls and women

Perhaps the strongest way graduates apply critical thinking with a view to bringing about social change is by fighting for the inclusion of girls in sports. In this sense, some graduates highlight how difficult it was to have girls as active participants in their initiatives,<sup>6</sup> as explained by one graduate in Kenya:

*"The greatest challenge was the community perception toward sport, maybe parents will not be in position to release their children especially the girls, maybe releasing those girls to come to the field and also participate in the sport activities. With boys they have no problem but with the team of girls that we formed last time was really challenging more especially the turn up." (KK\_YSF\_G12\_J)*

In fact, almost all graduates mention they had to make an active effort to ensure girls' participation in sports, reflecting on their efforts to convince family members to let their daughters play sports, and offering to train them individually (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F), or to establish a sports initiative specifically for girls.<sup>7</sup>

Following the social inclusion and cohesion principles they are taught during the YSF course – such as the importance of fostering the empowerment of girls, guaranteeing their rights, and that sports can be helpful to their development – graduates believe that, despite it being against some locally prevalent cultural and religious practices, girls should also be encompassed by sports initiatives. They also address how they are partly responsible for promoting such change in their environment.<sup>8</sup> In this respect, one

graduate stated, for instance, that the biggest takeaway from the course is that one should:



**"[create] a resilience zone for the girls. You know, [in] our culture, girls they are like, it's the next option. They first offer the option to boys, then when the boys achieved, it's when they come to girls. So, I think to my side I will create or open an organisation that I will be working with girl. So, that organisation will be dealing it whereby it will involve only girls, where girls will be able to share their experience, life, skills that they are facing."**

– MD\_YSF\_G10\_P

In order to achieve that, the main advocacy method employed by graduates is the conduction of home visits, individually contacting families with daughters to convince them to allow their girls to play sports.<sup>9</sup> A lot of times, it is through these practices that graduates foster the participation of girls in sports, as spelled out by the following graduate in Kenya:

*"I have a small meeting with the parents, I tell them even girls can play football, even girls she can build a house, even girls she can be a pilot, and she can be driver. It doesn't mean football is for men or boys. No, it's for all of them [...] Now you can go to tell this mother I need your daughter. I want to go to play football with her. Then she will say it is okay just take her. I'm just proud of that." (KK\_YSF\_G14\_J)*

<sup>6</sup> KK\_YSF\_G12\_J, MD\_YSF\_G10\_P, AB\_YSF\_G30\_F

<sup>7</sup> MD\_YSF\_G2\_P, KK\_YSF\_G4\_J, KK\_YSF\_G18\_J, MD\_YSF\_G10\_P

<sup>8</sup> MD\_YSF\_G10\_P, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J, KK\_YSF\_G18\_J, AB\_YSF\_G30\_F, KK\_YSF\_G8\_J, KK\_YSF\_G4\_J, KK\_YSF\_G10\_J

<sup>9</sup> KK\_YSF\_G15\_G, AB\_YSF\_G30\_F, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J, KK\_YSF\_G4\_J, KK\_YSF\_G15\_J, KK\_YSF\_G8\_J, KK\_YSF\_G10\_J, KK\_YSF\_G14\_J



In this sense, graduates work to change the community's perception of girls playing sports by striving to convince parents to let them participate in sports. To ensure retention and that girls effectively partake in these activities, the youth sports facilitators may make certain accommodations (KK\_YSF\_G8\_J), such as by forming separate teams for girls and boys (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J). One graduate in Kenya relates another practice:

*"The Islamic region, sometimes they don't allow girls in sport activities, so that is challenge for us. But for us to convince those people we have to put an effort, to some extent that we find that some of them have been allowed to participate in those sport activities, but now they participate with conditions [...] we will not tell them [girls] to remove those [hijabs] when they wanted to engage in sport activity, we need to accept it and allow them participate in those hijab" (KK\_YSF\_G15\_G).*

Thus, they specifically employ a practice encouraged by the course, which is to not make girls choose between participating in sports and adhering to cultural dress codes, but rather be flexible to accommodate these needs (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J).

A female graduate also explained a similar impact of the course on their own ability to be a female coach:

*"20 years ago, there was no coach girls or coach women, but now we have a coach of women [...] Women, she can [now] build the house. Like, myself I can build, and then I can wake up in the morning, because let me say in your cultures only man [they can], can build the fence. Yeah, because when you are woman what you know is cooking, sleeping and [giving birth], only that. But now what I am learning [is] why not?" (KK\_YSF\_G14\_J)*

The course therefore not only empowers all graduates to fight for the inclusion of

girls in sports, but also inspires female graduates to fight for their place as female coaches, taking an active role in creating safe spaces for other women and girls to take up sports.

Thus, both in terms of youth sports initiative facilitators and participants, the YSF course promotes social inclusion and cohesion.

### 2.2.2 Persons with disabilities

Other than girls, another group which graduates aim to include in their sports initiatives, despite them not being commonly seen as active practitioners of sports, are persons with disabilities. In this sense, graduates state that it was actually through the YSF course that they realised that children with disabilities could also participate in sports activities. For instance, one graduate says that:

*"I could not understand things to do with inclusivity, like how to involve learners or youth with disabilities in the sport. But after doing this course that's impacted [me] with that kind of knowledge and skills, of which now I'm able to [...] create some teams where I offer opportunities even to learners who are disabled to join themselves in the sports regardless of their abilities [...] our school is [an] inclusive school, where I also have learners with some different impairments. I'm also able to involve them [in] sports, in this case" (KK\_YSF\_G16\_G).*

With these skills, graduates strive both to create initiatives exclusively designed for children with disabilities (KK\_YSF\_G13\_G), as well as including these individuals in general sports initiatives (KK\_YSF\_G16\_G) while paying due attention to effectively include them, including by applying some of the measures outlined by the YSF course. This includes consulting persons with disabilities about how to adapt initiatives to their needs and ensuring that



facilitators and teammates are also aware of their specific needs.

Ultimately, what this kind of thinking instils in learners is an attitude of inclusion toward diversity:

*"I realise that there are a lot of things that people were not putting into consideration. Yeah, like when I look at people with disability, they were not involved so much in this sport. But, after I joined the course, I realised that there was a need for the people with disabilities to be engaged in such activities, sport normally brings inclusivity here, because everybody is involved in such activities [...] I am able to take myself out from the perception that was there previously. People used to say disable people are not able to play and after I joined the course I am against the perception, [...]. So, I have [...] realised their potential, they can do like any other person. Another thing is that I have realised that sport is everything in our community, [...] bringing youth together, setting up a project that can engage all the community is also [...] very meaningful to our community" (KK\_YSF\_G17\_G).*

### 2.2.3 Diverse cultures and religions

A third way graduates tend to advocate and act for social inclusion and cohesion is by bringing together people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in their sports initiatives. This attitude is fostered by a sense of intercultural and interreligious sensitivity which graduates highlight as being nurtured throughout the course, as expressed by one graduate from Kenya:



**"I embrace interreligion and interculture, because Youth Sports Facilitator has taught me what to do, and as the knowledge that I've got, it's open for everyone, it does not discriminate, it's a field which is showing everyone that there's no discrimination, there's no like this, we are just the same."**

