



Marielle Schweickart

Learn Director at Women Win



Inclusion Beyond Representation

Women Win

October 2024

GRLS

Proudly empowered by

Women Win

Women Win

The work we do

Women Win is a global multi-dimensional women's fund guided by the vision of a future where every girl and woman exercises their rights.

Women Win distributes its programmatic work across three "sister brands". While the three brands serve WW's overall vision, each has its unique mission.

GRLS continues the original work of Women Win, promoting women's rights through sport.

The GRLS mission is to advance the playing field that progresses gender equity in and through sports and play by contributing to individual, institutional and systemic change.



Beyond Representation

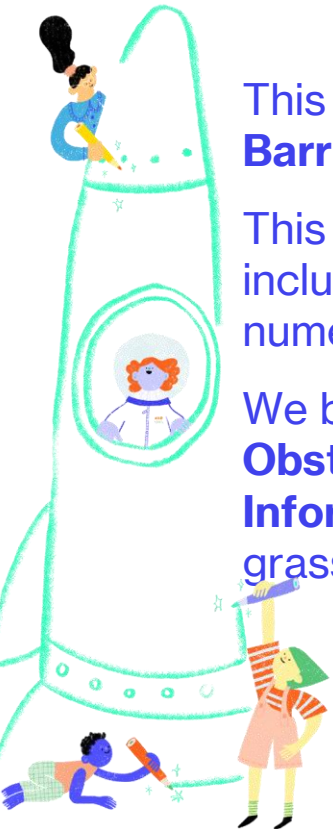
EXPLORING COMPREHENSIVE GENDER-INCLUSIVE APPROACHES TO ELEVATE WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

adidas Breaking Barriers research available online: <https://www.breakingbarriersacademy.com/breakingbarriers-research>

This research was developed by Women Win, the lead author partner, as part of the **adidas Breaking Barriers project**, in collaboration with Common Goal, and 17 Sport.

This research explores how stakeholders in the professional sports sector can implement gender-inclusive policies and practices that foster a genuinely inclusive environment for women, moving beyond numerical parity and representation.

We build on our previous two research papers, as part of the adidas Breaking Barriers projects: **(1) More Obstacles than Achievements** and **(2) Empowering Her Game: Exploring the Importance of Gender-Informed Coaching**, both of which explored the barriers to sports faced by women and girls on a grassroots level.



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research set out to delineate and bring to life:

- the range of **policies and practices** that sports organizations can enact to encourage and enable gender inclusion, and
- provide **practical and actionable insights** that equip the sports industry with a better understanding of how to move beyond a numerical representation approach and achieve greater gender inclusion.


METHODOLOGY

- **Literature review** of 10+ policies/practices
- **15 Expert interviews**
- **Survey** with 4500+ people, age 18-65 across 6 European countries



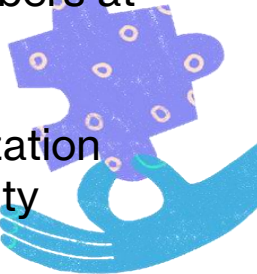


REPRESENTATION



Representation can be **quantified** and **measured**, such as the percentage of women board members at an organization.

Through the lens of representation, an organization may be able to easily achieve its gender equality targets – but women might still feel excluded, disadvantaged, or perceive these efforts to be tokenistic.



adidas Breaking Barriers research available online:
<https://www.breakingbarriersacademy.com/breakingbarriers-research>

VS. INCLUSION



Inclusion is a **human-centric, relational concept**. It involves a sense of belonging, trust, and fair treatment.

On the surface, inclusion may be less visible or tangible – but it is imperative for the sustainability of women's sport and the long-term support for women playing and working in the sector.



GRLS. Proudly empowered by Women Win.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR A MORE GENDER-INCLUSIVE SPORTS SECTOR



Addressing women's unique needs

- taking a comprehensive approach to women's safety and wellbeing in the workplace.



Embedding gender-sensitive safeguarding practices

- creating safer spaces where women can thrive.



Advancing career and leadership opportunities for women

- providing further career opportunities for women in sports by creating tangible and transparent leadership and development pathways.



Ensuring inclusive media coverage and visibility

- enhancing visibility to foster greater engagement in women's sports and inspiring the next generation to participate in sports.



Equalizing investment, pay, and prize money

- leveling the playing field financially between women and men by equalizing investment, pay, and prize money.



ADDRESSING WOMEN'S UNIQUE NEEDS

OPPORTUNITY AREA #1



adidas Breaking Barriers research available online: <https://www.breakingbarriersacademy.com/breakingbarriers-research>

Work-Life-Health Management

- **Menstrual leave and care policies:** concrete examples of actions include providing free access to menstrual products and involving athletes and staff who menstruate in the development and review of menstrual leave policies.
- **Pregnancy and comprehensive family leave policies:** concrete examples of actions include developing paternity policies and allowing for flexible working arrangements.
- **Good practice example:** FIFA's latest regulations to further protect women players and coaches.

