



2021

# WINNING PLAYS

## THE GENDER EQUITY PLAYBOOK REPORT

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**CANADIAN  
WOMEN & SPORT**

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



**Advancing gender equity is a team effort. The Gender Equity Playbook Report would not be possible without the collaboration of Canadian sport organizations and our research partners.**

We thank the 14 organizations who took part in the Playbook program for inviting us into their organizations and for their participation in the extensive engagement process. We also show extreme gratitude to these organizations for giving us permission to use their organizational insights and Playbook experiences to create this report so others can benefit. Their commitment to continuous learning in and beyond their organizations is both inspiring and greatly appreciated.

Taking the time to complete an internal review on gender equity can be challenging and eye-opening. The 14 organizations who completed the Playbook recognize the importance of gender equity and demonstrate great leadership in the sport sector. We appreciate their honesty in this process and their willingness to make change.

Dr. Alison Doherty and Abigail Perfetti (Western University) provided expert stewardship to the project and authored the report. Their expertise and commitment were instrumental to its realization. From the beginning, Dr. Cheri Bradish (Ryerson University) and Dr. Catherine Sabiston (University of Toronto) joined in championing the project. We are grateful for their vision and support.

We also acknowledge our Impact Research Committee, co-chaired by Dr. Sabiston and Dr. Bradish, for their thoughtful feedback and guidance. This expert advisory group includes: Dr. Janelle Joseph (University of Toronto), Dr. Tara McHugh (University of Alberta), Dr. Norm O'Reilly (University of Guelph), Dr. Cathy Van Ingen (Brock University) and Dr. Alison Doherty (Western University).

We are grateful to the Department of Canadian Heritage for their support in the development and delivery of the Gender Equity Playbook and of this report. And to Ryerson University's Dr. Cheri Bradish (Future of Sport Lab) and Dr. Wendy Cukier (Diversity Institute) for their role in the development of the Gender Equity Assessment.

And finally, we appreciate the Canadian Women & Sport staff and Board of Directors whose tremendous dedication and hard work are helping to bring about real and meaningful change.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In sport, gender equity remains a goal and not yet a mission accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

**Canadian Women & Sport's Gender Equity Playbook ("the Playbook") advances gender equity in sport by helping sport organizations examine and align their policies, processes and programs using an intersectional gender lens.**

Due to institutional barriers, girls, women and other equity-deserving groups often don't feel valued, seen, safe or heard in sport. The Playbook takes a tailored approach to help organizations advance gender equity, diversity and inclusion by identifying and understanding gaps and building competency to address them.

This report provides sport leaders, funders and partners an inside look at the Playbook process and the state of gender equity within a cross-section of Canadian National Sport and Multi-Sport Service Organizations (the Playbook organizations). This report highlights key learnings, triumphs, challenges and visions for growth that can be used to inform policies, investments, and actions broadly in the sport system. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the commitment to real and impactful change by the Playbook organizations.

Over 50 people across 14 sport organizations completed the Playbook - a three-stage learning, assessment and action planning process - between January 2020 and March 2021. All data presented in this report are derived from the Playbook activities and are presented in aggregate form. As we continue to work with additional organizations and follow the journey of previous organizations, we look forward to building on the data gathered to date to help understand the long-term impact of the Playbook.

Organizations identified the lack of women and other equity-deserving groups in leadership roles and a need to improve organizational conditions as the two most common gender equity gaps and issues.



## KEY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT IDENTIFIED:

1. The underrepresentation of women and people from other equity-deserving groups in governance, leadership and coaching roles was a key gap in the organizations.
2. Key issues surrounding organizational conditions included practices that privilege men, lack of intentionality in the pursuit of gender equity, diversity and inclusion, and complacency with the status quo.
3. Gaps in gender equity, diversity and inclusion practices across all six organizational dimensions of the Gender Equity in Sport Assessment Tool (GESAT) indicate key areas of improvement are not central to one business operation but rather gaps span across the full range of organizational activities.



***"The Gender Equity Playbook allowed our organization to create a plan to address gender equity and diversity in our organization. The Playbook translates the esoteric ideas into small attainable actions that advance the organization."*** – Playbook participant



## ORGANIZATIONS' IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES ARE TO:

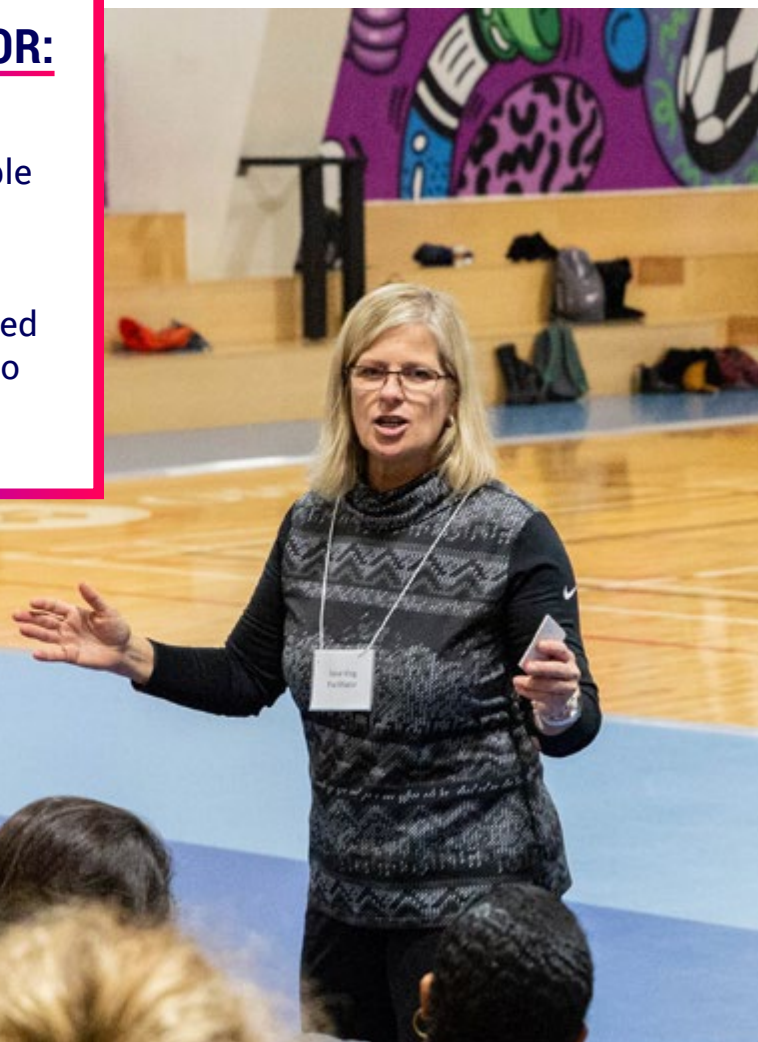
1. Address the underrepresentation of women and people from diverse groups through setting clear target goals and developing recruitment strategies to meet those goals
2. Focus on ensuring a vision, goals and policy for gender equity, diversity and inclusion; training and support for stakeholders; and generating and using data for informed action.

