

Chapter 8

Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls (SDG 5)

8.1 Introduction

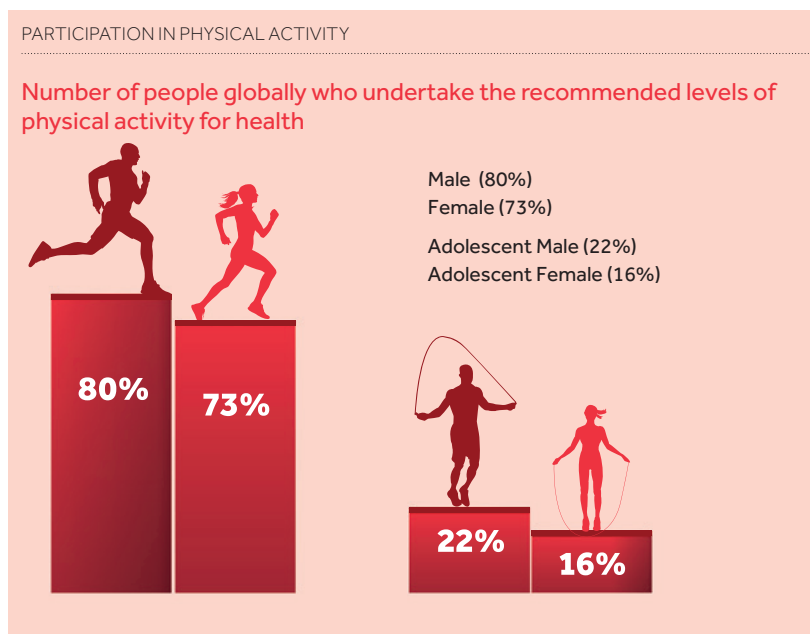
Gender equality is central to the core values and principles of the Commonwealth and to the achievement of sustainable development. In its own right, SDG 5 specifically recognises the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Gender issues are also more broadly acknowledged throughout the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* with particular targets related to women and girls included across a number of goals, including those for SDGs 4, 8, 11 and 16 that are considered in this guide.

Gender equality and empowerment have been a common focus of sport and development policies, including the *Commonwealth Guide to Advancing Development through Sport* (Kay and Dudfield 2013) and the *Declaration of Berlin* (UNESCO 2013), and have been central to specific sport-based initiatives in many countries. However, associated with SDG target 5.1, there remains a significant need to address the gender inequalities evident in sport. It is widely and internationally recognised that gender inequalities in sport participation begin in childhood (Bailey *et al.* 2004; Saavedra 2009; Jeanes *et al.* 2016) and are replicated in global statistics that show that young and adult females are less likely, by six and seven percentage points, respectively, to meet recommended levels of physical activity (WHO 2014) (see Figure 8.1).

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The relevance of SDG target 5.5, ensuring opportunities for female leadership and decision making, is also demonstrated through globally collected data that show that women are significantly under-represented in national and international leadership roles in sport (Women on Boards 2016). Nevertheless, initiatives that are well designed and targeted can also contribute to this target through facilitating the empowerment of specific groups of women. Such initiatives

Figure 8.1 Inequalities in sport and physical education: Participation in physical activity



Source: WHO (2014)

can also contribute to SDG targets 5.2 and 5.3, which prioritise the elimination of all forms of violence and harmful practices against women and girls. A similar balance must again be employed with vigilance and action to prevent and address such problems where they occur within sport.

Box 8.1 Enhancing the contribution of sport to Sustainable Development Goal 5: Key policy implications

- Priority should be given to addressing gender equality and empowering girls and women, both within and through sport, to contribute to SDG 5.
- Mainstreaming requires the application of a gender-sensitive approach across all policy stages, including formulation, resource allocation, implementation and evaluation.
- Multiple stakeholders need to be engaged to contribute collectively to gender equality across all levels of sport and to integrate approaches across different sectors.
- Recognition of socio-cultural gender norms and their association with sport should inform both scaled and specifically targeted approaches.
- Sport-based approaches can and must engage boys and men in addressing gender equality in and through sport.

