



WSLA

Next Gen Leadership

The voice of young women on
early leadership development

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NZ Olympic Women's Sport Leadership Academy

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WSLA

NZ Olympic Women's Sport Leadership Academy

The New Zealand Olympic Women's Sport Leadership Academy is designed to support NZ's female Olympians make a positive transition from sport performance to sport leadership and connect to an international network of women leaders in sport.

The 18 month programme provides a unique learning environment that supports the women to further develop their confidence and leadership competencies. One objective of the programme is to raise awareness of issues in women in sport, and this becomes the basis of the special projects. The WSLA participants work in small groups outside of the formal sessions to further enhance their leadership and learning, undertaking projects that are substantive and of direct relevance to the sector.

Find out more about the WSLA Special Projects including presentations of this report from the NZOC [website](http://www.olympic.org.nz)¹

¹ <http://www.olympic.org.nz/about-the-nzoc/programmes-and-funding/womens-sport-leadership-academy/>



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“Not enough knowledge. Young people, especially girls, need to know how they can become a leader in sport, why they would become a leader in sport and what they can do with those skills - how they can use them in a job, how they can get a job in sport leadership. I also think that there are too few female leaders in sport. I can name only one female sportswoman in New Zealand – Dame Valerie Adams”.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are not enough women in leadership positions in sport (or generally).

For wide ranging, but often consistent reasons, young females may not have access to leadership opportunities or feel like they possess leadership qualities to engage in leadership activities.

This project

Our investigations focussed on the secondary school context and the experiences and opportunities available to our young female students and their perception of those.

The term ‘leadership’ for our younger generation holds different meanings and realities than for the current generation of females in leadership positions, as well as those not currently showing leadership. Therefore, it is also important to understand how our young females (Years 10 – 13 at secondary school) perceive leadership and what they see are the barriers to them engaging as leaders.

To help us gain an understanding of the ‘next gen’, their views of leadership and the barriers they are facing, a brief online survey was designed and completed by Year 10 – 13 female sporting students. This ‘anecdotal evidence’ is analysed in relation to recent studies by Professor Sarah Leberman (Massey University)² and Sue Emerson (Unitec)³, and the large body of work underway by organisations such as Sport New Zealand, The Shift Foundation, Aktive’s Hera and the YMCA’s Raise Up initiative.

Sport New Zealand	https://sportnz.org.nz
The Shift Foundation	https://www.shiftnz.org/
Aktive	https://aktive.org.nz/
YMCA, Raise Up	https://www.raiseup.co.nz/

The intention was to confirm that findings of recent leadership studies are still relevant to the current cohort of young women and provide some clarity of what best practice looks like to encourage more young women into leadership roles.

² Harris, C., Leberman, S. I. (2012). Leadership development for women in New Zealand universities: Learning from the New Zealand Women in Leadership Program. Chapter 8: Future Sport Leaders: Developing Young Women to Lead

³ Emerson, S. (2017). Student perceptions of accessibility to leadership within the secondary school context

Key Findings

Key findings from our survey highlighted some common themes. In particular:

- Over 65% of students viewed leadership as very or extremely important.
- Most young women did not view themselves as a leader.
- Young women view leadership as positional (82%)
- Most young women were unclear about the importance of gender diversity
- 75 respondents expressed confidence, judgement, opportunity and recycling leaders as barriers to leadership

Our findings were consistent with the data collection done by Emerson in 2013 which poses the question as to whether we are or have been doing enough to improve and grow the skill sets and behaviours needed in leadership, educate around the benefits of diversity and equality and help eliminate the barriers for our next gen to have the confidence they need to lead in the many ways possible to them.

Recommendations

Key recommendations for educators in particular, are to outline ways to continue supporting young women, and how best to foster that leadership through sport at secondary school level and beyond.

Hear their voice

We would like to encourage all sporting bodies who oversee youth sports, or school sports committees, to invite young women to their decision-making tables.

If we want initiatives to be effective and meet their needs, they have to be involved in the design of that initiative. Young women want to be involved. Codesign allows for diversity in thinking and problem-solving.

Develop young women's leadership capabilities

We recommend that school's take on a more active role in developing young female leadership in a range of forums including sport, and our sporting organisations or local councils could initiate and support a sport leadership pathway. Initiate student-led school sports committees and create a leadership development framework. Create youth advisory committees through an amalgamation of selected students from a regional community catchment

Offer this across the board to all levels, to any and all young women interested in leading themselves first and then wanting to serve and lead others.

Provide next gen leadership opportunities

Leadership programmes and opportunities are currently in existence however where students live, or the school they attend often determines who has access.

We recommend that local and regional councils, and sport bodies, provide deliberate opportunities for our young wahine to exercise leadership and/or work alongside adults who drive strategy and

policy around their sports. Facilitate leadership workshops across a regional area, and utilise key identities, ie female Olympians, or sports people to share their ideas and take on mentoring roles. Picking up the best threads from the current programmes would set a strong foundation for a sport leadership curriculum and development in our sports landscape

Find out more

Our final recommendation is to encourage our sport leadership researchers to initiate further research and illicit deeper analysis of the information collected through our survey. There is immense possibility and peeling back the layers of our findings may contribute to a broader understanding of the actions that can be put in place.

Take action

Covid -19 has presented us an opportunity to seek changes to the way we interact, build new programmes and engage in sport - let's utilise this time to develop leadership capabilities and provide opportunities to our Next Gen Leaders.