Positively, all Playbook participants feel empowered by the Playbook experience to take on this challenge and report they are highly committed to continue to grow gender equity in their organizations and improve the retention and advancement of women and girls in sport.

As reflected in the Playbook data, organizations are not alone in needing support to advance gender equity and much work still needs to be done. Continued partnership and investment is required to meet the Government of Canada's goal of achieving gender equity at all levels of sport by 2035.<sup>2</sup>

## THIS REPORT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR:

1. **SPORT LEADERS AND DECISION MAKERS** sharing learnings, best-practices and actionable tools no matter where you are in your gender equity journey.
2. **FUNDERS AND PARTNERS** highlighting the need for continued investment, policy and support to enable real and long-lasting change.



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# INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the Government of Canada set a target of achieving gender equality at all levels of sport by 2035<sup>2</sup>. Reaching this target requires significant commitment and meaningful action by sport organizations and their leaders.

Research indicates that gender equity, diversity, and inclusion results in improved organizational performance and helps sport grow and adapt to meet the needs of Canada's diverse population<sup>3</sup> - embracing gender equity will improve sport for everyone.



**HOWEVER, WHILE 92% OF NATIONALLY FUNDED SPORT ORGANIZATIONS BELIEVE THAT GENDER EQUITY IS IMPORTANT OR ESSENTIAL<sup>4</sup>, ORGANIZATIONS:**

- > Struggle to understand their gender equity gaps and to identify the root causes;
- > Lack clarity and confidence in what to prioritize and what steps to take to create real change;
- > Find it difficult to independently review, interpret and apply the available guidance to their organization.



**IN RESPONSE TO THESE CHALLENGES, CANADIAN WOMEN & SPORT ENDEAVOURED TO PROVIDE SPORT ORGANIZATIONS WITH CUSTOMIZED, HANDS-ON GUIDANCE TO:**

- > Develop their understanding of gender equity for women and girls in sport;
- > Deepen their commitment and broaden buy-in to change;
- > Understand areas for action tailored to their organization;
- > Create a specific and measurable plan for moving forward.



**THE GENDER EQUITY PLAYBOOK ("THE PLAYBOOK")<sup>5</sup>** was designed and piloted in 2019-2020 as a systematic, theory-driven

program of continuous learning towards systemic change in and across Canadian sport organizations. Collaborating with Ryerson University's Diversity Institute, with its 20+ years of research and impactful programs that companies have used to harness

inclusion as a driver for success, and Future of Sport Lab, Canadian Women & Sport developed and launched the Playbook in 2019.

The Playbook is a comprehensive and collaborative program that aims to build capacity and confidence within organizational leaders, supporting them to implement tangible and meaningful action.

**Gender Equity** is the process of allocating resources, programs, and decision making fairly to all genders without discrimination, and addressing any imbalances in the benefits available to people of different genders. Canadian Women & Sport uses gender as its first lens of anti-oppression to advocate for self-identifying women and girls.



**[Gender Equity Video](#)**

## INTERSECTIONAL GENDER LENS

The Playbook applies an intersectional gender lens, meaning gender is the first lens through which organizational policy, program and processes are examined, but this process is also grounded in the principles and practices of diversity and inclusion. For a more in-depth overview of this program, refer to Appendix 1.<sup>5</sup>

We hope the information provided inspires individual and collective action to make systemic change. Only through working together can we ensure the full positive benefits of sport are available to all Canadians.



## PLAYBOOK PROCESS

### 1 SETTING THE FOUNDATION: THE GENDER EQUITY LENS

To build Playbook participants' understanding and competence to apply a gender lens in day-to-day decisions.



### 2 CREATING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING: ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

To provide Playbook organizations the opportunity to identify gender inequities, informed by multiple sources of data, leading to a recommendation report.

**KEY STEPS INCLUDE:**

- > Pre-assessment Survey
- > Gender Equity Assessment & Consultation
- > Recommendation Report

### 3 IDENTIFYING THE PATH FORWARD: ACTION PLANNING

To provide organizations with tools and expert support to create an evidence-based course of action for measurable change.

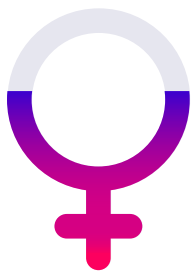
**KEY STEPS INCLUDE:**

- > Pre-Action Plan Survey & Consultation
- > Action Planning with follow-up support

# PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

This report presents landscape information from six National Sport and Multi-Sport Service Organizations (NSOs/MSOs) who completed the Playbook pilot project phase in 2019-2020, and eight NSOs/MSOs who completed the Playbook in 2020-2021, for a total of 14 organizations.

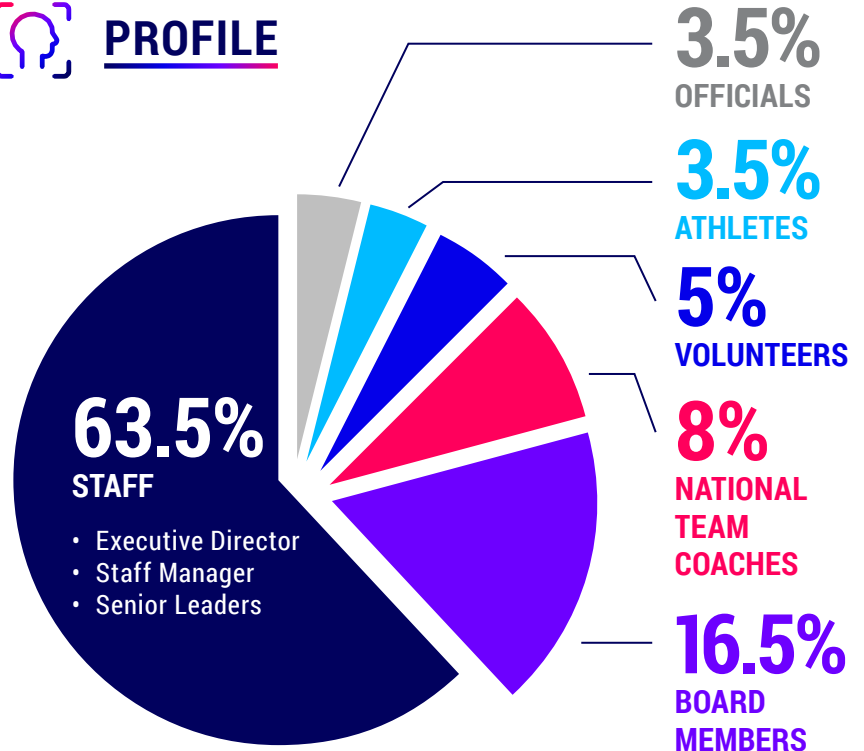
Data in this report are aggregated across the organizations. All data shared here is from the Playbook organizations, unless otherwise indicated. The Playbook participants held a variety of roles within the organizations.



