

Goal Five: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

What do you think are the entry points for addressing this goal in your host country, and what recommendations would you make for achieving this goal?

During my internship, I have attended two summits for girls and women: the Umgungundlovu Women Symposium 2016 and the Generation of Leaders. My recommendations will be based on what was discussed in these two summits and my experience at Slangspruit Primary School.

The Umgungundlovu Women Symposium 2016 symposium was about young women and sports, the things and/or obstacles that can impact South African female athletes, and how to leverage their athleticism to get scholarships for universities and to have a better future. During this conference, we discussed the barriers that could prevent girls from excelling in sports. These barriers are the following: not being able to afford to eat healthy to fuel their athleticism, gender-based violence, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy.

The Generation of Leaders was a summit organized by a previous intern and female students of Slangspruit Primary School. Women from the community were invited to join, and there were women of all ages attending. Some issues that the females, young and old, deal with are self-esteem issues, fear of getting pregnant too young, and not being respected by men.

At Slangspruit Primary School, the school doesn't have a proper sports field to kids to play in. For net ball practice, the girls had to practice on the pavement of the school's parking lot. They were doing burpees on the hard, concrete floor until their clothes were covered in dust. In order for girls and boys to excel at sports, they need to have proper facilities to practice and play in. It has been well-documented the positive outcomes sports can have on preventing drug abuse. The United Nations Office of Drug and Crime have published an article on this positive correlation.¹

Based on these summits and my experience at Slangspruit Primary School, I recommend the following:

- Partner with local organizations to create and implement a healthy breakfast program for kids who can't afford to eat breakfast. Having breakfast will help girls and boys perform better in school and in sports.
- Partner with local organizations to create and implement workshops to discuss gender-based violence, substance abuse and sexual education for both females and males in

¹ "Sports Help Prevent Drug Abuse". Unodc.org. N.p., 2016. Web. 8 July 2016.

the community. It is necessary to instil mutual respect of both sexes at a young age, so girls and boys know that they are equal and should be treated so. Holding workshops for older generations will be positive also, because kids learn from the behaviour of their parents. If parents show mutual respect for one another, it is likely their children will do the same.

- Partner with local organizations to create and implement girls-only sport programs, leadership opportunities and other clubs to improve the confidence of girls. This confidence will transcend into other areas of the girls' lives and help them feel that they are capable of achieving their goals.
- Partner with local organizations to create and maintain multi-purpose sports field for girls and boys to play sports such as football and netball. Sports are important for the development of children's physical and mental health, and girls and boys need proper sports facilities to thrive.