



Girls in Sport: Best Practice Guide



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Lead Authors:

Dr. Irene Faber
Professor Nicolette Schipper–Van Veldhoven
Dr. Ruth Brazier
Professor Sergio Lara–Bercial

Contributors:

Dr. Gary Hodgson
Sheelagh Quinn
Declan O’Leary



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Introduction: ICOACHGIRLS

Research shows that women and girls face multiple challenges to participate in sport and physical activity. For example, the gendered nature of sport, a lack of female role models and unequal provision all hinder girls' ability to participate. Girls in the EU across a broad range of sports and countries, are four times less likely than boys to engage in organised sport (Emmonds et al., 2021). By not participating, girls are missing out in all the potential physical, mental, social and professional benefits of regular physical activity. Importantly, early negative experiences of sport, physical education and physical activity during the primary school years contribute to girls' lower levels of activity.

ICOACHGIRLS (ICG) is an Erasmus+ funded project, which is part of the larger [ICOACHKIDS](#) (ICK) family. ICOACHGIRLS has two key objectives:

- 1) To increase physical activity and sport participation among primary school age girls
- 2) To increase the number, competence and confidence of female coaches.

The key targets linked to these objectives are as follows:

Objective 1:

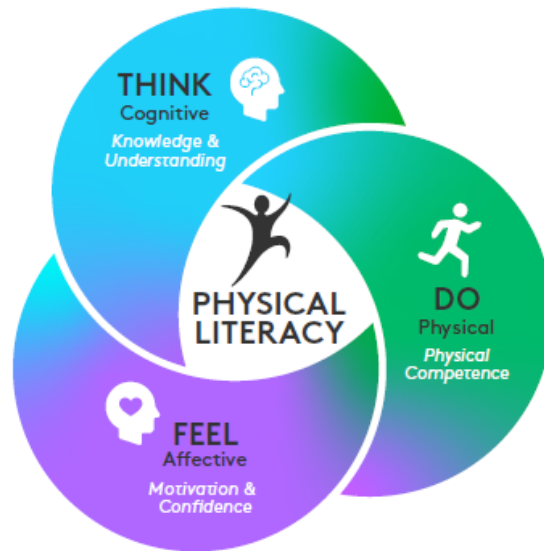
- Creation of 35 'Girls Play Centres' across 6 countries
- 1050 primary school age girls attending the sessions
- 350 sport and physical activity sessions delivered
- 95% satisfaction among girls and parents
- 50% of girls transitioning into regular physical activity on completion of the 10 week programme

Objective 2:

- 70 Head Coaches appointed to run the 'Girls Play Centres'
- 350 newly qualified or new-to-coaching female coaches completing a 'Come into Coaching' course and attending the 'Girls Play Centres' to receive mentoring from Head Coaches
- 95% satisfaction among Head Coaches and mentee coaches
- 95% of coaches improve their coaching competence
- 80% of coaches improve their confidence to lead coaching sessions



We recognise that long-term participation is crucial for girls to receive the benefits of sport and physical activity as outlined above. Therefore, through the delivery of the play centres, we will aim to support girls in developing their physical literacy. Physical literacy encompasses three inter-connected domains: cognitive – knowledge and understanding; affective – motivation and confidence; and physical – competence (Sport Ireland). ICOACHGIRLS will aim to positively influence primary school age girls across these three domains, and support them to become more physically active over the long term.



Physical Literacy Domains (Reproduced with the permission of Sport Ireland)

Girls in Sport: Best Practice Guide

Hi Coach!

This 'Best Practice Guide' will present a range of case studies, focusing on programmes and initiatives which aim to increase girls' participation in sport and physical activity. Each programme is unique in its own respect, but each brings to life some of the 10 elements which were presented in the previous guide: '(Re)introducing girls to sport and physical activity'. To explore best practice we use these 10 elements, mapped across the youth sport compass, and highlight examples where girls' needs and wants are at the forefront of programme design and delivery. The 10 elements are:

DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence

Provide non-competitive activities

MOTIVATIONAL

Provide high support

Offer a variety of activities

Use role-models

CARING

Promote friendships and social connections

Help coaches to understand girls' needs

SOCIALLY SAFE

Create a positive and inclusive environment

Provide girls only opportunities

Be aware of issues relating to body image

As in the previous guide, we also look across **MICRO**, **MESO** and **MACRO** levels to explore how programmes may affect opportunities for girls in different ways.

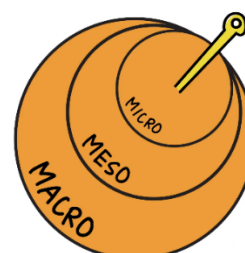
Each case study is presented and described, before highlighting how they work across the four corners of the youth sport compass and the 10 elements. Finally, a self-assessment tool is presented for practitioners to critically reflect on their own practice.

The case studies presented in this guide are:

1. This Girl Can™
2. PowerPlay™
3. Girls Active
4. UEFA Disney Playmakers™
5. Her Time to Play™
6. Coaching Her
7. Weetabix Wildcats™
8. Dads and Daughter's: Active and Empowered™
9. Gaelic 4 Girls
10. Keep Up With the Girls
11. Adolescent Girls Get Active



The Youth Sport Compass



This Girl Can™

[This Girl Can](#) is a national campaign that has run across England since 2015. Funded by [Sport England](#) and the National Lottery, it seeks to normalise women being physically active. Thus, it aims to challenge harmful gender stereotypes at a **MACRO** level.



