

PLAY LIKE A GIRL ATHLETE WORKSHOP SERIES

Social Change

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The main objective of the program is to promote sustained participation in sports amongst girls at an early age and to ensure they have a positive relationship with sport to effectively tackle our entrenched gender gap.

The workshop series covers interactive sessions led by experts in diverse fields in sport addressing themes such as Mapping the Female Body, A Sound Mind in a Sound Body: Anti-Doping Mental Preparation and Nutrition, Sexual Harassment in Sport and Leadership. Also “Talk Back” session with some of Barbados’ renowned female national athletes who became mentors to the young athletes.

What is the purpose of the project?

The series of workshops are to promote and enhance the development of young women (11-18) in sport by promoting sport as an integral part of girls' lives and to inspire girls to lead the charge in their personal development as the country's future elite athletes.

Also to support retention in their participation in sports at this critical life stage as rates of drop out at this key transition point is notably higher for girls than boys in Barbados. Targeting girls at these key life stages is paramount to maintaining the healthy lifestyles for girls.

The purpose is to facilitate sessions for the future of young female athletes on and off the field of play. A safe space aimed at celebrating their many accomplishments thus far, in life both in sport and in their everyday lives.

What were the enablers that proved successful in your project?

Rates of drop out at the key transition points from Primary to Secondary level are notably higher for girls than boys. Some issues that have been identified as reasons young girls don't participate in or continue with sports in Barbados are;

Parents promote sport as a boy's activity, and give boys more recognition and support

Teenage girls become more body conscious and don't feel they are the right shape to play

Society promotes that it isn't feminine to play sport

Teachers and Parents promote the idea that sports get in the way of my academic performance

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What impact did your project have?

Women in Sport have worked to champion girl's participation in sport and physical activity for a number of years. Participants in the PLG athlete Development Series came from a wide cross section of the population both culturally and ethnically with the program welcoming its first Muslim girl in the last cohort. The socioeconomic status of the group was also diverse.

There are been over 200 participants from 20 National Federations, 26 Sporting Disciplines with 21% of the participants compete in two or more sports. The girls came from 19 Educational Institutions 1 Primary School, 14 Secondary Schools

(11yrs – 16yrs) and 4 Post-Secondary (16yrs -18yrs)

From the inception of the PLG program the interest, participation and request for workshops has expanded to not only include Sporting Federations but also Schools, Clubs and parents.

What were the outcomes for women?

Several of the mentors and participants have gone onto successfully represent the island at major championships including the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, and eight (8) went on to gain Academic and/or Athletic Scholarships. At least 75% of the participants remained in their sport and some transitioned to assistant coaching and officiating.

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