

# Community Participation

## Info Sheet

### Increasing the participation of women and girls

#### A guide for small organisations

Even small sport and recreation organisations with limited staff and financial resources can work effectively to increase the participation of women and girls.

**As a starting point consider the following simple and effective steps:**

1. Discuss the benefits of increasing female participation in your organisation or community and make a commitment to working towards this goal.
2. Gather as much information as your resources allow on:
  - the profile of women and girls in your organisation and in the community served by your organisation
  - any barriers to female participation in any of your activities
  - what women and girls want from your sport or organisation.
3. Discuss with the organisation's players, officials and board members, areas of improvement the organisation can target.
4. Using the tips on this sheet, select activities that your organisation's resources will permit you to take on.
5. Determine a timeframe and some specific outcomes that you could realistically achieve.
6. At the end of the period, evaluate your success in achieving the outcomes you have determined.
7. Set some further goals for improvement and select some new activities to help bring about these outcomes.

#### Tips for small organisations to increase the participation of women and girls

The following practical strategies can be implemented in a way that best suits your organisation's needs. There is no standard way of implementing these strategies, work with the people in your organisation to develop the best approach.

#### Increasing the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions

- Adopt a policy goal of having 50 per cent of all leadership (board or committee) positions occupied by women and establish a timetable for its achievement
- Establish a board or executive position responsible for achieving equity for women and girls
- Ensure the terms of reference for boards and committees make clear the need to consider all community groups in the formulation of policies and procedures
- Provide a mentoring program to support female administrators, coaches and officials
- Establish a recruitment program to attract and keep ex-athletes and other women in positions of responsibility including coaching and officiating.



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### **Improving access and safety**

- Provide women and girls with equal time, space and equipment to participate and compete
- Ensure programs are offered in locations or facilities that are safe and appropriate for women and girls
- Eliminate all sexist visual images of women in your facilities. Display positive and appropriate pictures or images of women throughout the venue
- Investigate options for the provision of childcare and adopt a child friendly approach.

### **Improving the recognition and portrayal of women and girls**

- Allocate equal funds, prize money and sponsorship to male and female athletes or teams competing at all levels of your sport or activity
- Use gender-neutral language and ensure a balance of female and male reporting and representation in all your organisation's publications and promotional materials
- Ensure that sponsors support both women's and men's programs equally
- Assign responsibility to one person for increasing and improving media coverage of women and girls in your organisations sport or activity.

### **Increasing the active participation of women and girls**

- Consult women and girls in your organisation on strategies to attract new female members and to retain existing female members
- Provide competitions that focus on the fun and social aspects of sports participation
- Appoint female staff and volunteers to act as positive role models (eg. coaching and officiating)
- Ensure the organisation plans for and provides financial and human resources to support the activities targeting women and girls
- Schedule activities at times and places convenient for women and girls including prime participation times.

### **Addressing body image and health**

- Adopt clothing rules that cater for the cultural needs of women and girls and other specific community groups
- Reinforce the health and other benefits of sport for women and girls in all promotional materials
- Include women and girls from a range of backgrounds, ages and body shapes in advertising and promotional material
- Ensure that coaches, officials and administrators are aware of women's health issues including disordered eating, diet, weight loss and pregnancy.