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation is to better understand how our next generation of young women view leadership; any potential barriers; or ways we may be able to help moving forward, with the aim of developing more female leaders. For current leaders to be able to help - we need to hear young women's voices and understand what they are experiencing, seeing and feeling.

This project explored:

- Theories of leadership and leadership development
- Women's leadership in sport, with Australian and New Zealand examples
- Next gen leadership and how this is exercised
- Leadership skills
- Leadership barriers and opportunities for development.

The voices and perspectives of young women are woven through the report.

PROCESS

To gain a better understanding about their views, and experiences in leadership, gender equality and diversity, a survey was developed for female students in Year 10 to Year 13 who participate in sports. Survey participants were also advised that the information obtained from the survey was to assist us to put forward ideas on what leadership opportunities should be made available to all female students while at secondary school.

The survey focused on some key sections of information which include:

- How do they view leadership?
- How important is gender equality to them?
- Do they believe there is gender equality in New Zealand sport leadership
- How important is leadership ?
- Do they believe they are currently exercising leadership?
- What skills they believe are required
- What opportunities they have available to them?
- What barriers are there to them becoming leaders?
- What would be helpful to them moving forward?

By collecting this specific data, we were able to compare the voice of our next generation of women leaders with that of current research, identifying gaps and making recommendations regarding areas of improvement or initiatives to grow more female leaders in the sports sector.

The method used to inform students and the distribution of the survey was through a Dean or Head of Sports at several selected schools including in Christchurch, Wellington, the Waikato and

Auckland. On receiving the information, the Dean or Head of Sports forwarded the email and survey link out to all female students in Year 10 to Year 13 who met the sample criteria. It was then up to each student to decide if they wished to take part in the project.

The selected schools included state and private schools, co-education and single sex schools, and schools across a range of deciles. The schools and students were sent information about the project purpose, aim, confidentiality and a link to the online self-completion survey. Appendix 1.

Four schools were selected to take part and 158 students completed the survey. The table identifies the number of students who completed the survey by their school year.

School Year	Number of respondents
Year 10	21
Year 11	29
Year 12	54
Year 13	54

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

This section contains information about:

- Theories of leadership
- Leadership development
- Young women's perspectives.

Theories of leadership

Trying to pinpoint an exact definition of leadership is incredibly hard. "Leadership is a sociological concept that has been researched extensively in an attempt to interpret and understand its meaning across various societal contexts. There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define it" (Maxwell, 2011; Yukl, 2002). Jackson and Parry (2011) capture the elements of leadership in defining it as "an influence relationship between leaders and followers, focusing on authentic changes and outcomes that reflect shared purpose." The core measure of leadership according to Maxwell (2007), is influence.⁴

Reviewing many definitions of leadership there are common themes which are:

- influence
- outcome
- change
- shared purpose.

Understanding why influence is important may seem obvious: you want other people to think or act as you do. But becoming an influential leader is much more than getting people to do what you want. To make a lasting impact, you need to show them the personal benefits they will gain by changing their way of thinking.

Effective leadership will help deliver outcomes that the target group and stakeholders have mutually agreed are key measures to success, this will take shape in a number of ways and will involve developing relationships that are based on trust between the leaders and followers.

Developing these robust relationships will initiate authentic change as all parties will align their views and thinking to ensure that there is a common purpose and outcome to the group's workings.

Having a shared purpose will enable followers and the leaders to utilise their skills, knowledge and experience to achieve the desired outcome for all members of the group or community they are working for or delivering to.

⁴ "Student perceptions of accessibility to leadership within the" <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/handle/10292/11520>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.



Three key elements that underpin effective leadership are:

- the why - the purpose or Kaupapa
- the what - the delivery or kawenga and
- the Tikanga or How, the culture.

Puna – The sport and recreation leadership framework

The leadership framework for sport and recreation in Aotearoa as referenced in the Puna report (SNZ - Leadership Framework - 2018), refers to many key concepts that need to be understood to enable us to promote support and encourage leadership growth across the sport and recreation sector. However, these ideas can be transferred across many areas of our society and our schools can have a significant impact in developing the basic skills required for effective leadership.⁵

Exercising Leadership

A recent paper compiled by Canwell, Congrie, Neveras and Stockton⁶ highlighted 'leadership' as one of the most significant talent issues facing organisations around the world, and Aotearoa New Zealand is no exception. Leadership is a role that all of us play, rather than a function that is linked to our title, and new leadership models are needed for the organisations of the future.

There is a commonly held belief that effective leadership will entail working with peers, teams, organisations and communities to build appropriate performance criteria, so everyone knows what success looks like.

Types of leadership

Jackson and Parry 2011 suggest that leadership can fall into two broad categories – formal and informal. Formal leadership being viewed as having a formal position such as a sports captain – informal leadership is more of the day-to-day situations such as out on the playing field or in family settings.⁷

It is evidenced by research undertaken by Emerson (2018) and McNae, that student or youth leadership relies on the adults who propose leadership theories to co-construct ideas around leadership that utilise the voice of the youth and students themselves. Leadership is not a "title" but rather an action that is shown. It is therefore important to appreciate what the young women of today believe are qualities that are important when acting on leadership responsibilities.

⁵ "Leadership Framework - Sport New Zealand." <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/SNZ-Leadership-Framework-29-01-2018-Work-Final.pdf>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.

⁶ Leaders at all levels: Close the gap between hype and readiness. Canwell, Congrie, Neveras and Stockton, cited in Deloitte Insights, 2014 <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/human-capital-trends/2014/hc-trends-2014-leaders-at-all-levels.html> Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.