8.2 Analysis of sport and specific SDG targets

Target 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

Deeply symbiotic relationships exist between discrimination against girls and women within different societies and the reproduction of inequalities within the context of sport. These relationships present significant opportunities and challenges for sport and development. Enhancing equality and equity for girls and women within sport can challenge broader discriminatory norms (Shehu 2010) and, in so doing, strengthen all efforts towards SDG 5. On the other hand, negative stereotypes of girls and women that exist within sport can continue to reinforce embedded cultural values and gender discrimination. Girls' and women's involvement in sport is similarly framed and influenced by structured inequalities that may have both universal and context-specific dimensions (Saavedra 2009).

Policy development must, therefore, be undertaken in full cognisance of broader discrimination against girls and women, and also be sensitive to context-specific influences on their involvement in sport. Addressing discrimination against women benefits from harnessing the potential of complementarities within and beyond sport. Efforts that involve different stakeholders to improve gender equality at all levels of sport can be mutually reinforcing. Equally, significant improvements can be realised within sport through alignment with wider gender policies and by drawing on the expertise of government departments and other agencies responsible for women's affairs and gender equality. Addressing the societal and structural change required to address all forms of discrimination against girls and women is, however, a long-term process, and so sport-related policy aspirations must be realistically framed (United Nations 2007).

Addressing discrimination against women and girls in sport requires balanced policy approaches that both embed gender equality within all practices and enable specific and targeted actions where appropriate (Chawansky 2011). Mainstreaming gender equality throughout all policy processes benefits from well-developed systems of information gathering, communication and accountability. Collation and dissemination of gender-disaggregated monitoring of resource allocation and policy implementation, and of other measures of equality in sport,

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can fulfil important functions – from enforcement of existing legislation to informing particular sport-based initiatives. Such data can also be used effectively to inform capacity-building across a range of sport and development stakeholders, and to shape media strategies and campaigns to address gender inequality.

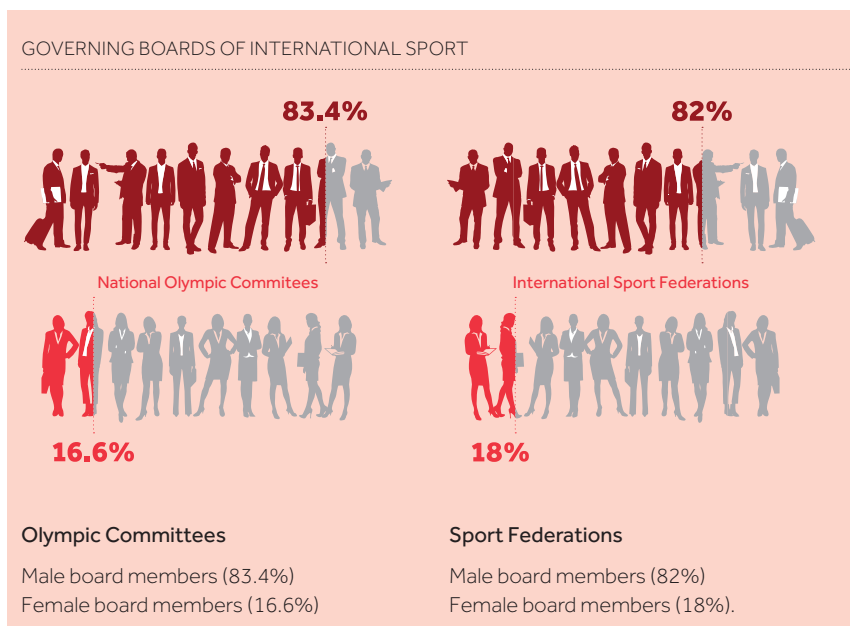
Achieving gender equality also depends on developing appropriate opportunities for the involvement of girls and women in sport. Approaches must address both specific barriers that impede girls' and women's participation in sport and the often complex intersections of gender-specific issues and other markers of disadvantage, such as disability, ethnicity and socio-economic status (Jeanes *et al.* 2016). The provision of competitive and non-competitive sporting activities that are attractive to girls and women also requires intentional planning (Bailey *et al.* 2009). In some contexts, girls and women can benefit from specific opportunities that enable them to participate in environments that are safe and supportive. However, care must equally be applied to ensure that girls' and women's participation in separate environments, or in specific sports, does not reinforce social divisions or generate unhelpful resistance from other members of society (Hayhurst *et al.* 2014). These considerations also point to the importance of adopting decentralised approaches that are sensitive to local cultural norms and engage all family and community members (Kay and Spaaij 2012), including boys and men, even in initiatives that may be specifically targeted at girls and women.

Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

For young females, in particular, leadership experiences gained through sport-based initiatives may make distinctive contributions to their empowerment in other social, economic and political spheres.

Females have commonly and traditionally been significantly under-represented in leadership and decision making at all levels in sport and across local, regional, national and international sporting bodies (Women on Boards 2016) (see Figure 8.2). Addressing this embedded and structured inequality is, therefore, a priority in itself. Importantly, enabling the equal involvement of women, from a diverse range of backgrounds, across the full spectrum of sport leadership roles will also enhance gender sensitivity in policy-making, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation, thereby contributing to other SDG 5

Figure 8.2 Inequalities in sport and physical education: Governing boards of international sport



Source: Women on Boards (2016)

targets. For young females, in particular, leadership experiences gained through sport-based initiatives may make distinctive contributions to their empowerment in other social, economic and political spheres (Lindsey *et al.* 2016).

Encouraging and promoting different types of female role models can make varying contributions to these outcomes. The significant profile of some elite female athletes can provide opportunities for advocacy and impetus to address gender inequality. The presentation of sexualised images of female athletes in the media can, however, undermine this platform (Sherry *et al.* 2015). Localised female role models can have an especially strong impact, particularly if they have direct involvement or lines of communication with girls or young women (Meier 2015). Close interaction with female role models whose own position may be seen as attainable can be particularly important in engaging female participants in sport and in building their own leadership skills. Furthermore, given the popularity of sport for boys and men, it can be valuable to enhance, with sensitivity, the contribution that female athletes

and role models can offer in challenging dominant gender norms (Meier and Saavedra 2009).

Female leadership and empowerment in sport has been promoted within and by specific initiatives in many contexts. When specifically designed, sport-based programmes can provide a safe environment in which young women, in particular, can develop a range of skills and experiences through involvement in coaching, officiating and a range of other roles (Murray 2016). Such programmes can also be a particularly effective context in which girls and women can build strong and mutually supportive relationships (Kay 2009; Samie *et al.* 2015). For sport programmes that do specifically contribute to the development of young women, it is vital that effective links and appropriate pathways within and beyond sport are created to enable them to utilise fully the leadership skills that have been developed (Hayhurst 2014).

Detailed evidence of gender inequalities in sport leadership, and of opportunities and outcomes being skewed towards men at all levels of sport, can be an important policy tool.

Improving female leadership and participation in decision making requires both a thorough analysis to address existing barriers and a supportive policy environment that enables complementary efforts to be realised. Detailed evidence of gender inequalities in sport leadership, and of opportunities and outcomes being skewed towards men at all levels of sport, can be an important policy tool. This is especially the case given that influence to address gender inequalities needs to be exerted across public, non-profit, commercial and media stakeholders in sport. Specific initiatives can make important contributions to enabling female leadership and decision making in sport, but these also benefit from linking into broader policies and partnerships with organisations working specifically on gender issues. It is through such collective approaches that systematic change for all women and girls can be promoted (Ferkins and Broadbent 2009).

Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.

Societal problems of violence and abuse have been and are reproduced in sport.

