



Legacy

TRY RUGBY

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TRYRUGBY





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About Us

The British Council is the UK's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between the people of the UK and other countries through the arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year, we directly reached more than 80 million people and more than 791 million, in total, with digital content, publications and radio and TV broadcasts. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a United Kingdom public body. Approximately 15% of our funding comes from the British government.



What do we do?

We help young people acquire the skills, confidence and connections they need to reach their potential and participate in strong and inclusive communities.

We provide support to learn English and obtain a high quality education and internationally recognized qualifications. Our work in arts and culture encourages creative expression and cultural exchange, as well as fostering creative entrepreneurship.

The British Council in Brazil

Since 1940, the British Council has been working to build a relationship of trust and cooperation between the United Kingdom and the countries of the Americas. Today, we have a team of 320 people in 12 countries, from Canada to Argentina. We have been in Brazil since 1945. Currently, we have two offices in the country, in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Through our programs, we offer opportunities to countless people around the world to learn about British culture and creativity with our programs for the arts and creative economy, schools, higher education and research, as well as for civil society.



Check out the video of the legacy that Try Rugby left behind.

Try Rugby: a transformative project



Try Rugby is a pioneering international initiative, carried out in a partnership between Premiership Rugby, the British Council and local organizations. With the participation of British coaches from Premiership Rugby, one of the most important rugby leagues in the world, the project brings together sport and education for the development of civic values among children and youth in schools and communities in Brazil.

The project began in São Paulo, in partnership with Industry Federations, and soon expanded to other states. FIRJAN, FIEMG, FIERGS and FIESC were essential for the continuity of the program. In Rio de Janeiro, Jaguar Land Rover was an important supporter, as well as Universidade Estácio de Sá, CCR Nova Dutra, Instituto CCR and the Federal Government through the law to provide incentives for sports (*Lei de Incentivo ao Esporte*).

Across Brazil, sport is a tool to engage children and young adults and promote health, education and social results. The project has also helped to increase the number of professional and amateur rugby players in Brazil, popularizing the sport in the country.

The goal of Try Rugby is to provide young people with the opportunity to play rugby for the first time. Sport promotes the development of important skills and values, such as respect, discipline, integrity, solidarity and passion.

Values in rugby

Teamwork
Discipline
Friendship **Empowerment**
Solidarity **Integrity**
Respect **Sportsmanship** Passion
Social interaction **Different**
Collaboration

(Image in the form of a Rugby ball)

2012 Kick-off:



The Try Rugby pilot project was launched in Brazil in September of 2012 with the arrival of 12 British volunteer coaches. With the goal of bringing the sport to children and youth, as well as training Physical Education professionals in rugby, the coaches worked in 12 SESI schools and communities in the state of São Paulo. The idea was planted and nurtured, and more than 300 physical education teachers from SESI and public schools participated in rugby training.

Prince Harry plays rugby with children in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, the year the Try Rugby project started in Brazil. (Unofficial [source](#))

Try Rugby project provided new skills for physical education professionals and the number of people involved grew significantly in the first year.



50,000 participants

In September of 2012, Try Rugby SP was launched in partnership with the Serviço Social da Indústria (Sesi-SP). The program's permanent activities reached more than 9,000 children and young adults. In addition, more than 50,000 people participated in occasional activities, such as sporting events, festivals, workshops and other sports-related activities.

Try Rugby SP was awarded the best community program of the year at the Rugby Expo Awards 2013, an international organization that recognizes best practices in the sport. It also won the Rugby Brasil Trophy for Outstanding Social Project in 2013. The recognition of the awards was important for continuity in the promotion of the sport in the country. Inclusion and social interaction further strengthened ties with communities, providing a sense of collaboration.

The Association to Support Children at Risk (ACER Brasil), located in the Eldorado neighborhood in Diadema, was an important partner in the community program. In addition to supporting the development of rugby, it also promoted [good practices for protecting children](#) and [social diversity](#).



1st Try Rugby SP Festival (2013) – 1,200 participants

2014: Rugby, a growing passion

In 2014, the Try Rugby project expanded, with seven units in the state of São Paulo, two in Minas Gerais and two in Santa Catarina. This represented an important milestone for the expansion of rugby in Brazil, and for community values.

That same year, British sport authorities visited Brazil with the goal of further promoting rugby, in the country known for football, through social and educational actions for children and youth.