This Girl Can uses an advertisement campaign, using ‘real life’ stories from women of all shapes, sizes and backgrounds. Social media is a huge part of their influence, empowering women to share their stories. Importantly, they challenge normalised assumptions about women’s bodies, and encourage women of all shapes and sizes to be active and happy with their bodies:

“We seek to tell the real stories of women who get active or play sport in the way that’s right for them, using images that show what activity really looks like in all its sweaty, jiggly glory” (This Girl Can)

Through their campaign, they tackle important issues that are specific for women and girls — including exercise plans for pre- and post-natal women, raising awareness of gender-based safety concerns in leisure spaces, and considering the differing needs of women from specific religious backgrounds. They also harness the power of the community as they have a research hub, and a range of resources for clubs and organisations who wish to run their own ‘This Girl Can’ sessions. To date, they have supported over 2.9 million women to be more active. This campaign is important because it addresses societal wide issues linked to gender and physical activity. By foregrounding images of different types of women, we can begin to change the narrative that sport and physical activity are a masculine pursuit. Although This Girl Can is mainly located at the **MACRO** level, it also supports practice at a **MESO** and **MICRO** level, as funding and support is offered to clubs who run This Girl Can sessions for individuals.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — by foregrounding a range of activities, and not just traditional competitive sport. The emphasis is on development rather than competition and winning.

MOTIVATIONAL

Use role-models — by centralising images and voices of women, who are used to represent ‘real’ women of all shapes, sizes and backgrounds. Every woman is represented, regardless of sporting background and experience.

CARING

Help coaches to understand girls' needs — by focusing specifically on the needs of women and girls, and promoting it through the campaign.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Be aware of issues related to body image and act accordingly — by explicitly acknowledging body-related concerns, such as breasts, pre- and post-natal concerns and periods.



PowerPlay™

[PowerPlay](#) is a family of programmes based in New York, all of which aim to empower young women and girls in being more physically active. They specifically recognise the challenges that young African-American girls face, who participate in sport at the lowest rate and have a lack of role models in coaching and leadership. Across all their programmes, they focus on teaching girls' fundamental movement skills in a variety of sports, so they become confident in their athletic abilities. For example, through their STARS programme, they deliver 90-minute sessions in schools which offer both physical activity sessions in a range of sports and healthy living activities including: eating well; building confidence; body image; bullying; dealing with stress; saying no to drugs and smoking; teamwork; and diversity. In approaching their delivery in this way, they encourage girls to be physically active, but also engage them in critical thinking and discussion around topics linked to gender and sport. As such, they effectively work at the **MICRO** level, as they directly support girls to be physically active.



Additionally, they have programmes which focus on sports leadership for girls aged 14–18:

“Students will experience sports in a safe space to catapult their confidence and leadership skills, allowing them to be stakeholders in their identities as well as their communities.” (PowerPlay)

The girls on the leadership programmes then feed back into the participation programmes, such as STARS. In doing so, they get valuable real-life experience in a safe and supportive environment, while giving the younger girls role models to look up to. This creates a positive, female friendly environment, and encourages transition between programmes and across different age groups. This is also an example of operating at the **MESO** level, as the policies and practices within the programmes actively promote female empowerment.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — by supporting girls to prioritise physical activity and providing opportunities to increase their skill level.



MOTIVATIONAL

Provide high support — by providing girls opportunities to train as leaders and support the younger age groups. This also offers girls a voice and ability to influence their surroundings, and aims to empower them.

Provide a variety of activities and variations — by offering a range of sporting options for girls to try.

CARING

Support friendships and social connections — by promoting a ‘community’ to make girls feel connected to the programme and one another.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Create a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment — by welcoming girls of all abilities and backgrounds. Moreover, acknowledging the specific issues that girls from different backgrounds may face, and supporting girls from African-American backgrounds in specific ways.

Provide girls only opportunities — by offering girls specific spaces and places where they can be active on their own terms.

Be aware of issues related to body image and act accordingly — by including educational elements linked to eating well, body image and more holistic issues such as bullying, drugs and smoking.



Girls Active™

The [Girls Active](#) programme is run by the [Youth Sport Trust](#) in the UK, aiming to help schools understand girls' motivations and barriers to Physical Education (PE). The programme encourages schools to consult with the girls in their contexts, help them develop in leadership roles and empower them to make a change in their own schools. In doing so, changes made are grounded in the specific wants and needs of the girls, and not enforced upon them.



The initial Girls Active programme has developed into further specific initiatives:

- Girls Active: Sweaty Betty — engaging the least active girls in the school community to co-design the school curriculum, working in partnership with the Sweaty Betty Foundation.
- Girls Active: Stepping Up For Change — supporting primary and secondary schools to work together, supporting girls through this transitional period of their lives when body confidence can take a huge hit
- Girls Active Coaches Camp — giving girls aged 14–17 the opportunity to be upskilled to help shape and drive activity sessions on return to their school. The Camp aims to inspire confidence, challenge young people to be outside of their comfort zone whilst providing a supportive and safe environment to work with like-minded young people.

By combining these range of initiatives together, and underpinning them with research and insight, Girls Active is ensuring that PE environments are more positive and catered towards the needs of girls in their schools. They're supporting transition at key ages, effectively building relationships between students and staff, and empowering girls to take control of their physically active selves. Girls Active largely targets the **MESO** level, as it focuses on fostering better relationships between students and teachers, and empowering young people to have a say. The **MICRO** level will naturally be affected by these positive changes at the **MESO** level, while the Youth Sport Trust can also influence **MACRO** level policy makers.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — by supporting girls to become more active, and value physical activity more.

MOTIVATIONAL

Provide high support — by giving girls a voice and say in how they want their PE lessons to run, supporting them to co-design their curriculum and make it meaningful for them

Use role-models — by upskilling older girls (14-17) to support the development of PE in their schools, and support the younger girls.