As with each SDG 5 target, efforts both within and through sport can support the goal of eliminating all forms of violence and harmful practices against girls and women. Societal problems of violence and abuse have been and are reproduced in

sport. Young females can be especially vulnerable if coaches and administrators abuse their positions of trust and responsibility (Kerr and Stirling 2008; Lang and Hartill 2014). In contexts in which sport may be considered as a masculine domain, girls and women may be exposed to increased risk merely through their visible participation in sport (Janes and Magee 2014). Under SDG 16, further attention is given to the increasing impetus that international policy gives to raising awareness of these problems and to promoting approaches to safeguard all children in sport. Ensuring that girls and women are not subject to any form of violence or harm within sport also requires continued efforts to change dominant masculine cultures where they exist in sport, the creation and maintenance of safe spaces for participation by girls and women (see SDG 11), and ongoing vigilance on the part of all stakeholders.

Sport can also make distinctive contributions to these targets through intentionally planned and well-delivered initiatives. Specific programming and activities can build awareness and understanding of various issues, including sexual health, gender-based violence and other harmful practices (Hershow *et al.* 2015). Peer education approaches have also been utilised in sport to provide supportive environments for discussion of gender-related issues, and to enable the empowerment of girls and young women. Sport may also provide a particularly appropriate environment through which boys and men can be sensitised to issues of gender equality and co-opted into proactive advocacy (Larkin *et al.* 2007; Chawansky 2011). Ensuring that all such initiatives are appropriately designed to take account of specific cultural contexts is vital. Furthermore, given the sensitivities involved, it is essential that all those involved in the delivery of activities have appropriate knowledge and skills, and have access to additional training and support where necessary.

Broader actions may also be important for encouraging and enabling stakeholders associated with sport to maximise their contributions to SDG targets 5.2 and 5.3. There needs to be sustained emphasis within forums for sport policy-making on the elimination of violence and harmful practices, and implementation at all levels. Building awareness and capacity across all organisations and individuals involved in sport is also essential. Beyond targeted information campaigns, scaled impact can be achieved through mainstreaming gender issues

Specific programming and activities can build awareness and understanding of various issues, including sexual health, gender-based violence and other harmful practices.

The *Girls Make Your Move* campaign: Inspiring, energising and empowering young women to be more active

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Physical inactivity is the second greatest contributor to the cancer burden in Australia and the leading contributor to preventable illness and morbidity among women (ABS 2013).

According to the Australian Health Survey (2011–12), nine in ten young Australians don't move enough. Physical activity decreases with age, with a clear turning point identified in the late teen years—a time when establishing healthy and active lifestyle choices is important. Further to this, young women experience unique barriers that deter them from being as physically active as young men, including self-consciousness and a fear of being judged.

Launched in February 2016, Australia's *Girls Make Your Move* behaviour change campaign works to inspire, energise and empower young women and girls aged 12–19 to be more active. Alongside wider initiatives to encourage young people's participation in physical activity and sport, it addresses perceived barriers and generates positive perceptions, pitching physical activity and sport as fun, healthy and social.

The campaign targets those who are less skilled and passionate but still enjoy activity, as well as those who were formerly active but whose participation has dropped off as a result of other commitments. The aim is to re-engage them by demonstrating a wide range of non-sport activities and the social benefits of being active.

It also involves parents, recognising their influence on reinforcing physical activity by providing support, being active themselves and encouraging family activity.

The campaign comprises television, online and print media, and out-of-home advertising and public relations. It is the first Australian Federal Government campaign to have used Facebook canvas advertising and social media influencers to drive and encourage behaviour change. The advertising is supported by a programme of events, a website and an Instagram presence with over 7,000 followers to engage with young women and encourage them to 'find their thing'. Engagement across these media platforms responds to SDG Target 5.b which aims to enhance the use of enabling technology to promote the empowerment of women.

