

About The Guideline

The International Guide to Designing Sport Programmes for Girls is a collaboratively authored tool designed to inform organisations as they develop effective, sustainable, sport programmes that serve girls and women. Simply put, this Guide seeks to answer the question: how do you design a quality sport programme that serves the needs of girls?

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Background

Over the past five years, Women Win has compiled the best practices, challenges, and innovations in this report with the help of scores of organisations. Women Win also consulted existing research, members of the Women Win’s Advisory Council and experts in the field. The dedicated individuals who lead these organisations, like you, are in the world, doing the important work of empowering girls through sport every day. This guide was informed by the real-life experiences of sport programmes and girls throughout the world.

Target Audience

The Guide is written for anyone, in any country, who wants to empower girls through sport. It is ideal for an individual or grassroots organisation interested in building or improving sport programmes for girls, including teams, girls’ and women’s organisations, schools, clubs and faith-based groups. It can also serve as a reference for coaches, international sport and development organisations, donors, sport governing bodies, caregivers, researchers and policy makers. The ideas in this guide can be applied directly to small groups of girls, as well as for informing larger, multinational initiatives.

This guide is aimed at programmes that serve girls ages 10 to 18, with a specific focus on the younger adolescent, ages 10 to 14. Women Win has chosen to target the younger adolescent because of the vulnerability of that age. The younger adolescent is at a crossroads between childhood and adulthood, and her body and place in society are changing and vulnerable. In many cultures, the younger adolescent is at point where she either continues her education or becomes a child bride. Between the ages of 10 and 14, she enters puberty and becomes susceptible to being sexually targeted by others, putting her at risk for pregnancy and disease. Women Win believes that this age presents the greatest potential for positive change in the life of an adolescent girl, both because of a girl’s vulnerability and because of her potential to be an agent for social change.

Sustainable programmes must be led by people who understand and address the key challenges facing girls and their families. Challenges girls face are different from challenges affecting boys. Girls face gender-specific and institutionalized barriers to participation in sport and have unique motivations and expectations for their sporting experience. For example, a girl living in a poor household is often expected to care for younger siblings. A programme built to serve her needs, and the needs of her community, will have to accommodate her duties at home or provide childcare while she participates in a sport programme. Ethically and practically, Women Win believes that the programmes that serve girls most effectively are those that emphasize girls’ wellness over winning. Sport is inherently a competitive space. Girls can benefit greatly from

learning how to compete, how to win and how to lose. However, as you will see in this guide, Women Win also believes that a successful sport programme should strengthen girls on and off of the field; growth and development of an adolescent girl is always more important than winning or losing.

Adaptation of this Guide

At Women Win, we understand that girls' development and empowerment is not a one size fits all approach. Certain ways of teaching life skills to adolescent girls in the urban centres of India might not work for girls in the rural villages of Sierra Leone. What is empowering for some girls may not be empowering for others.

While this Guide attempts to capture universal best practices, Women Win recognizes that regional and program diversity means each strategy must be personalised to meet specific needs. A diversity of challenges demands a diversity of solutions. Women Win hopes this guide will provide general guidelines and inspire you to think strategically and creatively so that your programme fits effectively within your cultural setting. We encourage organisations to use this guide as a starting point for dialogue with the community and most importantly, with the adolescent girls in the programme. Empowerment cannot come from a set of standardised outcomes, but will come from the experiences and real-life situations of the adolescent girls you are trying to reach. This guide is not meant to be a source of definitive solutions, but a guide to help your organisation ask the right questions.

Most importantly, please share with us your own experiences in applying these guidelines so Women Win may learn from you about how to best provide effective, safe, empowering and rewarding sport opportunities for girls throughout the world.

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Empowering girls through sport

Sport empowers. Over the last decade, sport has increasingly been used as a tool for empowering youth in developing countries. However, opportunities to participate in sport are often designed for, and dominated by, boys and men. Girls — subject to the triple challenge of gender discrimination, age discrimination, and poverty — benefit from the economic, emotional and physical self-determination offered by sport. Furthermore, participation in sport and other physical activities that promote fitness — such as boxing, football or running — challenges and expands norms that have previously limited girls and women.

Women Win's Theory of Change

Our theory of change is built on the belief that adolescent girls benefit from and are empowered by sport programmes that:

Provide Access: Community and institutional resources are often limited for girls. Well-designed sport programmes can help link girls to health, education and other critical sectors as well as provide access to powerful and important information for their healthy development. Sport programmes can also provide girls with access to mentors, strong female role models and the social support of a team or group of peers.

Build Assets: There are three primary assets that can be built through sport: social, human and sport skills. When a girl has the opportunity to develop these areas through the learning of important life skills, she can create social networks, build mental and emotional health, become educated about her rights and develop tactical and technical sport skills as well as physical strength.

Develop Agency: The foundation of agency for every girl is her want and ability to act in her own interest. Sport gives girls the opportunity to develop these new behaviours and practice life skills in a safe environment. When paired with leadership skills and increased individual potential, that agency not only serves the girl, but those around her. She becomes a valuable contributor to her family and greater community.

Well-designed sport programmes that provide access, build assets such as life skills and develop agency through the practice of those skills, create leaders, increase knowledge around women's rights, improve girls' health and fitness, and ultimately yield positive behaviours and health outcomes.

Why invest in girls?

Six hundred million girls are growing up in developing countries today. ¹ International authorities, from the World Bank to the United Nations, agree that the most effective way to fight poverty in the world is to help girls and women. Research has shown that if you invest in girls, you invest in society because the education, increased earnings and human development of adolescent girls have a direct impact upon their families. This is becoming known as the "Girl Effect". Because women often serve as primary caretakers, every dollar invested in a girl also benefits her family and her community. When the individual girl understands her rights and believes in herself, she will improve her life and the lives of others.

The adolescent girl participating in a well-designed sport programme can use her newly acquired skills and knowledge to inform and influence at the family and community levels. To start, her participation in a sport programme often requires negotiation of rights at home – as her participation often is breaking gender norms in a family or community of what girls can and should do with their time and bodies. Furthermore, many girl-centred rights-based sport programmes use the power of sport to attract and engage the community in outreach meetings, events or campaigns, as a place to inform and mobilise the community on a wide range of issues affecting girls and women in their daily lives. Girls are encouraged to take the leadership in creating and implementing these outreach events or campaigns. Women Win believes this creates a powerful multiplier effect at a family/community level.

How does sport advance women's rights?

Women Win uses sport as a strategy to advance women's rights with focus on three core rights-based issues:

- Addressing Gender-Based Violence
- Accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Gaining Economic Empowerment

Through extensive consultation with experts in the field and the most up-to-date research, we have created several frameworks that show explicitly how sport can be used as a tool to advance girls' rights related to gender-based violence (particularly in conflict or post-conflict situations), sexual and reproductive health and rights, and economic empowerment. All of our frameworks are based on a core set of life skills we feel are important for adolescent girls to learn and practice in order to develop their leadership as well as access and exercise their rights. These frameworks serve as the foundation for our guides, curricula and other tools as well as the basis for our girl-centric outcomes that show how change happens in the voice of the girls themselves.

1. United Nation Foundation. (2009). <http://www.unfoundation.org/global-issues/women-and-population/investingadolescent-girls.html>. December 17th, 2009.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

Understanding and overcoming challenges

Around the world, girls and women face unique challenges to participating in sport. These challenges are personal, practical, economic, political and cultural. In Pakistan, the lack of private space where girls can compete without being seen by men is an obstacle. In Zimbabwe, girls are expected to dance, while football is reserved for men.

In order to create a successful sport programme for girls, leaders must first be aware of the challenges. Understanding potential obstacles leads to the development of positive, sustainable strategies. The most important step to understanding the obstacles girls in a specific region face is to go out in the community and ask parents and leaders their thoughts on girls playing sport. Below are the challenges faced by Women Win partner organisations and suggestions for how to design a programme that overcomes them. The challenges are divided into three sections:

1. Challenges that affect a girl's physical **access** to sport and all the positive benefits that sport can offer
2. Challenges that arise in the **designing** of effective sport programmes for adolescent girls
3. Challenges that can negatively affect the **climate** of a sport programme, meaning the relationship with the community, stakeholders and the girls themselves

Sport apparel for girls (Access)

Many societies impose constraints on what is considered appropriate attire for girls. In tradition-bound and religious societies, expectations often include modest dress, often covering legs, arms and/or hair. According to programme partners, these requirements can make participation in many sports challenging for girls from both a practical and a psychological standpoint.

Similarly, if a girl feels like she is shaming her family for wearing a swimsuit in public, she is not likely to want to swim. It can actually be very dangerous for a girl to shame her family by behaving in a manner that is perceived as inappropriate; she risks being punished (physically or psychologically), blamed for being evil, threatened, or inhibited from moving around freely.

Recommendations:

- Whenever possible, don't make girls choose between sport participation and adhering to cultural dress codes.
- Be flexible about what a girl can wear to participate, within bounds of the girl's physical safety. For example, allow girls to wear headscarves if that makes them comfortable.
- Choose sport activities that girls can play in modest clothing. This can be critical for both the girls' interest in participating and the community's perception of your respect for tradition. When girls' attire restricts their ability to perform athletically, make accommodations. In some cultures, girls can dress as they like, as long as men are not watching. Perhaps consider conducting your sport programme in a private location that cannot be viewed by males.
- Provide girls and women coaches with proper sport attire if they can't provide it for themselves. Talk to girls and their families about their hesitations regarding athletic clothing. Major sport apparel companies, such as Nike and Adidas, have begun to produce conservative athletic wear for girls and women with this issue in mind.

- When money is of concern, encourage girls and their caregivers to design and sew appropriate sport clothing, which can be worn by the girls themselves as well as sold to others. In some cases, it might be sufficient to allow girls to wear pants beneath skirts during play.

Lack of sport facilities and fields (Access)

In economically disadvantaged communities, especially in urban areas, there is a lack of sufficient spaces to engage in sport. Compounding the issue of limited resources is the fact that those fields and courts are often over-used in high-density areas. There is typically a hierarchy for access to athletic space, and girls' sport teams are often at the bottom. Programme partners report girls' football events being cancelled without notice to accommodate boys and men who show up to play casual games on the fields. In some cultures or conflict regions, it may be inappropriate or too dangerous for girls to play outside, therefore confining them to an even smaller pool of indoor spaces.

Recommendations:

- Work with the local government to seek alternate fields or find times when fields are not being used.
- Know who makes the decisions regarding field use in a community, especially in urban areas.
- Include field space in the programme's budget to ensure that the girls have the space they need to play comfortably. Otherwise, make arrangements for girls to have access to free field space.
- Create or build mobile equipment that you can take with you when done playing.
- Partner with local schools and ask to use field space on days when school is not in session. Most times, school fields are empty on weekends or during holidays when children are out of school.

Economic constraint (Access)

Girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds can find the costs associated with equipment, transportation and competition unrealistic for their families. Additionally, playing sport can mean time away from paid jobs and work that generates income for a family, such as farming. Girls are often pulled out of school early to work and provide income for the family. Parents will be resistant to letting their daughter stop an activity that brings the family money and start an activity that, as many cultures regard, is a waste of time or won't get her anywhere.

Recommendations:

- Consider the financial burden on both the individual and group when designing a programme for girls. If you want girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to participate, you must make it affordable for them to participate
- When possible, provide income-earning opportunities for girls. Train them to provide services within the organisation that you would otherwise have to pay for externally, such as coaching and officiating.
- Be creative about improvising and finding low-cost solutions for running your programme. For example, instead of buying new uniforms, see if you can get donations of used equipment.

- Choose a sport that matches the economic capacity of your participants or cut costs by having girls share equipment. Consider creating a “shoe library” where girls check out shoes before practice and then check them back in after practice.
- Think about partnerships that can be built within the community to reduce costs. Solicit support from local businesses in exchange for marketing at events with banners or fliers displaying the business’s name.
- Creating income-generating activities at your organisation can help offset costs for participating in a tournament or attending sport camps. Kick4Life, a sport for development organisation in Lesotho, runs various programmes that generate income for their football development activities. Kick4Life runs a Super League and rents out its turf fields to local football teams, corporations and businesses. All proceeds go directly to Kick4Life’s development activities. They also host volun-tourism groups from outside of Lesotho, which raise money for programming and on the ground activities. In addition, the organisation rents out office space at its Football for Hope centre to NGOs and businesses. Their Women4 Women programme has its own vegetable garden and sells or makes food for income using what they grow. They also sell Kick4Life merchandise.

Scheduling (Design)

Girls, especially those living in poverty, are often responsible for assisting in caretaking at home, including watching children, doing chores, cooking and cleaning. ¹ In addition, many adolescent girls fill the rest of their day in school or working paid jobs. Participation in a sport programme might not fit easily into a girl’s already full schedule, consisting largely of other’s expectations for and demands on an adolescent girl’s time. Girls are often afforded only a little, if any, leisure time after their daily chores and caretaking responsibilities are over. Many cultures see leisure as an activity worthy of men who work to support the family, whereas the work women do in the home is not seen as work, and therefore women do not need to relax or have some time for themselves.

Recommendations:

- When possible, schedule training sessions and events around the majority of a girl’s home responsibilities. Consider this both on a weekly and seasonal basis. In agricultural communities, harvest and planting seasons might require you to negotiate scheduling differently than growing or dormant seasons. In religious communities, it will be important to make accommodations for holy days and regular worship.
- If it’s not possible to work around a girl’s external commitments, be flexible in your understanding of the importance of this piece of a girl’s life. Can you allow her to bring a younger sibling to a training session? Is it possible for a girl to make up a lesson or workout if she cannot attend with the rest of the group?
- In some cases, it might be helpful to organise sport programmes close to water fountains or firewood supply. This allows girls to participate in sport activities and return home with a filled water jug or a load of firewood, which is considered a productive contribution to the household.
- Ask teachers to leave you an hour before school ends to run your sport programme, thereby not taking up the girls’ time dedicated to other responsibilities.

1. Koivula, N. (2001). *Perceived Characteristics of Sports Categorized as Gender-Neutral, Feminine and Masculine. Journal of Sport and Behaviour, 24, page 378.*

Personal Safety (Design)

There are few girls who have never feared for their own safety. Across the globe, in urban and rural environments, girls walk home from school with the risk of being robbed, raped or harassed. To participate in a sport programme, girls and their caregivers have to feel safe when travelling to and from trainings and events, and throughout the entire practice and competition. In conflict zones, it is sometimes dangerous for women to simply be outside. It is important for sport programmes to first identify what the threat to safety is and then devise strategies for protecting girls from those threats.

Recommendations:

- Engage female coaches and trainers who can create safe spaces. They can help the girls feel emotionally and physically secure and comfortable within their sport environment.
- Communicate with supportive families about the programmes and involve them, in different ways, in the sport and physical activity. When the families of participants are supportive of their daughters' decision to take part in sport, girls are more likely to continue attending and thrive within a programme.
- Include girls in the creation and implementation of child protection policies within the organisation. Girls who know what their rights to safety are can better demand those rights when they are lacking.
- Schedule programme activities at appropriate times of the day (determined by the community, but certainly before dusk).
- Teach girls to recognize potentially dangerous situations or areas in their community.
- Arrange suitable transportation for getting girls to and from programme sites.
- Organise groups to walk home together in order to reduce vulnerability.
- Invite a qualified instructor, preferably a woman, to teach girls basic self-defence skills.
- Consider how to grow with girls' safety in mind. For example, as programmes evolve, it is likely that more girls will travel beyond the confines of their community or village to participate in sport or related activities. Their safety must be ensured.
- To avoid fear and suspicion from the parents, inform them about the time the girls will be home and plan a safe way of getting them there.
- Develop a strategy for communicating with parents and caregivers in case an external emergency arises during a practice or game (i.e., natural disaster or political unrest).
- Consider choice of the sport facility. It may be necessary for your programme to hold trainings and events indoors because it may be culturally inappropriate or dangerous for girls to play outside.

Lack of women role models (Design)

If a girl has never seen women participating in sport, it will be virtually impossible for her to imagine playing herself. Similarly, if she sees a woman training to be a doctor, she is raised to believe she, too, can be a doctor. When a girl sees a woman who grew up in her region, and who has faced the same challenges she faces, speaking out for herself and walking and playing proudly, that girl's sense of what she can do expands exponentially. When a girl sees a woman who is married and still playing sport, she realizes that becoming a wife doesn't mean giving up her passions. Strong female coaches who show just as much understanding and command of a sport as male coaches challenge a common stereotype, often held by girls themselves, that male coaches have more expertise than women.

Girls need role models to not just show them their limitless potential in sport and life, but to show them how one achieves success across spheres. Too often, girls are not exposed to a diversity of role models, limiting their visions for their own potential.

Recommendations:

- Regularly expose the girls in your programme to positive, strong women role models. Invite successful women, athletes and community members to be guest speakers or do training sessions with your group. Encourage girls to be positive role models for one another by sharing their successes outside of sport during group discussions.
- Try making it a policy in your programme to promote women coaches and leaders, even if it means you won't be the team that always wins. By doing this, you are creating an atmosphere of leadership development that sets an example and provides role models from within your organisation.
- Use powerful images of strong female role models (in and outside of sport) that can help girls visualize who a role model might be. Examples could be to put up posters around your office or in sport changing rooms where girls frequently go. Coaches or facilitators could also start sessions showing pictures of powerful females and hold a quick discussion about who she is and what she might represent to them.

Lack of government support (Climate)

Sport is a government-sponsored and regulated institution at local, provincial and national levels in many countries. In some places, sport exists almost solely within the context of the government. These governments, often run by a male majority, prioritise sporting opportunities for boys rather than girls. This bias occurs at all levels of government: national, regional and local. In countries where governments do not support sport opportunities for girls, independently run sport programmes fill an important void.

Recommendations:

- Solicit the help of individuals and organisations that can influence policy decisions in order to get government support for your programme. Building an alliance or coalition of like-minded organisations that speak with one voice shows strength and could have more influence than individual organisations with their own messages.
- Find community members, including teachers and caregivers, who support your programme.
- Build a network of citizens, politicians and business people who will lobby on your behalf. Consider including influential women in positions of power in this network, as well as popular athletes who are both men and women.
- Identify and apply for government funding that is relevant to your programme objectives.

Align with the government

NOWSPAR, a women's rights organisation in Zambia, created a strategic partnership with the ministry of education, which donated office space for their work, allowing NOWSAR to cut down on overhead costs and focus more on advocacy and programming.

