

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/274703106>

# “Course Proposal for Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Education of Women”. Presentation at the international workshop of the project “Estia–Earth to Sustain Women’s Careers as Academ...”

CONFERENCE PAPER · NOVEMBER 2009

---

DOWNLOADS

15

---

VIEWS

4

## 2 AUTHORS:



[Irene Kamberidou](#)

National and Kapodistrian University of Ath...

102 PUBLICATIONS 15 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



[Konstantinos Karteroliotis](#)

National and Kapodistrian University of Ath...

26 PUBLICATIONS 76 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



## Course proposals for postgraduate interdisciplinary education of Women, Erasmus MSc Program Environment-Life-Management

1. Proposed course/ or Directed Study: “Gender issues in sports” (offered by ESTIA-EARTH partner, scientific responsible: **Irene Kamberidou**)
2. Proposed course/ or Directed Study: “Research Methods” (offered by ESTIA-EARTH partner, **Kostas Karteroliotis**)
3. Directed Study: “Gender and technology (the anachronistic gender-science imbalance) from a sociological perspective. (offered by ESTIA-EARTH partner, **Irene Kamberidou**)
4. Proposed course or directed study: “Sport Sociology” offered by ESTIA-EARTH partner assistant professor **Nikolaos Patsantaras**.

The following is a draft proposal which includes proposed course “Gender issues and sports” in conjunction with socio-economic considerations and socio cultural issues in sport:

### “Gender issues and sports”

#### *Course content:*

Initially, discussions on what is gender, presentation of international dialogue on gender and the role of sport in addressing gender issues. Topics/lectures include: Doping and Gender, agency, the under-representation of women in competitive sports and in sport governing bodies (SGBs), the social gender and sport identity, the sport-gender imbalance, Women athletes in the mass media, genderless athletes, Olympism or peace education, underdevelopment of sport in developing countries, racism and xenophobia in sport, child exploitation and child protection in sport, gender and leadership skills, and so on. More analytically with regard to the course content:

#### *What is 'Gender'?*

Gender refers to the socially-constructed roles of and relationships between men and women. Gender concerns men and women, including conceptions of both femininity and masculinity. The difference between ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ is that the latter refers only to biological differences as an analytical category. Gender does not mean focusing solely on women or females, but rather on the inequalities regarding both genders, and should not be confused with feminism or women’s studies. However, analyses of gender *differences* often show a socially disadvantaged and weaker position of women and girls in social, political, economic, legal, educational and sport issues. This is why there is a tendency for gender discussions and interventions to focus on correcting these imbalances by specifically targeting women and girls.

1

### *Challenging and transforming gender norms*

Most research that examines the relationship between sport and gender refers to the transformative potential of sport to **challenge or alter gender norms**. ‘Gender norms’ refer to the social responsibilities and privileges assigned to men and women. Although the participation of women and girls in sport remains largely imbalanced when compared to participation among men and boys—as is the case in the sciences, engineering, technology etc.—most researchers are in agreement that the consistent and continued participation of women and girls in sport has had a major impact on achieving gender equality in certain contexts. Research programs, such as the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) program, reveal that girls’ participation in the football affected boys’ attitudes. **Boys are observed to have adopted positive and supportive attitudes** towards their female counterparts. Evidence from developing countries indicates that some sports programmes provide women and girls with **opportunities to develop leadership skills**. For instance, the Moving the Goal Posts Kilifi programme (MTGK) in Kenya provides opportunities for participants to compete and train, as well as participate directly in developing the organisation and **overseeing governance**.

In both the MYSA and MTGK girls’ football programs, the provision of possibilities to develop specialised skills in coaching, refereeing, training, league organisation as well as access to information on health and peer education is of great value to the participants. Exposure to competing internationally is seen to add a boost to public recognition of the skills that women and girls can develop through sport. Additionally, research using the concept of **self-esteem** suggests that girls and women who participate in sport and physical activity in both developed and developing countries demonstrate higher self-esteem as well as improved self-perception, self-worth, self-efficacy and so on. These improvements are associated with enhanced feelings of accomplishment, perceptions of improved physical appearance and commitment to exercise. Evidence from developing countries shows that involvement in organised sports activities helped to enhance girls’ **sense of agency, self-empowerment and personal freedom**.

### *Social inclusion and social integration of women and girls*

There is a large amount of compelling evidence from both developed and developing countries reflecting the relationship between **sport participation and social integration and social inclusion** of women and girls. For example, evidence from post-apartheid South Africa shows that young women from different backgrounds could use football as a platform to engage with one another, **mentor** each other, as well as develop friendships and strengthen relationships. Similar findings from **Nigeria** suggest that sport plays a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion and encouraging social interaction among young women and girls.

### *Policy Development in Gender and Sport*

Policy development at the nexus of sport, gender and development has centred mainly on sport and gender. Increasingly, there is recognition of the need to involve and engage with gender issues through sport in the context of developing countries.