*– KK\_YSF\_G18\_J*

In this sense, graduates define intercultural and interreligious sensitivity as the ability to live with everyone, regardless of their background. For example, one graduate in Kenya defines it as follows:

*"I normally coexist with my uncle who is a Christian and I'm a Muslim. He's a pastor, and I am just a Muslim, and we lived in the same house. So, most of the time, I normally tell him that okay you are a Christian, I am a Muslim, but when we come back home, we are together, and we have to respect each other's religions [...] what I always know is somebody from different race as long as he's human, it does not make him somebody else apart from human being." (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J)*

Similarly, other graduates also talk about the concept by basing it on the respect for difference and the belief that harmonious relationships can be created regardless of differences<sup>10</sup> and it is about "uniting, putting together religions, putting together different cultures." (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P)

In this sense, it is worth mentioning that the development of intercultural and

<sup>10</sup> AB\_YSF\_G28\_F, AB\_YSF\_G30\_F, KK\_YSF\_G4\_J, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J, KK\_YSF\_G7\_J, MD\_YSF\_G7\_P, MD\_YSF\_G6\_P, KK\_YSF\_G19\_G, MD\_YSF\_G2\_P, KK\_YSF\_G10\_J, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J, KK\_YSF\_G14\_J, KK\_YSF\_G20\_G



interreligious skills was also associated with YSF curriculum. The practicum was highlighted as particularly helpful:

*"Team should strictly comprise of participants from different communities here in the camp, being this person Congolese, that one Somalian, Sudanese; South Sudanese as long as they are in one team, they called themselves brothers and that is what we have been doing all in our practicum [...] we were able to bring them together under the umbrella of football. Football and living together, so I think I was inspired by the course." (KK\_YSF\_G20\_G)*

In this sense, the group exercise of the practicum was pointed as helpful, for it made students to effectively engage with people from diverse backgrounds (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J, KK\_YSF\_G8\_J).

Graduates share an understanding that their sports initiatives can be opportunities to promote intercultural and interreligious understanding, supporting better communication and interaction, ultimately building social inclusion and cohesion.<sup>11</sup>

For instance, one graduate in Kakuma highlighted:

*"When you look at the teams, it is not meant for tribal or something, it is mixed, and that shows still there is no discrimination, all cultures they come together." (KK\_YSF\_G16\_G).*

Sport therefore becomes a common ground through which different people can find similarities and focus on a shared goal through an activity which unites them<sup>12</sup>.

The way to accomplish an effective, diverse and inclusive team is reflected in the interreligious coordination skills which

graduates demonstrate during games.<sup>13</sup> For instance, this graduate in Kenya explains:



**"We just stop the football before reaching the prayer time of Maghrib [Islamic prayer performed at from within 6:50-7:10 pm]. So that one is one of my interreligious [measures] that I'm doing in the team before getting the Salat [prayer] of Maghrib, just stopping the football and all players are agreed either be a Muslim or Christian, they agree like that. [...] the Christian, I am giving them a day free for example, like Saturday or Sunday. Yeah, we don't have game Saturday or Sunday."**

*– KK\_YSF\_G6\_J*

Besides managing different cultural and religious contexts to build an inclusive environment, graduates frequently highlighted the development of an ability to instinctively understand others as a result of working with such diverse groups (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P). Therefore, this greater understanding of others is conducive to the creation of a good environment for those who participate in their teams and enables them to readily resolve any cultural or religious problems which may arise amongst their players (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J, KK\_YSF\_G20\_G, KK\_YSF\_G8\_J).

Graduates strongly emphasise their motivation to build teams which are diverse and represent spaces that foster

<sup>11</sup> AB\_YSF\_G30\_F, KK\_YSF\_G18\_J, KK\_YSF\_G19\_G, KK\_YSF\_G4\_J, KK\_YSF\_G13\_G

<sup>12</sup> KK\_YSF\_G19\_G, MD\_YSF\_G7\_P, KK\_YSF\_G15\_J, KK\_YSF\_G12\_J, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J, KK\_YSF\_G10\_J, KK\_YSF\_G18\_J

<sup>13</sup> MD\_YSF\_G11\_P, KK\_YSF\_G12\_J, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J



the creation of solidarity amongst community members of different religious or cultural backgrounds. Being adaptable, creative and attuned to their players' differences are the key entrepreneurial skills which enable graduates to create effectively inclusive and progressive initiatives. It is through this process that

graduates often apply their critical thinking and entrepreneurial skills, taking up advocacy roles and actively engaging with their communities to change customs with a view to promoting greater social inclusion and cohesion through sports.



*Figure 4: Youth Sports Facilitator onsite meeting, Kakuma, Kenya*





## 3 Existential competences

The social entrepreneurial mindset which graduates develop by refining their critical thinking and project management capabilities enables them to establish youth sports initiatives to promote social change. This section presents how this development ultimately nurtures both a sense of community which is anchored in empathy, of responsibility towards others, a willingness to bring people together, and leadership competences which enable conflict-resolution and result in facilitators being perceived as role models by their communities.

### 3.1 Sense of community

Graduates repeatedly noted the role of the YSF programme in forging their sense of community. By engaging in discussions about issues related to sports and community, as well as shifting from theory to practice and engaging with the community through the practicum, the programme fosters a new or enhanced sense of community based on care and empathy.

#### 3.1.1 Empathy

One of the prominent features of graduates' sense of community is the importance given to empathy. Some graduates defining their sense of community as the ability to feel for other individuals in one's own community (MD\_YSF\_G11\_P). One graduate elaborates:



“Sensing, sense is like feeling. You feel something, [...] empathy [...]. You feel something like some children, or some small children are crying there, you feel that crying it pains you, gives you a pain, that means a sense.”

– KK\_YSF\_G6\_J

This “emotional connection to the community” (MD\_YSF\_G11\_P) is key to becoming aware of and sensitive to issues outside one's own life, and problems affecting others (MD\_YSF\_G11\_P; KK\_YSF\_G6\_J; AB\_YSF\_G28\_F). For one Afghan graduate, this empathy emerges from the viewpoint that everyone is equal as member of society and thus one needs to understand the other's feelings, so that “if someone is sad, [...] if you're in that situation, there will be someone to help you.” (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)

Beyond empathy, some graduates added that a sense of community is encompassed in a feeling of care for other (MD\_YSF\_G11\_P) which builds a sense of belonging to the community, as illustrated by this graduate:

*“People must belong, [...] you are a branch of tree [...] so you belong to that tree. Yeah, we must belong to our community, we must give back to our communities in one way or another.”*  
(KK\_YSF\_G20\_G)

#### 3.1.2 Responsible to others

Learners developed a sense of responsibility towards others and creating a positive change in the community.



Graduates often refer to their sense of community through an expression of duty and commitment: “I have to make sure to participate and solve community issues” (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P); “I believe that I can do something for the community” (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P). For some, the sense of responsibility is not only toward their community at present but also to the next generation, as this graduate in Afghanistan states: “If something bad happens to the next generation I would be one of the responsible” (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F). For others, this sense of community is exhibited through community mobilisation to ensure its health and well-being:

*“The example that I can give you is that I do offer and I do sacrifice myself to make sure that my community is developing rather than keeping the way that it was like, when I see the communities undergoing about different disease, like because of dust, like [because of] mosquitoes [...], we organise people in the community and make sure we clean up the community and protect the community. [...] I do clean in our community with a certain team of the journal Africa, so we do clean the whole community to make sure that there is no such as mosquitoes around us to avoid such malarias.” (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P)*

This sense of community as helping others is most reflected in the willingness of graduates to address community issues (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P; KK\_YSF\_G8\_J), including through the planning of communities activities (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P).

