



**Equipping Sports Higher Education Institutions with
Intersectional, Innovative, and Inclusive
Gender Equality Plans**

D2.1

Inclusive gender+ equality policy and practice in sport higher education institutions

University of Gothenburg

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Submission date: 29. August 2023

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Project acronym: SUPPORTER

Project title: SecUring sPORTs Education thRough innovative and inclusive Gender Equality Plans

Grant agreement number: 101094529

Start date of project: 01.04.2023

Deliverable title: D2.1 Inclusive gender+ equality policy and practice in sport higher education institutions

Due date of deliverable: 31.07.2023

Actual date of submission: 29.08.2023

File name:

Organisation Responsible for Deliverable: University of Gothenburg

Author name(s): Karin Grahn, Suzanne Lundvall, Angelica Simonsson, Sofia Strid, Nathalie Wuiame

Status: Final

Dissemination Level: PU

Work Package: 2

Keywords: Gender+ equality, gender-based violence, inequalities, intersectionality, policy, sports higher education institutions,

Please cite as:

Strid, S., Lundvall, S., Grahn, K., Simonsson, A., & Wuiame, N. (2023). *Inclusive Gender+ Equality and Policy and Practice*. SUPPORTER Deliverable 2.1. Report delivered to the European Commission on 29 August 2023. Zenodo. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8297828. 59 pages.



Revision history

Version	Date	Revised by	Comments
0.1	21/07/2023	Angelica Simonsson, Sofia Strid, Suzanne Lundvall, Karin Grahn, Nathalie Wuiame (UGOT)	First draft
0.2	27/07/2023	Nikos Zaharis, Faye Ververidou (SEERC), Ildi Ipolyi (ESF)	Quality review by Quality Reviewers
0.3	27/07/2023	Consortium	Review by partners
0.4	08/8/2023	Sofia Strid, Suzanne Lundwall, Nathalie Wuiame (UGOT)	Second draft: integration of reviews
0.5	21/08/2023	Ildi Ipolyi (ESF)	Coordinator's check
0.6	21/08/2023	Sofia Strid (UGOT)	Third draft: integration of coordinator's comments
1	29/08/2023	ESF	Submission

Acknowledgement



Funded by the European Union

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Funded by the European Union.

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List of Acronyms

ADIO	Athletic diversity and inclusion officer
EC	European commission
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CoE	Council of Europe
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HR	Human resources
GEP	Gender equality plan
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ILO	Implementing organisation
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans
LGBTQ	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
WLB	Work-life balance



The SUPPORTER project

SUPPORTER, “SecUring sPORTs Education thRough innovative and inclusive Gender Equality Plans”, is an EU-funded project running from April 2023 until September 2025. Launched on 19 April 2023, SUPPORTER aims to support eight sports higher education institutions from Central and Eastern Europe in developing their own intersectional, innovative, inclusive and impactful Gender Equality Plans which explicitly address gender-based violence and sexual harassment.

Through mutual learning and interactive exchanges, the project will seek to:

1. Identify and document systemic challenges faced by sports higher education institutions in advancing gender equality and eradicating gender-based violence.
2. Develop activities tailored to each partner institution.
3. Strengthen the sports institutions’ organisational capacity to address gender equality with an intersectional approach.
4. Foster an inclusive institutional culture by developing mutual-learning processes.
5. Strengthen networking and exchange among sports institutions and with communities of practice.
6. Foster gender-related institutional, sustainable, transformative changes in the sports institutions with a specific attention on the challenge of gender-based violence -thus ultimately fostering the institutions and their Gender Equality Plans’ inclusiveness and the overall adherence to intersectionality.

While initially partnering with eight institutions, the SUPPORTER project aspires to target and reach the wider sports ecosystem and its various organisations in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond, and in the long run contribute to wide societal changes.



Project Partners

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Summary

The deliverable reviews the relevant state-of-the-art, including the theoretical background on gender+ equality and gender-based violence, and maps gender equality plans (GEPs) and their implementation in sports education/institutions in the specific environments of the Implementing Organisations (IOs). It outlines the theoretical foundation of SUPPORTER and sets the baseline of gender equality policy and gender-based violence policy in the context of the IOs. Based on these and in light of the already identified model institution, the deliverable provides recommendations to formulate the model institution in the context of the IOs.

The deliverable consists of five interrelated parts. The introduction (chapter one) describes the conceptual background to SUPPORTER by outlining key concepts and how they relate to each other, and describes the method and material used for the state-of-the-art literature review as well as the national and institutional policy implementation mapping. The literature review (chapter two) identifies the state-of-the-art scholarship on gender+ equality, gender-based violence and sports education institutions, and identifies key problems. The third part (chapter three) suggests solutions to the identified problems. The fourth part (chapter four) presents the results of the mapping of policy adopted and implemented by the IOs to address gender equality and gender-based violence in the respective institutions and within their national frameworks. The fifth part (chapter five), offers recommendations, summarises the baseline of best practices based on the theoretical framework, the literature review, and the mapping of policy implementation by formulating the concept of the “model institution” in the context of the IOs.

Key points include:

- To address inequalities and gender-based violence, gender equality policy needs to secure educational courses in sport education where gender equity and social justice are highlighted. This includes grounds for discrimination based on age, disability, ethnicity/race, gender, LGBT, and religion, dealing not only with the rights of the individual, but referring to the whole organisational culture of each institution/university.
- Identify internal change agents and provide them resources and support capacity building initiatives.
- Leadership of institutions/higher education should actively commit to gender equality. They should support organisational strategies and change agents working towards institutional change. This requires deinstitutionalising norms of exclusivity and heterosexism, articulating a viable alternative, to enable structures, processes, and norms to address LGBT, diversity and inclusion.
- Higher education and athletic departments need to build an action plan around policies and practice in relation to gender-based violence in academia and sport to fully prevent, protect or prosecute gender-based violence, and sexuality norms, and to take measures to counter act gender-based violence and harassments. Existing national and/or regional legislations in favour of gender equality and addressing gender-based violence should refer to support effective implementation.
- Using the existing models of impact drivers, encourage the entire organisation or the athletic department to assess their current capacities to develop and implement a gender equality

plan and gender-based violence inclusive policies. Such assessment should help to identify facilitating factors and actors within the organisation as well as challenges or potential resistance to address.

- Ensure that gender equality and gender-based violence policies are linked and jointly monitored and evaluated.
- Considering that sport is operating in silos (sex, age, (dis)ability, strength, etc), support transformation of norms and practices in higher education in sport to address effectively intersectionality issues.
- Importantly, the review of the state-of-the-art literature reveals a gap in literature specifically relating to the CEE context, in turn leading to a lack of observations on problems and solutions specifically on the in this context. Hence, it is clear that the region is 'left behind' in this regard, further underlining the relevance of the focus of SUPPORTER.



1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and research questions

The aim of this deliverable is to outline the theoretical foundation of SUPPORTER and to set the baseline of best policy and practices related to the implementation of gender equality and gender equality plans in sport higher education and universities. It reviews the relevant state-of-the-art, including the theoretical background on gender+ equality and gender-based violence in sports education/institutions and the best practices related to the implementation of 4I-GEPs in sports education/institutions and the specific environments of the IOs. The collected data will set the foundation and background context of SUPPORTER, with the results raising knowledge and theoretical awareness in the entire consortium. It also sets the baseline of gender equality in sport universities/departments and organisational responses to it in the context of the IOs. Based on the results, and considering GEP requirements and the already identified model institution, the deliverable formulates the concept of the model institution in the context of the IOs.

The research questions guiding Task 2.1 are threefold. The first regards the research field itself and how gender equality and gender-based violence are addressed in sports higher education, with specific focus on what problems are addressed, which inequality grounds are included, which target groups are included, and what theoretical frameworks and concepts are used. Consequently, the questions of what is excluded or not addressed are also in focus. Additionally, we are also interested in what research has identified as the problems in achieving gender equal sports higher education environments free from gender-based violence. Lastly, we are specifically interested in what best practices there are in policy and policy implementation regarding gender equality plans in sports higher education institutions in the SUPPORTER project IOs, and what recommendations can be made on basis of the state-of-the-art literature review.

The Deliverable contains five chapters. **The first chapter**, the introduction, describes methods and materials and the conceptual background to SUPPORTER by outlining key concepts and how they relate to each other, and describes the method and material used for the state-of the art literature review as well as the national and institutional policy implementation mapping. **The second chapter** presents the results of the-state-of-the art literature review of the international scholarship on gender+ equality, gender-based violence and sports education institutions, and identifies the key problems related to gender equal sports higher education institutions. **The third chapter** suggests solutions to the identified problems, again, based on the state-of-the art literature review of international scholarship. **The fourth chapter** presents the results of the mapping of policy adopted and implemented by the IOs to address gender equality and gender-based violence in the respective institutions. **The fifth chapter**, “recommendations” formulates a baseline of best practice and the concept of the model institution based on the findings from the literature review and the mapping of policy implementation, following the logic of GEPs, in the context of the IOs.

1.2 Methods and materials

1.2.1 Literature review

The search strategy was based on a systematic literature review. Six keywords, including *Sports education, Higher education, Violence, Gender, Equality and Other grounds for inequality* were used to create search terms with synonyms and related concepts. The database searches were conducted on three separate occasions and with different combinations of the search terms. A limitation in all searches was set for scientific peer-review publications only.

1. Global search for scientific articles on Sports education, Higher education, Violence, Gender, Other grounds for inequality. Year limitation 2010-2023.
2. A narrower search focusing on the *EU, Sports Education, Higher Education, Gender Equality*. Year limitation: 2015-2023.
3. An additional search in the Swedish publication database SwePub with keywords in Swedish and English aimed at finding scientific articles on *Sports Education, Higher Education, Violence, Gender/Equality*. Year limitation 2000-2023.

The searches were conducted in eight databases: Web of Science (multidisciplinary), PubMed (medicine, biomedicine), Scopus (multidisciplinary), SPORTDiscus (sports), ERIC (educational science, pedagogy), Education Research Complete (educational science, pedagogy), Gender Studies Database (gender research) and SwePub (Swedish research).

The searches resulted in a total of 825 unique database hits. The hits were reviewed at the title and abstract level in the screening programme Rayyan and in a second stage a full text reading and selection was made. The search blocks used to create search threads for each search are described in the Appendix.

Test searches were carried out to ensure the accuracy of the searches. At an initial stage, the global search was not restricted to the criteria to include gender and additional inequality grounds. These searches yielded a very large number of unwanted hits of studies that did not have the intersectional or at least potentially intersectional focus that is the starting point of SUPPORTER. The global search threads were then restricted to capture studies with an intersectional, or at least potentially intersectional, focus operationalised as including in the abstract, title and keywords both gender or gender-based violence, and one additional inequality ground, such as e.g. race/ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation.

The two main criteria for including publications were the following:

1. The empirical context and/or focus of the theoretical reasoning had to be sports higher education institutions (including both a focus on working environment, study environment, education and research).
2. The study focus had to include a focus on gender, including gender-based violence, and at least one more inequality ground.

This resulted in a large number of studies focusing on sports organisations, but not specifically the higher education context, to be excluded. It also resulted in a large number of studies focusing on gender only, or for instance ethnicity/race only, in the sports higher education context to be excluded. However, in order to facilitate finding publications focusing on implementation of policies addressing gender equality and gender-based violence in the EU, the criteria for including a study in the EU search was only that it focused on gender or gender based-violence. Thus, the two main criteria for

excluding publications were that the sports higher education context was not focused or was categorised as too peripheral, and that the study had a unilateral focus on gender, or gender-based violence, and not adhering to an intersectional approach.

In the first stage, based on abstract, title and keyword screening, 52 publications were included. In the second stage, based on full text reading, ten publications were excluded. The literature review is thus based on 42 publications. The full text reading was carried out by four researchers who divided the included publications among themselves based on academic expertise. During the reading, they worked in a common grid to code the content of the publications, in order to enable an equal focus in everyone's reading in a coherent way.

