



Implementing development goals: Sport and gender equality

1. Sport for Development

One of the goals of German development policy is to harness the power of sport and exercise more effectively in international development cooperation activities. The aim is to create opportunities for personal development for people of all ages and to strengthen social cohesion.

Sport activities with a social and educational component can raise awareness in a wide range of areas – not only among the children and young people taking part, but also among coaching staff. These areas include education, health, peace and the environment as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender and inclusion. By creating structured opportunities for participation, activities in the field of sport can also help to strengthen civil society; a further priority area in German development cooperation.

When used in a targeted way, sport can play an important role above and beyond the development of physical skills. It can promote the transfer of learning and can be used as an instrument of education. It can contribute to preventing HIV and Aids and violence and has a positive impact on the physical and mental well-being of children and young people in general. And finally, it

provides participants with the opportunity to learn life skills that will help them overcome difficult situations in their everyday lives and improve their prospects for the future.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) commissioned the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH with the implementation of the sector programme ‘Sport for Development’ with the aim of making a significant contribution in this area and developing effective ways of using sport in German development cooperation activities.

In a total of five country components across three continents, approaches and methods have been tested and further developed together with the project’s partners. The ‘Sport for Development’

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



5 GENDER EQUALITY



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



approach is also being implemented in two new regional projects.

The United Nations (UN) outcome document ‘Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ highlights the important role sport has to play in enabling sustainable development and emphasises the contribution it can make to development, peace, health, education and social inclusion.

The use of sport to promote gender equality contributes directly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in this case specifically to SDG 5 ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’.

This paper provides practitioners and theorists operating in the field of development cooperation with an overview of the ways in which sport can be used in the context of gender equality. It introduces the different approaches and priority areas, offers insight into the practical lessons learned and results achieved so far and presents example projects. The sector project ‘Sport for Development’ also offers additional materials as well as advice on mainstreaming the approach in the context of gender equality and on the use of sport in other sectors.

2. Background

For German development cooperation gender equality is one of the keys to unlocking the development of democratic societies based on human rights, social justice and sustainability. This is also consistent with the SDGs which



not only identify gender equality as a separate goal but also see it as a key component of other development goals in areas such as health (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4).

Gender equality is at the core as a primary or a secondary objective in well over half of all

Sport improves the self-confidence of girls and young women by encouraging them to assume responsibility in teams and making them more aware of their strengths.

BMZ commissions. ‘Sport for Development’ is a relatively new, but highly effective approach to promoting gender equality as well as other development objectives.

Girls and women in all areas of sport – as athletes, coaches, employees or managers of sports clubs, referees and even spectators – are under-represented and often disadvantaged. This is due to the fact that sport is historically and traditionally associated with masculinity and to a number of other factors relating to gender inequality. The ‘Sport for Development’ approach not only promotes equal participation in sports, but also aims to promote gender equality in the wider sense. The rights that girls and women fight for in sports can bring about change in everyday life and society. Sport provides a platform to question traditional gender roles and to change these in the long term – especially when the symbolism of public spaces can be harnessed to this end. As a physical activity, sport offers a safe space in which issues such as reproductive and sexual rights, health and attitudes to risk can be discussed. Group dynamics can also be used to address the issue of





respectful behaviour towards the opposite sex and to practise this through games and sporting activities. Well-trained coaches and sports teachers can act as role models and lead by example with regard to gender equality. Sportsmen and -women themselves can become agents of change for gender equality.

However, there are certain risks and challenges that need to be handled in a (culturally) sensitive way when using sport to promote gender equality.

The participation of girls and women in sport often depends on both socio-economic and cultural factors. A lack of time and the persistence of traditional gender roles can make it difficult for girls and women to take part in physical activity outside their homes.

Coaches can encourage the group to reflect on stereotypes and gender roles in a fun environment.

Many women and girls who participate in sports still face conventional gender stereotyping, which dictates, for example, that women with athletic bodies are not considered aesthetically attractive. They are often the subject of significant prejudice in sports still dominated by men. In some societies, girls' and women's participati-

on in sport in public places may even be considered a provocative act. More often than their male peers, girls and women avoid taking part in sport for fear of certain injuries and concern for their safety on or on the way to the sports

Equal access to sport is an important human right for girls and young women.

grounds. Many also believe false or unproven claims that sport could have a negative impact on their reproductive health. Furthermore, there are no toilets or changing rooms in many places. Due to these challenges it is important to plan and implement tailor-made and culturally sensitive measures in cooperation with those involved and to consider their roles and positions in the local context. It is also crucial in this regard to create safe (sports) facilities for girls and young women.

3. Approaches and priority areas

BMZ's three-dimensional, cross-sectoral approach is promoting gender equality focuses on gender mainstreaming, empowerment and policy dialogue. In the first two fields in particular, sport can be used as an instrument to promote

Namibia

Strengthening girls and young women

Girls and young women in Namibia face major challenges growing up. In addition to marked gender inequality, Namibia has one of the highest HIV rates in the world, and one in five women is pregnant for the first time before their 20th birthday. The sector programme on 'Sport for Development' therefore focuses on measures to improve the perspectives of girls and young women. It not only facilitates access to sports activities, but also works with this target group to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and promote health and life skills using sports education methods.

Together with partners such as the German Football Association (DFB), the Westphalia Football and Athletics Federaton (FLVW) and the Namibia Football Association (NFA), a 'Girls' Centre' was opened in Windhoek in 2016. For young sportswomen from disadvantaged families it serves as a safe space where they can come to participate in sports and take advantage of other educational and social services. For example, the centre offers information on training, qualifications and employment in the hospitality and tourism sector for young sportswomen who live at the Girls'



Centre and in the surrounding township of Katutura/Windhoek. It also helps them to find internships at tourism companies.

