

# sports and education



Whether it's basketball or soccer, boxing or swimming, sport builds character and promotes teamwork. CARE's *Power Within* signature program uses **the convening power of sport** to engage impoverished youth with each other and their communities. Our strategic combination of sports and education not only means more young people are going to school, but they are also learning leadership skills that can open doors to a better way of life.

## Power Within

For more than six decades, CARE has supported education projects in thousands of the world's poorest communities. Because girls are disproportionately denied an education – and if they do go to school, they are more likely to drop out early – CARE puts special emphasis on gender in our education programs. We work to ensure that all students reap the same benefits from schooling, including equal opportunities for success and the chance to escape poverty for good.

Today we've intensified our efforts, dedicated to improving the lives of 10 million girls through CARE's new initiative, *Power Within: Empowering Girls to Learn and Lead*. CARE sees sports as an ideal way to advance this crucial movement.

Extracurricular sports are a practical, low-cost, high-impact mechanism for getting more youth, especially girls, into school and keeping them there. Sport also helps them develop social and leadership qualities beyond the classroom, such as taking initiative and responsibility, organizing and managing groups and tasks, decision making, assertiveness and resilience. Even those who can't attend school are participating and benefiting.

## Sport for Development

CARE's pioneering sport for development activities allow girls and boys in more than a dozen countries to learn important life skills in a structured setting. They find a safe space to stretch their minds, observe peers in leadership roles and practice being leaders themselves.

Instead of teaching top-down leadership in the traditional sense, CARE helps youth strengthen basic competencies that can bring about positive change in their families, communities and nations. They build their self-esteem and self-confidence; discover how to effectively communicate, negotiate and cooperate; learn to resolve conflicts, overcome setbacks, be in charge of their own futures and more.

Armed with an education, and with the skills to be community contributors and leaders, there's growing evidence that girls in particular experience:

- Greater respect inside and outside the home
- Less domestic abuse and sexual exploitation
- Better ability to prevent HIV/AIDS and other diseases
- Reduced maternal and child mortality
- Higher economic productivity and opportunities
- Active political participation and leadership

## Everyone's a Winner

While CARE works with both boys and girls, we concentrate on marginalized girls, who are already behind the curve in gender equality. Athletics is just one example: Boys are typically encouraged to play sports, but many societies still frown upon girls' participation.

CARE strives to create a nurturing environment so that parents understand the overall benefits of sports. When girls start to be seen and heard in the public arena, often for the first time – speaking up, showing their talents and skills, and demonstrating their leadership potential – the community's stake deepens in the growth and development of its girls, who in turn begin to thrive.

By involving men and boys as well, CARE is helping shatter gender stereotypes and bridge gender gaps – putting girls and boys on a level playing field. Treating each other with mutual respect and dignity, they're encouraged to work together to solve their community's biggest problems.

Corporate, private and bilateral donors make CARE's sport activities possible, from Nike Inc. to USAID. They believe, as we do, that sport for development is a revolutionary concept in the fight against global poverty.



*“Before, I had very little motivation to attend school. But when CARE initiated the sport program, I developed an interest in going to school daily. My class performance is improving. I’ve made new friends, and I’m more aware of HIV/AIDS and the risks of early marriage and pregnancy.”*

– Monica in Tanzania



Defending dignity.  
Fighting poverty.

As one of the world's leading humanitarian organizations, CARE embraces extracurricular sports as an efficient and effective springboard to getting poverty-stricken children and adolescents into school – and helping them stay there until they complete their primary education. In the process, we want to shape a new generation of leaders who have the power to make a major difference in their own communities and beyond.

To get involved or learn more, please e-mail: [basicandgirlseducation@care.org](mailto:basicandgirlseducation@care.org) or visit: [www.care.org](http://www.care.org)