A mix of genders participated in both the assessment and action phases, with women comprising about two-thirds of participants.



## PROFILE



Generally, the profile of participants for each organization stayed consistent throughout the assessment and action plan phases, with the exception of reduced involvement of board members in the action planning phase.



# 1. SETTING THE FOUNDATION: THE GENDER EQUITY LENS

The Playbook process is grounded on principles of continuous learning – a critical aspect to building sport leaders’ confidence and competence to take on this work into the future. **The Gender Equity LENS e-Learning Module<sup>6</sup> is an opportunity for participants to gain a baseline understanding of gender equity and to develop skills to apply a gender equity lens in day-to-day decisions.** The Gender Equity LENS is a key activity for individuals to engage effectively in the subsequent phases of the Playbook.

211 members from participating Playbook organizations completed the Gender Equity LENS e-learning module. As a result of their engagement, participants reported positive self-awareness of gender equity and most individuals valued and recognized the importance of gender equity as a strategic priority.



**PARTICIPANTS UNDERSTOOD HOW GENDER EQUITY CAN BE A STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOR SPORT ORGANIZATIONS**



## 3 WAYS TO BUILD YOUR GENDER EQUITY COMPETENCE & CONFIDENCE:

1. Take the **Gender Equity LENS e-Learning module** and encourage others in your organization to as well

2. Check-out the **tools section** of our website for practical, do-it-yourself learning and guide.



3. Contact us at Canadian Women & Sport for customized learning and solutions – [info@womenandsport.ca](mailto:info@womenandsport.ca)



## KEY GENDER EQUITY LENS E-LEARNING MODULE TAKEAWAYS FOR PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR GENDER EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION:

- > Enhanced understanding of equity and what it means to be equitable
- > How to apply a gender equity lens
- > The role of bias in policies and practices
- > The importance of awareness of equity, diversity, intersectionality and bias

As with any learning, live or virtual, true understanding and confidence with new knowledge comes with the use and application of the information. For participants in the Playbook, this opportunity would come in the Assessment and Action Planning stages.



### MY TAKEAWAY FROM THE GENDER EQUITY LENS:

*“Understanding that we all have unconscious bias that cause us to make assumptions or create unintentional barriers. Being aware of this is half the battle towards change.”*

*“Taking steps to address gender equity doesn’t have to be overwhelming - it’s about identifying areas where you can make changes, setting your focus, and developing and implementing a plan - continuous improvement and learning!”*

## 2. CREATING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING THE ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Together, Canadian Women & Sport and the Playbook organizations collect and collate data and evidence about the organization's policies, processes and programs, identifying strengths and areas for improvement through a gender equity, diversity and inclusion lens.

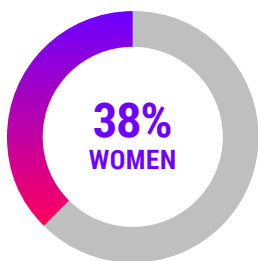
### "WHAT DO YOU THINK?": THE PRE-ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Each Playbook organization begins this process by sharing their perceptions about the organization's gender equity gaps through a pre-assessment survey. In this early stage, two themes arose from the data across the organizations:

#### 1. LACK OF WOMEN AND OTHER EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

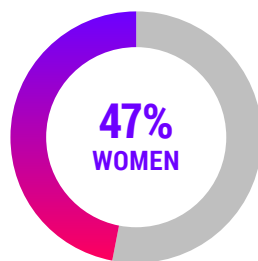
A common perception across the Playbook organizations was that there was an underrepresentation of women and lack of diversity particularly on the Board of Directors and in key coaching roles.

A balanced number of women and men on boards expands innovation by ensuring that multiple perspectives are considered, particularly when faced with complex decisions.<sup>7</sup>



#### PLAYBOOK ORGANIZATIONS' BOARD MEMBERS

This is consistent with the board representation across all Canadian national and multi-sport organizations<sup>4</sup>



#### SENIOR LEADER ROLES OF PARTICIPATING PLAYBOOK NSOs ORGANIZATIONS

These findings are consistent with the senior leader representation of Canadian NSOs and MSOs<sup>4</sup>

#### 2. NEED TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS

A common perception across the Playbook organizations was that it was challenging for women to advance in the sport because of a "boys club" that privileges men in the recruitment, selection and succession for various roles.

- > **Stereotyping and bias against women's skills and experience, and preference for (or against) a particular style of leadership (particularly regarding coaching)**
- > **The organization is not intentional/active enough in pursuing gender equity**

#### PLAYBOOK PARTICIPANTS PERCEIVED THAT WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATION...

**33%**

Women and men have the same opportunities.

**43%**

Men have more opportunities than women.

**10%**

Women have more opportunities than men.

**14%**

Unsure



### OTHER PERCEIVED ISSUES AND GAPS FROM THE PRE-ASSESSMENT SURVEY INCLUDED:

- > A lack of understanding of what a gender equity lens is and how to use it, or complacency that “we’re doing fine” on gender equity
- > Lack of equity and diversity training, and limited policies and strategies to address inequity

*“There are some attitudes of complacency or lack of interest in exploring opportunities to do better in this area. Because we are well represented in some areas on a surface level... many think there is no further work to do”*

- Playbook participant

## REPRESENTATION DOESN'T EQUAL INCLUSION

Organizations need to go beyond a surface analysis of tracking numbers and work to better understand and address the inequities experienced by women and other equity-deserving groups. Becoming an empathetic ally is a great first step!