An overall finding by the literature review exercise is that the majority of the literature on gender equality and gender-based violence in sport higher education is produced in the US and refers to conditions specific to the US, in particular race as an inequality and the experiences of e.g. black women in sports. This does, however not mean that the experiences of discrimination, inequality and gender-based violence and harassment are confined to the US system. Addressing these issues in a Central and Eastern European context may still learn from and use examples found.

1.2.2 Institutional mapping of policy implementation

The mapping of the institutional policy was conducted by the IO partners with the aim to identify best practices in institutional policies adopted to address gender equality and gender-based violence on the institutional level. The data collected contributes to setting the foundation and background context of SUPPORTER. It sets the baseline of best practices related to the implementation of gender equality and GEPs in sport universities and organisational responses to it in the context of the IOs.

The mapping covers best practices in policy and implementation in the current policy framework and is comprised of a set of questions, covering five themes: the overall description of the policy/document, target groups, content, implementation, and evaluation. A grid with questions was provided to all IOs, who conducted the mapping in June 2023. The grid served to obtain a detailed description of policies that deal with gender equality and gender-based violence.

The IOs reported their results by filling out the grid. If there were more than one policies, the one with the most encompassing and promising content was chosen. "Most encompassing and promising" meant the one that defines gender equality and gender-based violence, covers and defines most forms and inequality grounds, includes an intersectional understanding, has a dedicated budget for its implementation and a clear responsibility for its evaluation. In practice, this meant that the grid allowed the IOs to fill it out in the most comprehensive way.

The mapping methodology was desk-based, conducted by experts in the IOs, and complementary information and verification provided by colleagues in the IOs when needed. The IOs were asked to collect data on the most comprehensive gender equality policy in place, including an actual policy document, an action plan, or a code of conduct etc. The policy had to be adopted at the institutional level, ideally, at the level of the institution, otherwise also at the faculty, departmental or other relevant unit level within the institution.

1.3 Key concepts

This section outlines the key theoretical concepts underpinning the SUPPORTER project and it discusses how the concepts relate to each other, and the concept of GEP. Gender+ is the key focus in SUPPORTER and will subsequently be described, as an analytical concept, first. Gender is approached as always interconnected with other inequalities; gender+ is thus a way of conveying that gender is always the focus, but never unilaterally. This intersectional approach to gender and gender equality will be outlined. Further, the SUPPORTER conceptual understanding of gender equality is explained, as well as that of gender-based violence.

1.3.1 Gender

Gender is conceptualised as a social construct, a hierarchy, a relation and as a process (rather than as biology or merely a variable only) (Strid et al., 2021). Thus, the conceptualisation of gender attempts to go beyond a binary understanding, including the experiences of women, men, and further genders. SUPPORTER is also based on a feminist and intersectional understanding of gender which captures the social and cultural construction of sex. Based on the social and cultural construction of sex, gender is a concept used to identify processes and differences, and their effects, at micro, meso and macro levels, as well as their relationship to each other. Gender research often emphasise that gender matters everywhere, at all levels and at all times and in all contexts (Linghede, 2019). Thus, gender differences are constantly recreated and generate meaning and meaningfulness associated with the categories of man and woman and conceptualisations of masculinities and femininities, i.e., ideas about men and women regarding for instance bodies, appearance and power. Butler (1993/2011) uses the concept of performativity to make visible the very act of doing gender and how it is related to normativity. By repeating what is already understood as feminine or masculine, these connotations are evoked, and the repeated practice is given a meaningful significance in line with masculinity or femininity. Butler (1993/2011) goes on to argue that the repetition of femininity or masculinity cannot be seen as optional but rather as compulsory, as the repetition of these representations that are already understood as feminine or masculine is fundamental to how we become intelligible.

This “citation of the gender norm” (Butler, 1993/2011: 177) therefore plays a fundamental role in the way society is organised. This division and organisational principle keep the group of men and the group of women apart by maintaining an understanding of some phenomena as feminine and some as masculine. Occupations and industries are in many respects highly segregated horizontally by gender. Acker (1990) has pointed out that organisational practices and processes create gender segregation of work, differences of income and status between men as a group and women as a group, as well as individual gender identities. These gendered social structures are accomplished and reinforced by an uneven distribution of power (Acker, 1990). The horizontal and vertical gender division is often understood as a gender system in which the vertical order refers to the fact that men are more often in higher positions and more often do work that is more highly valued (Reisel et al., 2015), while women are more often in lower positions and more often do work that is less valued, including unpaid work both at home and at work.

Organisations are thus simultaneously constructing gender and being gendered, and this gendering is linked to power. One example of this within a sport context is given by Alsarve (2020), who discusses how ideals of masculinity are constructed in and around ice-hockey. Alsarve (2020)

argues that individual players are supposed to repeatedly take and ignore pain, practices that in turn generate status and a continued construction of a certain type of masculinity. The masculinity ideal reproduced in these individual practices simultaneously use and strengthen expectations and norms, as well as the language used, and the value attached to this particular sport. At a macro level, certain sports are lumped together and categorised in the media, for example, as representing particular types of masculinity by portraying them in particular ways. In this way, we can see how individual practices within a sport draw meaning from wider discourses on for instance gender and sexuality in society. In order to affirm certain norms of masculinity, others need to be denied or pushed aside. The inclusion of some types of masculinities thus relies on the exclusion and often the marginalisation of and domination over for instance some femininities, but also other masculinities such as homosexual masculinities (Alsarve, 2020).

In other words, the affirmation of certain ideals in order to reproduce meaning is accomplished by explicitly or implicitly repudiating other ideals or discourses in order to mark the boundaries of that particular type of masculinity; an inside does not exist without an outside and contours always constitute the inclusion of something whilst excluding something else. The ideals of masculinity that pervade ice-hockey rely on violence, both towards others and yourself, in terms of enduring pain and being treated violently or putting oneself at risk in potentially violent situations. Violent masculinity ideals have been highlighted as having the potential to spread outside the sport arena (see ref. in Alsarve, 2020). Different sports struggle with different intersectional challenges. When engaging as a male in a female coded sport like equestrian sport, can open for less stereotyped ways of being, but these experiences can also differ due to class, race/ethnicity and may open up for stereotypes as the athlete run the risk of getting his/her (hetero)sexuality questioned (Linghede, 2019).

One of the key values of sport is to ensure fair and equitable playing conditions for all participants. In line with this ethic, one of the first rules of sport is to categorise participants according to various criteria: disability (Paralympic Games), weight (in most combat sports, such as judo, boxing and weightlifting), age and above all sex. This principle of categorisation is a response to the principle of guaranteeing uncertainty of results, which is the basis of all sporting competitions (Bohuon & Quin, 2021).

In this way, we can see how the construction of gender in sport both can reflect and reinforce the norms and structures that exist in the rest of society. The separation of men and women in most sports are a way of reproducing gender as an organising principle and these categories as significant in society. Treating them differently, by for instance having different rules for men and women in e.g., ice-hockey is also a way of reproducing the difference and producing difference and different value. Letting men and boys over the age of twelve tackle, but not women and boys under 12 (Alsarve, 2021), is one way of making meaning about gendered bodies by hooking them up to understandings about vulnerability and violence, for instance. In this way, sport and gender can be seen as co-constructed in meaning-making processes where ideas about different bodies, sport, performance and values are intertwined.

1.3.2 Gender+

An analysis of gender always needs to consider how gender is always shaped by other inequality grounds, such as age, disability, ethnicity, race and social class (Walby et al., 2012). Gender is thereby understood as always interconnected with other inequalities and axes of power; there is no

‘pure’ gender. Thus, in SUPPORTER, gender is approached as always interconnected with other inequalities, hence the suffix and use of gender+ (Verloo, 2007).

Intersectionality means the intersection of inequality grounds such as age, disability, gender, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation. While grounds of inequality (sometimes referred to or conceptualised as e.g., inequalities, identities, categories) are many and extensive, the SUPPORTER project focuses predominantly on the five mentioned. Other often named inequalities include e.g., migration status, nationality, religion or belief, social class, transgender identity/expression. An intersectional approach considers how gender is always shaped by these inequalities, and the overall effects of their intersections. The ways in which inequalities/inequality grounds intersect and entangle and how this should be treated analytically (and politically) is a topic of vast scholarly debate (Barad, 2007; Choo & Feree, 2010; Crenshaw, 1991; Hancock, 2007; Linghede, 2019; Walby et al., 2012).

In the sports context, gender is uniquely judged by the individual’s biological sex (which is in fact impossible to determine univocally according to feminist research). By defining gender identity under this bi-categorisation, the complexity of gender determination is evacuated in favour of an alignment between all the components of sex, sex and gender and sexuality. Additionally, “feminity” tests are still excluding intersex athletes from competition (Bohuon & Quin, 2021).

1.3.3 Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is defined as violence directed against a person because of their gender and includes acts resulting in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion and control. Gender-based violence thus includes acts that by far exceed any single moment of bodily violation (EC, 2019; CoE, 2014; Fasting et al., 2012; Harris & Hanchey, 2014; ILO, 2019; Johansson & Lundqvist, 2017).;). Further, the SUPPORTER concept of gender-based violence captures a continuum of violence, violations, and violent behaviours and attitudes on the basis of sex and gender (Kelly, 1998; Hearn, 1998), which is understood as always intersecting with other mutually shaping inequality grounds (Walby et al., 2012) (see ‘Intersectionality’ section). Gender-based violence is further conceptualised as ^(OGB): a cause and consequence of gender inequalities, and as an inequality in its own right (Hearn, et al., 2020). Violence/gender-based violence is autotelic – that is violence begets violence (Schinkel, 2010) and previous violence is a predictor of subsequent violence – rather than being only an expression of other inequalities. Gender-based violence is an extreme expression of inequality on the grounds of gender and a human rights violation. It is an expression of power and structural dominance, rather than an expression of the loss of power and individual marginalisation, where the direction of violence is analysed primarily as going from the relatively privileged and powerful, and directed towards the relatively less powerful and privileged.

The different forms of violence include:

- Physical violence: acts of kicking, beating, pushing, slapping, and hitting, etcetera.
- Sexual violence includes sexual acts, attempts to obtain a sexual act, sexual assaults, or acts otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality without the person’s consent, occurring in both online and offline contexts.
- Psychological violence: psychologically abusive behaviours, such as controlling, coercion, verbal abuse, and blackmail and takes place in both online and offline contexts.

- Economic and financial violence: acts or behaviours that cause an individual economic harm. Economic violence can take the form of property damage, restriction of access to financial resources, education or the labour market, or a failure to fulfil certain economic responsibilities. The control mechanisms may include controlling the victim's access to healthcare services, employment, etc.
- Sexual harassment: acts and unwanted verbal, nonverbal, or physical behaviours and conducts of a sexual nature, such as touching, comments on a person's looks or body, stalking, sending [sharing] images with sexual content, or sexist jokes. Sexual harassment is not the same as sexual assault, although the two can and often do overlap. In sport research, sexual harassment is sometimes used jointly with sexual abuse (Johansson & Lundkvist, 2017).
- Online violence, abuse, and violation can take many forms, such as cyberstalking, cyberbullying, internet-based sexual abuse, non-consensual distribution of sexual images and text, certain features of which arise from the nature of information and communication technologies (ICTs), e.g., instantaneousness, a synchronicity, personalisation, global connectivity, reproducibility of images, the blurring of the 'real' and the 'representational' (Hodgins et al. 2022).

1.3.4 Institutional change

Institutional change means a “profound change within an institution which, as a consequence, also affects the outside environment. It encompasses changes in the basic values and beliefs that are dominant in a certain institution, as well as changes in the rules and regulations that lead to certain working results.” (EIGE, 2016: 4). Institutional change as a strategy aims at removing obstacles to gender equality, obstacles inherent to the research and higher education system itself, and at adapting institutional practices. The focus is on the organisation and the tool to adapt it is the adoption of GEPS.

Institutional change has been on the EU policy agenda for more than 20 years. However, the pace of change is slow and there is a high level of institutional resistances in higher education institutions, and many attempts to transform the gendered structures and cultures of higher education institutions have had limited success or failed all together (By 2005; Benschop & Verloo, 2011; Hodgins et al., 2022; O'Connor & White, 2021a, 2021b; Powell et al., 2018; Denison et al., 2021).