Performance

- **Investing in research** dedicated to women's sports and/or considering incorporating research findings into existing practices.
- **Customizing athletic gear** to be designed specifically for women. **Good practice examples:** Saysh, Ida Sport.
- **Taking a gender-informed approach** to coaching by adapting methods to suit women athletes' physiological and psychological profiles and promoting a more supportive and effective training environment.

GRLS. Proudly empowered by Women Win.

EMBEDDING GENDER-SENSITIVE SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES

OPPORTUNITY AREA #2

- **Provide mandatory training** for all staff, coaches, and volunteers on safeguarding practices and gender sensitivity, as well as preventing, recognizing, and responding to signs of abuse.
- **Appoint trained safeguarding officers** with expertise in gender issues who are responsible for handling complaints and ensuring the implementation of safeguarding policies.
- **Implement safer space policies** by ensuring that accommodations, travel arrangements, and training environments are safer, appropriate, and in agreement with participants.
- **Collaborate with other organizations and experts** specializing in gender-based violence and gender-sensitive, trauma-informed safeguarding to develop and refine policies and training programs.



ADVANCING CAREER AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITY AREA #3

- **Develop mentoring programs** to cultivate learning experiences, offering women guidance and affirmations as they navigate the sector to help them realize their value and capabilities.
- **Cultivate women's networks** to create solidarity and strength in numbers, enhancing visibility within and across organizational structures so women can broaden their horizons, share best practices, and create their own networks of influence
- **Make a wider range of roles and opportunities visible and accessible for women**, encouraging them to consider the range of roles within sports. Examples may include: recruiting retired athletes to explore job opportunities within their clubs or federations, posting open positions on women's networks first, or using gender-inclusive language in job descriptions.



ENSURING INCLUSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE AND VISIBILITY

OPPORTUNITY AREA #4

Only about **15%** of all sports coverage across Europe is given to women (European Parliament, 2024).

Representation in media contributes toward inclusion by elevating the status of women athletes, improving the likelihood of women's sports generating increased income, and working to strengthen women's sports for the future.

45% of men, and **49%** of women in Europe believe that having a gender-inclusive sports environment would increase their interest in the sport.

Our survey demonstrates that respondents from both **Spain** and the **UK**, specifically **millennials**, perceive **higher** levels of gender inclusion in professional sports compared to respondents in other European countries.



EQUALIZING INVESTMENT, PAY, AND PRIZE MONEY

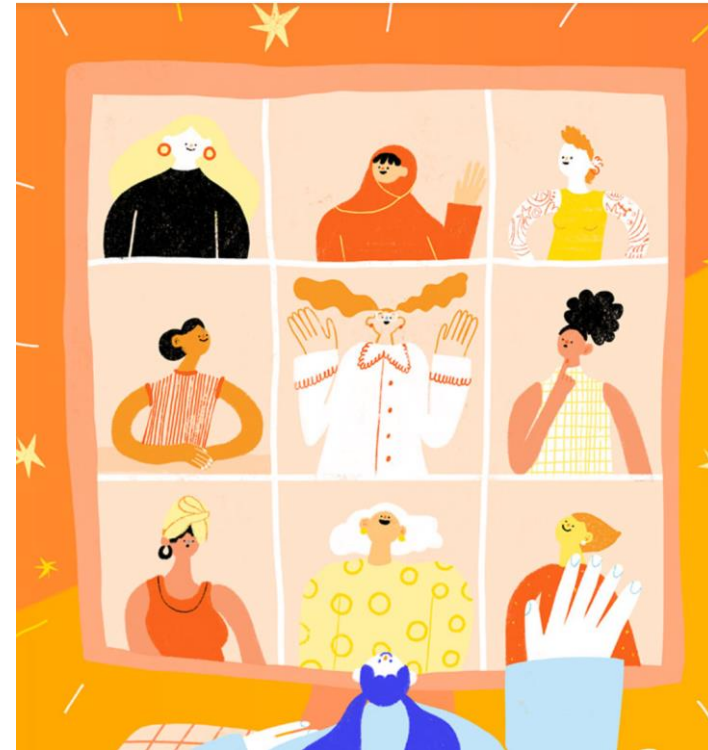
OPPORTUNITY AREA #5

- **Close the gender gap with pay and prize money.**
A good practice example: Since all major grand slam prize money was equalized in 2007, **9 of the 10** most highly paid women in sports are tennis players.
- **Leverage women's successes in sport to drive further investment.** Organizations can also play a role in supporting athletes to establish their own platforms, further leveraging interest to diversify their income sources and improving their own pay through better contracts, endorsements, and sponsorships.



MORE RESOURCES

Download the full
adidas Breaking
Barriers Research
Paper:



playground.womenwin.org

Women Win

2024



Proudly empowered by

