

---

PROJECT PLAY

2020  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

[www.project-play.org](http://www.project-play.org)  
[www.facebook.com/projectplayfrance](https://www.facebook.com/projectplayfrance)  
[@projectplayfrance](https://www.instagram.com/projectplayfrance)

---





## WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 1 Letter from the board
- 2 Our year in graphs
- 3 Our Core Activities – Safeguarding
- 4 Our Core Activities – Advocacy
- 5 Our Core Activities – Activities
- 6 Our Favourite Activities
- 7 Goals for 2021
- 8 Special Thanks
- 9 Photo Gallery

The year 2020 was not easy for anyone. Covid disrupted our lives, our work and the provision of vital services. At Project Play, we had to rethink how we do things in order to protect our team, our partner organisations and, of course, the families and communities we work with.

We made the decision to suspend our play sessions when France went into lockdown. We want the children we work with to be treated with the same respect and protection as any other child, so when France closed schools and children's groups, we decided to do the same. During this time, we had a team in France who were prepared to reopen services as soon as we felt it was safe to do so.

As the lockdowns eased and we've learnt more about how to keep ourselves and others safe, we have continued to run sessions since June 2020. We have had periods of short disruption due to team isolations, when we have needed to put the health and safety of everyone first.

This year has seen a shift for Project Play as we said goodbye to our co-founders (Rachel, Caia and Claire), who moved from ground work to remote board member roles. We now have four incredible coordinators with a responsibility for one of the four core aspects of the service: Safeguarding, Activities, Volunteers, and Advocacy. The co-founders and other board members (Katie and Tiph) still provide advice and guidance to the ground team and we work together to run an impactful service.

The policies of the French and UK governments continued to terrorise the families and individuals living on the UK border in France this year. Large scale evictions continued throughout a global pandemic. Children continued to be denied access to education, statutory protection and faced ongoing violations to their basic rights.

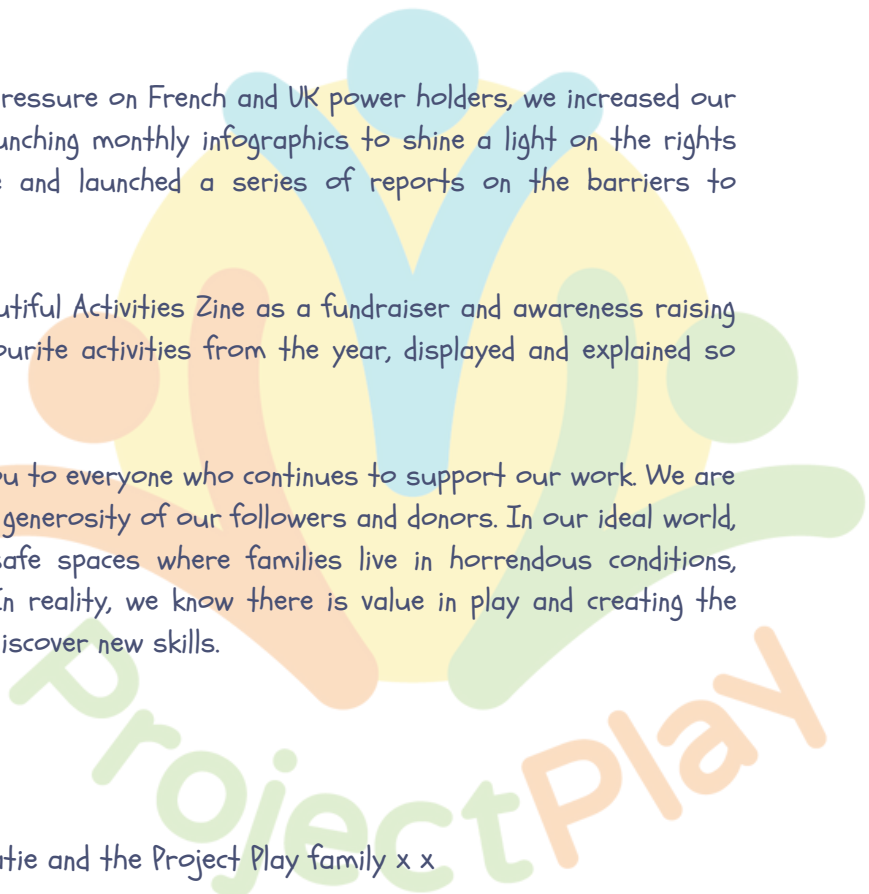
To push for systematic change and put pressure on French and UK power holders, we increased our focus on advocacy in 2020. We began launching monthly infographics to shine a light on the rights abuses taking place in northern France and launched a series of reports on the barriers to education and the impact of evictions.

