



# Increasing Female Participation

## *Club Workbook*

Adapted from

Eime, R. Casey, M., Harvey, J., Payne, W. (2011). Triple G: Girls Get Going Football Club Workbook. Ballarat: University of Ballarat. ISBN- 978-1-876851-48-4



## **Acknowledgment**

**The development of this manual was supported by the Australian Research Council (ARC) (LP0990206). Financial and/or in-kind support was also provided by industry partners including the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth); Department of Planning and Community Development - Sport and Recreation Department; Tennis Victoria; Football Federation Victoria; YMCA Victoria; Ballarat Aquatic Centre; and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.**

# Contents

---

Introduction

Section 1: Club Checklist – how does your club “actively” support the inclusion of females?

Section 2: Key Facts and Strategies for Engaging Young Females

Section 3: Club Action Plan

## Introduction

The following workbook has been adapted from the 'Triple G: Girls Get Going in Football, club workbook' which was designed to assist clubs to engage, re-engage and retain females in sport. The workbook was originally developed by the University of Ballarat, in conjunction with Football Federation Victoria and other partners as part of the Triple G: Girls Get Going program, which aimed to develop a co-operative link between school physical education curriculum and community sports clubs.

FFV is pleased to provide our member clubs with this revised version of the workbook, containing the relevant information and assessment activities that FFV clubs can utilise to assist them with:

1. Assessing their current club environment in regards to female members and participants,
2. Creating strategies which lead to building a better club environment for attracting and retaining females,
3. and ultimately increasing female participation.

Included in this workbook are three key sections from the original workbook. Section 1 (**Club Checklist – how does your club “actively” support the inclusion of females?**) is the warm up activity for your club committee and contains a 'club checklist' to encourage you to reflect and discuss current club practices specifically aimed at females.

Section 2 is titled **Key Facts and Strategies for Engaging Young Females**, and provides a summary of the barriers and facilitators to participation in sport by young females. This section requires you to identify key issues that relate to your club and to identify strategies that might help overcome participation barriers experienced by females.

Section 3 is **Club Action Plan**, which is designed to help your club prioritise activities and implement your strategies to engage, re-engage and retain female participants.

Completing this workbook should be seen as a crucial first step for any club wanting to create a female friendly environment, and better engage young females as players. Clubs that already successfully engage females may find the exercise equally useful for auditing their current strategies and potentially finding new strategies to implement.

For some examples of other clubs' work in this area please visit [www.footballfedvic.com.au](http://www.footballfedvic.com.au) and look for Best Practice Project (under Clubs subheading).

For any other enquiries please phone FFV on 9474 1800.

## Section 1:

### Club Checklist – how does your club “actively” support the inclusion of females?

This first activity is a warm up to get you thinking and talking about female participation at your club. With your club committee, identify and discuss female participation using the checklist below.

Checklist Item	Response	
1. How many female members do we have (players, coaches, committee members, etc)?	_____	
2. Has the number of female members changed over the past 5-10 years? Up or down? By how much?	_____	
3. Do we see female players stop participating at our club as juniors/adolescents?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Do we have one or two people at the club who can be dedicated to an all female recruitment program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Do we have a Welcoming Officer, who is there to create a welcoming and inclusive club environment for everyone?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6. Do our social activities cater specifically for, or are they inclusive of females?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Do our playing activities/programs cater specifically for females?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
8. Do our playing activities/programs for females include a competitive pathway?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
9. Do our playing activities/programs for females include social, less structured types of play?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
10. Do we have active recruitment, retention or re-engagement strategies for females within our club?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
11. Do we have links with local schools to promote our club activities/programs in general?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
12. Do we create opportunities to engage with local newspapers, or the council, to publicise and promote our club activities/programs? E.g. “good news” stories which are engaging and interesting to local community.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

## Section 2:

### Key Facts and Strategies for Engaging Young Females

#### *So what do we know about young females and their interests in sport and active recreation?*

The following boxes list some of the main reasons why young females participate or stop participating in sport and active recreation.

