

**Active women – How the MENA region is working to build
participation among women**

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Abstract

This case study outlines the disparity between representation of men and women in sport in Qatar across various levels. It outlines the variety of benefits to society and individuals of increasing the participation of women in sport and the barriers to achieving growth. It describes the structures in place in Qatar which have progressed the case of more equitable participation and which may do so in the future. Finally, it looks at how gender mainstreaming can be used as a tool to make bigger steps towards equality in this area.

Keywords: Qatar, Female, Gender, Sport, Mainstreaming, Participation

Introduction

In virtually all cultures, humans have used movement in their ritual life. Yet, until very recently, relatively few cultures have developed the highly organised, rule-governed, competitive games that today we think of as sport. The development of human movement into sport has varied by time and place and while some societies, especially in the western world, have instilled a cultural norm of sports and physical activity as a regular part of daily life, this isn't the case for other parts of the world.

And while sport is now a significant contributor to cultural capital in virtually every country, participation in all its spheres is far from uniform. A wide range of social, economic, political – even legal - constraints act as barriers to entry and while these vary between cultures, in almost every country in the world, one effect is uniform – a lower level of participation amongst women. Despite the fact that the effect is widespread, in some countries, including those in the Middle East, the disparity is seen as emblematic of wider inequalities.

As Mariah Nelson said in the book, Nike is a Goddess:

“The story of women in sports is personal, because nothing is more personal than a woman’s bone, sinew, sweat, and desire, and a political story, because nothing is more powerful than a woman’s struggle to run free. It’s the story of women’s liberation.”¹

Part 1 – Why is female participation important?

Sport has historically been a male-dominated area, from its origins in the stone age (walking, running, hunting etc.), through the Roman gladiatorial ideal, to the more organised games of modern-day sports and physical activity.

And while there is evidence of women participating in sport as long ago as the sixth century, female participation really only became popularised in the 19th century, by

which time the upper social classes in some European and imperial countries were engaged in activities such as horse-riding, archery, golf, tennis, skiing and skating.²

The first female participation in the Olympic games was 1900, where only 12 women participated (IOC, 2020) yet more than 120 years later, there is still inequality between female and male involvement in sport across the world. From grassroots participation, through elite level competition, coaching and training, to representation on sports' ruling bodies, there is a widely acknowledged gap between men and women.³

The most recent World Health Organisation (WHO) National STEPS Survey (NSS) conducted by Qatar shows that 43% of female respondents were obese, that 54% of women showed low levels of activity (compared to 37% of men), and that women undertook only 23 minutes per day of physical activity (compared to 56 minutes for men).⁴

A 2009 study undertaken by the Qatar Olympic Committee found equally concerning results (see Figure 1).