⁷ "Student perceptions of accessibility to leadership within the" <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/handle/10292/11520>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.



Students who responded to our survey clearly stated that a leader does not always have the badge or title, but that leadership can be shown by each individual in a myriad of different ways. The most basic is by leading oneself; for example, by trying their hardest, encouraging others, being supportive and showing respect to those in their team or group they are working with.

Here is what one student responded to our recent survey:

I believe that a leader is someone who displays some of the following: courage, empowerment, motivation, bravery, good decision-making skills, determination, perseverance, optimism, inclusiveness, good time management, realistic goal setting, and lead by their examples.

Our young leaders are empowered when they are given the opportunity to understand the purpose of their task, what needs to be delivered and how that delivery will impact on the people, group, organisation or community that they are working with and for. They will exercise leadership and be able to take ownership when they know what to do, why they are doing it and who for.

Leadership development

A lot of people describe leadership as a way a person leads their life rather than a position and supporting this Maxwell states “a leadership position can be received in a day, but leadership development is a lifelong process”.⁸

Lombardi (2001) states that leaders are made, not born, and asks how we create environments to make leaders. Leadership can be learned as it is a pattern of practices, behaviours, skills and abilities which can be learned and strengthened with the desire to practise and listen to feedback (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).⁹

This suggests that adolescence is an extremely important time for development of leadership skills, attitudes and behaviours. We should be encouraging the practice of these leadership skills and behaviours as well as creating leadership learning opportunities in our education settings such as schools and universities.

Next gen leadership

Leadership begins with establishing relationships and understanding others, so that we can effectively work within communities to influence change as it is required. Leadership can be seen on many levels. Leadership of oneself, leadership of others and leadership in the wider/global communities. The ability to influence others, for positive outcomes will benefit all in society.

⁸ Emerson, S. (2017). Student perceptions of accessibility to leadership within the secondary school context p.71

⁹ "Student perceptions of accessibility to leadership within the" <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/handle/10292/11520>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.

One young female leader, from a coeducational independent secondary school in the Waikato stated that *"I believe that leadership is gaining people's respect while leading them in the right direction"*. Essentially, they understand the importance of relationships and the ability to leverage off this relationship base, to guide others towards a positive outcome. Leadership is based on respect.

We believe that our next generation of female leaders are in a prime position to utilise their leadership skills and talents to forge an exciting, creative and innovative landscape for sports people across the wider community. The qualities, questions and insights they can bring to the boardroom table, sports and coaching spaces, will enhance an organisation's ability to maximise the full and diverse potential of its members and stakeholders.

Young women's perspectives

Analysis of the survey of next generation females identified clear messages about leadership, and in particular what sport leadership looks like to them. The common themes were:

- Positive role modelling and leading by example
- Encouraging and supporting others
- Creating a positive environment where everyone can achieve their goals
- Leadership not having to be the best player or person with the best ability but more the person who can have the most influence.
- Having confidence in their own abilities and respecting others
- Inspiring and inclusive and a team first approach.

One student's response in particular:

I think leadership in sport is to be able to lead through your actions and mindset. You don't always have to be the best player on the field or strongest in the game to be a leader. Leading through your actions can be keeping your head high when you're down on points, not arguing with refs, and showing sportsmanship even when it is the last thing you want to do. To be encouraging and building a positive environment where success and growth are encouraged and feedback is asked for not resented is a way to show leadership by providing others with the opportunity to improve.

On reflection, every student expressed that leadership is extremely important. However, many of the leadership opportunities they referred to, whether at university or school, were based around positional leadership roles.

As our research suggests – adolescence is an extremely important time for development of leadership skills. Therefore, we question whether enough is being done to develop leadership skills in young females to give them the confidence and understanding as to when, where and how they can use these and apply these leadership skills in everyday life.

HOW IMPORTANT IS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN SPORT?

Sport, and women's leadership in sport can contribute to social change, skill development and organisational and community benefits.

Australian and New Zealand

The Australian Women in Sport Advisory Group was established in 2019 to create a strategic and coordinated approach within and across sectors to achieve gender equality from women and girls in sport. One of the key questions for a lot of people however is how important is women's leadership in sport or why is women's leadership in sport important?

Social change

Firstly – sport can create social change. It can shape community attitudes and perspectives and provides a number of health benefits. Participating in sport (especially team sport) is also linked with the development of leadership skills such as communication, decision making, strategy execution, teamwork, goal setting and problem solving. Sport shows us that women and girls can be strong, powerful and competitive and that these traits are healthy and normal.

Skill development

Sarah Leberman, founding co-Chair of Women in Sport Aotearoa/Ngā Wāhine Hākinakina o Aotearoa and Professor of Leadership at Massey University, notes that as well as helping to foster leadership skills, overseas research links women and girls' participation in sport to life-long physiological health benefits, psychological benefits like positive self-perception and healthy body image, and community involvement.

