

# *EQUALCAREERS*

## *Women's Leadership Programme Impact Report Summary*

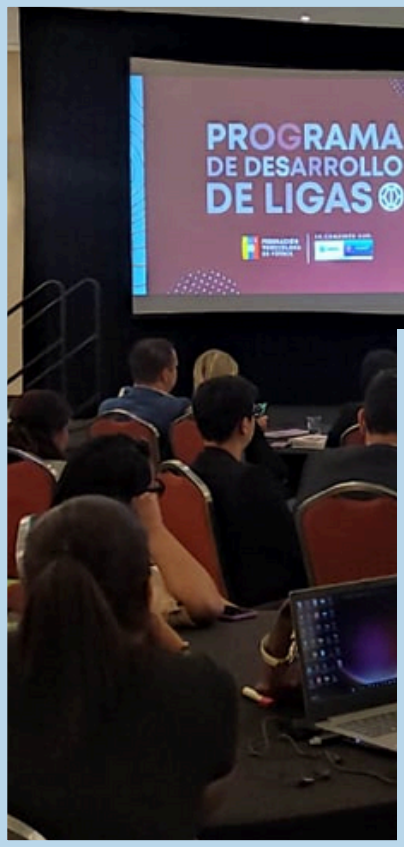
Leadership Readiness



Leadership Opportunity



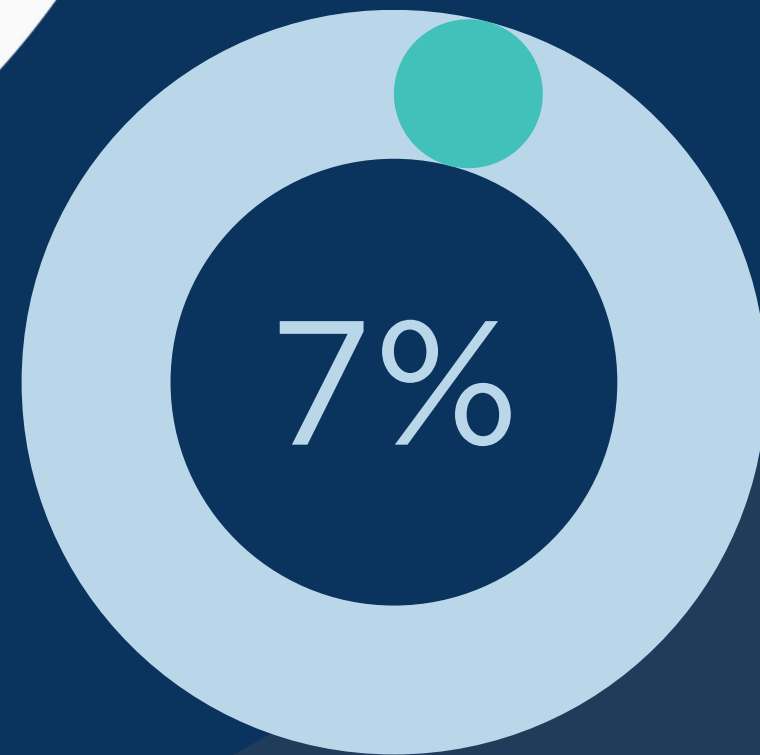
# EQUALCAREERS: WHO WE ARE AND OUR STORY