To round off the year, we created a beautiful Activities Zine as a fundraiser and awareness raising resource. The zine consisted of our favourite activities from the year, displayed and explained so that people could do them at home.

As always, we want to say a big thank you to everyone who continues to support our work. We are only able to continue playing through the generosity of our followers and donors. In our ideal world, we would not need to create mobile safe spaces where families live in horrendous conditions, marginalised and abused by the state. In reality, we know there is value in play and creating the space for children to be themselves and discover new skills.

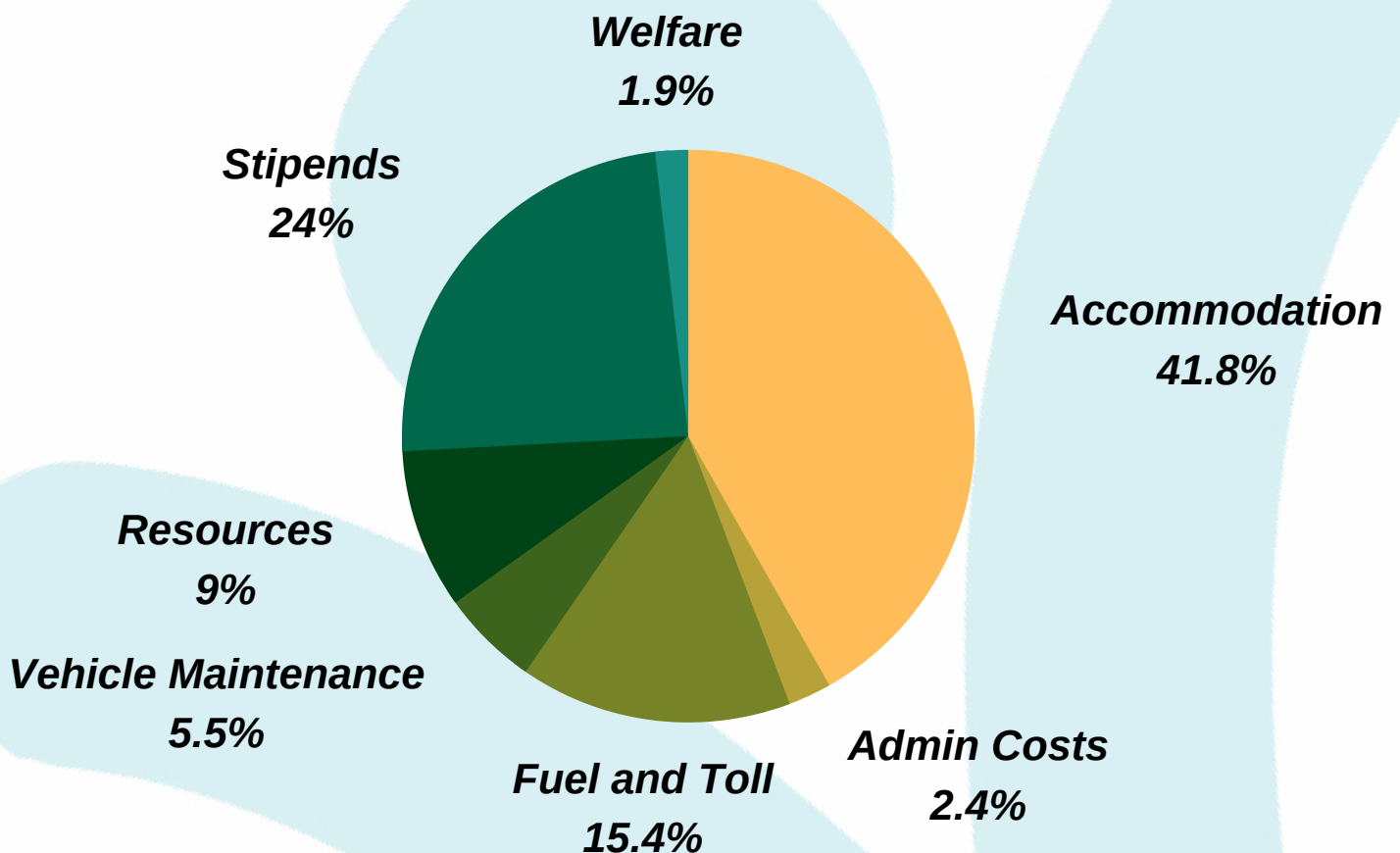
Thank you all!

