



GENDER & SPORT

Mainstreaming Gender
in Sports Projects



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SDC and Sport for Development

In November 2003, UN Resolution 58/5 was adopted which called on governments to use sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace. 2005 is the International Year for Sport and Physical Education. From professional, elite and international sporting competition to games played within communities and educational institutions, sport can be used to work towards a number of development goals, including:

- Human development; improving public health and wellbeing, supporting education and leisure activities
- Social development; promoting stability, tolerance, social inclusion and community-building
- Economic development; fostering investment and employment opportunities
- Political development; promoting peace and respect for the rules of democracy

Sport covers a wide range of activities; physical, recreational and competitive. International football, dhow boat racing,

wrestling and chess are examples of sports that could be looked at in a development context.

SDC sees sport as a low-cost, high-impact intervention. Until recently however, there was no coherent thinking on sport and development. Sports projects were supported by development agencies, including SDC, on a case-by-case basis. SDC supports projects and programmes, communication campaigns, conferences and festivals, and provides funds for sports infrastructures and equipment. It focuses on targeting marginalised groups – ethnic minorities, women, disabled people, child soldiers – and gives support to NGOs, aid agencies and sports associations. SDC Sports Policy is implemented in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports and operates within the framework of the Magglingen Declaration.





The Magglingen Declaration on the role of sport in development was signed in Switzerland in 2003. Following the Magglingen Conference, an international platform for Sport and Development was established bringing together representatives from the UN, international and national sports federations, NGOs and other sports bodies. A database of sport and development projects worldwide can be accessed at: <http://www.sportanddev.org/>. The Magglingen Declaration defines sport as a human right. However, although all sections of the recommendations refer to the importance of including women and other marginalised groups in sports initiatives, and although the need to eliminate gender stereotyping is made explicit, there is otherwise little recognition of the gendered nature of sport.

Why is it important to look gender and sport?

Sport is a social and cultural process in which social constructions of masculinity and femininity play a key role:

- Sport is traditionally associated with «masculinity». In many societies, it is considered inappropriate for women to engage in sports, and women who do may be perceived as «masculine». Conversely, men who do not engage in sports or who are not talented in sports may be labelled as «unmanly». Yet, it is evident that there is no one masculinity or femininity, and sport could provide a space where masculinity and femininity are re-negotiated rather than re-affirmed in their dominant acception.
- The practice of sport is related to a number of assumptions about «work» and «leisure», which are often lived differently by men and women. Caring for the sick and elderly, raising children, and other work in the home – «reproductive» activities still predominantly carried out by women and girls – are generally not socially and economically recognized as «work». «Productive» activities exercised outside the home and recognized as «work» – and in particular when they are performed by men – bring with them the

right to have time off «work» for leisure.

- Some societies value sport as «productive» in that it contributes to the physical health of the workforce, especially that engaged in manual labour. Despite the fact that, at least in some markets, an increasing number of women compose the workforce, sports may be valued when practiced by men and be seen as a waste of time when practiced by women.
- Women and men tend to engage in different types of physical activity and their attitudes towards sport may be very different. The competitive dimensions of many sports may for some be at the heart of the game, while for others, sports may simply be an opportunity to get together. Being identified and identifying oneself as belonging to a particular «culture», «ethnic» group, socio-economic class or caste also plays a role in how one engages in sports.

Women, and eventually men too, may face a number of practical barriers to participation in sport:

- In addition to a general lack of safe and appropriate sport facilities, lack of skills, resources, and technical support, women may face additional physical constraints





including lack of time, lack of childcare facilities.

- Women may be particularly exposed to physical and/or verbal sexual harassment as well as other dangers related to participation in sports programmes, because of location and time of day, for instance.
- There is a lack of female role models including women coaches or «leaders». Women are under-represented in decision-making bodies of sporting institutions.

Why gender equality in sport?

Gender equality is a fundamental goal of development and belongs to the basic and universally recognized civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. The aim of the SDC Gender Equality Policy is to ensure that all SDC interventions increase women and men's opportunities to exercise their rights equally and gain equal access to and control over the benefits of development.

Worldwide, women are less frequently seen participating in sports activities than men. Sport can promote mental and physical well-being, and studies have shown that it reduces the risk of chronic diseases later in life. Thus sport for girls as well as for boys should be encouraged.