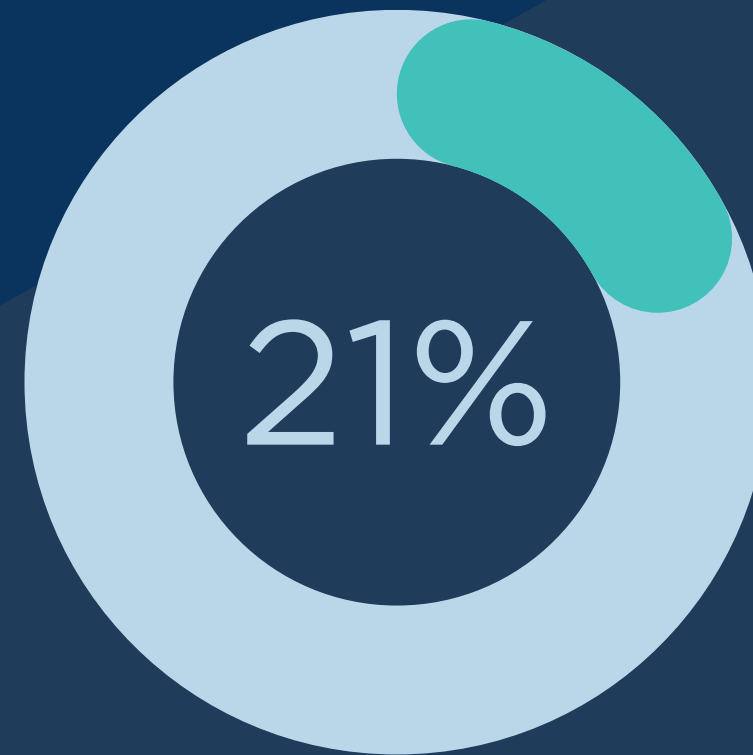
# THE BASELINE PROBLEM



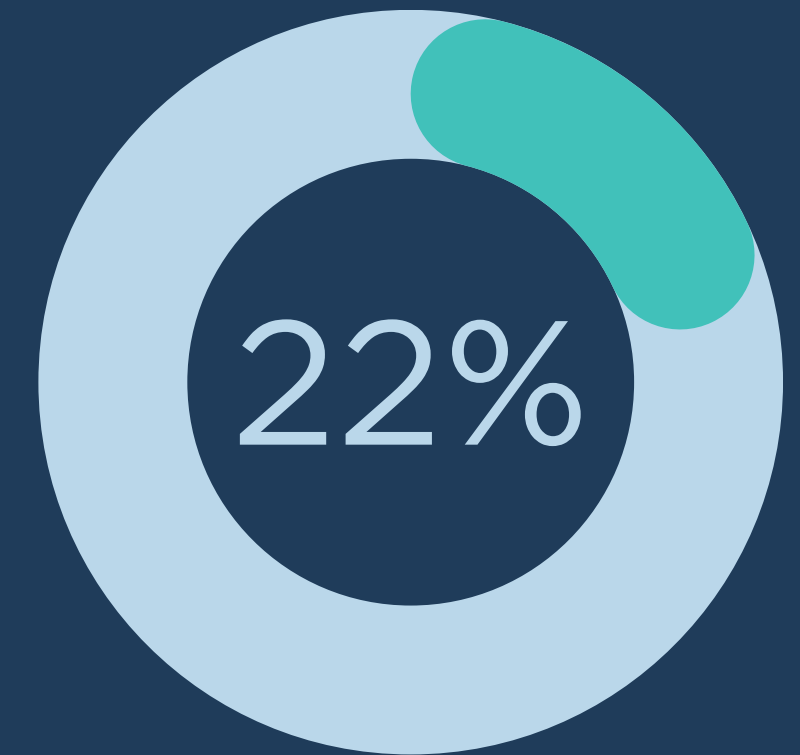
The global state of female representation in leadership positions within International Olympic and Paralympic sports organisations remains too low