Magic Bus, a sport for development organisation in India, has been extremely successful in expanding its programmes by applying for and receiving funding from the government to work

in various states across India. By becoming the Knowledge and Implementing partner of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Government of India, Magic Bus received the support it needed to go after its goal of reaching 1 million youth in 10 Indian states.

Lack of positive media coverage (Climate)

The media plays a pivotal role in showing, or hiding, the images of strong, healthy women athletes who can serve as role models for younger girls. Girls derive their sense of self, in part, by what they see on the television and in newspaper and magazines. Most mainstream media shows women's sport only occasionally or not at all, while providing a daily dose of men's sport. It's no wonder girls are often brought up feeling like strangers to the sporting arena.

Recommendations:

- Search video collections, newspapers, books and the Web to find news about girls' and women's sport and share it with the girls in your programme.
- Encourage local media outlets to cover women's sport. Write letters, send emails and make phone calls to radio stations and newspaper editors.
- If possible, invite local media to cover your programme, events and participants.

Religion (Climate)

Sometimes religion is used by conservative societies and institutions to prevent females from participating in sport. These religious groups within society misinterpret or use fanatical texts to demonstrate sport as inappropriate for girls. This often shames families whose daughters play or scares families into barring their daughters from playing out of fear of religious authorities. The reality is that although many religions do dictate appropriate clothing for sport or appropriate spaces, very few, if any, bar girls from playing and participating in sport. In fact, many religions promote sport as a tool for well-being.

Recommendations:

- Approach the religious community in your area and present to them the benefits of sport on the mind and body, while showing them that your organisation abides by all rules regarding acceptable clothing or any other culturally or religiously relevant rules, such as separation of women and men. Making sure religious leaders are fully aware of what you are doing helps reduce fears, anxieties and misunderstanding that might exist.
- Ask religious leaders on board with your programme to help educate parents that religion does not forbid sport. Hold a community meeting in which you invite parents as well as these religious leaders.

Misperceptions and prejudices about girls and sport (Climate)

Many cultures consider sport to be a male domain.¹ Despite the increase of women athletes at all levels, from grassroots activities to the Olympic Games, girls are often barred from watching and participating in sport. Societies assume that the physical and psychological qualities associated with athleticism, such as strength and competitiveness, are "masculine." In many traditional societies, a girl can be condemned for being pornographic for merely showing her skin in athletic clothing or raising her leg to kick a ball. When femininity in a culture is associated with being petite or soft, girls are often reluctant to build muscle mass. ² Becoming a wife often means giving up sport or other leisure activities. These attitudes about the role a girl should or should not play in society are imposed upon adolescent girls and, over time, adopted by them as well.

There are also misunderstandings when it comes to sport and its impact on girls' sexual and reproductive health. Some fear that playing sport will cause loss of virginity. A common myth in some cultures is that the physical exertion of sport, such as running, kicking or jumping, will cause the hymen to tear. An intact hymen is erroneously seen as a physical indicator of virginity. In societies where a girl's virginity before marriage is sacred, the threat of sport causing a tear can be a very serious concern.

Girls and society often have misunderstandings about the safety of participating in sport while menstruating. In addition, sanitary pads and tampons are expensive and are not a financial priority for many families, especially in traditional cultures or among economically disadvantaged families.³ When girls begin to menstruate, they are often confined to their homes and temporarily or totally cease participation in sport.

Recommendations: General

- Educate. Education is a powerful tool for combating negative attitudes about girls' participation in sport programmes. Teaching girls, caregivers and community members about the health, economic and social benefits of physical activity for an adolescent girl can help change perceptions.
- Show images of women athletes or host events where programme participants are able to interact with a champion female athlete who is a positive role model.
- Invite caregivers, teachers and community members to visit the programme in action and to talk about their concerns.
- Create and implement a child protection policy and code of conduct that ensures there are guidelines detailing procedures and process needed to keep girls safe emotionally and physically in the programme.
- Train coaches and facilitators on the protection policy and code of conduct so that those who have the most contact with the girls can work to ensure their safety at all times during the programme.
- Talk openly with girls about perceptions of women athletes and encourage them to care more about themselves and what makes them happy and less about what others think of them.
- Enlist the support of male athletes, professionals or tribal elders who are respected in the community. Their support can help to defuse myths and solicit support from other community members.
- Use local pride as a motivator. For example, in Peru, the women's national volleyball team won a silver medal in the 1988 Olympic Games. A grassroots sport programme leveraged that inspiration to build support for their girls' volleyball team.

Recommendations: Fear of Virginity Loss

- Inform caregivers about your intention to discuss reproduction with their daughters as part of the sport programme. Once you have the support to have an honest conversation, you can educate girls that the only way to lose your virginity is through sexual intercourse. A girl's hymen tearing is a physiological occurrence that can happen in a variety of ways, only one of them being sexual intercourse. Any pelvic trauma, such as that experienced when climbing a tree, riding a bike or participating in sport, can also cause tearing.⁴

- Encouraging girls to own their bodies and make decisions based on their own well-being as opposed to cultural stigmas and myths is the next step in this conversation. Include caregivers and community members in the conversation, as their fears around their daughters losing their virginity can limit participation.

Recommendations: Menstruation Prohibits Participation

- Teach girls how to manage menstruation while participating in sport. This could include training girls about how to use feminine hygiene products, such as sanitary pads, sponges and tampons. Encourage girls to use all products safely, including avoiding using tampons for prolonged periods of time and being exposed to risk of toxic shock syndrome.
- Consider providing feminine hygiene products for the girls if cost is an issue, or do fundraisers as a team to help offset the costs. If a girl cannot find the resources to purchase feminine hygiene products, educate her about safe alternatives, such as cloths or sponges.
- Let each girl know it is alright to play sport while menstruating, as long as she does not feel sick. Sometimes participation in sport might actually help her feel better. It is equally important for girls to know they can talk to trusted peers and coaches about cramps or other symptoms associated with menstruation without fear of judgment.
- Ask an accomplished female athlete to come discuss this subject of playing while menstruating with girl participants.

1. United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007). *Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender Equality and Sport*.

2. United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007). *Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender Equality and Sport*. Page 15.

3. Association for Women's Rights in Development (2005). *AWID interviews Shiphrah Gichaga of the Forum for African Women Educationalists Kenya Chapter (FAWEK) about the organisation's work in addressing menstruation management to ensure that girls' education is not interrupted by their menstrual periods*. By Kathambi Kinoti. *Resource Net Friday File Issue 231, June 2005*

4. Abder-Rahman, H. A. (2009). *Hymen care for unmarried Muslim females: role of the forensic consultant in gynecology interventions*. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 15. Page 864

Body Image (Climate)

A girl's perception of her own body and her relationship with her body image can influence if she feels confident or comfortable enough to play sport. In many societies, beauty is often considered the opposite of what a girl's body looks like when she plays sport. Therefore, many girls are apprehensive to join sport programmes, out of fear that they will not look attractive and their bodies will become less "feminine" because of the muscles, and therefore they will not have a boyfriend or ever get married. Also, girls are sometimes not confident enough with their own bodies to participate without feeling ashamed or embarrassed.

Recommendations:

- Discuss with girls alternative ideas of beauty. Ask girls what the ideal "woman" looks like in their opinion and then ask them to look around and see who in that room has all those characteristics. Point out that this "ideal woman" does not exist and that beauty is not one thing but different things to different people.

- Expose girls to strong women athletes who have gotten married and have families of their own. If these women are accessible in your community, have them talk to girls through visits to schools and youth centres.
- Promote the health benefits of sport and exercise or how sport can give them the opportunity to play in tournaments, travel and gain other types of stature within their community and among their peers.
- Be patient. Sometimes it takes girls time to develop confidence in their bodies or develop positive self-image. What they need is a positive and encouraging environment free from judgemental comments, teasing or harassing.

Choosing the right sport for your programme

The success of your programme will depend, in part, on what sport or physical activity you select. Encourage girls to focus on a single sport. Often girls are given basic introductions to many sports, but never given the opportunity to invest time and energy in developing and improving skills. Consistent participation in a single sport over time is critical to a girl's sense of accomplishment and growth on and off the playing field.

Accessing resources

- Conduct a thorough assessment of the resources you need to begin a sport programme. Resources include space (indoors/outdoors), equipment, girls' practice and game attire (uniforms), transportation and coaches.
- When choosing your sport, be realistic about what tools you have at your disposal or are able to acquire.

Choosing between an individual or team sport

- Team sport participation encourages cooperation and communication and gives girls a social context or group in which to place themselves. According to several programme partners, girls participating in individual sport learn personal responsibility for outcomes, feel unique and able to fully control personal progress. Regardless of whether you choose an individual sport, such as running, or a team sport, such as netball, it is ideal to combine the positive aspects of both experiences.
- If you are running a team programme, meet with each participant one-on-one, giving each girl time for individual reflection, and hold each girl accountable in front of the team.
- When teaching individual sport, create group cohesion through gatherings and collective results so girls feel like they are part of something greater than themselves. Some programmes have reported success introducing a mix of team and individual sport.

Identify what girls are interested in

- Choose a sport programme the girls in your community are excited about. If logistically possible, ask girls what sport they want to play. This is the single most important aspect to sport choice. If you choose a sport that girls are not motivated to play, you will face a daily challenge of participation. Share economically and culturally sustainable options to guide participants, then allow the girls to make the choice.

Challenging stereotypes

- Stereotypes around economics, gender and race exist around every sport, in every culture. Choosing a sport that challenges a stereotype can be a very positive experience for girls and their community. Teaching a girl from the slums to play basketball, a sport reserved for wealthy people in Kenya, shows her that anything is within her reach.
- When girls play a traditionally male-dominated sport, girls and the boys around them experience a transformation in their personal and societal expectations.
- When community members see girls competing in a sport typically dominated by males, they begin to expand their understanding of girls' capabilities, opening up opportunities for girls to engage in traditional male domains, such as school and work.
- Organizers must be aware of the potential backlash to choosing a sport that challenges stereotypes. Negative responses could include boys challenging girls outside of the programme and caregivers barring girls from participation. Organizers need to be aware of the impact the challenge could have on the girls' lives, assessing if the sport benefits or harms individuals and the collective group. Once you have identified these factors, assess what is ultimately best for the growth of participants. Leaders must balance the comfort and safety of each girl with potential societal change.

Consider:

In India, the Naz Foundation chose netball specifically because it was considered a girls' sport and was not a traditional male sport. Rather than trying to force their way into a traditionally male world like cricket or football, the organisation felt the best for their girls in their programme would be to focus on a sport that wasn't culturally masculine. Eventually, boys started asking the girls if they could teach them to play netball.

Can your sport programme also teach self-defence and build physical strength in girls?

Strength differences between men and women put girls at risk for being physically compromised, beaten or raped. Although most sport builds muscle, sport that build speed, confidence and strength can be effective tools for the empowerment of women. ¹ Programme leaders of organisations that teach girls boxing and martial arts, such as karate and weightlifting, attest to benefits of teaching girls about personal strength and self-defence. Furthermore, if a girl has experienced abuse or bodily trauma, self-defence training can be a powerful way to regain control over her body.

1. GBV Prevention Network. (2008). *Our Strength is the Solution: Communities Can Prevent Sexual Violence. Quick Chats for 16 Days of Activism. Page 3.*

Using a curriculum

A well-designed curriculum, or a set of sessions that guide teachers and coaches on teaching a certain skill, idea or lesson, can be indispensable for programmes addressing issues such as life skills, gender-based violence or sexual and reproductive health and rights. A tested and proven curriculum can help in a number of ways.

Firstly, it serves as a guide for coaches and facilitators, giving them flexible and adaptable instructions on how to link games and exercises with life skill lessons as well as how to lead discussions around sensitive topics such as rape, sexuality or reproductive health. This is never

an easy task, and having written instructions that guide a coach in asking the right questions and providing factual information is an immense asset.

Secondly, it allows you to expand your programme and train coaches and facilitators quickly, since you have a written lesson-by-lesson guide on how to deliver sessions.

Thirdly, by using the same curriculum across multiple programme sites, you can measure the progress of all of your participants. Since they are all going through similar sessions, based off a single curriculum, you can use standard surveys and other tools to measure what they have learned and then share this progress with donors, funders or the community.

The key is finding the right curriculum for your programme. The ideal is to use something that you can easily adapt to local context, culture and age of participants. It is also important to let coaches know that even the best curriculum is not meant to be read word-for-word in front of a group of girls, but rather, it is more of a guide that can be and should be adapted to the programme and its context.

Determining length of girls' engagement in programme

When designing your sport programme and identifying curricula that fit with your objectives, consider the length of time that your programme will engage each individual girl. The longer that you can keep girls in the sport programme, the more impact sport and positive coaching role models can have on that girl. When allotting funding to certain programmes, keep in mind that it might be better to engage 100 girls over four years than 400 girls over a couple of months. Assess the capacity of your organisation and the tools it has so that girls can get prolonged exposure to sport and life skill training, whether through several different programmes within your organisation, through leadership roles after their particular programme is over or through participation in tournaments and sport leagues.

Magic Bus

Magic Bus, a sport for development in India, engages with its participants over the course of eight to 10 years, which allows participants to grow and develop alongside mentors, role model coaches and a social peer group in their most important adolescent years.

Importance of female facilitators

Keep in mind that although male coaches can be great role models and effective facilitators for topics such as teamwork or leadership, there is great value in having female facilitators lead sessions and discussion with girls on sensitive topics such as gender-based violence or sexual and reproductive health and rights. Girls will feel more comfortable speaking openly and honestly about these topics with a female and may be shy or afraid to ask questions if there is a male facilitator helping out or even in the room.

Interested in using a curriculum? Check out [Goal](#), an award-winning curriculum created by Standard Chartered Bank and the Population Council that integrates sport with lessons on life skills and financial literacy.

Building support for your programme

Communities, not individuals or independent organisations, build successful and sustainable sport programmes. Perhaps the single most critical factor in designing a sport programme for girls is identifying who has a stake in it and earning their support. Partnership building is an on-going, pivotal process throughout the life of a programme. The following is a list of stakeholders and suggestions for how to develop positive relationships with each group.

The girls

When considering building solid partnerships, first consider your relationship with the girls who will be your participants. In some ways, gaining buy-in from girls can be the most difficult part of building a programme, as many girls have never considered sport as something available to them or something that they necessarily wanted to do because of social pressure to be “feminine” and do things that are “appropriate” for girls.

Tips on approaching and engaging girls:

- Make participation voluntary.
- Interview girls about what they want to get out of a sport programme and design accordingly.
- Involve girls in decision-making and listen to their suggestions.
- Provide a physical and emotional space where it is safe for each girl to play and interact.
- Provide for basic needs to the best of your abilities, including food, water, clothing and first aid supplies.
- Reward exemplary participation enthusiastically with honours, praise, awards and added responsibilities.
- Organize tournaments or other events related to the sport so that girls see their training or sport sessions as a step to a competition or large event.
- Provide intellectual, emotional and physical growth opportunities.
- Make sessions fun and dynamic.
- Offer girls a variety of dates and times to participate.
- Invite girls to lead activities.

Parents and Caregivers

It is critical to earn the trust and support of caregivers. It is in each girl’s best interest for the programme directors and coaches to be on the same “team” as caregivers in order to avoid having a participant feel like she must choose between participating in sport or obeying the wishes of her caregivers.

Tips on approaching and engaging parents and caregivers:

- Arrange meetings with parents and caregivers. Educate them about all aspects of your programme and listen to their concerns.
- Be absolutely transparent and honest at all times.
- Ask caregivers to sign consent forms. This demonstrates that you respect their role in their daughter’s life.
- During the program design phase, ask caregivers about the skills or knowledge they would like their girls to attain through the program.
- Involve caregivers in ongoing monitoring of the program’s success. Ask them for feedback, and report back to them with findings.

- Assure caregivers of the physical and emotional safety of the girls while participating in the programme.
- Invite caregivers to participate occasionally in sessions. Invite them to observe or to be guest speakers on health issues.
- Organize a friendly competition between girls and caregivers.
- Give caregivers small income-earning opportunities by training them to serve as officials, organize events or maintain facilities.
- Conduct home visits. Meet each caregiver in the environment where he or she is most comfortable.
- Adjust programming schedule to fit family needs.
- Teach girls time management skills to balance home responsibilities and sport participation.
- Create incentives. Recognize supporting caregivers with an award. Be clear about what it takes to earn an award to avoid accusations of favouritism.
- Utilize and engage caregivers who are enthusiastic from the onset. Build on the positive contributions from the few at the beginning. One great strategy is to use caregivers who are on board with your programme as advocates who can talk to sceptical caregivers who are unsure whether to let their daughter play or not.
- Identify and utilize different strategies for male and female caregivers. Fathers and male caregivers often have an idea of the power of sport and its impacts since they themselves may have played or still play. Leverage this by highlighting their own experiences and how sport impacted them and what it could do for their daughters. On the other hand, many mothers or female caregivers may have never kicked or caught a ball themselves. Organize sport days for them so that they too experience the joy that playing sport brings.
- Engage the boys in girls' lives when making the case for female sport programmes. Brothers, potential boyfriends or male peers can be the biggest accelerators of a girl's right to play or the greatest inhibitors. Hold meetings or attend boys' tournaments and describe why girls' sport is good for the community and how it could be good for them as well.

Community leaders

Power and influence in a community setting is often organized hierarchically, with political, educational, religious or economic leaders at the top. The opinions of those at the top of the hierarchy shape a community's support for your programme.¹ Creating positive partnerships with the leaders at the top develops important inroads across a community. The failure to do so can mean political, economic and logistical hurdles down the line.

Tips on approaching and engaging community leaders:

- Maintain constant communication and transparency. Listen to advice and concerns.
- Respect and honour community leaders. Make them your partners.
- Offer community leaders the opportunity to be programme spokespeople.
- Don't demand more time and energy than community leaders are able and willing to give.
- Respect the cultural landscape and try to work within it, as long as expectations of girls do not conflict with their human rights.
- Be patient. Understand that trust is built over time.

- Solicit the help and expertise of community leaders. Consider asking them for referrals or for help linking you to people who they feel may help improve your program. Once you contact the referral, remember to write or call back immediately and thank them.
- Show them how your programme helps strengthen the community that supports them.
- Remain nonpartisan. Aligning with a political party makes your programme susceptible to the rise and fall of that party. The well-being and development of girls is not a political issue. Constantly reiterate that your sport programme has no political agenda.
- Express gratitude. Follow up with letters, conversations and tokens of appreciation, like t-shirts, photos from events, etc.
- Recognise supportive community leaders with an award. Be clear to the rest of the community about what you are rewarding and why.