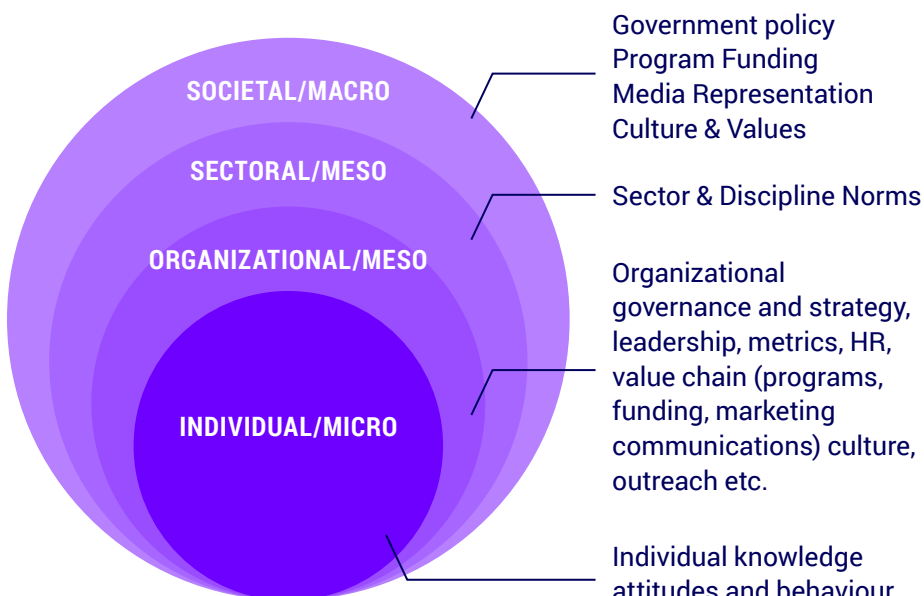
[View Infographic](#)

## TAKING A DEEPER DIVE: THE GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

Next, organizations complete the Gender Equity in Sport Assessment Tool (GESAT)<sup>8</sup>, a tool that allows for a comprehensive and systematic assessment of organizational processes, practices, and policies to identify growth areas.

The six GESAT dimensions were developed in partnership with the Diversity Institute (Dr. Wendy Cukier) and the Future of Sport Lab (Dr. Cheri Bradish) at Ryerson University and derive from the Institute’s evidence-based Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT), which is grounded in best practice. The Diversity Institute takes a holistic systems approach to diversity and inclusion using the Ecological Model to map out the ecosystem.

### THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL



### THE 6 GESAT DIMENSIONS:

- Governance, Leadership, and Strategy**
- Recruitment, Selection, & Promotion**
- Values & Culture**
- Measurement & Tracking Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**
- Gender Equity & Diversity Across Organization Activities**
- Expanding the Pool & Outreach**

Canadian Women & Sport review the evidence submitted by each Playbook organization and facilitate two 2.5-hour collaborative consultations with each respective organization. During the sessions, organizations can provide additional context to the evidence they submit, providing Canadian Women & Sport with clarity and a deeper understanding of the organizations' policies, processes and programs. The consultation sessions also support the goal of continuous learning, building Playbook participants' knowledge of gender equitable practices.

The common gaps and strengths<sup>9</sup> in the critical gender equity, diversity and inclusion practices outlined by the GESAT<sup>8</sup> dimensions were aggregated across the Playbook organizations. The following sections outline the findings from the Gender Equity Assessment.



## 1. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, & STRATEGY

Governance, leadership and strategy provide the direction and commitment needed to drive gender equity, diversity and inclusion in organizations. These elements also set out the accountabilities of the organization and resourcing to deliver on them.

**Many Playbook organizations indicated they have one or more board members and senior staff who are women or people from other equity-deserving groups.**

**ORGANIZATION HAS BOARD MEMBERS AND SENIOR STAFF LEADERS WHO ARE WOMEN AND/OR PEOPLE FROM OTHER EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS**

93% YES

However, organizations having representation of the range of stakeholders in the sport system remains an area of growth:

**BOARD MEMBERS AND SENIOR LEADERS REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF THE ORGANIZATION'S STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SPORT'S ECOSYSTEM IN CANADA**

22% YES 21% UNSURE

**An additional area of growth is adopting policies with implementation plans and strategic goals for improving gender equity.**

**ORGANIZATION HAS EXPLICIT GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY POLICIES, OR CORRESPONDING IMPLEMENTATION PLANS**

15% YES 14% UNSURE

**ORGANIZATION HAS PERFORMANCE AND COMPENSATION FOR LEADERS TIED TO MEETING GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY TARGETS**

7% UNSURE

**ORGANIZATION HAS SPECIFIC STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS TO IMPROVE EQUITY FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN AND PEOPLE FROM OTHER EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS IN THE ORGANIZATION**

15% YES 14% UNSURE

The "tone at the top" is critical to signaling the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion for everyone in the organization.



## 2. RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, TRAINING & RETENTION, PROMOTION, TERMINATION

Fair and equitable Human Resource (HR) processes that are transparent and include bias-mitigating mechanisms are critical to improving diverse representation. Diverse representation leads to better and more innovative decisions, a better understanding of the target audience and improved organizational reputation.

The Playbook participants reported a desire to adopt best-practices in applying gender equity and diversity lenses to their HR processes, however organizations reported a lack of intentional gender equity and diversity focus in their recruitment, hiring, and training:

### ORGANIZATION HAS SPECIFIC EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS RECRUITMENT STRATEGY FOR:

Board & Staff

0% YES 7% UNSURE

Coaches & Officials

43% YES

### ORGANIZATION SPECIFICALLY TARGETS WOMEN AND PEOPLE FROM OTHER EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS IN RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

7% YES

### ORGANIZATION HAS GENDER AND DIVERSITY TARGETS FOR INTERNSHIPS

0% YES



### ORGANIZATION HAS GENDER EQUITABLE SELECTION COMMITTEES

23% YES 23% UNSURE

### ORGANIZATION HAS TRAINING ON BIAS-FREE HIRING

23% YES 23% UNSURE

### ORGANIZATION HAS MANDATORY GENDER EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES, COACHES, CONTRACTORS OR BOARD MEMBERS

14% YES 14% UNSURE

### ORGANIZATION HAS SUCCESSION PLANNING WITH GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

14% YES 14% UNSURE

### ORGANIZATION TRACKS GENDER EQUITY METRICS IN EMPLOYEE SEPARATIONS

0% YES

Using an intersectional gender lens in HR practices ensures organizations are attracting and retaining diverse perspectives, which will enhance decision making that reflects the needs and experiences of the Canadian sport ecosystem.



### 3. VALUES, CULTURE – POLICIES, CULTURE, FLEXIBILITY & SUPPORT

Values and culture drive the day-to-day interactions that support true inclusion for women and other equity-deserving groups. Culture includes the take-for-granted assumptions and ways of doing in an organization - “how we do things around here”. Putting an intersectional gender equity lens on organizational values and culture helps ensure an inclusive environment that allows employees and members to do their best work.