Female presidents  
or chairs



Female CEOs or  
secretary generals



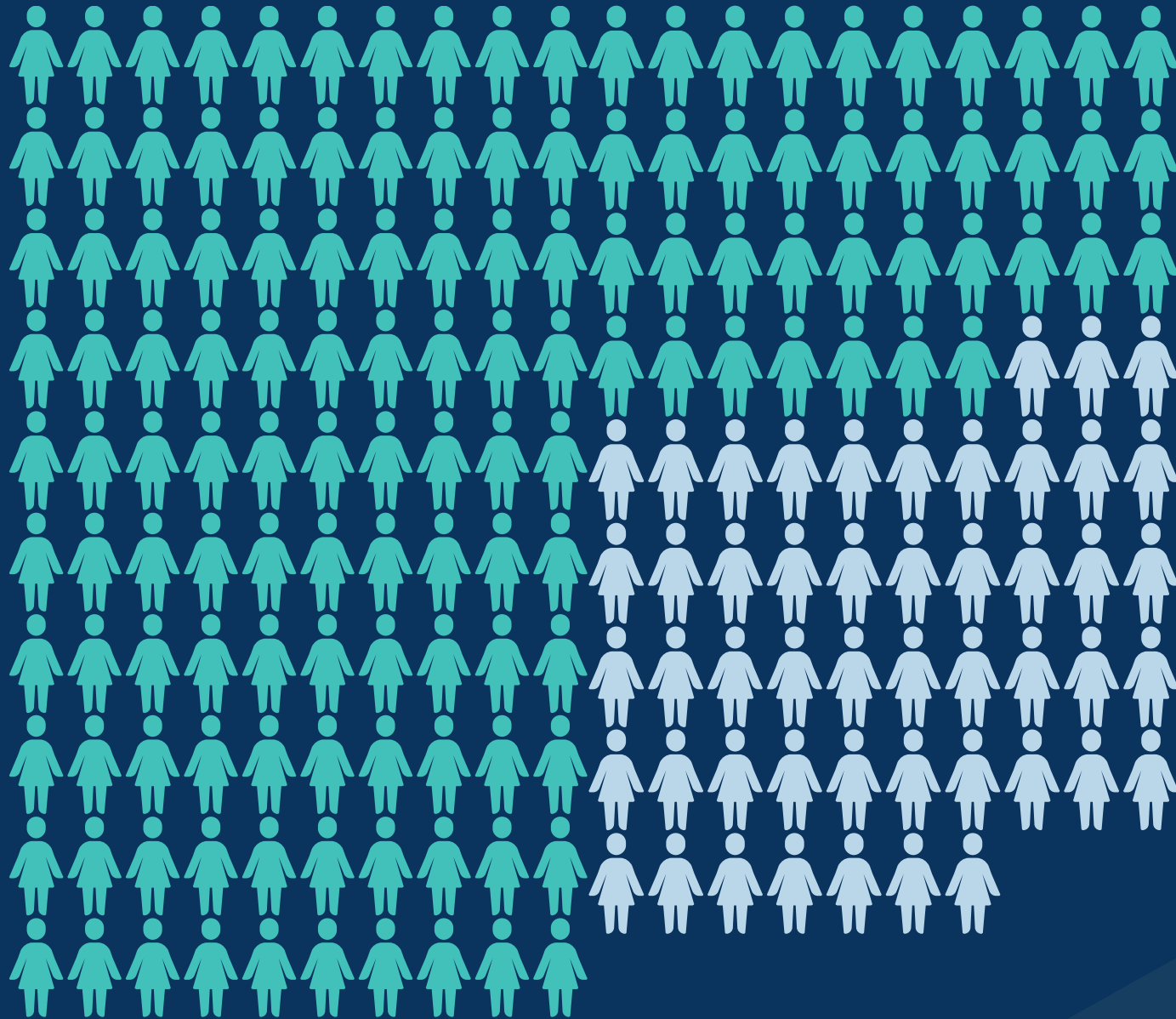
Females on boards  
or executives  
committees

(Matthews & Piggott, 2021)

- Surveyed **187** graduate participants with **73%** response rate.

- A strong, representative data set ensures insights are **credible** and globally relevant with responses from **69** countries and participants represented over **100** international and national federations.
- Participants came from diverse roles: senior administrators, technical, elected officials and athlete to leader pathways

- Data from **3** cohorts:
  - online
  - hybrid
  - in-person
- Mixed-methods: **qualitative + quantitative.**



# REGIONAL ANALYSIS



**National federations** were **less likely to promote** or elect graduates. Participants from national federations cited **organisational culture and resistance to change** as major barriers to progression

Participants from **international federations** had a **higher** number of programme graduates stepping into leadership roles than **national federations**

Participants from **North America and Europe** saw the highest career progression

Participants in **Asia & South America** were most likely to report **bias and harassment** "Often" or "Very Often."

Participants from **Africa, Asia and Latin America** faced systematic leadership barriers

Opportunity is not distributed equally: a story of geography, governance level and culture determines how and how high women systematically rise.

# ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE SETS THE CEILING



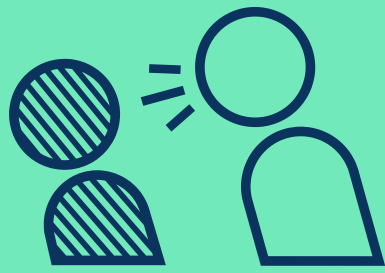
## Explicit organisational cultural bias

**61%** of participants reported experiencing bias or exclusion even after attending the programme

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## Harassment

**62%** of participants reported experiencing some form of harassment in their professional career



# Organisational Culture and Barriers



Participants without harassment rated the programme's effectiveness at **73%**, while those with high harassment exposure rate it at **54%**, showing a **19% variable**

**91%** of participants who were exposed to harassment or bias still pursued leadership roles but only **32%** of them succeeded compared to **54%** success rate of those who have never been exposed to bias or harassment showing a **22% variable**

This is where ambition meets the ceiling.

