

HOW TO BUILD INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACES THAT FEEL SAFE AND WELCOMING FOR TEEN GIRLS?

While women in general are underrepresented in sport; women of color, economically disadvantaged, older, physically challenged, or lesbian, bisexual, and transgender are even less visible.

source: Mann & Krane, 2017

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Girls are less visible in public spaces
Girls are underrepresented in urban sports

When girls become teens:
they 'disappear' out of public spaces
the likelihood for them to dropout of sports is high

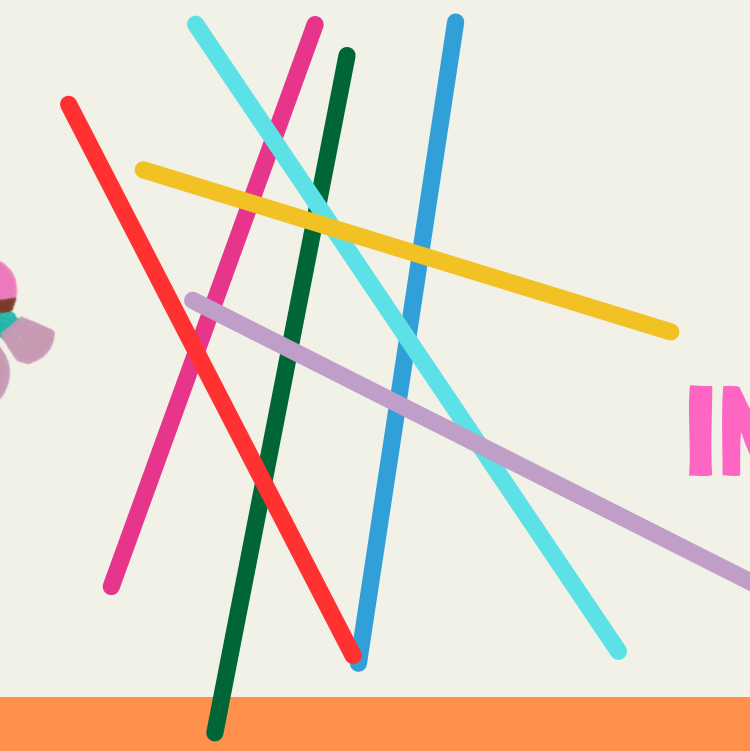
NOT BY CHOICE!

Often this is considered a personal choice.
If it were, why do we see the same pattern worldwide?

STRUCTURAL PROBLEM

RESEARCH QUESTION

how to construct urban sports environments and change its imaging & its activities in order to motivate more girls between 12 and 18 years old, living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, to exercise in public spaces?



INTERSECTIONALITY = CRUCIAL

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THIS INEQUALITY?

Physical environment

Social aspects

- gender: upbringing, norms & expectations
- public space = masculine domain
- street harassment & unsafety

Individual factors

- perception of places
- self-esteem, body image
- perceived competence



FACT

public space & urban sports are traditionally male domains where girls experience exclusion

LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK...

37%

of youngsters in public space are girls

15%

of the users of outside exercise infrastructure/equipment are girls

17%

of urban sporters are girls

59%

of girls don't feel welcome in public parks because boys are claiming the space

91%

of girls have experienced harassment in public spaces

TIME FOR ACTION !

Roeselare & Ronse

- Testing grounds: city administration & youth work as partners

Antwerp:

- policy maker meetings - push for political action

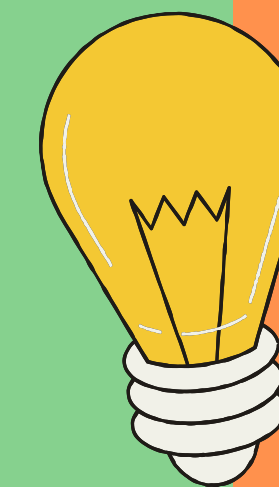
WHAT DO GIRLS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THIS?

"What is stopping me from having fun is the boys, I think they take too much space for sport, activities etc."

"If I go in a park for little kids, all the parents just look at you, they think that you're doing something...they're like, 'Why are you here? It's a child's park."

"I feel like everything's really tailored for boys, and that you need things really for girls."

"I often feel unsafe and judged in public places."



HOW DO WE MAKE THINGS BETTER?

Co-create the space

- positive effects on their sense of ownership & perception

Turn spaces into lively spaces where girls want to hang out: facilitate!

- influence their perception of public space
- set up accessible and fun community events for & with girls
 - free, without mandatory registrations or other requirements
 - inclusive communication and imagery
 - create a safe space
 - provide fun activities: focus on the social aspect instead of competition
 - use female role models/ambassadors

Create a community

- Establish trust
- Empower them

Educate boys

- share space
- raise awareness about gender stereotypes
- zero tolerance on harassment

Set up partnerships with other (youth) organizations & local authorities:

- make it a joint mission!



source: Make Space For Girls