Big love from Claire, Caia, Rachel, Tiph, Katie and the Project Play family x x



# OUR YEAR IN GRAPHS...

Our expenses:  
€40,326.55

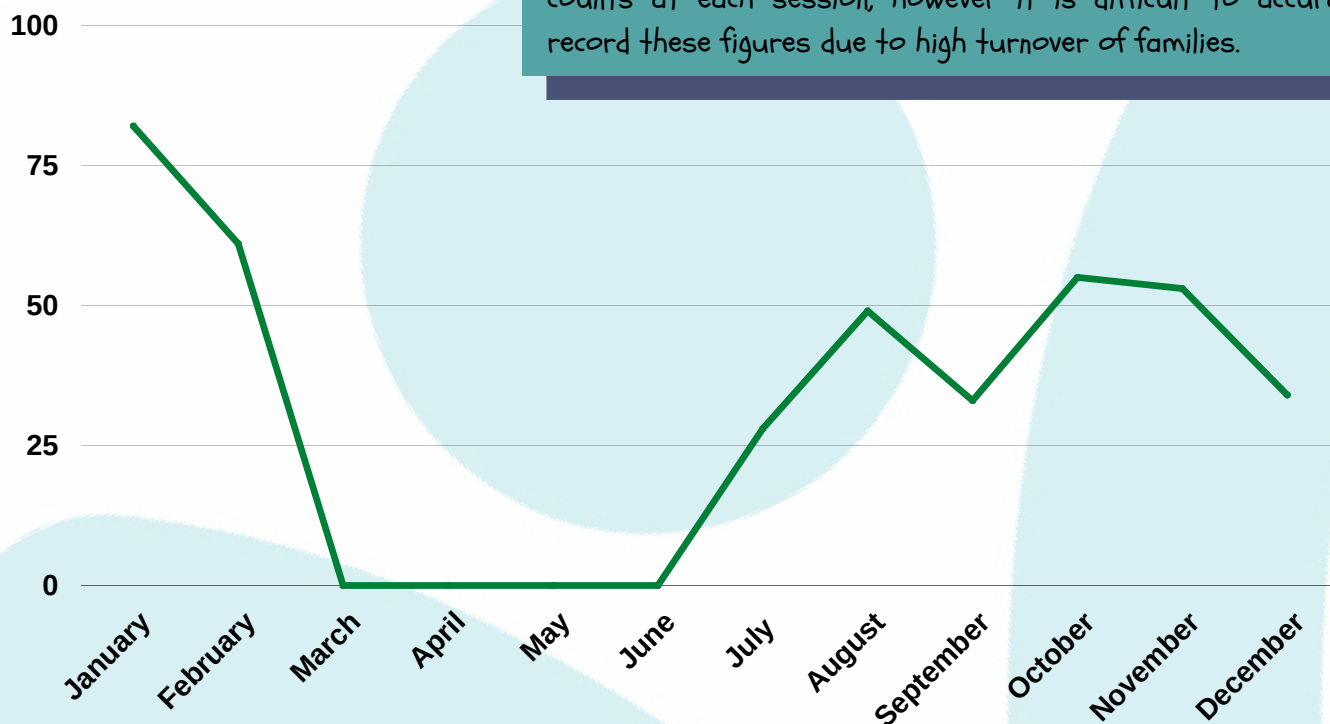


We grew as a charity in 2020 and were able to spend more on our service provision. Stipends are the salaries we pay our coordinators, so that they can stay for a minimum of seven months and develop their expertise to provide the best possible service. Vehicle maintenance includes insurance and repairs for our van, which drives us to