



Judo for Peace – South Africa

JUDO FOR PEACE SOUTH AFRICA NPC REG: 2023/151062/08

Judo for Peace

Summary of Impact on Women Through Judo

This document highlights the significant impact of Judo empowering women, focusing on the physical, mental, and social development fostered through training. The program has been instrumental in building confidence, discipline, and a strong sense of community among female participants.

Introduction

The Judo for Women Empowerment initiative was launched in 2021 by Judo for Peace (JFP) in response to the lack of female participation and retention in the sport. The program's objective is to attract and retain more women in Judo. The very first Women Only event to be hosted by Judo for Peace took place in Brixton (West Johannesburg), a Muslim neighborhood, with women and girls from other dojos. The event featured Judo activities, motivational speeches, and social interactions that many participants found profoundly healing from their everyday social issues.



The launch of the Women Empowerment Initiative in Brixton at the Muslim dojo.

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Teaching and Training

Since its inception, the program has successfully hosted 12 women-only events across various locations in South Africa. The program hosted 5 events in Berea, 3 in Brixton and 1 in Alexandra, 1 Soweto, 1 in Orange Farm and 1 in Parys (4-day retreat). Through this initiative, Judo for Peace has cultivated 2 female brown belt and created 31 women competitors (including minors), with 4 of them serving as coaches. Notably, at the 2023 Judo for Peace Grand Gala Awards, Warda, now a Brown Belt, competitor, and coach, received an award for the most consistent woman in training, resulting in inspiring other girls to remain active in the program.

CONFERENCE **GEVRISE EMENEKE**
Parcours de championne :
3 X championne du monde
& médaillée olympique en judo

De Yaoundé au sommet du monde
17 MAI 2023
A partir de 19:00

FRANCE JUDO JUDO FOR PEACE AIRFRANCE

Alliance Française-17 Lower Park Dr, Parkview, Randburg

FREE CLASSES for women of all ages and abilities

location: Brixton Multi-recreational Centre
date: 25 March 2023
time: 08:30 -11:30
SVP contact Coach Warda Mchelle (083 312 43)

8 Women's Day Celebration
8 MARCH
15:30 - 18:00 @BEREA Dojo
SPECIAL GUESTS:
NIKE, UNHCR & KWANELE APP REPRESENTATIVES

JUDO FOR PEACE NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT

JUDO FOR PEACE JUDO TOGETHER Women on the mat
Date: 22 April
Time: 09:00 - 12:00
Location: Soweto TBC
RSVP: JFP on 068 196 6298

A collage of a few posters of the previous women events

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Judo for Peace is presently active in 10 schools in the Johannesburg metropolitan area (Soweto, Central Johannesburg). In schoolteachers are sensitized to bring girls to the judo classes and we have now obtained a successful 45% rate of girl's participation in schools; at the same time, we are active in Observatory Girl Primary where judo classes are taught twice a week – raising the total number of girls in judogi considerably.

Curriculum Development

The women only events initially focused on promoting self-defense in response to the Gender-Based Violence crimes that the country is facing. As the program evolved, Judo for Peace, began to introduce Judo as a sport; hosted body confidence seminars developed by Nike; invited professionals from the safety and security sectors; including the Alexandra Police Station & [Kwanele App](#) to provide tips on how to keep and hopefully stay safe in our communities. Finally, UNHCR is a supportive partner of Judo for Peace and is continuously helping during our events – in particular, hosting roundtables that entail women empowerment e.g., for the World Refugee Day.



The girls having a round table on body confident sports women in a retreat held in Parys (Free-State).

Community Engagement

The Judo for Peace girls are not only training, competing, grading, and enjoying the women only events, but they are active community members. The girls joined in the Berea Cleaning Campaign where the team had to clean up the park behind the main dojo in Berea. This was a wonderful event, as the girls got to learn more about the surroundings of the dojo. Recently, they participated in the “big pack” (an initiative where community members joined SAPS in filling food jars with soups mixes) at the Linden Police Station. The girls have also engaged in demonstrations at schools, events, and family markets, this shows the increasing interest in wanting to do more for the program and the community at large. Judo for women has also collaborated with Kwanele App NGO, Phola NGO, Gun Free South Africa to mention a few. The impact is tremendous, and the program is growing at a never-ending pace.