Women are also under-represented in the decision-making bodies of sporting institutions. Increased participation by women would diversify the talent pool of administrators, coaches and officials. Sport-related development projects would become more effective in reaching all groups within target populations and communities.



Why sport for gender equality?

As well as working towards gender equality in terms of participation in sports activities and institutions, there are also ways in which sport can help promote broader gender equality objectives (e.g. rights and empowerment). Sport can give women and girls access to public spaces where they can gather, develop new skills together, gain support from others and enjoy freedom of expression and movement. It can promote education, communication, negotiation skills and leadership, all of which are essential for women's empowerment.

Sport can develop girls' and women's sense of ownership over their bodies, increase their self-esteem and better enable them to make choices about their lives, including their sexual activity. In situations of deprivation and inequality, such a sense of ownership over one's own body is all the more important. Moreover, sport can provide a channel for informing girls and women about reproductive health and other health issues, particularly young unmarried women who may not receive such information.



International Measures to Promote Women's Participation in Sport - The Brighton Declaration and the Windhoek Call for Action

The First World Conference on Women and Sport was held in Brighton, UK in 1994. It led to the Brighton Declaration and the establishment of the International Working Group on Women and Sport. In 1995, sport was included in the Beijing Platform for Action (paragraphs 83, 107, 290) and subsequently in the Beijing+5 outcome document five years later. The Second World Conference on Women and Sport took place in Windhoek, Namibia in 1998. The Windhoek Call for Action goes beyond pushing for women's participation in sport to promoting sport as a means of realizing broader goals in health, education and women's human rights – an idea further promoted at the Third World Conference on Women and Sport in Montreal, Canada in 2002. This involves integrating sport within community development projects, information campaigns around health and other issues, and national advocacy campaigns for gender equality and women's rights.

The Brighton Declaration calls for:

- Equity and equality in society and sport
- Planning, design and management of sports facilities to meet the needs of women
- Leadership, including increasing the number of women coaches, advisers and decision-makers
- Education, training and development programmes that address gender equality
- Information and research on women and sport
- Resources for sportswomen and for targeted programmes to increase women's participation in sport
- Domestic and international cooperation and the sharing of knowledge and experiences

Windhoek Call for Action calls for:

- Greater cooperation between different agencies responsible for women's issues in sport and between these agencies and other actors working for women's rights and gender equality.
- ODA programmes to «provide equal opportunities for girls' and women's development and recognize the potential of sport to achieve development objectives».

Case Studies

Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), Kenya – the Population Council

MYSA was set up in 1987 to link sport, youth development and environmental activism. It now implements an HIV/AIDS education programme and a football programme and offers other community services (e.g. rubbish collection) and educational activities. MYSA did not simply design programmes for girls based on those for boys, but designed projects that took into account the specific physical and social constraints girls faced. To gain support from within the community, and in particular from parents, MYSA staff and members went to individuals' homes, talked with parents and got them involved in the project. Parents who lived nearby MYSA also very simply could see what MYSA was doing with the children in the fields and this made many of them allow their daughters to take part in the project.

"Sport pour la Paix" in the Ivory Coast – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Addressing gender-based exclusion from sports is not just about «letting women play». It is about showing a marked commitment to understanding the barriers girls may face in sport, and ensuring their full and meaningful participation. A programme in the Ivory Coast is doing just that. Sport pour la Paix (Sport for Peace) was launched in October 2003. Over 1'600 young people have since taken part in the programme. The programme is seen as part of the reconciliation process after years of religious and ethnic conflicts. It brings together young people with little or no formal education from different ethnic, political and religious groups. One third of the young people involved in Sport pour la Paix are girls. They participate in regular training, 2 or 3 times a week, in open spaces of the cities of Guiglo, Man and Duékoué. To make it easier for girls to get involved in the programme, warm-up exercises are replaced by music and dance. In addition, girls have to be represented amongst the «peer leaders» who provide support to other members of the group. Finally, the president of the Ivory Coast's «Women's Parliament» (a group of 3'000 women, belonging to a peace movement) has championed the programme and provided high-level support for making the programme more gender-sensitive.