*“I’m helping the community, if I am helping the community in terms of supporting the sport. Also, I can join the community in solving community issues (conflicts). So yeah, that is one of the examples that can show that I have sense of the community.” (KK\_YSF\_G8\_J)*

This new awareness and care for other is seen as a direct impact of the YSF programme:

*“I can say of course, they have increased sense of community because when I look to back in days in the community I was no one, I didn’t even mind about my community I was just minding my business but at least right now I can do something in the community and I can also even participate in the community activities.” (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P)*

As a direct outcome of the course, this sense of community encourages graduates to increase their participation in the community while also “bringing the community together in terms of unity and peace” (KK\_SYF\_G4\_J).

### 3.1.3 Bringing people together

This new sense of responsibility towards the greater good of the community and relentless willingness moves graduates to build initiatives and engagements for the development of the community (KK\_YSF\_G14\_J). For example, graduates speak about how the course allowed them to mobilise the community to address community issues (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J), ultimately fostering social cohesion, as a priority.

Most graduates act on this sense of community and responsibility by establishing sports initiatives (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J, AB\_YSF\_G28\_F), particularly ones supporting youth (KK\_YSF\_G15\_J) and marginalised groups. For one graduate, it is important to address challenges in the community such as substance abuse and school dropouts:

*“If maybe we say like school dropouts, or maybe those people who normally engage in drugs, if it means we are going to stop it. How can we stop it? So, unless we raise our awareness on the dangers of such kind of drugs and how will we raise our awareness? How will we make sure that we raise awareness? Is it through training? Will we conduct training for the youth? How will*



*we do it? So that is that comes as a sense of our community.” (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J)*

For others, this goes beyond one’s immediate community, with graduates in forced displacement contexts reaching out to the host community. This graduate in Kakuma shares that:

*“When we go also to the schools part, from my community schools, even the host communities, which we are living among them [...] I am able to reach them, talk to those people who are our host who have welcomed us in this camp. Like I go and visit those children who are [...] in need of support, most of the time I feel like I should talk to them, I should make a little support to them by providing them. Those who are one most vulnerable. I give them whatever I have.” (KK\_YSF\_G18\_J)*

Their sense of community translates into a willingness to build activities and projects which contribute to others’ empowerment (MD\_YSF\_G11\_P) regardless of one’s cultural or religious background (KK\_YSF\_G19\_G).

### 3.2 Leadership: coaching leads to social inclusion

Another significant impact of the course reported by graduates is the opportunity to build leadership skills. With its curriculum covering how to become a coach who can instigate positive change through sports and nurture engaged, social, empathetic and healthy individuals, the YSF programme has been essential for graduates to learn about leadership and apply this in their own community.

#### 3.2.1 Coach: a leader caring for the team

Graduates frequently elaborate how the YSF programme develop their leadership skills, particularly as team sports coaches.

For this coach in Kakuma, being a mentor to youth was one of their goals:

*“Actually, the course has made me achieved what I wanted. One of the things I wanted to achieve was that I wanted to be a mentor... to mentor upcoming youth on the importance of the sport and the benefits [...] now I am a coach in the community mentoring a team and that is one of the things I have achieved. For sure I have acquired lot skills that I am able to handle these young kids.” (KK\_YSF\_G15\_J)*

Speaking about the ability to manage a team, this graduate touched upon the graduates’ subsequent capacity to adapt and handle multiple emotions team members might demonstrate at any given time. In this sense, a graduate from Malawi said:

*“I know how I can manage the stress of people, how I can manage the anger of people, how I can manage the happiness of people.” (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

Knowing how to fairly enforce the rules of the game is another aspect of managing a team was also highlighted, giving examples such as not benching a player for two games in a row (KK\_YSF\_G16\_G). Effective team management is often described by graduates as the ability to keep team members calm, happy, and motivated (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F, KK\_YSF\_G17\_G, KK\_YSF\_G6\_J).

This ability to manage a team is understood as essential to graduates’ leadership skill development, as they gain legitimacy in coaching and guiding their teams (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P; MD\_YSF\_G2\_P) as one graduate in Dzaleka states:



*"I mentioned am coaching at JWL so people who are like other than me, so they are accepting that I should be coaching them just because they understand and realise that am having leadership skills that I can stand on their behalf." (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

The authority which graduates embody as leaders is not taken for granted. They mention the importance of listening to the "voice of the people" and the challenges linked to fairly representing the common wish of the community (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J). This leader explains:



**"I'm not a leader just because of being a leader, but I am a leader because I have people whom I'm leading. [...] So, if you have people that you are leading, which means you have to listen to them [...]. So, the course has helped me to know ways that I may approach my people, listen to them and at least in one way or the other using their ideas."**

– KK\_YSF\_G10\_J

As a result of this approach to leadership, graduates reveal their coaching skills through forms of community transformation and empowerment (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P; MD\_YSF\_G11\_P). A graduate in Afghanistan refers to their leadership skills as tools which can be used to inspire team members to take advantage of available means (such as when they complain about the lack of sports facilities) and encourage them to achieve their goals (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F).

These skills are eventually transferred to community members as this graduate,

who now coaches youth in her community explains:



**"The youth that I'm serving right now they really benefiting from me for the first thing they are learning from me the leadership skills and coaching skills and how to develop talents and confidence within the one another so that people may work more effectively."**

– MD\_YSF\_G11\_P

Graduates emphasise the importance of coaching a team towards a constructive and inclusive environment, ultimately nurturing team spirit. This graduate in Afghanistan encapsulates this mentality:

*"I learned the benefits of sport, how it can affect us, not only in our physical health but also how it improves us to be inside the group and how to participate in a group." (AB\_YSF\_G30\_F)*

Engaging people in collaboration is an intricate part of coaching and represents the sport's potential to help improve the community, breaking down barriers between people and nurturing solidarity (KK\_YSF\_G20\_G).