It's for such reasons that girls' and women's participation in sport was acknowledged by the United Nations when it adopted its Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. The UN specifically notes the importance of sport in promoting gender equality: *"Sport can contribute to the elimination of discrimination against women and girls by empowering individuals, particularly women, and equipping them with knowledge and skills needed to progress in society."*¹⁰

Organisational benefits

Not only does participating in sport have huge benefits with health and the development of leadership and life skills – having women leaders offers many other benefits to organisations. The Australian research shows that there are many benefits from gender diversity such as expanding audience bases, increasing viewership and engaging different communities. The evidence-base for gender equality is very clear and shows improved productivity and economic growth, increased

¹⁰ "Women, sport & leadership - Global Women." 29 Jun. 2017, <https://www.globalwomen.org.nz/news/women-sport-leadership/>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.



organisational performance, ability to attract and retain talent and improved organisation reputation. Research continues to show us that increasing gender diversity is only good for the company but the economy. Companies with three or more women directors are outperforming those with no women on their boards. Promoting women's engagement in sport as players and spectators, coaches and trainers not only has positive financial implications, but research shows that when gender diversity is prioritised, connection is strengthened and poor and anti-social behaviours decrease.¹¹

Further research by Professor Leberman "shows that across the country's 65 sports organisations and sports trusts there are just eleven women CEs and twelve women board chairs. And though there are 12 organisations with more than 50% women on their board and 24 with more than 50% of women in leadership and management roles, many of these are in areas traditionally coded as "feminine" like marketing and communications. She explains the importance of gender diversity and for the same reasons that diverse leadership matters—because it's both the *right* thing to do and the *bright* thing to do. More diverse boards are linked to more innovative and successful businesses and having leadership that better represents the make-up of our country in both gender and ethnicity helps build a society that is fairer and more equal. And—like attracts like. If sports bodies are primarily lead by Pakeha men, that sends a strong message that sports is "for" that group. To get more women of all backgrounds involved and benefiting from participation in sport, it's crucial to build a more diverse leadership, from team coaches to board chair."¹²

In summary, it is important to have strong female role models to encourage our next generation of females to participate in sport for the health and life skill benefits. Research continues to show us that gender diversity in our organisations is going to increase performance in a number of different ways.

Young women's perspectives

The views of our next generation females who responded to the survey show that students understand and stress the importance of female leaders and that they want female role models to look up to.

Over 65% of the students viewed leadership as being very important. The importance of having role models is to create inspiration for them to believe they can achieve whatever they set their sights on in life. A number of students also expressed the importance of having the best person for the job, regardless as to whether they are male or female - that they have the required "skill set for the role".

11 "A level playing field: the case for investing in women's sport." <https://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/level-playing-field-women-sport.pdf>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.

12 "Women, sport and leadership - Global Women." 29 Jun. 2017, <https://www.globalwomen.org.nz/news/women-sport-leadership/>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2020.

The following comments were made by the survey respondents.

All school girls involved in sport definitely want to see female influencers and leaders up there with the male leader. We want to be able to see how both female and male sport leadership can work beside each other to aid one another. By showing equal, fair and positive leadership it allows for younger generations to have goals to look to achieve, and work towards. It also breaks stereotypes, allowing for an even playing ground, therefore opening up more opportunities for females.

Early this year I went to the United Nations conference to discuss global issues, and my specific committee was discussing the effects of gender inequality. By looking into data, we were able to conclude that this was predominantly due to imprinting from a young age. Women have been exposed to fewer opportunities than men from a young age, influenced and enforced to believe that they were less capable of achieving goals simply because of their gender, whether it through be excluding them from "more masculine sports" such as rugby, football etc., or treating them as weaker, both mentally and physically. This stereotypical viewpoint transcends into academic, work and social choices later in life, thereby shaping their approach to grasping leadership roles.

Gender equality is so important in sport leadership as there should be a platform encompassing male and female roles. It allows both perspectives to be taken into consideration rather than one side. This is imperative in the world of sport as most codes involve both genders so it is only fair that we have leaders from both genders being able to represent and lead.

The gaps and opportunities

There is a gap in the number of students who truly understand the importance of gender equality in terms of what it can offer an organisation. They are less aware of the research that gender equality improves performance in organisations.

We need to start educating young women so they value female role models because they are inspirational, and that they understand the benefits of having females in leadership roles. There is still clearly work to do in developing confident females with strong skill sets to believe that they can achieve and become some of these future leaders in various fields, but also in understanding why this is so important.

It is clear that our next generation of females want to have more female leaders visible – and express the importance of role modelling to give them inspiration and belief.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Leadership Skills

Good leadership skills include the ability to inject huge doses of enthusiasm into a team or individual and be very energetic in driving others forward. Leaders need a vision and to be able to clearly share that vision with others. Leaders must delegate responsibility but must be accountable. Leaders must be able to influence others, not by rules or force, but by persuasion. Leaders establish a direction and align others to reach a common goal. While leaders are often defined by actions and behavior, their personality is a key part of their leadership. Leaders should be driven towards excellence not just in themselves, but in others as well. Leaders are innovative and challenge the status-quo. Leaders ask what, when, where and why. Leaders have an eye on the horizon and have a long term perspective. Leaders focus on the people and inspire trust. (Sam Grier, 2019)

It must be understood that no one leader will possess all attributes and skills. One of the most important leadership capabilities is to be open to learning. With this in mind, it is important that our policy makers are open to learning from young people and source their views on how we should be delivering information and programmes to enable them to lead themselves and others. This can widen the basis for decision-making. As a result, each individual (including our students) will have more opportunities to contribute to the common good in ways that will enhance their own learning and organisation's effectiveness. This needs to be built on a framework which supports a shared vision and such values as fairness, equity, inclusion and respect.

Young women's perspectives

The themes in the literature were also reflected in our survey results as the young females identified the following skills or traits required to be a leader: communication, confidence, ability to speak to a large group, empathy, ability to motivate others, being organised, being a problem-solver, selfless, an active listener, being courageous, resilient, a positive attitude, and perseverance amongst others.

A selection of statements highlights many of the identified characteristics: leaders need to be encouraging, supportive, respectful, attentive; and they need to act with confidence, kindness, fairness and empathy.