Playbook organizations provided mixed evidence of specific policy and organizational supports for gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

#### HARASSMENT & ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

100% YES

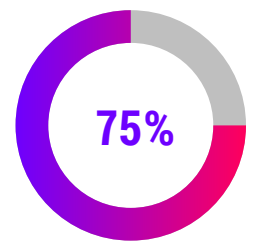
#### CODE OF CONDUCT & ETHICS

100% YES

#### FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

100% YES

Three-quarters of the organizations did not have implementation plans in place for their Harassment and Abuse Prevention, Code of Conduct and Ethics, Accessibility or Safe Sport policies (nor gender equity, diversity and inclusion), or were unsure if they did.



#### ON-SITE CHILDCARE OR EMERGENCY DAY CARE SERVICES

0%

#### CAREGIVER ARRANGEMENTS FOR DAILY WORK-LIFE WHILE TRAVELLING FOR TRAINING AND COMPETITIONS

0%

#### ROLE SHARING SYSTEM IN PLACE

0%

#### PAY EQUITY POLICY

15%



*Did you know advancing gender equity may be a tool to help lessen gender-based violence and champion safe sport?*



[View Infographic](#)

Policies help to formalize culture and values. Implementation plans operationalize an organization’s policies and commitment to gender equity and diversity. Without implementation, policies are ineffective at creating conditions for equity.



#### 4. MEASUREMENT AND TRACKING EQUITY & DIVERSITY

Equity and diversity measurement and tracking provide important support and insight about an organization's ecosystem for decision makers. Through these activities and systems of tracking, decision makers can understand, monitor, evaluate and act on gender equity dynamics over time.



**Across the participating Playbook organizations, tracking and evaluating metrics, reporting the insights and ultimately using the data to move forward on gender equity, diversity and inclusion are seen as critical but are incomplete practices:**

Almost two-thirds of organizations engaged in tracking and reviewing the number of girls, women and people from other equity-deserving groups who engage in their sport across a range of roles, however, less than a third of organizations reported and acted on those results, including benchmarking against other organizations.

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS TO GAIN INSIGHT TO THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN AND PEOPLE FROM DIVERSE GROUPS**

0%

#### MEASUREMENT & TRACKING EQUITY & DIVERSITY

Organizations that track and review # of girls, women and people from other equity-deserving groups who engage in their sport

62% YES

Organizations that reported and acted on those results, including benchmarking against other organizations

22% YES

7% UNSURE

% OF ORGANIZATIONS

**EQUAL PAY AUDITS OR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS WITH SELF-REPORTED DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

AROUND 15%

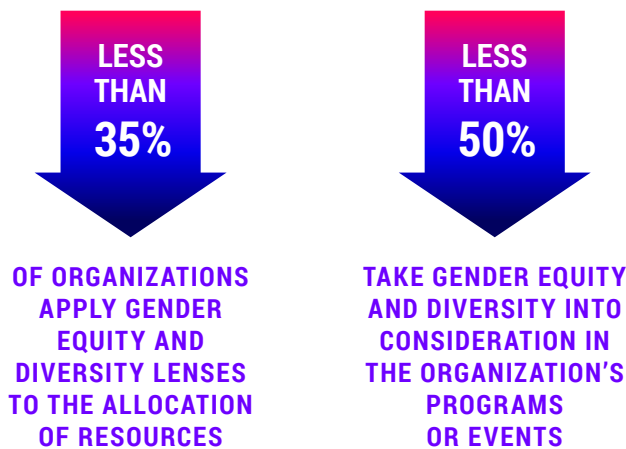
Collecting and analyzing gender and diversity data helps identify or uncover any potential gaps or inequities. This information can help organizations take a more targeted approach to designing gender equity, diversity and inclusion strategies. In the absence of data and discussion of the findings, inequity can proceed unchecked.



## 5. GENDER EQUITY & DIVERSITY ACROSS ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES – RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAM DELIVERY, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Embedding the principles and practices of gender equity, diversity and inclusion across organizational activities ensures women and other equity-deserving groups are welcomed, safe and included in sport organizations.

Two-thirds of organizations were active in offering the same number of program choices to women and men and promoting (through accessible materials) information about opportunities for all to be involved in different aspects of their sport. **However, many organizations also struggled or simply neglected to consider gender equity, diversity or inclusion across a range of related organizational activities:**



**LESS THAN  
25%  
OF ORGANIZATIONS**

- > Consider or communicate the importance of gender equity and/or diversity in their procurement processes and activities.
- > Communicate, or with any intent, the importance of gender equity and diversity in the organization's internal and external publications
- > Have a policy requiring inclusive language and/or images in all organizational communications and promotional material

Reviewing communication practices, programs and events with an intersectional gender lens helps organizations better understand the actions required to be inclusive and relevant, especially when designing activities to meet the unique needs of girls, women, and people from other equity-deserving groups.

## THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATING GENDER EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:

**Achieve goals** - Create alignment around gender equity, diversity and inclusion goals

**Coordinate efforts** - Address deep-rooted gaps in the sport to create more equitable policies and practices

**Improve culture** - Improve buy-in when asking folks to train and change behaviours

**Expand the pool** - Attract women and people from other equity-deserving groups as board, staff, volunteers and members



## 6. EXPANDING THE POOL & OUTREACH

Women and other equity-deserving groups face different individual, organizational and sociocultural barriers to participation and leadership in sport. Gender equitable outreach strategies that aim to actively connect and engage with diverse stakeholders and partners can help lessen access and inclusion barriers.



Expanding the pool was an area requiring growth for most organizations. The majority of organizations did not consider gender equity or diversity in their partnership and outreach activities:

LESS THAN 25% OF ORGANIZATIONS CONSIDERED OR COMMUNICATED GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY IN:

Outreach, selection and assessment of potential clients and partners



OVER  
75%

of the organizations did not provide, or it was not clear if they provide, outreach to girls and people from other equity-deserving groups in schools or communities about opportunities in the sport

Philanthropic activities



OVER  
50%

did not consider the importance of representation of women (& girls) and people from other equity-deserving groups in partnerships with educational institutions (i.e., research, executive education, training and development), and another third were unsure whether they did this or not

Women and girls make up more than 50% of the population but continue to be underrepresented in sport. This stems from a history of sport that has **actively excluded** their participation. As a result, organizations need to take an **active approach to include women and girls** by inviting, connecting, listening and valuing them as participants and leaders in sport.

OVER  
60%

of the organizations did not work with other institutions to support programs to encourage women and people from other equity-deserving groups to participate in the organization (as a member, athlete, coach, etc.)