CARING

Help coaches to understand girls' needs - by centralising the girls voices, and forging connections between teachers and students, teachers can better understand what girls value and prioritise

SOCIALLY SAFE

Provide girls only opportunities — by focusing on girls PE and single-sex spaces



UEFA Playmakers™

[UEFA Playmakers](#), in partnership with Disney, aims to deliver a fun and safe introduction to football, for girls aged 5–8 years old. Sessions are hooked onto classic Disney tales, inspiring girls to move by putting them at the centre of their favourite characters and films, such as The Incredibles, Moana and Frozen:



Playmakers brings together the latest research on the benefits of play-based learning and the magical power of Disney storytelling (UEFA)

In doing so, the Playmaker Centres focus on the **MICRO** and **MESO** level, and promise to develop:

- Friendships
- Health and Confidence
- Life Skills
- Movement Competence
- A Love of Football

Playmakers sessions are delivered in over 40 European Countries, creating 30 Playmaker Centres in each, and has so far engaged over 50,000 girls. Their sessions are designed on the latest research around story-telling and play-based learning, meaning their impact has been positive in attracting previously disengaged girls. Moreover, using child friendly material has been successful in raising girls interest in a traditionally male dominated sport. Participants are given ‘adventure passports’ so that they can continue to immerse themselves in the stories, even after the sessions have finished. All Playmakers coaches are given bespoke training in advance of the sessions, enabling them to understand specific issues the girls may face and to understand the purpose of scope of the project.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — by focusing on fundamental movement skills (with and without a ball) and aiming to develop girls’ confidence and competence.

Provide non-competitive activities — although Playmakers is themed around football, the activities are entirely uncompetitive, instead focusing on co-operative play, individual improvement and fun.

MOTIVATIONAL

Provide high support — by providing an ‘adventure passport’ that girls can take home that encourage girls to stay engaged between sessions and to allow parents and family to understand and support their activity journey.

Use role models – The workforce contains a majority of females coaches to ensure the girls see themselves represented in their coaches and can connect easily with them.

CARING

Support friendships and social connections— by centralising friendships and social connections

Help coaches to understand girls’ needs — coaches are offered specific training in order to deliver on the playmakers programme, centred around getting girls active.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Create a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment — by using Disney as a hook, girls may feel more inspired to join in to begin with

Provide girls only opportunities — Playmakers is a girls’ only programme, offering girls a specific space in a sport that is often dominated by men and boys.

Her Time to Play™

[Her Time to Play](#) is a national initiative supported by the National Basketball Association (NBA) and Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA), which aims to “champion change on behalf of girls and women and provide them with ways to connect, collaborate, and actively engage with the game of basketball and one another.” Her Time to Play focuses on the **MESO** level, in that they encourage organisations to develop their environment to be more girl-friendly. They do this through the Her Time to Play community, which gives organisations access to:

- Toolkits
- Practice Plans
- Support for Female Coaches
- Support for Female Officials
- Branded clothing for players and coaches, and branded organisational material



Through the Her Time to Play ‘curriculum’, girls are also offered educational sessions linked to a range of issues which are relevant for young girls — including ‘building confidence’, ‘nutrition’, ‘body image’, ‘self-care’ and ‘strong body/strong mind’. Thus the programme aims to do more than increase physical activity levels but also educate and empower young women in more holistic ways.

By supporting organisations, such as clubs, community groups or schools, practice at the **MICRO** level can be affected positively. Moreover, partnerships with national organisations such as the NBA, WNBA and Women’s Sports Foundation may enable Her Time to Play to get more national recognition and thus have potential to influence at the **MACRO** level.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — by offering practice plans to organisations which aim to increase girls’ competence and confidence in their basic movement and basketball skills.

MOTIVATIONAL

Use role-models — partnerships with the WNBA ensure that strong female role models are used to show that women can be successful in sport

CARING

Help coaches to understand girls' needs — coaches are offered toolkits and practice plans to support their delivery for girls. These differentiate between new coaches and more experienced coaches, to support a range of coaches work with a range of girls.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Provide girls only opportunities — Her Time to Play is specifically designed for girls to engage in basketball related activities.

Be aware of issues related to body image and act accordingly — the programme includes educational material and sessions linked around body image and healthy lifestyles.

Coaching HER™

The vision of [Coaching HER](#) is to “help more girls get and stay in sport through critical drop-out ages”. They do this by tackling one of the most central issues in girls’ participation in youth sport: coaches’ unconscious gender biases and stereotypes. It is well documented that coaches are powerful role models for all young people — however, how girls feel about their coach is one of the biggest determining factors in whether she continues participating (more so than for boys).

Coaching Her aims to educate and upskill coaches and give them the training needed to address gender stereotypes and biases. Importantly, they encourage coaches to be ‘gender responsive’ which is defined as:

Intentionally employing gender considerations to affect the design, implementation and results of programmes and policies. Gender-responsive programmes and policies reflect girls’ and women’s realities and needs (Coaching HER)



In order to achieve this goal, they offer free online training modules covering a range of topics, including:

- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Eliminating barriers for girls
- Recognising girls’ identities
- Supporting girls’ needs

By influencing coaches, and clubs and programmes at the **MESO** level, the aim of Coaching HER is to facilitate positive change at the **MICRO** level.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — although Coaching HER does not directly deliver activities which focus on competence, the training for coaches includes information about the importance of physical literacy and competence and why this is particularly important for girls.

MOTIVATIONAL

Use role-models — coaches are role models for young people, by upskilling and training them they can have a strong positive influence on girls continued participation.

CARING

Help coaches to understand girls' needs — this is the key element of Coaching HER, as it is fundamentally based around educating and upskilling coaches

SOCIALLY SAFE

Be aware of issues related to body image and act accordingly – the educative tools focus on specific issues that girls may face, including body image concerns. Coaches will be better equipped to act accordingly in their own environments.

Weetabix Wildcats™

[Weetabix Wildcats](#) is a non-competitive football programme for girls aged 5-11. Importantly, it is aimed at girls who have never played before and want to try the sport for the very first time:

It's non-competitive football for girls who want to give it a go for the very first time or want to play with other girls their own age. Most importantly, Weetabix Wildcats is all about having loads of fun and meeting new amazing friends.

Working in partnership with the [English FA](#), centres are delivered across the country.

The biggest factor in the success of Weetabix Wildcats is the environment that they create, to ensure the girls feel safe, welcome and supported. In this way, they aim to influence both the **MICRO** and **MESO** level. They focus on:

- A non-competitive environment
- Building fundamental movement and football skills
- Inclusion
- Developing friendships and social connections
- Fun!

