



GENDER EQUITY

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Globally, women are at a greater risk than men of living in extreme poverty. In many regions, gender inequity prevents girls and women from fully realizing their rights, accessing resources and harnessing opportunities. Inequity, which can be manifested by widespread preference of sons over daughters, as well as limited education and work opportunities, is difficult to dismantle. If global development goals are to be realized, concerted efforts to empower women and challenge harmful gender stereotypes are needed.

RIGHT TO PLAY'S APPROACH

Right To Play's innovative methodology is founded on a unique understanding of social learning theory and child development needs. We recognize that sport and play can be powerful tools to challenge inequity and empower girls and young women. Gender equity is therefore a common thread that guides our approach. Our sport and play activities are delivered by carefully-selected coaches and leaders who have been trained to break down traditional gender barriers by promoting the inclusion of girls. Right To Play programs provide girls with a fun and joyful outlet to socialize with their peers and develop social networks outside the home. By participating in our programs, girls build valuable life skills such as leadership, teamwork and self-esteem, while improving their confidence and ability to make decisions in their own lives.



Effective approaches to gender equity require the participation of girls, boys and entire communities. Our interventions challenge gender norms that prevent girls and boys from assuming non-traditional roles. For example, when community members see girls and young women engaged in Right To Play activities, they begin to recognize their physical capabilities and eagerness to learn. This can positively influence perceptions about the roles and abilities of girls and young women.

RIGHT TO PLAY'S RESOURCES & GENDER-BASED TRAINING

Right To Play's programmatic approach involves the application of our specially-designed resources. These resources, including *Red Ball Child Play*®, *Live Safe Play Safe*®, and *Early Child Play*®, are made

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up of sport-based games and activities that have been designed by child development experts to reflect our sensitivity to inclusion and gender equity.

Our coaches and leaders are trained to address barriers to female participation and are skilled at adapting games and activities to ensure full participation. For example, in countries where sex-segregation is practiced, sport and play activities are delivered by female coaches in safe spaces that respect local customs. This approach allows girls to participate, while also sensitizing siblings, families and communities about the importance of female participation in sport and play.

Focus group discussions in Azerbaijan with Right To Play coaches (16 women and 22 men) revealed that 100% of coaches considered 'inclusion of girls' as the second most important outcome of the overall program.

SOME OF RIGHT TO PLAY'S GENDER-BASED ACTIVITIES

In **Mali**, leaders established a girls' basketball team and trained female peer educators to support teachers. Both of these efforts are increasing girls' leadership abilities and providing them with opportunities to take part in sport and play.

"Before Right To Play began in our school, we used to watch the boys play from the holes of the boundary walls of the adjoining boys' school. This is how we developed our interest and learned about volleyball. We were so happy when Right To Play started working in our school through a coach. Now we play our own volleyball games together." – *Girl participant, Pakistan*

In **Liberia**, girl players are being integrated into football games. Young women are also being trained to manage teams and referee matches for the first time. As a result, girls and boys now routinely practice together, and support for female teammates is overwhelmingly strong: some teams now have girl players as captains, strikers, defenders and goalkeepers.

In **Pakistan**, Right To Play has built safe spaces to encourage the participation of girls. In November 2008, Right To Play leaders organized the first ever girls' volleyball tournament at a government high school in the Mansehra district. Six girls' teams from local schools took part – with more than 1,000 students, teachers, and community leaders participating in the awards ceremony that followed.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

Gender equity is everyone's responsibility. Parents, teachers, community leaders, and political champions all have key roles to play. This is why Right To Play's approach to gender equity goes beyond individual capacity-building to include activities that strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders. Right To Play works diligently to promote an understanding of the benefits of sport and play to gender equity at the community and government levels. In addition to delivering sport-based community events on International Women's Day and other special commemorative days, we also work with local and national partners to position the interests of girls and women as a key development priority.



By the end of 2008, roughly half of all Right To Play participants and coaches were girls and women (48% and 53% respectively).

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