Girls Make Your Move was inspired by the UK's *This Girl Can*, but was produced for a younger audience in the Australian context. It has been assessed as highly novel, captivating and atypical of traditional government advertising. The target audience has welcomed the coverage of a range of young women enjoying different activities in a non-competitive, judgemental or prescriptive way.

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The *Girls Make Your Move* campaign: Inspiring, energising and empowering young women to be more active (cont.)

The campaign has reached over 80 per cent of girls aged 12–19 years across the nation. Independent evaluation results show that the campaign's impact on attitudes and intentions has been overwhelmingly positive. One in four girls surveyed reported having interacted with the campaign's social media activities, and one in five reported doing more physical activity as a result (Australian Government, Department of Health, 2016). The initiative contributes to achieving SDG target 3.4, which aims to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable disease.

Overall, the campaign has been found to be wide-reaching, engaging, motivating and empowering, which points to its effectiveness. It has broad appeal to female audiences and is suitable for adaptation for countries facing similar trends.

The *Girls Make Your Move* campaign contributes in particular to the following SDGs:

SDG3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages

SDG5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

within coach education and sport administrator training (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation 2005; Pfister 2010). Associated with SDG 16, governance systems for sport also need to be fully accountable in addressing issues of gender-based violence and harmful practices, in order to command the confidence of all girls and women involved in sport.

8.3 The means of implementation: Policy options for Sustainable Development Goal 5

Policy development must seek to improve gender equality within sport and also utilise opportunities for gender empowerment through sport. The scale of the gender equity issues associated with sport calls for strong enactment of a range of policy options. These options include recourse to wider systems of regulation and involve gender-sensitive systems of funding distribution and re-distribution, and various approaches to data and information gathering and dissemination that build awareness and ensure accountability. Decision making regarding the use and implementation of policy options must be sensitive to specific socio-cultural complexities that present particular opportunities and challenges for gender equality.

Policy development must seek to improve gender equality within sport and also utilise opportunities for gender empowerment through sport.

Table 8.1 Policy options to enhance the contribution of sport to SDG 5

	Government-led Implementation	Structured implementation partnerships	Complementary Implementation	Autonomous Implementation
Country-leadership and policy coherence	Refer to, and implement in sport, all legal and other frameworks that are in place to promote and enforce equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex			
	Identify and communicate appropriate targets for girls' and women's involvement and representation in sport at all levels, including as coaches, officials and administrators			
		Co-ordinate provision to ensure that girls and women have appropriate pathways for sustained participation in sport and progression into and through a full range of leadership roles		
		Integrate sport-based approaches into gender equality strategies where they can create safe spaces for empowerment of women and girls and/or contribute to engaging men and boys with gender issues		
		Provide design guidance to ensure all sporting spaces and facilities are safe and appropriate for girls and women		
		Engage media organisations through publicising positive gender role models and content, and encouraging appropriate mainstream representation of female sport and athletes		
Mobilising financial and human resources	Ensure that all organisations receiving public funding for sport have appropriate strategies, provision and monitoring in place to advance the full participation of girls and women			
		Allocate and utilise funding to create a range of opportunities for participation and leadership in sport that address the different context-specific needs and barriers among women and girls		
		Involve gender experts from other sectors to inform specific and integrated capacity-building to improve gender equality and empowerment in sport		
		Mainstream gender equality issues within all curricula and training programmes for sport coaches, administrators and leaders, including those in governance roles		

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Table 8.1 Policy options to enhance the contribution of sport to SDG 5 (cont.)

	Government-led Implementation	↔	Structured implementation partnerships	↔	Complementary Implementation	↔	Autonomous Implementation
Country-specific and disaggregated 'measures of progress'	Ensure that all measures and indicators of sport-based expenditure and resources, policy implementation, participation and involvement are disaggregated by gender						
			Encourage all sport organisations to publish indicators of girls' and women's involvement and representation				
	Include girls and women in the design, implementation and analysis of all monitoring, evaluation and research activities within sport						

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