# WHERE RESISTANCE CONCENTRATES



## INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS

- *Higher promotion rates for programme graduates*
- *More progressive governance structures*



## NATIONAL FEDERATIONS

- *Lower promotion rates*
- *Culture cited as primary barrier*
- *Recognised as the key bottleneck*

***What this signifies:*** National federations serve as the ***critical juncture where change is most necessary.***

# Mentorship & Sponsorship

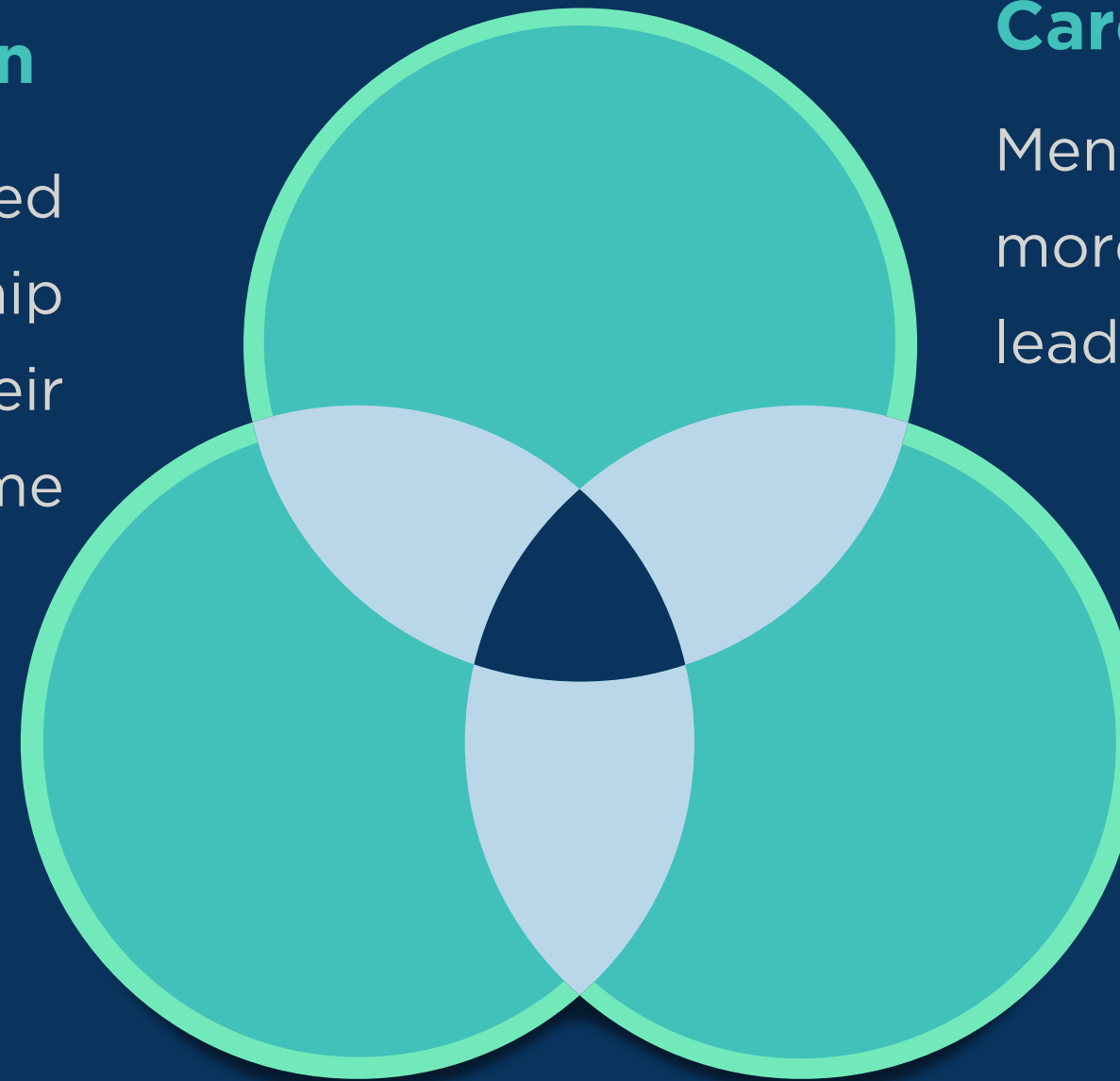


## Career Progression

**75%** of participants who received mentoring before the leadership programme made progress in their careers post the programme