Weetabix Wildcats also work in partnership with their County FA's and local providers to ensure that girls who want to transition to competitive football can do so, as Wildcats centres are linked to local clubs.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Provide non-competitive activities — Wildcats is grounded in non-competitive football, instead focusing on building confidence and competence in a supportive environment

MOTIVATIONAL

Provide high support — Wildcats centres often work with other providers (i.e., local clubs) to ensure the girls are supported should they want to transition to competitive football. In this way, they support the girls continued development beyond the Wildcats centres.

CARING

Support friendships and social connections — the main focus of the Wildcats centres is ‘having fun’ and ‘making amazing new friends’. Practice on the ground reflects this focus, as girls work co-operatively and coaches encourage girls to work with and meet new people.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Create a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment — girls are made to feel welcome in a variety of ways, including a supportive and friendly coach, specific branding to make them feel a sense of belonging, and a girls only environment.

Daughters and Dads: Active and Empowered™

[Daughters and Dads: Active and Empowered](#) targets fathers as agents of change to improve their daughter's activity levels. Based across Australia and the UK, they focus on three traditionally male-dominated sports — cricket, basketball and football — and offer a 9-week activity and education programme.



An award-winning evidence-based program, proven to enhance the physical and social-emotional well-being of girls ... many girls and parents consider basketball/football/cricket to be a 'boys' sport resulting in girls receiving less encouragement and opportunity to play in the backyard and at school.

The programme attempts to tackle barriers at the **MICRO** level by:

- Increasing girls' competence and confidence in sporting activities
- Encouraging dads to become their daughter's 'coach'
- Using relevant female sporting role models
- Teaching dads about their role as key positive influencers of their daughter participation in sport
- Teaching daughters and their dads how to combat societal gender bias that restricts girls' participation in many sports

As part of the programme, fathers attend information workshops designed to raise their awareness of issues their daughters may face in being physically active. There are also weekly sessions that both daughters and dads attend which focus on different sport specific skills and coaching.

The key to this programme is the focus on the relationship between fathers and daughters. By engaging dads to become more active in their daughters' sporting lives, they can have an impact beyond the 9-week programme, as parents can continue to support their child both at home and in various sporting contexts. Fathers are given the opportunity to learn about the powerful influence of gender, and barriers that they themselves have never had to face in their own lives.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — one key aim of the programme is to increase girls competence and confidence in being physically active, thus empowering them to continue their physical activity journey after the end of the programme.

MOTIVATIONAL

Provide high support — by involving fathers in the programme, the level of support girls receive from home will be increased

Use role-models — the programme uses female sporting role models from the relevant sport, to show girls that sport is not just for boys

CARING

Help coaches to understand girls' needs — this programme situates fathers as coaches, and so they are educated about issues which are specific to their daughters. This can help them support their daughter throughout childhood and adolescence.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Be aware of issues related to body image and act accordingly — a key aspect of the programme is educating parent and child about gender specific issues, which includes body image and gender bias.

Gaelic 4 Girls™

[Gaelic4Girls](#) (G4G) is a 12-week programme designed to attract girls aged 8–12 into the sport. The focus is on introducing the sport in a fun way, aiming to involve players who have never played the game before.



Sessions are hosted by established clubs who wish to either develop a new girls' section or boost their numbers for their existing girls' team(s). This is an important factor, as it means that girls are helped to transition into the club after the end of the programme, because they are familiar with the other players, the coaches and the facilities. In this way, G4G targets both the **MICRO** and **MESO** level, by providing positive activity for girls and influencing change at a club level.

Clubs must provide 2 qualified coaches per programme, who have to attend specific G4G training prior to starting. They are provided with specific marketing materials and t-shirts for the girls to help them feel part of the team. The first 8 weeks of the programme is only for girls who have not played before, so they can develop their skills in a safe and mixed ability environment. To support transition, the final 4 weeks are integrated with the club's current girls' section, letting the new players build relationships with other girls. Overall, this programme has been successful in supporting girls to transition to regular physical activity, with an estimated 50% of G4G participants joining their clubs full-time after the end of the programme.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — the focus of the programme is to introduce girls to the sport in a fun way, therefore increasing their skills and confidence.

MOTIVATIONAL

Use role-models — after 8 weeks, more experienced players are invited to the session to support transition. These girls can act as role models for the participants, as they can see first-hand how girls their age can compete in sport.

CARING

Support friendships and social connections — by inviting girls who already play to later sessions, girls can begin to develop friendships with players who they may go on to play with in club settings

Help coaches to understand girls' needs — coaches have to undertake specific training, which covers specific issues relating to girls participation.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Create a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment — by only including beginner players, girls can develop their skills with other girls of the same ability and a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment.

Keep Up With the Girls™

[Keep Up With the Girls](#) is a European wide project which aims to support women and girls to play football — delivered by [Special Olympics](#), it targets those with and without intellectual disabilities. In this way, it aims to be inclusive in being open to women and girls of all backgrounds and abilities.

Delivered as part of Special Olympics' wider European Football Week every year, the project includes a series of events across 20 European countries with the aim of increasing participation and upskilling coaches. In 2019, 4,303 athletes participated (including 677 without an intellectual disability), 992 coaches were involved (including 416 new coaches) and 633 volunteers engaged in the programme. Additionally, online campaigns, backed by global ambassadors including former professional football players and current Special Olympic athletes, are used to spread awareness of the campaign.

**Special
Olympics**



Because of the nature of the project, being spread over 20 countries, there were multiple approaches to delivery, including:

- Come and Try events — often running in partnerships with schools and local clubs
- Coaching Seminars and Knowledge Exchange — to attract and upskill new coaches
- Partnerships with Professional Clubs and National Associations
- Local, National and International Tournaments
- Communications Campaigns

This case study is unique within this guide as it is the only one which specifically targets women and girls with intellectual disabilities. Importantly, much of the advice and learning is similar to other case study projects — the enduring assumption that specific sports are associated with masculinity and thus ‘not for girls’ was pervasive, while the importance of female coaches and of role models and ambassadors are crucial to consider for girls of any background. However, this case study also highlights specific considerations need to be taken into account when working with targeted populations. For example, it was highlighted that it was much harder to attract girls with intellectual disabilities after they have left formal education, so projects which target this population may need to work closely with education providers. Moreover, coaches need to be specifically trained about the nature of intellectual disabilities to ensure they are equipped to understand and respond to specific needs.