The following presents major highlights in policy development in sport, gender and development:

**1949** – International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW) is formed.

**1968** – a female athlete lights the Olympic fire for the first time at the Olympic Games in Mexico city.

**1975** – UN Women’s World Conference in Mexico City leads to the creation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

**1979** – UN General Assembly adopts the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

**1981** – Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) is established.

**1981** – two female members are elected to join the IOC.

**1984** – Women’s Sports Foundation is founded in Great Britain.

**1994** – the first World Conference on Women and Sport and the signing of the Brighton Declaration, signals the ‘women in sport’ movement taking on an international dimension.

**1995** – the International Working Group on Women and Sport is formed and receives the status of official IOC commission.

**1995** – the fourth UN Women’s World Conference takes place in Beijing, signalling the shift in discourse from ‘Women in Development’ (WID) to ‘Gender and Development’ (GAD).

**1996** – the promotion of female sport is added to the Olympic Charter.

**2004** – the third IOC World Conference on Women and Sport is held in Morocco, entitled: ‘Sport as a Vehicle for Social Change’.

**2009**- The Cyprus Sports Organisation held the 8th European Women and Sport (EWS) Conference in October 9th and 10th 2009 in Limassol, Cyprus at which the EWS Sport Declaration was formulated. (signing of the Cyprus Declaration).

## Socio-economic considerations and socio cultural issues

In developing countries, lack of time and division of labour between men and women may prevent women and girls from participating in social activities outside the home, including sport. At the beginning of the 20th century in Western Europe, most female sports were exclusive to the wealthier, upper class groups who had time to spare. The economic and socio-cultural context of established gender norms must also be considered when conducting sport programs that aim to address gender norms. For example, it may be considered a provocation for women and girls in some contexts, to be seen in public, wearing sports attire that may not cover all parts of the body. Not behaving according to established gender norms determined by socio-cultural influences, can have significant negative consequences for those who deviate from these norms. Codes of conduct for coaches and appropriate reporting systems are necessary to avoid incidents of possible abuse or exploitation. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate facilities (e.g. with changing rooms, water and sanitation facilities, etc.) and/or sports equipment can deter women and girls from participating in sport activities. The risk of injury, especially towards women and girls, can be particularly restrictive.

Evidence from a sports programme in Bam, Iran shows that girls and women could only participate in sports and physical activity indoors, protected from public view. During the summer, activities were cancelled because it was not possible to open windows and doors

3

while the female participants were playing. Experience shows that facilities that are close to residential areas, with appropriate lighting are more likely to have greater participation of women and girls. Activities should also be scheduled at appropriate times, e.g. before dusk.

### *Ideals of masculinity and femininity*

Sport is often perceived to express heterosexuality and male excellence. Experience shows that in most contexts, women who would like to be successful in sport competition have to demonstrate some ‘typically male’ attributes (such as: ambition, self-confidence, aggressiveness and power). Girls and women who ‘trespass’ on these socially and culturally defined boundaries, are seen to challenge and perhaps transform well-protected gender norms.

### *Lack of female role models*

Research has shown that most girls learn ‘culturally-appropriate styles of movement’ by imitating their older female counterparts. But communicating the achievements of those exceptional women to others remains a challenge. For example, media coverage of sports remains biased towards male sport, with comparatively less attention paid to the accomplishments of female athletes. Practical efforts to focus attention on the triumphs of women and girls in sport have shown to help other women and girls perceive possibilities for developing themselves.

### *Promoting gender equity through sport*

This unity will provide general guidelines, based on experiences from various interventions, on promoting gender equity through sport. The provision of designated spaces for women’s and girls’ sport activities can have practical benefits but also a symbolic character, especially if these areas are public. In general, access to community areas is primarily granted to men and boys. In some cases, should women and girls frequent these community spaces, they are usually allowed to do so under specific conditions (e.g. while being accompanied by a male family member). Experience shows that by women and girls claiming public space, the community may become slowly accustomed to seeing women and girls sharing public space with men and boys.

### *Access to resources, structures and leadership*

Besides infrastructure, sports programmes for women and girls have shown to require organisational structure as well. Sports programmes that assure women and girls active board membership in leading positions, equity, financial means, participation in decision-making and strategic planning are likely to be more successful in producing lasting change in the self-perception and self-confidence of female participants in such programmes.

### *Choice of sport*

Successful sport programmes for women and girls have shown to have paid careful attention to categories of sports, such as: sport vs. games; contact vs. low-contact vs. non-contact sports; mixed vs. single-sex sports activities; team vs. double vs. single sports; etc. Careful consideration of these aspects can help to establish female sports participation and its integration into everyday life. Research conducted on perceptions of sport in e.g. the US has shown that basketball is seen as a ‘rough’ sport, while similar research in Senegal shows that basketball is considered a ‘feminine’ sport, indicating that an understanding of the community’s perception of different sports is required.

### *Traditional games and competition*

Traditional games have shown to be useful in promoting gender equity, an approach which does not focus heavily on mainstream sport. This can help to avoid potential issues with promoting competitive sports. But some indigenous games and activities derive from e.g. male-dominated hunting or war practices and therefore might be counterproductive in reaching gender equity objectives, reinforcing existing patriarchal structures and gender norms. As such, experience shows that modifying existing games, changing certain rules and focusing on participation and fun rather than on competition and performance, is more effective in achieving an inclusive approach to promoting gender equity.

