

Boxgirls Kenya

Using boxing to promote young women's rights

Boxgirls Kenya is a small, youthful, interactive and dynamic organisation operating in the disadvantaged areas of Kariobangi, Nairobi, that works towards creating a world where uprooted, marginalised and excluded young girls are supported to lead dignified lives in secure communities.



Location	Nairobi and Western Kenya
Organisation	Boxgirls Kenya
Start-end date	2007 – ongoing
Target group	8-23 years old (some young boys aged 9-15)
Reach	Between 2007 and 2014, the programme has reached 900 girls.
Partners	African Women Development Fund, Match Women Fund Canada, Ford Foundation, and fiscally supported by Comic Relief through the Women Win initiative
Key facts	The programme involves more than 900 girls and young women who meet weekly for boxing training on self-defence, building self-confidence, self-esteem, body fitness and leadership.
For inspiration	www.boxgirls.org/home-2/international/kenya/

Summary

Boxgirls' motto is "Strong girls, safe communities". Using boxing and working with selected schools, Boxgirls trains participants in boxing in order to break gender stereotypes related to girls and sports. Boxing is used as an entry point for promoting leadership and increasing personal security (emotional, physical, relational, spiritual and mental). All training is play-based, girl-friendly and effective. Boxgirls fight every minute of every day to imbue girls' lives with hope, strength and joy. Access to sport is a right for every human being, as well as being an entry point to other fundamental rights.

Boxgirls uses sport to build a world where young girls enjoy their childhood, are free to speak, move around and be themselves without fear of sexual molestation. Boxgirls envisages a day when young girls and young women can run joyfully in the wind, letting the body stretch to its full height. Boxgirls wants to see a world in which girls can trust their teachers, parents, neighbours and their community without fear of being abused, a world where they can explore who they are without being constrained by poverty and other deprivation.

Boxgirls Kenya is a founding member of the Boxgirls International Network (www.boxgirls.org).

Keys to success

Tailored Curriculum

Boxgirls has built a comprehensive life skills training curriculum that is integrated with sport training. The curriculum provides participants with confidence and direction in carrying out their training programmes. Boxgirls has trained its teachers to use the curriculum and worked to make it available via its online platform, www.tools.boxgirls.org. This curriculum has enabled Boxgirls to uniquely access the leadership potential of under-privileged girls and to build their capacity.

International promotion and experience

Boxgirls was invited to speak at the UNESCO World Youth Forum on Sports, Culture and Peace in Nanjing, China. Boxgirls shared with the audience the innovative practices used to promote the sport of boxing in the community through the programme. Boxgirls' coaches are members of the Kenyan National Boxing Team and have represented Kenya at the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.

The programme was featured on U.S.A. Global News Channel (PBS) and CNN as one of the few organisations using sports to equip girls with self-defence and survival skills. This international promotion of the programme allows Boxgirls to increase its recognition and its ability to further develop the programme for the benefit of the girls taking part.

Local Influence

Boxgirls is a grassroots organisation whose leaders and coaches are drawn from the communities that they serve. Utilising local networks and generating trust from parents and community leaders makes it easier to engage girls with sport programming. Community activation through parades, street clean-ups and tournaments ensures that messages about girls' rights and fighting gender-based violence are transmitted to the wider community.





Sport for All objectives

Promote sport and physical activity

Boxgirls focuses on creating strong and confident girls to challenge gender stereotypes in sports and to actively socialise through sports participation. Boxgirls trains coaches to a very high technical level, as shown through their participation in the Kenyan national teams and participation in Commonwealth and Olympic Games. This technical skill helps them act as role models and further support and develop the sport of boxing.

Support active societies

One of the core objectives of the Boxgirls programme is to create partnerships with the local schools in the community. By forging strong relationships with these schools, it allows a more efficient working relationship with the communities in which the programme is active in order to collectively tackle issues affecting girls and young women there. Boxgirls also works with parents of participants, conveying to them the power of sport to increase girls' rights, as well as participation in school and community development from the ground up.

Foster Olympic legacy

Boxgirls Kenya had the honour of developing the first female Olympian to represent Kenya in boxing. As a current Boxgirls coach, she inspires younger girls and teaches them determination and perseverance in reaching their goals. Participants in the programme are taught to become role models who promote the Olympic values of friendship and respect among younger girls.

How is the programme communicated?

Awareness of the programme is achieved through visiting schools and engaging in face-to-face conversations with young girls and parents. Boxgirls Kenya also welcomes journalists and international students to visit its programmes. Boxgirls Kenya maintains a website online and also shares its curriculum over the www.tools.boxgirls.org platform. Boxgirls Kenya and Boxgirls International share their experiences through participation in international conferences and through partnerships with UNOSDP (United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace) Youth Leadership camps.

How is the programme evaluated?

The programme has been evaluated externally by Comic Relief which shows that boxing is a suitable instrument to sensitise the girls and community about gender-based violence and girls' rights. The evaluation also praised the values of Boxgirls being rooted in the community and working with a social justice perspective for the uplifting of the entire community. Boxgirls International has been evaluated by the German Sport University and has shown the girls participating became more confident, tolerant and challenging of discrimination. In addition to commissioning these external evaluations, Boxgirls Kenya is a learning organisation and gathers data for its own use and planning. There is a parents' committee and captain structures with the girls to provide timely feedback to the programme leadership and make sure the programmes fit community needs.

“Boxgirls has shaped me to be confident leader who understands the importance of negotiation, analysis of issues and how to find solutions.”

**Sarah Ndisi – East and Central African
Featherweight Champion**





Join the sporting society!

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active (World Health Organization). Let's reverse the trend and get moving.



Promote sport and physical activity

Recent changes in leisure and work practices, diet and a host of other trends has led to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle amongst the world's population. Sport for all programmes aim to promote sport and physical activity to mitigate the negative effects associated with these developments.



Improve public health and well-being

Sport and physical activity plays an important role in making societies healthier, happier and safer into the future. Successful sport for all projects help to stimulate these common benefits across entire communities.



Support active societies

Active societies involve many stakeholders such as parents, coaches, schools, local clubs, sports organisations, event organisers and grassroots activities, to name but a few. They can all be hugely influential in promoting healthier lifestyles within a community. Programmes that support and reinforce their efforts are vital for the encouragement and promotion of active societies around the world.



Provide equal access to sport

Every member within a community should have equal opportunity to live an active and healthy lifestyle. Effective grassroots programmes place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that all of their participants can enjoy this opportunity regardless of physical condition, race, gender, social conditions, geographical location or otherwise.



Foster Olympic legacy

The Olympic Games provide a source of inspiration and a vibrant expression of the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. This unique power can energise communities to develop projects enabling and inspiring people to become and stay physically active into the future.

Become a key player in your community

A useful platform has been designed for organisations across the Olympic Movement that are managing Sport for All programmes, providing them with the knowledge, understanding and tools needed to improve existing programmes worldwide, as well as to create new ones.

Get inspired by more than 45 projects around the world

Learn more about best practices with our toolkit

Create your project based on proven academic research and experience of organisations

Share your experience and lead the way to inspire more projects

Connect with a vast network fueled by inspired partners

Find more information

- Sports and Active Society Programmes
- A Guide to Implementation
- www.olympic.org
- activesociety@olympic.org