You need to be able to build trust with other players, have an extremely strong work ethic, be able to have honest conversations with yourself and others, and no matter what happens always being there to support, encourage and back your team or the people around you.

The top skills I think you need to be a leader in sport are: To be respectful, to show empathy to their teammates, to be able to show resilience when things get tough, to be positive, and to be accountable for what they do and of their team and lastly they would have to have a good work ethic. These skills to me make a good leader.

These young people recognise that interpersonal skills are at the forefront of someone becoming a good leader and being a team player.

And this reinforces our understanding that an effective leader will demonstrate having proactive, relational interpersonal skills; an ability to interact with a wide variety of people; an ability to enable and empower others; is an active role model; is able to build positive relationships authentically; can influence others positively; is an effective organiser and can meet deadlines.

BARRIERS TO LEADERSHIP

The views of our next generation females in the survey shows us that there are a number of issues that young women are facing:

Barriers to sport leadership

One issue, identified through Emerson's research (2017),¹³ is that during their adolescent years, when many are forming their identity, leadership is seen as standing out. There is often reluctance to stand up and be the person to take the lead amongst peers.

Skills and confidence

Lack of confidence was cited as one of the strongest barriers to students presenting themselves for leadership opportunities.

A second reason appears to be that many students have an attitude that they lack the skills of cooperation and listening needed to be considered a leader, despite the fact that they were able to identify those qualities, and therefore quite possibly do have the skills (just again lack the confidence).

A third major reason is that strong desire to fit in and gain acceptance amongst peers meant many students missed out on leadership opportunities. They worry a lot about what others think of them and that as a leader there is huge potential to make mistakes, and if you make a mistake you will stand out. They are genuinely afraid of making a fool of themselves.

I feel as though girls will thrive better when they are in a team with just females but if males are in the sport it is normally them who will take the leadership role as they often feel intimidated by the males

Confidence, people can get intimidated or shy. But you won't find out till later on, confidence is so important and also backing yourself.

¹³ Emerson, S. (2017). Student perceptions of accessibility to leadership within the secondary school context p.71

One of the barriers of leadership in sport particularly in NZ is the tall poppy syndrome. A lot of younger kids and teenagers do not want to be called out as a leader or captain because they fear their teammates will think they have a big ego or think they are better than them. It is often perceived as a bad thing to stand up and lead or stand out because you are not being humble. That is a barrier in sport right now.

Opportunity

Emmerson (2017, pg. 102), found that many had not had any experience in leadership for the above reasons (seeing themselves as non-leaders) and as a self-fulfilling prophecy, therefore diminishing even further the students belief that they could in fact fulfil such a role. She suggests that the single most significant barrier for young people to engage in leadership is their *perception* of what it involves, that it is “more complex than it actually is” (pg. 114). Her conclusion was that if the leadership pathway/opportunities for young people were simplified and even shared amongst a group environment, then more would take the first step forward to engage – they would feel “safe, confident and encouraged” to do so.

Furthermore, Emerson also identified that there was a theme suggesting that if you didn’t engage in leadership opportunities in Junior school then you effectively missed the boat. Teachers have a role to play in both offering the opportunities in different ways/formats to different students but also reinforcing that it’s not ‘too late’ to start that pathway at secondary school.

I think many people think that if you aren’t a captain in your team that you can’t lead. Maybe try to break down those barriers and help teammates see that they all need to lead each other, within reason so that they don’t clash with each other.

I think most people are only viewed as a leader once they’ve reached the top, became the best of the best and are recognised for that. it’s hard to be a leader when you’re overlooked by people who’ve accomplished more than you but you’re still possessing the same leadership qualities as them.

To have the opportunities to lead especially when you are younger than others.

The people who are really good at the sport tend to take all of the possible development opportunities so people who maybe aren’t as good can’t develop their skills as leaders.

Big personalities that look to make a name for themselves can often drown out the best leaders in a team

Gender

Gender can also play a role. Leberman (2011, pg 2) suggests that females in leadership roles are often penalised for appearing too communal or eager to follow orders. In terms of development, the focus for girls is more on behaviour and how to dress rather than identification of values and development of skills and experiences.



Leberman also suggested that it was important young females were prepared in the tertiary years with tools to cope in a workforce where male opinions are valued over women's or in the sporting context, where the environment is often run by men for men (boys club mentality). "It is naïve to assume it is an even playing field" (pg 13)

So, in summary, fear (of peer judgements), complexity (what is involved in leadership) and courage (belief that leadership roles are possible and worth trying) are seen as the main inhibitors to young people engaging (Emmerson). Gender plays a role in a largely male dominated sporting environment that still sees women less likely to be promoted than men.

In summary, there are a number of barriers to leadership that young women are experiencing:

in sport leadership, some women/ girls get written off just because they are their gender and it's frustrating but its good fuel to the fire as it drives me personally as a women to challenge and test the stereotypes made about us

I think there is definitely a stigma around female leaders in sport not being as influential as male leaders but for young school girls there is definitely lots of positive female leadership expressed and shown. At school we are given many inspirational female leaders to look up to and this definitely has increased the desire to excel as a female in sport.

New Zealand definitely has its issues but it is the best place to be for gender equality. Regarding sports, female leadership is definitely suppressed, with the split in female and male sports teams, the male sports teams have little to no female support, whilst female sports teams have male support.

Mens sports games generally get more coverage and are talked about more often. Women sport teams don't often get the opportunity of the same sponsorship as men teams even though they may have better results or are just as good as the men's team.