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Professional Developments

JFP strongly encourages growth and development of female judokas. As for now our leading judokas have successfully participated in the following judo related course.

- IJF Academy Instructor Course
- IJF Academy Judo Manager Course
- 1st Aid course
- Judo South Africa (JSA) Referee & Table official courses
- Seminars and training camps with High performance coaches/athletes such as [Sensei Hannes](#) and [Sensei Regina Daxbacher](#), [Travis Stevens](#), [Gevrise Emame](#), and [Ugo Le Grand](#).
- Nike coaching seminars (in presence and online): inclusive coaching, I coach kids, I coach Girls, coaching for belonging.

Challenges and Solutions

The main challenges that Judo for women faces are:

- **Perceptions of Judo as a men's sport.** Women feeling scared to try the judo as they fear injuries – families deem judo appropriate for boys but not for girls. In this case we host demonstrations for schools and communities, where we explain the fundamentals of the sport, we assure them of their safety, but also highlight the main causes of injuries and how to avoid them and then allow them to try the sport on the mat with trained and qualified instructors to get a feel of it. By doing so, they get a broader idea of the sport which allows them to make an informed decision of whether to join or not.
- **Cultural bias.** Girls are meant to babysit in the house and are not sent to do sport. For this we have direct contact with the families of the girls to sensitize them about the importance of doing sport for all kids.
- **Attire and Conducive environment.** Moreover, the sport environment is usually designed for boys and not for girls. Girls are seldom dressed appropriately for sport and often feel uncomfortable doing sport because they are embarrassed of being judged because of their dress code. Thanks to the great partnership with Nike, they managed to sponsor the girls with Bras, T-shirts, and sport Hijab (for the Muslim girls) which has enabled the girls to participate with more confidence and comfort. Finally in the dojo boys are sensitized on how to interact with girls and establish mutually respectful gender relations – helped by the Judo Moral code.



The girls all wearing their judogis celebrated International Women's Day at an event with the UNHCR held in Berea at the main dojo.

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Conclusion and way forward

The Women's Empowerment through Judo initiative has made significant strides in fostering the physical, mental, and social development of women participants. By addressing challenges such as fear of injury, cultural bias and concerns about attire, Judo for Peace has created an inclusive and supportive environment that empowers women to thrive in the sport.

The program's success is evident in the growing number of female competitors, coaches, and community leaders who support Judo for Peace. As the initiative continues to expand, it not only enriches the lives of its participants but also contributes to broader social change by promoting confidence, discipline, and a strong sense of community. The ongoing support from partners like Nike, UNHCR, Italtile Foundation ensures that this transformative journey will continue to inspire and empower women for years to come.

Activities that would promote the empowerment of girls and women in judo:

- Availability of a **shuttle service** to and from the dojo: judo sessions are conducted after school and often finish after sunset (in particular in winter times). Our dojo are located in areas that are not always safe for kids and teenagers, in particular after dark. The availability of shuttle services for the judo practitioners (in particular girls) would help them to embrace the sport and commit themselves to a healthy lifestyle
- **Sport bursary** to assist girls to achieve their sport goals (competition or coaching). In judo we have many expenses related to competitive sport – travels, competition fees, sport equipment, course fees. Supporting girls with tangible aid – school fees, transport money, stationary, food or else) would help the families to accept girls in sport – as girls are often assigned house chores and babysitting tasks.
- Promote **ad hoc events** that sensitize the local communities on the importance of introducing girls and women to sport. Many formats are available – self-defense session, celebration of women's day, women's only training session, team building events.



Odrade Mabunu the strongest woman in the program, doing her magic at the Team event competition.

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