## Career Impact

Mentored participants were **12%** more likely to progress into leadership positions



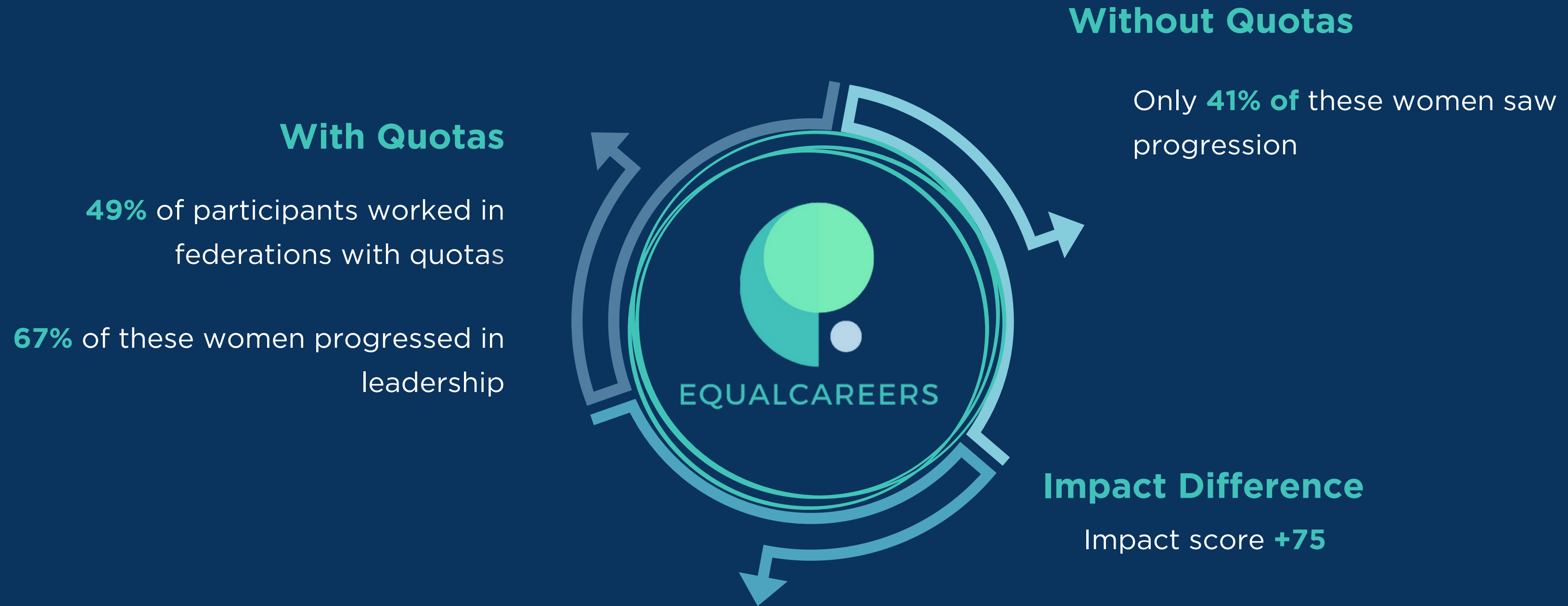
## Received Support

However, only **33%** received mentoring or sponsorship after the programme

### What it means

- Mentorship programmes tended to be adhoc and mainly based on goodwill
- Mentorship wasn't structured, offered at scale and only benefited the lucky few

# QUOTAS AND LEADERSHIP PROGRESSION



## What it means

- **Quotas** help to break the **first barriers** when backed by political will and structural reform
- Poor implementation issues or tokenism erodes their power
- Women reported **influence** issues and **contribution quality** issues

# DOES EXTERNAL EXPERIENCE IMPACT LEADERSHIP PURSUIT AND SUCCESS?

Participants **with professional** roles outside of sport were

- +20%** more likely to pursue leadership roles
- +21%** more likely to succeed in their application