Ishraq – Safe Spaces to Learn, Play and Grow (Egypt)

Ishraq was set up for girls in rural Upper Egypt who were not attending school and were at risk from early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). The project takes a «holistic approach» combining literacy classes with training in life skills such as agriculture and sports. Sessions are conducted during «girls only hours» at village Youth Centres. It also works with community leaders, parents and boys to change attitudes towards the empowerment of girls. The project aims at encouraging girls to exert influence over the timing of marriage so they may get an education. It also aims at changing attitudes towards FGM and the division of labour within the household. Many of the girls participating in the programme have since gone on to formal schooling. Taking a «holistic approach» rather than focusing solely on literacy training has led to longer and more meaningful participation in the programme, and has resulted in significant changes in attitudes towards marriage and gender relations. In-depth research and analysis (baseline study) conducted at community level during the planning stage provided the basis for making the programme a success. The baseline was then used in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected, and parents and boys' reactions to the programme were recorded.

Source: Alyce Abdalla and Ray Langsten, «Bringing Sports and Opportunities to Girls in Rural Egypt», *Al-Raida* 21/22, Summer/Fall 2004-2005

How to mainstream gender equality in sports projects and programmes

Gender Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming gender equality involves a three-pronged approach:

- Gender as a transversal theme (minimum requirement); integrating gender in the analysis, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of all projects/programmes;
- Gender-specific programmes; initiatives/budgets addressing specific gender issues;
- Engendering organisations; integrating gender in procedures, staff competence, budgets, partnerships, organisational culture, and equal opportunities policy.

Gender mainstreaming entails looking at how the «reproductive», «productive», «community-managing» and «constituency-based politics» roles are negotiated between and among women and men, analysing women's and men's level of access to and control over resources (e.g. power, information, income, assets, etc.), and considering their practical and strategic gender needs. This means going beyond noting that women are often excluded from sport. In order to avoid reinforcing inequalities and crude stereotyping, projects should demonstrate an understanding of the gendered nature of sport (see case studies above), of particular contexts and power dynamics, of the barriers different groups and individuals face in gaining access to and control over resources, and of their own perceived needs and interests. Consultations with these different groups and individuals are essential.

This section provides insight into how to mainstream gender equality in sport and development projects. It covers all stages of project cycle management: analysis, consultation, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. For each stage, it lists key questions to prompt discussion and reflection, together with additional information and suggestions for improving practice.

Analysis

Question: *Has a gender-relevant baseline study been conducted?*

Gender experts with a sound knowledge of the context in which the project/programme is to operate should be called in to carry out a gender analysis (including the collection of gender-disaggregated data). A gender analysis should cover:



Policy environment

- National commitments to gender equality made under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, and the existence of a National Women's Machinery;
- Existing national legislation that guarantees equal access and opportunities in sport;
- National sports federations and Olympic committees;
- National sports policies;
- Relevant national health and education policies;
- Details of who currently sets priorities and what the criteria are;
- Existing donor initiatives, funding from donor agencies;
- Lessons learnt from previous sports programmes;
- Budgetary allocations from national, local or municipal governments.

Society and culture

- Overall participation of men and women in sport and physical activity;
- Participation of men and women in organised sports;
- Attendance of men and women at sporting events;
- Relevant health or education issues such as girls' attendance at school, or health problems particular to girls and women;
- Reasons for women's non-participation – for example, lack of time, childcare, safe and appropriate facilities, skills;
- Gender stereotypes, socially valued ways of living one's masculinity/femininity that might impact on participation in sport;
- Cultures of sport – what sports are played and by whom;
- The role national and local media play in the promotion of sport;
- The use of sporting idols in the creation and affirmation of particular political or cultural positions.





Sports agencies and organisations

- Roles of men and women in coaching;
- Existing training and skills;
- Access to and location of existing facilities, problems of security, existence of changing rooms, women-only spaces and childcare;
- Participation of men and women as decision-makers in sports management;
- Links with women's organisations and universities.

Households and individual members

- Roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family;
- Current attitudes of husbands, wives, parents and relatives to sport;
- The amount of time women and men spend in «productive» and «reproductive» tasks and leisure activities.

