

The Sports Division of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, chaired by Mag. Robert Pelousek, supports several sports projects in an ongoing successful partnership with Women without Borders, in order to implement sports as tool for development cooperation. In this context, the Sports Division contributes to the realisation of the current United Nations International Year of Sports and Physical Education.



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Women without Borders
A-1060 Vienna, Gumpendorfer Straße 22/9
T: +43/1/533 45 51, F: +43/1/533 45 52
E-Mail: office@women-without-borders.org
www.women-without-borders.org



Women Winning the Future!

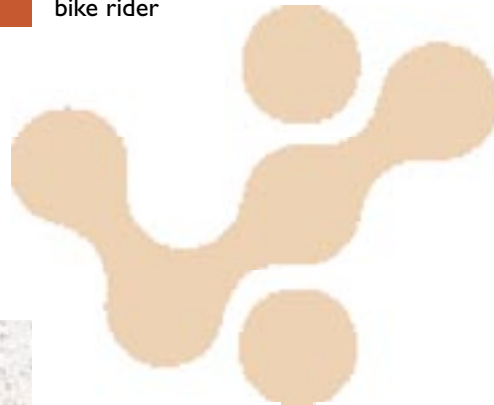
Sports Empowerment for Peace and Change!

Play, Compete and Win!



“So fun to jump, so good to win, so impressive to be on the gate with the crowd waiting for the lions to ride the track – so strong to get into a turn with seven other riders. I feel great when I work on the back wheel, because it is all about balance.”

Karine Chambonneau: 26, BMX sports bike rider



© Karine Chambonneau



“I am in the National team of Afghanistan, football is the best of all, the king of sports. The boys in my neighborhood used to shout ‘she is not a good girl, she is playing football’, but I did not care, I played anyway. People do not like when girls go outside, they say, freedom is not for girls. I have two goals, I want to be the best football player and the best journalist.”

© Eva Maria Gaus/WwB

Khalida Popal: 18, Afghan footballer

Welcome to Women without Borders!

Today women are players in business, politics, science and sports. They are smart, ambitious and ready for action. The challenge now is for women to move from excellence to significance. Women must reach a critical presence, make their voices heard, transform society in partnership with men into a gender just arena. Then societies will greatly benefit from women co-shaping the positive trends in their countries.

Women need strength and confidence for leadership roles. The regular playing of sports creates healthier bodies and stronger minds. Better circulation helps us to think clearer, react faster and cope better with stress. Studies claim that women who compete in sports have a healthy self-esteem, a positive self-image and even have more power in their life skills. From a better life balance to negotiating safer sex, and their career path, everything is on track.

The challenge, the success, the development of competence in sports and the acceptance of others through playing together

strengthens women and their ambitions. For in the female mindset traditionally co-operation is seen as ‘good’ and competition as ‘bad’, but through sports we learn that competition can be fun and productive. We must be proud of our strength and show muscles as we work towards our goals.

Women without Borders therefore include sports as a powerful method for empowering women in situations of crisis and transition around the world.

Women and girls in many areas experience a loss of freedom. Sports gives women access to new networks, developing a group identity and becoming energised. Sports and games provide an opportunity to break up limiting social behavioural patterns.

Through sports, women can play a key role in the peaceful development of their societies.

Lets play, compete and win a gender just future!

Yours
Edit Schlaffer



© Xenia Hausner/WwB

Edit Schlaffer
Chairwoman WwB



© Georgina Nitzsche/WWB

Include Women – Involve Women Invest in Women

Women without Borders is an international research-based advocacy and PR organisation for women in politics and civil society, based in Austria. Women without Borders supports women all over the world as they strive towards the participation of women in all levels of decision-making. We uphold positive politics that advance the specific inclusion of women in public life.

Women without Borders stands for peaceful conflict resolutions in countries of transition and reconstruction. We promote a future without fear, suppression and violence. Through global dialogue, targeted information, sports initiatives, with model projects and the creation of alliances with international partner organisations, Women without Borders empowers women towards positive change. Women without Borders has grown into a

well recognised voice standing for positive alternatives and creative solutions.

Living in these critical times, societies need to tap into the talents and energies of all their citizens. Women need self-confidence and to trust in their competence to join in this new vision and bring balance into public sphere.

So we call on all decision makers to include women, for women to involve themselves and for communities to invest in women.

When women get involved from education to economics, from faith to family, from credit to credibility and from governance to good will – everything just gets better.

This could be you!