Research on European institutional change (also called structural) projects are highlighting the typical challenges in the change process and identify some conditions or facilitating factors towards change and explore the internal capacity for institutional change. Capacity deals with a set of functional conditions that allow elaborating and implementing programme with better performance. Based on theory of change it supposes that a number of preconditions, or impact drivers, must exist to allow effective change to be realised. Based on their previous work, Mergaert and colleagues (2022) have identified twelve impact drivers that can be used for monitoring and evaluate progress but also assess of an institution's capacity for gender equality efforts. These include: core team of change agents, capacity/skills of the change agents for driving institutional change; leadership actively committed; availability of resources; data collection and statistical analysis; involvement of internal stakeholders, involvement of external stakeholders and experts; coverage of the different dimensions/areas of gender equality institutional change; transparency and accountability;

institutional policy making based on a robust understanding of GE; organisational culture; and organisational governance.

1.3.5 Gender Equality Plan

GEPs are “a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through a process of structural change” (EC, 2021), and constitute a basic requirement for participation in the European Commission’s research framework programme. The eligibility criterion in Horizon Europe sets out GEPs including both mandatory and recommended building blocks:

- **Mandatory process-based elements**, which represent standard minimum components of action plans to promote gender equality.
- **Recommended content-related elements**, which are key gender equality issues that a GEP should seek to address.

Mandatory process-based building block

- Publication and official endorsement of the GEP
- Dedicated resources
- Data collection monitoring
- Training

Recommended content-related (thematic) building block

- Work-life balance and organisational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
- Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

The process of developing and implementing a GEP can be broken down into six different steps, each requiring specific types of activities and interventions (EIGE, 2016).

- **Step 1: understand the context.** Successful actions in other higher education institutions cannot just be copied. An analysis of the organisation context is necessary and should reflect on its location (i.e., urban versus rural), economic situation (expanding or facing budget constraints), and institutional characteristics (i.e., leadership, structure and governance). Understanding the context, dynamics and opportunities will allow the identification of potential support and allies inside and outside the organisation. **Step 2: analysing and assessing the state of play in the organisation.** To develop an effective set of actions, the best starting point is to collect in-depth information on gender composition of the organisation (gender audit). This step comprises a review of relevant legislation and policies applicable, gathering and analysing sex-disaggregated data about staff and students, identify the existing measures to promote gender equality, their effective – or not- implementation and results.
- **Step 3: setting up a GEP.** Based on the initial analysis of the organisation, areas of intervention to be addressed in a GEP can be identified. Priority areas, opportunities and constraints will help to set out the objectives. In collaboration with senior management and

leadership posts, measures, indicators, targets, timeline and division of responsibilities will be agreed upon.

- Step 4: implementing a GEP. Measures agreed in the GEP will be implemented according to timeline and responsibilities decided. Outreach efforts to gradually expand the network of stakeholders supporting the GEP implementation will be needed. To this end, visibility shall be given to the plan adopted and activities, progress and difficulties shall be communicated to the whole community.
- Step 5: monitoring progress and evaluating a GEP. To assess the implementation process and the progress achieved against the aims and objectives set, monitoring and evaluation instruments (both quantitative and qualitative) should be in place. Such tools are necessary to support effective actions and create accountability of key agents. They also enhance knowledge on ongoing changes and difficulties and allow adjustments and improvements of interventions.
- Step 6: what comes after a GEP? A GEP is concluded at some point in time, but its end will not mean the end of promoting gender equality in the organisation. While some measures and procedures may be sustainably integrating in the routines, some may require further actions. New priorities or new areas of actions may have been identified during the process and can constitute the basis of a new GEP.



2. State of the art: sport as a high-risk arena

Sport has a longstanding record of promoting ethical values, fair play and integrity (Opstoel et al., 2020) but within sport and sport higher education violence also occurs (Alsarve & Strand, 2023).

There are within sport different forms of violence as part of specific sport disciplines' practices in terms of allowed physical (bodily) contact. The boundaries for what is permitted, accepted or not in and/or by society, is part of what several researchers call 'a grey zone'. This also includes different forms of sexual and emotional harassment and abuse. In specific sport disciplines, aggressive and violent actions are allowed, where rules set the limit for how aggressive and violent these actions can be against opponent players or athletes. Besides strong expectations of how to (actually) behave to secure a team's performances on the playing field, boxing ring or fighting arena, expectations also deal with social cultural and financial dimensions.

Regulations, rules, and policies are decided by international and national sports confederations. These documents set the limits for what is allowed and with what additional equipment. Moreover, from what age and if certain gender specific rules need to complement the already existing regulations. But as literature shows there is a risk that some athletes have difficulties in handling situations of violence, including sexual violence, outside of the sports field or arena, and this is often related to male athletes (Flood & Dyson, 2007; Flood & Pease, 2009).

Sport as an arena for violence or to define violence in sport is a contested and complex issue. Alsarve & Strand (2023) point to that there is always an objective side to violence (what is permitted by the rules) and a subjective side (how did this affect the individual) and must be seen in a social cultural context. That is why preventive work on norms, values and attitudes is essential on all levels - including the individual, organisational and societal – to address structural and societal demands and reach individual relations.

Besides sport disciplines' practices on the playing field, literature points to the risk of sexual harassment, un-healthy power mechanisms and abuse in coach-athlete relationships, and how this can violate human rights and cause damage to athletes' health and performances (Johansson & Lundqvist, 2017). Even though research is scarce and there exists different definitions of sexual harassment and abuse, self-reported data from male and female athletes show prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse (gender-based violence) perpetrated by coaches. According to for example Johansson (2016), minorities and atypical cases based on gender, sexuality, and perpetrator–victim stereotypes, can inflict additional layers of vulnerability and risk of sexual harassment and abuse. Gender-based violence can also be perpetrated by other adults within the athlete's entourage, such as doctors, physiotherapists or managers but surprisingly also peer athletes. Data on sexual harassment and abuse on children and teenagers in sport from Belgium and the Netherlands show cases mainly from other athletes (33%), other adults (41%) and to a lesser extent coaches (17%) (Vertommen et al., 2016). This study confirms also that ethnic minorities, lesbian-gay and bisexual and disabled athletes and those competing at an elite level report more significantly experiences of interpersonal violence. A vast majority of athletes that have participated in studies do not disclose having been subjected to sexual harassment and abuse in the context of sport, but this does not downplay the need to prevent gender-based violence in any forms (Parent et al., 2015; Johansson & Lundqvist, 2017). There are uniformed recommendations that advocate the promotion of research to inform education, policies and code of conduct, including sound value grounds and norms, and to

establish proactive and reactive measures on all levels (Chroni et al., 2012; Johansson & Lundqvist, 2017).

2.1 Organisational structure and culture

The organisational culture of research and higher education is characterised by asymmetric power relations, hierarchical structures and strong dependence on senior staff (Strid et al. 2021). The organisational structure of higher education is a distinct enabler of inequalities with specific implications for gender inequalities and gender-based violence: a senior layer of permanent positions, including leaders, managers, and recruiters supported by a central administration - dominated by white men - (Heffernan, 2019; Borland & Bruening, 2010); a middle layer of more gender-equal permanent and non-permanent researchers and lecturers, supported by administrative staff; and a lower level of students, where women tend to outnumber men in a growing number of disciplines. This creates hierarchies of power that are structured by gender and age, and which underpin violence. The academic environment is unique, but structural inequalities and 'elitism' can increase the problem of gender-based violence (Münch, 2007). There are signs of toxic masculinity, as seen by tendencies towards hyper-competition and extreme individualism. Additionally, the tendency to individualising gender-based violence and discrimination obscures structural inequality (Havey, 2021); analyses indicate that institutions are likely to: (a) limit their responsibility for bias incidents; (b) individualise discriminatory behaviour to the perpetrators, ignoring embedded institutional cultures; and (c) reiterate "zero tolerance" while failing to enact any change for students who are consequently harmed both by the incidents themselves, and vague or poor policies (Harvey, 2021). Further, attempts to institutional change often meet resistances. Here, as Denison et al (2021) argue, research can address and be part of what drives change and mitigates harm. Sport management scholars, in particular, they argue, "are in a unique and privileged position to address current resistance to action and drive change through conducting research aimed at identifying pragmatic, practical approaches to end harmful discriminatory behaviours."

For sports higher education institutions, the culture of sport (heteronormativity, traditional forms of masculinity, sexism, lad culture (Phipps et al., 2018; Denison, 2021) further exacerbates these hierarchies and inequalities (Melton & Cunningham, 2014; Welch et al., 2021). Further, institutional and cultural backlashes against feminism combined with gender expectations about "appropriate activities and behaviours based on notions of acceptable femininity relating to physical ability and capacity; female sexuality and expectations of motherhood and domesticity" are still very evident in the organisational culture of sport (Scranton, 2018). The inclusion in athletic departments is deeply influenced by the university and the surrounding community cultures and values (Melton & Cunningham, 2014), including feminist backlashes and gender stereotypes in the sports community (Scranton, 2018). Hence, existing gender stereotypes and inequalities stand in the way for a gender equal sports higher education.

2.2 Leadership and management

Previous research examining leadership and management within sport institutions have mostly considered barriers for minority groups working within higher education (including coaches). One such barrier is the lack of diversity in leadership and administration positions and in recruitments for these positions. This has especially been put forward as a barrier for women from culturally diverse

backgrounds (Borland & Bruening, 2010; Dadswell et al., 2022; Welch et al., 2021). Another barrier faced by female coaches is lack of support by sport administrators. Female coaches described their administrators as “sexist, homophobic, and controlling” (Kamphoff, 2010: 366). Further, coaches who had children found administrators un-supportive of them being caregivers (ibid).

Melton and Cunningham (2014) further mention that minority groups may face different work experiences in sports than in other areas of work. They exemplify this by explaining that most top administrators in sports are white, heterosexual men – a group who has previously been shown not to support LGBTQ rights. This may affect LGBTQ minorities since persons in leading positions have power to influence the culture of the workplace but need to be open-minded. Being in a status/powerful position are also highlighted as important to influence equality.

2.3 Women in leading positions/career opportunities and pathways in sport higher education

A scoping review on facilitators and barriers experienced by female leaders from culturally diverse backgrounds, show that most research reports focus on either gender or cultural background with few articles having an intersectional approach. Further, most of the research was produced in the USA, focusing on either college coaches or sport administrators (Dadswell et al., 2022). Similar results are found in this review, showing that research within leadership have mostly emphasised ethnic minority women in leadership positions in USA (Welch et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2011; Keaton & Channel, 2022).

One of the problems studied in several of the included articles relate to **women and their career opportunities in the context of sport higher education** (Borland & Bruening, 2010; Dadswell et al., 2022; Kampoff, 2010; Wright et al., 2011). The methodology used is often interview studies where women are asked about their experiences, either as leaders, as someone who has made a career, or as someone who has quit and left. These studies report on poor working conditions, lack of professional support and networks, and issues relating to discrimination and questioning of competence, mainly relating to the intersections of gender, sexual orientation and/or race/ethnicity (Welch et al., 2021).

Also, lack of policies addressing “the complex nature of discrimination and only focused on one axis of a person’s oppression (e.g., either race or gender)” (Dadswell et al., 2022: 17) were found to be a barrier as a women leader with a culturally diverse background.

One of the problems studied is also the **under-representation of Black women** in different staff/faculty positions. One such position is the head-coach position. Borland & Bruening (2010) suggest that barriers such as sexism, racism and “latent heterosexism” place Black female coaches in an “out-group” with lower status and therefore limiting their possibilities to become head-coaches. Wright and colleagues (2011) instead examined the underrepresentation of women and minorities in the position of athletic director at athletic departments. Using biographies from intercollegiate athletic directors published on 348 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) websites as data, the Wright et al. (2011) finds that women directors are in minority; 27 of the 348 studied biographies represent women directors. A similar calculation by the National Collegiate Athletic Association shows that 1% of div 1 athletic directors in between 2016-2017 were Black women (Simien et al., 2019).

