

MIND & BODY

Good physical health contributes to good mental health. Exercise has been linked to improved mood, reduced stress, increased energy, and heightened self-esteem. In addition, participating in sports fosters the development of important aspects of psychological health including self-esteem, social skills, discipline, and respect for others. Our *MIND & BODY* section highlights individuals from resource-limited settings who have excelled in sports and inspire others to incorporate physical activity into their lives.

2013 Little League World Series

Worldwide, discrimination has been an issue affecting girls and women throughout their lives, limiting self-esteem, confidence, and the development of important talents and abilities. Education, health (i.e. basic medical care), harassment/violence, and property rights continue to be challenges associated with discrimination, especially in the developing world.

Seeing a young girl succeed among her male counterparts is an inspiration – a reminder to girls and women worldwide that they are capable even if opportunities remain limited. Eliska Stejskalova, from the Czech Republic was the only girl to play in the 2013 Little League World Series (LLWS) in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania, USA. She played on the Europe-Africa team, represented by the Czech Republic, whose appearance was their first in history. Eliska beat several boys (including her brother) in securing a place on the team and played several positions during the competition including catcher, outfielder, and short-stop. While the team lost in a later round of the competition, they earned the opportunity to play in a consolation game. Eliska was the 16th girl to ever play in the LLWS, with the first girl participating in 1984.

2012 Olympics

Congratulations to all athletes who have had the opportunity participate in the 2012 Olympic Games and a very special congratulations to individuals receiving either a gold, silver, or bronze medal from the following countries with developing economies: Afghanistan, Armenia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Georgia, Guatemala, Indonesia, India, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, North Korea, Tajikstan, Uganda, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Uganda Boys Baseball Team & 2012 Little League World Series

The Ugandans, were the second African team to qualify for and the first to actually make it to the 2012 Little League World Series (August 16 - August 26) in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Although the team from Lugazi, Uganda lost their first two games (to Panama and Mexico) they triumphed in a consolation bout against the United States' Oregon team. Baseball in Africa has been a late arrival compared to countries in the Americas and East Asia. Although it is unclear exactly how many youth play baseball in Africa, six countries have joined the African Baseball League and others have teams in the developmental stages. The game is gaining fast on soccer as a popular sport in schools and has also been used in countries, such as South Africa, to help bring awareness to public health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Uganda and other African countries face significant challenges as efforts are made to develop the sport. Many children use balls made of paper, have no gloves, and improvise bats. Games are often played barefoot on dry fields with little or no grass, and schools, where baseball is popular, struggle to find places to play. Charities and other organizations have been working to aid with development. Uganda's success in Williamsport will help to raise the sport's profile in Africa, and, hopefully, to raise more money to support the children.