One graduate in Kenya explained:

*"The key thing that I learned was I may say integration, bringing people from different backgrounds together and I speak one language, which is the sport language. That was of the key things that I learnt. There are also techniques of maybe attending to different people in their areas [...]. We have those techniques that when you like maybe to go and visit the certain family, we have some techniques that you may use to meet them and talk to them." (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J)*



Thus, for many graduates, coaching means that they can manage teams with the goal of building an environment fostering a sentiment of inclusivity, and building relationships of trust amongst team members (KK\_YSF\_G16\_G), as expressed by this graduate:

*"The sport that we are doing, we are targeting togetherness and to enhance peace [...] when we are doing something, we can advise, we advise the group then when taking decision we come together, we see how we can handle that, or how we can decide on that issue. So, we decided together." (KK\_YSF\_G5\_J)*

### 3.2.2 Solving issues in the community

Conflict resolution is another ability underscored by graduates, who report that the YSF course helped them recognise that conflicts are a normal occurrence in sports (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J) and showed them how to effectively resolve these through solutions aimed at bringing harmony within the team (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P). The course is seen as elemental to building strong leadership skills as well as an understanding of what a good leader is (KK\_YSF\_G18\_J; KK\_YSF\_G4\_J), and this often cited as motivation to enrol (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J):

*"The Youth Sports Facilitator course has really supported my leadership skills in terms of solving issues in the community. Most of the time, when I think of the community issues, I normally reflect back on what I went through and some of the reasons because I remember in the leadership skills, I normally remember the characteristics of being a good leader. I remember the behaviours of a good leader and through what I got in the course normally helps me to also settle down the problems I have in the community." (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J)*

Active listening, speaking with all parties, patience, and openness to accept different perspectives before making any judgments are highlighted as part of a constructive approach to conflict resolution.<sup>14</sup> Graduates also emphasise how they try to make their students draw lessons from conflict, as expressed by this graduate in Kenya:

*"Call the two sides in conflict, you sit with them, you hear from them and after the judgment, is when you do not just forgive and forget, but you learn also from the experience. If somebody has really done a mistake and he accepted and said 'yes this is the mistake I have done and I will not repeat' and then we have reached to a solution, but if the other victim is still in doubt, then that is not the right way to have solved the problem." (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J),*

Another graduate in Kenya states that:

*"You see the nature of the problem and you don't take the action, but you see the problem you look into it and you identify way of tackling and integrating people, bring them together" (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J).*

The course is viewed as a catalyst to develop conflict-resolution skills which can be applied for the well-being of the community (KK\_YSF\_G15\_J; KK\_YSF\_G18\_J). This graduate encapsulates how these conflict-resolution skills are used daily to serve the community, such as when one of the blocks in Kakuma Camp had no water:

*"Our tap went dry for long of time like for a month or so. So have to mobilise people we must come together, we must go to the block, we must do this, we must do that before we don't just have to rebel, we don't just have to you know go to UN or something is unruly. So, we had to sit together all of us all those people who are fetching water from that tap. We had to sit*

<sup>14</sup> KK\_YSF\_G8\_J, KK\_YSF\_G6\_J, KK\_YSF\_G15\_J, KK\_YSF\_G12\_J, MD\_YSF\_G6\_P, KK\_YSF\_G4\_J



together, we had to organise, we had to appoint some people to go and see the block leader and then allies with the block leaders and see where the problem is, why are we not getting water and the other people are getting water? So, you see we had to sit down and each person was to take this as their own responsibility [...]. You see if my compound is to go and complain somewhere in the office and other compound goes and complain, another compound goes and complain then at the end of the day we will even have conflicting ideas, so have to organise ourselves and of course we have to belong and by belonging here we have to do our things together.” (KK\_YSF\_G20\_G)

### 3.2.3 Role models: leading by example

During the interviews, graduates offered their views on leadership, often linked to representing persons and communities in a just manner and advocating for their well-being.<sup>15</sup> Graduates emphasise leading by example as crucial characteristic of a good leader:

*“[...] leader is someone who has that capacity, who has that skills or who is willingly to rule by examples, who is willing to [lead] by actions and who is leading to become the role model of the community.” (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J)*

For one of the graduates in Malawi, leadership is also only possible when

*“[...] accepting to take care of others, [...] to work on behalf of others and representing others, [...] being able to speak on their behalf and being able to support them. So, you are like a servant whenever people they need you, you have to be there.” (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

Thus, graduates’ vision of leadership embraces values of servant leadership, seeking to serve others first, and leading by example (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998).

Being a role model is also perceived as being part and parcel of good leadership, as emphasised by this graduate:

*“A good leader is a role model. Somebody whom people can follow that I will like to become the kind of leadership that I like to apply. I like to become like so and so. So, you are a role model [...]. But also, being inspired by someone it also plays a role of somebody to become a good leader. Because within the world, you may be having that talent in you of being a leader, but you have also to be taught on how good leader should behave.” (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J)*

This leadership trait is nurtured during the YSF course, particularly during the practicum as coach:

*“Because of this course I have learnt a lot, for example, leadership skills, how to deal with such kind of situations when it comes [...] it has really helped me to settle out some issues in the community in terms of decision making, in terms of being role model, creating teamwork in the community so it has really helped me because I was given the chance to be the sports activities manager in our community, and that is why I believe that it has really helped me to bring together unity among the youth” (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J).*

Being a role model through coaching helped this graduate bring unity amongst youth in their community. Other graduates also recognise themselves as enablers of similar circumstances,<sup>16</sup> thus revealing the strong impact their initiatives have in transforming the relationships amongst members of their communities.

As coaches and role models, some graduates were able to encourage youth to continue their studies (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P).

<sup>15</sup> KK\_YSF\_G18\_J; KK\_YSF\_G7\_J; KK\_YSF\_G10\_J

<sup>16</sup> MD\_YSF\_G6\_P, KK\_YSF\_G15\_G, KK\_YSF\_G12\_J, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J, KK\_YSF\_G14\_J



Graduates often act as educators and mentors, impacting the lives of both on and off the pitch (KK\_YSF\_G15\_G). As role models, graduates apply their newly developed negotiation skills to gain multiple stakeholders' support for their projects. This is reflected in the way that graduates report being able to promote their work to others in the community and create greater access to sports initiatives for youth in their community.<sup>17</sup> In Malawi, one graduate states:

*"This is the key that I saw that very interesting to win in the community, talk to different people and win their mind, and win their children. Such thing is very interesting because apart from that I couldn't have many children, right now, am having like more than hundred kids who are*

*there waiting for me and my stuff to teach them, and also educate them for their bright future."*  
(MD\_YSF\_G5\_P)

Therefore, as graduates build their leadership skills, they become role models within their community, empowering youth to not only join sports initiatives but also encouraging them to pursue their studies and focus on their future. Coaching skills developed during the course are instrumental in solving issues faced by the community and addressing diverse needs. This impact on the community is not without consequences for graduates themselves, as this growth in existential competences boosted their self-confidence.



Figure 5: Girls' volleyball team, Kakuma, Kenya

<sup>17</sup> AB\_YSF\_G28\_F; KK\_YSF\_G18\_J; KK\_YSF\_G5\_J; KK\_YSF\_G8\_J



## 4 Self-confidence

When speaking of the transformation experienced during the YSF programme, what graduates highlight the most is a gain in self-confidence. This section introduces graduates' definition, characteristics and impact of self-confidence.

### 4.1 Defining self-confidence

During the interviews, graduates were asked to reflect on how the course impacted their self-confidence and their responses closely align with the concept of self-belief and trust.