Importantly for ICOACHGIRLS Centres, this case study highlights that girls are not a homogenous group that face the exact same barriers and challenges. While they may face similar challenges in relation to gender stereotypes, ICOACHGIRLS providers must take into account the specific group of girls they are working with — who perhaps differ due to disabilities, migration status or

geographic location — and ensure their needs are being catered for in the design of the play centre at both a **MICRO** and **MESO** level.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — by providing ‘come and try’ events, girls can be introduced to the sport in a safe and constructive way. In providing developmentally appropriate introductory events, girls can be encouraged to try new activities and increase their confidence.

MOTIVATIONAL

Use role-models — ambassadors and role models, including those with intellectual disabilities, are used to encourage more girls to try the sport.

CARING

Help coaches to understand girls’ needs — coaches are specifically trained about the needs of girls, and about the specific needs of those with intellectual disabilities. Coaching seminars and knowledge exchanges ensure coaches can continue to develop their knowledge and skills.

SOCIALLY SAFE

Create a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment — the ethos of Special Olympics is linked to inclusion. Importantly, by targeting the programme at girls with and without disabilities (unified sport), they are being truly inclusive and not segregating populations.

Adolescent Girls Get Active™

[Adolescent Girls Get Active](#) is a research programme in Ireland which acknowledges that issues for girls being physically active do not stop at childhood — indeed much research suggests problems with body image and confidence increase during this time point (adolescence).

“Evidence suggests participation plummets during adolescence with just 7% of girls age 14–15 years meeting recommended physical activity levels [in Ireland]. Girls who are active in their teenage years and develop a love of sport are much more likely to establish a life-long relationship with sport and exercise in adulthood.” (Adolescent Girls Get Active)

While ICOACHGIRLS is aimed at a younger age group, it is still important to recognise how girls lives and priorities change as they reach adolescence. Indeed, adolescent girls may be involved in ICOACHGIRLS sessions, as coaches and leaders. Moreover, older girls who are participating in the ICOACHGIRLS play centres may be on the cusp of adolescence.

Adolescent Girls Get Active aims to influence practice at a **MACRO** level — by providing research and insight which can influence policy — and at **MESO** level — by supporting clubs and organisations to better understand the needs of adolescent girls. After conducting the research, organisations were encouraged to take part in an online ‘hackathon’ which brought organisations and clubs together to brainstorm effective methods to increase girls’ participation in sport. In turn, practice can be affected at a **MICRO** level. They identify five ‘anchors’ which they believe are what really matters to adolescent girls:

- Support Network
- Independence and Opportunity
- Socially Connected
- Moments of Pride
- Keeping on top of it all

The infographic consists of five numbered cards, each with a title, a brief description, and a representative image. Card 1: 'Support network' with an image of people jumping. Card 2: 'Independence & opportunity' with a landscape image. Card 3: 'Socially connected' with an image of a girl on a phone. Card 4: 'Moments of pride' with a heart-shaped hand gesture. Card 5: 'Keeping on top of it all' with a brain and smiley faces.

Original Framework - Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls (Women in Sport, 2019)

SPORTIRELAND.IE #WOMENINSPORTIRE

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SPORT

The anchors are useful to keep in mind in the development of ICOACHGIRLS — they reinforce that barriers to physical activity for girls are multi-faceted and nuanced. ICOACHGIRLS partners need to be flexible and inspirational in their approach.



DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Focus on competence — focusing on ‘moments of pride’ involves building self-progression, self-esteem and learning new skills

MOTIVATIONAL

Provide high support — recognise that girls often want independence and freedom, and a say in their lives. Moreover, bringing together clubs and organisations to problem solve collaboratively works across both the **MESO** and **MICRO** level.

CARING

Support friendships and social connections — foreground friendship and support networks for girls

SOCIALLY SAFE

Create a positive, inclusive and welcoming environment — recognise that girls from different backgrounds face different challenges, and adapt practice accordingly.

Summary and Top Tips

In summary, there are a range of existing programmes and initiatives which have benefited girls' opportunities to become, and stay, more physically active. By studying the different models and approaches, we can better understand how the ICOACHGIRLS principles (outlined in the previous guide: "(re)introducing girls to physical activity") may look in practice. The key takeaway message is not to try and do everything outlined in this guide — instead, consider what might work in your context, for the girls you will be working with and plan appropriately. These top tips are not an exhaustive list and are merely meant to act as a guide to support the development of the ICOACHGIRLS play centres as well as any other initiatives across the EU.

DEVELOPMENTAL

Element 1: Focus on Competence

Emphasise fundamental movement skills

Create practice plans and syllabus' which foreground the above developmental points

Element 2: Provide Non-Competitive Activities

Offer 'come and try' events to entice girls to try something new for the first time

Foreground personal improvement

MOTIVATIONAL

Element 3: Provide High Support

Enable girls to have a voice and say in how the programme runs

Consider how you can support transition into external activities

Involve parents

Element 4: Offer a Variety of Activities

Ensure a range of activities and families of activities are offered

Give the girls opportunities to choose what activities they take part in

Element 5: Use Role Models

Include role models — these can be coaches, athletes or other participants

Train older girls as leaders — offer a pathway and inspire the younger girls



CARING

Element 6: Promote Friendships and Social Connections

Create a community feel — for example, consider your branding to make girls feel part of something bigger

Forge connections between the girls and their peers and coaches

Element 7: Help Coaches Understand Girls' Needs

Ensure specific coach education is offered — include specific issues linked to gender, and other relevant issues (e.g. disability)

Differentiate coach education for new and experienced coaches (and parents)

SOCIALLY SAFE

Element 8: Create a Positive and Inclusive Environment

Welcome all abilities and backgrounds

Ensure coaches are trained to recognise and appreciate difference

Element 9: Provide Girls Only Opportunities

Ensure you offer girls only spaces

Educate parents and coaches as to the benefits of this approach

Element 10: Be Aware of Issues Related to Body Image

Acknowledge and understand body issues

Include educational elements — use sport and physical activity as a vehicle for positive change

Self-Assessment Tool Kit

Please use the following table to self-assess your offer across the [Youth Sport Compass](#). To help you in your thinking, we encourage you to think across the [10 key elements](#) of coaching girls, and give you the series of top tips as examples. You do not necessarily have to be green in everything to run a successful centre. This is designed to allow you to think critically about your own offer, and identify areas for further development.