[1. F. A. Kuponiyi. \(2008\). Anthropologist, 10\(4\), page 239-243.](#)

The community

Communities can take many forms. For some, the most important community is a village. For others, their community is a religious group. Still, for others, the community is a refugee camp. Gaining the support of any community that girls are a part of is invaluable.

Tips on approaching and engaging a community:

- Clearly demonstrate how the programme benefits the community.
- Be visible. Open your doors. Hold outreach events. Publicize games, tournaments and performances.
- Solicit volunteers and paid workers from the community.
- Share news and progress widely. Create a newsletter, if resources are available. If not, post pictures or reports of events in a central, visible place in the community.
- Ask community members about their views on girls and sport and the results they would like to see from such a programme.
- Share your resources with community members when it does not compromise girls' use of it, including health information, computer use, athletic equipment and facilities. Set up rules early in the program to ensure that all members of the community are clear on what you are offering.
- Respect community traditions and culture.
- Express gratitude and encourage girls to give back to their community.
- Organize community parades, where parents, participants and community members can come together and walk through the neighbourhood with messages promoting girls and sport, or denouncing gender-based violence or human rights abuses. Coordinate parades with important days or events such as International Women's Day or 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence.

Government and police

Operating within the legal mandates of a region, including city, provincial and national laws, is a simple and non-negotiable necessity for establishing your programme. Failure to do so, especially in corrupt government environments, can jeopardize your success and the safety of the girl participants. Position your organisation as a leader in girls and sport development and show government leaders and ministries that you are an asset that could help them develop their policies or reach more children.

Tips for approaching and engaging the government and police:

- Treat government leaders with respect and regard their partnership as you would other community leaders.
- Abide by all laws, all the time.
- Understand programme establishment laws and abide by them. When required, register your organisation.
- Write letters to government officials to inform them of your programme details, intentions and membership.
- Follow protocol regarding working your way up the hierarchy for soliciting support. Sometimes this means approaching lower-ranking officials first.
- Invite police to monitor major events. Thank them publicly for their support.
- Invite government officials to speak at or participate in events or functions.
- Consider applying for government funding, when available.
- Many governments have a ministry or department in charge of promoting sport and games. Be sure to discuss your programme with this ministry and discuss how you can work together to promote common goals.
- If police or government officials begin to expect financial compensation for their support, be strategic about engaging them less frequently or in front of other community partners who would frown upon such demands.

Resource providers and organisational partners

Finding resources to run your programme does not always have to mean spending money. Mutually beneficial partnerships can be a valuable way to secure equipment, facilities, expert advice, basic provisions and other programme needs. Consider building relationships with local businesses, organisations that serve girls, sport organisations, schools and invested individuals.

Consider

In Nairobi, Kenya, basketball courts are few and far between. Programme Directors from Safe Spaces Africa forged a valuable relationship with a local church enabling their girls to play basketball at the local church for a few hours a week.

Tips for approaching and engaging resource providers and organisational partners:

- Find ways for your programme to benefit potential partners. Understand that although partnerships are occasionally built on altruism, they are more frequently built and sustained when there is clear mutual benefit. Maybe help maintain the field at a local school by cleaning up trash after every training session, or donate extra equipment you have to the youth centre that allows you to use their space.
- Communicate frequently and transparently about goals, needs and challenges.
- Demonstrate the successes of your programme. People want to partner with a successful programme that is positively impacting girls and the community.
- Be professional. Conduct regular meetings. Follow up with reporting on progress, events and impact.
- Assure visibility or invisibility, depending on the desire of the partner.
- Express gratitude, publicly thanking each partner for support, using logos and other materials provided by the partner.

- Create a flier that concisely and attractively summarizes your programme. In many places, a written document with photos goes a long way in making your programme look more official and respectable. This is especially important if it is a new programme. Include the names of your partners on your materials, if appropriate.

Donors and funders

Organisations and individuals often invest financially in girls' sport programmes. These are two-way relationships. Funding organisations exist to support community-building programmes, like yours. They need you, just as you need them.

Tips for approaching and engaging donors and funders:

- Be transparent and honest.
- Be responsible for commonly agreed upon expectations.
- Don't be afraid to share the need to adjust goals and expectations when they become unattainable or restrict growth.
- Report on outcomes and impact. Show results in multiple forms, including statistics, written accounts and photos.
- Share future goals and expectations.
- Treat every relationship as a partnership. Share discussions around successes and problem solving. Funders are people and potential friends, not spreadsheets.
- Introduce funders to other individuals and organisations invested in the same causes or working in the same area.

Safe Spaces

Participants and their families must trust that all activities associated with a sport programme occur in a secure environment. Addressing safety concerns must be a top priority for all sport programmes that seek to empower girls.

Martha Brady of the Population Council has written extensively about the concept of sport programmes creating "safe spaces" for adolescent girls, a concept now widely understood and promoted within effective girls' sport programmes.

According to Brady, safe spaces are:

- Free from emotional and physical threat
- Private and confidential
- Culturally acceptable to parents and caregivers yet free from parental pressures
- Conveniently located and familiar to programme participants
- Not subject to intrusions by males un-associated with the programme or unwanted authority figures

Without safe spaces, a girl's growth is inhibited. If she is fearful of being in physical or emotional jeopardy, she will not take the risks necessary to experience the full benefits of a sport programme. If a girl is afraid she will be ostracized, she is unlikely to share her innermost questions and thoughts. If she is getting tackled brutally by older girls during practice, she will not want to play the game. [1](#)

We at Women Win think the creation of safe spaces is a critical mandate to building a sport programme that seeks to benefit girls. That's why we gave it its own section.

1. Brady, Martha (2005). *Creating Safe Spaces and Building Social Assets For Young Women In The Developing World: A New Role For Sport*. *Women's Studies Quarterly* 2005, vol.33, no.1&2, pp. 44-45.

Recruiting Girls

Consider

Ask caregivers to fill out applications or simple entry forms for girls who want to join your sport programme. This provides written consent and ensures that the organisation has contact information in case of an emergency. If photos will be taken of girls during training, make sure to include this in the consent form, as in some cases photos compromise the personal safety of participants.

Step 1: Identify the potential participant

When designing a sport programme, it's critical to first identify the girls who will be targeted by the program. Who do you want to participate? Why do you want them to participate? Is this girl from a rural or urban environment? How far away from the programme headquarters or playing grounds does she live? How old is she? Is she HIV-affected? Does she have a disability? Does she have caretaking duties within her family that might restrict her participation? Is she in school or does her family have enough money to send her? Clear identification of the characteristics of the "type" of girl you are looking builds a solid foundation for serving her.

Step 2: Assess capacity

Once you have identified who will most benefit most from your programme, evaluate the programme's capacity for participation. How many girls can the infrastructure accommodate? Consider availability of coaches, time, space, uniforms, food, permits and all other necessary resources. Be realistic. Overestimating how many girls you can serve can result in participants not experiencing the full benefits of participation. You can always recruit more girls or rely on girls to bring their friends if your numbers are low. However, it's very difficult to turn girls that you've recruited away if you find that you have overestimated your capacity.

Step 3: Create and execute a strategy

Recruiting girls for your programme can be extremely challenging. It's unlikely that you will just walk up to an informal game of football and find large numbers of girls waiting to join your sport programme. For reasons of safety and gender-dictated responsibilities, girls are more likely to be closer to home than boys, who are often free to roam about. It helps to have a clear, intentional plan for how you are going to identify and recruit girls.

Effective strategies are based on knowing exactly who you want to reach, where she is, what will motivate her to participate, and who makes decisions for her if she is not permitted to make them for herself. Once you identify these factors, devise a creative approach for reaching your potential participants. Every programme's recruiting strategy will be unique. For some, creating an after-school partnership with a local primary school is all the strategizing that needs to be done. For others, finding a team of participants might require months of going door-to-door, building relationships with community leaders, caregivers and girls.

Ideas for Recruiting Girls

Designing a strategy for recruiting girls will depend on the particular cultural context of where the sport programme takes place. However, there are some general tips that seem to be relevant for sport programmes across the globe.

- Understand and address all barriers to participation.
- Encourage girls to bring their friends. Word-of-mouth is a powerful recruitment tool. Programme partners report that more than 50% of participants come from referrals from friends.
- Create partnerships with schools, religious institutions or other groups that serve girls.
- Post flyers in public places where girls and their caregivers are likely to be.
- Host tournaments. Pass out information. Have current members share their experiences.
- Meet with community leaders. Ask for their influence in spreading a positive word about the programme.
- Partner with other organisations that serve girls.
- Go door-to-door. Explain programme benefits and details to girls and their families. Solicit the help of trusted community women, as they might be more openly received in their neighbours' homes.
- Give financial incentives, when possible. If a girl can earn extra money by providing a service for the programme, such as cleaning uniforms or officiating, her caregivers might be more likely to support her participation.
- Advertise constantly. Post a sign outside your training facility. Wear programme t-shirts and encourage girls to do the same. Speak about the benefits of sport in the lives of girls to anyone who is willing to listen.
- When recruiting girls, rather than doing a general meeting to see who comes and signs up, advertise a try-out or selection day. This creates a sense of competition that could motivate the girls to come and feel as if they have "earned" a spot in the programme. However, this must be carefully considered since creating a competitive atmosphere could also alienate girls who have never played sports and or have low self-esteem, even if they are already guaranteed a spot.

Girls' participation in programme design

Personal empowerment and control are closely linked. Programme partners report that when a girl feels like she has control over her body, her future and her environment, she begins to feel strong and powerful. It is important to give participants in your programme some degree of control over the design of the program, especially when the intent of the program is to increase girls' self-esteem. Girls are more likely to fully engage in activities that they help design.

Tips for how to engage girls in programme design:

- Allow girls to choose paint colours and make decorations for the space where their sessions are held.
- Ask girls to vote on how they would like to be grouped for competitions, for example, by age, by region or by skill level.
- Give girls the choice of uniform colours and team names.
- Consult with girls and their families about time and duration of practices and training sessions.
- Ask girls to create rules of conduct for sessions and penalties for breach of conduct.

- Pick a group of girls to interview and evaluate potential coaches.
- Ask girls which sport they would like to play.
- Ask girls which life skills topics they would like to discuss.

Developing Leadership

The leadership of an organisation is a direct reflection of its values, philosophies and priorities. In sport organisations, there are often several layers of leadership: administrators who oversee the programmes from a management perspective; coaches, who work directly with the girls; and peer leaders, who serve as influential intermediaries between the girls and the adults. Leadership serves as the external face of the programme, the coordinators of logistics and powerful mentors for each participant.

The importance of women in leadership

Women coaches, trainers, discussion group facilitators and administrators are crucial to ensuring the success of sport programmes aimed at empowering girls. Prioritizing women for these roles creates leadership opportunities, where such opportunities may otherwise be scarce or non-existent. In all levels of organisational leadership, women have a chance to strengthen decision-making, confidence and management skills over time. Some sport programmes recruit women as staff members.

The staff members are given responsibilities ranging from organisational management and administrative duties to organising tournaments and supervising teams. In the long term, with the appropriate technical training for skill development, these girls and women can become strong candidates for positions in traditionally male-dominated sport governing bodies. The more women that are visible in these roles, such as sport referees or coaches of mixed-gender teams, the more that gender stereotypes are broken, not only for adolescent girls but also for adolescent boys and men.

Women in positions of power within an organisation serve as strong role models for younger girls. When girls see women from their own communities in leadership positions, the possibilities for their own accomplishments become more real. Women leaders also play an important role in ensuring that girls feel safe and that their needs are met. Many coaches and trainers with whom Women Win has spoken say that girls feel more comfortable conveying their needs to women coaches, trainers and referees rather than male ones. For example, if a girl is being abused at home, in many cases she is more likely to feel comfortable communicating her situation to a woman rather than a male.

Gender equality should also be considered across the organisation, by encouraging and seeking female members of the board of directors, advisors and organisation administration. Women representatives on these decision-making bodies help the organisation consider what is best for its girl participants, keeping their interests in mind and serving as role models themselves.

Girls in Leadership

Girls' leadership can and should be an important part of programme design. Developing the leadership abilities and opportunities within a programme for the adolescent girl participants creates a pool of potential coaches, facilitators and female leaders for your sport programmes. This, in turn, increases the potential for these girls to grow as leaders in their communities.

Consider

FCAM, an organisation based in Nicaragua, uses peer-to-peer education groups in their women's camps, which provide adolescent girls the opportunity to explore issues that affect their lives through a gender, inter-generational and feminist perspective.

The objective is to open spaces for reflection so that adolescent girls can build new kinds of relationships together (peer-to-peer), based on their experiences in their organisations and as individuals, with a profound analysis of how power relationships can arise.

Recruiting Women Coaches

In some areas of the world, qualified women coaches are plentiful, especially in places with high-density populations or where women's sport has a strong presence and history. However, women's sport is still not fully and universally embraced. ¹ There is a scarcity of women who have the skills to play sport and the competency, confidence and knowledge to coach. By working hard as an organisation to identify and hire women coaches for your programmes or by training and providing paths to accreditation for female athletes turned coaches, your organisation will change certain attitudes that persist, among female sport teams as well, that male coaches are better since they are thought to be more technically skilled and have more expertise.

CONSIDER

Programme leaders at MIFUMI (Uganda) originally wanted to use karate as the sport focus for girls. However, they were unable to find more than one qualified karate coach who was a woman. Believing deeply in the value of women coaches, they decided to build a tae kwon do practice as they were able to recruit an experienced tae kwon do coach who was a woman from a nearby city. There was an unexpected benefit to recruiting this coach as well. When concerns were heard from caregivers, reluctant to let their girls participate in tae kwon do because the amount of kicking "would diminish their girls' ability to have children," this particular coach was able to effectively address these concerns. She could attest to kicking not damaging reproductive organs as she had given birth to two healthy children.

Tips for recruiting women coaches:

- Advertise. Let the community know you are seeking women coaches. Post flyers in community spaces, like markets and schools. Be sure to indicate clearly your needs regarding time commitment and qualifications.
- Be willing to travel. Experienced women footballers or netballers might live in a city near where your programme is based if they do not live in the immediate area.
- Visit venues where the sport is being played. The best place to find boxers is at a boxing gym, and the best place to find tennis players is at a tennis court. Visit local sport venues and meet women who are there to recruit and get recommendations.
- Train girls within the programme. If your sport programme has been established for a few years, your most fertile ground for recruiting women coaches is likely right before your eyes. Give older girls who have a solid grasp of the skills and who have demonstrated an ability to lead a chance to become a coach. This can be a powerful tool in their empowerment, and the programme benefits from the coach already having knowledge of programme logistics and expectations.
- Consider the crossover athlete. Consider recruiting women who have experience in another sport and train them to coach the sport you've chosen for your programme.

- Sport-specific skills can be learned quickly with focus and a qualified instructor. Regardless of the sport, the female athlete will already be aware of basic needs for participants, such as training, functioning within the context of a team, and simply being an athlete.
- Recruit and train caregivers. Caregivers are already invested in the development of girls. They are often willing to volunteer their time and share in the building of a sport programme that benefits their girls. Help drive their passion by training them as coaches.
 - Contact the national sport governing body. Many popular sports have national organisations that govern regulations, coaches, officials, etc. As a central headquarters for a sport, the people in this organisation often know of qualified coaches and can help you get in contact with them.
 - Reconsider sport choice. If you cannot find women to teach girls how to play basketball, for example, perhaps it is worth reconsidering if that is the right sport for girls in your area.
 - Give female coaches access to formal accreditation programmes. Often times, women coaches are taken advantage of and asked to volunteer their time because they don't have the same formal coaching certificates or recognition from the government or other sporting bodies as do men who are at their same level. By helping female coaches gain access to these trainings and accreditation processes, your organisation gains accredited coaches, and these coaches can negotiate salaries and earn a living through coaching in the future.
 - Share resources. Partner and work with other organisations that need or have strong female coaches and role models, and work with these women so they split their time between different programmes.

1. United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007). Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender Equality and Sport.

Men in Leadership

When incorporating men in positions of leadership, it is important to recognize that in many societies, girls and women have learned to be submissive to boys and men, who occupy positions of authority. Conscious design and careful selection of men that truly believe in girls' equality and empowerment is paramount to making male inclusion in the programme successful. Although Women Win believes that including and training women in positions of leadership should be a top organisational priority, most organisations benefit from men's contributions as well. Including men in efforts to empower girls and women can be beneficial on both ideological and practical levels.

Over time, men have had greater access to sport; therefore, they often have valuable technical knowledge to offer to girls. When teaching girls sport-specific skills, programmes often call upon that expertise. Men who are truly dedicated to empowerment can work directly with girls and show them positive examples of cross-gender communication, behaviour and respect. They can bring a diversity of experience and perspective to a programme. Furthermore, having a male celebrate the strength and athleticism of an adolescent girl can leave a big impression upon the participant.

From a programme point of view, having caring, qualified professionals that embody the principles of the organisation and are dedicated to empowering girls, regardless of gender, is paramount. However, the presence of males, regardless of the individual, has the potential to compromise a girl's feeling of security within the space and reinforce her belief that men are in charge. If she has experienced gender-based oppression at the hands of a man, she will likely be reluctant to trust and share as freely as she would with a leader who is a woman. There are countless examples of women athletes, in environments that should be about empowerment, being sexually harassed and defiled by their own coaches.

In designing sport programmes for girls, it's important to be aware of both the risks and benefits of this dynamic to make sure the programme is a success.

Consider

It is typically more comfortable for women and older girls to talk to participants about issues surrounding reproduction and menstruation than it is for males. However, most men coaches of adolescent and teen girls will encounter occasions when a girl's full participation in a sport programme requires understanding, advice and education about personal and sensitive issues particular to women. For example, if a girl is menstruating and experiencing cramps, she must be able to communicate to her coach without experiencing shame. Or, if a coach notices that a girl is not performing to her potential because she does not have a sport bra, he must be able to offer her resources, if they are available.