*“We’re still in the beginning phases of making changes but the biggest thing I’ve noticed is more enthusiasm among those that participated in terms of achieving the recommendations.”*

- Playbook participant

The Playbook data highlight the **underrepresentation of women and other equity-deserving groups in sport organizations, especially in leadership roles**. Intentional and targeted effort to recruit and retain women combined with gender equitable hiring practices will help to ensure sport organizations reflect the diversity of stakeholders and sport’s ecosystem in Canada. As identified, organizations must also address **organizational conditions** to allow members and

employees to do their best work including formalizing an inclusive culture through policies. Tracking data with an intersectional gender equity lens can help support these initiatives.

Women need to be actively encouraged to join and ascend in sport organizations as participants and leaders while ensuring the conditions of the organization are right to support and sustain them.

# 3. IDENTIFYING THE PATH FORWARD: ACTION PLANNING

Through a shared understanding, built throughout the assessment, consultation and recommendation process, the organizations move to the final Action Planning phase of the Playbook with continued consultation, support and feedback from Canadian Women & Sport.



## CREATING A SHARED VISION: PRE-ACTION PLAN SURVEY & CONSULTATION

In an important visioning exercise before determining their strategic priorities for gender equity, diversity and inclusion, organizations are asked to reflect on the most important changes they would like to see within the organization over the next 5-10 years and how gender equity could help their organization.

The following themes were identified by the organizations:

### THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGES WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION OVER THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS WILL BE:

**1 IMPROVED/BALANCED REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS AT ALL LEVELS AND ROLES ACROSS THE SPORT WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON WOMEN IN COACHING**



**2 ORGANIZATION CONDITIONS THAT SUPPORT GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY, INCLUDING:**

- ✓ A safe/welcoming environment supported by culture of trust and respect
- ✓ Robust gender equity, diversity and inclusion policy, and all policies with gender equity and diversity lenses
- ✓ Intentional and sustained equitable resource allocation, professional development, and gender equity and diversity training on best practices
- ✓ Transparent recruitment, selection and promotion practices, that increasingly draw from the pool of athletes in a sport

**3 TAKING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN OUR SPORT, AND ACROSS THE CANADIAN SPORT LANDSCAPE, IN ADVOCATING FOR AND MODELLING GENDER EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICIES AND PRACTICES.**



### GENDER EQUITY & DIVERSITY CAN HELP OUR ORGANIZATION WITH:

- > Increasing organizational performance through more balanced, representative and diverse perspectives for better decision making and problem solving
- > Improving organizational image and reputation by eliminating the impression of being male-dominated, and showcasing the growth and integrity of the organization
- > Modelling diversity and representation that encourages girls, women and people from other equity-deserving groups to be involved at all levels and roles of the organization
- > Enhancing stakeholder benefits as athletes are able to work with both men and women, women coaches and administrators have an opportunity to grow to their potential, and the organization aligns value-wise with partners and the community
- > Promoting growth and development of the sport through increased trust in the organization and pride in the sport, increased inclusion of current stakeholders, attraction of future stakeholders

## FROM INSIGHTS TO THE WINNING PLAY: ACTION PLANNING

Based on a solid understanding of their organizational gaps as indicated in the Recommendation Reports and efforts underway to establish a clear gender equity vision, each Playbook organization reviews their report and are asked to prioritize the recommendations. **From the prioritized list, organizations identify the top three areas to focus on for their action planning sessions** with Canadian Women & Sport.

### LOOKING ACROSS THE PLAYBOOK ORGANIZATIONS, THE PRIORITY AREAS ARE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT THE ORGANIZATIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AS GAPS AND ISSUES:

1. Underrepresentation of women and people from other equity-deserving groups.
2. Improving the organization conditions for gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

To address these priorities, with the support of Canadian Women & Sport staff, each organization identified and developed customized actions that would help it advance gender equity and diversity. The themes that arose from those actions are presented here:



### ADDRESSING UNDERREPRESENTATION:

- > Establish target goals of a minimum level of representation of women and members of other historically underrepresented groups on key committees, the Board, as senior leaders, and as coaches and officials
- > Develop recruitment strategies and plans, with a particular focus on increasing women in coaching, and increasing the diversity of the Board
- > Establish/revise nomination and selection committees and policies, and succession plans, with gender equity and diversity lenses

*“From the action planning session we were able to provide our Board with specific and measurable goals supported by data which facilitated the creation of a Board committee with a focus on gender equity and diversity.”* – Playbook participant



### IMPROVING THE ORGANIZATION CONDITIONS:

- > Establish/commit to a vision and goals of gender equity, diversity and inclusion
- > Involve, inform, and educate all stakeholders, and partners, in the sport's ecosystem about the organization's vision and goals
- > Revisit/revise gender equity, diversity and inclusion policies, and all policies with gender equity and diversity lenses
- > Promote/mandate gender equity and diversity training, for all stakeholders
- > Provide financial and work-life support for women in leadership and coaching roles (including their development)
- > Generate and utilize data to understand and improve the participant, coaching and leadership experience of women and people from other equity-deserving groups
- > Encourage the engagement of people from equity-deserving groups throughout the sport through increased visibility and equitable resource allocation

So often organizations look to develop standalone programs, events or initiatives for women and girls and people from other equity-deserving groups, rather than address the underlying structural inequities. **Positively, the findings indicate organizations are looking inward to make change first before embarking on external strategies.** By establishing good internal policies, processes and programs, organizations will continue to build their competence and confidence to explore and solve for other gender equity gaps. Canadian Women & Sport offered a longer list of recommendations for organizations. Playbook organizations are encouraged to start with their priority areas and to address other organizational gaps as they continue on their gender equity and diversity journey of learning and advancement.



# A JOURNEY OF CONTINUOUS LEARNING & GROWTH: THE PLAYBOOK [IN] REVIEW

In addition to guiding organizations to a tailored, actionable plan for gender equity, diversity and inclusion, the Playbook is successful in promoting continual learning. **Continual learning encourages honest reflection and an openness to personal and professional development through a no-judgement approach.**



95% OF PLAYBOOK PARTICIPANTS LEARNED NEW INFORMATION ABOUT GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY AS A RESULT OF THE PLAYBOOK PROCESS

95%

LARGE MAJORITY OF PLAYBOOK PARTICIPANTS (97%) WILL PROMOTE THE GENDER EQUITY PLAYBOOK AMONG STAFF, MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

97%

OVER 50% LEARNED SPECIFIC SKILLS ABOUT GENDER EQUITY AND DIVERSITY THAT THEY CAN APPLY

50%

ALL PARTICIPANTS FELT THEY ARE FAIRLY OR VERY CONFIDENT THAT THEY CAN IMPLEMENT THE IDEAS

100%



SIX MONTHS POST-PLAYBOOK, THE 2019-2020 PLAYBOOK PARTICIPANTS REPORTED THEY PERSONALLY WERE HIGHLY COMMITTED (OR CONTINUING TO GROW IN THEIR COMMITMENT) TO:

- > gender equity in sport and physical activity as a priority
- > promoting the advancement of women in sport and physical activity
- > the retention of girls in sport and physical activity

At the time of this report, four of the six 2019-2020 Playbook organizations completed the 6-month survey reporting they had commenced activities associated with their Playbook Action Plans.