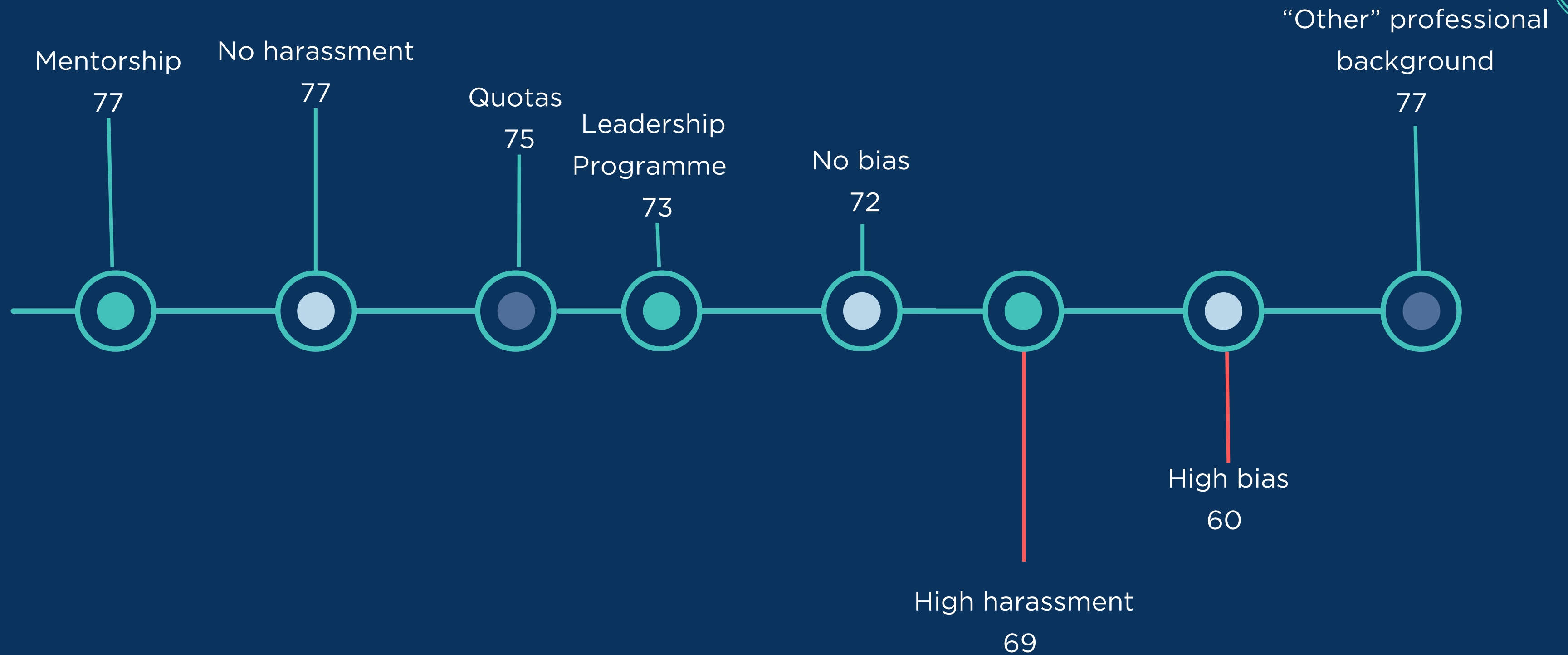
Participants **without** other external roles, said their **top barriers**:

- Lack of confidence (**45%**)
- Organisational Culture (**39%**)

Cross-sector experience **unlocks ambition** and **results**

Sports-specific **cultures may limit both**

# IMPACT SCORES



**Culture sets the limit** -biased systems keep boardroom doors closed

# THE ANSWER

We measured impact, scalability and political feasibility.

We pressure tested all levers against one simple question:

*Which combination can deliver real, lasting change at scale?*



“ —

*Stop assuming leadership readiness equals leadership opportunity*

— ”

“

*Equity in sport leadership isn't about simply handing women the **keys** to boardroom doors through leadership programmes or other established levers. These things are important but they're only half the story.*

*It takes more, and often more uncomfortable, affirmative action. True change comes when organisations work with women but also remove the cultural, structural, and policy **locks** women never created, and when they do, we strengthen the entire system*

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