Tips on integrating men into a programme

- Screen the men you plan to hire as coaches or administrators. Interview them about their perception of girls' empowerment. Ask them about their experience in helping shape strong girls, as opposed to focusing simply on their technical coaching skills.
- If a male coach has no experience with girls' empowerment, limit his role to occasional training sessions with another female coach present.
- Never allow men to train or travel with girls without an adult woman present. For many groups, this can be financially and logistically difficult to achieve. If you have a male coach, consider asking a women teacher, mother or community member to join in sessions on either a voluntary or paid basis. Create meaningful roles for these women, such as helping with equipment, organizing transportation, communicating with parents or preparing food.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy for inappropriate interaction of male leaders with girls.
- Train all coaches, women and men, on how to talk with girls about sensitive issues, such as sexuality, health and reproduction. Include gender sensitivity sessions in these trainings for all coaches so there exists an honest and open dialogue between male and female coaches as well.
- Educate girls about reporting gender-based violence or abuse when/if it occurs at the hands of men within the organisation. Make sure girls have a trusted woman whom they can talk to and who will help them contact police and/or third-party service providers.
- Encourage girls to view men as partners in their development, as opposed to controllers of it. Establish open lines of communication around sensitive issues. In initial group meetings, acknowledge that all coaches, men and women, understand that menstruation and sexual development is a healthy and normal part of girls' coming of

- age. Ensure that coaches respect and believe girls when they say they cannot participate because of cramps or other discomfort related to reproductive health.
- If girls are not comfortable using formal language around sensitive issues, welcome them to come up with a code word to communicate with all coaches, male or women, when they are menstruating.
 - Maintain clear boundaries around discussions with girls. Do not get into discussions about girls' sexual behaviour. If a girl needs to discuss sexuality and other personal topics, refer her to an adult woman within the programme.

Designing for girls with disabilities

When developing your sport programme, actively recruit girls with physical, sensorial and other disabilities. Be aware that, due to religious and cultural biases, many families still hide their disabled children and specifically girls with disabilities. Girls with disabilities are often regarded as second class and a burden to their family. Any investment in girls with disabilities could be undermined by members of a community who would prefer investment in children who are not disabled. Make contact with the mother first, listening to her stories and issues, and gently persuade her into bringing her disabled daughter to your sport events.

Integration

Regardless of how many girls with disabilities you have, make sure they can be physically included in the games by providing them with suitable infrastructure and sporting equipment within realistic and financial parameters. If your girls are interested in road racing, but wheelchairs are not available or of poor quality, look for sport activities that match equipment and abilities.

Coaching sensitivity

Most importantly, seek the right teachers with skills and creativity to teach girls who are disabled, or take courses to learn how to accommodate girls with disabilities within your programme. Look for the abilities of the girls, not their disabilities, to see the opportunities for them within your sport activity. If you have a large enough group of girls with disabilities, consider creating a group just for them, where they can share and compete against girls with similar abilities and experiences. When working with girls with disabilities, be flexible, creative, patient and enthusiastic.

Language

If you work with deaf or girls who are hearing impaired, learn basic Sign Language for the first communication and include Sign Language interpreters into your courses. You will also need to include this in your financial plan.

Transport

You will also need to address how to transport girls with certain disabilities. In many countries, special transportation is not available, too costly or poorly organized. Build this into your program design, and consider programmes that can be offered close to the girls with disabilities (e.g., their schools or institutes).

Peer Support

In addition to considering how your programme will accommodate girls with disabilities, it is also very important to educate girls without disabilities. Peer support is critical to creating an

open and encouraging environment for all participants. Help all participants broaden their perspectives about who can play sport. Allow them to ask questions. Teach the girls without disabilities to be the strongest advocates for the participation of those with physical, sensorial or mental challenges.

Role Models

Look for role models. Nearly all countries have Paralympic athletes. Invite them to your training to have girls with and without disabilities experience what can be achieved in spite of disabilities. Work with disabled women trainers if they are available or adult disabled women as coaches or supporters of your program. Seek support of the local or national disabled persons' organisations, preferably disabled women's organisations.

Their Right

Make girls with disabilities, their parents and caretakers aware that participation in sport and physical activities is their right (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and that it can enhance their health, their lives and their abilities.

OPERATIONS

Encouraging participation and retention

In this section, we share best practices for running sport programmes in an environment that encourages girls to thrive and continue being involved in sport. Fundamentally, the programme must meet girls' emotional, personal and physical needs, encouraging their growth and addressing stumbling blocks that impede involvement.

Motivation

There are countless strategies for motivating a girl to participate in a sport programme. The effectiveness of incentives varies based upon age, sport, geographic region and the individual. Programme directors and coaches often want to give girls every possible incentive to play. However, with limited resources, most programme directors have to make difficult choices about which incentives will yield the greatest results relative to cost, or how deeply invested to get in any one form of motivation. For example, a programme director might have enough money in the project's budget to provide uniforms for 25 girls, but not have enough money to provide transportation to competitions.

Tips for motivating participation:

- Recognize and reward. Publicly honour girls based on leadership, performance and initiative. Recognition can be a physical award, such as a certificate or trophy; a privilege; or simply verbal recognition in front of the group by a coach or leader. Recognition can happen randomly or in the form of a regularly scheduled event, such as an annual awards banquet. Women Win programme partners suggest inviting local businesses to donate awards or prizes, such as t-shirts or bags. It is important to be open and explicit about how other girls can attain such an honour, so they have clear and tangible goals.
- Keep it fresh. A primary motivator for playing sport is simply having fun. Many of the girls targeted by sport programmes live serious lives, having experienced serious trauma. Girls around the world are weighed down with daily responsibilities that require them to behave beyond their years. The practice of simply learning to play with peers can be incredibly healing and liberating. When coaches and programme designers put the emphasis on fun, girls respond. Fun can be maintained by introducing new training exercises, games and music into training sessions, and by keeping the pace of sessions fast, light and exciting.
- Give girls leadership roles. Giving girls leadership roles in daily sessions, at events or within the organisation, encourages girls to set goals and work hard to reach them. There is no better way to teach girls how to lead than to actually let them do it and learn by experience. Several programmes reported providing rewards based on leadership schemes. When a girl meets certain leadership criteria, such as excellent attendance, she is given a reward. Be sure to make leadership opportunities available to ALL girls, including those with disabilities.
- Provide economic incentives. Giving girls a chance to earn and manage money are skills that will serve them beyond the playing field. A girl that is financially independent is an asset to her family and becomes less reliant upon others to meet her needs. Furthermore, when a girl earns money, perceptions of her ability and self-worth shift. Some programmes have had success in retaining girls by offering them a chance to earn money within the programme. For example, girls can get paid small sums for cleaning,

officiating or coaching. Others have used small sums of money as part of the leadership scheme mentioned above. If the intention is for girls to use money for school fees, programme directors can give the girls' earnings directly to the school. It also can be tremendously valuable to teach girls about saving, protecting and managing money once they are earning it. Conversely, if a girl is not earning money at a sport programme, it is possible that her caregivers will see the participation as a waste of time, when compared to home duties or paid work elsewhere. If your sport programme cannot provide income to girls, provide encouragement and support for them to earn income in another job. Introduce them to vocational training and non-formal education opportunities, and schedule practices during times when girls do not have to work. Also, be flexible if a girl has to miss a training session or a game for work.

Consider

Although there are many positive ways to provide economic incentives for girls to participate in sport programmes, there are also negative and harmful practices that could create a culture or atmosphere where girls only come if they are given money to come. Try not to hand out money just for simple participation. Girls should be there because they love sport and want to exercise. Making it easier for them and their family financially so they can participate is important, but simply providing money for showing up sends the wrong messages to the girls. Also, staff must be careful when finding employment for the girls in the sport programme, considering carefully how and what girls do so as not to reinforce or promote child labour or exploitation of participants.

- Offer non-economic incentives for participation. Non-economic incentives could include small prizes, clothing or equipment. Some programmes provide a "membership card" that is stamped each time a participant attends a practice or a programme activity. A chart posted on the wall tracks attendance, and then the programme can award prizes for different levels of participation. Prizes such as hair elastics or pencils would require fewer participation stamps, and cleats or tennis racquets could be earned for more. In this way, girls have clear incentives for participation, and equipment is earned rather than given.
- Make it meaningful. Girls need to consciously see the value of a sport programme prior to making a commitment. For some, this can be simply about having fun and feeling carefree while at practice. For others, it is in making new friends, learning new skills, building physical strength or feeling a heightened sense of possibility. As programme leaders, it is important to evaluate what is individually meaningful for each participant and try to support her development through your programme.
- As a coach, be responsive to the girls in your programme. Ask their opinion on what will help them the most to meet their needs inside and outside the sport programme.

Basic Needs

The following is a list of basic needs for a successful sport programme. Each need is discussed in terms of "the minimum" and "the ideal". If a programme cannot ensure that each girl is receiving the minimum recommended accommodations, the programme needs to reconsider its design so it is not a threat to a participant's well-being.

Consider

One of the girl participants at Sadili Oval, in Nairobi, Kenya, fainted one Monday morning when she arrived to train. Until that incident, no one knew that she was living on her own. She was not able to eat on weekends, as her only sources of food were school and what she ate at Sadili Oval. This girl literally could not participate safely without being given nutritious food.

1. Clean water and food

Athletic participation demands that participants are properly nourished and hydrated to reach their full potential. A girl without enough calories in her system is less likely to physically perform and focus than a girl who has her nutritional needs met. In economically disadvantaged communities, girls might not be getting their dietary needs met at home; therefore provision of food and water at an athletic programme is absolutely necessary. Most programmes offer some sort of provision here, whether it is a small snack or a full meal, offered to participants before or after competition. The higher the level of competition and energy output, the more important it is to provide food. It is not advisable to give girls fast food or drinks that are high in sugar and caffeine. In economically disadvantaged situations, consider inviting parents to cook for the athletes and offer a small payment for their effort.

The minimum

Provide clean drinking water and make sure that girls have enough calories in their systems for physical exertion. If girls are malnourished or dehydrated, they should not be playing sport without being given food or water, as it can further jeopardize their health. Educate girls on the importance of drinking water and eating healthy foods when participating in sport.

The ideal

Provide all girls with nutritious snacks, juices and clean drinking water at training sessions and events.

Consider

Once girls reach puberty, undergarments become of utmost importance for sport participation. A supportive sport bra is critical for girls participating in running sport. Without one, girls may experience pain from bouncing breasts and are less likely to want to run. Underwear is equally important, as it enables girls to use sanitary pads or other materials to manage their menstruation. Any sport programme aimed at serving adolescent girls effectively must address the issue of ensuring all girls have both a bra and underwear.

2. Athletic clothing

If a girl does not have comfortable and sport-appropriate clothing, she will not be able to fully participate in a sport programme. If she is expected to run, she needs running shoes. If she is playing field hockey, she needs shin guards. Many girls who stand to benefit the most from sport programmes have no athletic clothing at all and will need the programme to provide all parts of the uniform. Beyond function and performance, uniforms often give girls a sense of pride and belonging. Several programme partners have been able to secure donations for athletic wear. When resources are scarce, programme leaders must improvise. For example, girls can share uniforms if they aren't playing at the same time. If there is not enough money for full uniforms, girls can wear practice jerseys over their blouses.

The minimum

Ensure girls have functional and culturally appropriate clothing and are not in danger of injury or social ostracism for participating in the clothing they have available.

The ideal

Provide sport-specific uniforms, footwear and underwear for all participants.

Consider

Some girls, despite having a safe space to change and access to proper training kits, might not feel comfortable changing clothing to play sport. If the goal is to get girls to participate, it's best not to force that girl to change. Let her play. However, it can be helpful to talk with her about the benefits of wearing comfortable shoes and clothing, and explore her reasons for not wanting to change.

3. Safe space to change clothes

Girls typically need to change out of street clothes and into athletic wear prior to playing sport. Providing safe, private spaces in which to change is vital for participation. In the absence of such spaces, girls will either opt not to change their clothes, thus playing in inappropriate attire or, if they wear their athletic clothes outside of the sport programme, can be put at risk of assault or social ostracism for breaking social codes related to gender-appropriate dress. When considering dressing rooms, programme directors should ensure space that is free from visual or physical intrusion from boys and men. Girls can use a co-ed or boys' changing room, but coaches must make sure boys are prohibited from entering when girls are occupying the space.

The minimum

Access to a toilet and a place to change that is lockable and off-limits to males during the time the girls are using it. If you work with girls with disabilities in need of wheelchair access, measure the widths of the doors and the widest wheelchair of the girls. Discuss with the girls how to make the toilet accessible to them.

The ideal

A separate girls-only facility for changing and cleaning up near competition space.

4. Transportation

Getting to and from training sessions can be a costly and dangerous predicament for girls. If participants do not have a safe, affordable and reliable method of transportation, the longevity and consistency of a girl's participation will be affected. Some programmes organize girls in groups so they can walk home together safely through dangerous neighbourhoods. Other organisations give girls fare for minibuses or hire buses outright for the girls' transportation to and from events. When considering transportation, be sure to create safe, low-cost provisions for regular training sessions as well as games, tournaments and events. Programme directors might want to consider asking caregivers to sign a permission form, indicating that they understand that their girls are riding in a bus or car and releasing the sport program from responsibility in case of an accident.

The minimum

Ensure that girls can travel, by foot or vehicle, to and from training safely and affordably.

The ideal

Alleviate cost and safety concerns by running a programme near girls' homes or at a school that girls already attend and do not need to travel to. When this is not possible, provide necessary transportation.

5. Menstruation

Consider

At Moving the Goalposts (Kenya), coaches often bring sanitary pads to the fields. Girls can purchase them at cost.

There exists an incredibly potent social stigma around a woman's menstrual blood. Girls are unlikely to attend a sport programme if they fear the possibility of bleeding in front of others. This can be a major barrier to initial and ongoing participation for girls without the means or education to manage menstruation. For example, studies show that once girls begin to menstruate, they are more likely to drop out of school. ¹ The same may occur in sport. Educating girls about her menstrual cycle can be a major incentive for participation. A sport programme can also consider providing menstruation supplies that participants are unable to find elsewhere in their lives. It can be very helpful to have a health provider come and talk to participants about why they menstruate, what it entails and how to continue participation in all aspects of life while menstruating.

The minimum

Provide education about hygienic menstrual management and bathroom facilities for girls near athletic spaces.

The ideal

Provide girls with education, bathroom facilities and sanitary pads.

6. Reputation and effectiveness of programme

Consider

The duration of participation is a key factor in determining how beneficial a sport programme will be for a girl. Every girl is different, but, generally speaking, the longer a girl participates, the more opportunity she has for growth. Several programme partners agree that girls need to be involved for no less than one year to enjoy the benefits of participation.

Strong sport programmes that provide women role models, safe spaces and growth opportunities will continue to grow without endless recruiting efforts. If a girl is meeting her own goals, is having fun and feeling inspired by her time within the programme, she will do everything in her power to continue participating. She is also more likely to recruit other friends to join a programme that is meeting her needs.

The minimum

Try to keep girls in the sport programme for at least an entire year.

The ideal

Run programmes so that girls are exposed to sport and life skills for more than four years, allowing them to grow and learn in a safe environment at a critical time in their adolescence.

7. Home duties

One of the most common reasons girls leave sport programmes is because it conflicts with family responsibilities or values. Families are the fabric of many societies and their influence is powerful. Girls are often expected to care for siblings and elders, cook, clean and contribute to the family's income. When conflicts between sport programmes and those duties arise, it's very difficult for a girl to choose herself over her commitment to her family. Additionally, family disagreement over priorities can curtail a girl's participation in the program.

It is critical that leaders operate programmes to fit within the context of a girl's family life. This can mean scheduling practices and events around chores and farming schedules, allowing girls to bring siblings to practice, or making sure girls have the energy to help around the house once they leave a practice. It's equally important to communicate regularly and transparently with caregivers about a girl's activities and progress, to avoid misjudgements and help caregivers see the positive benefits of sport participation. Programmes will need to make allowances for girls who may have to stop training temporarily so they can re-join the group at a later date.

The minimum

Be conscious of a girl's responsibilities at home and to her family, letting her leave training early or skip certain days when they conflict with her family work.

The ideal

Schedule trainings and games around a girl's family responsibilities and chores she does at home, allowing girls to be able to attend all activities related to the programme. Also, talk to parents to perhaps give their daughters lighter loads at home when they are training or participating in tournaments or other events.

1. Kirk, J., Sommer, M. (2005), *Menstruation and body awareness: linking girls' health with girls' education. EQUALS, Beyond Access: Gender, Education and Development*, 15, page 6.

Group cohesion

An important part of keeping girls in a programme and making sure the atmosphere is comfortable and open to all is good group cohesion, or positive group dynamics. A group atmosphere in which girls feel comfortable to be themselves, speak what they think and discuss all topics is ideal for any sport programme, however, this is not always as easy as it sounds. Often times, girls bullying other girls and feelings of superiority can be large problems, especially if you have groups that mix social class, nationality, ethnic backgrounds or even just neighbourhoods and schools. If there is no group cohesion, or some girls feel threatened by others in the programme, they will not speak up or fully engage in sessions and could eventually decide not to come back, preferring to avoid the group and forget sport.

Good group cohesion and the absence of bullying are important factors in keeping girls in a programme, and this responsibility usually falls on the coach or facilitator. Being able to identify situations in which bullying is happening or girls are making judgemental comments about others, and stopping those situations, is essential.

Recommendations

- Monitor girls who are more dominant in discussions and during sessions. If you see the dominance being displayed in abusive or negative ways rather than through positive and healthy ways, pull that girl aside and talk to her about her behaviour.
- Break up cliques when you see them forming, so that all girls partner or form groups with girls they do not know or are not necessarily close to during training. Play games in which those girls must rely on each other to win, forming a bond through competition.
- Help girls talk through conflict resolution. If you see conflict forming between two girls, try to approach the girls before the conflict has been blown out of proportion.
- Stop gossip and rumours from circulating. Have a discussion with the girls about the damages that gossip or rumours cause.
- Refrain from playing favourites. It is great to reward girls and encourage girls who are natural leaders and show great behaviour; however, constantly favouring some girls over others can cause jealousy and conflict in the group. Give each girl the opportunity to be rewarded and take on responsibilities.

Informal time

Informal time before or after a sport training session can often be a critical period of time in which a coach can form strong bonds with his/her players and gain their trust outside of the coach/player relationship on the field. This unstructured time could be valuable for coaches to discuss life issues with players while juggling a ball, shooting hoops or just sitting on the grass and waiting for everyone to come. Interviews with coaches have shown that players feel more free to open up, ask for advice and discuss things bothering them in life the more time they spend with the coach before and after practice, outside of the structured curriculum or training session. This, in turn, gives the coach more opportunities to act as a mentor and give valuable advice and information to that child.