Consultation

Question: *Have sufficient time and resources been allocated for consultative processes?*

Consultations should form the basis of any project/programme plan. During these consultations project/programme goals are identified and negotiated, needs are expressed, barriers men and women face in seeking equitable access to services and resources are spelled out, etc. In order to avoid (further) marginalising particular groups and individuals – including marginalisation along gender lines –, it is important to allocate sufficient time to consultative processes.

Consultation must be undertaken with:

- Target communities. An understanding of people's own perceptions of their needs requires gender-sensitive participatory methodologies. Equal percentages of men and women must be consulted, possibly in separate groups to enable people to speak out more freely;
- Groups working on gender and development (NGOs, unions, cooperatives, mothers' groups, religious groups, donors and project staff);
- Government and sports associations;

Consultation is made more effective if it based on context-specific gender expertise, for example, from NGOs, universities or other research organisations.

Examples of questions to ask:

- Where and when do women and men prefer consultations to be held?
- What communication methods are preferred by women and men for exchanging the information they need regarding the project?

Planning

The analysis and consultation should form the basis of any project/programme design and plan.

Question: *Has a gender equality strategy been formulated for the project/programme, with specific objectives to advance gender equality and women's participation? Is the strategy included in the terms of reference?* Formulating specific objectives for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment can prevent the gender perspective from getting «lost» in the course of the project cycle. Having a gender «focal point» can also ensure that gender equality remains a continuing priority.

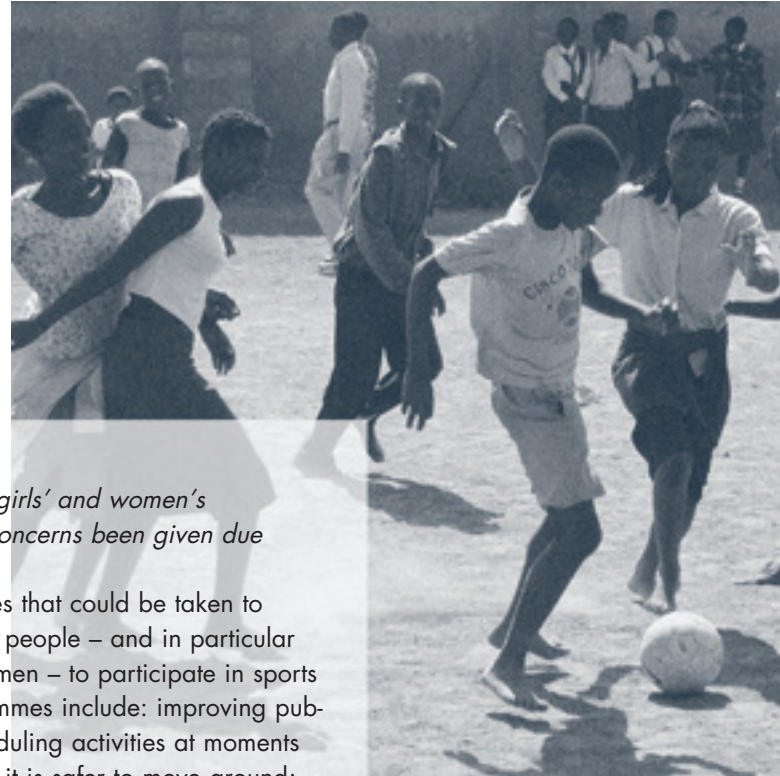
Question: *Have the roles attributed to men and women in the project been compared to the roles they were observed playing in society (in the initial gender analysis)?*

The gender analysis should provide detailed information on the roles attributed to men and women in society, on how these roles are negotiated, and on the obstacles particular groups and individuals have to overcome to change roles. Recruitment procedures must be gender-sensitive. Special efforts may be needed to enable women to become coaches and trainers. Advocacy for change might entail outreach activities such as home visits to family/parents.

Question: *Are women's organisations and/or the National Women's Machinery involved in the planning process?*

Question: *What measures are foreseen to make it possible for all groups and individuals – and in particular for women – to participate fully and durably in the project?*

The gender analysis might show that for some groups and individuals it may be difficult to stay in the project continually. Giving them the possibility of opting in and out of the project might ensure their long-term participation in it.