and from play sessions. Resources are all the materials we need to play, most of which comes from material donations. Accommodation is for our entire team, so they can stay in northern France whilst they work with us and to ensure working with us is affordable and inclusive. Welfare is our budget to support our volunteers, who give so much and need time to rest and recuperate.

Our total annual total budget for 2020 was £63,157.64 or €69,885.91.

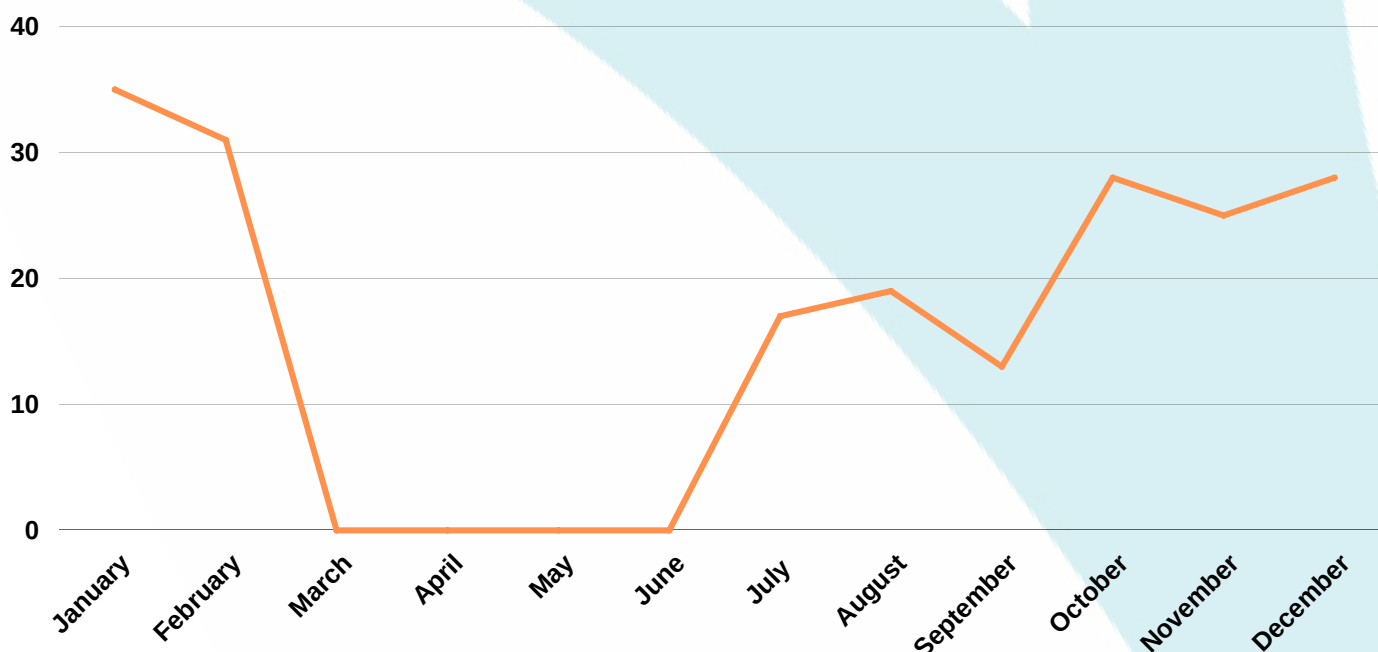
# OUR YEAR IN GRAPHS...