However, unstructured and informal time may not also be a good thing. Male coaches may use this time to flirt with participants similar in age to them. If no one is monitoring them, coaches can also take this time and use it in ways that could harm the girls, either through fostering inappropriate relationships or favouring some girls over others. As an organisation, it is important to think through creating this informal or unstructured time for your coaches and players to interact and ensure that the time is a positive thing for the players.

Recommendations

- Ensure that if there is unstructured time before or after practices, that male coaches are always accompanied by female coaches or some female adult. Do not let male coaches meet with female players before or after practice alone.
- As an organisation, pay coaches a little bit extra to come 30 minutes before practice and stay 30 minutes after, giving them the opportunity to interact with players who come early and those who leave late.

Code of Conduct

Although the concept of using sport as a strategy to empower girls has gained international momentum, there is an absence of any code that enshrines norms of good practices to ensure “safe spaces” in sport for development.

Moreover, as the number of programs in this area increases, there is an urgent need for zero tolerance of harmful practices—such as sexual harassment, gender inequality and discrimination—that have unfortunately become a recognized reality and social problem in sport. Any well-designed sport programme that truly takes into consideration the emotional and physical safety of its female participants must create and implement a code of conduct that guides behaviours, processes and procedures that ensure girls are protected.

Training Coaches

As the first line of interaction with girls, coaches make all of the difference. Strong coaches will both help girls develop sport skills and facilitate the transfer of the sporting experience into an empowerment tool for life. Weak coaches can disempower girls and have a long-lasting negative impact on self-esteem and love for sport. Ultimately, the success of a programme lies in the hands of the coaches. Programme directors are responsible for making sure coaches have the tools they need to effectively serve participants.

Perhaps the most meaningful standard by which a coach's competency (and ultimate success) can be measured is in relation to the goals of the program in which they operate. If sporting excellence is your main purpose, the quality of your coaches depends on their ability to build good players and teams—through techniques, tactics and game strategies— and win games and championships. If the goals of your programs are to equip children with life skills, you must build those capacities in the coaching staff. Being a “good” coach means more than just facilitating a sport session; it means having specific knowledge, facilitation competencies and providing a panorama of support to the participants—often from situations with a multitude of challenges and vulnerabilities. Coaches need to be adequately prepared to deal with the sensitive and complex issues that affect the daily lives of their charges.

However, many coaches in sport for development programmes are not adequately trained or prepared for their objectives. Often elite sport coaches, with high expertise in technical training and athlete excellence, have little training on how to explicitly teach valuable life skills that develop and empower youth. Facilitators who teach and develop life skills at various development organisations may have a deep understanding of what it takes to empower youth but have little training or knowledge of how to teach the basics of a certain sport.

Coaching, or perhaps more accurately, coaching consciously, is often a new skill for individuals. It is crucial to provide an environment where a coach feels like he or she can learn and improve, whether that means improving their technical knowledge of the game or learning how to link sport with life skills and lessons. Some coaches might not feel prepared to teach and talk about sensitive issues such as gender-based violence or sexual health. Other coaches may not feel comfortable running a basic football session. Overall, adapting an attitude of patience and investing in a coach's development is important. Ideally, coaches are already highly skilled and sensitive to team dynamics, but, more often than not, these skills can be cultivated and developed over time. Organisations should take a look at what their coaches' capacities and skills are and where they might need extra training in order to foster a holistic approach to using sport as a tool for development.

Also, women's rights organisations, which work with deep concern for the girls' interest, might be new to using sport as a strategy to achieve their objectives and, therefore, need to think critically on how to recruit and train coaches in their new programmes.

Tools for training coaches:

- **Manuals.** Providing coaches with a written guidebook of technical information about how they are expected to lead girls is a first step in training. Manuals often include programme rules and philosophies, ideas for drills and tips on practice planning. Most manuals are produced internally by programme directors and other coaches and include very specific information about sport-specific skills, facilities and local cultural considerations. However, if you are unable to create your own, there are also coaching handbooks that are produced by third-party providers, such as national or international sport federations and/or coaching bodies. Coaches should also understand that it is at times acceptable to stray from a set curriculum, depending on the girls' needs and preferences
- **Curricula.** Besides technical training manuals, curricula that help coaches address life issues like gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, teamwork, or peer pressure are essential for coaches attempting to approach sensitive topics. Be mindful of language barriers. It's important to provide coaches with manuals that are written in a language they fully understand. Most manuals do not include chapters on physical education for those with disabilities. Enhance your knowledge if you teach mixed groups of girls with and without disabilities by looking for manuals about girls with disabilities and sport.
- **Workshops and training.** Learning styles vary from one individual to the next. Some coaches may be able to learn everything from a manual, while others prefer to learn from live demonstrations or discussions. Holding or attending in-person coaching workshops can be a valuable way to share information. Coaching workshops and training can be focused on any aspect of the job, such as creating safe spaces for girls, teaching a specific skill, or how to recognize and address instances of gender-based violence in a girl's life. Internal training can help ensure that all coaches are working within the same philosophy, promoting the same values. These face-to-face meetings can foster powerful idea exchanges between individual coaches. These meetings can also provide opportunities for programme leadership to reiterate the programme's values and goals. It might also be important for male coaches to go through gender sensitivity training if they will be coaching adolescent girls' teams or mixed-gender teams.
- **Mentoring.** One of the cheapest and most effective ways for coaches to learn is from mentors. Programmes should look for opportunities to pair up younger coaches with more experienced coaches. Learning "on the job" from mentors is an extremely effective way to improve coaching skills.
- **Observing and evaluating coaches.** Regular evaluations are a vital tool in supporting a coach's growth and ensuring that he or she is positively serving girls. The evaluation process can be a learning experience for all involved. Evaluations should be conducted by supervisors or programme directors as well as girls and peer coaches. Inviting girls to participate in developing and conducting the evaluation process can send a powerful message to a girl that her voice and experience matter.
- **Effective evaluations from a supervisor or peer can be conducted verbally, but should also be written, as a record of a coach's performance and as a measure of accountability on both sides. For their protection, girls' evaluations of coaches should be done anonymously and in writing.**

- Code of conduct. Successful sport programmes for girls have very clear expectations for all the coaches and staff within the organisation. Coaches are in a position of power. Every coach should sign a contract, stating that he or she understands and will abide by the organisation's mandates. This provides for complete accountability in case of abuse or misuse of that power. The contract is also a valuable communication tool, demonstrating that both the administration and coaches understand clearly what is expected to create a safe space for girls. Program directors should also be very clear about penalties for breaching the code of conduct. There should be a clear organisational commitment to a "zero tolerance" for sexual harassment, violence or abuse.

Peer Leadership

One of the most powerful ways to build leadership qualities in girls is to put girls in leadership roles. When girls are expected to lead others, they find power within themselves they might not know existed. This can come in the form of formal positions or informal relationships between girls. Creative programme leaders and coaches find subtle ways to facilitate this process and support all forms of leadership.

Tips for developing leadership:

- Be patient. Leadership is a skill that is developed over time. Ask girls what they are good at and how they want to build their skills and confidence. Encourage them to lead their own development.
- Allow girls to elect their own leaders.
- Highlight examples of good leadership on and off the playing field.
- Let girls train others in sport-specific, practical and life skills.
- Show girls you value their opinions.
- Explicitly talk about and encourage discussions about leadership values to girls regularly.
- Lead by example as a coach or programme leader.
- Support positive role modelling.
- Allow girls to choose if they want to fill leadership roles.
- Encourage girls to go out in community and be recognized.
- Reward acts of leadership with outward praise and formal honours.
- Create standards of what it takes to be a leader from both girls with and without disabilities.
- Reward exceptional performance with leadership roles.
- Give all girls opportunities to lead during practice, not just older, talented, non-disabled or more natural leaders.
- Constantly encourage goal setting and evaluation.
- Target inhibitors of leadership and address them, such as lack of confidence, peer pressure or poor mentoring.
- Seek to help every girl develop to her highest personal potential, as opposed to constantly criticizing or comparing girls to one another.
- Recognize quiet leadership in girls, those who are not outspoken or loud, but rather, those who will always run the extra lap with the slowest girl on the team.

The Power of Role Models

Girls are exposed to both positive and negative role models every day: a strong mother who stands up against domestic abuse or a female celebrity that uses her sex appeal to be popular.

All of these people affect how a girl views her own potential. These are the people who girls use as references for whom they will become and whose behaviour they will emulate.

A girl needs to see confidence, leadership and accomplishment in other women in order to envision herself with those qualities. A programme designed to empower girls must provide powerful, positive role models. As programme directors, it is helpful to expose girls to a diverse set of role models as consistently as possible. Strong role models can be women who are older, skilled athletes, coaches, community leaders, successful business people, celebrities, politicians, religious leaders, confident peers or any strong woman whose presence will resonate with the girls. Although there is power to showing girls women who are international heroines, there is also a power to exposing them to local people.

Local examples provide more easily imaginable visions of success. A key component to presenting girls with role models is to make sure the success experienced by the role models is attainable and replicable in their minds. Research has shown that when individuals feel that the role model in front of them has attained a status unreachable to them, their presence can actually be demoralizing. ¹ If possible, find role models who exemplify an area in which girls have an interest and where they need help in personal development. Find a person who can share their personal experience with personal growth in that area. Men can certainly serve as positive role models; however, there is an inherent value in same-gender role modelling.

Tips for creating opportunities for girls to learn from role models:

- Organize events where role models speak to girls about their experiences.
- Try to pair up individual girls with older mentors with the intention of creating long-lasting relationships.
- Take girls to see athletic events with older participants. Arrange a meet-and-greet afterwards to allow girls to interact with players.
- Set up guest coaching sessions with successful coaches from your region.
- Ensure that all those in positions of power within the organisation are serving as positive role models for participants.
- Seek role models outside of the sport arena. Invite a successful businesswoman or female politician to come to the programme and speak to the girls.
- Consider inviting men or women with a disability to come speak, as they often have a powerful impact on girls with and without disabilities.
- Discuss the concept of “negative role modelling” with girls, i.e., simply because a person is successful does not mean that they are worthy of being a role model. Challenge girls to evaluate virtues, values and expectations related to these role models.

1. Lockwood, P. & Kunda, Z. (1997). *Superstars and me: Predicting the impact of role models on the self*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73, 91-103.

Tracking Each Girl’s Development

If a girl sees measurable indications of her movement towards personal empowerment, she will be more motivated to continue putting time and effort into a sport programme. An effective way to inspire a girl’s growth is to help her set goals. Goals can be set for sport-specific skills, such as basketball shooting percentage or goals scored in a season. Although more difficult to quantify, goals can be also be set for improvement in life skills, such as saving a certain amount of money or becoming more vocal in a classroom setting.

Tracking a programme's success based on the intended objectives should be part of an organisation's monitoring and evaluation strategy. One way to measure if the girls in your programme change their behaviour because of your programme is to give them a baseline survey (which asks questions related to what they will be learning) before the programme begins and then give them that same survey (the endline) after to the programme ends. By evaluating how their answers change, your organisation can get a better understanding of the impact of the curriculum or particular programme had on the girls.

Girls also can be engaged in tracking their own progress toward meeting their goals. A girl can track her speed, goals scored or skill development. It's important to first "pre-test" girls to establish a starting point from which to improve. For example, a running coach might time girls in the 100- and 800-meter distances and record their times. Perhaps more meaningfully, progress can be measured in discussions between participants and coaches in regard to life skills, such as leadership. When discussing progress, ask girls how they feel about their growth or what is important for them to feel satisfied with their performance. It is especially important to encourage girls to develop goals for themselves when they enter the program, so they have a sense of what they are working toward.

Recommendations:

- If you have access to video cameras, have girls do "before" and "after" video interviews. In the pre-programme interview, ask each girl what she hopes to learn or wants to learn, what her goals are. Show girls their interviews halfway through the programme and see if they have reached their objectives. If not, ask them what they think they need to do so they do reach their goals. Using video is a great way to make this interactive and fun!
- Have girls keep diaries or journals during the programme, where they can write down how they see themselves progressing.
- Have girls interview people in their community about how they themselves have changes throughout the programme. For example, have each girl interview her mother or father, a best friend or a teacher, asking that person what physical and mental changes they have seen in her since she started the sport programme. Then, the girls must report back what the interviewee said. This is a great way for the girls to see how their changes were perceived by those around them.

Competitions, Tournaments and Community Events

In regular training sessions, girls hone technical skills, confidence and ability to work within a team. It can be empowering for girls to test those skills through competition and in front of a crowd. It is one thing for a girl to learn how to shoot a basket in practice. It is quite another for her family or neighbours to come watch her score baskets, play defence and share her growth with an audience. Public affirmation of development can accelerate progress inside and outside of the sporting arena.

Consider

At Safe Spaces, in the Kariobangi region of Nairobi, girls play basketball, a sport considered to be only for wealthy boys, weekly at a public court in the heart of the slum. The community, which consists of mostly men, gathers around the court in droves and watches with intense focus as girls in basketball uniforms sweat, run, jump and compete with all of their strength against one another. They are literally centre stage as they display their game. The community has an opportunity to learn what the girls are doing and comes out to support and witness their progress. Their assumptions of what girls can actually do expand each week. The girls exude tremendous pride in the attention. Under the gaze of their community, they learn to focus on themselves and their skills despite external attention. They learn that it is okay to make mistakes in front of others without being embarrassed. When girls learn how to cope with this type of pressure, they are better equipped to maintain focus in the face of other social pressures.

Furthermore, competitions and events allow the community to see girls compete. This can encourage the shift of perceptions about girls' participation in sport, as well as facilitate conversation among the community about the value of sport in the lives of girls. Gender (as well as disability) stereotypes are automatically challenged when community members witness girls participating in activities that are assumed to be reserved for boys and people who are non-disabled.

Ethically and practically, programmes that serve girls most effectively are those that emphasize girls' wellness over winning. Sport is inherently a competitive space. Girls can benefit greatly from learning how to compete, how to win and how to lose with poise. However, if a programme's aim is to help strengthen girls off the field, growth and development of the adolescent girl must always be considered to be more important than winning or losing.

LIFE SKILLS

What are life skills?

UNICEF defines life skills as knowledge, attitudes and the ability for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life¹. For the purposes of this discussion, life skills are divided up into three main categories:

1. Communication and Interpersonal Skills
2. Decision Making and Critical Thinking Skills
3. Coping and Self-Management

What are adolescent girl life skills?

"Life skills" is a very broad term. Women Win defines "life skills" as any tool that serves a girl outside of sport, such as body awareness, financial savvy or self-confidence. Depending on the specific needs and life circumstances of participants, life skills education can include a wide variety of topics. Women Win has taken these life skills topics and identified (as well as added) key issues specific to the growth and development of healthy adolescent girls. These are skills that can be beneficial for girls to acquire, in addition to those skills that are more general.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

¹ <http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills>

General Adolescent Life Skills ²	Adolescent Girl Life Skills
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem and Confidence
Negotiation/Conflict Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiation and Refusal
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying and Gossiping
Cooperation and Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and Qualities
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power and Gender Relationships

Decision Making and Critical Thinking Skills

General Adolescent Life Skills ³	Adolescent Girl Life Skills
Decision Making and Evaluating Future Consequences of Present Actions for Self and Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights • Body and Reproductive Health
Problem Solving and Identifying Alternative Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Spaces • Accessing Community Services • Economic Empowerment
Analysing Relevant Information, Attitudes, Social Norms, Beliefs, and Peer and Media Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-Based Violence

Coping and Self-Management

General Adolescent Life Skills ⁴	Adolescent Girl Life Skills
Increasing Internal Self-control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal Setting • Self-image
Managing Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings and Emotions
Managing Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience

Self-esteem and Confidence

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Self-esteem and confidence in using your voice

General Adolescent Life Skills: Communication

² As defined by UNICEF

³ As defined by UNICEF

⁴ As defined by UNICEF

In many communities, adolescent girls often lack spaces to build their confidence and self-esteem in constructive and healthy ways, particularly when it comes to communicating their needs and wants, exercising their rights, and expressing their emotions.

Sport programmes help girls learn to use their voices in confident and strong ways, such as organizing and coordinating with teammates during a match, demanding foul calls from the referee, voicing opinions and feelings to the coach on the match or at practice. Stepping out onto a playing field takes courage and confidence, and the more that girls play, the more they build their self-esteem. Learning new sport skills also builds confidence and self-esteem, helping girls realize that physical activity is not just for boys in the community, but they too can learn and master the same skills.

Facilitation Tips

- Rotate team captains or assistants during practices, allowing each girl a chance to be in a leadership position and use her voice to give instructions and opinions
- Try rotating group members during practice so that the same girls are not always part of the same teams or practice groups, giving them the opportunity to gain confidence by making new friends among their teammates

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions - Learning to Say No (and meaning it!) - Non-Verbal Communication?

Negotiation and Refusal

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Communication, negotiation and refusal skills

General Adolescent Life Skills: Negotiation/Conflict Management Skills

The better adolescent girls are able to communicate, negotiate and understand how to refuse advances, the more likely they are to avoid dangerous peer pressure that may result in lying, stealing, crossing emotional and physical boundaries, abuse, and unsafe sexual experiences.

Practicing using their voice to communicate and negotiate in loud and forceful ways during a sport practice can help girls gain the confidence to use that voice off the field. For example, a girl who builds confidence on the field might be more likely to speak up in her best interest, or say no when approached for sex or pressured to do drugs. Learning to negotiate playing time on the field, position choice or rules of the game can help girls learn to negotiate and communicate their rights off the field such as school, home or in a relationship. Communication, negotiation and refusal skills are also critical in protecting girls from various forms of gender-based violence (see [International Guide to Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through Sport](#)) and in asserting their sexual and reproductive rights (see SRHR Guide coming soon).

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions - Learning to Say No (and meaning it!) - Say it with Silence - Conflict Ladder - Peer Pressure

Bullying and Gossiping

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Understanding implications and consequences of bullying and gossiping

General Adolescent Life Skills: Empathy

Adolescence can be a difficult landscape to navigate in any culture, particularly for adolescent girls. Often times, girls bullying girls, rumours and gossip are daily occurrences in schools, in the neighbourhood and even in sport programmes. This can cause false (or true) information to spread and damage a girl's reputation, social standing and status in the community. Once labelled, a girl can feel defined by that label and then engage in destructive or unhealthy behaviour she otherwise would have avoided because that is what everyone expects of her. This can cause low self-esteem, unhealthy choices and the opportunity for others to take advantage of her.

