

STRIVE (<http://strive.lshtm.ac.uk>)

Sport to empower Indian schoolgirls

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STRIVE partner ICRW-ARO is training young women as mentors to implement a new version of their successful Parivartan programme in Shivaji Nagar slum community of Mumbai. Previously, adolescent boys were mentored by specially trained cricket coaches to challenge violence against women. Parivartan for Girls translates the approach into an empowerment process for adolescent girls as they take up physical space which has, until now, not been considered 'appropriate' for them.

Since 2008, the Delhi-based Asia Regional Office of the International Centre for Research on Women ([ICRW-ARO](#)) has designed, run and evaluated the [Parivartan](#) programme in Shivaji Nagar, "[coaching boys into men](#)". Using the national love of cricket as a springboard, Parivartan aimed to:

- promote gender-equitable attitudes
- encourage respect for girls and women
- equip coaches as mentors and role models of positive gender norms

No sport exerts the same pull for girls as cricket does for boys. Quite the opposite – girls are not encouraged to play sport at all, especially in public. So Parivartan for Girls will take a different path to encourage girls to get fit.

ICRW is training mentors to coach girls in Kabaddi, a traditional Indian contact sport, in order for the girls to:

- play Kabaddi and improve physical fitness
- have the opportunity to occupy public space safely
- discuss topics ranging from life skills and health to gender, violence and sexual harassment
- increase self-esteem, self-confidence and educational aspirations

I never felt so strong: My body is in my control."

Mentor in the midst of training for the Parivartan for Girls programme.

Ten mentors are being trained. They will lead the programme, engaging up to 150 girls, aged 12–16 years, in sport, discussion and group education over a period of 15 months. Parivartan for Girls is a collaboration between Maharashtra State Kabaddi Association, ICRW and a local community development NGO called Apnalaya. Through the STRIVE consortium, ICRW will work with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical medicine to:

- conduct a process evaluation of changes in attitudes and behaviours (girls, families, mentors, community)
- document implementation challenges, such as backlash
- analyse social and gender norms and any perceived shifts

Through sports, girls will acquire new interpersonal networks, develop a sense of identity, learn negotiation skills and teamwork, and access new opportunities. Jumping and kicking around is a way to get girls out of their comfort zone and show what they're made of. Ultimately, fitness can be a very empowering experience."

Dr Madhumita Das, senior technical specialist at the Asia Regional office of the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW-ARO)

Read blogs about Parivartan:

[Wrestling for Equality](#)

[Beyond Project Boundaries: Parivartan mentors selected for community vigilance group](#)

Source: <http://strive.lshtm.ac.uk/news/sport-empower-indian-schoolgirls-loading>