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From the side lines to centre court

One woman's experience

Gina Menzies

Why Sporting Bodies should improve female involvement

- Not a right – A necessity for sports success because.....
- Increased numbers boost activity at all levels – more bodies, more ideas
- Increased funding
- Positive Profile of your sport/activity



- Gender Equity in Sport means.....

“Providing all individuals with **ACCESS** and **OPPORUNITY** to take part in a full range of sporting activities with the objective of fulfilling their human potential”



What would constitute a level playing pitch for girls and women in sport and recreational activities?

- Equal numbers participating at all levels of sporting activity?
- Equal funding?
- Equal media coverage?



OR

- Equal Access and Opportunities so that physical activity is an integral part of life for all women and girls?



Information for decisions?

- **FACTS/ DATA** for
 - Participation
 - Coaching
 - Refereeing
 - Administration
 - Decision making positions
- **POLICIES/ STRATEGIES**
 - Government
 - Irish Sports Council
 - Olympic Movement
 - National Governing Bodies



A Sporting Life

- Childhood – sport part of natural environment-parental influence
- Primary/Secondary school excellent PE programme, positive sporting experiences, PE teacher influence, club membership, coaching courses, refereeing practice
- Third level – increased choice, structured coaching, administration



World of work-sport/life balance

- Time management – international honours
- Supportive environment – family, club, coach

- Payback Time – Volunteer
- Administration, coaching

Welcome changes

- Participation in male dominated sports
 - Boxing
 - Rugby
 - Soccer
 - Cricket
 - GAA
- Targeted Funding and Programmes
- Irish Times Monthly Women in Sport Awards



Barriers

- Psychological
- Social and cultural
- Economic



Question 1

- What do you think are the barriers to girls' and women's participation **in your sport?**



Barriers to girls' and women's involvement

- Lack of time, money, childcare
- Access to facilities
- Body image
- Lack self-confidence
- Lack of appropriate role models
- Sexual harassment and abuse
- Homophobia
- Media coverage



Question 2

- What strategies would increase the participation of girls and women **in your sport?**



Make a difference

- No single remedy for all
- Need for multi-layered solutions
- Different actions/strategies
- Government
- Irish Sports Council
- National Governing Bodies
- Clubs



Macro Level

- Data Base
- National Governing Bodies audit
- Facilities audit
- Adoption of Brighton Principles
- Irish Sports Council
- Government Policies
- A Women's Sports Foundation (WSFF) The Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation



Micro Level

- National Governing Body audit – strengths and weaknesses re female involvement
- Template for club analysis
- Targeted Programmes – increase participation, coaches, representation on decision making units



Aspiration

- A level playing pitch is a realistic expectation for women and men in the 21st century
- Thank You

The most essential ingredient?

FUN FUN FUN



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