In this context, girls need to learn how to empathise, or feel what other girls feel, when they are bullied, gossiped about or the centre of rumours. Only through learning to empathise with others can girls stop these three elements that cause pain and often depression in adolescence. Coaches can be positive role models in this sense, modelling behaviour that discourages spreading personal information about others or making fun of others. Playing a team sport is also a lesson in the importance of solidarity. If some team members are bullying or spreading gossip about other teammates, that team is less likely to win in general because they have lost their team spirit.

Facilitation Tips

- As a coach or facilitator, pay close attention to groups or clicks forming among girls in your programme. If you see one forming or dominating, try to deliberately split that group of girls when playing team activities.

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions – Secret Whispers

Skills and Qualities

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Understanding personal skills and qualities and their value for a team

General Adolescent Life Skills: Cooperation and Teamwork

When girls are not celebrated for or encouraged to develop their skills and qualities, which is often the case, they have a hard time seeing their own value as part of a team or group or even family unit outside of cooking or cleaning. On the other hand, when a girl is given encouragement and shown how her personal qualities and skills can be of value to a group, or, for example, a sport team, then she is more confident and willing to work in a team and cooperate with others around her.

Playing on a sport team, with a coach and teammates who support and help develop a personal sense of value, illustrates the positive aspects of teamwork and how when players cooperate and pool their skills and talents, they can win games or reach objectives they could not have individually. This cannot be more evident when you have one player who does not pass to the others but tries to score by herself. Although maybe this works once in a while, the team will quickly realize that the most efficient and effective way to get a ball down the field in a football match is to pass it. Being a team player and cooperating on the field helps girls work in groups at school, be constructive members of their families and be group leaders in their jobs.

Facilitation Tips

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions – Skills vs. Qualities, Who Am I? What Do I Want to Do?

Power and Gender Relationships

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Navigating power and gender relationships

General Adolescent Life Skills: Advocacy

Adolescent girls need to understand and recognize how unequal power balances and community gender stereotypes might affect their development and the relationships around them. Girls who can recognize when the power in a relationship is unequal and unhealthy can address it earlier or get themselves out of the relationship before they experience abuse. (See [International Guide to Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through Sport](#) for more information.)

Girls can be exposed to positive gender relationships and the differences between healthy and unhealthy uses of power through sport programmes, helping them form alternative views that break and challenge these stereotypes. Sport highlights the strength of women, physically and mentally, and can introduce girls to positive male role models and positive uses of power that do not degrade, criticize, abuse and violate the rights of others. A match can show that if power and strength are used in positive ways on the field, the referee will not call a foul and your team has a good chance of winning. However, if power and strength are abused, then the referee will start calling fouls and there will be consequences.

We recognize that girls can't always avoid or change these restrictive gender relationships and stereotypes, but by being able to recognize them, at least girls can choose to not adhere to them or be defined by them.

Facilitation Tips

- In order for your sport programme to challenge stereotypes and fight against the use of power in unhealthy ways, it is important for the adults (coaches, facilitators and administrators) in the programme to go through some form of gender sensitivity training and be trained on organisational child protection and gender inclusion policies.
- As a coach, try not to restrict girls and boys to gender stereotypes when assigning roles and responsibilities (for example, girls wash uniforms and boys carry the heavy stuff). The same should go for coaches and other staff as well. Try to challenge these gender stereotypes in every session by reversing roles when possible for both boys and girls in

every supporting activity.

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions – Boys and Girls - Gender and Work - People and Things

Rights

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Understanding and exercising rights

General Adolescent Life Skills: Decision Making and Evaluating Future Consequences of Present Actions for Self and Others

Girls often do not have access to valuable information concerning their rights, how to exercise them and where to go if those rights are being violated. Sport programmes can be excellent places to gain that missing access and build understanding. Through the guidance of knowledgeable coaches and the support of their teammates, girls can explore through their own perspective what is important to them and what channels to go through to demand and access those rights. Sport programmes can reach girls who are not in school, in rural areas and in communities where girls are not getting the correct information and may not even know if their rights are being violated. These rights include but are not limited to the right for education, to live a life free from gender-based violence and abuse, and the right to have access to health care and decision making regarding sexual health and reproductive rights.

It is also important to note that coaches and facilitators themselves might need to be educated about what rights girls are afforded in their countries and internationally. Before approaching and attempting to educate girls, make sure that all the coaches and facilitators are on the same page, are aware of laws in your particular country or community, and are aware of international women’s rights and children’s rights statutes and conventions, so they can properly relay the information and help girls ask for and protect their rights. This can often be challenging in countries and communities where girls’ rights are violated. Properly train coaches to speak confidently and know where they can link to, such as external organisations or agencies, which can support girls and fight the violation of their rights. Also, coaches should approach parents and caregivers as well, educating them on supporting their daughters.

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions– Wants and Needs - Know your Rights

Body and Reproductive Health

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Understanding and making decisions about the body, sexuality, sexual/reproductive health

General Adolescent Life Skills: Decision Making and Evaluating Future Consequences of Present Actions for Self and Others

Decisions about the body, health, sexuality and reproduction are some of the most important decisions adolescent girls will be faced with. Adolescence is the time when girls transition into potentially sexually active beings. The experience happens within herself, through menstruation and increased sexual interest. The process also entails a change in how she is viewed externally

by boys, men and society as a whole. This can be a positive and exciting part of a girl’s life, or an incredibly painful and damaging one.

Girls are faced with issues such as negative body image, menstruation, sex, pregnancy, STIs, HIV/AIDS and countless others early in life and are not given access to the right information or enough support in making healthy decisions. During this sensitive time, an adolescent girl needs to build self-esteem and make decisions based on facts, not myths, pressures or social opinion. Unfortunately, in many instances, girls tend to prioritise the needs of others before their own⁵ and make, or are forced to make, decisions that go against their rights, their health and their happiness.

Surrounded by a network of teammates and coaches, girls can use sport programmes as a way to gather in a safe and non-threatening environment, get access to the right information and develop the ability to make healthy choices. This environment can give girls the confidence to ask tough and sensitive questions and speak openly about sex and reproductive health. Participation in sport involves sweating and getting dirty, compounding the need for attention to personal hygiene. A sport programme provides the opportunity to teach each girl how to create personal time and space for positive, caring interactions with her own body. (See SRHR Guide coming soon for more information).

Consider

- Family-in-Need Trust of Zimbabwe is a programme that empowers girls and women through football in rural areas. Founder Jack Bbabbe on talking to girls about sexuality and pregnancy: “We have a box, and every girl is invited to drop an anonymous question into that box. If I find more than one question about a topic, such as sex, I invite a trained counsellor to come in and talk with the girls about the issue. These women are trained to address issues such as prostitution, child pledging, abortion and so on.”

Facilitation Tips

- Talk honestly and openly.
- Describe why it is important to clean yourself and the potential ramifications of not attending to personal hygiene. Provide demonstrations and visuals.
- Emphasize that vaginas are not dirty or unclean, but rather are just like any other part of our body that we need to take care of and keep clean.
- Give out samples of soap and sanitary pads, if possible.
- Consider the access a girl has to supplies when discussing these topics.
- Refrain from judgment.
- Allow girls to ask questions and treat all questions as valid.
- Be creative. Use activities, games or role play to initiate conversation about sensitive topics.
- Create partnerships with resource providers within the community to educate girls about relevant topics and serve as a resource when necessary.
- Allow girls to show emotion (laughter, sadness, frustration) if it helps them in being

⁵ United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007). *Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender Equality and Sport*. Page 9

comfortable during sensitive discussions.

- Create or emphasise confidentiality agreements, so girls are clear that they are safe to ask questions or share comments.

Practical Session Ideas
Goal Programme Sessions– Body Image - Real Beauty Commercial - Menstruation - It Could Be Worse - Contraception, Bodies, Emotions, Sexuality - Living with HIV - What is Risky?

Safe Spaces

Adolescent Girl Life Skills: How and when to access emotional and physical safe spaces

General Adolescent Life Skills: Problem Solving and Identifying Alternative Solutions

With threats such as gender-based violence, abusive relationships and cultural stereotypes that strip girls of their sexual and reproductive health, education, work and leisure rights, it is important for girls to learn how to identify and access the safe spaces around them (both emotional and physical). These may be a certain relative’s house or certain after-school programme, clinic or sport field.

Well-designed sport programmes can be these safe spaces, offering secure playing facilities, trustworthy adults and coaches, and a network of female teammates. Girls can learn to identify and avoid places that could be dangerous and harmful, where they may be taken advantage of or abused and denied their rights. These could be places near bars or empty lots in neighbourhoods, or even, unfortunately, schools and sport programmes themselves. Secondly, girls can learn where their own safe spaces might be and how to get to those safe spaces when they are in danger or feel fear. (For more information, see [Safe Spaces](#) section in the IG on how to ensure your sport programme is a safe space.)

Facilitation Tips

- Create a space that is safe (physically and psychologically) for girls to share their experiences.
- Demand that girls respect one another, including opinions, bodies and experiences. With girls’ input, establish ground rules for confidentiality, discussion parameters and leader involvement.

Practical Session Ideas
Goal Programme Sessions – Resource Mapping

Accessing Community Services

Adolescent Girl Life Skills: How and when to access community services

General Adolescent Life Skills: Problem Solving and Identifying Alternative Solutions

Once girls understand their rights and can make informed decisions and think critically about their health, hygiene, sexuality, body, education, economic opportunities, gender and the relationships in their lives, the next step is for girls to understand how and when to access various community services that could help them. Often girls do not know where to go if they are experiencing abuse, or if they have specific questions or concerns related to menstruating or

sexual and reproductive health. Sometimes the police are the right choice, sometimes they are not. NGOs might provide trauma counselling or job skills courses, and there might be clinics with special GBV wards. When girls know how to access these services and aren't afraid to do so, they greatly reduce emotional and physical health risks and gain valuable care, information and support.

Trusted coaches or female facilitators are ideal for introducing girls to these services. They can take the girls on visits to various service providers and introduce them, in non-threatening and comfortable ways, to point people at the institutions who can help the girls get the treatment or help they need. This initial introduction through a sport programme field trip can make girls more comfortable and less afraid to access these services outside of the programme later in life. (For more information, see SRHR Guide coming soon and [International Guide to Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through Sport.](#))

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions– Papers for Life - Mapping Resources - Walk Around Town

Economic Empowerment

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Financial literacy and economic empowerment

General Adolescent Life Skills: Problem Solving and Identifying Alternative Solutions

We believe that sport programmes can be important factors in helping girls access pathways to economic empowerment. For us, this means girls:

1. Stay in school or return after dropping out
2. Access important informal education opportunities
3. Learn and develop employability skills

Because a girl is not considered to be a wage-earning part of a family economy, she is given responsibility for caretaking, cooking, childbearing, and collecting wood and water. Financially, a girl's value is often perceived as limited to the dowry payment she generates or, in desperate situations, the collateral she can earn to pay back debts. Because of this, girls often lack simple financial literacy, such as counting money or making a budget, and are ill equipped to handle money, take out micro credit or start their own small business if opportunities arise.

However, if a girl can learn these valuable financial and economic skills and, furthermore, can generate prosperity for herself and her household by earning money, she can change perceptions about her worth. A sport programme that teaches a girl simple financial literacy, connects her to vocational training, gives her access to micro loans and female lending groups, and contributes overall to her economic empowerment, can dramatically increase her self-worth, as well as her value within her family and community. The ability for a girl to earn an income within the context of her sport programme can be one strategy for organisations to increase a girl's economic independence, however, it is more important for participants to gain skills that they can take outside of the programme, finish school and find employment. (See [International Guide to Economic Empowerment Through Sport](#) for more information.)

CONSIDER

Stay in school or return after dropping out

- Soccer without Borders provides its girl participants in the Nicaragua programme with writing tablets, as most girls in the community drop out of school because they cannot afford notebooks or paper.

Access important informal education opportunities

- Kick4Life, a football for development organisation working in Lesotho, trains participants in agriculture and tourism as well as general employability skills and job access through its Fit4Work programme. The organisation also started ReCYCLE, a programme that allows street children to earn money for school fees and books by collecting recyclable waste from subscribing customers.

Learn and develop employability skills

- A Ganar (Vencer in Brazil) is a youth workforce development program that utilises football and other team sports to help youth in Latin America, ages 16-24, find jobs, learn entrepreneurial skills or re-enter the formal education system. Through A Ganar, participants gain the valuable skills of discipline, teamwork and respect as well as learn employability skills such as resume writing, computer literacy, job interview skills. Youth who finish the programme are given internship opportunities and mentored.
- Moving the Goalposts, a girls' football programme in Kilifi, Kenya, runs its large program through girls' practicing leadership and learning organisational skills. Girls both in and out of school make up "field committees." These field committees are responsible for all teams using their field, organising the practice time, maintaining attendance records and coordinating with other groups who use the field (usually a school or community field). They also organise the league and Saturday matches, organise referees, and make sure that first aid and peer counsellors (trained players) are always on-site during practices and games. At Moving the Goalposts in Kilifi, Kenya, girls compete for small financial prizes at tournaments and major events.

Personal Profile Saru B.K., Nepal

In Nepal, regard, respect and access to financial resources is largely determined by caste and gender. Saru was born with all odds against her. For the past seven years, she has worked her way up the ladder at Three Sisters Trekking – a women-only trekking outfitter in the Himalaya Mountains. She has had an opportunity to earn money for herself and her family. Beyond being able to financially sustain her own life, she pays school fees for her younger siblings and contributes to her family's basic needs. Her sense of economic empowerment and her practical ability to earn money are direct results of her participation in a sport for development programme.

Facilitation Tips

- Offer participants opportunities to earn money by providing services within the programme, such as coaching, officiating or washing uniforms.
- Create opportunities for girls to learn and practice skills. Computer and office skills can be learned through volunteering in the office and doing practice, tournament and other administration.
- Provide school scholarship support for girls who exhibit extraordinary leadership as part of the programme.

- Teach girls simple math, reading and verbal skills.
- Educate girls about how to manage and earn money or open a savings account.
- Help girls develop marketable skills to secure jobs in the community.
- Encourage girls to develop a sense of financial independence and confidence in their ability to earn money.
- Train girls on the basics of organizing a project, events or tournaments, in which they gain valuable skills they could one day use towards starting and running their own small business.

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions – Be Money Savvy Module

Gender-Based Violence

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Mitigating consequences and risks of gender-based violence

General Adolescent Life Skills: Identifying and Analysing Relevant Information, Attitudes, Social Norms, Beliefs, and Peer and Media Influences

According to the United Nations ¹ (U.N.), one in three women is beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime. The impacts of this social ill permeate all aspects of society. A critical factor in the creation of deep social change is the direct involvement of girls within their communities. Girls need to be educated about gender-based violence (GBV). They need to know what it is, how it impinges on their rights, and how they can access justice and services if these rights are violated. Although this work can be done in a variety of settings, we believe that there are qualities inherent in sport that can make it a powerful environment for approaching this difficult subject with girls.

Too often, GBV happens behind closed doors and is treated as a private family matter or a normal part of family life. This lack of support is why decision-making and analytical thinking skills are critical for adolescent girls faced with the issue of gender-based violence, before, during and after the violence and abuse takes place. Knowing how to navigate the risks of gender-based violence and making decisions in her own best interest during or after experiencing abuse in order to lessen the impact of harmful consequences are critical skills that adolescent girls need.

A girl needs a safe space to discuss experiences, violations and fears, and receive validation that her fears are okay. Furthermore, a girl needs to understand her legal rights. She also needs a place where she can learn confidence that will help her report abuses, if they happen, in a safe way. A team and trusted coaches can provide that environment and intentionally design curricula can help teach the girl critical thinking and decision-making skills they need.

Unfortunately, gender power dynamics and abuse happen even within programmes aimed at empowering girls through sport. It is important that organisations ensure girls are protected when participating. (See [International Guide to Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through Sport](#) for more information.)

Consider

- MIFUMI is a women-led organisation working to end domestic violence by working with survivors and their organisations to increase support to them, to enable them to become more effective and skilful, and to promote women’s rights. The organisation is well-known for its campaigns against domestic violence and bride price violations. As part of their programming, MIFUMI has begun to use karate and taekwondo with girls ages 10-16 to help empower them to defend themselves while providing education about domestic violence.
- Participants undergo an initial intensive training over 14 days and thereafter meet in their respective teams once a week to undergo training. Trainings consist of two parts: karate/taekwondo, and domestic violence and child protection using a resource pack “Feel Free” developed by MIFUMI to explore conflict management, relationships and domestic violence.

Facilitation Tips

- Use imagery whenever possible to show each girl what abuse looks like. Strong pictures can elicit fear and emotional responses, but can also create mental images that resonate more strongly than words.
- Teach each girl who is disabled the difference between gender-based and disability-based violence and where they intersect.
- Rely on local service providers, such as social welfare organisations, to help educate each participant and counsel her if she has been victimized. Be prepared to transport a girl who has been victimized to a service provider instead of simply making a referral.
- Report instances of gender-based violence to the police and family, if this does not further jeopardize the girl. If a family member is involved, or the police cannot be trusted, use alternative service providers.
- Invite someone who has experienced and overcome gender-based violence to come share her story with the group.
- Train peer educators about addressing gender-based violence. A girl is often more willing to talk to a peer about being abused.
- Use alternative communication forms, such as poetry, music or theatre to open up sensitive discussions about gender-based violence.
- Conduct outreach events to raise awareness about gender-based violence in your region.
- Inform caregivers that you will discuss this topic with the girls. Organize a discussion evening with interested caregivers. However, maintain girls’ confidentiality after sensitive discussions, unless their health is in danger, at which point it might be necessary to contact caregivers.
- Invite boys to sit in some workshops and learn to listen and discuss issues that affect the girls. Invite the boys to support the girls.

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions – History of Violence - Breaking the Silence

Goal Setting

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Setting life goals

General Adolescent Life Skills: Increasing Internal Self-Control

In many communities, girls are often not taught to take pride in their skills and qualities or encouraged to reach goals. Educating girls on setting life goals for themselves and creating plans to reach those goals helps them realise their own value. Whether they are educational, career or family goals, objectives help girls focus and gain control of their behaviour and actions, make healthy decisions and improve their confidence and self-esteem. Girls are frequently conditioned to believe that what is possible for their lives is limited: to be married off, to be someone's wife and become a tool for reproduction.