According to graduates, self-confidence is defined as "believing in yourself [...] that I can do it" (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J). For many, self-confidence is intertwined with the idea of trust:

*"Self-confidence actually means the ability, the trust and ability that person have in his or herself. This is a self-confidence." (KK\_YSF\_G12\_J)*

More importantly, this trust placed in oneself is perceived as related to the ability to perform a given action independently:

*"An example of that question, I can say first ability, trust in yourself, ability to do the work that you can feel like you can manage, that you feel like you can do and accomplish by yourself." (MD\_YSF\_G11\_P)*

This is often tied to using one's critical thinking and decision-making skills.<sup>18</sup>

*"I will always advise them to always trust themselves to always believe in themselves, to always remember that they should think*

*critically before they do walk or before judging anything. So that having self-confidence will always drive them ahead and they can make a change themselves." (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J)*

The action-related aspect of self-confidence is particularly unique to graduates' views. One graduate in Afghanistan encapsulates the notion that self-confidence serves a greater purpose that enable one to achieve a specific goal:

*"Self-confidence is, you have to believe that you could be able to do something that you plan and there is no difficulty in what you have planned so you have to be confident you have to [...] to know that you're able to do something you're able to implement and you're able to achieve what you want to be in the future. (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)*

This notion is shared by many graduates who equally highlighted the impact of the course on their self-confidence:

*"I believe that Youth Sports Facilitator course creates in me a certain idea [...], I see what I am focusing much in my future and as I started I believe that I will go far away, far as you know, a vision starts from zero and grow and can be international so, the ministry that I am doing right now I hope that it's part of my life and it really impact as much as God can do, you know we believe in God that everything is impossible." (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P)*

Thus, this inner sense of limitless power is the essence of self-efficacy, and is developed by graduates during the course,<sup>19</sup> particularly during the practicum, as highlighted by this graduate in Dzaleka:

*"It [the YSF course] shaped me that because coaching need self-confidence, standing like in front of fellow youth or other people or group of*

<sup>18</sup> MD\_YSF\_G7\_P, KK\_YSF\_G4\_J, MD\_YSF\_G11\_P, KK\_YSF\_G19\_G

<sup>19</sup> MD\_YSF\_G5\_P; KK\_YSF\_G13\_G, MD\_YSF\_G6\_P





*people it needs self-confidence, and with the course because it was online course it came we did the practicum whereby we tried to practice what we are learning, so during that period is when we start like having that comfortability that self-confidence of how you can stand and how you can talk, how you can know and it really helped me and this course helped me.” (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

As part of this gain in self-confidence, learners feel capable of establishing sports initiatives which make positive contributions to the community.<sup>20</sup>. This graduate illustrates:

*“Yes, the Youth Sports Facilitator has helped me find more confidence to stand out and create something like organisation is part of self-confidence to that you believe in yourself that yes, I can do this. So, that’s part of self-confidence (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P).*

Attached to the idea of self-confidence, two main characteristics emerged from graduates’ interviews: communication and resilience, as explained in the following sections.

#### **4.1.1 Communication skills: advocacy and public speaking**

A recurrent theme linked to self-confidence is the increase in communication skills. Some graduates define self-confidence as one’s ability to communicate clearly and overcoming the fear of sharing one’s ideas (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J; MD\_YSF\_G11\_P):

*“[...] to me confident actually means the ability to express yourself, very clearly and to be able to explain your standpoint, your position very clearly and the other person is able to understand what you actually stand for, that is what I take to be confident even though you still have something in your heart that makes you*

*uncomfortable but if you take one thing to be right you must always stand for it not being swayed by this by that. So that is what I take to be confident.” (KK\_YSF\_G20\_G)*

As the programme teaches learners to acknowledge their shortcomings and accept themselves as they are, they build their self-confidence and embrace new activities involving public speaking. For instance, this graduate in Dzaleka explains how they used this new-found confidence to give speeches and organise workshops in their community:

*“Yeah, I really feel that I have self-confidence because when I remember back in the days, I wasn’t able to have public speaking, but right now at least I can organise a workshop and stand in front of audience and speak public so which means I have self-confidence. [...] I can say that self-confidence is when a person believes in himself and understand himself because you can’t have self-confidence if you don’t believe in yourself and accept who you are. You have to accept who you are, then you can believe in yourself. “(MD\_YSF\_G7\_P)*

Another graduate in Afghanistan explained how they were able to apply their public-speaking skills to create new initiatives in the community:

*“When I was at school, I was really shy, I really didn’t want to talk in front of the classmates and [...] I was thinking what if that I share something if it is wrong and people will laugh and so all of us, I was always thinking about it, but when I took this course and every week we had a discussion it helped me to share whatever I think I should share, and there, it is not a big deal what people think [...] about my idea, so I got confident I always [share] my idea, without any worries, whether if they laugh if I’m wrong [...]. And I after graduation, I had a plan to help young children and I fortunately I could succeed, so my*

<sup>20</sup> MD\_YSF\_G5\_P; MD\_YSF\_G10\_P



answer is yes, this course helped me a lot to gain confidence.” (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)

#### 4.1.2 Beyond challenges: resilience and resourcefulness

In addition to communication skills, graduates highlighted a willingness to embrace failures as part of this heightened sense of self-confidence. For instance, this graduate in Kakuma explains that:

*“Self-confidence, it is self-belief. [...] No, it is not to say that you are perfect, but is only that belief that I can also do even if I fail today but I will still have that of confident to say okay I fail here because of this and this so tomorrow I will make difference and I will achieve. [...] I can say that I have a self-confidence and I believe that because I’m not perfect in the field [...], but I continue carrying out my duties when I’m wrong, I correct myself and I continue.”* (KK\_YSF\_G5\_J)

This perseverance reveals a willingness to take risks (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P), stepping out of one’s comfort zone and overcoming one’s fears (KK\_YSF\_G13\_G). Sometimes, this even requires challenging close family or community members who discourage graduates from the pursuit of their dreams, as expressed by this graduate in Dzaleka:

*“So, when you are doing something, it means you don’t care about the risk. What you want is to achieve. The goals that you have set. So, through the goals that you have set, I share with my family that I have this plan and I have these plans. Sometimes the family, they discourage you, but I still go ahead. So, at the end, they said wow, we thought that it’s nothing you are doing but this means that we have seen that you are doing this. So, through that taking risk, my family or other people around me can know that I have self-confidence through the risks that I have taken in the past.”* (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P)

This is also the experience of another graduate in Dzaleka who shares that despite discouragement from community

elders, they were able to accomplish a project seen as contributing to youth wellness:

*“[...] people really discouraged me, like the elder one saying that you can’t manage you can’t accomplish your dream and but when I included youth in my project they really giving me courage as for I continue, for I too accomplish and they still run, we are still with them together even if we have some challenges that we can’t solve by ourselves but we are working hand in hand with them.”* (MD\_YSF\_G11\_P)

This resilience in the face of obstacles and willingness to work through the problems are highlighted in graduates’ capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and maintain their motivation to carry their community project to fruition (KK\_YSF\_G12\_J; AB\_YSF\_G28\_F). The story of this graduate in Afghanistan who previously studied archaeology and sought to establish group to play different sports in his community exemplifies this engrained self-confidence:

*“This course helped me a lot but you know the situation got worse, we had covid-19 and then Taliban came over and took power. It changed everything. I had a lot of plans to help young children, my village. [...] I started a [...] football team, and nowadays they are also playing football, so there are 14 people. [...] I bought them clothes and shoes and socks everything, so I helped them, [...] they’re really enjoying playing football and [...] I started the project, which is called “Traditional and local games and sports” [...] but unfortunately, I got a problem, and it is a budget so I’m working again with another association silk road, and I might be able to submit my application if I went to this project, and for sure I can help a lot, I can help the young children and young people to do those traditional and local games again.”* (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)

While his story expresses a form of resilience to changing local situations, he proved his commitment to help the



community by sharing one of his takeaways about the course:

*"[the YSF programme] give me an idea to help people learn without a facility. I was thinking that if you want to help children in my village, I need to be rich, I need to have money, I need to have a lot of facility to pay of the way, but when I took this course I landed for helping them always there is no need for facility, but it is*

*important, have facilities, [...] it will be possible to help them develop a team okay from gathering them It doesn't need anything."*  
(AB\_YSF\_G28\_F)

Graduates thus demonstrate how, by accepting failures and taking risks, they built a sense of self-confidence which translated into resourcefulness and resilience.