#### **Young females participate in sport and active recreation...**

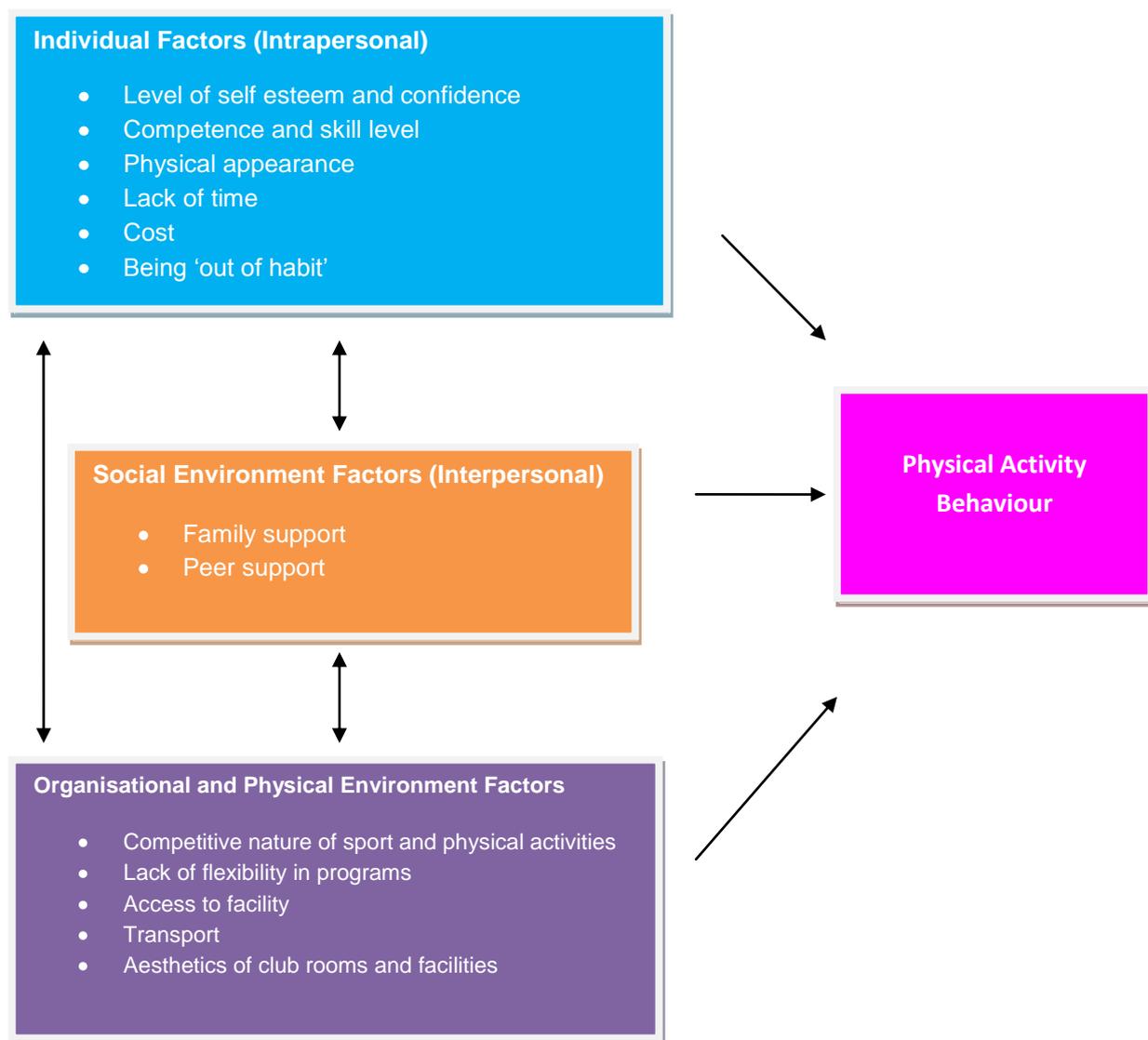
- To have FUN!
- To be active with their FRIENDS
- For FITNESS and HEALTH
- To improve their skills
- To socialise
- To experience challenge, achievement and personal responsibility

#### **Young females STOP participating in sport and active recreation because they...**

- Fear that they lack the "right" skills to participate
- Have poor self-image and confidence
- Lack motivation
- Feel uncomfortable about their appearance
- Experience and/or fear of peer teasing
- Have to compete against, or play with male peers
- Dislike the uniforms (e.g. unflattering or uncomfortable)
- Perceive the setting is unwelcoming or unfriendly
- Dislike the competitive nature of sport
- Perceive the coach to be too hard or too authoritarian or that there is too much emphasis on winning
- Feel that the opportunities available do not cater for their skill levels or interests
- Lack support during the transition from child to adolescent to adult
- Have sustained injuries through sport
- Can no longer afford to participate
- No longer have the time to commit to sport
- Cannot access an appropriate level of competition

There are many factors that contribute to an individual's participation in sport and recreation. These include individual, social, organisational and environmental factors. The figure overleaf provides a summary of these factors for young females. It is important to understand that these influences do not work in isolation from one another; instead there are often multiple influences on physical activity behaviour. When designing programs or strategies to promote participation in sport and recreation by young females it is important to take all of these influences into account.