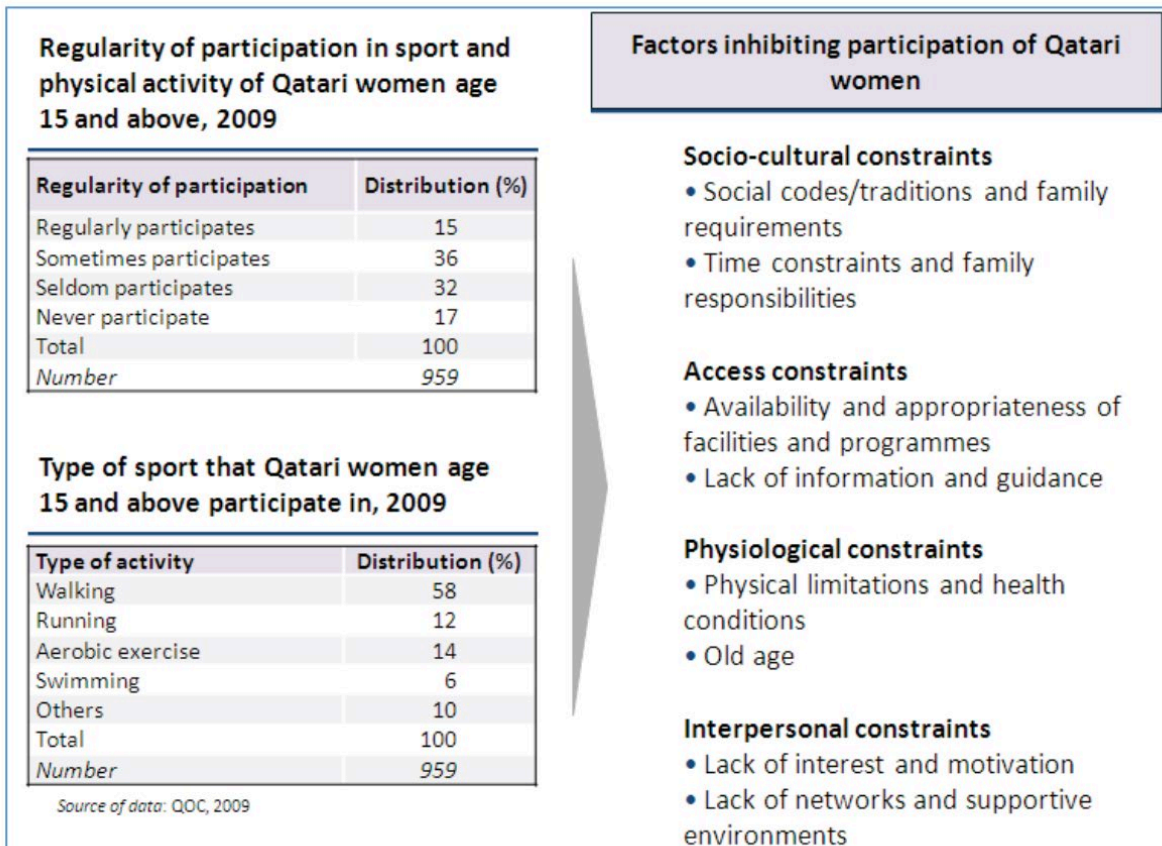


Figure 1 – Physical activity among women
 Source: Qatar Olympic Committee

Internationally, the case is also the same. At the Rio Olympics (2016), while women made up 45% of athletes, there were 161 events for men, compared to 136 for women.⁵ But women only made up 11% of coaches at the Games and likewise, they represent only 31% of members of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Executive Board and only 34% of the IOC's members are female.⁶ Female representation is also a problem more locally at the elite level – female representation on the Qatar Olympic Committee senior team, for example, is not level with male's and the country sent just two female athletes to the last summer Olympic games - but as the global data suggests, this is not an isolated issue.⁷

In an interview for this case, the Qatar Women's Sport Committee (QWSC) outlined its attitude to women's participation in sport in the country.

"A healthy society is measured by the number of practitioners of sports in it, and we in Qatar do not differentiate between men and women, as the two are equal in everything. Therefore, increasing the activities of women in sports contributes to achieving sustainable development, which is in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030, which is concerned with sports and the need to practice sport for everyone.

"We are keen for girls to practice sporting activity, whether in the competitive field or for the sake of public health, especially since the State of Qatar allocates an annual day for sports, which is the National Sports Day...an official paid vacation for the public and private sectors...this is unique in our country to encourage sports for life."

Beyond the simple equality arguments, there are a number of practical reasons why the disparity between male and female involvement in sport is problematic.

These include (but are not limited to) the following areas:

1) Physical health

The physical benefits to health from activity and exercise are well-established. They include positive impacts across a range of chronic diseases including: cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis.⁸

Amongst younger females (and males), there are further benefits to be had from participation including healthy bones, efficient heart and lung function as well as improved motor skills and cognitive function.⁹

For older women, physical activity through sport can reduce the effects of osteoporosis, a disease which disproportionately affects women.

Sport can also be a cost-effective public health intervention in developing countries, both in prevention and rehabilitation.

2) Mental health

The World Health Organisation estimates that “one in four patients visiting a health service has at least one mental, neurological or behavioural disorder, but most of these disorders are neither diagnosed nor treated”.