## 5 The road to empowerment

### 5.1 Self-empowerment

In parallel to a growth in self-confidence, the programme also saw graduates experience a process of empowerment. This is encapsulated in the words of this graduate in Dzaleka:

*"Yes, it empowers me so much because it gives me that confidence to go out and start something new different from the way I was before I do it, so that the tool of doing of achieving on what am doing it's all about empowerment that I gained from JWL through Youth Sports Facilitator course."* (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P)

Described as this "force or energy to do something out of some ideas" (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P), graduates define their confidence as linked to a determination to succeed and becoming empowered:

*"Even it's really hard I can do it you still believe in yourself, I believe in myself that in whatever am doing whether you face through with challenges I feel just confidence that yes, I can do it, no matter what that's the confidence and yes am very strong enough, it's yet possible and I move forward, yeah!"* (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P)

Thus, empowerment is a process tied to an improvement of the self, accompanied by a growth in confidence (KK\_YSF\_G14\_J). This feeling of belief in oneself is seen as liberating:

*"Self-confidence is when you feel free and when you feel like there is nothing big to you, when you feel like you are free to say anything if only it doesn't affect people, yah, it's something like speaking freely without hesitation, without fear you know that's self-confidence doing something which is right, something that other people gonna admire you, you see, taking*

*yourself as a role model you know, that all about self-confidence."* (MD\_YSF\_G6\_P)

Graduates qualify the YSF course as an empowering tool, particularly in terms of the knowledge and skills acquired through it:

*"So, it empowered me with the knowledge that I can be able to change the community. I can be able to change the community here."* (KK\_YSF\_G8\_J)

Graduates explain that prior to the course, they were not aware of their skills and how to use them in various context but that this has changed and that they are now able to apply them professionally (MD\_YSF\_G6\_P; MD\_YSF\_G5\_P), and to "think deeper" and "improve their life" (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P). This graduate in Dzaleka expresses that

*"right now I have self-confidence and I can be also able to run business using the new strategies that they didn't even expect."* (MD\_YSF\_G7\_P)

The confidence reflected in this skills-building process empowers graduates to contribute to their community (KK\_YSF\_G15\_J). For instance, this graduate states that:

*"An example that shows that I am empowered is the confidence I have to talk to the youth, most of the time I normally conduct youth meetings to talk about them, to talk about their problems, that are affecting them, how we can solve the problem together because through youth is where we hear their voice and we see what we can do as a team. It has really empowered me to go out and tell youth that we have to do a certain way so that we do away with some of the negative things that we see in the community and build ourselves."* (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J)

Graduates reflect how the course empowered them and, in turn, how they



now empower other members of the community, as underlined by this graduate in Malawi:

*"[...] that I am empowered is that the knowledge that they gave me am working on it, so I am also empowering other people because I opened the organisation for children for youth for sport, I mean so and even for girls, so the empowerment that I gain the knowledge am also applying to other people." (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

Thus, the YSF course has the ripple effect of transforming and empowering learners and their community (KK\_YSF\_G16\_G).

Being seen by the community as bringing positive change motivates graduates to remain steadfast in their commitment:

*"[The course] can help me to become a good motivator in life so that I can be able to encourage people, encourage community, they can excel, they can find solution, they can improve their lives. They can be able to become creative inventors." (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J)*

Thus, graduates employ their skills and confidence to engage in the community. Whether by creating sports projects (KK\_YSF\_G15\_G, MD\_YSF\_G6\_P) or other forms of community groups (i.e., spiritual group) (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P), graduates transform their growing confidence into personal empowerment at service of their community. This graduate's words encapsulate this holistic development:

*"[...] I was just a simple youth, with no imagination of football or sport but after undergoing Youth Sports Facilitator course so I*

*become aware of how sport is and how sport can be managed and how sport can be learned, how a coach can deal with players, so empowerment is when you get something in order to help other people or example you didn't have a knowledge the knowledge and help people to become aware of who what they are what they can do or make them proud they can proceed in achieving what they want to achieve." (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P)*



Figure 6: YSF student studying at home in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya

Ultimately, this newfound willingness to serve the community reflects the transformative, empowering impact of the YSF course on graduates, who in turn empower others through the initiatives they go on to establish.



## Q Challenges

While graduates underscored the significance of the YSF course in enabling the development of empowering community activities, they also highlighted financial and material constraints which impacted the development of their practicum projects (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F) (KK\_YSF\_G19\_G). As graduates have to find partnership with schools and organization welcoming youth during their practicum, graduates had to navigate between different organisation's willingness to fund the practicum project, resulting in facing challenges and backlash: "I face that shortage [...], so I started with mine, when I started, the way I was spending, is the way I was going shortage of money so the time I realised that I don't have any money like to get supporting so I felt like maybe this was the wrong thing that I started and I started blaming myself at some point. Some people started blaming me, why did you start, so I started getting disappointed but if we could have like people to support us, I think we could be higher." (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P). Others pointed out that the lack of financial support affected the smooth running of the course as sports equipment was lacking (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P, KK\_YSF\_G5\_J, KK\_YSF\_G6\_J). This lack of financial support is seen as creating stress and placing pressure on graduates (MD\_YSF\_G2\_P).

### 5.2 Empowering the community

Graduates express how this growth of confidence, empowerment, along with the development of existential competencies and a robust sense of community and leadership, they were able to impact their communities. This graduate in Malawi stresses the role of the YSF course in generating this impact:



**"Youth Sports Facilitator is not all about sporting activities but with the empowerment or the knowledge, or the content of the course itself empowers us to do other activities that can support us in every day's life."**

– MD\_YSF\_G10\_P

Among the various activities and issues geared towards community empowerment, graduates emphasised impact in four particular spheres.