Facing stereotypes and discrimination is another common theme in research (Borland & Bruening, 2010; Kampoff, 2010; Welch et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2011). As an example, research by Welch and colleagues (2021) shows that ethnic minority female athletic directors face intersectional challenges due to both sexism and racism; however, most often facing discrimination due to their gender. Their experiences were bordered by intersectional challenges impacting on career opportunities or having their authority as well as their competence questioned.

Stereotypes may also impact the positions for which a coach is hired for (Wicker & Kutsko, 2021; Borland & Bruening, 2010) and the opportunities a coach may face (Nessler et al., 2021). As an example, a study of differences in tenure among American college soccer coaches showed that white coaches had significantly longer tenure than Black coaches. Further, among head coaches, men had longer tenure than women coaches. The authors suggest this to be a result of “whiteness structures” and racial prejudice affecting behaviours (ibid).

A position aimed at working with inclusion at athletic departments in USA is the Athletic Diversity and Inclusion Officer (ADIO). Results from an interview study show that Black women ADIO’s experienced discrimination. However, the ADIO’s also drew on their own intersectional experience to create inclusion for others in the department. The personal experience of being “an outsider within” shaped these women’s leadership, created empathy and understanding also for other minority groups (Channel & Keaton, 2022).

Lack of support is another problem for women in leading positions (Borland & Bruening, 2010; Kampoff, 2010; Siple et al., 2018). Interview data from ten Black women athletic trainers, studying barriers and promoting factors that affect the matriculation of Black women athletic trainer students. They found that lack of support, as well as sexism and racism served as impeding barriers, whereas for instance personal characteristics, experience with white culture, as well as peer support and the clinical education experience served as promoting factors (Siple et al., 2018). Good examples, on the other hand, include good, engaged and well-informed supervisors/mentors, to work with athletes in practice using knowledge and skills and by that getting the experience of being in a team, ability to navigate, and peer friends (group relations).

2.4 Student athletes’ conditions and academic opportunities

In several of the included articles, student athletes’ **conditions and pathways** throughout their college careers are studied (Feltz et al., 2013; Murty & Roebuck, 2015). Often, these studies focus on race/ethnicity, gender and class, and describe problems such as racism and more or less explicit forms of discrimination. In many of the included articles, the specific US college sport context is problematised from a critical point of view, highlighting different negative aspects of the socio-political context, both in terms of student conditions and exploitation (Yearwood, 2018) and in terms of limited knowledge content in teaching and thus limited possibilities to help students challenge discrimination and harassment in their future professions in the sports field (Wiest & King-White, 2013). Some of these studies make explicit references to colonialism, pointing out the similarities to the current situation, not least for Black male student athletes (see for instance Yearwood, 2018; Murty & Roebuck, 2015).

When the conditions in US college sport is problematised as marketised and serving the interest of building financial capital and increasing the revenue of the college rather than serving the educational and academic interest of the student college athletes, studies point towards **the lack of**

structural perspectives (Wiest & King-White, 2013) highlighting the need for real progressive change that can challenge these structural inequalities. **Experiences of racialisation and stereotyping** are present in several studies (Murty & Roebuck, 2015; Simien et al., 2019; Stowe & Lange, 2018). A common stereotype is that Black students are physically superior and have innate bodily dispositions fitting certain sports better than others. This may put pressure on Black students to pursue a sport career instead of an academic career. This stereotype may also lead to ideas among coaching staff and students that success among Black athletes is due to genes rather than hard work (Feltz et al., 2013; Hextrum, 2020; Stowe & Lange, 2018; Murty & Roebuck, 2015; Simien et al., 2019). However, racialisation and stereotyping may also spring out of a **maintaining whiteness at college campuses, and what is also called ‘whiteness silence’**. By mainly recruiting white athletes, college institutions maintain segregation and the student athletes adopt “underdeveloped notions of race and racism” (Hextrum, 2020: 384).

Experiences among **Black female college athletes** add a layer to the understanding of racialisation and stereotypes facing Black student athletes’ conditions and opportunities. In a literature review by Simien and colleagues (2019) they identify “a series of practices that both constrain and situate Black female athletes differently than others who actively participate in sport” (p. 409). The authors point to oppression experienced by women due to intersection of gender and race/ethnicity. Similar results are discussed in Stowe & Lange’s (2018) article concerning Afro American sport management students’ experiences of discrimination and stereotyping, showing that male Afro Am males perceived more barriers based on race/ethnicity than white males. And that females perceive gender a disadvantage in all realms.

Another topic of research is **experiences among homosexual athletes** (Kavoura & Kokkonen, 2021; Vilanova et al., 2022). A scoping review of 58 relevant articles showed that research is done in different countries, but most common from Australia, Canada, UK, and USA. The dominant methodological approach was qualitative and lesbian athletes were the most common population of interest. Five themes were identified in previous research, namely: *identity* among athletes and coaches (either self-identified or subjectivities); *discrimination* experienced by athletes and coaches (e.g. stereotypes, harassment, violence); experiences of *coming out* in sports; *the body* (e.g. in relation to body ideals); and *strategies for social change*, approaching heteronormativity in sports. A later study of Vilanova and colleagues (2022) focused on experiences of gay men studying physical activity and sport science. The study was conducted in Spain and included eleven interviews. The result shows that the interviewees experienced the physical activity and sport science field as heteronormative, including hostile and homophobic language. Several felt affected by this context; however, experiences (positive or negative) differed depending on the students’ outness as gay. Some participants also highlighted the lack of LGBTQIA+ themes in the curriculum.

Finally, **sexual violence and prevention of sexual violence** at universities are studied in a few recently published articles (Parent et al., 2022; Tredinnick, 2022). Although the question regarding sport as a risk or a protection of sexual violence is still debated, this particular research showed that “being a varsity athlete did not significantly increase the risk of exposure to sexual violence at university” (Parent et al., 2022: 1). Further, male and female athletes were equally at risk of experiencing sexual violence (Parent et al., 2022).

A web-based survey by Tredinnick (2022) evaluated students’ “perceptions of the campus climate and awareness of sexual assault policies and resources” (2022: 5849). The result highlights the importance of sport departments including staff to engage in sexual violence prevention to raise

awareness among students of resources and policies regarding sexual assault. No significant differences were found due to ethnicity and/or gender.

2.5 Student and staff attitudes and stereotypes

Another problem studied is attitudes towards diversity (DeLuca et al., 2022) and in some studies more specifically towards gender equality and/or homosexuality among employees (Melton & Cunningham, 2014) and students (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2018; Ospina-Betancurt et al., 2023), often in relation to religion (Anderson, 2011; Sarac, 2012; Toomey & McGeorge, 2018).

Students' attitudes towards diversity and inclusion were examined in an multi method study by DeLuca et al. (2022), showing several differences based on “sex, race, upbringing and surroundings, internship experience, and transfer status” (p. 37) among undergraduate sport management students. Results found that male students were less supportive of diversity and inclusion. Qualitative parts of the study suggest that “race should be understood as salient to student experience within sport management Education” (p. 37), shown by race being a dominant topic when students got to write about diversity in open ended questions. Further, the result show that students who had done off-campus internship showed more acceptance towards diversity and inclusion, suggesting that real life experience may expose students to a more diverse population and experience of topics of diversity and inclusion.

Student attitudes towards homosexuality in relation to religion have been explored in a few studies. In Anderson (2011), the hypothesis studied is that team sport athlete heterosexual Catholic men are expected to embody homophobia. However, the ethnography conducted instead resulted in a counter-narrative, with examples of widespread homosocial touching in a context of privileged heterosexuality but an absence of explicit expressions of homophobia. Rather than rejecting homosexuality, Anderson argues that masculinity in this team was constructed around valuing athleticism and athletic ability as a means of “constructing masculine stratifications”. One of the few studies conducted outside of the US higher education context is performed by Sarac (2012), who studies physical education, candidate students' attitudes towards homosexuality and the relationship to levels of religiousness in the higher education context of Turkey. Based on survey data from 173 teacher education programme students, Sarac's (2012) findings show that teacher education candidates who were men were more negative towards gay men than teacher education candidates who were women. Higher levels of religiosity had a positive relationship to negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men (Sarac, 2012). Another way to approach the issue is to study levels of identification as an LGBT ally. Results show that religious beliefs were not associated with being an engaged ally (Toomey & McGeorge, 2018) and student athletes who were organised religiously where the religion highlighted homosexuality as immoral showed more gender prejudice than non-religious and ally identifying student athletes (Anderson et al., (2019).

Another way to approach the issue of norm conforming student **athletes' attitudes towards sexual diversity or homosexuality** is by studying heterosexual student athletes' attitudes towards guidelines protecting LGBT athletes. Atteberry-Ash and colleagues (2018) found that a majority of their convenience sample of heterosexual student athletes was neither in favour nor against such guidelines. In line with other studies (Ospina-Betancurt et al., 2023; Sarac, 2012; Toomey & McGeorge, 2018), the results in Atteberry-Ash and colleagues (2018) also show that women student athletes were more in favour of the guidelines than the student athlete men. Moreover, Atteberry-Ash and colleagues (2018) found that politically conservative students were against protecting guidelines more than liberal students, that students from sport teams with higher levels of team

acceptance of LGBT people were more supportive, and that students that met homophobic language in their team settings were more positive to protecting guidelines.

Staff attitudes on micro, macro and meso levels towards supporting LGBT co-workers were studied by Melton and Cunningham (2014) at a large public university. They found that factors at micro-, meso- and macro level co-occurred to shape a more or less inclusive climate according to interviewed employees who did not identify as heterosexuals. At micro-level the interviewees' described allies as mostly females, politically liberal and grown up in a more progressive area of USA. Further, open-mindedness and experiences from LGBT friends/family were important factors. At meso-level culture of diversity and personal within the organisation showing support for LGBT inclusion were of importance. Lastly, at macro level attitudes and actions of inclusiveness were influenced by both the traditional heteronormative culture of sports as well as by values and cultures in the surrounding community and at the university.



3. Suggestions for solutions

Sport is described as a high-risk arena, not only in terms of violent and aggressive practices on and off the field, but also in relation to coach-athlete relations and un-healthy, abusive power mechanisms. Preventive work on different levels around norms and attitudes are suggested essential to meet structural and societal demands and reach individual relations. Uniformed recommendations exist that advocate the promotion of research to inform education, policies, and code of conduct, and to establish proactive and reactive measures on all levels.

3.1 Organisational structure and culture

The academic environment is unique, but structural inequalities and 'elitism' can increase the problem of gender-based violence as there are signs of toxic masculinity, as seen by tendencies towards hyper-competition and extreme individualism. Existing gender stereotypes and inequalities stand in the way for a gender equal sports higher education as the inclusion of athletic departments is deeply influenced by the university and the surrounding community cultures and values, including feminist backlashes and gender stereotypes in the sports community. Accordingly, there is a need for critical feminist work in sports higher education to bridge the gap between theoretical sophistication and experiences in practice (Havey, 2021; Denison, 2021; see also Clavero & Galligan, 2020).

Policies need proper resourcing and commitment of responsible academic leadership; training of responsible staff, monitoring incidents and case management outcomes, and evaluation of desired effects. This means: 1) to recognise the importance of employees' attitude and behaviours for workplace inclusion. Providing education, training and skills for employees, 2) to support employees who are hesitant in showing explicit LGBT inclusive strategies to show support more implicit; 3) to evaluate the structure to ensure "power and autonomy" to employees to "promote inclusive practices and policies in their respective departments".

Literature regarding change agents differentiate between micro and macro agents. CEOs, along with other high-level managers or leaders constitute macro change agents who are committed to impulse change toward gender equality, diversity and inclusion in their organisations. They have the ability to transform practices through their authoritative control and proactive leadership. In contrast, micro change agents employ strategies and techniques to drive organisational change leveraging their personal sphere of influence. (Dahmen-Adkins & Peterson, 2021). Six different change practices of micro-agents have been identified: communication, community-building, building trust and legitimacy, using and transferring knowledge and drawing on personal motivation. Both categories of agents contribute to fostering more inclusive organisational practices.