### *Didactical considerations*

In many cases, sport activities have shown to act as an ideal platform on which to address gender roles among children and adults. This is largely due to the ways in which sports activities are taught. For example, a significant learning experience can derive from witnessing a female referee at a sports tournament or training with a female coach. The role of females in such positions has shown to relay an implicit message that women do possess knowledge and leadership skills, and are also capable and familiar with a male-dominated field. Research on such programmes has shown that male participants and stakeholders tend to experience an ‘eye-opening effect’ when witnessing and learning from female experts in sport.

### *Providing incentives*

Sports programmes in developing countries are usually run by sport coaches who work on a voluntary basis. But sports projects have shown to require specialised and trained staff in order to reach the desired outcomes. As such, in order to get capable people to become actively involved in girls’ and women’s sport, research shows that added incentives must be provided (such as: remuneration, transferable skills, equipment, further education, media exposure, travel opportunities or other resources) to make the programme sustainable.

### *Holistic approach*

Sports programmes that have proven most effective thus far in promoting gender equity are those that are well-integrated into the community and context in which the program takes place. Experience has shown that programmes implemented with resistance from the community are less likely to continue activities once the programme comes to an end. The programmes that have used available input, knowledge and resources from the community tend to be more effective in maintaining longer-term impact of the initiative.

### *Sport and Economic Development*

This topic includes a number of diverse issues relating to sport’s role in economic development in developing countries. Four main areas that present the limitations and the potential of sport to contribute to economic development will be discussed:

- Underdevelopment of sport and ‘muscle drain’ in developing countries
- Exploitation and child protection in sport
- Developing local markets through sport by means of hosting local sports events, producing low-cost and affordable sporting goods and through athletes’ remittances
- Building skills for employment through sport

5

This topic also includes a selected number of examples/modes (project profiles), which provide illustrative examples of using sport to encourage economic development. Each sub-section will include recommended reading with links to online documents and further sources of information.

### *Developing local markets through sport*

A brief discussion of the potential of sport to stimulate local development through local sport events, producing low-cost and affordable sporting goods and through athletes' remittances. Studies on a number of local sports events show that they have the capacity to attract large numbers of people, initially from the local and surrounding areas where sports events take place and progressively, from further away. Local industries and a local sports sector may emerge should the events generate enough interest as to attract people willing to attend the event and purchase products and services associated with the event. At the local level, a 'virtuous cycle' can be created, in which sports-related services are provided, creating jobs and opportunities to upgrade skills and produce further services and products – a positive 'spill-over' effect from local sports events. A number of local races in Peru, such as the Inca Marathon, the Andes International Marathon and the Huancayo Race are reported to have created small local industries such as crafts industries for manufacturing shoes for the runners from the Mantaro valley (in the case of the Huancayo Race). Furthermore, sports tourists to these events can participate in other sports activities that make use of the Peruvian landscape and environment, such as skiing, rock-climbing, river-rafting and so on. However, if local economic opportunities are to be made through sports tourism, local responses to building local economic development have proven to be most effective in creating lasting and sustainable opportunities for local people. To begin, it has been suggested that local communities build their own skills, to be followed by developing skills that are specific and relevant to their community's social environment and local context. Local communities can then use their own capacities to organise the event, showcasing the community's abilities in progressively gaining recognition in the region and internationally.

### *Manufacturing Local Sporting Goods*

Despite the presence of local raw materials and manpower, sports equipment, particularly footballs, are not manufactured on a large scale in Africa. The sports balls that are currently available are imported from abroad, synthetic and non-repairable. These sports balls are unsuited to tough playing conditions and are also too expensive for most consumers in Africa. The organisation Alive & Kicking has developed a unique model for African manufacture of affordable, durable and repairable leather sports balls. The crucial aspects that make the business model function are access to essential raw materials and labour. The manufacture of locally-produced sports balls has placed Alive & Kicking at a competitive edge in meeting consumer demands for affordable and durable sports balls. Alive & Kicking balls are produced in stitching centres that employ roughly 20 workers, who are provided with skills training and employment opportunities. Under the Alive & Kicking model, each stitching centre is designed to be self-financing after a year of production.

### *Re-investment of athletes' earnings into local communities*

The investment of athletes' earnings from winning international sports competitions into local businesses and real estate has become a phenomenon in some developing countries, especially in Africa. For example, some research indicates that Kenyan runners' earnings from winning competitions from the 'European running circuit' in the town of Eldoret has helped to develop

6

the local economy and funnel investment into domestic sectors that are the lifeline of the local economy. In the case of Eldoret, the local economy is largely based on agricultural activities. Many Kenyan athletes from Eldoret have invested their earnings into purchasing a farm and/or starting a local business. In addition, many athletes have invested back into running by establishing training and fitness centres for further developing local sport talent.