While the Centre can only cater for a small group each year, the NFA's 'Galz&Goals' programme works with around 3,000 girls and young women nationwide. A football (Football4Life) and basketball (Basketball4Life) manual provides coaches with information on issues such as gender, HIV and AIDS, alcohol, drugs, safe sex and contraception and how to integrate these issues into training units.



Gwen Joyce Narises from Namibia dropped out of school in grade 10 and has always been very insecure about what her future would look like. After having lived in the backroom of the office of the Namibian Football Association on an informal basis for a year she moved into the new NFA 'Girls' Centre' in 2016. There she completed a free training in 'Restaurant Management' and got a permanent position in a renowned hotel in Windhoek as supervisor. Besides, she continues to play football passionately and makes plans for the future: 'The fact that I am earning my own money and am fully independent makes me very proud. Going through the training has taught me a lot of patience and to stick to what I really want. I believe I have learned this for life.'

gender equality at the individual, community and societal levels. Various approaches and priorities can be applied:

- The empowerment of girls and women is an important prerequisite for achieving gender equality. Sport can play a major role in strengthening the self-worth and self-confidence of girls and women. Acting as coaches, referees, sports teachers and employees in sports clubs or at schools also strengthens their leadership and management capacities.
- Sport can be used to discuss the topic of sexual and reproductive health and rights with girls and young women in a protected environment. It is essential in this context to have female coaches who can serve as role models and discuss questions and problems that are taboo in other settings. Studies show that female athletes are more risk averse when it comes to sexual behaviour and have fewer children overall. For boys and men too, the protected environment offered by sport can be used to address sensitive issues.
- Girls and women engage in far less physical activity than their male peers, despite the fact that sport and exercise are a cost-effective way

Well-trained coaches can act as role models for gender equality and become agents of change.

of preventing certain illnesses. Regular physical activity helps to prevent many non-communicable diseases – including diseases such as osteoporosis and breast cancer, which disproportionately affect women or affect women only.

- Sport has transformative potential when it co-



mes to gender and the specific roles and behaviour of women and men as well as girls and boys in a sports environment. It provides a platform for addressing and discussing traditional gender roles. The effects of this extend far beyond the boundaries of sport. In this context, it is important to ensure that girls and women have access to sports activities and to remove gender-specific barriers. Particularly with boys and men sport can be used to discuss the concepts of masculinity and respect for the opposite sex.

Sport provides a safe and protected environment in which sensitive issues can be discussed freely and without prejudice – with both girls and boys.

4. Lessons learned and results achieved

Gender is a key issue in the pilot measures initiated by the sector programme on ‘Sport for Development’ and by other sport-related projects in the field of German development cooperation. The scientific support provided by the German Sport University Cologne (DSHS) in relation to country-specific measures takes gender-specific data and indicators into account. All projects are aiming at reaching as many girls and young women as possible and, in particular, increasing the number of female coaches and teachers. Gender-relevant issues are also incorporated into many of the training methods developed with partners. One example of this is the development of the ‘Treino Social’ method which has been developed in Brazil. Gender is one of four priority areas incorporated into



Afghanistan

Supporting girls and young women through sport at girls' schools

Sports lessons for girls may not sound like a revolutionary idea, but for a long time they were unthinkable in Afghanistan. During the Taliban rule and decades of war, Afghans were not allowed to practice any form of sport or cultural activities. Girls and women were denied access to schools. Today, Afghanistan is still ranked 169 out of 187 in the Gender Development Index (GDI). The measures implemented as part of the sector programme on 'Sport for Development' therefore focus on promoting child-oriented and practical sports activities in girls' schools. Up to now, sports lessons in these schools have been purely theoretical if carried out at all. Moreover, sports teachers lack the training to provide high-quality physical education.

Working in cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Education and the GIZ Basic and Secondary Education Programme for Afghanistan (BEPA), the programme focused on two areas: On the one hand, 'master coaches' were trained according to the „Sport for Development“ principles. In training workshops, they developed relevant, practical skills that can then be used to convey a practical and child-oriented approach to teaching physical education to teachers working at girls' schools. Visits to 20 schools in Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul confirmed that almost all of the teachers



who took part in the trainings are now implementing the methods they learned in sports lessons at the schools.

The second programme component involved the development of a course concept for physical education that the Afghan Ministry of Education plans to integrate into primary school teacher training at teacher training colleges. The resulting curriculum was piloted with various partners at a workshop in November 2016 and adapted accordingly.

These two components are intended to ensure the sustainability and broad impact of the programs. As a result of the programme's activities, girls are able to assert their right to take part in sport. The programme ran from 2015 - 2017.





football training in the country in addition to health, peaceful co-existence and environmental awareness. Coaches complete a raft of practical exercises that enable them to integrate gender equality issues into sports coaching immediately after their training.

Through sport, girls and young women can access other education and health services.

The ‘Youth Development through Football’ (YDF) project in South Africa shows that activities in the field of gender do not always have to focus on girls and young women. For example, monitoring reports confirmed that, as a result of activities carried out with boys, violent behaviour in young men fell by 35% after one year. In terms of mainstreaming gender issues, the regional programme on ‘Sport for Development

in Africa’ has achieved positive results with regard to the construction and rehabilitation of sports facilities. In conjunction with the Inter-disciplinary Centre for Gender Studies of the University of Bern, it has developed a ‘check-list for gender-responsive standards for sports grounds’, which is tailored to the needs of those planning and realising the construction of sports grounds. These standards cover the core areas of physical integrity, socio-cultural norms, safety, health, hygiene, access, mobility, protection and prevention.

These experiences and examples show that sport can help ensure that girls and women play an equal role in society and that boys and men can also be involved in this process.

For further information and advice, please do not hesitate to contact us!

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