Green = we are successful at this

Amber = we are not sure how well we do

Red = we have not thought about this yet

N/A = not applicable, or not relevant for our centre

| How well do we do across the Youth Sport Compass: | Green | Amber | Red | N/A |
|--|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| Development-Oriented | | | | |
| Element 1: Focus on Competence <i>(For example, emphasise fundamental movement skills, create practice plans and syllabus' which foreground the above developmental points)</i> | | | | |
| Element 2: Provide Non-Competitive Activities <i>(For example, offer 'come and try' events to entice girls to try something new for the first time, foreground personal improvement)</i> | | | | |
| Motivational | | | | |
| Element 3: Provide High Support <i>(For example, enable girls to have a voice and say in how the programme runs, consider how you can support transition into external activities, involve parents)</i> | | | | |
| Element 4: Offer a Variety of Activities <i>(for example, ensure a range of activities and families of activities are offered, give the girls opportunities to choose what activities they take part in)</i> | | | | |
| Element 5: Use Role Models <i>(For example, include role models – these can be coaches, athletes or other participants, train older girls as leaders – offer a pathway and inspire the younger girls)</i> | | | | |
| Caring | | | | |
| Element 6: Promote Friendships and Social Connections <i>(For example, create a community feel – consider your branding to make girls feel part of something bigger, forge connections between the girls and their peers and coaches)</i> | | | | |
| Element 7: Help Coaches Understand Girls' Needs <i>(For example, ensure specific coach education is offered – include specific issues linked to gender, and other relevant issues (e.g. disability), differentiate coach education for new and experienced coaches (and parents)</i> | | | | |
| Socially Safe | | | | |
| Element 8: Create a Positive and Inclusive Environment <i>(For example, accept all abilities and backgrounds, ensure coaches are trained to recognise and appreciate difference)</i> | | | | |
| Element 9: Provide Girls Only Opportunities <i>(For example, ensure you offer girls only spaces, educate parents and coaches as to the benefits of this approach)</i> | | | | |
| Element 10: Be Aware of Issues Related to Body Image <i>(For example, acknowledge and understand body issues, include educational elements – use sport and physical activity as a vehicle for positive change)</i> | | | | |

Glossary of Terms

Elements — refers to particular elements which are specific to encourage more girls to participate in sport and physical activity

ICOACHGIRLS — A specific project within the ICOACHKIDS Global Movement, which recognizes that girls may face additional challenges to participate in sport and physical activity, and aims to support more girls in overcoming these barriers

ICOACHKIDS — A non-profit global movement to help kids get the most out of sport. The online platform gives youth sport coaches the knowledge and tools to share and learn from one another

Micro, Meso, Macro — different levels of impact from individual (micro), organizational (meso) and regionally/nationally (macro)

Physical Activity — refers to all movement and exercise that causes a person's body to work harder than normal. This can include sport, but also less organized activities such as walking, active play, skipping and jumping. It is recommended that children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity a week

Play Centre — refers to the specific activity centers which will be designed, delivered and evaluated through ICOACHGIRLS

Physical Literacy - Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that enables a person to value and participate in physical activity throughout life

Principles — refers to the 10 principles in the ICK pledge

Sport — refers to organized games and activities in which teams or individuals compete within the boundaries of defined rules (e.g. football, basketball, cricket, netball etc.)

Appendices

- 1. Guide 2 Executive Summary – English**
- 2. Guide 2 Executive Summary – Spanish**
- 3. Guide 2 Executive Summary – French**
- 4. Guide 2 Executive Summary – German**
- 5. Guide 2 Executive Summary – Dutch**
- 6. Guide 2 Executive Summary – Hungarian**
- 7. Guide 2 Executive Summary – Lithuanian**



Girls in Sport: Best Practice Guide

This guide presents a range of case studies, focusing on programmes and initiatives which aim to increase girls' participation in sport and physical activity. Each programme is unique in its own respect, but each brings to life some of the 10 elements (noted in bold below) which were presented in the previous guide: '(Re)introducing girls to sport and physical activity'.

A selection of the case studies presented are included below:

- 1. This Girl Can™**
A British campaign which seeks to normalise women being physically active. This uses role models and promotes awareness of body image issues by centralising images of women taking part in a range of physical activity.
- 2. PowerPlay™**
A family of programmes based in New York which focus on sport participation and leadership for girls. PowerPlay offers a range of activities and provides high support by training girls as leaders to inspire the next generation.
- 3. UEFA Disney Playmakers™**
A programme which delivers a fun and safe introduction to football. The sessions are girls-only and focus on fundamental movement skills, therefore building competence and offering a non-competitive environment.
- 4. Her Time to Play™**
An NBA community which gives basketball clubs access to toolkits, practice plans, and support for female coaches and officials. The partnership with the National Basketball Association (NBA) and Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) ensures strong female role models are used.
- 5. Coaching Her**
An online education programme for all coaches working with girls, aiming to support more coaches to understand the needs of their female participants.
- 6. Weetabix Wildcats™**
A non-competitive football programme for girls aged 5-11, aimed at those who have never played before and want to try the sport for the first time. One of the key focus areas for these sessions are to develop friendships and social connections and build fundamental movement skills, and therefore perceived competence.