Athletic departments with inclusive organisations, cultures and practices are suggested to act as agents of social change. Furthermore, academic staff may take on the role as "change agents" by engaging in champion behaviours, important in relation to the advocating of LGBT inclusiveness to counter-work normalised sexism on campuses (Denison, 2021). Academic staff with research and/or teaching responsibilities "can have a ground-breaking role in changing the way disciplines are taught and the way research is done. Integrating a gender dimension in research and innovation content and in teaching opens new horizons and creates new knowledge. Considering a gender dimension

in research can have a positive and powerful impact on society and on improving people's lives. " GEAR tool. Studies in the literature review also highlight the relevance of a new conceptual framework: to draw on institutional theory to develop the argument that athletic departments can be agents of change to shape more diverse, inclusive environments where "reformative activism" in terms of target organisations also can be part of the process of change. Athletic departments are members of a particular organisational field and therefore must adapt to a reformative position: organisations are viewed as the problem - however, they can also become part of creating the solution (Cunningham, 2015). Efforts are needed to minimise the potential influence of gendered racial stereotypes in intercollegiate athletics and are suggested to be done in three steps: 1) deinstitutionalisation of non-inclusive practices; 2) shape a visible alternative; 3) re-institutionalisation (Cunningham, 2015; Cunningham et al., 2021).

Solutions suggested for staff members in vulnerable position (due to short-term contracts or other forms of insecure/precarious employment conditions, and expectations of (international) mobility), include working with mentor programmes and build professional networks for support.

The athletic departments in higher education can be deeply influenced by the university and the surrounding community. To encounter real life experiences out of campus is suggested to be a positive factor as well as the exposure to diverse cultures, values, and norms

3.2 Leadership and management

According to the findings in the literature review college sport leaders over time have utilised culturally biased approaches that prioritise status quo sustainment of whiteness and maleness. Therefore, Cooper and colleagues (2020) suggest "a paradigm shift for college sport leadership with the intent of cultivating paramount experiences for people across diverse backgrounds based on anti-racism, anti-sexism and cultural responsive response". A culturally responsive transformational leadership is suggested that assert a level of compassion where the awareness of disadvantages is concerted into action and cross-cultural communication for the understanding of the importance of communalism, ethic of care and values of reciprocity.

Creating antiracist and anti-sexist policies is about redressing historical and systemic oppressions and levelling the occupational playing field. This means to take on an antiracism and anti-sexism philosophical stance where the roots of racism is confronted to manifest racial justice and where anti-sexist policies can act as a counter system against sexist policies and practices that disadvantage women particularly from underrepresented and marginalised racial and sexual identity backgrounds. A culturally responsive leadership with the involvement of leadership and middle management, is therefore suggested which involves socio political consciousness, cultural empathy and a collective responsibility and commitment to inclusive learning and progress.

Other barriers for inclusiveness and diversity are strategies and policies for recruitment. Accordingly, one suggested solution is to – in policy and practice – promote diversity and inclusiveness when hiring. Strategies for inclusiveness and diversity may then be guided through:

- including the whole person and diverse factors that may influence organisational experiences;
- being observant to "who resides outside the margins of power" (Chanel & Keaton, 2022:11);

- being aware of the intersection between identity and power and how this puts certain groups in specific positions;
- being aware of how oppression can be shared with other minority groups but also opposite to other groups (Chanel & Keaton, 2022).

3.3 Women in leading positions/career opportunities and pathways in sport higher education

Several studies stress the importance of mentorship and networks as part of leadership development (Borland & Bruening, 2010; Dadswell et al., 2022; Siple, et al., 2018; Welch et al., 2021; Wright et al., 2011). As an example, a suggested solution to address under-representation of Black women in different staff/faculty positions is networking (Wright et al., 2011), mentoring and role models (Siple et al., 2018) and developmental programmes (Borland & Bruening, 2010), as well as paying attention to hegemonic masculinity in sport organisations and the issue of sexual harassment (Wright et al., 2011). When the completion of studies and graduation is discussed as a problem, research also points to the educators and that they must acknowledge their responsibility (Siple et al., 2018).

Further, facilitators for sports leadership positions among women with culturally diverse backgrounds, were found to be certain interpersonal factors such as “personality, coping strategies, previous experiences and psychological wellbeing” (Dadswell et al., 2022: 13), as well as personal and organisational support. Interpersonal facilitators included mentorship, networks and communities supporting career development within the leadership position. Further, leadership programmes and inclusive practices were found to support leaders (Dadswell et al., 2022). Kamphoff’s (2010) study of reasons for female coaches’ decisions to leave their college coaching position suggests six main recommendations from the coaches including: 1) increased salary; 2) control recruiting; 3) start a women’s coaches’ association across all sports; 4) provide more female role models for young girls; 5) address family issues; and 6) train/advise women in negotiation and coaching contracts. At last, more intersectional research on women from culturally diverse backgrounds is needed, as well as policies addressing several oppressing grounds. (Dadswell et al., 2022).

3.5 Student and staff attitudes and stereotypes

The findings of Vilanova and colleagues (2022) suggest addressing a more inclusive and welcoming organisation for student athletes, including structure and policy. Making LGBTQIA+ more visible i.e. on websites and on campus, and in course content. This can create a deeper awareness of the need for gender sensitive language. Furthermore, it is essential to provide LGBTQI+ training for staff and students.

Other suggested solutions are to increase students’ knowledge about the formal aspects of student rights and how to support and act as part of a non-discrimination culture and environment. Furthermore, to let students get insights into the gendered nature of the curriculum, unsafe spaces that create opportunities for bullying and anxiety about the body, as well as teachers’ pedagogies that reinforce gender and sexuality norms. Another aspect is how athletic identity may be positively affected by developing an academically engaged identity and the benefits thereof (Higginbotham, 2021).

Several studies find that men student athletes or physical education men students in general are less positive towards homosexuality than women student athletes or physical education women students (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2018; Ospina-Betancurt et al., 2023; Toomey & McGregor, 2018), and a focus on men is therefore suggested as a possible avenue for change (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2018).

When negative attitudes towards for instance homosexuality are studied and found among students, the suggested solutions include issues relating to diversity as a teaching content in order to challenge such negative views among students during their education (Sarac, 2012). Counternarratives to the pervasiveness of hegemonic and homophobic masculinity are also highlighted as important to raise, since these might contribute with other and more diversified descriptions of the masculinity constructions that take place in all male team sports (Anderson, 2011). Research also suggests focusing on the coaches in changing students' attitudes, as the coaches' own attitudes seem to positively influence the students' (Toomey & McGeorge, 2018). Suggestions include addressing politically conservative and/or religious students as well as homophobic language. Moreover, to create environments where LGBT athletes and non-LGBT athletes can meet (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2018).

Change in the curricula to address diversity and prepare students for future work with diverse individuals in the sporting and physical education field, is another important suggestion as for example studies on school students in physical education point to aspects of exclusion and discrimination (Jansson et al., 2023). De Luca and colleagues (2022) conclude that diversity and inclusion must be brought into course content and classroom environment. They specifically suggest incorporating into instruction themes such as privilege and oppression, gender, race, and sexual orientation within the sport context and to include experiences from out of campus.

For employees, Melton and Cunningham (2014) stress to recognise the importance of employees' attitude and behaviours for workplace inclusion, therefore an institution should provide education, training and development of skills for employees. Further, employees who are hesitant in showing explicit LGBT support may show support more implicit. The authors also suggest evaluating the organisational structure to ensure "power and autonomy" to employees to "promote inclusive practices and policies in their respective departments" (Melton and Cunningham: 204).



4. Mapping of institutional policy and implementation

This fourth part presents the results of the mapping of institutional policy adopted and implemented by the IOs to address gender equality and gender-based violence in their respective institutions. It builds on elements of the UniSAFE mapping (Huck et al., 2022) and the GEP building blocks. Six of the eight IOs responded to the mapping request.¹ The following sections thus cover Charles University, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport (CU), West University of Timisoara (UVT), Lithuanian Sports University (LSU), State University of Physical Education and Sport (SUPES), University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport (UL), and University of Banja Luka (UNIBL).

The mapping covers what the IOs experts consider the most comprehensive policy and implementation in their current policy framework. It is comprised of a set of series of questions, covering five themes: the overall description of the policy/document, target groups, content, implementation, and evaluation (See Annex). It is important to note, that in a previous and similar – but significantly more extensive – inventory of policies and measures to respond to gender-based violence in European universities and research organisations, the majority of policies and measures were found lacking a comprehensive and intersectional perspective in addressing gender-based violence (Huck et al., 2022).

4.1 The overall policy

All but one (UL) mapped policies are currently valid Gender Equality Plans with university wide reach, and the UL policy is a general policy on rules on measures against violence, harassment, and bullying. The responsibility for drafting the plans is generally high level and centralised, e.g., Rectors, Prorectors or Prorectors delegates, Deans, Heads of Departments, supported by various committees and HR. At UL, which is the only IO where a general policy was mapped, the drafting process involved partnerships such as the student union. None of the mapped policies does however include a clear definition of gender equality, and only one (SUPES) is specific to the sports environment (Table I).

¹ The remaining two will be supported to complete their mappings in connection to the first training and mutual learning workshop, Strasbourg 14-15 September 2023.

Table 1: Overview of mapped policies

IO	Name of policy	Reach	Type	Definition of gender equality	Sports dedicated	Validity
UNIBL	Gender Equality Plan at the University of Banja Luka	university	Gender equality plan	No	No	2022-2026
UL	Rules on measures against violence, harassment and bullying	university	General policy	No	No	2022-ongoing
CU	Equal opportunities plan 2022-2024	university	Gender equality plan	Commitment to the principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination, and the equalisation of opportunities	No	2022-2024
NSA						
LSU	Equal opportunities policy and its implementation arrangements at LSU	University	Gender Equality Plan	No, only discrimination	No	2023
UVT	Planul de egalitate de general universitatii de Vest din Timisoara	University	Gender equality plan	No	No	2022-2023
SUPES	Gender equality plan in SUPE	University	Gender equality plan	No	Yes, sports environment	2021-2025
USEF						

4.2 Target groups and inclusion

The target groups, i.e., the explicitly defined target groups of the policy measures at the functional or inequality (age, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation) levels, vary between institutions. All but one (LSU) include academic staff, all but one (SUPES) include non-academic staff, and all but one (UVT) include students. All IOs GEPs or General Policy explicitly address women, all but UVT explicitly address men, and none of the mapped policies address non-binary people.

While the CU GEP explicitly only addresses women and men, the IOs expert points out that it is clear that the measures are targeting all other inequality groups included in the questionnaire, that is: non-binary people, ethnic minority students, ethnic minority staff, students with disabilities, staff with disabilities, students with migrant backgrounds, staff with migrant backgrounds, sexual minority students, sexual minority staff, older students, older staff, younger students, and younger staff.

None of the mapped policies address bystanders. One (UL) addresses perpetrators, both staff and students - as well as perpetrators that are in any other way than as an employee or student, are involved in the activity of the member faculty - and does so in an extensive way and with clear mandate of the Rector to “order them to immediately cease violating the victim’s dignity”. In case of staff perpetrators, a wide range of measures can be imposed (Table 2).

Table 2: Measures to address perpetrators of violation of dignity (UL)

Refer the perpetrator to attend an education course intended to raise their awareness of the issue of violating dignity.

If possible, an altered manner of performing work obligations shall be ordered for the perpetrator in line with the labour legislation.

Issuing of a warning.

Initiation of a procedure of issuing a written warning prior to ordinary termination of employment contract in accordance with the act governing employment relationships.

Initiation of a procedure of ordinary termination of employment contract due to misconduct in accordance with the act governing employment relationships.

Initiation of a procedure of extraordinary termination of employment contract in accordance with the act governing employment relationships.

Termination of the contract that serves as the basis for the perpetrator to perform work at the UL.