Helen Grant

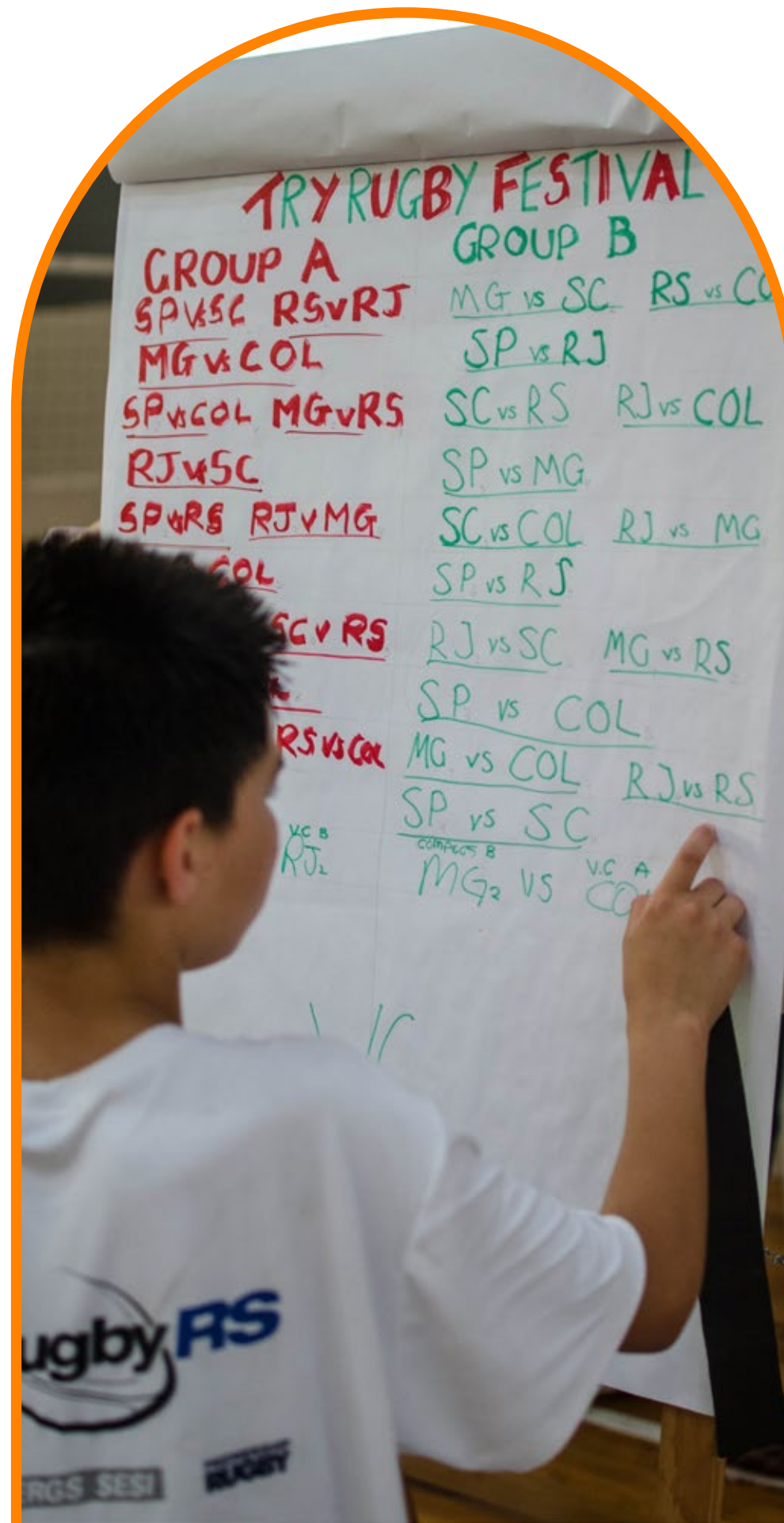
United Kingdom's Minister for Sport meets with key local sports partners in Brazil to discuss potential long-term partnerships, prospects and expectations for new collaborations with the British Council.



Chester Williams, the black pearl

The top player on the South African team Springbok, and winner of the 1995 Rugby World Cup against New Zealand, visited Try Rugby SP in October of 2014 to share his experiences.

2015: Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul



Try Rugby RS was launched in March of 2015, benefiting 500 children in permanent project activities and another 10,000 people in the community in occasional activities. Soon after, the project was expanded to Rio de Janeiro. This expansion required a greater number of British rugby coaches in Brazil, totaling 15 (with 8 in the state of São Paulo alone).

In 2015, 15,000 students participated in permanent activities and 70,000 in occasional activities.



2016: The Olympics in Brazil

In April of 2016, runners carried the Olympic torch from Greece to Brazil, passing through more than 300 cities in the host country. The long-awaited year had finally arrived. This was a significant moment for Try Rugby, as the project was developed especially to promote rugby in Brazil, in view of the Olympics in the country.

In Belo Horizonte (MG), the UK national team used the Try Rugby training space to prepare for the 2016 Olympics in Rio. The trainer and sport legend, **Lord Bates**, also participated in the event. It was a special date, when all the project participants were able to see professional athletes train.

Marcus Watson
and Lord Bates,
important names in
the sport.



That same year, under the Federal Sports Incentive Law, the Ministry of Sports authorized British Council Brasil to seek investors in 3 states (SP, MG, RJ). The action ensured continuity in Try Rugby's promotion of socio-cultural development.

2016: British House in Brazil

A space for British athletes to enjoy a bit of home abroad and, at the same time, serve as a space to disseminate British culture in Brazil during the games, the British House, UK's House of Hospitality, played a very important role in Rio de Janeiro's Jardim Botânico neighborhood community. The house hosted cultural and business events, as well as festivities.

During the 2016 Olympics, the British House hosted a number of events. The legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games in London was one of the themes presented in the house, in addition to seminars on energy, education, science and innovation, urban development, e-business and creative industries.

The British House hosted the “Rugby is GREAT” conference in the Parque Lage neighborhood. The event was attended by the United Kingdom's Minister for Sport, Tracey Crouch, who gave the opening speech. In the speech, she addressed sport and education topics, as well as cooperation between Brazilian and British universities. Speakers also discussed the importance of sponsoring sport.



2017-2020: A legacy for Brazil

In the different communities where they have a presence, Try Rugby promoted a cultural exchange not only for students, but also for local industry workers and their dependents and neighboring communities, through the promotion of various events.



Women in rugby

The situation of women in sport is an important issue for Try Rugby. The project challenges gender norms, creates opportunities and builds capacities among participants. The actions of the British Council are based on the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) to promote equality and diversity, and are aligned with the main international policies for the promotion of women in sport.

According to UN Women, education and sport transform the lives of girls and reduce the likelihood of early or unwanted pregnancies. The organization defends the urgent need to develop actions to promote a greater female presence in all areas. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2019 report “Movement is Life” reveals that women are 40% less physically active than men, a parameter that is symptomatic of gender inequality in sport.