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Las chicas en el deporte: Buenas prácticas

Esta guía presenta una serie de estudios de casos, centrados en programas e iniciativas cuyo objetivo es aumentar la participación de las chicas en el deporte y la actividad física. Cada programa es único en su género, pero cada uno da vida a algunos de los 10 elementos (señalados en negrita a continuación) que se presentaron en la guía anterior: **(Re)introducir a las chicas en el deporte y la actividad física**".

A continuación se incluye una selección de los estudios de casos presentados:

- 1. This Girl Can™**
una campaña británica que pretende normalizar el hecho de que las mujeres sean físicamente activas. Utiliza modelos de conducta y fomenta la concienciación sobre los problemas de la imagen corporal centralizando imágenes de mujeres que participan en diversas actividades físicas.
- 2. PowerPlay™**
una familia de programas con sede en Nueva York que se centra en la participación deportiva y el liderazgo de las niñas. PowerPlay ofrece una gama de actividades y proporciona un alto apoyo mediante la formación de las niñas como líderes para inspirar a la próxima generación.
- 3. UEFA Disney Playmakers™**
un programa que ofrece una introducción divertida y segura al fútbol. Las sesiones son solo para niñas y se centran en las habilidades de movimiento fundamentales, por lo que fomentan la competencia y ofrecen un entorno no competitivo.
- 4. Her Time to Play™**
una comunidad de la NBA que ofrece a los clubes de baloncesto acceso a herramientas, planes de entrenamiento y apoyo para entrenadoras y árbitros. La asociación con la Asociación Nacional de Baloncesto (NBA) y la Asociación Nacional de Baloncesto Femenino (WNBA) garantiza que se utilicen modelos femeninos fuertes.
- 5. Coaching Her**
un programa educativo en línea para todos los entrenadores que trabajan con chicas, cuyo objetivo es ayudar a más entrenadores a comprender las necesidades de sus participantes femeninas.
- 6. Weetabix Wildcats™**
un programa de fútbol no competitivo para niñas de 5 a 11 años, dirigido a las que nunca han jugado y quieren probar el deporte por primera vez. Una de las principales áreas de interés de estas sesiones es el desarrollo de amistades y vínculos sociales, así como el desarrollo de habilidades de movimiento fundamentales y, por lo tanto, de la competencia percibida.



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Les filles dans le sport: Meilleures pratiques

Ce guide présente une série d'études de cas, axées sur des programmes et des initiatives visant à accroître la participation des filles au sport et à l'activité physique. Chaque programme est unique en son genre, mais chacun donne vie à certains des 10 éléments (notés en gras ci-dessous) présentés dans le guide précédent : **(Ré)initier les filles au sport et à l'activité physique**".

Une sélection des études de cas présentées est incluse ci-dessous :

- 1. This Girl Can™**
campagne britannique visant à normaliser la pratique d'une activité physique par les femmes. Elle utilise des modèles et sensibilise aux questions d'image corporelle en centralisant des images de femmes pratiquant diverses activités physiques.
- 2. PowerPlay™**
une famille de programmes basés à New York qui se concentrent sur la participation sportive et le leadership des filles. PowerPlay propose une série d'activités et apporte un soutien important en formant des filles au leadership afin d'inspirer la prochaine génération.
- 3. UEFA Disney Playmakers™**
un programme qui offre une introduction amusante et sûre au football. Les séances sont réservées aux filles et se concentrent sur les mouvements fondamentaux, ce qui permet de développer les compétences et d'offrir un environnement non compétitif.
- 4. Her Time to Play™**
une communauté de la NBA qui permet aux clubs de basket-ball d'accéder à des boîtes à outils, à des plans d'entraînement et à un soutien pour les entraîneurs et les officiels féminins. Le partenariat avec la National Basketball Association (NBA) et la Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) garantit l'utilisation de modèles féminins forts.
- 5. Coaching Her**
un programme de formation en ligne pour tous les entraîneurs travaillant avec des filles, visant à aider davantage d'entraîneurs à comprendre les besoins de leurs participantes.
- 6. Weetabix Wildcats™**
un programme de football non compétitif pour les filles âgées de 5 à 11 ans, destiné à celles qui n'ont jamais joué auparavant et qui veulent essayer le sport pour la première fois. L'un des principaux objectifs de ces sessions est de développer des amitiés et des liens sociaux, de renforcer les compétences fondamentales en matière de mouvement et, par conséquent, de donner l'impression d'être compétent.



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Meisjes in de sport: Beste praktijk

Deze gids presenteert een reeks casestudies, gericht op programma's en initiatieven die tot doel hebben de deelname van meisjes aan sport en lichaamsbeweging te vergroten. Elk programma is uniek in zijn eigen opzicht, maar elk brengt een aantal van de 10 elementen (vetgedrukt hieronder) tot leven die in de vorige gids werden gepresenteerd: (Her)introdactie van meisjes tot sport en lichaamsbeweging'.

Hieronder volgt een selectie van de gepresenteerde casestudies:

- 1. This Girl Can™**
een Britse campagne die probeert te normaliseren dat vrouwen lichamelijk actief zijn. Deze maakt gebruik van rolmodellen en bevordert het bewustzijn van lichaamsbeeldproblemen door beelden te centraliseren van vrouwen die deelnemen aan verschillende lichamelijke activiteiten.
- 2. PowerPlay™**
een reeks programma's in New York die zich richten op sportparticipatie en leiderschap voor meisjes. PowerPlay biedt een scala aan activiteiten en biedt veel ondersteuning door meisjes op te leiden tot leiders om de volgende generatie te inspireren.
- 3. UEFA Disney Playmakers™**
een programma dat een leuke en veilige introductie tot voetbal biedt. De sessies zijn alleen voor meisjes en richten zich op fundamentele bewegingsvaardigheden, waardoor competentie wordt opgebouwd en een niet-competitieve omgeving wordt geboden.
- 4. Her Time to Play™**
een NBA-community die basketbalclubs toegang geeft tot toolkits, oefenplannen en ondersteuning voor vrouwelijke coaches en officials. De samenwerking met de National Basketball Association (NBA) en Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) zorgt ervoor dat er sterke vrouwelijke rolmodellen worden gebruikt.
- 5. Coaching Her**
een online trainingsprogramma voor alle coaches die met meisjes werken, met als doel meer coaches inzicht te geven in de behoeften van hun vrouwelijke deelnemers.
- 6. Weetabix Wildcats™**
een niet-competitief voetbalprogramma voor meiden van 5-11 jaar, gericht op meiden die nog nooit hebben gespeeld en de sport voor het eerst willen proberen. Een van de belangrijkste aandachtsgedieden voor deze sessies is het ontwikkelen van vriendschappen en sociale banden en het opbouwen van fundamentele bewegingsvaardigheden, en daardoor de waargenomen competentie.