#### 5.2.1 Sport

Given the strong emphasis on sport as a means to create inclusive and peaceful communities, it is among the most frequently mentioned activities led by graduates that directly contributed to community empowerment as a result of the course. This graduate in Kakuma refers to the power of sport:

*"Sport helps people in peace making, because it helps people in doing integration, you find people from different backgrounds coming together, maybe for a certain purpose, they can play maybe football, volleyball, basketball and the other things and from there you find a sport acting like a joining centre of so many people from different backgrounds. Yeah, so there is a sport language that they will be using that's one. Also, sport helps in improving maybe academic performance in one way or the other because at a school level you may find that there are those learners that you find they are isolated, they don't like to play with others. [...] but once you introduce them to sport, they will be able maybe to chat with others and from there, you will see her or his performance coming up. So, it's also help in that way."* (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J)



Besides improving social cohesion and academic performance, sports are also seen as a source of happiness within the community.<sup>21</sup> For example, this graduate explains the effect of gathering youth to play games:

*"When the parent sees me like am having their children on the field, playing with them, making them happy, smile, they also get happy not only my family but it's all the community."  
(MD\_YSF\_G2\_P)*

As a path for empowering and encouraging others (AB\_YSF\_G28\_F), the YSF course enables graduates to use sport activities to do "something meaningful" in schools (KK\_YSF\_G17\_G). For instance, this coach explains how developing an interschool competition brought the community closer:

*"They appreciate it because one when we had interschool competition, I think this brings schools closer because when learners meet, teachers meet from different schools, this is already an appreciation from the school as well as from the community because when we met, we do activities together that become something meaningful. Yeah, it was not just for pleasure, but we also get to interact, they get to know one another, get to know what the plan for the learners is, as they were thinking that they were one to build their main talents, they are not aiming only to do it within the camp, but their aim is only to compete with other schools outside the camp. That was what the learners were telling us during the project or during the activities yeah, and it was appreciated".  
(KK\_YSF\_G17\_G)*

Ultimately, learning about the potential of sport prompts graduates to put in place initiatives that cultivate constructive interactions, create a "sense of friendship" within the team, bring "more youths together," and which can change the

community (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J). Therefore, graduates believe that "sport [is] for peace, sport [is] for youth and sport [is] for integration, for everyone" (KK\_YSF\_G18\_J). This excitement, happiness and emulation among youth mobilised through these activities is a testament to the impact of the YSF course on the graduates and their communities.

### 5.2.2 Gender equality

Gender equality holds a special place among graduates' activities. Aware of the challenges that women and girls face in the community, graduates seek to address these in several ways. Sport is often used as a means to break gender barriers:

*"I told them the importance of sport [is] you don't have to be shy. You don't have to put yourself like: I'm not going to play with this man, I'm not going to interact with this female. It's all about the mentality of culture, you see. So, by that one I took them through the procedure that like sport is for peace, sport is for everyone, you don't need to feel shy, when you play sport and [you are] even able to interact more."  
(KK\_YSF\_G18\_J)*

Gender equality can also be fostered through other activities, as this graduate who mentors girls and provides menstrual products when needed illustrates:

*"A lot of things I do to serve my community. One of them I do girl child empowerment whereby every weekend. I have to meet with those girls. After meeting with them, we share the pain that they're going to through. We share the experience. They try to give me what challenges they are facing? I write them down. I give them some mentorship programs like consoling, giving them counselling to extent if it goes to an extent, I'm well financial stable I buy for them sanitary towels, which they think it's a human right for them. I help them out with it." (KK\_YSF\_G18\_J)*

<sup>21</sup> MD\_YSF\_G2\_P; MD\_YSF\_G6\_P, KK\_YSF\_G18\_J



This graduate also highlights the frequent need to speak with parents about the right to participate in sports, while also raising awareness about other women and girls' rights (KK\_YSF\_G18\_J).

Another other alumna in Malawi pointed to her role of as a leader and role model as significant for the empowerment of women in her community (she leads an initiative which addresses gender-based violence):

*"Through the thing I do with my age with my community is things that people they have never thought that someone like me I can do as I said I have a platform whereby girls they share their experience on gender-based violence and life skills so they say wow that this girl is special." (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P)*

As a leader and coach, she is able to "reach people with different ages old, young," building her leaderships skills as well as empowering her community (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P).

Other graduates engage in similar activities in their community, such as this graduate who conducts workshops for women who experience trauma:

*"We also have [training] for girl's empowerment. For example, we have those girls who might have always gone through trauma, and they find it challenging always when they meet some other challenges. So, we normally empower them on how to cope up with life to have confidence in themselves and to know that it is you to change life if you wait for somebody to come and change your life, probably that person may not be there, but it is you to start with positivity from yourself is when you can change others." (KK\_YSF\_G4\_J)*

Therefore, graduates place special importance on the role of women and girls

in sport or other community activities, seeking to improve their living conditions, and ultimately facilitate their empowerment.

### 5.2.3 Community wellbeing and sustainability

Graduates' interviews reflect the course' impact on building initiatives seeking to address community wellbeing and sustainability issues.

Drug abuse is frequently mentioned as a primary community concern and graduates explain how sports can help address this (KK\_YSF\_G13\_G; KK\_YSF\_G4\_J). For instance, a graduate in Kenya showcased how they volunteer their time to address this issue by mobilising different resources and providing various kinds of support:

*"As you can see, the youth nowadays they are engaged in using drugs. So, I trying like to give them awareness on those substance which they are using and to show them the negativity that will bring to their life if they continue using that drug. So, it means that I'm myself awareness person who is considering the community, and who wants good for them especially the youth. [...] I address, I mobilise, I put posters for them which shows that if they continue using those substance what will be the risk of them using it? How will it end with them after prolong using of those drug abuse? Also, I conduct seminars like advising them. I scheduled meeting with them talking to them on the effect of those drugs." (KK\_YSF\_G18\_J)*

This care for the community's wellbeing is also demonstrated in initiatives seeking to empower sustainable lifestyles. For instance:

*"The best example I can give is taking some other skills from this Youth Sports Facilitator and combining it with sustainable agriculture and community nutrition and being able to sustain them all. Like I said, I use the skills from*





*Youth Sports Facilitator where we learn about resilience zones, creating the safe space for the girls so that they can share their life skills, challenges that they are facing. So, with sustainable agriculture, where we learn about nutrition, climate change, so, I use those skills and form something in my community.” (MD\_YSF\_G10\_P)*

Thus, emerging as a leader in her community, this graduate encapsulates the power of the YSF course in generating positive social change.

The same concern toward building a sustainable community is brought up by graduates who faced a water shortage in their community and applied conflict-resolution skills learnt through the course to resolve this issue in peaceful way and ensure healthy and sustainable living conditions (KK\_YSF\_G18\_J):

*“We handle [...] such problems at the level of water telling them that we all deserve the same service. Water does not only belong to one tribe or the service offered at the camp does not only depend on one individual, this services are brought equally to levels all the societies in the camp, I like that I as the facilitator I come in by telling them or by trying to provide solution by telling them that the amount of water will always be a communicated and the water should be increased so that this problem should not arise because of the problems of water [...]. We are all together. We as community we need to live together as one people, we need to have an objective and we need to live friendly, so we maintain peace.” (KK\_YSF\_G7\_J)*

Thus, graduates’ mediation skills foster peace, even in dire situations. In others, this commitment to community empowerment is reflected through the establishment of initiatives which provide community members with small loans and training to start their businesses and contribute to the betterment of the community:

*“I normally help women who are in the community in terms of training them with this village saving association, village saving and loan association within the community” (KK\_YSF\_G10\_J).*

#### 5.2.4 Peacebuilding

Lastly, graduates describe their commitment to positively impact their community, particularly by seeking to build peace and harmony, as expressed by this graduate in Kenya:

*“All what we are doing as a result of the enhancing peace, we are doing it for community, for people whom we are living together, we need us to be in a peace place with no conflict and that is the motivation of us to do this sport and to support youth in doing sport because we need our community to be better to be a better place.” (KK\_YSF\_G5\_J)*

For this coach and representative of a CBO in Dzaleka, one of the outcomes of sports activities was the strengthening of the relationship between the refugee host communities (MD\_YSF\_G6\_P). Others utilise their language skills to promote peace and cross-cultural understanding in the community by providing translation services to block leaders (KK\_YSF\_G6\_J).