Sport and physical activity can have a significant role to play in both the prevention and treatment of mental ill-health, while physical self-worth and physical self-perception, including body image, has been linked to improved self-esteem.¹⁰

As well as the evidence to support the intra-personal benefits of physical activity – i.e. physiological, cognitive and affective benefits – there are also benefits derived from the social and inter-personal side of sporting participation.¹¹

3) Education

Physical activity is widely evidenced to have a range of benefits on educational outcomes – even if their all its delivery mechanisms are not as widely understood.

Physical education and school sport (PESS) typically deliver benefits in four domains – physical, social, cognitive and affective – but their benefits are thought to dependent on the context, as well as style of delivery.¹²

4) Social skills

For children, PESS can teach a range of social skills which can take more time to develop in other settings. Although many of these skills are not strictly defined, they can include cooperation and teamwork, leadership, listening, selflessness, discipline and self-discipline, accepting rules and decisions and belonging.^{13 14}

5) Societal

Although less widely-evidenced, research suggests that sport can have a range of benefits to society, where the exclusion of women may mean that they do not

benefit equally. For example, sport can promote pro-social (as opposed to anti-social) behaviours in young people. More significantly, there is also strong evidence that sport can contribute to social bonding by increasing connectedness and a sense of belonging. According to the UK's Culture and Sport Evidence programme, "Positive outcomes in studies include reduced social and ethnic tensions, and more collective action and community involvement through sport, particularly volunteering".¹⁵

Structural barriers to greater female participation

Generally speaking, when considering gender equality concerns in designing and implementing development programmes, there are two factors to consider.

1. The differences between men and women that demand different approaches in the structure and delivery of any programmes, campaigns or activities
2. Systemic inequality - the clear patterns of women's inferior access to resources and opportunities.

But each society may also impose its own cultural constraints on women and Golkowska (2017) argues that cultural traditions of regular social gatherings, a strict interpretation of the Quran (clothing, spatial practices), and the traditional roles of Arab women as wives, mothers and daughters, where family obligations come before personal goals, all contribute to an inequality which can affect participation in sport.¹⁶

Golkowska also adds these factors:

“In addition to the environmental challenge, sociocultural factors lead to sedentary lifestyle and overweight. With wealth came the possibility of hiring domestic help to do household chores, which further reduced the amount of everyday physical activity. When food, especially fast food, is plentiful and affordable, it is hard to maintain a healthy diet”.¹⁷

QWSC added that it finds the transition between school and college as key moment in women’s life as a particular barrier to building participation:

“The biggest challenge we are facing is when they [women] reach the age in high school and when [girls] start preparing for joining college/ university as it is not easy to do both. And sad to say that scholarships don’t exist in most universities.”

Part 2 – Initiatives aimed at promoting women in sport

This section explores a number of initiatives and programmes aimed at promoting women’s participations within sport. In the context of that it is helpful to understand the structure of sports delivery in Qatar.