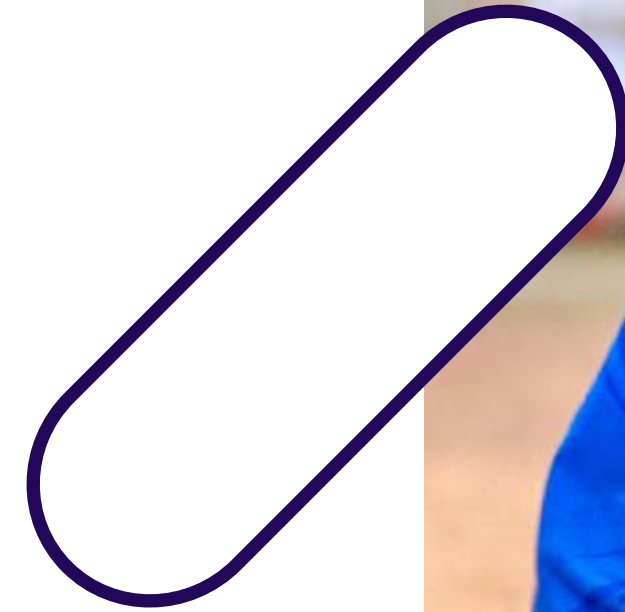
The “International Women’s Day” event in Resende (RJ).

At Try Rugby, empowerment is equally important for the promotion of mental health, as it encourages awareness of individual choices, which reflect on community relationships.

Try Rugby asks a fundamental question in this social context: what is the role of women in rugby? For us, it is where women want to be, to be who they want to be.



**Watch to
learn more:**



First Women's Try Rugby
Festival SP.



Women's Competitions

In recent years, there have been a number of women's rugby competitions aimed at promoting the image of women in sport and motivating young leaders with the development of skills in sport.

In 2014, the U13 Sevens Rugby Festival (Girls Festival March) was held in celebration of International Women's Day in different countries around the world, including Brazil, Hong Kong, India, Saint Lucia, Swaziland, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uganda.

The Girls Festival March event, along with the competitions and recreational activities, promotes a dialogue on the role of women in sport, and young athletes in rugby. The participants talked about the fundamentals of the team sport, where each person has a strategic role, and discussed how to stay motivated and motivate others and self-development.



Participants in Try Rugby permanent activities in 2016.

More than 10,000 girls participated in the permanent activities in the states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and São Paulo. This number is even greater if you count community participation in the occasional activities.

Life stories

Rugby transforms student into community leader

Letícia Silva de Moura, a student at Colégio Sesi in Diadema (SP), was 15 when she discovered rugby. At first, she had no idea what the sport was about. She played volleyball and handball in high school.

The arrival of Try Rugby, with a British coach speaking English during the presentation, caught Letícia's attention. She signed up and, over the years, improved her game and became one of the most engaged participants in the sport. Today, she dedicates part of her time to **introducing new athletes to the sport.**

In 2017, she trained with the Brazilian women's rugby youth team. The following year, she went to a conference in England at the invitation of Premiership Rugby and Girl Up, an international organization to empower girls and a partner of the British Council at the time.

Today, the Chemical Engineering student is a youth leader in her community, helping girls get involved in rugby.



“

This bond with rugby has grown significantly since I started in the project. I can say that it has totally changed my life, my path. It opened many doors- not only in the sport, but also in my academic and professional life”, Letícia explains.

Emotional intelligence in sport and in life

The changes, according to Leticia, are related to the construction of personality and the benefits that this sport offers, in addition to physical conditioning.



I developed the ability to better deal with my emotions, empathize and relate to others. I understood, in practice, what resilience is, the motivation to persist.

Motivation to do good

Now, at 22 and with the experience of having competed on her university's rugby team, Letícia says that women's rugby still has a long way to go, especially in Brazil. And she is willing to be a motivating force for young girls.

“

Rugby helps many women around the world. We need to be physically and mentally strong to overcome our limits and succeed in sport. Women's empowerment is exactly that- getting to places that no one imagined we ever could.

Girl UP!