Approximate number of children we worked with



The figures in these graphs demonstrate the data we have collected each month on the number of children who attended each session, the number of sessions we ran and the hours we played. The number of children is an estimate taken from head counts at each session, however it is difficult to accurately record these figures due to high turnover of families.

Number of sessions recorded



We ran sessions in the first week of March and the last week of June, but we do not have the data for these sessions. We quarantined for two weeks in September, hence only holding 13 sessions.



# OUR YEAR IN GRAPHS...

In 2020 we played across eight different sites:

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

GS Camp

GS Indoor Space

SA

Nedonchel

Armentieres

Saint Vernant

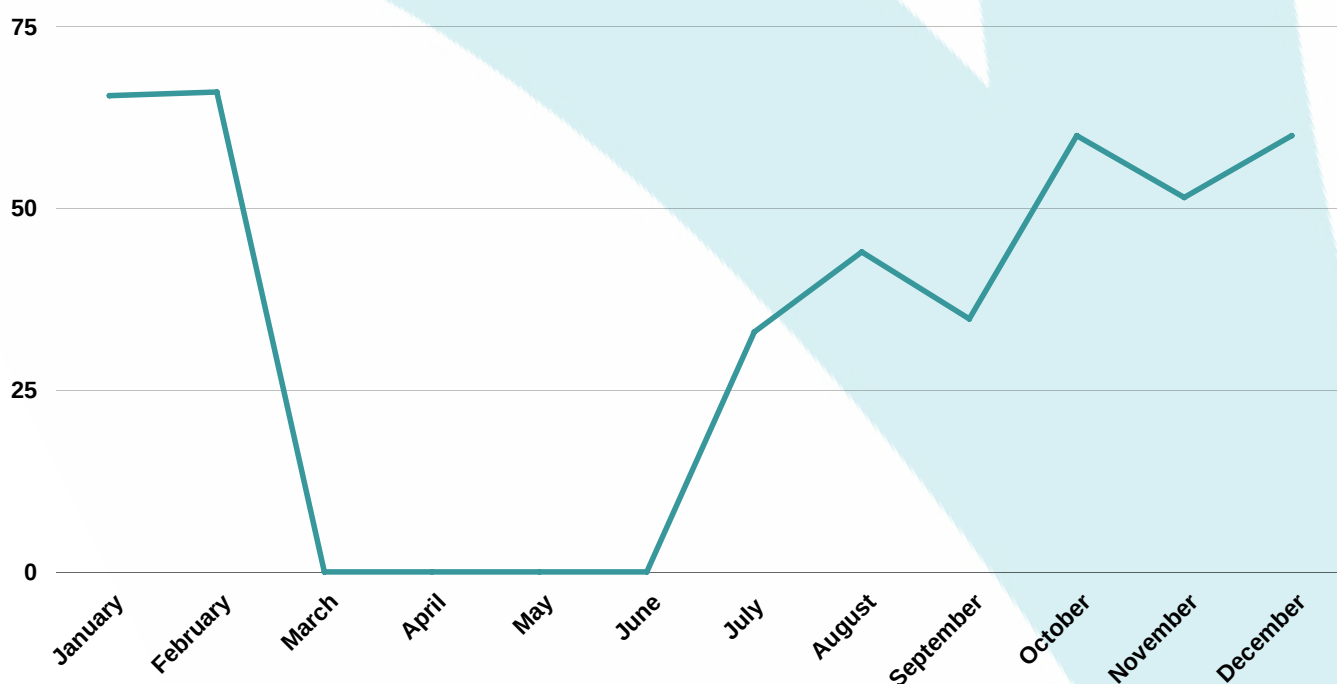
Orange = accommodation centre  
Green = informal settlements  
Blue = safe spaces run by NGOs

Secours Catholique

Maison Sesame

Total hours of play

In total in 2020 we ran 196 sessions and 414.8 hours of play!



# OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

## SAFEGUARDING

### Working Towards Safer Spaces

2020 brought with it safeguarding challenges that Project Play, like many other grassroots organisations, had to adapt to moment by moment. In the initial months of 2020, the board established a dedicated Safeguarding and Vulnerabilities Coordinator role to better address acute vulnerabilities that were being observed in sessions as well as in conversations with volunteers in other organisations. Our initial efforts included building upon regular meetings with the case manager of the Refugee Women's Centre to compile a network of referral and psychosocial support resources for children and families at acute risk of exploitation, neglect, or abuse. We also continued safeguarding practices established by Project Play's board members and initial coordinators, including dedicating a portion of every session's debrief to discussing any potential safeguarding concerns observed by a volunteer during the session.

As the pandemic increased its hold over Europe, Project Play made the difficult decision to pause its services until more information was known about Covid-19. This came after considering that the risks of growing ill can be more severe for displaced persons who may be coming to northern France with untreated pre-existing and chronic conditions, and who often face restricted access to medical treatment, proper shelter, and adequate food. Several members of the Project Play team remained in northern France working with other organisations whilst Project Play's fieldwork was paused. The safeguarding coordinator continued to conduct a modified version of the safeguarding training established in 2019 for all incoming volunteers and began to host office hours weekly for volunteers who had concerns or questions related to safeguarding.

As Project Play returned to the field towards the end of the summer of 2020, safeguarding trainings and office hours continued, and the coordinator began to take a more active role in monitoring and responding to incidents of acute concern, often working in tandem with Refugee Women's Centre and the Project Play team to build a plan to help support a particular child or family. The safeguarding coordinator also conducted several requested trainings on topics such as grounding and de-escalation for members of other teams who wanted to create a safer space for individuals disclosing emotionally-charged experiences. Safeguarding leads in Project Play, Refugee Women's Centre, and Collective Aid also began to collaborate on improving the volunteer safeguarding policies for the warehouse that the three organisations shared. In August of 2020, the safeguarding and advocacy coordinators worked together to develop a French version of the safeguarding training in order to improve its accessibility to French speaking volunteers, and we began to offer safeguarding trainings in French every other week.

Thank you to Jessie Weber for all your wonderful work as Safeguarding Coordinator in 2020!

# OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

## ADVOCACY

Since Project Play started, we have been documenting the children's rights violations we witness during our sessions. This information is witnessed first-hand, or through testimonials told to us by the children or their parents. In 2020, we started to compile this information into monthly infographics.

In October 2020, we published our first advocacy report in partnership with Refugee Rights Europe, an Overview of Barriers to Education Facing Children in Northern France. The right to an education is a universally recognized right, protected in multiple international and national conventions including the Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This report highlights the barriers to education for displaced children, whilst calling on the French and UK governments to uphold their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child to make decisions informed by the principle of the best interests of the child.

In 2020 we continued to take part in demonstrations against the hostile environment in the UK and France. We stood in solidarity with the people suffering this hostility, including those facing deportation and detention. We continued to share information about emerging news and events that highlighted the hostility, violence and racism of our immigration and border policies. We remembered the lives of people who have died on our borders, including children who we have worked with.

In December, we released our second advocacy report focusing on the harmful effects of eviction operations on the children we work with. At the time of release, there had been 822 evictions in Calais and 71 evictions in Grande-Synthe in 2020. Evictions deny children access to food, sanitation, shelter and the bare minimum standards of child protection; all of which constitutes a blatant disregard for children's rights. We saw these evictions continue to take place throughout the 2020 lockdowns and during the height of the pandemic.