Qatar Sports structure

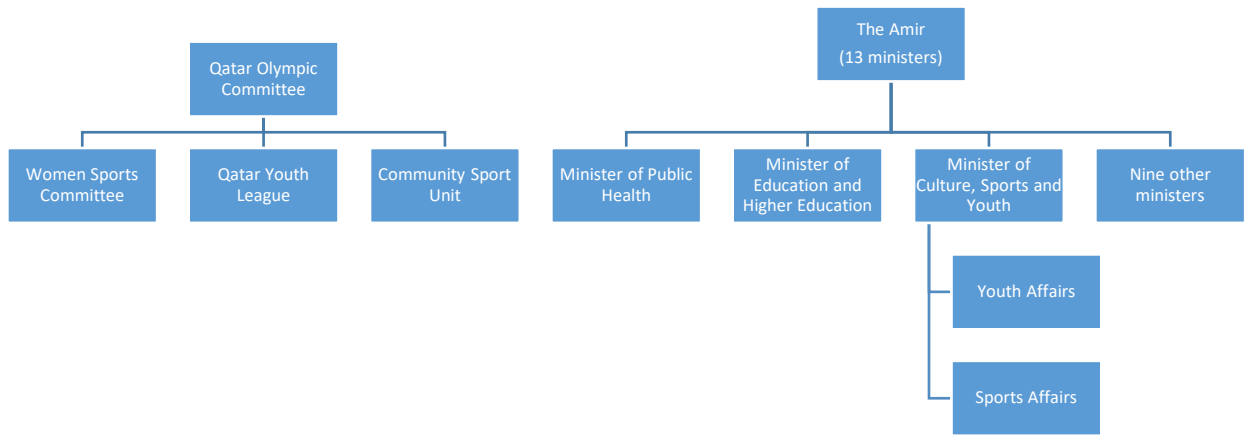


Figure 2: Qatar Sports Structure
 Source: Ministry of Culture and Sport/James Stibbs^{18 19}

As Figure 2 shows, a number of stakeholders are involved in the formulation and execution of sports policy in Qatar. Their actions are set against two key policy frameworks:

1) Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV)

The Qatar National Vision provides policy-makers with a map and compass when developing strategies which aim to build a bridge between the present and the planned future of the country. It sets and prioritises concrete development goals that are time-bound targets, and which articulate the processes and roles of stakeholders, as well as expected performance standards.²⁰

2) Qatar Second National Development Strategy 2018 - 2022

“The strategy is part of a series of successive development plans that help make Qatar National Vision 2030 and its four pillars of human development, social development, economic development and environmental development a tangible reality.

The strategy aims to transform Qatar into a developed country by 2030, capable of achieving sustainable development and ensuring well-being of its people for generations to come.”²¹

The plan includes a key section regarding the Sports Sector Strategy, listing challenges from the previous strategies and what further initiatives will be put in place to support QNV 2030.

Its main outcome is as follows:

“An active and creative cultural, sports and youth system that supports society advancement while reserving its constants and values”

Sports initiatives in Qatar

1) Qatar Women’s Sports Committee

Arguably the most significant early breakthrough in the promotion of women's sporting interests in Qatar happened 20 years ago with the creation of the Qatar Women's Sports Committee (QWSC). It was established under the leadership of Sheikha Moza bint Nasser al-Missnad, the president of the Family Affairs Council and second wife of the former emir, with the aim of promoting women's representation in sports at all levels (see Figure 3 below).

The QWSC is credited with a number of significant breakthroughs for women in sport including in 2003, Qatar's hosting of the second Asian Conference on Women and Sport, the country's first female representative at the Asian Games, the creation of a national women's golf team and, in 2012, the selection of female athletes for the Olympic Games for the first time.²²



Figure 3: Qatar Women's Sport Committee's Strategic Plan, three priority areas
 Source: QOC, 2011. pp.20

While as we noted above, Qatar's female representation fell to just two participants in the 2016 Olympics, two cycles of the games should not be viewed as indicative of the broader commitment to greater participation at this level. In fact, immediately after its creation, the QWSC became affiliated with Qatar's Olympic Committee, elevating women's sporting pursuits to the level of their male counterparts in the country.

And, as the Committee's former President Ahlam Al-Mana has said, the organisation's progress has been maintained by small steps taken at the right time. She gives examples of beginning with a programme of activity within schools, rather than outside them; of building confidence by briefing first mothers of participants, then

mothers and fathers; by taking time before inviting the media to sessions; and challenging international rules to allow the wearing of the veil in international basketball tournaments.²³

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqLfc5WwXO8>

As it moves forward, the Committee plans to continue focus on two areas – improving the social understanding of the importance of sport in daily life and organising sport on the ground.

“The social field is [delivered] through community by participating in various awareness programs; organizing seminars and courses about the importance of sport for women, as well as raising the awareness of the dangers [of inactivity] that threaten non-athletes and the need to move towards sport from the standpoint of a healthy mind in a healthy body.

“We have important community partnerships with different national societies, such as raising awareness of the importance of sport in preventing diabetes, obesity, as well as breast cancer and other diseases that afflict women and how to prevent them.”