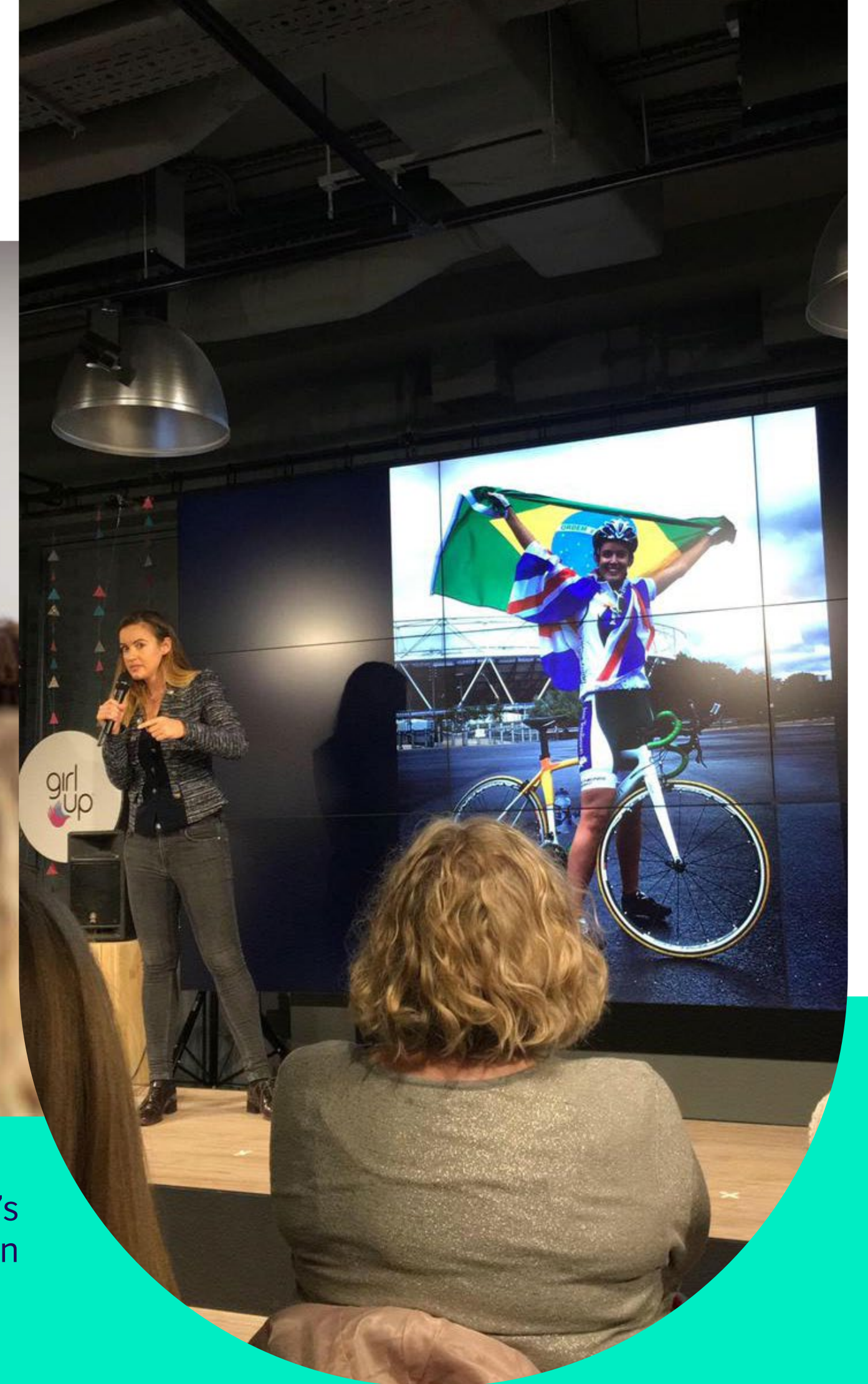
According to Letícia, the sport she ended up discovering by chance is, today, part of her wonderful path in life. When she left high school, she continued playing rugby on the university team, and new opportunities have come up. She recently received an invitation to travel to England, and she didn't have to think twice about accepting.



This was a turning point in my life. I participated in the B Series rugby championships in São Paulo. In 2018, Try Rugby got in touch with our team and introduced me to Girl Up, an NGO that promotes the engagement of girls in sport. The NGO invited me to London to participate in an event with women leaders. It was amazing! Girls from 17 to 20, from all over the world, were there to attend presentations and discuss issues with successful women.