In case of student perpetrators, the Rector, depending on an investigate committee’s findings, may order an altered manner of fulfilling study requirements and/or initiate a disciplinary procedure in line with the provisions of the Rules on the Disciplinary Liability of the Students of the University of Ljubljana. Additionally, the Rector shall immediately inform the perpetrator, the victim or the person authorised by the victim of the measures adopted and completion of the procedure, along with the Dean of the member faculty where the violation of dignity was committed and the Dean of the member faculty where the alleged perpetrator is employed, works, studies or is in any other way involved in the activity of the member faculty.

Three of the six policies (CU, LSU, UNIBL) make it explicit what or who needs to change, including e.g., organisational culture, and names the function/role responsible for the change. In CU, the responsibility sits with specific members of the Rector's board and each objective is aligned to a

specific position. In LSU, the responsibility for change sits with HR, and in UNIBL with the Rector or Senate. For proposing and reporting on change, it is the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources, for implementation it is the Office of the Vice-Rector for Human and Material Resources, and the Gender Equality Advisory Board, and as support structures are faculties and partner NGOs named as responsible. In three of the IOs (UVT, SUPES and UL), neither what needs to change nor who is responsible for change is clearly defined or assigned.

The mapping of intended beneficiaries of change follows the same pattern: in policies where change is defined and responsibility allocated, the intended beneficiary of that change is specified (CU, LSU and UNIBL).

To sum up, the mapped policies do not target an inclusive group of staff and students but are rather concentrated on academic and non-academic groups of staff and students on a general level, without specifically considering marginalised or disadvantaged identities and inequalities, nor the intersections between inequalities. Further, only three of the mapped policies define gender equality change, assign responsibility and name beneficiaries of the change. The beneficiaries are named in a similar way as the overall target groups, without clear visibility of inequalities and their intersections.

4.3 Coverage and content of policy

4.3.1 Gender equality and gender-based violence

None of the mapped policies include a clear definition of gender equality. Gender-based violence as an overarching form of violence is not explicitly addressed in any of the six policies, but different forms of gender-based violence are. The most addressed form is sexual harassment, which is addressed in all but two policies (LSU, UNIBL). In UNIBL, however, gender-based violence is covered by the Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence at UNIBL, which is a different policy document.

Table 3: Forms of violence addressed in the policies

IOs/form of violence	CU	UVT	LSU	SUPES	UL	UNIBL ²
Gender-based violence						
Physical violence		Yes		Yes	Yes	Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
Sexual violence		Yes			Yes	Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
Financial/economic	Yes			Yes	Yes	Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
psychological		Yes		Yes	Yes	Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)

² Gender-based violence is covered by the Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence at UNIBL, which defines gender-based violence and its different forms.

Sexual harassment	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
Harassment			Yes			Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
Moral harassment		Yes				Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
Online violence					Yes	Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
Structural Violence		Yes				Not in GEP (but in the GBV guidelines)
Indirect discrimination			Yes			
Direct discrimination			Yes		Yes	

Two of the policies (LSU and UL) define violence or a form of violence. In LSU, harassment is defined as “an act of unwanted conduct which is aimed at offending or offends personal dignity”, and in UL, violence is defined as “any unacceptable interference in the integrity of another person using physical or psychological force, and which is aimed at creating or creates frightening, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment on grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, or religion.”

None of the policies address gender-based violence specifically for the sports environment, nor do the policies specify places or venues where gender-based violence can occur, such as on campus, in the dormitory, at conferences, or in locker rooms, or specially to sports as a high-risk arena.

Overall, there is a lack of an intersectional perspective on gender equality and gender-based violence. Only one of the IOs experts (UL) states that the policy includes such understanding. Three of the IOs (LSU, SUPES, UL) state that the mapped policy includes multiple inequalities, these include: gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, or religion (LSU), gender (SUPES) and age, physical disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, social status (UL). This means that in three of the gender equality plans and general policy, multiple inequalities and an intersectional perspective are lacking. While there is a recognition that inequalities can be based on different grounds/criteria, there is no intersectional perspective of inequalities.

4.3.2 Addressing gender-based violence

In terms of addressing gender-based violence (GEP recommended thematic area, EC, 2021), the mapping draws on the 7P model, a holistic conceptual and theoretical framework including policy, prevalence, prevention, protection, prosecution, provision of services and partnerships. It was originally developed by Mergaert and colleagues (EC, 2016), and further developed and used in the EU H2020 UniSAFE project (Strid et al., 2022; Mergaert et al., 2023). This model is useful as it can “pinpoint various facets that contribute to addressing gender-based violence, as this allows different entry points to the analysis of the design and effectiveness of policies put in place” (Mergaert et al.,

2023: 2). In this model, policy is the basis of the approach and refers to both a coherent set of measures with a clear vision and strategy, and specific policy documents detailing such measures, while the remaining six Ps can be used to assess policy³:

- **Prevalence** and incidence estimates contribute to evidence-based policymaking. Data can be collected through surveys or administrative processes (e.g., the registration of complaints). Importantly, data collection and analysis must take an intersectional approach, taking into account, for example, people's ethnicity and origin, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, as well as their function within the organisation.
- **Prevention** refers to measures that promote changes in social and cultural behaviour. This may include induction materials for both staff and students; internal and external publicity and training; and public statements and visuals.
- **Protection** is about ensuring safety and meeting the needs of (potential) victims and survivors, with the objective to avoid (further) harm being inflicted. This includes clear processes, procedures, and infrastructure for reporting occurrences, and training for those responsible for handling cases. Protection may comprise measures such as a restraining order or offering a change of dormitory, student group, unit or supervisor.
- **Prosecution** and disciplinary measures cover legal and disciplinary proceedings against perpetrators, and related investigative measures and judicial proceedings. This includes possible warnings, suspension, termination of employment and study, as legally appropriate, and liaison with legal, police and criminal justice organisations and professionals.
- **Provision** of services refers to the services offered to support victims, families, bystanders, perpetrators and the community affected by gender-based violence. It can include counselling; legal, psychological and medical support; accommodating different exam, study or teaching schedules; and also, rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators. Importantly, the availability of services needs to be well known by all staff and students as well as by managers and supervisors.
- **Partnerships** relate to the involvement of relevant actors at all levels, such as governmental agencies, civil society organisations, trade unions, or staff and student associations.

In the SUPPORTER mapping of IOs, **prevalence**, the requirement for data collection on gender-based violence, is addressed in three policies (CU, UL, UNIBL). **Prevention and protection** are addressed in four (CU, LSU, SUPES, UL), **prosecution, procedures for reporting and provision of services** are addressed in three (CU, LSU, UL), and **partnerships** in four (CU, LSU, SUPES, UNIBL) (Table 4). In conclusion, the most comprehensive policy along the 7Ps is found at CU, which addresses, to some extent, all seven Ps, and at LSU and UL, which both cover six of the seven Ps.

³ Additionally, the model deploys a set of overarching principles that inform the implementation of the model: "attention to power, intersectional inequality and victim-centred approaches as well as perpetrator accountability, proportionality, patterns, perspectives and parties. Without extending the 7P model with additional components, they provide a deeper understanding of the existing model, adding sophistication and complexity" (Mergaert et al., 2023: 10).

Table 4: Policy coverage of the 7Ps to address gender-based violence

IOs/P	CU	UVT	LSU	SUPES	UL	UNIBL ⁴
Prevalence	Yes				Yes	Yes
Prevention	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Protection	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Prosecution	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
Provision of services	Yes		Yes	Yes		
Partnerships	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes

Indicators (measurable or verifiable) to assess the degree of implementation are included in three of the policies (CU, UVT, UNIBL). These predominantly relate to prevention, followed by prevalence and protection. None of the policies have indicators for prosecution and only CU for partnerships and UVT for the provision of services.

4.3.3 Implementation and evaluation

All mapped policies define concrete **implementation objectives** to be reached relating to the implementation of the GEP. In CU, where the gender equality plan is the more comprehensive policy, these include: regular monitoring of progress and informing management; prevention of bullying and sexual harassment; support for equal opportunities and prevention of gender stereotyping in the hiring process; ensuring the effective resolution of complaints relating to conduct that may violate the principles of the CU Code of Ethics; and sharing of good practice in the area of promoting equal opportunities within the academic and research sphere. In SUPES, these include: the creation of a database at the institutional level in order to permanently monitor the dynamics of recruitment and selection of employees; institutional implementation of system procedures and monitoring practices regarding gender equality; promoting gender equality through models of good practice and through communication and marketing means.

All policies allocate institutional **responsibility for the implementation** of policy and policy measures, involve a wide range of actors in their implementation – ranging from Vice-rectors and leadership to academic and administrative staff and students. Few of them call on partnerships with staff unions (SUPES), trade unions (UL), student unions (UL) and NGOs (UNIBL).

The policies were actively **disseminated** to the target groups, e.g., posted on the institutional website, including intranet, communication campaign, e-mail to the heads of faculties, departments, staff and students.

Two of the policies allocate a **budget** (UNIBL) or specify sources, without an exact allocation (CU) for policy implementation. While the policies have not yet been **evaluated** (all are still in force) two

⁴Gender-based violence is covered by the Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Violence at UNIBL, which defines gender-based violence and its different forms.

will be evaluated at the institutional level (CU, UNIBL) and all name a function/person responsible for evaluation.

4.4 Conclusions

In summary it is possible to conclude that the six mapped IOs have a GEP and policies on gender equality and gender-based violence. The policies have some implementation objectives to be reached and identified responsible parties for implementation. Definitions of gender equality and gender-based violence should be further elaborated to ensure a broad coverage of all issues (specificities of sport environment) and attention to intersectional discriminations. None of the policies have indicators for prosecution, and only one has indicators for partnerships and provision of services. Few policies call on partnerships with staff unions or student unions or NGOs. Only two of the policies have specified sources or a budget. Evaluation of policies (and actions) are still to be done. Finally, there is an intersectional gap in the mapped policies, where only three address multiple inequalities and none include an intersectional perspective.



5. Recommendations

5.1 Model institution for implementation of gender equality in sports higher education

This section aims at formulating the concept of a model institution in the context of the IOs based on the results and recommendations from the literature review and the mapping of institutional policy in the IOs. It takes into account the current EU requirements regarding the content of a gender equality plan. The purpose of formulating the concept and presenting components of a model institution is to visualise how changes and re-organisation of structures and value systems can be made to enable a gender equal sports higher education with an environment free from violence. Different institutions have different challenges due to country specific contexts, organisational environments and institutional conditions (these will be mapped in T2.3). Regardless, these recommendations for a model institution can function as both a reminder of, a tool for change and a re-orientation of systems and/or value grounds in practice.

Institutional change is a strategy aimed at removing obstacles to gender equality that are inherent to the research and higher education systems themselves and at adapting institutional practices. The focus is on the organisation and the adoption of gender equality plans (GEP) is the main tool. Such GEPs have been promoted in the past by the European Commission but have now become an eligibility criterion under the EU framework Horizon Europe research programme.

A GEP comprises a set of actions of varying degrees of complexity. This set of actions must be structured around a strategic vision aimed at achieving equality within the organisation. Minimum mandatory aspects of GEPs relate to the availability of dedicated resources (time and funding) for gender equality positions and others working on the GEP; ensuring data collection to monitor and evaluate progress and outcomes and engaging the whole organisation through training and capacity building actions.

The recommended fields of actions to achieve gender equality in research and higher education are:

- Work-life balance and organisational culture.
- Gender-balance in leadership and decision-making.
- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression.
- Integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching content.
- Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

5.1.1 Conceptual clarity and shared understandings

Working towards gender equality and the eradication of gender-based violence in (sport) higher education requires clear definitions of the concepts to ensure a shared understanding of the problems to address and the formulation of these. This is of particular importance in institutions where the national frameworks are weak or where the experiences of addressing gender equality and/or gender-based violence may be limited. This is fundamental to defining what problems policy should address, and the challenges in doing so. The IOs mapped policies do not define gender-based violence. The recommendation here is to base this definition on international conventions and international scholarship, where gender-based violence is understood as a manifestation of

gendered power inequalities, and where gender-based violence encompasses a broad range of multiple, interacting, physical, psychological, and emotional experiences of violations and abuse, such as for example in the UniSAFE definition (Strid et al., 2021: 13):

Gender-based violence includes all forms of gender-based violence, violations and, abuse, including but not limited to, physical violence, psychological violence, economic and financial violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender harassment, stalking, organisational violence and harassment – in both online and offline contexts, including emerging forms of violence, experienced as violence, violations and abuse not yet necessarily named or recognised as violence.