By learning to set small goals and reach them, like juggling a football 10 times or running a kilometre without stopping, girls learn, through sport, that the possibilities of developing skills and reaching goals are endless. Girls start to believe that they can accomplish and achieve objectives by working hard and putting their energy into it. Good coaches and facilitators can help girls transfer this skill off the field, by showing them that the possibilities that exist for them are numerous and not limited to what society tells them their roles should be. A girl can learn that there isn't a big difference between working hard to run a certain distance and studying hard to pass a certain exam and continue her education.

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions – Skills vs. Qualities - Who Am I? What Do I Want to Do? - Managing Money - Ways to Make Money

Self Image

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Developing a healthy self-image

General Adolescent Life Skills: Increasing Internal Self-Control

A girl's perception of her own physical body is at the very heart of her identity. If she dislikes her body, or is not able to own and attach to her physical self because of trauma, impairment or negative conditioning relative to her size or shape, she will be inhibited from developing strength in any other aspect of her life. A girl who values her body is more likely to walk proudly, exercise bodily self-determination and feel truly empowered in daily life.

Girls around the world are discouraged from loving the natural state of their bodies. The media is constantly presenting unattainable images of beauty, which lowers a girl's self-esteem because she does not look like the ideal. Girls are often sexualized and objectified, leading them to believe that their bodies exist for the pleasure and judgment of others, especially men. If a girl has been sexually abused, she might detach completely from her physical body, the site of a major emotional trauma. The concept of body awareness – of a girl looking at and owning the rhythms and strength of her body – is unknown.

Quote: "Now, after playing [soccer] seriously for months, Robina is aware of her body in a new way. Before, it was her hands that were necessary to her: to carry water up the mountain to their house, to scrub the floors or to write out her lessons. But in soccer, they are useless. Now she's discovered her legs, her balance, the speed with which she can run. And her forehead, which she uses to butt the ball. Before soccer, her legs and feet simply got her places or kicked at rubbish or stones in her way. Now she knows each part of her foot intimately, the way it

curves on one side, perfectly contoured to the side of the ball. She knows the strength of the broad, smooth sweep leading up to her ankles, and the dense, solid circle of her heel, perfect for pivoting." *Excerpt from However Tall the Mountain, reprinted with permission from the author, Awista Ayub (Afghanistan)*

Playing sport requires that girls be attached to their physical selves. They can feel their heartbeats, work on motor skills and coordination, and experience injuries and soreness. The physical becomes conscious when a girl runs, jumps, shoots and stretches. As a girl grows physically stronger and sees her body accomplishing athletically, she often becomes more confident and aware about of her body. The goal of body image development through sport should be to teach girls how to value the body they have, take care of and control it, and use it to their benefit.

For a girl with disabilities, addressing body image in sport programmes is especially important. A girl with disabilities carries the double burden of being a woman and physically different from their peers.

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions– Body Image - Real Beauty Commercial - It Could Be Worse - Bodies, Emotions, Sexuality

Feelings and Emotions

Adolescent Girl Life Skills: Understanding and explaining feelings and emotions

General Adolescent Life Skills: Managing Feelings

Adolescence can be a very confusing and emotional time for girls, particularly because they are going through significant bodily changes such as menstruation, growing of breasts and other physical and hormonal changes. It is important for girls to be able to understand what is happening to them not only physically, but emotionally as well, and learn how to express those feelings, emotions, fears and confusions in healthy and positive ways. Too often, girls feel like they are going through these changes alone and do not reach out and ask for help, explanations or support. Also, girls who are survivors of abuse or violence may keep their feelings inside, afraid to talk about what they are going through and why out of shame.

Girls can find safe spaces (both physically and emotionally) in a sport programme where they can discuss and talk about what they are feeling as they experience adolescence. Role models such as coaches and facilitators are in a great position to become confidants and guide girls through this confusing period in their lives. Through sport, girls learn how to speak out, trust others and feel part of a group, all factors that will make it easier for them to discuss and express what is going on inside their heads.

Consider

- Girls & Football SA (GFSA), an NGO that empowers girls through football and life skills education, uses a game called “Check In/Check Out.” Before each session begins, participants sit in a circle and pass around a ball. When a participant gets the ball, she must state her name and how she is feeling and then say the phrase “I check in.” All the other participants respond shouting “Yo.” At the end of the training session, participants repeat the exercise but instead of saying how they feel, they must state what they liked, disliked or learned from the session and then end by saying “I check out.” After each girl speaks, everyone again responds “Yo.”

Facilitation Tips

- Give girls time for individual reflection in addition to group discussions and exercises.
- Give girls a variety of outlets for expression. One girl might be comfortable talking about a difficult issue with a group, while another might be more willing to open up by writing a poem or participating in a role-play.
- Train coaches and all leaders in the program to listen to girls and encourage them to speak. Always assume a girl is telling the truth and let her know you care about her experience.

Resilience

Adolescent Girl Life Skill: Coping with trauma and being resilient

General Adolescent Life Skills: Managing Stress

A skill like resiliency, which is generally defined as maintaining effort and interest despite failure and adversity, is likely to help a girl succeed⁶ on her sport team, at school or in her job despite societal obstacles that prevent adolescent girls from reaching their full potential. This skill is especially important when girls must cope with traumatic events that happen early on in their lives, causing harmful emotional damage, a decrease in self-esteem and even depression. Traumatic events could include being pulled out of school by family, barred from participation in sport or other leisure activities, forced labour at a young age, or any form of gender-based violence.

When girls experience gender-based violence, the physical and emotional impact is lasting and seeps into every sphere of her life. Managing and coping with the stress related to being a survivor of GBV or other forms of trauma is critical to staying resilient and moving on. Girls with this capacity can not only live positive and healthy lives after the trauma but also help other girls who have gone through similar experiences.

Through sport, girls learn to manage stress when playing matches and games or trying out for and learning new positions. Importantly, sport can teach girls not only how to win and celebrate, but also how to lose and try again, emphasising resilience in the face of obstacles and failure. (For more information, see [International Guide to Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through Sport](#)).

⁶ Duckworth, Angela, Peterson, Matthews, Kelly, “Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals

Practical Session Ideas

Goal Programme Sessions – History of Violence - Breaking the Silence

ENGAGING BOYS AND MEN

When addressing the empowerment of adolescent girls, we recognize that we must engage boys and men in the process. Boys and men can play a positive role in ensuring that girls live in a world free from gender-based violence, have access to leadership positions and are able to make their own decisions about their bodies and future. The vulnerabilities and disadvantages that adolescent girls face are often because of social constructions that determine identities, roles, behaviours and social structures. By addressing these social stereotypes, with girls as well as boys, sport programmes can take a holistic approach to creating social structures that empower girls and do not alienate or exclude the boys. In fact, excluding boys from programmes, particularly in places where there are little opportunities for either gender to play or join a sport team, could sometimes cause jealousy among the boys and could lead to increased aggression.

Working with males is important when creating an inclusive approach that addresses gender inequity and other social problems that lead to GBV and general disempowerment of girls. Teaching boys how girls are disempowered, and how their own exercise of traditional norms around masculinity often contributes to GBV, is good for everyone. Restrictive gender stereotypes can also hurt boys themselves, setting them up for failure in difficult economic or conflict situations by not living up to traditional gender norms or societal views of what a man must be or provide. We have an opportunity to engage these boys in programs to address GBV and other important social issues, changing their attitudes and perhaps shifting the entire social structure. The opinions and behaviours of boys often impact significantly the girls they call sisters, girlfriends and neighbours, now and in the future.¹

When designing and implementing sport programmes aimed at adolescent girls' empowerment, organisations should keep in mind the importance of engaging all of society. Creating meaningful and sustainable change will require big changes in communities, a process that requires us to look beyond girls as the sole agents of change in their community and use the energy and potential of boys and men for the empowerment of girls.

Involving Males in the Community

Seeking the support and help of older males, such as fathers, brothers, relatives or other community members, when implementing a sport programme can help your organisation reach its objectives through a holistic and sustainable approach. You gain valuable advocates and important allies who work with you to change existing social stereotypes, gender roles and societal constructions, from which women's disempowerment and vulnerability to GBV has emerged. You are creating an atmosphere that fosters working with, not against, men to create more equitable relationships between males and females.

Recommendations:

- Encourage fathers or male caregivers to come to programme meetings. Often times, mothers or female caregivers take on the responsibilities of meeting with teachers and sport coaches, and are the ones showing up to all the meetings. When a male caregiver does show up, have him introduce himself and give him special recognition.
- Create a committee of male caregivers whose daughters are involved in the programme. Have these males strategize ways they could reach out to other males and institutions in the community to help promote their daughters’ right to play as well as their rights in general. Examples could include meeting with influential groups in the community normally not accessible to women or gathering large crowds of supporters when there are matches or tournaments.
- Involve males in organising tournaments or community events. Promote ideas of women and men working side by side for a common cause.
- Approach boys’ sport programmes (or local boys’ sport teams) and co-host community events or tournaments.

Examples from the Field

- The ICRW conducted a programme in Mumbai, India, called Parivartan, which engaged cricket coaches and mentors in schools and the community to teach boys lessons about controlling aggression, preventing violence and promoting respect. The programme used peer-to-peer education as well, engaging young cricket captains to act as role models and educate their teammates on GBV and positive behaviours.
- KMG, an organisation in Ethiopia that works with communities on SRHR, female genital mutilation (FGM) and HIV prevention, has started engaging boys and men through male discussion groups on FGM.

Mixing Genders

By necessity or by choice, there are times when boys and girls are integrated into a sport programme. Common scenarios include organisations that share resources, such as play space, sport equipment or coaches. This also occurs when a programme originally designed for the boys decides to add a component for girls. In this section, Women Win will explore the values, benefits and dangers of the combination of boys and girls in sport programmes and provide recommendations on how to effectively integrate the two. It is important to remember that there are best practices to follow when mixing genders and that simply pouring girls into an existing boys’ programme without considering their unique needs could be harmful for the girls as well as the boys. Research shows that when girls’ and boys’ bodies change during adolescence, the playing field becomes unequal in many sports. Mixing genders should be carefully considered, making sure that the girls aren’t marginalized in the process. In the end, girls and boys do need their own spaces to discuss sensitive issues if they come up or are part of the curriculum.

Understanding Gender Roles

When considering mixing boys and girls in a sport programme, it is critical to first recognize the power dynamics that exist between genders in most societies. The term “gender” refers to the set of social norms, practices and institutions that regulate the relations between women and men (also known as “gender relations”). Gender relations involve a system of power relationships between women and men in the context of socio-cultural definitions of masculinity

and femininity and economic relations. In many societies, the system of gender relations gives power and privilege to men and discriminates against women. 1

Consider

The sporting arena reflects a society's gender divisions and values. Sport has been "historically associated with ideal masculinity, and, until today, it is often used to uphold the image of culturally determined masculine traits like strength, power, endurance, ambition, self-confidence, aggressiveness and activity – traits that are opposed to those considered 'typically feminine' like being submissive, obedient, tender, emotional, beautiful and passive." (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2007), *Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender Equality and Sport*, Page 9.)

A child's sex will determine his or her gender role, expectations, tasks and responsibilities, and personal belief in his or her potential. Characteristics of gender roles vary greatly across cultures. However, across cultures, girls are often given fewer opportunities, decreased access to public spaces, and less power than male peers.

To effectively integrate girls and boys in programmes, you need to have a complete understanding of the social distribution of power and social expectations of both genders for the culture in which you are working.

...

[1. United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(2009\). *Women 2000 and Beyond: Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality*, page 4-5.](#)

Recommendations

Recommendations and experiences for mixing boys and girls in a sport programme are often defined by conditions and intentions. How a programme director would handle introducing boys to an existing girls' programme is different than how one would handle adding girls to an existing boys' space, although many of the same principals of equity, respect and communication remain the same. The following information is written for:

- Those who have been operating a sport programme for boys and want to add, improve or expand a component for girls.
- Those who have been operating a sport programme for girls and choose to integrate boys, either on account of limited resources or to help promote growth for all children.
- Newly established programmes designed with the intention of mixing boys and girls.

Consider Timing and Frequency

According to programme partners, it is important to establish a safe space for all children prior to integrating members of the opposite sex. Girls must know and trust that their growth is a priority within the programme. They must feel comfortable on their teams, playing their sport and communicating with one another and coaches before introducing boys into the programme. Similarly, if you are adding girls to a programme that was formerly only for boys, it is important to talk to boys about why girls are being added. If integrated too early or hastily, girls or boys can feel threatened and intimidated, thereby stunting opportunities for growth. Consider integrating slowly, inviting the new group to attend sessions occasionally at first and then with more regularity when both groups are comfortable with the presence of the other.

In various countries around the world, youth sport, particularly football, is often mixed-gender, girls and boys playing alongside each other on the same teams until they are 12 or even 13. However, as girls and boys hit adolescence, their bodies change in different ways, making it difficult for them to play together. Research also shows that when girls turn 14, they drop out of sport two times the rate of boys¹, particularly when the teams are mixed-gender. This transition to adolescence is a scary, confusing and emotional time for both boys and girls. Although mixed-gender teams may be great ideas for girls and boys at a young age, as they both enter their teens, it is important for an organisation to recognize girls may need their own space and their own teams so as not to stop playing completely.

1. *Women's Sports Foundation*

Consider

At MIFUMI in Uganda, boys were occasionally threatening girls on the way home from karate training. They were initiating conflict because they were jealous of the training and attention the girls were receiving and curious about the sport. MIFUMI programme leaders decided to bring the boys in occasionally to satiate their curiosity, teach them a few skills and share lessons of respect learned through martial arts.

Position Girls in Leadership Roles

Boys will typically try to assume leadership roles in a programme. It is important to demonstrate that girls are capable of being strong leaders. Girls need this education as much as boys do. According to programme partners, it is not uncommon for girls to be shy and reluctant to be vocal or volunteer in front of boys. They are culturally programmed to yield to males. Give girls the opportunity to be team captains, teach skills to younger boys and lead discussions. Position them in places of power whenever possible, even if it initially makes them uncomfortable. Team-building exercises addressing gender inequities with the group are recommended. It is important to have full engagement and ownership by both boys and girls so boys do not feel that they are the problem. A discussion or activity around respect for one another and why respect is important and non-negotiable can be an effective start to integration.

Consider

At Boxgirls, in Nairobi, Kenya, boys are invited to train with the girls from time to time. Gym space is limited in the slum. Priest, the leader of the programme, often has a more experienced female boxer instruct a less experienced, younger male boxer. This encourages the boy's respect for the girl's mental and physical skill, while building the girl's confidence in herself and her abilities.

At Sadili Oval, in Nairobi, Kenya, young tennis players train to be the best they can be. Girls and boys alike come every day to improve skills, get stronger and become well-rounded athletes. Director Dr. Liz Odera, a former professional tennis player, believes that girl-boy integration is the ideal for a sport programme, primarily because this is how we all live in society. Once a girl has established a feeling of comfort and confidence at Sadili Oval, she is encouraged to play matches against athletes of similar skill level, boys or girls.

In the Naz Foundation's Goal programme in India, girl Goal Champions lead select life skills sessions as well as teach netball skills to boys who would hang around during the girls' practices. Kalyani Subramanyam, who runs the programme, realized that the boys wanted to know what how to play netball because it was something new to them, netball being traditionally a girls' game. Kalyani used girls in her programmes who were leaders to teach those boys how to play netball and lead them through selected life skills sessions as well.

Maintain a Safe Space

A primary focus of every sport programme for girls should be maintaining a safe space. It can be especially important to ask girls if they want to share their space with boys before trying to integrate boys. The same is true for integrating girls into programmes previously run solely for boys. This means that all children must feel emotionally and physically safe and comfortable at all times. Maintaining the integrity of this space means holding all participants to the same standards of confidentiality and conduct during discussions. In some communities, this might mean allowing girls to wear pants while playing in the presence of boys if wearing shorts around boys is socially prohibited. Coaches and programme directors should monitor this carefully and proactively address any indications that girls are becoming hesitant or reserved. It might also be necessary to create a participants' code of conduct, which ensures both boys and girls understand the need for respect.

Limit Sensitive Discussions

There are some discussion topics, such as health, gender roles, communication, leadership and economic empowerment, for which it can be beneficial to share with mixed-gender groups. However, there are others, such as sexuality, abuse and menstruation, which should only be discussed in a woman-only environment. The type of subjects that are "sensitive" depends on culture, context and level of trust between boys and girls. These important conversations might not be happening in school or at home, however, and both girls and boys can benefit from factual education and a safe space to explore sensitive issues. These sensitive conversations are often more productive in single-sex environments, where children can feel free to talk openly, ask questions and insert personal experiences into conversations. The presence of members of the opposite sex can inhibit this freedom and even make girls more shy about opening up, as girls fear being judged. Furthermore, caregivers and community leaders can quickly become sceptical of a sport programme's intent when boys and girls are addressing these sometimes culturally taboo subjects together.

Be Mindful About Mixed-Gender Physical Activity

Depending upon the age of the participant, there can be significant differences in boys' and girls' physical strength and aggression. This is especially true after boys and girls have gone through puberty. Having girls and boys play against each other can actually reinforce gender power structures and disempower girls. On the other hand, competing and succeeding against boys can be empowering for a girl. When considering integration, there is no hard rule for when it is or is not appropriate for girls and boys to compete alongside and against one another. What matters is that coaches pay close attention to the physical safety of girls and ensure that girls are not playing with greater reservation when competing with boys. It can be helpful to ask girls if they want to play with and against boys; coaches should honour their decision.

Consider

Unsuccessful integration of boys and girls in a sport programme can lead to a reinforcement of unequal power dynamics and girls' feelings of athletic inadequacy. For example, if a coach rewards boys for passing to girls during a football game, he unintentionally reinforces the notion that girls are inferior to boys and would not receive passes unless others are forced to pass them the ball.

In programmes where girls are being integrated into existing boys' teams, programme directors need to carefully consider if girls are physically and emotionally safe competing against boys, or if they need their own groups. Prior to adolescence, some programme partners report no issues at all having boys and girls play with one another. However, it is important to consider cultural context, as even younger children playing together in a mixed-gender environment can be viewed as socially unacceptable.