Question: *Have girls' and women's safety/security concerns been given due attention?*

Specific measures that could be taken to make it safer for people – and in particular for girls and women – to participate in sports projects/programmes include: improving public lighting; scheduling activities at moments of the day when it is safer to move around; organizing sports activities in safe areas and/or in areas close to participants' homes so they do not have to use a means of transportation; etc. One may wish to accommodate existing social norms about what can be done – and who can do what – in open public spaces, and offer both outdoor and indoor sports facilities. There may also be a need to develop codes of conduct for coaches and other project/programme staff.

Question: *Are other development activities included in the project?*

A programme may gain more support from the community if it includes other activities such as health education or community services along with sport. Having sports and other cultural activities at the same location can increase women's participation. Education on gender equality and women's rights can also be introduced in the context of sports projects.

Implementation

Question: Does the project team have adequate gender expertise?

Gender experts must have in-country and sector experience. They must be experienced in the implementation of gender strategies and participatory methodologies, and in monitoring and evaluation.

Question: Do project partners have sufficient skills and access to information?

Each project should have a training and capacity-building component on gender so that everyone involved in the project becomes aware of the problems of gender stereotypes and cultural change. This includes project staff, project partners such as sports associations, and participating girls, women, boys, and men.

Question: Do women participate in decision-making? Are women represented in decision-making?

Encouraging women's leadership means understanding that women may find it difficult to express themselves in the presence of men, particularly in an area traditionally associated with «masculinity». Single-sex activities in the area of sport may provide a context for building confidence as well as physical well-being. There needs to be a supportive and collaborative environment. The project may also need to make targeted efforts to identify and attract female mentors and role models.

Question: Have all project partners been made fully aware of the gender dimensions of the project?

Men and women in institutions need to be made more aware of the importance of women's participation. All organisational literature must be gender-sensitive and use gender-inclusive language.

Question: Are women's organisations and/or a National Women's Machinery involved in the project's implementation?



Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

Question: Do project reporting systems (project meetings, annual reviews, etc.) cover gender issues?

The monitoring of activities, outputs, outcomes and processes should use gender-sensitive indicators. In addition, monitoring reports should contain a special section on progress made towards achieving the project's gender equality objectives.

Evaluation

Question: Have gender-sensitive indicators been developed for evaluating outcomes?

The indicators should be derived from the initial gender analysis/baseline study. They could cover such rubrics as participants' physical fitness, propensity for sexual risk-taking, school performance, and awareness of rules and tactics learnt from sport, as well as ease of access to the programme, its participation rate, dropout rate, etc.

Data may also include gender-disaggregated data on: attendance at training sessions and participation in consultations; men and women in management positions; and men

and women in non-traditional positions. Data should be both quantitative and qualitative to avoid reliance on numerical targets. Women and men must be involved in evaluating the significance of differences and changes and in formulating future strategies based on the evaluations.

The evaluation team needs to have gender expertise.

Question: Are «lessons learnt» being compiled to document the successes and failures of the project's gender strategy and, more broadly, how it tackled gender issues?





Further Resources

Brady, M., 1998, «Laying the Foundation for Girls' Healthy Futures: Can Sports Play a Role?», *Studies in Family Planning* 29 (1): 79-82

<http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/councilarticles/sfp/SFP291Brady.pdf>

Brady, M., Khan, A., 2002, «Letting Girls Play: The Mathare Youth Sports Association's Football Programme for Girls», New York: Population Council

<http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/girlsplay.pdf>

International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), 1999, *Women, Sport and Physical Activity: Sharing Good Practice*, Berlin: ICSSPE

Informations:

<http://www.icsspe.org/portal/index.php?w=&seite=public/contentpage/tx3610.html&z=3>

White, A and Scoretz, D, 2002, *From Windhoek to Montreal, Women and Sport Progress Report 1998-2002*, Tokyo: IWG (Includes the texts of the Brighton Declaration and the Windhoek Call for Action)
<http://www.canada2002.org/e/progress/index.htm>

Groupe de travail international sur les femmes et le sport (GTI)

<http://www.iwg-gti.org/>

WomenSport International

<http://www.sportsbiz.bz/womensport-international/index.htm>

Comité International Olympique (CIO) – Femme et Sport

http://www.olympic.org/fr/organisation/commissions/women/index_fr.asp

European Women and Sport Group (EWS)

<http://www.ews-online.com>

Asian Women and Sport (AWS)

www.jws.or.jp/ae



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