



**British
High Commission**



**PRESS
RELEASE**

NEW FEMALE SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME COMES TO SAINT VINCENT *local efforts to improve child safeguarding practices*

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10TH : KINGSTOWN, Saint Vincent: Efforts to substantially increase the number of skilled female coaches/mentors to help improve their understanding of basic child rights and ability to communicate and handle conflict situations are underway in Saint Vincent.

Children make up more than a third of the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. A recent Human Child Rights report, said 50% live in poverty. 94% of children attend elementary school. Among them, 25% never finish because they must work to help their families.

The Female Sports Diplomacy and Child Safeguarding programme (FemDip), supported by the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Football for Hope Initiative seeks to identify best practice in communities working directly with affected local youth, peer mentors and coaches to help re-educate and register coaches and officials as child safe mentors.

"I am delighted to be able to help get this important programme underway," said Annie McGee, the British Government Representative to St Vincent and the Grenadines, at the recently held physical education session in Victoria Park with participants from St. Marys RC Primary School. "It will make it safer for children to play and do the things they love as well as educate coaches and mentors on best safeguarding practices".

The programme's two key objectives are focusing on child centred rights development and in the process improving child safeguarding practices and public diplomacy, where an advocacy campaign will educate on the need for safe spaces to play and include interventions from well-known UK sports personalities in a bid to strengthen links between the UK, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenada.

Local programme country coordinator and seasoned veteran teacher Ian Sardine added: "Sport is a most effective means to reach young people, bridging gaps and allowing for tutoring in a range of life skills that will alter their outlook and approach in communities".

Working in local communities, the programme will extend existing efforts to reach the most vulnerable segment of the population. It will also establish one of the region's first child safeguarding registration programmes, providing training in child safeguarding methods and registration of 45 coaches/youth mentors, the first programme of its kind in the Eastern Caribbean.

SACRED SPORTS FOUNDATION INC. is the implementing agency for this initiative and is a legally registered not for profit charity, economically, politically independent, non denominational organization based in St. Lucia, West Indies. The organization's focus is to provide more comprehensive, holistic sustainable solutions as it looks to help tackle critical social issues, offering youth greater employment opportunities, improved child welfare, environmental sustainability, health and youth development.

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