## Factors affecting participation in sport and active recreation by young females



Now that you are aware of a range of factors affecting participation in sport and recreation by young females, it is important that you identify what factors are most relevant to your club and what strategies might work in your situation.

Overleaf are listed some of the most common “facts” about young female’s interests and their barriers to participation in sport and recreation. Each fact is followed by a list of “strategies” that could be implemented to reduce the barriers experienced by young females. Go through each fact and identify whether this is an issue that relates to your club and identify a strategy that might help overcome the barrier at your club. You may find some strategies to be very easy to implement, whilst others may be much harder, depending on your club’s capacity. The list we have provided is by no means exhaustive. There is room to insert some findings from Club Checklist (“key individual barriers”), and identify club specific (‘other’) strategies if you wish along the way. This activity is intended to help you start your Club Action Plan in Section 3 of this workbook.

## FACTS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

### Fact: Competence and confidence are key influences on females' participation in sport

- When it comes to participation in sport and active recreation many young females perceive that *"everyone else will be better than me"* and that *"there is no entry level for beginners my age"*. Participation in sport and active recreation can therefore seem daunting, particularly at a time when "fitting in" is crucial to young females (e.g.; adolescents). Furthermore, a strong focus on winning and being competitive in club sport can further impact on confidence as some young females fear being picked last for teams or not qualifying to participate in the "best team".

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant  No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies to help address girls competence and confidence	We already do this	We could try this
Provide a range of participation opportunities that cater for different skill levels and interests (e.g. social, competitive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply a 'learn through play' coaching approach (e.g. Game Sense) that focuses on making the game easier to learn for beginners and focused on tactics rather than isolated to skill development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote beginner opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote a focus on participation rather than competition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Fact: Participation in sport and recreation is associated with socio-economic status

- Young females from low socio-economic families are less likely to be involved in sporting clubs as their family may not be able to afford the participation costs and/or they must work to supplement the family income.

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant  No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies to help address the cost of participation	We already do this	We could try this
Provide short term membership options rather than yearly memberships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer start-up or introductory membership/payment options so girls can try before they commit to a full-year membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have free or discounted equipment to borrow/hire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer casual membership options (i.e. pay as you go)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer two for one memberships or discounts for friend/family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer current participants a discount if they bring a paying friend to the club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Offer membership or participant fee on a sliding scale based on their participation levels (e.g. social, irregular, regular)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer participants fundraising opportunities to help offset the cost of uniforms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer the opportunity to work-off membership fees by volunteering at the club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Fact: Young females report that the main intrinsic factors motivating them to participate in sport and active recreation is fun and to improve health.**

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant  No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies to help promote participation for fun and health	We already do this	We could try this
Focus on participation for fun and health and not solely on competition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivate participation by emphasising intrinsic rewards (e.g. fun, pleasure, challenge) rather than extrinsic rewards (e.g. winning, proving superiority to others) for participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enquire about girls' interest outside of football, and if appropriate, include in your training sessions (e.g. ask participants to bring music to their session)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus on developing girl-only teams from the age of five, providing opportunities to play with close friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)....		

**Fact: Lack of time is often reported by adolescents due to their increasingly busy lifestyles and competing priorities (work, study, social interests)**

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant  No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies to help fit with adolescents' busy lifestyles	We already do this	We could try this
Offer flexible, out of season programs, running during the week and/or weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a rotation system where players are not required to commit to every session each week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Other key “individual” barriers for your club to address include...**

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

Other Strategies	We already do this	We could try this
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## FACTS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

**Fact:** Social support is one of the most important factors for motivating young people in general to be active. There are many forms of support including watching, participation by family and/or friends, providing transport, encouraging or praising participation, coaching, or volunteering.

- **Friends play a critical role** to facilitate female participation in sport. Most females participate to be with friends and to make new friends. In fact some girls' main reason for participation is for the social opportunities and not skill development or competition.
- **Coaches and club volunteers** also play an important role for female participation in sport. Young females prefer friendly and welcoming coaches, whereas, aggressive or unsupportive coaches are a deterrent and particularly for those just starting out. In addition, coaches who focus too much on competition can deter some females. In fact, a friendly and welcoming club environment is often more important than any other club policy or practice. For example, did you know some young females will only approach and join a club if they know someone there or have been personally invited?
- It is also important that coaches are able to recognise the different skill levels of players to prevent boredom for those that are highly skilled and minimise feelings of intimidation by those with less skill.
- Word-of-mouth via social networks (e.g. school setting, Facebook) is the one of the fastest way to promote your club among young people.
- The role of **family support** changes during the adolescent years. For example, younger adolescents rely heavily on parents for moral support and transport; whereas late adolescents look more to their peers for support and have greater independent mobility.