Girl UP, a women's leadership event in London



Story 2

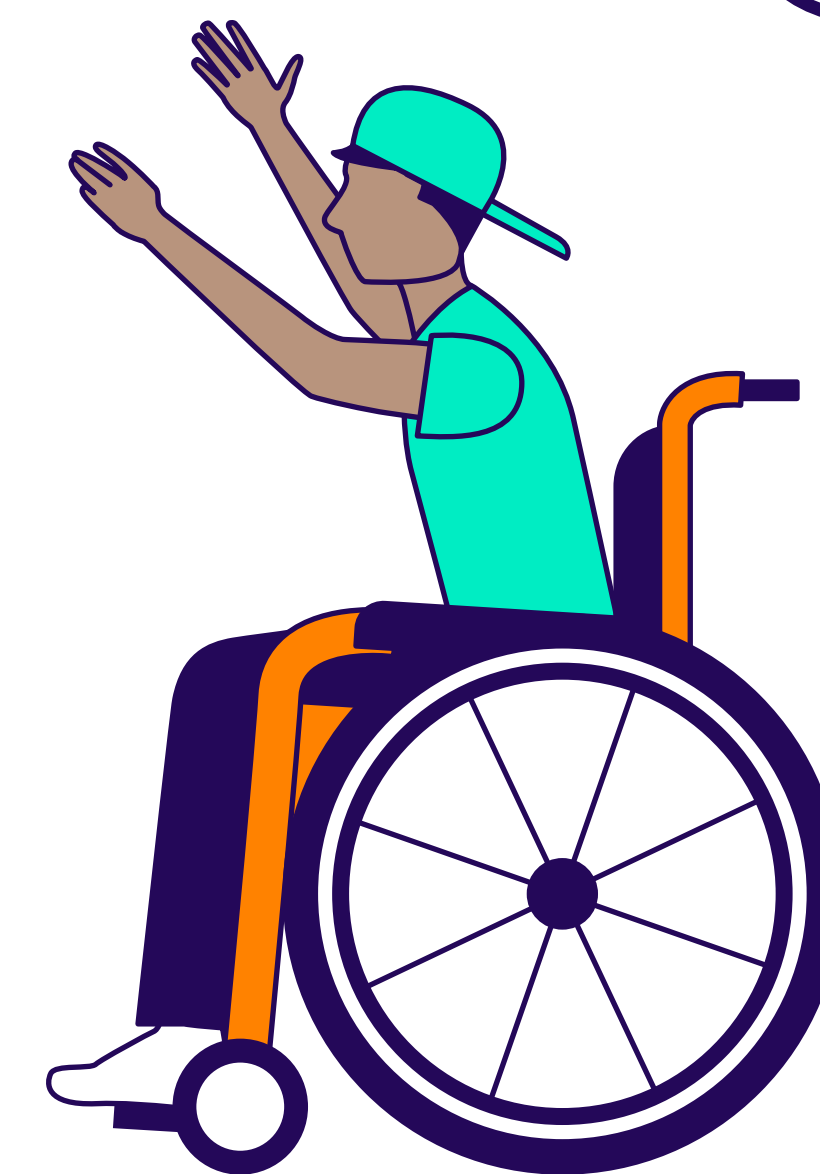
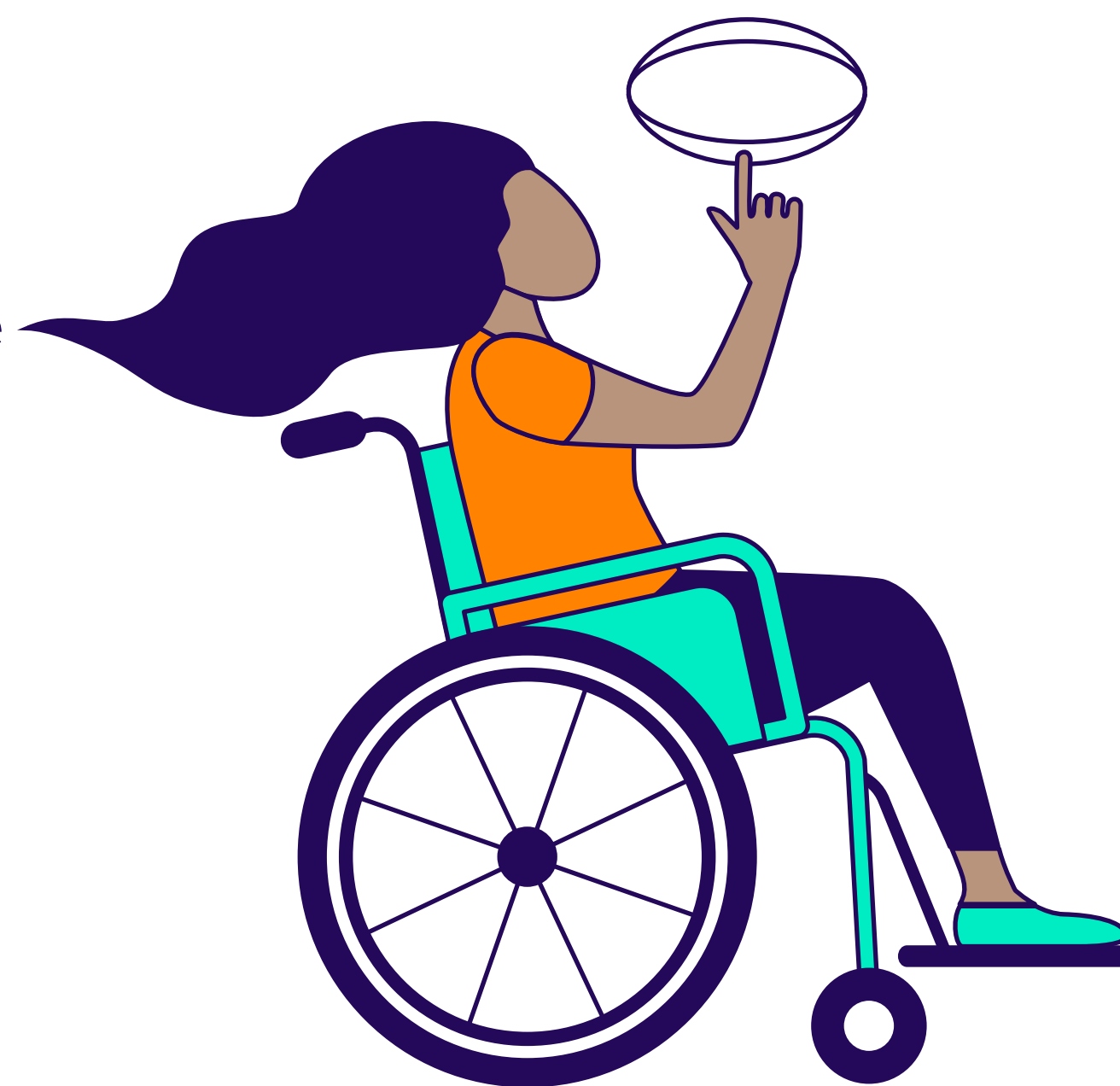
Participant is an example of leadership in Blumenau

Micaeli is a young woman who regularly participated in the Monday and Wednesday morning classes at Projeto Atleta do Futuro (PAF), a SESI Blumenau (SC) sports program.

She uses a wheelchair and has limited movement, though this has not stopped her from being one of the most engaged athletes in school sports. The rugby activities were planned and adapted to include Micaeli and make her feel part of the team.

In an awareness raising action in the program, wheelchairs were brought in so that the other students could experience sports with a disability, with Micaeli in charge.

Through rugby, she developed new skills, as well as confidence and self-esteem. Although she faces difficulties every day, she enjoys life in every possible way.



What project participants say

The main protagonists of Try Rugby are children and youth. Their care and well-being is what drives the project, in accordance with the values of the [Child Protection Policy](#). For this reason, listening to them is fundamental for development through sport.

The British Council offers tools and reports to organizations interested in promoting child protection actions in their projects, such as the [e-book School Leadership - Professional Development Program](#).



Discipline

I remember that when I got involved, my friends were also motivated to participate. In rugby, I always ask how I can improve my game. It was really cool. At that time, I was given a rugby ball autographed by all the Premiership rugby captains because I had created a poster on the fundamental values of rugby. Now, I intend to study Physical Education.

