



Monitoring Gender Based Violence against Women and Girls in Sport

The Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport Calls for Data and Collaboration

CSW 69/Beijing+30, New York, 18 March 2025

The Global Observatory collaborated with the Rachael Kundananji Foundation to develop and deliver a side event at the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) on 18 March in New York at Open Society Foundation Headquarters in New York. CSW69 also marked the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) a landmark moment at which the Global Observatory highlighted its role as a convenor of expertise and knowledge connector. The Global Observatory presented a statement to call for action for gender data on GBV and launched the project developing a [Directory of Knowledge Institutions and Initiatives on GBV and Sport](#).

About the Global Observatory

Distinguished convenors, speakers and delegates, the Global Observatory for Gender Equality and Sport ([Global Observatory](#))^[1] is a global convenor and repository of research and expertise on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in and through physical education, physical activity and sport (PEPAS). Building on the existing gender and sport movements across the world, we are dedicated to closing knowledge gaps and enabling actors to overcome global and systemic inequalities and inequities to advance the rights, health and empowerment of girls and women in all their diversity in and through PEPAS.

GBV Persists in Sport

Sport is recognised as a method and platform for achieving gender equality and fulfilling the rights of women and girls including the right to health, leadership and public participation. However, Gender Based Violence and Violence against Women and Girls contributes to the sustained exclusion of women and girls from participation and progression in areas of sport including leadership, visibility, and in professional occupations as athletes, officials, and entrepreneurship within sport ecosystems.

Institutional cultures in sport bodies facilitate power abuse and violation of the rights of those who are subjected to violence. In relationships with asymmetrical power dynamics such as between coaches and athletes^[2], abuse may be cultivated by a culture of fear^[3], silence and failure to apply policies even where they exist.

Conditions that enable harm such as systemic poverty, autocratic governance cultures, and gender inequality contribute to institutional and interpersonal violence against women and girls in sport. Inconsistent adoption and application of human rights protection mechanisms such as

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child protection and labour laws provide conditions for violence against women and abuse of girls in form of economic exploitation, neglect, and sexual abuse.

Limited resources and preparedness expose women and girls in sport to violence. The limitations in policy coherence and cross-sector coordination, leaves the sports field behind when states implement mechanisms that are aimed at other sectors such as education, justice, or media. This results in insufficient linkage to prevention and response mechanisms when violence against women and girls in sport occurs for instance in digital media spaces.

There is an urgent need to ensure that women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible, acceptable, and quality essential services including for long term recovery from violence.

Data and Stakeholder Cooperation for Action

Distinguished convenors, speakers and delegates; it is critical that quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices, collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes. However, gaps in research and data persist. Available data on women's and girls' participation in sport mostly focus on developed countries or elite athletes. The existing data do not show much about the intersection between gender and race discrimination in sport, global and local resource inequities and exclusionary community practices. However, some scholarship is beginning to address these issues.

Further gaps include; the limits in the types of data, low variety in methodologies, limitations in diversity of research disciplines, scope and topics covered, intersectional analyses, research resources and challenges with uptake of evidence in policy and practices. Initiatives such as the Global Observatory and UNESCO Fit for Life Alliance, which the GO is a member, illustrate the value of collaborative work to drive shared indicators and measurement frameworks, to mobilise collective data, expertise, and accessible tools on gender-based violence and violence against women to empower policy makers and practitioners to take action.

Call to Action

Distinguished convenors, speakers and delegates, we call on all state and non-state stakeholders to commit to collecting data to monitor and publicly report progress on an annual basis on;

- The status on gender-based violence including prevalence, incidence, experiences, and trends in sport;
- Legal, social, psychosocial, and financial mechanisms in place to address gender-based violence in sport;
- Resources allocated and deployed to enable capacity for prevention, response, and remedy of gender-based violence in sport;
- Media portrayal and coverage of gender-based violence in sport;
- Inclusion of sport in national cross-sector coordination mechanisms addressing gender-based violence

We call on research institutions, researchers, and research agencies to adequately and expediently provide adequate resources to enable the implementation of data governance frameworks and initiatives across the world that are inclusive of the sport setting and account for gender inequalities;

We call on governments through their national data mechanisms such as census and demographic surveys, and gender-based violence surveys among others to integrate indicators and data points relevant to addressing gender-based violence in sport;

We call for recognition of the varying contexts, the differences in methodologies and in data needs of various stakeholders. This requires a shift towards global frameworks and approaches that are informed by intersectional analyses, leadership and input of a diversity of scholars, practitioners, and policy makers.

GO Contribution: Resources to Facilitate Coordination

To encourage and to facilitate cooperation, we have initiated an initiative to document and share information about Knowledge Institutions and Initiatives that are working on the subject of Gender Based Violence in Sport. Although much work is being done on GBV broadly, and in sport, the various organisations and researchers are disconnected and operating in silos. With this initiative we aim to support connection, knowledge exchange, and sharing of good practice. We are pleased to launch here today, the [Global Observatory Directory on GBV Knowledge Institutions](#). We have opened the submission form and invited you to share your input in order to populate this resource and make it meaningful.

Dear convenors and delegates, we call for research engagement that incorporates insights and views and methods from across the world to reflect the diversity of girls and women around the world and their realities. We further offer a contribution of a proposed [Research Agenda on GBV in Sport](#) to support inquiry that can offer valuable insights for policy makers and practitioners to address Gender Based Violence in Sport. We call on governments and non-state actors to collaborate towards coherent global data that is implemented with an ethic of open sharing and learning to break down the barriers that limit access to data and relevant research insights that governments need at different stages of their policy making, implementation, and monitoring.

References

^[1] Global Observatory for Women, Sport, Physical Education and Physical Activity

^[2] Kerr, G., Willson, E., & Stirling, A. (2019). Prevalence of maltreatment among current and former national team athletes (pp. 1–51). Retrieved from https://athletescan.com/sites/default/files/images/prevalence_of_maltreatment_reporteng.pdf

^[3] Owton, H., & Sparkes, A. C. (2017). Sexual abuse and the grooming process in sport: Learning from Bella's story. *Sport, Education and Society*, 22(6), 732–743. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2015.1063484>
Global Observatory [Directory of Knowledge Institutions and Initiatives on GBV and Sport](#)

Author:

Lombe Mwambwa, PhD,
Research Director, Global Observatory for Gender Equality & Sport
info@genderequalitysport.org