On the sports delivery side, there is also a wide range of activity undertaken by the Committee.

“We have many active programs for the community such as yoga and training courses during the year. We work in improving the professional level by working with sports federations in preparing teams to participate in games and tournaments. In addition, we organise matches and local tournaments for female athletes and national team players in various sports during the year.”

And the Committee has high hopes for women’s participation in sport as a result – both at the elite and grassroots level.

“The participation of women in sports is very important, as [it] lies in building society, and women are the main partner for men in society. [Since in] Qatar, women enjoy full rights and have all powers at all levels, it is natural for women to be athletically present, whether through sports for all, which is a non-competitive sport to build health and the body, or a competitive sport by participating in various games.”

2) Aspire Zone

One of the biggest initiatives not just in Qatar but the world is Doha’s Aspire Zone, a 250-hectare sporting complex established in 2003. Built to host the Asian Games in 2003, its life is now as a sporting centre for participants of all levels – from complete amateurs to global superstars. It is also home to the region’s first accredited anti-doping lab.

It makes an important contribution to ensuring that sporting infrastructure both is and is seen as available to female participants. From marketing materials which feature entire families exercising, through the provision of Doha's biggest women-only gym and its Ladies Sports Hall, to offering women-only sports competitions during the Ramadan Sports Festival, the facility provides a model which meets the country's goal of modernisation which preserves Islamic tradition.²⁴ As a further measure of mixed use (and perhaps the seriousness of application by those who use the facility), the centre's medical centre treated nearly 13,000 women in 2017.²⁵ What's more, according to 2016 figures, 27% of its employees are women too, contributing to the sense that the facility is open to all.

Golkowska asserts that while the park's walking paths may seem unremarkable to many, they send a clear message to women:

"Walking is the easiest and most culturally acceptable physical activity. It does not require equipment or sports uniforms and can be practiced at different difficulty levels. Women's football met with opposition in Doha due to its clothing requirements, but walking does not cause such concerns. Not surprisingly, it is the type of physical activity most popular among Qatari women."²⁶

3) Qatar Sports For All Federation

The Qatar Sports for All Federation was established in 2015 following Minister of Youth and Sports Resolution No. (47).²⁷ The QSFA aims to raise awareness of the concept of sports for all and to increase the number of people in the country who regularly exercise. Although increasing participation among all types of people is its ultimate goal, in its aims it specifically talks about gender:

- To spread sports culture in general
- Increase the number of practitioners of both genders, and all ages
- Support sports programmes and initiatives for all
- Provide means and capabilities to support Sports For All.

While the organisation itself is still relatively young, it is possible to see below (Figure 4) how efforts to grow female participation are being rewarded. The number of female athletes registered with sports federations has doubled over the last four years, indicating that thanks to initiatives like the Qatar Sports For All Federation, the pipeline for female athletes is open and flowing.

Athletes registered with sports federations by age and gender, 2014/15 – 2018/19

Table (23)

Age Group & Gender Year	المجموع Total		
	المجموع Total	إناث Females	ذكور Males
2014 / 2015	19,686	1,449	18,237
2015 / 2016	21,655	1,630	20,025
2016 / 2017	20,957	1,284	19,673
2017 / 2018	26,996	1,587	25,409
2018 / 2019	27,533	2,705	24,828

Figure 4: Registered athletes with sports federations by age and gender
Source: Ministry of Culture and Sport

Success factors

As the evidence suggests, there appears to be a number of ingredients in Qatar’s efforts to improve women’s participation in sport. As one of – if not the – key stakeholders, the Qatar Women’s Sport Committee has a its own view of why the country has been able to make progress:

“Co-operated teamwork and the great support of officials for women’s sport [are the main reasons for success]. They provide women's sport with everything women need to succeed, by providing the infrastructure, such as stadiums and halls.”

They also point to the importance of contributing to elite levels of sport – what some in the sector describe as ‘you cannot be what you cannot see.’