Mariana, student at Colégio Sesi in Botucatu (SP)



Passion

When I started playing rugby, I wanted a non-traditional sport. And when I went to the class, I fell in love with the sport. My plan was to train a lot and become a professional. If I couldn't have a career playing professionally, I could always be a coach. Today, I want to help other young people like me, because rugby helped me with physical and emotional issues. What I want the most is to be more responsible and happy.

Alice Rezende, student of class 4 in Resende (RJ)

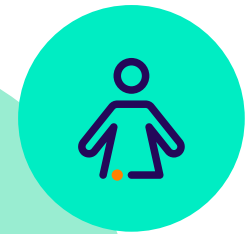


Respect

I remember when I participated in the 1st Try Rugby Brasil Festival. I expected it to be a tough competition, but, for me, it was much better, because I really had fun. It was a well-organized event. At the festival, I was able to watch more professional matches. It became clear that without respect and teamwork, rugby doesn't work.

Tainá Machado, participant in Blumenau (SC)

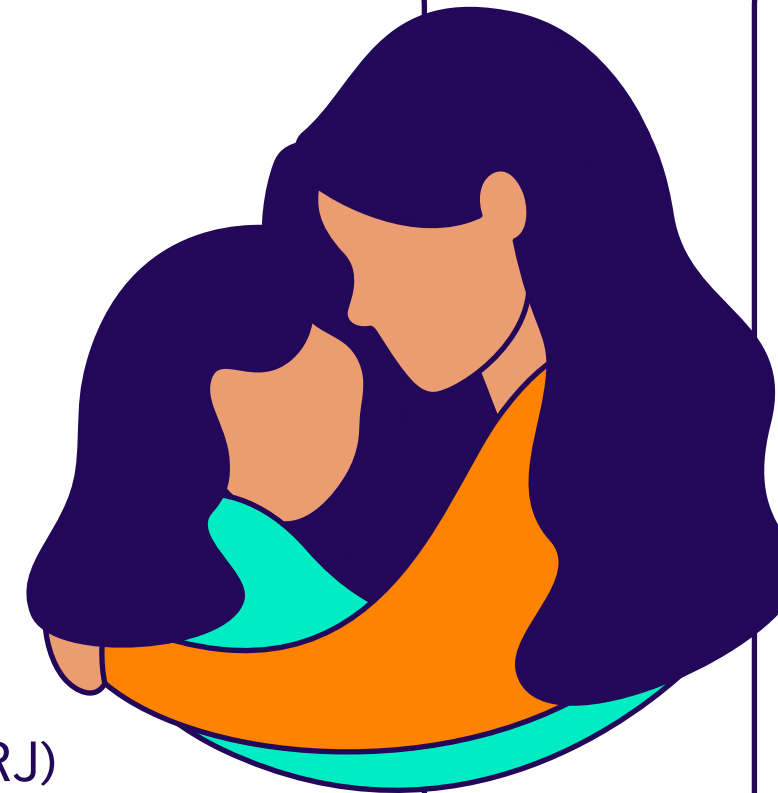
What family members say



Integrity

Izabelle is very involved and passionate about rugby. Before rugby, she did ballet, which requires discipline and concentration, then swimming, which builds resistance. Now, in rugby, she is learning teamwork. My daughter is showing improvements in her behavior, socializing and in controlling anxiety.

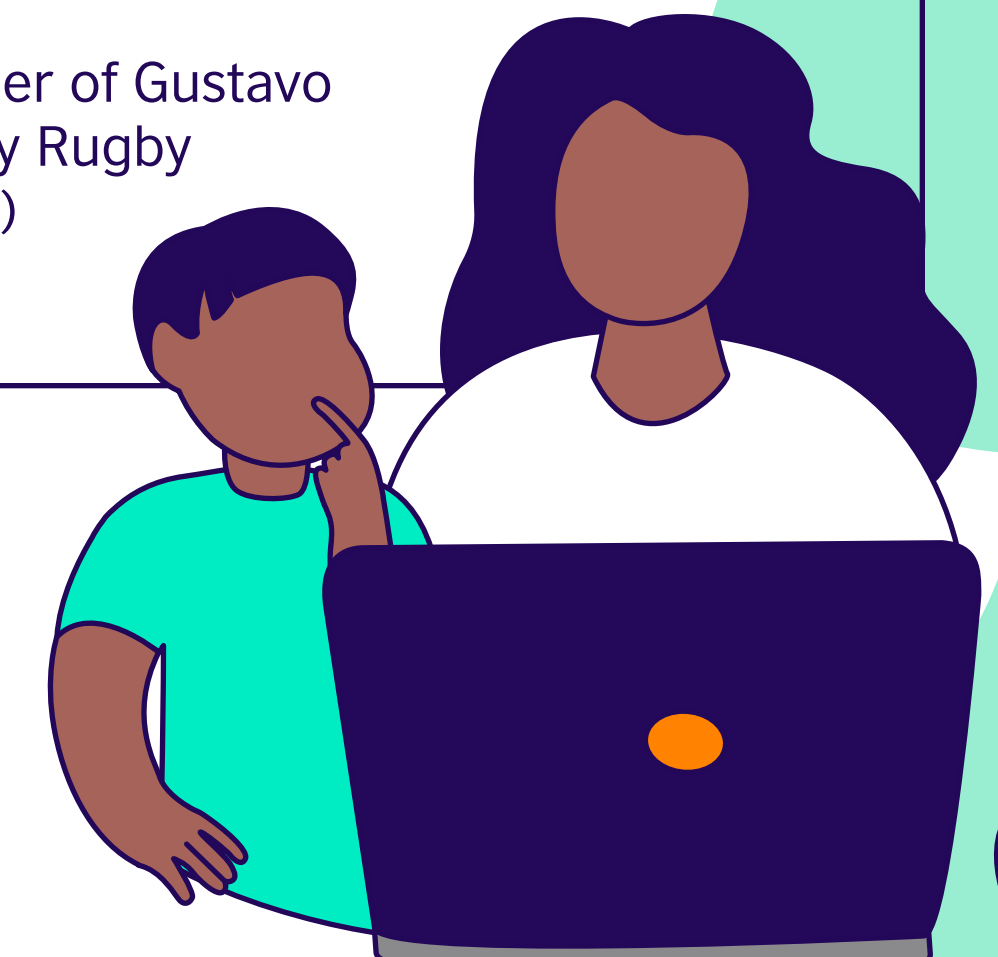
Carla, mother of Izabelle Nicole Aguiar de Lima, Try Rugby Nova Iguaçu (RJ)