I think it is unfair that women athletes especially in New Zealand are not very praised and or do not get shown the amount of respect they should.

Yes, there is less recognition of female sport in NZ and because of that leadership is not recognised

I feel like men have more opportunity in sport and the difference in money for men and women playing the same sport needs to be paid equally

I think overall NZ is pretty good regarding gender equality however I think the men's sport tend to get a lot more recognition than women's sports, I found this very evident during my last few years of high school. The boys teams received more funding and acknowledgment compared to the girls teams for success and upcoming games.

New Zealand in general has a very similar statistic distribution of male to female leadership roles, however looking at communities on a more focused scale, there is a clear barrier between the amount of women in high paying/leadership/sporting roles compared to men.

Female teachers at my intermediate school report are trying hard to be heard in conversations about technical and economic issues at school - everyone thinks that (we) they aren't able to do it. This blatant sexism is very often overlooked as being too 'soft' however it still influences the overall presence of it within society.

Stereotypical sports

Stereotypical sports also seem to have a role to play in exacerbating the gender 'gaps'

- When it comes to Rugby and Netball, these two sports make students feel they are not welcome if they are not a Boy (for rugby) or a girl (for netball). However, I feel that when it comes to leadership, both genders are equal.

- (Usually Public) Primary schools often have gender-categorised sports. This takes away the enjoyment and opportunities available to young children growing up. An example would be primary schools football teams. Most schools provide teams for male football players but many schools do not usually provide a section for females. Leadership opportunities are also being revoked by doing so.

The media

The media continues to play a significant role in the inequity.

- I have noticed that the difference in publicity, praise and money a male New Zealand team gets when they win the World Cup vs a female NZ team

- I think all around the world there is gender inequality in every aspect of life, especially sport. Male sport stars (the All blacks for example) always get promoted over any female sport stars every time. While it seems there are good things going on and perhaps even progress, some are positive (albeit a little naive?) about the opportunities that are offered

- I think that the leaders of sport in New Zealand are not chosen necessarily by gender but by competency so there are no issues with having a more experienced male leader if a female is also wanting that role.

- Definitely in some sports, although I do not see it in mine. I am a young female coach, and have been put down due to my age but never gender. I hope it stays that way.



- Yes, I think there is definitely a stigma around female leaders in sport not being as influential as male leaders but for young school girls there is definitely lots of positive female leadership expressed and shown. At school we are given some inspirational female leaders to look up to and this definitely has increased the desire to excel as a female in sport.

Summary

In summary, there are three key barriers to leadership:

Skills and confidence

- Lack of recognition of female sports
- Fear of failure - Tall poppy
- Time management
- Lack of knowledge and confidence on what leadership entails
- The belief you need to be the best skills-wise to be the leader

Opportunities:

- Less opportunities for women generally - Too few female role models
- Positions decided on favouritism rather than potential ability
- Age bias - lack of opportunity to lead for younger peers
- Academic homework pressures
- Positional confinement - if you are not a sport captain, there's no hope
- Bias toward sporty leaders - sport leadership dominated by a few and
- Lack of early experience of how to manage/deal with leadership roles.

Gender:

- Gender inequity
- Stereotypical sports play a role in exacerbating the gender 'gaps':
- Media can reinforce stereotypes and bias.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Research shows young women and girls can view sport as only being for those who are good at it and competitive. By Year 13, nearly half of young women are no longer involved in sports. According to Sport New Zealand (2018 Active NZ Main Report)¹⁴ the amount of time spent in weekly participation peaks between ages 12-14 before significantly declining between ages 15-17 years. Females are more likely to want to increase their participation than males, but have more barriers to participation.

Existing programmes

Leadership programmes and opportunities available to secondary school students, particularly those involved in sport, appear to be limited in New Zealand. A small number of programmes exist, and accessibility to those programmes are determined by where students live and the school they attend.

The Ministry of Youth Development states *“effective youth participation is about creating opportunities for young people to be involved in influencing, shaping, designing and contributing to policy and the development of services and programmes”*.

One such initiative is provided to the Wellington region by the Shift Foundation. Piloted by Wellington City Council in 2015, the programme was rolled out to the wider Wellington region in 2018. The Shift Foundation delivers a variety of programmes to young women that include physical activity, wellbeing and leadership through their Just Shift It, Shift your Mind, EmpowHER and LeadHERship programmes. This is available through sports such as boxing, rugby, cricket and dance. The programmes empower young women by inspiring and growing young leaders to create change in their own communities.

Another programme is This is Me, an initiative in the Waikato region led by Sport Waikato. This is Me also encourages, supports and celebrates women and girls of all ages getting out there and being active. They too provide opportunities for participants to develop strategies and leadership skills to break down the barriers for participation in their communities.

The Shift Foundation and Sports Waikato identified the importance for young women to be involved in the conversation and the codesign of their programmes, to make sure their needs were being met. This also involved a collaborative approach with local government, localised and regional sports, schools, community, and NGOs.

Young women were clear. To increase and maintain their participation, physical activities need to appeal to all abilities, be fun, be accessible and meet their social needs. Digital and social media have

¹⁴ Sport New Zealand. (2018). Active NZ Main Report: The New Zealand Participation Survey 2017. Wellington: Sport New Zealand.

been important platforms for young women to be able to access activities in their communities, and has increased the numbers showing interest in participation, and then taking part in those activities.

Both initiatives have resulted in an increase in the number of young women wanting to re-engage or continue their involvement in sports and the leadership opportunities offered through these programmes. Despite their success, neither initiative has been rolled out to schools nationally.