Sports pioneers as role models for young girls and women

Women's sports have a long tradition and today of course, women can be seen in all kinds of sporting activities. However, women's sports do not seem to have the same top ranking significance as male sports do and top female players still have specific problems to confront – as an ongoing action research project, funded by the European Commission, "Sports, Media and Stereotypes", points out. Women without Borders is responsible on behalf of the Sports Division of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, for the Austrian part of this trans-national project which is coordinated by Iceland.*)

The lack of female role models runs right across the sports spectrum. Fewer girls than boys are motivated by their parents to join school or community clubs for team sports. In the media, pictures of top female sports players are rare. Indeed there are few female sports journalists, who perhaps are rather taken as fringe sports experts by their male colleagues. In the public perception, sports are still mostly male pursuits. And finally, there are too few female sports trainers in sports education for girls.

*) www.jafnretti.is/sms



Fair Play – in a gender just arena!

This Women without Borders project provides a booklet and a tool for encouragement and inspiration of girls as well as a 'how to' guide for future movers and shakers in sports and beyond. The booklet includes testimonials, in words and pictures, from courageous female athletes in the world, who crossed over cultural barriers, overcame gender limits and broke free of stereotyping.

Their stories and their success show young girls what can be achieved with vision and determination. With this booklet in their hands, girls can envisage themselves as front runners and jump up and join in.

Now girls no longer have to play like a man, to win like a woman!

'When I play football I become brave, just at that moment when I enter the field, and I want to win, I feel excited and happy!'

Diane Beruldsen, president and founder of the International Women's Flag Football Association.



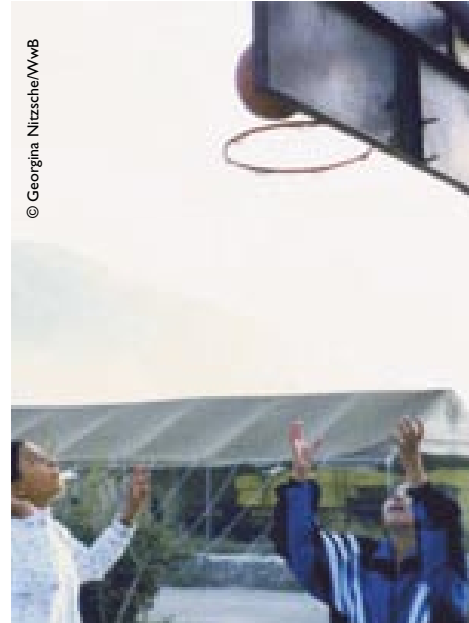
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Basketball for Girls

Under the reign of the Taleban, girls were literally under house arrest. They have forgotten or had never learnt how to play and move around. As child development is closely linked to physical development, this loss of childhood play could have long lasting effects on an entire generation. Girls, then, have much catching up to do concerning freedom of movement, physical expression and by extension, self-confidence. Team sports and games are an ideal way to redress this balance.

The Basketball for Girls project was set up in 2001 to create, introduce and monitor basketball as an education leisure activity for girls schools in Afghanistan. This pilot project provided courts, costumes and equipment in two girls schools in Kabul and a Women without Borders training handbook and sports empowerment brochure was tested and used. Up to 500 girls had the chance to practice basketball skills, compete in matches and train in teams in this unique initiative.

Afghan girls had the opportunity to experience dynamic action and importantly, contributed to the normalisation of the national perspective on female physical activity.



Asked how they felt whilst playing, one girl replied "I feel free", indeed their perspectives had totally changed.

In a short time, Afghan girls made a remarkable transition. Girls who just months before were not allowed to go to school, are today dreaming of going to university and becoming pilots and doctors.

Rwanda: Kicking for Reconciliation!

Self confidence, life skills and healing through sport

Today, the average age in Rwanda is approximately 18 years. The youth then, have the responsibility of leading the country into a safe and stable future. Women, who are representing half of the parliament, have taken on a very special role in reconciliation, peace building and social healing processes.

Current research supports that youth who play sports are up to 90% less likely to

- be part of street gangs
- use harmful narcotics
- have unsafe sex
- have unplanned pregnancies.

These factors are extremely relevant for Africa, where HIV/AIDS is threatening the continent, and the use of street drugs is rising.

With the generous sponsorship of Austrian Sport, 160 girls in Kigali are playing football in the sports fields around their school. Playing football, they gain self confidence, take responsibility, work in teams and develop the physical and emotional balance they need to face the everyday challenges in Rwanda.

The training of Hutu and Tutsi girls is in line with national efforts for reconciliation and is an investment into the future of the youth. By working out the stress and painful emotions, sports is an important tool for coming to terms with the past and being strong for future roles of responsibility.