Discipline

My son became more responsible and disciplined with school work and also with housework. When he heard about the project, he signed up right away. He was sure it was going to be a good project. Gustavo was happy to have participated in something so different. His personality really matured. I hope that the project teachings continue to benefit young people.

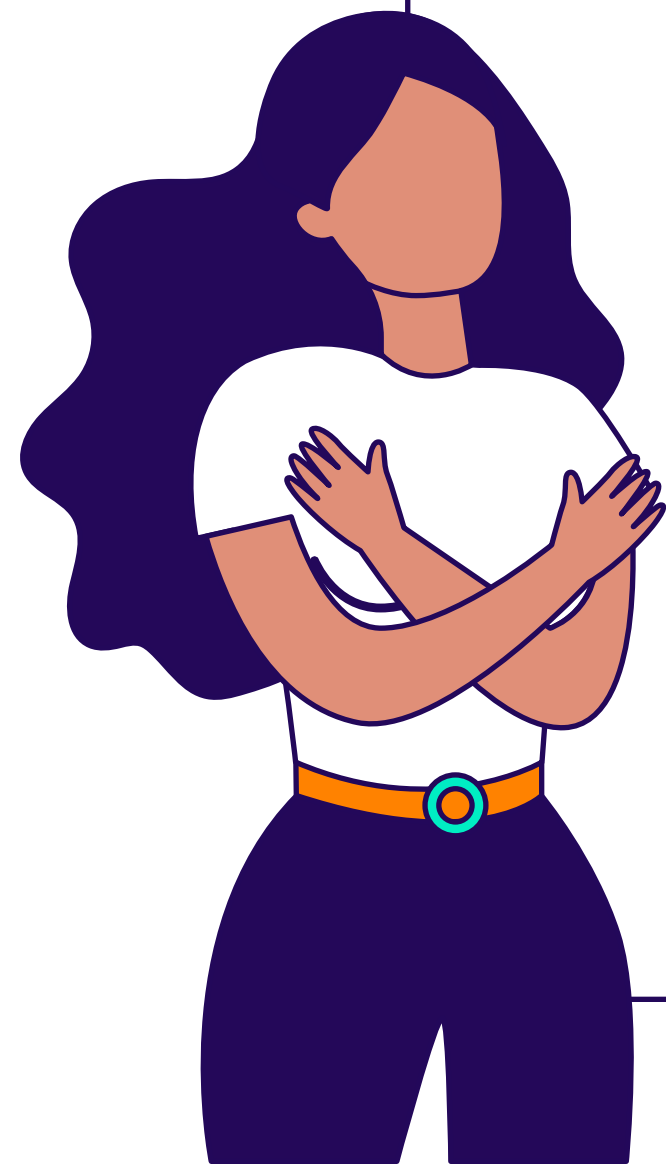
Ermelinda, mother of Gustavo Vianna Dória, Try Rugby Nova Iguaçu (RJ)



Socializing

Before rugby, she and I were in a difficult moment, with a lot of losses in the family. Her brother got married and moved away. Try Rugby was an excellent refuge. Her social relations improved significantly. She really matured. Alice started to have more friends and overcame her fear of being alone. She traveled with the rugby team to compete in tournaments and that was very good for her. She's also more responsible and organized.

Mariangela, mother of Alice Maximo Rezende - Try Rugby Resende (RJ)



Lives that change with rugby

“Rugby changed my life. It’s all about discipline and respect.”

Football, volleyball and handball have always been part of the lives of most students in SESI schools, partners of the Try Rugby project, and in the communities served. One of the initial missions of the project was to make the new sport as familiar as other sports. More than that, the idea was to make rugby a part of the daily lives of young people- a task that proved to be quite complex. It was necessary to try something new!

There are similarities, but there are also many differences between rugby and the sports mentioned above. In addition to developing physical and technical skills on the pitch - strength, thrust, throws - it is essential to recognize that rugby is a strategic and team sport. In rugby, players have to develop problem-solving skills.



“I have always liked sport, but I’ve never experienced such a united and strategic sport. I started playing in 2012, with coach Alex. Right at the beginning, I realized that my behavior had changed. I developed self-discipline. Before this, I had always fooled around during classes. I became the school’s sports representative, and this changed everything. It taught me a lot about discipline and respect,” says Fernando Scatena, participant in the Try Rugby project at Sesi Votorantim (SP).

Similarities between the game and life

Try Rugby project participants felt welcome from the very beginning. After all, the sport evokes positive feelings, intensifying the perception of opportunities to develop social relations.

In rugby, teams use strategy to win, leading to quick thinking. For the team to work, communication has to be clear and precise. Thus, participants need to become more communicative. Over time, participants find it easier to delegate and commit to tasks on and off the pitch.