Case study – St Peter's College

Many schools offer leadership programmes in a range of different formats. One school who had multiple survey respondents, was St Peter's, a co-educational Independent School, in Cambridge, with boarding and day students from Year 7 - 13. They deliver leadership courses to their students in a range of ways.

At St Peter's all students have the opportunity to sign up to a leadership programme which is offered at each year level. The students attend for an hour once every two weeks. The Deans of each level run the programme for these students. The programme runs over three terms with 10-12 sessions held throughout the year. All programmes cover the following essential skills:

- Communicating
- Building good relationships
- Interpersonal skills
- Problem solving
- Building a good team.

They use the growth coaching model to enhance their leadership capabilities, and to further unlock their potential.

Furthermore, in the Well-Being/Hauora curriculum delivered by Learning Group coaches as well as programmes in the Physical Education Department, the Year 13 students are further exposed to leadership concepts. They identify the motives for leadership, how to be a strategic leader, their character strengths and how to utilise these to their best advantage, explore their own levels of self-esteem and how to be their authentic self. They also explore how to deal with difficult people and work collaboratively in an environment to deliver an event or service to their wider community.

St Peter values the leadership contributions made by all students and encourages their participation in a wide range of activities whether the student has a Prefect role or not.

Summary

In summary, we recommend that schools take on a more active role in developing leadership in a range of forums. Offer this across the board to all levels, to any students interested in leading themselves first and then wanting to serve and lead others. Offer programmes also in the sporting contexts to enable all players to have input and feel their contributions are valued. Coaches should be encouraged to apply the distributive leadership model, where everyone has an opportunity to lead in one form or other. This can be as simple as organising and running the warm-up drills or cool-down stretches.



CONCLUSION

The next generation of young women clearly understand the importance of leadership and what it means. Their views align with that of our research. There are some gaps, such as their understanding that leadership can be both formal and informal and not just positional. This is a common theme that comes through in schools and universities, reinforced by the leadership opportunities available through “positional roles e.g. Sports Captain”. We need to create more leadership opportunities and show different ways to lead and what this looks like.

The Next Gen also outlined the importance of having female role models and the need for gender equality, although they are not entirely sure why. Educating young women about the benefits to an organisation is another potential area for development, as well as education about why gender equality is important.

When we create spaces for youth to have their say and share their views, they will get involved. This is evidenced in this project with over 150 female students choosing to complete the project survey. Although many commented they did not demonstrate leadership, one could argue their participation in this project is in fact influential leadership. It is likely they did not recognise this, as their choice to participate in the survey is not viewed in the context of a formal leadership role.

If we want students to work in partnership with adults, we must give them the opportunities to develop leadership skills—skills that allow them to manage time, work as a team, set goals, solve problems, facilitate meetings, defend positions, and make effective presentations. In other words, we must help them develop effective life skills. Providing all students with leadership opportunities helps them grow into responsible adults.

The voices of some next generation young females were consistent with recent research (Emmerson and Leberman), reinforcing gender stereotyping as one major barrier to leadership opportunities and or the desire to take on leadership roles.

There were many other barriers consistent across the research and next gen voice such as: lack of support/confidence, age, peer perceptions, bias toward sporty types and leadership being seen simply as positional. One of the strongest messages highlighted that opportunities to lead begin early and tend to carry through to secondary school and beyond.

From a young age, many females are exposed to fewer leadership opportunities than males, influenced and reinforced to believe that they are less capable of achieving goals because of their gender. This occurs through excluding young women from more traditional sports (rugby, football, netball), or treating them as weaker, both mentally and physically. This stereotypical viewpoint and lost early opportunities ultimately extend into work, academic and social choices later in life, thereby shaping the female approach to leadership roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Young women are our next gen leaders – they have different perspectives, skills, experiences and insights than those currently in leadership. They will know what works for them and what their gaps are. Research indicates that it is better to have young women involved and have a say to better identify what is required.

“In a marketplace defined by complexity, disruption and change, today’s most successful enterprises are those that bring diverse perspectives and experiences to each new challenge. Along with being the right thing to do, diversity and inclusion offer a strategic advantage – especially at the leadership level. That is why it is critically important for businesses to look at the challenges women often face, and clear the path for talented and dynamic leaders to rise to the top.” KPMG - John Veihmeyer, Chairman, KPMG International.

Hear their voice

“Effective youth participation is about creating opportunities for young people to be involved in influencing, shaping, designing and contributing to policy and the development of services and programmes”. Ministry of Youth Development¹⁵

If we want initiatives to be effective and meet their needs, young people have to be involved in the design of any initiative – young women **want** to be involved. Using creative and participatory processes to engage different kinds of people and knowledge to problem solve for wider benefit. Codesign helps generate more innovative ideas.

“It is human nature to invest in something that you agree with and have had a part in devising. Buy in will be better when the co-designer’s expectations align with the remit.”
NZOC - Evelyn Williamson, 2020.

We recommend that:

- Who** Policy makers, educators, other leaders, people in positions that can facilitate opportunities for young women, people developing or designing a leadership programme, or anything to do with youth. Sport NZ with their new strategy to get Every Body Active in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- What**
1. Need to hear the voice of young women
 2. Allow them to co-construct what leadership looks like
 3. Engage the rangatahi and tamariki who will be affected by changes to post Covid-19 competitions to share their perspective and cater for this cohort of youngsters as well as the targeted majority.
 4. Undertake long term research with rangatahi and tamariki about the impact for some of the stopping and restarting youth sport programmes, giving voice especially to our talented young girls who thrive in the competitive environment.
 5. All sporting bodies who oversee youth sports, or school sports committees, invite young women to their decision-making table.
 6. Develop a leadership model that is current and relevant to our young female students and athletes to allow for diversity and inclusion and that they can thrive in.