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant  No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies to help promote social benefits of participation	We already do this	We could try this
Encourage parents to play an active role at the club via coaching, volunteering, watching, car pooling rosters, or even participating with their child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote "bring a friend" or family member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Run social events for females (e.g. movie night, BBQ)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide youth-friendly spaces at the club by asking players to design their own club room space and set rules for how the space should be looked after	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide single-sex as well as co-gender activities (where appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider youth-friendly messages and communication strategies (e.g. promotional material that specifically targets specific age groups, skill levels, and interests e.g. beginner groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage mum's to play a role on the club's committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Fact: Some young females have reported that they “don’t feel accepted” by others in the club or group. These feelings may be real or perceived and it is important to promote “inclusion” within the club.**

- It can be very daunting for a young person to enter a club environment. They often worry about how they look to others in terms of their appearance and performance. Take a good look at your club environment and the social dynamics from a new member’s perspective.
- Sometimes clubs can be perceived by outsiders as ‘exclusive’, especially when teams are strong and well established.
- Some young females dislike participating with or around males. This is sometimes due to a difference in motor skills between the sexes, but may also be due to males’ behaviour toward females (e.g. teasing, intimidating or dominating club activities).
- Adolescents in particular are heavily influenced by stereotypes of what a female should be like, and often females do not view competitive physical activity or sport as part of that stereotype.

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant       No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies for an inclusive club environment	We already do this	We could try this
Designate a ‘welcoming’ person, whose responsibility is to meet and greet new members, or run induction sessions to provide information on membership options, club events and policies, link the new member with a peer mentor etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promote an inclusive club environment to your club members (e.g. appropriate facilities for both male and female members)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide structured opportunities for members to provide feedback on their participation at the club (e.g.; surveys)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)....		

**Other key “social” barriers for your club to address include...**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Other Strategies	We already do this	We could try this
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## FACTS AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE ORGANISATIONAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

**Fact: Young females' interest in club sport can range from a competitive focus to non-competitive. Does your club cater for all types of players?**

- Young females' interest in club sport may vary because all players are not the same. They have different interests and these often change as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. For example, young females have reported wanting changes from competition to social play or changes from a performance focus to a health and fitness focus. Young females have also reported having to manage competing priorities (e.g. work, study and social interests) and sometimes sport is the first to be sacrificed.

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant  No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies to address the organisational environment	We already do this	We could try this
Increase choice in types of activities available (e.g. competitive, non-competitive/social, semi-structured, unstructured)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide specific opportunities for beginners in a friendly, welcoming environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review times for young females programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review length and commitment of traditional competition season	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invite players to participate in decision-making about programs – young people can be motivated by having choice, control, and a sense of belongingness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer 'come and try' days whereby young females can have time to trial, observe and experiment before signing up as a yearly member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Fact: Female participation in club sport is sometimes hindered by the physical environment (transport options, club facilities and aesthetics)**

Does this relate to your club?  Yes, relevant  No, not relevant

If yes, what priority should it have for your club to address?  High  Medium  Low

Strategies to address the physical environment	We already do this	We could try this
Encourage members and participants to car pool	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise to meet a group of young females (e.g. at the school gate) and walk to the club grounds for the first session	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implement a cleaning roster to help keep club facilities tidy; maybe you could link the roster to some incentives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female-friendly change rooms (e.g. clean, private changing spaces, male/female shared spaces maintained in a condition acceptable to females)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implement a facilities fund and apply for grants to upgrade club rooms and facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Other key organisational and physical environmental barriers for your club include...**

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

Other Strategies	We already do this	We could try this
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section 3: Club Action Plan

The table below provides a space for you to plan specific strategies to engage, re-engage and retain young females at your club.

Objective	Strategy	Level of Priority	Actions or tasks	Measure of Success
<i>Example: Provide affordable membership options</i>	<i>Implement pay-as-you-go participant fee</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>The club runs an introductory program where participants pay \$3 per session. After a 6-8 week program participants can deduct these fees from their registration fees if they wish to become member. Alternatively, we will offer girls the opportunity to continue in a pay-as-you-go social program.</i>	<i>Number of girls in the club program. Number of girls who take up club membership and/or stay in a social participation program.</i>

Objective	Strategy	Level of Priority	Actions or tasks	Measure of Success