Naming and addressing multiple forms of discrimination, or framing challenges in terms of gendered inequalities, is a first important step towards conceptualising gender-based violence further. Gendered inequalities are at the core of the concept of gender-based violence, both as a determinant and consequence of violence and abuse. It opens for an intersectional perspective, i.e., the interconnected, complex ways in which multiple inequalities (age, sex, gender, race/ethnicity, disabilities, nationality, location, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) position people and enable violence and abuse. Intersectionality defined this way is an important and major shift in focus and understanding of the multiple, differentiated ways inequalities coexist and play out in gender-based violence experiences.

It is therefore important to recognise the way sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, and other forms of oppressive norms and behaviours define academic cultures. When considered as processes of normalisation and neutralisation of violence and abuse, it becomes possible to recognise how norms of this kind are established as almost invisible and intangible structures of oppression creating risks for and potential ongoing, toxic, violent, and abusive study and work environments throughout the European higher education systems.

In policymaking, monitoring, and evaluation, and when developing concrete, targeted measures at an institutional level, it is important to understand gender-based violence as intersectional violations and abuse emanating from structural oppression. It sharpens and deepens the analytical perspectives on the experiences of often minoritised groups, shedding a light on the oppressive norms and behaviours within higher education institutions and helping to push for new and bold notions and concepts beyond simplified versions of sexual harassment and binary biological sex or gender identity. Foremost, it makes it more relevant and possible to *both* acknowledge different potentially vulnerable or minoritised groups and their specific intersectional experiences, needs, and demands *and* to pursue relevant structural transformative measures for the benefit and safety of all students and staff.

5.1.2 Work-life balance and organisational culture

Work-life balance is a key component of achieving gender equality in the workplace. The Directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance for parents and carers that should be now implemented in all member states, aims to establish a new distribution of risks connected with caregiving and improve the situation of women in the labour market through a more equal sharing of care responsibilities (De la Corte-Rodriguez, 2022). Embedding WLB in all institution/department, and for all academic and administrative staff is paramount for the transformation of an organisation's culture engaged in advancing gender equality. Issues relating to maternity, paternity and other types of carer's leave

are currently under research in the context of sport higher education and universities and specifically for coaches.

This area concerns all general policies and actions that contribute to creating a favourable environment for both women and men to develop and fulfil their full potential and career opportunities.

The findings from the literature review urgently call for the consideration and implementation of a new institutional model. This applies to higher education institutions responsible for educational programmes and research in sports science, as well as to coaches and students involved in sports training programme under the umbrella of an academic institutions or universities. This institutional model must also consider the intersection of two different fields with partly different underpinning logics: In the field of high-performance sport, the basic logic of practice is to compete and win, and within higher education the logic of practice is to learn and critically reason around scientific based knowledge. But for career development there are elements of competition and elimination. Sport started off in ancient times as an arena for play and games often related to festivals where people gathered to meet from different villages or settings. What we today recognise as sport has gradually during the second part of the 1900s and onwards gone through a fast and strong professionalisation and marketisation process where the commodification of athletes is evident in several sports disciplines. Today it is a full-time job to become a high-performance athlete or a coach, and in several countries this practice of training is combined with studies at higher education. This also means that several countries have a whole structure and staff in place for supporting this dual career system. Other countries strive to establish a dual career system for high- performance elite sport athletes and coaches.

According to the literature review the intersection of these two fields within higher education have had problems in realising a gender equal sports higher education with an environment free from violence. This has to do with, for example, sport as a high-risk arena where certain behaviours are allowed inside the court but not outside of it. But this has also to be related to the development of competitive sport based on a (white) masculine norm, performed by and for men, and the marketisation and professionalisation processes. The below recommendations are based on the findings of the literature review, and the purpose of them is to support changes and a re-organisation of structures and value systems to enable a gender equal sports higher education with an environment free from violence. Different institutions have different challenges due to country specific contexts, regardless of that these recommendations can function as both a reminder of and a tool for change and a re-orientation of systems and/or value grounds in practice.

Such profound transformation of the culture of organisations can only be realised through the mobilisation and engagement of stakeholders acting as change agents.

To enable equality, the institution/department, academic and administrative staff, constantly work on the organisational culture which for the individual includes the work life balance. This is done to maximise both internal and external changes.

Taking the lead: Athletic departments can act as agents of social change working to deinstitutionalise norms of exclusivity and heterosexism, articulating a viable alternative, and then work to re-institutionalise new structures, processes, and norms of LGBT diversity and inclusion. Employers supports employees to take on the role as **change agents** engaging in champion behaviours shaping visible alternatives, not the least for the advocating of LGBT inclusiveness. A whistle-blower

function may also be of value. Further, as an inclusive environment the athletic department are prepared **to take actions** against 'lad-culture' on campus and normalising sexism.

Institutions/higher education needs to be prepared to take on a lead role in relation to organisational strategies dealing with cultures, norms and values as the organisational culture, (e.g. on work-life balance) may be deeply influenced by the surrounding community cultures, values and the specific sports community. To take on a lead role means to promote inclusive and diverse practices and policies in the respective departments.

Infrastructure: Higher education and athletic departments need to build an infrastructure around policies and practice in relation to work-life balance and an organisation promoting actively gender-equality and a workplace addressing proactively gender-based violence (see also point 5.1.6).

Beware of the culture of research and higher education: To be aware of the risk of creating asymmetric power relations, hierarchical structures, and strong dependence constituted by elitism, gender and age, which may underpin violence, includes a responsibility to recognise the importance of employees' attitude and behaviours for workplace inclusion.

5.1.3 Gender-balance in leadership and decision-making

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making positions is a key concern of EU institutions in general and in the research area. Such requirement was already expressed in the Council conclusion on advancing gender equality in the European research area adopted in December 2015. It is an objective of the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, and it is enshrined in the regulations, including in directives, relating to gender equality. In Horizon Europe, a target of 50% women in Horizon Europe research teams, board, expert groups and evaluation committee is set as a ranking criterion for proposals with the same score.

The rationale for ensuring a gender balance in all leadership and decision-making bodies is multiple. One important aspect is that it shows that the organisation is truly living up to its values. Women and men should have equal access to formal and informal decision-making structures and decisions taken should also be gender informed and gender sensitive.

A way forward towards a paradigm shift in sport leadership has been for the institution/department to include anti-racist and anti-sexist approaches to diversity by establishing a **culturally responsive transformational leadership** where the underrepresentation of groups, stereotyping, discrimination and lack of support is under scrutiny.

Linking with the organisation culture transformation, establish open and transparent procedures and a working environment where everybody feels supported and is encouraged to apply for decision-making positions.

Ensure that the top leaders of the institution explicitly support gender equality and give legitimacy to gender matters raised when decisions are taken.

Education of coaches: Secure education for coaches where the content includes legal aspects of discrimination and sexual violence/harassments, policies, examples of code of conduct and what characterise proper resourcing and commitment of a responsible academic coaching leadership. This involves training of responsible staff, monitoring incidents and case management outcomes, and the evaluation of desired effects.

Establish a “culturally responsive transformational leadership”: A way forward towards a paradigm shift in college sport leadership, including anti-racist and anti-sexist approaches to diversity is to establish a culturally responsive transformational leadership where the underrepresentation of groups, stereotyping, discrimination and lack of support is under scrutiny.

Networks and mentoring: Expand coaches networking and mentoring and introduce developmental programmes.

5.1.4 Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Ensuring equal opportunities for the development and advancement of careers in sports education/institutions is essential for both women and men. Recruitment, selection, and career progression play pivotal roles in achieving this objective. Therefore, it is imperative for organisations to thoroughly evaluate the current recruitment and selection procedures at all levels to identify and rectify any biases that perpetuate structural discrimination against women throughout their career journeys. Diversity of profile of staff and students in terms of gender, race and ethnicity contribute to excellence as contributing to a wide range of approaches and ideas fostering creativity and innovation.

While the European equality directives (i.e., Directive 2006/54 covering gender equality in vocational training and employment) are providing a strong background to ensure equality between women and men in the vocational training and in employment, horizontal and vertical segregation is still widely spread across sectors and countries. Bias in recruitment and promotion, cultural and social norms from both staff and students, international mobility etc are playing an important role as well as the organisational routines and working culture.

Sports education/institutions should take a double approach and act on both a structural level to review routines and monitor processes, and on an individual level to support coaches and teachers.

The institution/department shall ensure that there are **secure routines for recruitments** assured by processes guided by non-discrimination, non-racism and the avoidance of stereotyped attitudes limiting staffs' and students' conditions and opportunities for recruitment and career development.

A way to support career development is to expand coaches/teachers **networking and mentoring** and introduce developmental programmes. Staff security is also seen as important and therefore the athletic department ensures to **monitor and support staff members** in a more vulnerable position due to short-term contracts or other forms of insecure/precarious employment conditions, and expectations of (international) mobility.

5.1.5 Integrating the gender dimension into research and teaching content, higher education programmes and curricula

The integration of the gender dimension in higher education programmes is crucial to develop the knowledge and pedagogical skills of future sport teachers/coaches. In parallel, education programmes should have specific courses on gender equality issues, addressing students' rights and how to support and act to ensure a non-discriminatory environment.

To ensure the required content of sport educational programmes the institution/department involved in sport educational programmes and athlete training have secured educational programmes/courses for staff, coaches and students where gender equity and social justice are highlighted and linked to gender and research. This includes definitions of and grounds for discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, religion, dealing not only with the rights of the individual, but refers to the whole organisational culture of each institution/university. Both in terms of legal aspects and how norms and values function in practice.

Higher education curricula: Institutions/departments involved in sport educational programmes and athlete training need to secure educational courses where gender equity and social justice are highlighted. This includes grounds for discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, religion, dealing not only with the rights of the individual, but refers to the whole organisational culture of each institution/university. Both in terms of legal aspects and how norms and values function in practice.

To ensure a student climate based on equality/equity the institution/department puts in a large effort to support a positive student culture. One part of this work is to educate the students not only in their respective subjects but more specifically on gender + equality and GBV. This is done by **increasing students' knowledge** about the formal aspects of **student rights** and how to support and act as part of a non-discrimination culture and environment. This kind of courses or education should highlight different negative aspects of the socio-political context, both in terms of student conditions (gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and class discrimination) and the exploitation of athletes to increase knowledge. These types of courses, or mainstreamed course content, should include how to be and behave as a fellow student, how and where to 'ring the bell' if incidents appear.

Further, an important part of the education is to make students aware of/able to problematise **structural perspectives of inequalities**. For example, how certain sports colleges and marketisation processes serve the interest of building financial capital and the revenue of the institution rather than serving the educational and academic interest of the student athletes.

To support students during their academic and athletic career the institution/department also offers mentorship among students.

Educating of students: increase students' knowledge about the formal aspects of student rights and how to support and act as part of a non-discrimination culture and environment. This kind of courses or education should highlight different negative aspects of the socio-political context, both in terms of student conditions (gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and class discrimination) and the exploitation of athletes to increase knowledge. These types of courses should include how to be and behave as a fellow student, how and where to 'ring the bell' if incidents appear.

Mentorship: introduce mentorship among students.

Structural inequalities: make students aware of/able to problematise structural perspectives of inequalities. For example, how certain sports colleges and marketisation processes serve the interest of building financial capital and the revenue of the college rather than serving the educational and academic interest of the student college athletes.

5.1.6 Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence occurs in all spheres, domains and organisations, and in offline and online settings. Higher education and research institutions are no exception. Some of the specific features of higher education and research institutions –such as unequal power relations or the specific organisational culture –may make the occurrence of gender-based violence even more frequent here compared to other settings (Linková et al., 2023).

The highly competitive academic environment intersects with sports which is a high-risk arena where certain violent behaviours are allowed inside the court but not outside of it. But this has also to be related to the development of competitive sport based on a (white) masculine norm, performed by and for men, and the marketisation and professionalisation processes.

