

Coaching for Hope: Empowerment of Women and Girls Through Football

Coaching for Hope has partnered with the University of Cape Town's Sociology department for assistance with the design of research methodology to examine the role of their *Empowerment of Women and Girls Through Football* project on girls' education. Reika Shucart, a Master's student enrolled in the Development Studies programme, under supervision of Sociology professor Dr. Jacques De Wet and project officer Lucy Mills, will pilot these tools in four project sites to look at the contribution of the project to participants' perceptions on education. The qualitative research design comprises a mix of in-depth, informal interviews and focus groups with a wide range of people, such as coordinators from partner organisations, coaches, players, and school teachers. Interviews and focus groups will be conducted over the coming months and the study will be showcased at the annual Beyond Sport Summit which is being held in Cape Town in December. The Summit is an annual event that brings together the best sport-led social innovators with influential, global leaders to address sport's role in driving positive social change. The research ties in with the Summit's theme: The Role of Sport in Girls' Education, which is being discussed within the context of the aims of UNGEI (United Nations Girls' Education Initiative), on behalf of UNICEF, Beyond Sport's main partner.

The *Empowerment of Women and Girls Through Football* project ethos is distinctly all about women leading women, and the objectives are to train female coaches and generate wider access for girls to participate in women-led football sessions and competition, particularly in areas where barriers are most entrenched. The City of Cape Town, funders of the project, allocated 6 target communities: Langa, Mitchell's Plain, Ocean View, Lwandle, Gugulethu and Bishop Lavis. In each site Coaching for Hope has partnered with local structures/NGOs that are responsible for recruiting female coaches and implementing the project. The 6 partner organisations are: Soccer 4 Hope (Gugulethu), Bread of Life (Langa), Making an Impact Through Sport (Mitchell's Plain), Northern Suburbs Ladies Football Club (Bishop Lavis), Lwandle Sport for Development Committee (Lwandle) and Isiqalo Foundation (Ocean View/ Masiphumelele). Coaching For Hope partnered with these community-based organisations in order to promote project sustainability. In April and May, Coaching for Hope trained up to 30 females from the partner organisations and these coaches are now delivering regular football and life skills sessions to between 30 and 60 girls.

The initial pilot phase is 20 weeks and the longer-term objective is to establish football clubs at each of the 6 sites that can be affiliated to the South African Football Association (SAFA) Cape Town. Over the next few months there is scope for integration of life skills modules, the content of which has been generated by a focus group that Coaching for Hope conducted with female coaches that ascertained the barriers and challenges specific to each community. An integral part of the project will be to use the football sessions to address challenges and issues that are specific to each community. The focus group, which took place in May 2011, identified the main issues affecting women and girls in their communities. These included a lack of access to playing fields; teenage pregnancies, alcohol and substance misuse; fear for one's safety; violence and rape; and a lack of support by male dominated structures and individual men. One of the most profound pieces of information to come out of this workshop was the notion that: if you know yourself, know who you are and what you want, then you

can navigate yourself through vulnerable situations and be in the right frame of mind to be able to reach out for positive opportunities.

For more information please contact Lucy Mills: lucy.mills@coachingforhope.org