“Bringing in experts and the best training cadres to train the female players to obtain the required expertise so that we [women] can be present at all levels [is a factor for success]. Thank God, we now have various achievements in the Gulf, Arab and Asian countries, and we look forward to the world constantly by participating in big tournaments such as the Olympic Games as well as world championships.”

Part 3 – Gender mainstreaming as a tool for use in sports equality

Gender mainstreaming has emerged as a powerful tool in the effort for gender equality in sport. Used comprehensively, it can support the promotion of women’s interests at all levels – from participation to high level representation.

More than 20 years ago, the Council of Europe defined gender mainstreaming as:

“The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.”

In practice for sport, this means acknowledging that women have different needs to men, but also different circumstances – including unequal access to and

control over power, resources, human rights and institutions, including the justice system.

The aim of mainstreaming is to take these differences into account (into the mainstream) when designing, implementing and evaluating policies and projects so that they benefit women as well as men, and so that they don't widen the inequalities between men and women.

Using gender analysis and gender impact assessments at the planning stage of policy-making can help to ensure that the country's future sports policies build on the work already being done. Even policies which do not at first glance appear to be relevant can hide gender inequality and the process shows that it is only the act of analysis and inspection that will actively uncover these aspects.

Although the pre-requisite of gender mainstreaming is the political will to make sports less unequal, there are a host of complementary tools which policy-makers can use to begin the process. These range from education and training, through assessment and institutional transformation toolkits, to gender budgeting. The relevance of each may vary according to the situation of each organisation or sport.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) introduction to gender mainstreaming:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZvNcflKBDs>

EIGE mainstreaming platform and tools:

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>

¹ Mariah Burton Nelson, 'Introduction', *Nike is a Goddess*, edited by Lissa Smith (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1998), p ix. (cited in Sports in Society Lecture 4 – Sport and Gender, 2020)

² Serwint, Nancy (1993). "The Female Athletic Costume at the Heraia and Prenuptial Initiation Rites". *American Journal of Archaeology*. **97** (3).

³ IOC, (2020) "Key dates in the history of women in the Olympic movement" Available from: <https://www.olympic.org/women-in-sport/background/key-dates> [Accessed on 27th May 2020]

⁴ https://www.who.int/ncds/surveillance/steps/Qatar_FactSheet_2012.pdf

⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-41272613>

⁶ <https://www.olympic.org/women-in-sport/background/statistics>

⁷ <https://www.olympic.qa/en/AboutQOC/Pages/Management-Team.aspx>

⁸ <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/67796>

⁹ <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/503601?ln=en>

¹⁰

https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/090615_sport_and_health_for_print.pdf

¹¹ https://www.fsem.ac.uk/position_statement/the-role-of-physical-activity-and-sport-in-mental-health/

¹² Richard Bailey, Kathleen Armour, David Kirk, Mike Jess, Ian Pickup, Rachel Sandford & BERA Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy Special Interest Group (2009) The educational benefits claimed for physical education and school sport: an academic review, *Research Papers in Education*, 24:1, 1-27, DOI: [10.1080/02671520701809817](https://doi.org/10.1080/02671520701809817)

¹³ <https://ijbnpa.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1479-5868-10-98>

¹⁴ Leonard M. Wankel & Bonnie G. Berger (1990) The Psychological and Social Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity, *Journal of Leisure Research*, 22:2, 167-182, DOI: [10.1080/00222216.1990.11969823](https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.1990.11969823)

¹⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416279/A_review_of_the_Social_Impacts_of_Culture_and_Sport.pdf

¹⁶ KU, Golkowska, (2017) "Qatari women's participation in sports and physical activity." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 22, no10, pp. 91-95 <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%202022%20Issue10/Version-6/K2210069195.pdf>

¹⁷ KU, Golkowska, (2017) "Qatari women's participation in sports and physical activity." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 22, no10, pp. 91-95 <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%202022%20Issue10/Version-6/K2210069195.pdf>

