



CASE STUDY :: 03

LOCATION

Nairobi

MYSA: letting girls play

OBJECTIVES

Empowering women

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Mathare and the neighbouring slums are the largest and the poorest in Africa. What outsiders hear and read on slums largely about drugs, illegal beer, prostitution, AIDS, thugs and mob justice. Most (over 70%) are hardworking mothers and their kids who often have been abandoned by one or a series of husbands / fathers. After the government's collaboration with MYSA, hundreds of street kids are processed every week at the Juvenile court in Nairobi. Most are charged as vagrants. They are taken to Juvenile courts on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday with their fates hanging on the balance.

The sports project was actually the first project in MYSA .It was started in the year 1987 and the idea was to involve the kids within the Mathare area in active sports with the main sport being football. MYSA has been dependent on voluntary work pumped in by the many well wishers.

Adolescence is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood when gender disparities in opportunity and expectations become pronounced. Boys begin to enjoy more privileges than girls; they gain autonomy, mobility, and have more social opportunities, including participation in sports. For girls, restrictive gender norms weigh heavily on their ability to actively participate in community life. Moreover, the behavior of boys in the public space inhibits girls from participation in sports and denies them the positive social and health benefits that boys have long enjoyed. process of integrating girls into a community-based youth sports program.

The Population Council was an international, non-profit, non-governmental institution that sought to improve the well-being and reproductive health of current and future generations around the world. It helped achieve a humane, equitable, and sustainable balance between people and resources. The Council conducted biomedical, social science, and public health research and helped build research capacities in developing countries. The main focus of the research was to help the young girls of Kenya to develop new and valued skills, form friendships, receive and give peer support, and enhance their social networks. It enabled them to enjoy freedom of expression and movement. It facilitated mentoring support from trusted adults, who serve as girls' advocates and take advantage of new learning and educational opportunities.

45 Sport has offered girls in Kenya's Mathare Youth Sports Association exciting opportunities to broaden their horizons. Girls who play a team sport learn about social and group dynamics and how to work together. Sport encourages girls to become leaders and to participate in civil society.

PURPOSE

- improve opportunities for young girls and facilitate smooth transition from childhood to adulthood
- develop new and valued skills
- form friendships, receive and give peer support and enhance their social networks
- enjoy freedom of expression and movement
- receive mentoring support from trusted adults, who can serve as girls' advocates
- take advantage of new learning and educational opportunities
- encourage women to take up leadership positions.

PARTNERS

Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), a nongovernmental organization (NGO)

COST AND DATE

Mathare youth association was formed in 1987
Letting Girls Play was established in

TARGET

15-24 year old women



OUTCOMES/IMPACT

The research study revealed that 'letting girls play':

- provided girls with a safe and supportive environment in which they are treated with dignity.
- helped develop new and valued skills
- enabled youth to form friendships, receive and give peer support, and enhance their social networks so facilitating a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood
- facilitated freedom of expression and movement, and enabled youth to receive mentoring support from trusted adults, who served as girls' advocates
- enabled youth to take advantage of new learning and educational opportunities.

Adolescence is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood when gender disparities in opportunity and expectations become pronounced. Boys begin to enjoy more privileges, gain autonomy, mobility, and have more social opportunities, than girls. For girls, restrictive gender norms weigh heavily on their ability to actively participate in community life. The objective of this research is to overcome the gender disparity and facilitate programs focused on the all-round development of girls in society. The research, implemented at the behest of the Government of Kenya, provided information and insights into youth empowerment, with an emphasis on girls. In most of the underdeveloped countries like Kenya, girls are not provided with all their rights and benefits in society, due to existing restrictive practices and policies. Similar research programs can be replicated with government support in other regions to analyze and suggest alternatives for the over all development of girls, who are basically downtrodden and deprived of privileges.

The Mathare Youth Sports Association's Football Programme for Girls', – a project which found that '*sports can be a vehicle for social development and for the transformation of gender norms ... [and] help boys and girls develop new skills, consolidate friendships, and break down social and gender barriers to personal achievement*' (Brady & Banu Kahn 2002).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective programmes were built upon good ideas and a solid understanding of the prevailing norms and beliefs in the communities in which programmes operate. The conducted research and experience suggested that there were several critical issues, which programme planners need to address as they develop programs for girls:

- Programmes that addressed the broad needs of girls proved more acceptable to parents and community leaders than one that was focused solely on sports.
- Recruitment evidence from a variety of settings suggested that girls wanted to participate in new activities and programmes
- Need to accommodate girls' responsibilities for domestic duties
- Need for flexibility in participation, allowing girls to enter or re-enter programmes easily

Enlist the help of parents and community leaders



FURTHER INFORMATION

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