At the end of the year, we submitted a consultancy proposal to the EU Commission for the upcoming EU strategy on the rights of the child 2021- 2024. We provided evidence of the children's rights violations which are happening daily at the border. We called for new frameworks which protect children and an end to the brutal cycle of eviction operations which put children at risk. We gave recommendations for how children could have been better protected during the outbreak of the pandemic, and ways they should be protected in the future.

Link to the reports: [https://www.project-play.org/advocacy-reports?fbclid=IwAR2MeFn\\_10IY6o9VNt7SL9Lgsgf8uaBAGtgZeIVQ54RRRLsgQTNSoDxIK2kc](https://www.project-play.org/advocacy-reports?fbclid=IwAR2MeFn_10IY6o9VNt7SL9Lgsgf8uaBAGtgZeIVQ54RRRLsgQTNSoDxIK2kc)

Thank you to Clara Houin for all your dedication as Advocacy Coordinator and to Grainne Farrel as our UK Advocacy Officer in 2020!



# OUR CORE ACTIVITES

## ACTIVITIES

In 2020, we had to spend more time planning and designing activities that were covid safe, but still brought the group together and created a nice and friendly space for all. We consistently ran an average of eight sessions a week in four different locations. We used our colourful gazebo, tables and chairs and all our education and play resources to build a shielded and safe space for children to play freely. Our sessions were, on average, three hours long, with volunteers often sticking around for extra play time. We welcomed children of all ages and backgrounds, from one year olds, to older siblings and parents. Numbers varied greatly — we often held smaller sessions, especially during the colder months, which we tailored to the needs of the children attending, though we also had sessions with fifty children at times! The adaptability and willingness of children and volunteers alike was crucial in the consistent delivery of the service under ever-changing circumstances.

All of our sessions begin with a circle. This is the perfect chance to be silly, imaginative and playful, and to start feeling comfortable in the group. It works incredibly well to regulate energy levels and keep warm during the coldest months. Thanks to circle time, we saw a lot of children grow in confidence. This time is a great opportunity for them to request their favourite songs, share games they used to play in their home countries and lead their own games and songs! An 8 year old teaching other children how to dance to a song, a 12 year old boy showing volunteers and children how to play his own original version of stuck in the mud, or a young girl using one of our favourite circle games —the energy ball— to create an imaginary bouquet of flowers and gift it to her sister, are just some examples of joy the circle can bring. Fostering a sense of collective identity and individual agency is crucial in a context where children often lack control over everyday events.

After circle time, we move on to our main activity, where we tackle a series of core objectives linked to key developmental stages. Some of these objectives are easier to target, for example gross and fine motor skills or collaboration and participation. Others, such as emotional regulation and awareness, or health and self-care, require more thought to be made into fun and engaging activities.



# OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

Our main activities usually fall under a weekly theme, and 2020 brought us some amazingly fun and creative themes!

- Nature week: Everyone's favourite activity during this week was making nature crowns. We combined this with a nature walk to collect leaves, flowers, pine cones and other foraged goods for the crown. This session intended to allow children to have an alternative interaction with their surrounding environment, one that is usually associated with hardship and hostility. A 13 year-old girl who regularly joined our sessions spent hours working on her crown. She was so happy with the result and really pleased when all the volunteers, children and parents wanted to take pictures of her crown because they were so impressed!
- Space week: This was the perfect week to combine fun and education. One of our favourite activities was making flying rockets. This starts out as a creative crafting activity and develops into a thrilling science experiment. Volunteers explained how the chemical reaction between the vinegar and baking soda creates a gas which fills the rocket and pops the cork out, making the rocket shoot up into the air. During this week, we also designed our own planets, learnt all the planet names through song and wrapped up with a space / alien parade full of face paint and fancy dress.
- Self-care week: During self-care week, we put together some activities to start conversations around health, self-care and self-confidence. On one day, we asked children to think about things that made them feel safe and strong, and then draw this onto a cardboard shield. We then used this for free, imaginative play, allowing the children to embrace those things that bring them safety and joy. Another favourite was creating perfumes using flowers and glitter. On the last day of the week, we all became superheroes, wearing masks and capes — such a confidence-boosting activity!