¹⁸ Team Qatar (2020) “Programmes and Initiatives” Sport for Life. Available from: <https://www.olympic.qa/en/AboutQOC/Pages/Programmes-and-Initiatives.aspx>

¹⁹ Ministry of Culture and Sport (2020) “Organization Chart” Available from: <https://www.mcs.gov.qa/en/about-us/organizational-chart/>

²⁰ Qatar, (2008) “Qatar National Vision 2030” PDF. General Secretariat for Development Planning

²¹ <https://www.psa.gov.qa/en/knowledge/Documents/NDS2Final.pdf>

²² <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue10/Version-6/K2210069195.pdf>

²³ <https://www.womenofqatar.com/interviews/2019/7/7/ahlam-salem-al-mana>

²⁴ <https://www.aspirezone.qa/news-item.aspx?id=10164&lang=en>

²⁵ <file:///Users/cricatania/Downloads/Annual%20Report%202017%20-%20English.pdf>

²⁶ KU, Golkowska, (2017) “Qatari women’s participation in sports and physical activity.” IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Vol. 22, no10, pp. 91-95 <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue10/Version-6/K2210069195.pdf>

²⁷ QSFA (2020) “Qatar Sports For all Federation” Available from: <http://qasportsforall.com/>

Teaching asset

Introduction

While sport is now a significant contributor to cultural capital in virtually every country, participation in all its spheres is far from uniform. A wide range of social, economic, political – even legal - constraints act as barriers to entry and, in almost every country in the world, there is a lower level of participation amongst women. Qatar and other Middle Eastern countries are no different.

Why is female participation important?

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Education
- Social skills
- Societal benefits

But delivering these benefits through sport is not straightforward. In every society there tends to be structural barriers to greater female participation - and Qatar is no different.

Qatar has introduced a number of initiatives over the years designed to address inequality in sport. There are also other tools, like gender mainstreaming, available for those in search of greater or faster change.

Exercise 1 – List as many reasons as you can think of why it is important for women and men to participate in sport. Think about the benefits of participation to the individual and to society or a community. How many reasons are there that apply to men rather than women; and women rather than men?

Answers 1

Answers are not limited but may include:

- **Physical health improvements** across a range of chronic diseases including: cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis. Women, who suffer disproportionately from osteoporosis, stand to benefit more than men in the prevention of this illness. And in communities where women are disproportionately more likely to be overweight or obese, the effects of exercise are likely to be more beneficial.
- **Mental health improvements** - Sport and physical activity can have a significant role to play in both the prevention and treatment of mental ill-health, while physical self-worth and physical self-perception, including body image, has been linked to improved self-esteem. In cultures where self-esteem and body image are particular problems among women, physical activity is likely to be more beneficial.
- **Education** – Although its mechanisms are not widely understood, physical activity is widely evidenced to have a range of benefits on educational outcomes. Where there are disparities between genders in educational attainment, physical exercise may be a step towards addressing them.
- **Social skills** - PESS can teach a range of social skills which can take more time to develop in other settings. Again, where there are gender disparities in the acquisition of social skills, PESS can help.
- **Societal** – Physical activity can encourage pro-social behaviours and social bonding across and between the sexes.

Exercise 2 – In small groups, describe the barriers faced by women seeking to be more active in the Middle East. Explore which barriers are country-specific and which are faced more generally across the world by those trying to increase women’s involvement in sport.

Answers 2

Barriers to participation faced by women include:

- The differences between men and women that demand different approaches in the structure and delivery of any programmes, campaigns or activities. These may include in areas such as:
 - The types of sport offered – ie sports favoured by men, rather than women
 - The times sport is offered – eg at times that are inconvenient for women
 - The place sport is offered – eg at a location unsuitable for women
 - The way a programme is delivered – by whom, for example
 - The way an activity is advertised or marketed – eg by using the wrong marketing channels or the wrong images
 - Etc
- Systemic inequality - the clear patterns of women’s inferior access to resources and opportunities. These may include areas such as:
 - Economic/financial inequality
 - Political inequality
 - Educational inequality

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- Domestic inequality
 - Legal inequality
 - Religious inequality
 - Cultural inequality

Exercise 3 – Put yourself in the shoes of an organiser of a mega-event – The Olympics.