¹⁵ Working with young people <http://www.myd.govt.nz/working-with-young-people/>

Next Gen Leadership

“When students have the opportunity to lead, they become architects of their futures and change agents in their schools and communities.” Betty Edwards.

Young women are clear about what leadership looks like – and this includes difficult conversations and effective communication. Leadership needs to be flexible, adaptable and non-positional. Leadership can occur in a range of different areas. Making leadership visible in all its forms and naming it in the moment can be crucial for them to recognise their own leadership.

If young women have no opportunity to take a leadership role, they are likely to miss out on the leadership skills and confidence that contribute to both their wellbeing as young women. They also translate into older life, building skills and confidence – putting themselves forward as capable and confident contributors. These leadership opportunities need to be deliberate, and available to all.

We recommend that:

Who Teachers designing programmes, Ministry of Education, Boards of Trustees, School Principals and Senior Leadership Teams, school student leaders, Regional Sports Trusts, Community funders, NZ Olympic Committee’s Ambassador Programme, commercial partners.

- What**
1. Be flexible about leadership models and co-design these with young women
 2. In these changing times Covid-19 has provided us with an opportunity to re-evaluate and reflect on best practices in a range of areas. Youth leadership and female empowerment through leadership are areas that can be co-designed now to encapsulate their ideas, perspective and vision. Ensure the opportunity is available at all schools.
 3. Through leadership in the Ministry of Education spaces, School Boards and Senior Leadership teams, strategies can be developed to ensure that leadership opportunities are an expected part of the curriculum. All students regardless of gender, age, race, socio-economic background, should have the opportunity to be exposed to leadership courses and opportunities.
 4. Provide youth with a space to own leadership in their own right – this is an opportunity in itself.
 5. Building platforms in schools and communities where our youth have the opportunity to contribute to strategic planning, comment on current issues and drive positive change, will be a positive way forward. These platforms may include school student councils, student led house committees, local council youth committees.
 6. Be flexible about leadership models and co-design these with young women

Leadership development

“There’s not enough knowledge about how to actually be a good leader and how you can become one because for some it doesn’t naturally happen. Some may want to put their hand up but haven’t unlocked their full potential yet because of the lack of knowledge of good leadership qualities.” student - St Peters, Cambridge.

Each person has leadership qualities, for Maori, being born with rangatiratanga, we are all leaders – making decisions every day is leadership in action. Young kids experience their first models of leadership at schools, which makes it crucial for us to work in the school context.

“role models - younger athletes need to be able to identify with older athletes in some way, and if they see gender inequality this can be very disheartening for them. Gender equality allows people to aim as high as they can in their chosen sport, as there are enough obstacles to perform at the highest level.” student - Auckland Diocesan

Young women are keen observers of others which makes role models important. Finding ways of supporting and encouraging others.

We recommend that:

- Who** Sport NZ, Curriculum Developers within the Ministry of Education, School leadership (eg Deans, Senior Leadership Team), Regional Sports Trusts, Regional Sports Organisations
- What**
1. Hauora curriculum initiatives that enable young women’s leadership to be developed and rolled out to schools, building on their instinctive leadership traits and allowing them the opportunity to unlock their full leadership potential.
 2. Utilise strategies that will help our young females to grow in confidence, while recognising the lack of opportunity or belief they have in themselves to fulfil roles in leadership.
 3. Identify and minimise the key barriers that prevent women from taking leadership roles, and develop initiatives that support this – individual leadership, being your authentic self, being resilient and developing one’s character strengths.
 4. Hauora curriculum initiatives that enable young women’s leadership to be developed and rolled out to schools, building on their instinctive leadership traits and allowing them the opportunity to unlock their full leadership potential.
 5. Utilise strategies that will help our young females to grow in confidence, while recognising the lack of opportunity or belief they have in themselves to fulfil roles in leadership.
 6. Identify and minimise the key barriers that prevent women from taking leadership roles, and develop initiatives that support this – individual leadership, being your authentic self, being resilient and developing one’s character strengths.



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NZ Olympic Women's
Sport Leadership Academy

E hara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari, he toa takitini

Success is not the work of one, but the work of many.

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APPENDICES: YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SURVEY

1. Please click "Agree" if you have read and understand the Information Sheet and the reasons we are conducting this survey. This will allow us to use your information provided below.
2. Please click "Agree" if you have read and understand the Information Sheet and the reasons we are conducting this survey. This will allow us to use your information provided below.
3. What School or University do you attend?
4. What Age and Year Level are you?
5. What Ethnicity do you identify with?
6. What Sports do you play or are you involved with?
7. What does leadership in Sport mean to you?
8. Do you think New Zealand has any issues around gender equality and leadership in sport?
9. How important is Gender Equality for you in Sport Leadership?
10. How important is leadership?
11. On a scale of 1-5 how strongly do you feel you are currently exercising leadership in the sporting arena?
12. Please explain your answer above
13. What skills do you believe you need to be a leader in sport?
14. What leadership opportunities are available for you at your school or university?
15. How does your School or University support leadership development?
16. What would be helpful for your leadership development?
17. What, if any barriers, do you perceive there to be in sport leadership?
18. Thank you for completing the form. If you would like to go into the draw to win a sporting prize pack please enter your phone number and we will text the winner.



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