



Empowering girls and women through sport and physical activity

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Abstract

In recent years, sports and physical activity have emerged as a strategy to empower girls and women around the world. Girls and women face obstacles when it comes to empowerment, whether it is cultural, socio-economic political or religious. Empowering Girls and Women through Sport and Physical Activity is an impact assessment and research publication that focuses on the impact of sports and physical activity programs on the lives of girls and women around the world and the development of those programs. It's a thing. This article examines girls and women's empowerment through sport and physical activity.

Keywords: Sports and physical activity, empowerment, physical education

Introduction

Sports and physical activity are not widely used as strategies for women's exercise. However, we are already hearing very positive stories from both program partners and programs in our network. Based on the experiences of these partners, we have learned more about how participating in sports and physical activity can empower individual girls and women. For example, participation in sports and physical activity builds social networks that enhance life skills, self-confidence, and body awareness, and make dramatic positive changes in participants' lives. We have seen that participation in sports and physical activity can positively change existing gender norms and help girls and women advance into the public sphere. In addition, sports and physical activity programs provide opportunities to bring communities together and contribute to the achievement of development goals related to issues such as (post-conflict) management, reproductive health and gender-based violence.

Girls and women face a disproportionate number of life challenges, which reduce their ability to achieve their full potential. Recent studies show that despite formal guarantees of equality, the overall rate of progress for women, particularly those from the poorest and most marginalized regions of the world has been slow.¹ Women and girls continue to encounter inequalities and deprivations in their daily lives, which prevent them from contributing toward both the creation of more equitable societies and sustainable development within their communities and beyond. Girls and women face a disproportionate number of life challenges, which reduce their ability to achieve their full potential. Recent studies show that despite formal guarantees of equality, the overall rate of progress for women, particularly those from the poorest and most marginalized regions of the world has been slow.¹ Women and girls continue to encounter inequalities and deprivations in their daily lives, which prevent them from contributing toward both the creation of more equitable societies and sustainable development within their communities and beyond. A number of programmes have and continue to

challenge and change local gender-based stereotypes within their communities. For example, a sports and physical activity program in Kigali, Rwanda chose to specifically encourage girls and women to play football. This was because at that time sports that required the use of legs and feet were generally accepted only by boys and men. As time went on, and as girls and women learned to play football in public, members of the community became more and more open to the idea. As the founder and president of AKWOS reported, many community members now support their daughters, wives and mothers' decision to play football. Essentially, when communities are confronted with girls and women playing sports and engaging in physical activities usually reserved only for boys and men, stereotypes are shattered and the old perception of the impossible is broken. What was once turned into a new real possibility?

Sports and exercise programs provide an opportunity to combat discrimination against specific groups of girls and women. For example, girls and women with disabilities often face many forms of discrimination. The low participation of girls and women with disabilities partly reflects the double discrimination they face as persons with disabilities and as women. Sport and physical activity programs for girls and women with disabilities demonstrate that participation in sport and physical activity exposes groups of girls and women who tend to be isolated to their abilities rather than their disabilities increase. Meeting other girls and women in similar situations gives them the opportunity to share their experiences and learn about often-denied issues such as reproductive health. The participation of girls and women with disabilities in sports and physical activity breaks down the stigma about disability and impairment⁸ and contributes positively to their empowerment.

Key elements of a successful sports and exercise program

Based on our research, we recommend three key ingredients for successful sports and physical activity programs aimed at empowering and empowering girls and women. These

include: • Life skills instruction • Women's coaches and referees • Safe spaces All program partners and many affiliated networks are committed to developing sustainability, sustainable we are committed to ensuring a high-quality program that demonstrates our commitment to excellence. Projects are often embedded in these programs in unique ways, with appropriate measures in place to teach life skills, develop and encourage coaches and referees, and ensure safe spaces. Each of these key components is described in the following chapters, along with program examples and testimonials from participants and staff.

Women Coaches, Coaches and Referees

Coaches and referees are integral to the success of sports and physical activity programs aimed at empowering girls and women. Prioritizing female coaches and referees creates leadership opportunities for girls and women who otherwise would have had such rare opportunities. For example, girls and women coaches are responsible for making decisions about how best to conduct training and how to use training time efficiently. As coaches, they are given the opportunity to enhance their decision-making, organizational and management skills over time. Some sports programs later recruit them as employees, giving them duties ranging from organizational management and administrative duties to hosting tournaments and coaching teams. In the long run, these girls and women, who have received appropriate technical training to improve their skills, are good candidates for influential positions in traditionally male-dominated sports federations.

Life Skills Education

Sports and exercise programs can be used as platforms for teaching life skills to girls and women. Teaching life skills to girls and women in sports and physical activity is an integral part of the physical education curriculum. These programs recognize the importance of equipping girls and women with the knowledge and skills they need to improve their quality of life. Reproductive rights education for girls and women is also part of shaping life skills. Life skills instruction usually takes place indoors, with girls and women finding families at schools and playgrounds as part of their practice time. In some cases, a life skills session is a peer education course. This means that life skills session facilitators and trainers are sports participants of the same age and background as the girls participating in the sessions.

Safe Space

Sports and exercise programs provide opportunities for girls and women to meet in public on common interests. In this way, girls and women are given the opportunity to assert their independence outside the home, build strong social networks and increase their chances of participating as active citizens within and outside the community. Preventing girls from moving outside and around the house has traditionally served as an important safety factor. Ensure that girls and women enjoy the positive benefits of sport and physical activity. Participants and their families should feel comfortable and safe to engage in regular physical activity outside their residential area. Addressing safety concerns can be beneficial if participants' families support girls' decisions to participate in sports and physical activity, increasing the likelihood that girls will be able to relax and enjoy exercise without stress should be an important priority

in sports and exercise programs aimed at increasing the power of people.

Conclusion

Gender inequality was considered the most fundamental of many gender problems in the community. After deciding to focus on improving gender equality through physical activity, we worked with communities to select specific areas to work on, including school playgrounds to host sporting events, and community workshops. We've identified available resources, such as classrooms for shops and government support. In this way, the entire community participated in the action plan.

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