# IN SUMMARY

The level of motivation and commitment shown by the participating Playbook organizations and their leaders is evidence of tremendous progress toward creating the conditions required for real and meaningful change to happen. **The data and feedback gathered from the Playbook process highlights the positive impact the program plays in enhancing organizations' capacity to turn that motivation into effective action.**



**ALTHOUGH WORK IS UNDERWAY BROADLY TO ADDRESS ORGANIZATIONAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL BARRIERS TO GENDER EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, THE TWO MAJOR AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AMONG THE PLAYBOOK ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:**

- 1. THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AS LEADERS**
- 2. ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITIONS**

These issues and their solutions are complex and interconnected. The data gathered in this report suggests there is still much work to do across all aspects of sport organizations. Bringing women into organizations requires specific strategies and conditions to ensure they feel valued and will remain in the organization as participants and leaders.

Gender equity, diversity and inclusion are ongoing processes and require a commitment from all individuals in our sport system in all roles and at all levels. For example, the Government of Canada

has committed to gender equity on boards by 2024, however, recent data suggests our current rate of change won't get us there until at least 2036<sup>4</sup>. Advancing gender equity within the sport system requires strong, continued government and partner support to ensure deep and lasting change. If we are to reach gender equality at all levels of sport in Canada by 2035, we must act now and persist over time to realize the intended results.

The Playbook's progressive phases and activities with expert support strives to expedite progress on achieving this important call to action by promoting engaged voices, continual learning, and collective responsibility. It helps to empower organizations and leaders with the knowledge, motivation, competence and vision to create safe, welcoming, and inclusive opportunities. We are encouraged by the outcomes of this program, value the opportunity to use this data to continue to improve it and look forward to working with more organizations to support them in their gender equity, diversity, and inclusion journeys.

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5. More information about the Gender Equity Playbook program is available in Appendix 1
6. More information about the Gender Equity LENS e-Learning Module is available in Appendix 2
7. Citation: Dalhousie University & Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. (2019) National Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarking Study (page 6). <https://ccdi.ca/media/1979/20190715-research-national-diversity-and-inclusion-benchmarking-study.pdf>
8. More information about the Gender Equity in Sport Assessment Tool is available in Appendix 2
9. *Gap* represents well over 50% of organizations missing or unsure about the equity, diversity, inclusion practice. *Strength* represents well over 60% of organizations exhibiting the practice.

# APPENDIX 1

## THE GENDER EQUITY PLAYBOOK

The Gender Equity Playbook is a comprehensive service offered by Canadian Women & Sport to educate, assess and create tangible action to improve the quality and effectiveness of sport and physical activity organization's policies, programs, and processes in advancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion. It involves three continuous and progressive phases:

### 1 SETTING THE FOUNDATION: THE GENDER EQUITY LENS

To build Playbook participants' understanding and competence to apply a gender lens in day-to-day decisions.



### 2 CREATING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING: ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

To provide Playbook organizations the opportunity to identify gender inequities, informed by multiple sources of data, leading to a recommendation report.

#### KEY STEPS INCLUDE:

- > Pre-assessment Survey
- > Gender Equity Assessment & Consultation
- > Recommendation Report

### 3 IDENTIFYING THE PATH FORWARD: ACTION PLANNING

To provide organizations with tools and expert support to create an evidence-based course of action for measurable change.

#### KEY STEPS INCLUDE:

- > Pre-Action Plan Survey & Consultation
- > Action Planning with follow-up support

### PHASE 1 SETTING THE FOUNDATION: THE GENDER EQUITY LENS

During this phase, participants from sport organizations that are engaged with the Playbook complete the [Gender Equity LENS e-learning Module\\*](#). Based on Gender-Based Analysis+, the module assesses and builds individual understanding about gender considerations and how to apply an intersectional gender lens in the creation of policies and programming, and in the leadership and delivery of sport. A post-module survey tracks learning and perceptions across participants.

### PHASE 2 CREATING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING: ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

In this next phase, the current landscape of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the organization is assessed through several activities, and supported by a collaborative consultation process with Canadian Women & Sport. A team of organization stakeholders, including two point people, representing the board, senior leadership, staff, coaches, officials, athletes, and volunteers is expected and encouraged to be engaged in this and each phase of the Playbook. Canadian Women & Sport offer guidance as to who should be involved. This ensures active voices throughout the process representing a variety of perspectives and levels of the organization.

#### THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESSES INCLUDE:

- > **Organization background data** - The organization's background and context is outlined as a starting point for change through the Playbook process, with information collected from the organization and from publicly available data.
- > **Pre-Assessment** - A "pre-assessment survey" is completed by the organization's stakeholders, who share perceptions about the context of gender equity, diversity and inclusion in their sport.

# APPENDIX 1

- > **The GESAT** - The Gender Equity in Sport Assessment Tool<sup>®</sup> (GESAT<sup>®</sup>)\* is also completed by organization stakeholders, in consultation with Canadian Women & Sport during two half-day sessions. The GESAT provides a robust measure of strengths and gaps across six dimensions that are fundamental to meaningful equity, diversity and inclusion (Governance, Leadership and Strategy; Recruitment, Selection and Promotion; Values and Culture; Measurement and Tracking; Gender Equity and Diversity Across Organization Activities; Expanding the Pool and Outreach). Organizations are encouraged to identify “leads” who then consult and seek support from others in the organization to ensure accuracy of information across the different sections of the GESAT.

With these three sets of insights, and in collaboration with the organization, Canadian Women & Sport generates a Recommendations Report that outlines next steps for change tailored to each organization to address their gender equity, diversity and inclusion gaps.

## PHASE 3 IDENTIFYING THE PATH FORWARD: ACTION PLAN

During this final phase of the Playbook, the organization engages in evidence-based planning, outlining a course of action to create measurable change. Collaboration with Canadian Women & Sport means continued guidance and support, and opportunity for discussion and feedback with experts outside the organization. This includes a facilitated workshop session with the key leaders and stakeholders who make up the organization’s Playbook team.

The phase begins with a pre-action planning activity that helps to focus the organization on its vision for gender equity, diversity and inclusion. This is followed by identifying strategic priorities, and related critical steps, drawing from the recommendations for change provided by Canadian Women & Sport. The result is a tailored, evidence-based action plan for meaningful change that has a high degree of consensus and commitment behind it, and which continues to be supported by Canadian Women & Sport for any follow-up needs.

### OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES & TIMELINES

#### Setting the Foundation: The Gender Equity LENS

- > Gender Equity LENS e-learning Module
  - 1 hour to complete, individually
  - Playbook team members to complete within 30 days of initiation

#### Creating a Shared Understanding: Organizational Assessment

- > Background research
  - Completed by each organization’s Playbook team and Canadian Women & Sport consultant, with discussion
- > Pre-Assessment Survey
  - Completed by Playbook organization team members within a week
- > GESAT and Recommendations Consultation
  - Completed by Playbook organization team (up to 3 weeks)

- Followed by two half-day consultation sessions with Canadian Women & Sport
- > Recommendation Report

#### Identifying the Path Forward: Action Plan

- > Pre-Action Plan Survey and Consultation
  - Completed by Playbook organization team members at outset of action planning sessions held over two half-days with Canadian Women & Sport
- > Action Planning
  - Developed during the two half-day consultation sessions, finalized on own (with any feedback provided, as requested, from Canadian Women & Sport)
- > Follow-up Consultation
  - 30 to 60 minute call with Canadian Women & Sport

### MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

One month and six months following the completion of all Playbook phases, participants complete online evaluations to assess the impact of the Playbook on their knowledge, skills, attitude, motivation and confidence to advance gender equity, diversity and inclusion. They are also asked about their organization’s commitment to the process at those points post-Playbook. Canadian Women & Sport plans to continue collecting information from Playbook organizations to assess the long-term impacts of the initiative.

# APPENDIX 2

## THE GENDER EQUITY LENS E-LEARNING MODULE

The Gender Equity LENS e-Learning module is a prerequisite for participating in the Playbook process. Hosted on the Respect in Sport platform, the module was created to increase sport stakeholders' understanding of gender considerations in sport and enhance their competence in applying an intersectional gender lens to the creation of policies and programming, and in the leadership and delivery of sport.

Canadian Women & Sport encourage organizations to offer the training to those individuals involved in the Playbook and up to 50% of the organization's key stakeholders (e.g., board members, staff, coaches, volunteers, etc.)



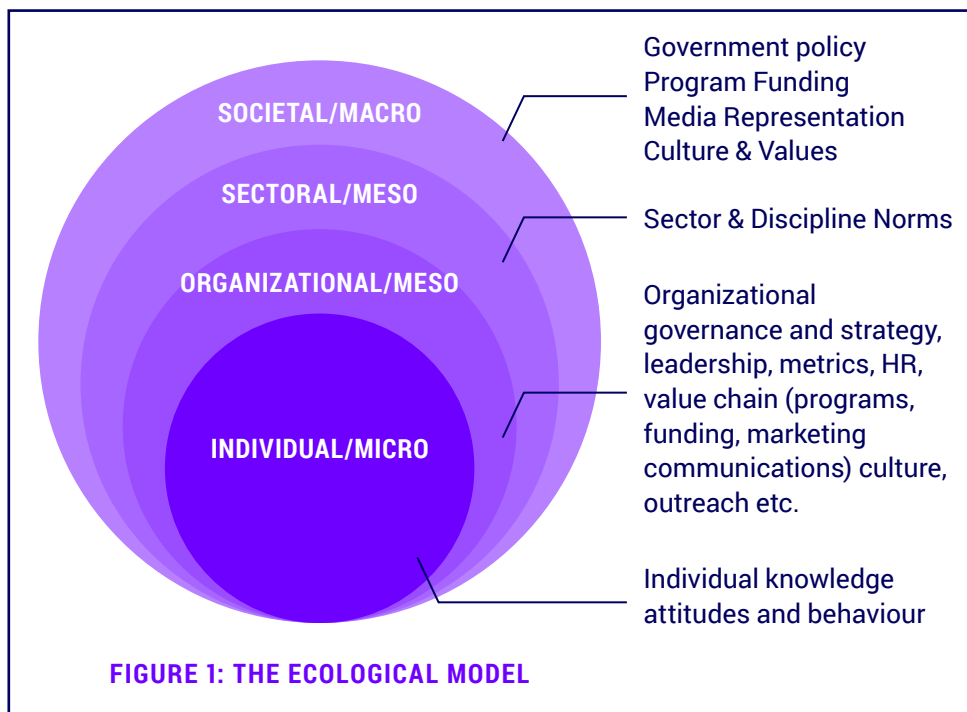
## THE GENDER EQUITY IN SPORT ASSESSMENT TOOL (GESAT)

The GESAT is a comprehensive framework used to evaluate organizational processes, practices, and policies with equity, diversity and inclusion lenses. Canadian Women & Sport partnered with the Diversity Institute (Dr. Wendy Cukier) and the Future of Sport Lab (Dr. Cheri Bradish) at Ryerson University to develop the tool from the Institute's foundational Diversity Assessment Tool (DAT).

The Diversity Institute takes a holistic systems approach to diversity and inclusion using the Ecological Model, which addresses three major levels of any ecosystem, including sport (see Figure 1 below). At each successive level are factors that potentially support or constrain equity, diversity and inclusion:

1. The macro-level includes government policies, political structures, culture, media representation, and other societal-level factors;
2. The meso-level includes sector (such as sport) norms and structures, as well as organizational practices;
3. The micro-level captures individual agency (attitudes and behaviour) in the framework.

These three levels intersect in complex ways. It is necessary to think about the entire ecosystem and plan strategically in order to advance equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the levels.



# APPENDIX 2

Organizations have the greatest amount of control at the meso level with organizational practices and decisions. This is the level at which the GESAT operates. The GESAT guides a comprehensive and systematic assessment of organizational processes, practices, and policies to identify the areas that could be improved from a gender equity, diversity and inclusion perspective. The GESAT measures multiple organizational aspects within six dimensions that are considered critical to equity, diversity and inclusion:

1. **Governance, Leadership, and Strategy** – focuses on “tone at the top,” which is critical to signaling the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion
2. **Recruitment, Selection, and Promotion** – focuses on equitable and inclusive human resource practices, as well as the system for ensuring a pipeline for diverse representation
3. **Values and Culture** – refers to the values, and related policies and practices, of equity, diversity and inclusion in an organization
4. **Measurement and Tracking Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** – refers to the important activities and systems that support understanding an organization’s ecosystem, and monitoring, evaluating and acting on any shifts (or inertia) over time
5. **Gender Equity and Diversity Across Organization Activities** – focuses on the principles and practices of equity, diversity and inclusion in the fundamental activities of an organization (such as programming, marketing, resource acquisition and allocation)
6. **Expanding the Pool** – refers to outreach strategies to connect and engage with (future) stakeholders and partners