Conduct Follow-up Discussions

Give girls the opportunity to debrief about their interactions with boys, both on the field and in programme discussions or meetings. Ask them how they felt, what was different, and what was positive about sharing their space with boys. Reflection will give coaches important information about what to do differently and give girls the opportunity to express themselves and experience a level of control over their programme. It is also important to conduct follow-up talks with boys. This enables coaches to gain an understanding of the ways in which boys learn from the process and help answer their questions, address their concerns and guide their experiences. Give feedback to both boys and girls on their different perceptions of the experience. This helps them understand each other better. Both coaches and participants need to understand gender dynamics. The result is often a positive breakthrough moment for boys with regards to the physical abilities of the girls, as well as a self-realization of strength and ability for girls.

The Potential Value of Integration

Mixed-gender sport participation can have a positive impact on girls' development. The following is a list of reported positive outcomes when programme partners mixed boys and girls in trainings and discussions:

1. Empowering girls in the presence of boys

Consider

Programme partner MIFUMI (Uganda), uses karate and tae kwon do to educate girls about domestic violence and empower them physically and emotionally against it. When the programme began, Project Coordinator Janet Otte reported that boys were physically attacking girls on their way home from training. They were uneducated in martial arts and wanted to show the girls that they, too, could fight. Janet made the decision to include boys occasionally to educate them about the non-violent principles of martial arts to help keep girls safe.

Although girls may be shy at first when participating or speaking up in front of boys, programme partners report girls find increased confidence in themselves when they are able to demonstrate their skills and strength in front of male peers.

2. Changing the perspective girls and boys have of each other

Communities and individuals are at risk when girls and boys are not educated about life skills and appropriate gender dynamics. If children do not understand the how and why to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, they are more likely to spread infection. If a boy sees girls being treated as second-class citizens, and no one speaks up against it, he will do the same. However, if girls and boys are educated and encouraged about how to treat each other with honour and respect, they can be part of each other's peer empowerment, instead of contributing to unequal and destructive power dynamics. Sport programmes in which boys and girls are taught life skills can impact an entire community's sense of what is possible in terms of communication, mutual respect and the potential for girls' contributions on and off the playing field.

3. Facilitating positive cross-gender communication

Social cues teach boys and girls over time how they should communicate with one another. When a boy hears his father say disparaging things to his mother, he learns something about what is an acceptable way to talk to women. Conversely, if he is taught to be respectful, honest and open with women, his communication and treatment of girls outside of that environment is likely to improve. Sport programmes can give girls and boys the tools to talk about sensitive issues, handle conflict respectfully and use appropriate language in a protected environment. This can have wide-reaching, positive ramifications outside of the playing field.

4. Diffusing potential gender-based challenges

When boys see girls participating in sport, receiving uniforms, instruction and attention, they are likely to become curious. If they are not included, boys can become jealous and challenge girls physically and emotionally when girls leave trainings. In this way, sport programmes can actually escalate instances of gender-based violence and abuse. If boys are invited occasionally to see what is happening in the sport programme sessions and educated about why girls are playing sport, they may become allies with the programme and be less likely to make jealousy-inspired challenges.

5. Girls care what boys think

In all communities, boys play a big role in the lives of girls. Girls in adolescence often overvalue the opinions of their male peers. If boys like a girls' sport programme and become allies of it, they are less likely to demean or challenge a girl's participation. If they feel threatened or excluded, teasing and harassment by boys in the community could reduce the number of girls who want to participate, as well as diminish the self-confidence of girls participating in the

program. On the contrary, inviting a boys' team to come and support girls at a game or event can be a powerful statement and affirm a girl's participation in the programme.

SAFE SPACES

Participants and their families must trust that all activities associated with a sport programme occur in a secure environment. Sport can play a valuable role in the well-being and development of adolescent girls; however, if child protection and safe spaces are not at the centre of programme design, development and implementation, then that programme risks causing more harm than good.

Programme designers and implementers have a huge responsibility when it comes to ensuring that they are not putting their participants in any further harm and negating the positive outcomes sport can have. This can only be done by establishing non-negotiable policies, practical codes of conduct and organisational processes that truly ensure safe, inclusive space for youth. However, establishing safe spaces goes beyond a policy on a piece of paper taped to the wall in the office. Creating “safe spaces” means creating an atmosphere where girls feel free to express themselves without fear, understand and are free to exercise their rights, and are not afraid to report their rights being violated. This implicates everyone, from coaches to administration, volunteers to visitors, and the girls themselves.

Martha Brady, of the Population Council, has written extensively about the concept of sport programmes creating “safe spaces” for adolescent girls, a concept now widely understood and promoted within effective girls’ sport programmes.

According to Brady, safe spaces are:

- Free from emotional and physical threat
- Private and confidential
- Culturally acceptable to parents and caregivers yet free from parental pressures
- Conveniently located and familiar to programme participants
- Not subject to intrusions by males un-associated with the programme or unwanted authority figures

Without safe spaces, a girl’s growth is inhibited. If she is fearful of being in physical or emotional jeopardy, she will not take the risks necessary to experience the full benefits of a sport programme. If a girl is afraid she will be ostracized, she is unlikely to share her innermost questions and thoughts. If she is getting tackled brutally by older girls during practice, she will not want to play the game. [1](#)

What is a safe space?

A safe space is an environment where girls feel physically and emotionally secure. It is a place where they are protected from bodily harm, including sexual abuse and preventable sport injuries. In a safe space, girls feel free to openly express themselves in a confidential environment, without fear of judgment or intimidation. They are comfortable sharing their deepest concerns and asking sensitive questions. Ultimately, the definition of a safe space depends on how girls feel within that space; therefore, the programme space needs to be consistently evaluated and adjusted by programme leaders and girls.

Consider

Several programmes have encouraged girls to ask sensitive questions by putting out a question box. Girls can put thoughts, concerns or questions in the box and remain anonymous. Although anonymous question boxes can be useful tools for helping girls feel comfortable initially, it should not be considered permanent. In a truly safe space, girls feel comfortable expressing themselves openly.

Child Protection Policies and Procedures

Part of creating a safe space means developing clear guidelines and codes of conduct for all staff, as well as participants. In addition there must be clear and accessible processes and procedures if these policies and codes are violated. Child protection policies not only help organisations articulate their approach to protecting participants to the outside community, but also provide all staff and participants with a definition of a safe space and the practical steps to take when there is a violation of that safe space.

Why is a child protection policy important?

Even though sport programmes play a valuable role in the well-being of children, they can also be, if the proper policies and procedures are not in place nor practiced, a place where children are abused, excluded or taken advantage of.

Coaches are in a unique position to be role models and mentors for young participants, but there are also countless stories of coaches misusing their influence and power to take advantage of youth – harassing, manipulating, neglecting and abusing them. According to research from UNICEF’s 2009 Report Card on Child Protection, “Children are more vulnerable to sexual abuse and other forms of violence if they are subjected to discrimination, neglect and disadvantage related to their caste, ethnicity, gender or economic status, and girls are generally at greater risk.”⁷ Girls’ greater vulnerability to violence in many settings is in large part a result of the influence of gender-based power relations within society.

That is why child protection policies, particularly policies and processes in which the children themselves take part in the creation, are extremely important to ensure that a sport programme reaches its objectives of empowering youth and contributing to their well-being. If child protection is overlooked, then the sport programme as a vehicle for development is in danger of putting those very children in situations that could expose them to even more harm and negative experiences. In fact, to ensure an atmosphere of child protection, this issue must be at the centre of programme design, development and implementation.

Unsure where to start?

Below, we have outlined some important steps and processes (based on best practices from around the world in sport and youth development) that can help organisations create and formulate their own policies and procedures and, importantly, learn about ways to implement them so that children know their rights to protection and coaches and staff understand how to help children exercise those rights.

⁷ Progress for Children: UNICEF 2009 Report Card on Child Protection.

Steps to take in creating and implementing a child protection policy

Take the Child Protection Self Assessment to know where your organisation currently stands in regards to the various child protection elements.

Set Up the Child Protection Policy and Process

Code of conduct

Before writing an actual policy down on paper, it is important for your organisation, its staff, administration and anyone else involved in the day-to-day operations, to identify and agree upon a set of standards for a Code of Conduct that will be the foundation of the policy. This Code of Conduct, once agreed upon, will have to be followed by all staff, volunteers and visitors. This could be as simple as a list of behaviours that are acceptable, not recommended and never acceptable. Once everyone agrees on them, have all staff members (and any visitors or volunteers) sign the code. This list should then be displayed in a public space within the organisation where all visitors, staff and, most importantly, the children themselves can see what conduct they should expect from their coaches and what they shouldn't.

In addition to a staff code of conduct, it is important to create a code of conduct for participants themselves, which outlines what is expected of their behaviour towards each other and their coaches and facilitators. This can be created with the participants themselves by asking them to write down what behaviours they think they should abide by for a safe and fun programme. A participant code of conduct is especially important when mixing genders so that both girls and boys understand the need to respect each other.

Create the policy

Once you have a code of conduct and an agreed-upon set of standards, the next step could be to write out a clear and simple policy that outlines your organisation's approach to child protection. Practically, this could include the following:

- Basic definitions of what abuse is and what child protection means for your organisation
- Code of Conduct and good/bad practices related to child protection and sport
- Reporting processes and procedures
- Referral system
- Investigation process into reports of violation of the policy
- Follow up after abuse is reported and investigated

Reporting and referral processes and procedures

A very important part of your policy should be the reporting and referral processes and procedures. By this, we mean steps to take to report abuse (whether it is a child reporting the abuse or an adult reporting it) and the necessary follow up. This process is important because it provides a clear guide for coaches and other adults, as well as children, on how to handle extremely sensitive cases of abuse that may have happened within the organisation itself or at the child's home. Without knowledge on how to handle these situations, a child revealing abuse to an unprepared adult could put that coach in a very difficult situation. Not knowing what to do or not being prepared to handle the report could harm the child and cause stress and anxiety for the adult. The result could be a situation handled in a way that would hurt all the parties involved rather than resolve the situation and get everyone the help they need.

For examples of reporting and referral processes, take a look at our model Child Protection Policy, particularly the reference to reporting and referrals.

Child protection guidelines on recruiting

Creating guidelines on recruiting coaches, facilitators and other staff (including accepting volunteers) is crucial in creating a safe environment for girls in your sport programme. When recruiting potential staff, make sure to have a standardized process that includes background checks for both male and female coaches. Check not only with local police but also with the community and make sure that the coach would be an ideal role model or mentor for the programme. If you do have female participants and male coaches, make sure that you hire enough female coaches or facilitators so that there is at least one female adult in each group coached by male.

Make Your Organisation “Fit for Purpose”

Create partnerships

One very important step in getting your organisation ready to implement its child protection policy, processes and procedures is to make contact and create partnerships with external organisations. Look for external organisations with expertise that fills the gaps in your organisation’s capacities. Look for child abuse organisations, child’s or women’s rights organisations, psychological counsellors or health organisations that could help you access important services when abuse is found within your organisation or involving participants in your programme. Finding social services or government agencies that deal with abuse and child protection could also be great partners in helping you with your policies and their implementation. Having contact with legal advisors or lawyers will help when investigating cases and in the unfortunate circumstance that legal action must be taken.

Hire a child protection officer

One great way to prepare your organisation for implementing your child protection policy and process is to hire a Child Protection Officer, ideally someone with experience in this field. This could be someone who worked for a social services organisation previously or another community institution in which their role was to supervise the protection of children and the policies around abuse.

We do recognize that most organisations will not have the budget to hire a staff member specifically for this role. Another option is to appoint a current staff member or volunteer for this role and train that person to be well-versed in the policy and all the processes involved. Have that person attend other trainings, if possible, by external organisations such as child welfare, social services or government agencies that deal with children and abuse. It is important to have one point person who can coordinate activities surrounding child protection and who can be the person coordinates reporting and referral processes.

Notify and educate community about child protection policies and referral systems

As an organisation, you will want to inform and educate the community, including parents of the children, about the policies and processes involved in protecting their children while in the sport programme. This can be done through community meetings or having the children do theatre skits that illustrate the organisation’s code of conduct and policies around conduct. This not only helps the parents feel more at ease in sending their children to the programme but also educates them about the process if they need to be involved later on.

Conduct adult trainings with all coaches, staff and volunteers

Having a policy on paper is not enough. Training coaches, staff members and volunteers is extremely important when preparing to implement your policy. Hold a one- or two-day workshop for your staff. Make sure they are familiar with the entire policy and understand the procedures they need to take. Do role-plays, practicing what they would do if they are approached with an allegation of a violation of the policy. Also, make sure everyone is aware of how to make contact with partner organisations. It is critical that everyone understands the procedures so that allegations, whether true or not, are dealt with quickly and with sensitivity to the situation, the child, the coach and the organisation.

Conduct child training

Walking children and programme participants through the policy, reporting processes and procedures as well as the code of conduct is also necessary before implementation. When children understand what their rights are and they understand how to report if their rights are violated, they will be less afraid to take action if anything happens. Make sure that all policies and tools are adapted with child-friendly language and are easily accessible and available for children.

Child-centric design

Putting in place policies around child protection and gender inclusion is a key part of the solution, but this is not enough. With the exception of a few sport for development programmes, such as UNICEF, children's voices have been largely left out of the child protection discourse, and they have not been supported in taking an active role in their own protection. Children, and girls in particular, must be given a voice within such programmes and empowered to drive the agenda by determining the meaning of protection in their context and in their sport.

This can be done various ways. Have children act out through role-plays what they consider is, for example, a coach misusing his or her power. This may be different depending on the child. This is a great way to show children that there are different opinions on what manipulation or abuse means and that they have to right to their own definition and their opinion being respected.

Implement the Policy

The third step in creating a protective atmosphere in your organisation for participants is to implement the policy. This is often a nuanced step, which requires all parts of your organisation to mobilize together in order to make sustainable organisational change. This is more than just having staff members sign codes of conduct. Implementing your child protection policy will require you to reach every part of your organisation and ensure that staff members are trained on processes and procedures, that children understand their rights in the context of the policy, and that everyone is aware of their role in the context of child protection and creating safe spaces. This takes considerable resources, time and commitment on behalf of everyone.

Review, revise, renew

After the creation and implementation of a child protection policy, it is important for organisations to conduct internal evaluations after a set period of time in order to measure the effectiveness of their policies and processes. Take a look at the language used in both the adult and children's policy. Does it still make sense based on what your organisation has learned?

Renew child protection officer agreements or contracts, or, if necessary, identify and hire new candidates. As an organisation, evaluate on a regular basis the structures and processes you have created and how they can be improved upon based on your experiences and learnings. If possible, integrate child protection in your monitoring and evaluation processes to maximize improvements to your approach.

Creating a Safe Space

Once policies and processes are in place, there are crucial elements that all programmes should consider when addressing safety. This responsibility falls on not only coaches and facilitators who directly interact with girls on a daily basis, but on all staff and administration of the organisation as well. Everyone involved in the organisation has the responsibility to ensure girls feel emotionally secure and comfortable within their sport environment, protected from physical harm.

Programme leaders cannot always ensure safety outside of their programme. Serving girls fully means giving them the knowledge and skills to handle themselves in their environment, both inside the programme and outside in the world. Programmes can also help girls develop coping mechanisms when personal safety is compromised.

One strategy that your organisation can use is to create, if you have the resources, coaching teams in which every session has two coaches. This allows one of the coaches to give individual time to a player with a physical injury or emotional problem, rather than a single coach stopping the entire practice or session and tending to that single player. If a sensitive situation comes up, one of the coaches can pull that player aside and spend one-on-one time with her to address the situation while the rest of the team plays on. This also reassures the girls that if they have a problem and they come to the coach, their situation can be dealt immediately and privately rather than having the coach stop practice or wait until practice is over to see her.

Tips for creating a physical safe space:

- Ensure that play space is free from harmful objects, such as broken glass and holes.
- Always have First Aid materials ready in case of injury.
- Ensure that girls have adequate protective gear for sports that require it.
- Schedule sessions at times where girls do not have to walk to or from home in the dark.
- Establish the rules of the game girls are playing and enforce fair play.
- Adopt a no-fighting policy within the programme. This should apply to participants, coaches and volunteers and should include physical and verbal attacks.
- Train the coaches to ensure they are able to maintain safe spaces for the girls.
- Become acquainted with neighbours in the area.

Tips for creating an emotional safe space:

- Invite the girls to define what is important for the creation of their safe space.
- Have girls create and sign a code of conduct for training sessions and sensitive discussions. Have them decide what parameters will be put on confidentiality and the resulting penalties when the agreed upon code is broken.
- Teach girls communication skills to help them peacefully resolve conflicts among one another.

- Consider holding sessions in spaces that can be physically enclosed, to keep outsiders out and to help girls feel secure. These do not need to be built from scratch. You can often work out agreements to use existing courts, gyms and public spaces.
- If possible, forbid non-participants, such as boyfriends, from observing regular practice sessions and discussions as girls are likely to feel intimidated or inhibited in front of an audience.
- Ensure that there is always an adult woman present when a male is involved in sport training with the girls.
- In some cultures, creating an all-girl space is necessary for girls to feel emotionally and physically safe. This means no males watching girls play sport or in the room while discussions are held. Therefore, it is important to consider having an all-female coaching staff when working with girls.
- Be aware of bullying. Demand individual respect from and for all girls.
- Set out a box for girls to give feedback and suggest conversation topics.
- Allow girls to speak about sensitive topics in the language that is most comfortable. However, be aware that girls who do not speak the majority language may feel marginalized.
- Discourage rumours and gossip.
- Although you should encourage parents to be actively involved in the sport programme in some way, having too much parent involvement could actually keep girls from feeling comfortable and being able to express themselves fully. Let parents know that the girls need their own space as well.
- Provide private changing rooms. Although a permanent girls-only space is preferable, it is fine to use a space to change that is used by both men and women, as long as boys are prohibited from entering during the time girls are using it. In conservative cultures, it may be necessary to establish same-sex spaces and/or clothing accommodations to ensure girls are comfortable.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuse or harassment as well as procedures to ensure that if there is a violation of this policy, all participants and staff understand how to address the problem and the right channels to go through.
- Revisit these concepts continually. Many programmes have new members joining regularly, and it is important to discuss rules and expectations with new members. Older or more experienced members can lead these discussions.

1. Brady, Martha (2005). *Creating Safe Spaces and Building Social Assets For Young Women In The Developing World: A New Role For Sport*. *Women's Studies Quarterly* 2005, vol.33, no.1&2, pp. 44-45.