Pressconference: Kicking for Reconciliation, f. l.t.r.: Rwandan Ambassador, Eugene-Richard Gasana, Home Minister Liese Prokop, State Secretary Karl Schweitzer, Dr. Edit Schlaffer



Play Stress Away!

Table-tennis for youth between horror and hope

Women without Borders have developed a research-based action project with adolescents in Baghdad, Iraq. The initial study revealed the youth are acutely aware of the current political unrest and suffer from the unstable security situation in many different ways. Boys and particularly girls are experiencing restricted movement, lack of access to social activities and unsafe transport to school, when they are open. The rise of harassment for girls and women is an alarming trend. Indeed the study identified the increased need for sleep amongst youth, which is a typical symptom for stress.

Women without Borders is responding to the lack of opportunities for youth with workshops and activities to relieve stress, fear and trauma. Table-tennis is making an important contribution to this program. Espe-

cially in Iraq where girls have little possibilities to exercise their bodies, the chance to play table-tennis is a safe and socially acceptable solution for them.

Movement, fitness and games help to relieve stress and anger and promote well being. Moreover, fitter bodies are more able to sustain physical and emotional stress in general.

In cooperation with the Sports Division of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, table-tennis clubs in and around Baghdad will train more girls and boys together. Table-tennis is ideal to bridge the gender gap, it focuses on quick reactions, strategic thinking and persistence in contrast to physical strength. Thus, girls will gain fitness, inner strength and confidence in an equal standing with the boys.

Women Swimming into the Future

Promoting and strengthening women in the south-indian tsunami-hit region

An unproportional number of women and children died in the tsunami catastrophe in December 2004. One of the reasons is, that in the patriarchal fishing communities women usually don't practice physical movement nor do they learn how to swim. So, a critical reason for their loss of lives was the physical constitution of women. Due to the absence of sporting activities for women in many affected areas, women lack strength and confidence. In the tsunami, many were not able to swim, tread water or were not capable of climbing on to the roofs, up trees or other safe areas.

Women without Borders together with the Austrian Swimming Association, the Austrian Life Saving Federation and the Austrian Youth Red Cross will now offer swimming lessons for girls and women in the south-indian coastal regions.

The swimming training will offer women and girls the chance to

- Regain trust in the water
- Enjoy contact with water, thorough floating, exercise and relaxation



© Elisabeth Kasbauer/WwB

- Learn about water safety and water side first aid
- Understand benefits of physical fitness
- Enhance self-esteem through learning a new skill
- Experience team empowerment through team building exercises

This effort is not only a valuable contribution to their future survival, but also strengthens self-confidence and will enhance their group identity and solidarity as they learn together. This project will bring more respect and increase women's status in their rural societies.

In some villages, up to 80% of the death toll consisted of women.

Becky Buell, Oxfam Director

So much to gain – so fun to win

Girls without Borders Racing Ahead!

Today girls are open-minded, curious and ready to embrace alternative life options. We want to see these girls of today, bringing their hopes, dreams and energies into formal positions of influence. They are the parliamentarians, businesswomen, peace negotiators and policy shapers of the new century.

'Girls without Borders' is an attractive forum to develop the skills and spirits for a pro-active life based on personal exploration and cooperative visions.

Our model projects offer practical empowerment that can be sustained locally. So that Girls without Borders

- have the health to thrive,
- the courage to dream,
- the capacity to create
- and the will to achieve!

Girls without Borders want to become "Fit for Leadership!"

The Girls Parliament Initiative and various different sport empowerment projects are currently running in four continents. The programmes are organised as after school clubs for teenagers, awakening their political spirit in preparation for management and leadership roles. As part of the curricula, girls hold 'shadow' parliament sessions with 'elected' ministers. The results of these sessions are sent directly to the actual ministers for youth and education, thereby giving the girls a direct voice in politics.

Girls without Borders meet face to face and in the (cyber)space!

This is a real and virtual network, where girls can interact and share their visions for common dreams and ambitions.



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Let's Win the Future!



© Donna Lange

"When I go sailing in the middle of the ocean, alone on a boat, there is just me and my own personal flow of life and the nature: no politics, no family, no man. I don't feel lonely, it is a pilgrimage. I place myself in the ocean, so I can be quiet and alone."

Donna Lange: 44, sailor, crossing the seas with a Women without Borders sail.



© Sue T.L. Fox

"If people do not like what I do, I would never care. I would never let anybody stand in my way – I would never accept a man who would reject my sport or has that kind of philosophy about women in his head. My personal motto: no guts no glory."

Sue T.L. Fox: 45, boxer, in 1975