In other contexts, graduates demonstrate a commitment to peacebuilding through diverse forms of education in the community. For instance, for this community organiser, training and guiding people in community who lost communication with a family member, or women whose husbands disappeared has become a new focus. This graduate involves them “in every activity that take part in the community, they feel OK, and they see that life is ok.” (KK\_YSF\_G17\_G)



Indeed, graduates share a willingness to mentor and teach subjects that would improve the community's wellbeing:

*"Right now, am having like more than hundred kids who are there waiting for me and my stuff to teach them and also educate them for their bright future." (MD\_YSF\_G5\_P)*

Graduates express their interest in advocating for improved community living conditions (KK\_YSF\_G19\_G), like this graduate who organises monthly meetings with the council of elders to "bring the youth together", to "learn and appreciate the culture of other people" "empower them and give them more information about their lives" (KK\_YSF\_G17\_G).

Therefore, graduates' action demonstrates a commitment to the empowerment of the community, seeking to build a peaceful and harmonious environment for all. They demonstrate their creativity and leadership in providing solutions and initiatives that work to promote healthy, inclusive, sustainable and peaceful communities, ultimately contributing to the community's empowerment. As a consequence, the YSF course is seen enabling one to learn

*"[...] how to live your life well with others and how to even become the solution of your problem and how to even provide for yourself how to become self-reliant." (KK\_YSF\_G20\_G)*



## 6 Conclusions

The analysis of the interviews demonstrates a clear, primary outcome of the Youth Sports Facilitator programme: a vast majority of graduates go on to implement their own sports programmes in their communities. Students learn how to fundraise, work in teams, manage their time, and to think critically, amongst other skills which enable them to effectively bring their projects to fruition.

Beyond entrepreneurial skills, the course equips graduates with skills and a mindset to promote social inclusion and cohesion, ultimately serving to bring together communities – including marginalised groups. Through critical thinking, the course transforms students into advocates for social change, and results in teams that are heterodox, mainly because they strive to include women and girls, persons with disabilities, and be culturally and religiously diverse.

These skills related to the two pillars of the UNHCR Sports for Protection's approach are intertwined with two lessons imparted by the course: a sense of community and leadership. Indeed, graduates report building initiatives which are deeply rooted in their sense of community. That is, a common care for the community, and feeling of responsibility to contribute to its betterment is a shared mindset among graduates the main driving force behind all of their efforts as leaders, role models and advocates for social cohesion and inclusive environments.

With this sense of community, graduates are able to develop their leadership, translated into powerful coaching and advocacy skills applied through inclusive and socially transformative sports

programmes. Youth Sports Facilitator graduates' build teams that foster inclusivity and create solidarity between its players. Beyond sports, graduates report how skills acquired through programme enable them resolve conflict in the community. Thus, the course's main output is the proliferation of graduate-led, inclusive and socially transformative sports programmes.

Through the development of existential competencies and personal growth, graduates are able to build their self-confidence and believe they can achieve their goals. In this sense, graduates develop into individuals with initiative, who are resilient, persistent, resourceful and always positive that they will achieve what they strive for. Building inclusive, transformative, and essentially heterodox sports programmes is dependent on and embedded in this self-confidence, which enables graduates to embark on a journey of self-empowerment.

Combining this strong sense of responsibility towards the community interwoven with graduates' self-confidence and empowerment, graduates initiate inclusive and transformative sports programmes that are driven by these characteristics. This ultimately results in the implementation of projects that empower graduates' communities and contribute to the promotion of peaceful and harmonious environments.

This impact study therefore demonstrates the Youth Sports Facilitator course's alignment with two of the UNHCR Sport for Protection approach pillars – social inclusion and cohesion. Furthermore, it demonstrates how, with the ultimate goal of forging peaceful and sustainable communities, the YSF course empowers graduates as leaders within their



community to promote the same values of inclusion and peacebuilding and share their empowerment process with their communities.

## Key points

- Graduates develop an entrepreneurial mindset geared towards social inclusion and cohesion in their communities.
- Critical thinking and project management skills are used to design and implement sport initiatives that involve marginalised groups, such as women and girls and persons with disabilities, and nurture intercultural sensitivity.
- Graduates' sense of community increases as they nurture empathy and feel responsible for others' wellbeing.
- Graduates are able to develop their leadership, as a competence primarily demonstrated through their work as coaches for sport initiatives. Consequently, they become leaders and role models who resolve conflicts and promote peace in their communities.
- The YSF programme supports graduates in their journey towards self-confidence and resilience.
- A virtuous circle of empowerment of the self and of the community is reported by the graduates as a consequence of the shift in mindset and the acquisition of existential competences developed through the YSF programme.



## 7 References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). *Thematic analysis*. American Psychological Association

Greenleaf, R. K., & Spears, L. C., (1998). *The power of servant-leadership: Essays*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Hall, B. L. (1992). From margins to center? The development and purpose of participatory research. *The American Sociologist*, 23(4), 15-28.

International Commission on the Apostolates of Jesuit Education (ICAGE), *Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach* (Rome: International Center for Jesuit Education, 1993), 12- 13.

Honen-Delmar, M. and Rega, I. (2021). *A Journey towards Empowerment: The impact of Liberal Studies on graduates and their communities*. Research Report n.02. Jesuit Worldwide Learning



## 8 Authors

**Mélotie Honen-Delmar** is JWL Global Director of Professional Programmes and Research Manager and holds a Master in Development Studies from the Graduate Institute in Geneva (Switzerland). She has previously coordinated local refugee organisations that support refugee access to higher education and conducted other research related to migration, refugees and education.

**Carolina Miranda Futuro** is a master candidate in International Relations and Political Science at the Graduate Institute in Geneva (Switzerland). She is deeply interested in migration, and has been dedicated to studying its diverse implications since the beginning of her studies. Previous professional experiences have been concentrated on researching issues revolving around

refuge concession, refugee integration, and human trafficking and will concentrate on the phenomenon of deportation for her upcoming thesis.

**Dr Isabella Rega** is JWL Global Research Director and Associate Professor in Digital Media for Social Change at Bournemouth University (UK). She has been working as academic and practitioner in the field of the use of digital technologies to promote community development, in Europe, Africa and Latin America for the last 20 years.

Special thanks to Ghak Atem, Patricia Kazembe, Magdalena Nauderer, Noah Lapp, Farzana Farzam, Zainab Hamidi, Fr. Benny Ouso, Jacob Mohamed Ali who contributed by connecting with graduates, notably by listening to their stories, interviewing them and transcribing their voices.



**Jesuit Worldwide Learning**

Higher Education at the Margins

18, rue Jacques Dalphin  
1227 Carouge/GE Switzerland  
CH-660-0056017-8  
Website: [www.jwl.org](http://www.jwl.org)  
Phone: +41 (0)22 525 38 33

If you want to cite this report:

Honen-Delmar, M., Miranda Futuro C., and Rega, I. (2023). *Sport to Promote Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion. The Youth Sport Facilitator Programme*. Research Report #09. Jesuit Worldwide Learning