A holistic approach to gender-based violence, using the 7P model should be adopted by IOs. This means that through a GEP, both the department in charge of student affairs and staff should first assess the magnitude of gender-based violence in academic and athlete careers. Then they can adopt and implement measures such as educational programme about gender-based violence, protective measures and support services centered on victims, formal and informal reporting procedure, a code of conduct and clear and transparent investigation procedures and sanctions, internal and external partnerships and a clear policy framework.

As part of their policy, higher education/institutions in sport should formally adopt the UniSAFE vision (Linkova et al., 2023) where:

- No form of violence is tolerated.
- The existence of intersectional inequalities is acknowledged and actively tackled by institutional measures and actions.
- Staff and students are expected to act with integrity, in a continuous effort to learn and reflect on ways to improve organisational cultures.
- Teachers are trained to acquire skills on how to approach students in a respectful and inclusive way inside and outside the classroom.
- Members of the academic community treat each other with respect, acknowledging that in an unequal society, what constitutes disrespectful behaviour may have different meanings to people in different hierarchical positions and the views of those in less powerful positions must be heard and acknowledged.
- Members of the academic community care about the academic environment and are engaged in a joint effort to build this vision for future academic and research settings free of gender-based violence.
- Members of the academic community trust their institution – its processes and responsible staff – to strive to protect staff and students from gender-based violence, and when an act of violence occurs, to treat it with the seriousness it deserves, and address with transparency and confidentiality acts of gender-based violence.

5.1.7 Policy

The model institution overall policy framework should have clear, measurable and verifiable objectives and measures, be based on a shared understanding of gender equality and gender-based violence. Furthermore, the policy needs to address the naming and addressing of multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination, and to frame challenges in terms of gendered inequalities. Partnerships with other organisations/student unions/departments should be included among the indicators described. Dedicated personnel and a budget to support institutional changes should be

allocated. Infrastructure and dissemination of information and knowledge should be at hand/complement the policy.

5.2 Recommendations/Implications for the SUPPORTER training⁵

In summary it is possible to conclude that all IOs have policies with implementation objectives to be reached. None, however, focus specifically on gender-based violence in sport higher education. Some, however, have information on indicators and monitoring for other aspects of gender equality. None of the policies have indicators for prosecution, and only one has indicators for partnerships and provision of services. Few policies call on partnerships with staff unions or student unions or NGOs. Only two of the policies have specified sources or a budget. Evaluation of policies (and actions) are still to be done. Finally, there is an intersectional gap in the mapped policies, where only three address multiple inequalities and none include an intersectional perspective. An important caveat, however, is that the mapped policies (GEP or any other specific ones) of IOs subject to analysis are implemented as part of the entire system, which encompasses multitude of other policies and laws.

An important step in the SUPPORTER training will be to address multiple inequalities and gender-based violence from an intersectional perspective. Naming and addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and to frame challenges in terms of gendered inequalities, are important to enable for the conceptualising of gender-based violence further. This opens for an intersectional perspective, i.e., the interconnected, complex ways in which multiple inequalities (age, sex, gender, race/ethnicity, disabilities, nationality, location, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) position people and make possible violence and abuse. Intersectionality defined this way is an important and major shift in focus and understanding of the multiple, differentiated ways inequalities coexist and play out in gender-based violence experiences. By, in practice, work with and discuss organisational structure and culture, as well as leadership and management, from an intersectional perspective will help to close/ bridge the gap between research, recommendations and the findings from the mapping.

Another recommendation/implication for the SUPPORTER training is to take on a holistic approach in relation to an athletic department and its organisational levels to increase the understanding and knowledge of policy, as well as strategies for effective prevention.

Student participation or student influence is a third recommendation/implication to bring to the SUPPORTER training. Student voices are sources for learning where the encounters with and between students can be seen as part of both building and challenging an organisational culture and the activities taking place.

Content related recommendations to develop capacities:

- Share understanding and definition of gender equality and gender-based violence in the context of sport and sport studies.
- Raise awareness on oppression and privilege as well as gendering processes.

⁵ These recommendations are based on the mapping in Task 2.1. A more comprehensive mapping of the wider organisational environment of the IOs is conducted in T2.3.

- Informing and developing capacities to design action in the different fields of a GEP and the six steps of a GEP.
- Supporting active bystanders' interventions in both academic and sport environment.
- Develop capacities to identify allies, both internal and external, that have the authority to challenge and change organisational norms, routines and practices.
- Allow a deconstruction of norms about excellence, individualism and competition that are widely shared in the academic and sport environment and contribute to gender and intersectional inequalities and gender-based violence.
- Develop educational content centred on gender equality and gender-based violence, including a gender + approach, suitable for integration into higher education curricula on sport.
- Identifying and dealing with resistance.
- Communication skills to inform and get support from stakeholders towards structural change.
- Develop capacities to assess, monitor and evaluate structural changes on gender equality and gender-based violence.



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Acknowledgement

The mapping of policies in the IOs was conducted by the following experts:

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APPENDIX

Method

A search strategy inspired by the method of a systematic literature review has been implemented. Six key concepts: *Sports Education, Higher Education, Violence, Gender, Gender Equality* and *Other Inequality Grounds* were used to create search strings with synonyms and related concepts. The database searches were performed on three separate occasions and with different combinations of the search strings.

1. Global search for scientific articles on *Sports Education, Higher Education, Violence, Gender, Other Grounds for Inequality*. Annual delimitation 2010–2023.
2. A narrower search focusing on *EU, Sport education, Higher education, Gender equality*. Annual delimitation 2015–2023.
3. A supplementary search in the Swedish publication database SwePub with keywords in Swedish and English aimed at finding scientific articles on *Sports education, Higher education, Violence, Gender/Gender equality*. Annual delimitation 2000–2023.

The searches were carried out in the databases Web of Science (multidisciplinary), PubMed (medicine, biomedicine), Scopus (multidisciplinary), SPORTDiscus (Sports), ERIC (educational sciences, pedagogy), Education Research Complete (educational sciences, pedagogy), Gender Studies Database (gender research) and SwePub (Swedish research).

The searches resulted in a total of 825 unique database hits. The hits were reviewed at title and abstract level in the screening programme Rayyan and in a second stage a full text reading and selection was made.

Below are the search blocks that were used to create search strings for each search.

First search (1)

Gender-based violence in higher sports education (Global search)

Sports education

athlet* OR "exercise science" OR "physical education" OR PE OR "sport* coach*" OR "sport* education" OR "sport* instruction" OR "sport* science" OR "sport* studies"

Higher education

academ* OR college* OR "doctoral student*" OR "graduate* school*" OR "higher education" OR HEI OR facult* OR instructor* OR lecturer* OR "phd student*" OR professor* OR "research institut*" OR researcher* OR rfo OR "research funding organi*" OR rpo OR "research performing organi*" OR schola* OR student* OR "tertiary education" OR universit*

Violence



abuse OR abusive OR "adult victim*" OR assault* OR "crime victim*" OR discrim* OR "forced sex*" OR "gender based violen*" OR GBV OR harass* OR "hate crime*" OR "hate speech" OR maltreat* OR metoo OR "me too" OR misogyn* OR offend* OR perpetr* OR rape OR "sexual advance*" OR "sexual consent" OR "sexual coercion*" OR sexism* OR stalk* OR threat* OR "unwanted sex*" OR violen*

Gender/Gender equality

female* OR gender* OR "gender equal*" OR "gender equity" OR femini* OR "gender equality plan*" OR GEP OR "gender inequal*" OR "gender unequal*" OR hypermasculin* OR intersex* OR masculin* OR male* OR man OR men OR nonbinar* OR "non-binar*" OR woman* OR women* OR transgender OR transsexual* OR transwomen* OR transwoman* OR transman* OR transmen*

Inequality grounds other than gender

ableis* OR afrophob* OR ageis* OR "anti-gay*" OR "anti-LGB*" OR antisemit* OR "anti-semit*" OR "anti-trans*" OR bisexual* OR caste OR chauvinis* OR colorism OR disabili* OR ethnic* OR funkophob* OR gay OR hetero* OR homosex* OR homophob* OR indigenous* OR intersectionality OR islamophob* OR lookism* OR LGB* OR lesbian* OR migrant* OR minorit* OR prejudice* OR queer* OR racialization OR racis* OR religio* OR "sexual minorit*" OR "sexual orientation" OR "social class" OR stigma OR taboo OR transphob* OR transsex* OR xenophob*

Second search (2)

Gender equality in higher education with a focus on the EU

Sports education

athlet* OR "exercise science" OR "physical education" OR "sport* coach*" OR "sport* education" OR "sport* instruction" OR "sport* science" OR "sport* studies"

Higher education

academ* OR college* OR "doctoral student*" OR "graduate* school*" OR "higher education" OR HEI OR facult* OR instructor* OR lecturer* OR "phd student*" OR professor* OR "research institut*" OR researcher* OR rfo OR "research funding organi*" OR rpo OR "research performing organi*" OR schola* OR student* OR "teritiary education" OR universit*

Gender equality

"gender equal*" OR "gender equality plan*" OR GEP OR "gender equity" OR "gender inequal*" OR "gender unequal*"

EU including UK, Nordic countries

austria OR belgium OR "baltic states" OR bulgaria OR croatia OR cyprus OR "czech republic" OR denmark OR england OR estonia OR EU OR "european union" OR finland OR france OR germany OR "great britain" OR greece OR hungary OR iceland OR ireland OR italy OR latvia OR lithuania OR luxembourg OR netherlands OR "nordic countries" OR norway OR "northern Ireland" OR poland OR portugal OR romania OR scandinavia* OR "scandinavian and nordic countries" OR scotland OR slovakia OR slovenia OR spain OR sweden OR "united kingdom" OR wales

Third search (3)

Gender-based violence in higher sports education (Swedish research databases)

Sports education

athlet* OR atlet* OR "exercise science" OR idrott* OR "physical education" OR sport* OR "sport* coach*" OR "sport* education" OR "sport* instruction" OR "sport* science" OR "sport* studies"

Higher education

academ* OR akademi* OR college* OR "doctoral student*" OR doctorand* OR facult* OR fakultet* OR forskare OR forskningsinstitut* OR "graduate* school*" OR "Higher education" OR HEI OR högskol* OR instructor* OR lecturer* OR "phd student*" OR professor* OR "research institut*" OR researcher* OR rfo OR "research funding organi*" OR rpo OR "research performing organi*" OR schola* OR student* OR "teritiary education" OR universit*

Gender/gender equality

bisexual* OR female* OR femini* OR gender* OR "gender equal*" OR "gender equity" OR "gender equality plan*" OR genus* OR gay* OR GEP OR "gender inequal*" OR "gender unequal*" OR HBTQ OR HBTQI OR hetero* OR homosex* OR hypermasculin* OR hypermaskulin* OR ickebinär OR intersectionality OR intersektionalitet OR jämställd* OR kvinn* OR LGBTQ OR LGBTQI OR lesbi* OR male* OR masculin* OR maskulin* OR man OR men OR män OR nonbinar* OR "non-binar*" OR queer* OR woman* OR women* OR "sexual minorit*" OR "sexual* orient*" OR "sexuella minoritet*" OR "sexuell orientering" OR transfob* OR transgender OR transkvinn* OR transman* OR transmen OR transmän* OR transperson OR transsexu* OR transwomen* OR transwoman*

Violence

abuse OR abusive OR assault* OR agres* OR brottsoffer OR "gender based violence" OR GBV OR "gender discrimination" OR harass* OR hatbrott OR "hate crime*" OR "hate speech" OR homofobi* OR homophob* OR kränk* OR könsdiskrimin* OR maltreat* OR metoo OR "me too" OR misogyn* OR misshandel OR offend* OR perpetrat* OR rape OR "sex discrim*" OR "sexual advance*" OR "sexual consent" OR "sexual coercion*" OR sexis* OR "sexuellt samtycke" OR stalk* OR threat* OR trakass* OR transfobi* OR transphob* OR "unwanted sex*" OR violen* OR våld* OR övergrepp

Mapping grid