Thank you Josh Evans-Jesra and Valentina Frassa for all your work developing creative and engaging activities in 2020!





# OUR FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES

Here are some words from our volunteers on some of our favourite activities and moments of play this year.

"There were two sisters (I think they were 11 & 12) who were very engaged in sessions around Oct/Nov 2020. They were both very talented especially in arts and crafts, and one session we focussed on making shell mobiles. They spent so much time on this task, whilst others moved on to different activities, and they paid some much attention to every little detail, the colour of the sting, feathers, and painting the shells. They didn't have time to finish during the session, so they took their mobile with them and some extra shells to continue this after the session. The next day both girls came running up to the van and volunteers when we arrived to show us their completed mobiles, which were incredible. They were both so proud of their work and it was so nice to see how they could continue to develop this project outside of the session."



"We made nature crowns on session in November 2020! We went for a walk with everyone by the lake, to explore and interact with the surroundings in an alternative way! We collected flowers, leaves, etc. One of these two girls that Alicia just talked about spent the entire session working on her crown. It was so impressive how she could give so much energy and dedication to the same thing for hours! Most of the children enjoyed the activity, but quickly moved on to something else and she stayed on her table working on it for ages. This is her crown, everyone was so impressed and she loved when everyone was complimenting it and wanting to photograph it"



# GOALS FOR 2021

At Project Play we are always reflective of our practice and looking for ways to adapt to the needs of the community. Although we wish to improve, our core aim of providing play for children will always remain the same and we prioritise maintaining our core service to the best of our ability.

## 1.

We will continue our role as one of the main actors in safeguarding within the grassroots community in northern France

In 2020, we developed our safeguarding training and started to deliver this in French and English to our partner organisations who work alongside us to provide support to displaced communities in Calais and Dunkirk. For 2021, we will continue to provide this vital training and aim to create stronger links with other safeguarding actors.

## 2.

We will provide innovative and impactful activities for children and young people of all ages

In 2020, we provided hours of creative and considered activities for children and young people. In 2021, we want to keep innovating new activities and create increasingly impactful sessions, taking on feedback from parents and children where we can.

## 3.

We will develop our advocacy campaigns and speak out against the rights abuses we witness on a daily basis

In the past year we have put more focus than ever into our advocacy and campaigning efforts, headed up by our Advocacy Coordinator. In 2021, we aim to grow and expand our advocacy work and develop projects with partner organisations to advocate for an end to the hostile and violent treatment of the children we support.



**OVERVIEW OF  
THE BARRIERS  
TO EDUCATION  
FACING CHILDREN  
IN NORTHERN  
FRANCE**

# SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank above all everyone who volunteered with us as we could not play without you. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated, fundraised or shared our posts for us, we wouldn't be able to keep going without you. We would like to thank our umbrella organisation, DonateForRefugees, who graciously support us with finances and fundraising. We would like to thank all the children who shared their time with us, who lit up our days with their imagination, creativity and enthusiasm for learning.

Thank you to our partners, who share their knowledge and skills with us and who we grow alongside. Thanks to Donate4Refugees, Maison Sésame, L'Auberge des Migrants, Utopia 56, Refugee Info Bus, Collective Aid, Calais Food Collective, Plateforme de Soutiens Aux Migrant.e.s, Human Rights Observers, Secours Catholique, Refugee Women's Centre and Le Planning Familial Nord-Pas-de-Calais & Choose Love.



**CHOOSE  
LOVE**



# PHOTO GALLERY



## Project Play Activities Book





# PHOTO GALLERY





Project Play is a French registered  
charity, Charity No: WS94012083

We operate in the UK under the umbrella  
of Donate4Refugees, Charity No: 1168435

Find us online:

[www.project-play.org](http://www.project-play.org)  
[www.facebook.com/projectplayfrance](https://www.facebook.com/projectplayfrance)  
[@projectplayfrance](https://twitter.com/projectplayfrance)