One of your objectives (to meet sponsors' demands and maximise broadcast audiences) is to increase followership amongst women across the world. Using what this case study tells you about the Olympics, as well as any research of your own about the ways in which women are under-represented, what policies, campaigns and changes will you put in place to increase your female audience?

Answer 3 – Answers here may be wide-ranging given the differences between markets.

They may include policies which:

- Measure and track female followership to get a better handle on the problem
- Address fundamental inequalities at NOC level
- Encourage greater female participation at grassroots level
- Encourage greater female participation at elite level
- Encourage greater female representation among sports administrators
- Encourage greater female representation among sports coaches and other support staff/entourages
- Welcome women to sporting events as spectators

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- Give sports organisations better tools to address inequalities across these areas
 - Improve marketing targeting so that women are reached more frequently and effectively
 - Work with sponsors to activate campaigns that engage women
 - Work with broadcaster to activate campaigns that engage women
 - Raise the profile of female athletes as high as men's
 - Work with media to ensure same.

Exercise 4 – Design a programme to deliver increases in participation amongst women.

The programme should focus on multi-sports delivery and be aimed in particular at mothers of school-age children. Consider how best to reach the target audience, which kind of messages are going to win most engagement and how the programme should be formed to meet the specific needs of those women.

Answer 4 – Mothers of school age children face a particular set of barriers to beginning sport and a good response should begin by highlighting what those barriers are. They may include time constraints, economic constraints, body image etc.

The programme design should focus on students' understanding of the particular needs of this audience and more research may be needed by students to understand how this group differs from others. Specific needs may include low barriers to entry (eg skill), safe spaces to prepare and change, the support of peers etc.

Targeting should consider how best to reach this group. Students should consider what communications platforms and channels the group commonly uses since that will be the best place to engage with them. Mediums could include advertising, media relations, an outreach programme etc.

Students should give thought to the type of messages this audience will be receptive to. This may differ between markets but may include, for example, an opportunity to return to fitness, to have fun with others, or to offer the sports offering as part of a broader offering including, perhaps, social or health elements.

Exercise 5 – Considering gender mainstreaming as a process to reduce inequality and thinking about the tools which can be used as part of it, apply the broad thinking to a sporting organisation. This can be a grassroots delivery body (like a club, team or programme), a sports federation (like a governing body) or a policy-making body (like a government department). Think about how the resources, structures and policies of an organisation like this may be adapted in order to better take into account women's needs and support sporting provision for them.

Answer 5 – Students should consult the gender [mainstreaming toolkit](#) as their first port of call. Depending on the type of sports body they have chosen, they should select the appropriate tools and follow the guidance to apply it to the organisation.

In particular students should find the following tools useful:

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- Allocating resources
 - Organisational analysis
 - Strategy and work plan

Although many other tools are useful, including others are aimed at later on in the process of gender mainstreaming.

Processes which students should consider include:

- Ways to create accountability and transparency within an organisation
- Analysing an organisation to identify where work needs to be done (and use of the SPO model)
- Conducting a gender audit
- Finding ways to provide and allocate financial support for the process
- Identifying relevant parts to a strategy (not every part will be relevant, depending on the process). These may include:
 - Staff development
 - Gender action plans
 - Continuous audit
 - Setting gender objectives
 - Communication of gender objectives
 - Introduction of mainstreaming structures.

Further reading

Nike is a Goddess: The History of Women in Sports – Lissa Smith (1998)

Routledge Handbook of the Business of Women's Sport (2019)

Eat Sweat Play: How Sport Can Change Our Lives – Anna Kessel (2016)

A Contemporary History of Women's Sport, Part One: Sporting Women, 1850-1960 – Jean Williams (2014)

<https://www.womeninsport.org/>

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<https://womensportinternational.org/>

<http://ewsports.over-blog.com/>

<http://womeninsport.org/resources/women-and-informal-sport/>

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