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Lányok a sportban: Jó gyakorlatok

Ez az útmutató számos esettanulmányt mutat be, olyan programokra és kezdeményezésekre összpontosít, melyek célja a lányok sportban és fizikai aktivitásban való részvételének növelése. Mindegyik program egyedi a maga szemszögéből, és mindegyik az előző útmutatóban bemutatott 10 szempont közül néhányat felelevenít (az alábbiakban vastag betűvel szedve): "Lányok (újra)bevonása a sportba és fizikai aktivitásba".

Az alábbiakban néhány esettanulmányt röviden bemutatunk:

- 1. This Girl Can™**
egy brit kampány, amely a nők fizikai aktivitásának normalizálására törekszik. Példaképeket használ, és a testkép problémáinak tudatosítását segíti elő azáltal, hogy a különböző fizikai tevékenységekben részt vevő nők képeit állítja középpontba.
- 2. PowerPlay™**
egy New York-i székhelyű programsorozat, amely a lányok sportban való részvételére és vezetői szerepvállalására összpontosít. A PowerPlay számos tevékenységet kínál, és komoly támogatást nyújt azáltal, hogy vezető szerepet betöltő lányokat képez, inspirálva a következő generációt.
- 3. UEFA Disney Playmakers™**
egy olyan program, amely szórakoztató és biztonságos alapot nyújt a labdarúgáshoz. A foglalkozások csak lányoknak szólnak, és az alapvető mozgáskészségekre összpontosítanak, nem versenyszerű környezetben fejlesztik a készségeket.
- 4. Her Time to Play™**
egy NBA-program, amely a kosárlabdaklubok számára hozzáférést biztosít hasznos eszközökhöz, edzéstervekhez, valamint támogatást nyújt a női edzők és játékezők számára. A Nemzeti Kosárlabda Szövetséggel (NBA) és a Női Kosárlabda Szövetséggel (WNBA) való partnerség garantálja az erős női példaképek alkalmazását.
- 5. Coaching Her**
egy online oktatási program lányokkal dolgozó edzők számára, amelynek célja, hogy minél több edzőt támogasson a női résztvevők igényeinek megértésében..
- 6. Weetabix Wildcats™**
1. Weetabix Wildcats™ – 5–11 éves lányoknak szóló, nem versenyszerű futballprogram, amely azoknak szól, akik még soha nem fociztak, és először szeretnék kipróbálni ezt a sportot. A foglalkozások egyik fő fókussterülete a barátságok és a szociális kapcsolatok fejlesztése, valamint az alapvető mozgáskészségek, és ezáltal a megélt tudás fejlesztése.



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Merginos sporte: geroji praktika – geroji patirtis

Šiame vadove pateikiami įvairūs atvejų tyrimai. Juose daugiausia dėmesio skiriama programoms ir iniciatyvoms, kuriomis siekiama didinti mergaičių dalyvavimą sporte ir fizinėje veikloje. Kiekviena programa savaip unikali, ji padeda įgyvendinti kai kuriuos iš dešimties elementų (toliau pažymėtų paryškintu šriftu), kurie buvo pateikti ankstesniame vadove „Mergaičių supažindinimas su sportu ir fizine veikla“.

Toliau pateikiama keletas pavyzdžių:

- 1. This Girl Can™**
Didžiosios Britanijos kampanija, kuria siekiama, kad moterys būtų fiziškai aktyvios. Šioje kampanijoje pasitelkiami pavyzdžiai ir skatinama suvokti kūno įvaizdžio problemas, dalyvaujant įvairiose fizinėse veiklose.
- 2. PowerPlay™**
Niujorke įsikūrusi programų grupė, kurioje daugiausia dėmesio skiriama mergaičių dalyvavimui sporte ir lyderystei. PowerPlay siūlo įvairią veiklą ir teikia didelę paramą mokant mergaites tapti lyderėmis, kad jos įkvėptų naująją kartą.
- 3. UEFA Disney Playmakers™**
programa, pagal kurią smagiai ir saugiai supažindinama su futbolu. Užsiėmimai skirti tik mergaitėms. Juose daugiausia dėmesio skiriama pagrindiniams judėjimo įgūdžiams, todėl ugdomos kompetencijos ir siūloma nekonkurencinė aplinka.
- 4. Her Time to Play™**
NBA bendruomenė, suteikianti krepšinio klubams prieigą prie priemonių rinkinių, treniruočių planų ir paramos moterims trenerėms bei pareigūnėms. Partnerystė su Nacionaline krepšinio asociacija (NBA) ir Moterų nacionaline krepšinio asociacija (WNBA) užtikrina, kad būtų naudojami ryškūs moterų pavyzdžiai.
- 5. Coaching Her**
internetinė švietimo programa, skirta visiems treneriams, dirbantiems su mergaitėmis. Šia programa siekiama padėti daugiau trenerių suprasti treniruojamų moterų poreikius.
- 6. Weetabix Wildcats™**
nekonkurencinė futbolo programa 5–11 metų amžiaus mergaitėms, kurios niekada anksčiau nežaidė ir nori pirmą kartą išbandyti šią sporto šaką. Viena iš pagrindinių šių užsiėmimų tikslinių sričių – draugystės ir socialinių ryšių plėtojimas bei pagrindinių judėjimo įgūdžių, taigi ir suvokiamos kompetencijos, ugdymas.



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