“

Rugby helped me to develop a more assertive attitude. One has to tell the team to take their positions, to move forward. One has to be a true leader, speaking and doing, not only delegating, but also listening to others. These are essential skills for life, for social interaction,” according to Anne Caroline, also from Votorantim (SP).



Check out other stories from the show on our [Youtube channel](#).

Everyone matters

In rugby, everyone has the opportunity to tackle an opponent with the ball at the last minute, or to score a try - to score a goal. This is what the participants said in a collective conversation. Whether the person is tall, short, thin or muscular, each position is equally important, with equal opportunities in the game, which leads to cooperation with a passion.



The impact of the partnership with FIESP

Rugby can be a powerful tool in education, as well as an important tool for social integration and inclusion. This is what Eduardo Augusto Carreiro, educational manager at Fiesp / Sesi in São Paulo (SP), believes. The proof of this can be seen in the improvement of academic performance among student participating in the sport. For educators, Try Rugby transcends good practices in socializing and the cultural

exchange between coaches, students and the community.

The Try Rugby project brought English coaches to Brazil, who were assigned to SESI schools across the state of São Paulo. According to Eduardo, students were immediately interested in the project. The exchange was also beneficial for Physical Education professionals, who received training from high-performance coaches.



My director at the time Alexandre Pflug (now SESI superintendent) and I were the main program managers. We mobilized more than 12,000 students. Teachers enjoyed the experience, and the students even more. The project went beyond the pitch and reached the community through different social actions,” Eduardo Carreiro recalls.

The values of rugby - passion, respect, solidarity, discipline, integrity and social interaction, among others - were internalized by all the participants, according to Eduardo. It was a fundamental lesson for developing a sense of belonging and collaboration.



It was an excellent tool for a cultural and sport exchange. A well-organized action with great partners. It provided opportunities for thousands of children and young people. I hope the participants enjoyed each experience, each moment of the exchange with the coaches, each trip. We learned a lot from the whole process,” he concludes.

Evolving students

Some coaches were given the task of interviewing the participants in person. In RS, Jim Crick had a community experience with 25 children between 12 and 14. During the interviews, the children described how rugby had made their lives better.

The introduction to rugby was a very positive experiment, according to the coach. Participants developed positive relationships between themselves and developed a passion for physical activities, and cognitive functions in the game helped students improve school performance.



They said that they became stronger, fitter and more agile with rugby and that, in turn, this helped them with the strenuous activities of everyday life. Then they spoke about changes in behavior, their confidence in their abilities to try new things, on and off the pitch,” Jim Crick explains.



[Photo source](#)



The children said that they cooperated more with each other after starting in the program. Skills such as delegating or committing to a task became easy to understand,” he says.

The transformation that Try Rugby brought to British coaches



Gary Ayres was just 21 years old when he left England for Brazil to join the team of coaches in the Try Rugby project. At first, he was unsure whether to become a professional rugby coach or not. Nevertheless, he stayed in the country for four years - working in the states of SC, RJ and SP - and he developed significantly during this period. We asked Gary to talk about his experiences and maturing in Brazil.

After these 4 years, working in different states, can you talk about the diversity of Brazil and its relationship with rugby?
[Gary] I lived in Santa Catarina. Sports and clubs were a little better known in the state. It was different from Rio and São Paulo, for example. Obviously, football is the most popular sport in the country, but I was happy that in SC there was already some recognition. São Paulo is the rugby capital of the country,

with a number of teams, the best in the country. In RJ, hardly anyone knew the sport. They thought I was playing American football because of the oval-shaped ball. It was great! The cariocas are calm, more relaxed, and they like to play on the beach and socialize. Although rugby here is a little different than it is in England, the values are the same.

How would you describe the respect for LGBT rugby players?

I was openly accepted in all states. Rugby values continue to prevail. I saw other LGBT athletes also accepted. While on the field, the player is even more respected and any differences are forgotten.

How important was the project for your career when you returned to the UK?

My experience in Brazil was very important for my career. I was 21 and didn't really know what I wanted to do. I was a rugby coach, but I had no experience with

youth or adolescents in situations of social vulnerability. However, I wasn't sure if I would pursue this career. In four years in Brazil, I developed professionally. When I got back to the UK, I got a position on the Leicester Tigers main team. After that, I got a job on Britain's Paralympic rugby team, where I still work today. No doubt, Brazil has given me confidence to be a coach and I am very grateful.

How important is Try Rugby for the development of young British coaches?

Most of the coaches who went to Brazil were 21 years old. It was essential to absorb the experience with different cultures of the participants. The experiment allowed us to think about adapting to contexts, how to teach. Everyone went back better prepared to deal with diversity.

How easy- or difficult- is it for Brazilian teachers and participants to understand the values of rugby?

It was difficult. The 5 values of rugby are: respect, discipline, integrity, solidarity and passion. For the English, this is internalized in sport. It is normal for us to respect the referee's decision. In Brazilian football culture, for example, referees are not always respected- rather, they're almost always disrespected. We see rugby as a contact sport, but not a sport with fights. Sometimes children would fight or curse when they were tackled. So, it took time at first, but they soon assimilated the rules and values. The change affected their personalities and they became more respectful on and off the pitch. This was a great victory for us and for them.



Try Rugby in numbers



Funds raised

2014 - R\$ 571.200
2015 - R\$ 439.460
2016 - R\$ 198.000
2017 - R\$ 700.000
2018 - R\$ 250.000

Total

R\$ 2.158.660

Coaches

20+

**Total number
of people
involved in
regular and
occasional
activities**



People participating in occasional activities

70,000+

Participants

15,000+



Teachers trained

400+



Acknowledgements

The Try Rugby Brasil project would not have been possible without the support of the partners below.

