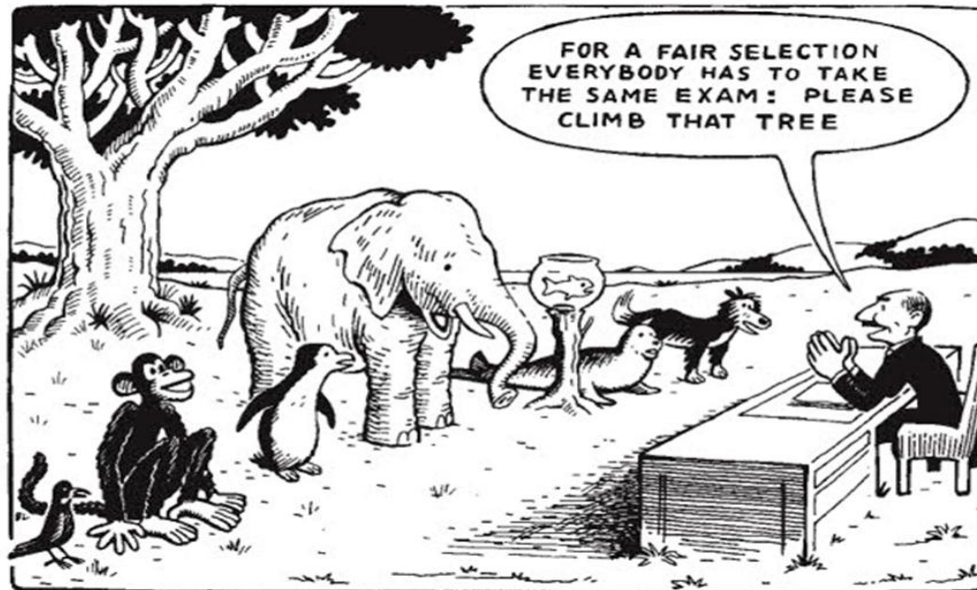


# Understanding & Achieving Gender Equality:

## Gender Equality:

For young athletes, sports organisations, and coaches



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# Outline of Presentation

- Defining gender equality
- The policy landscape
- The 'voices' of inequality: Examples from young athletes, coaches, sporting organisations
- Why does gender equality matter? The impact of gender inequality on young athletes
- Achieving equality: For sporting organisations and for coaches
- Concluding thoughts

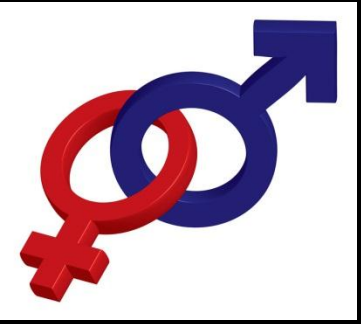
# Defining Gender Equality



GE: “refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.

Gender equality is not a women’s issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development”.



# Defining Gender



Gender: refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men.

These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable.

Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context.

In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities.

# What Do These Definitions Imply?

- A balance of representation, rights and responsibilities
- Appreciating difference
- What inequality can 'look like'
- The importance of socially constructed ideas and values
- Social relations and relationships
- Access, opportunities, inclusion
- Power and decision making
- Equality is not just a 'woman's issue'
- Participation
- Inequality does not always have to be overt



# Defining Gender Equality: A Sporting Context



**UK Sport:** “Ensuring there are no barriers to participation and involvement in the running of sport for any social groups.

The overall aim is to support the development of a fair, equitable, and ethical world-class sporting system in the UK that is athlete-centred and people-focused. Equality is about recognising and removing the barriers faced by people involved, or wanting to be involved in sport. It is about changing the culture of sport to one that values diversity and enables the full involvement of disadvantaged groups in every aspect of sport.

UK Sport embraces the spirit of all equalities legislation and is committed to eradicating any form of unfair discrimination”.

**Sport England:** Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.

# The UK Equality Landscape: Where are we now?



In the UK, individuals play and coach sport against a backdrop of improvement in wider social attitudes and legislation towards equity, equality and diversity.



Significant implications for UK sporting organisations and clubs

# The UK Equality Landscape: Where have we come from?



- 1970s a significant decade in putting gender equality on the political agenda
- Drive gathered pace with New Labour govt in 1997 –
- Sport conceived as a social ‘tool’
- Accumulated in the 2004 ‘ Equality Standard for Sport’



# The UK Equality Landscape

## Who are we now?



### Coaches



### Participants



### Organisations



# Some 'Voices' of Gender Inequality

**Laura:**  
young athlete,  
competes in Athletics  
event at a high  
performance level

**Heather:**  
young athlete,  
competes in Athletics  
event at a high  
performance level

**Matthew:**  
Male coach of both a  
University men's and  
women's team sport

**Equality manager:**  
Works in UK national  
sporting governing  
body, tasked with  
increasing diversity in  
organisation

**Fiona:**  
Master female coach,  
one of most highest  
qualified female  
coaches in the world in  
her sport

**Charlotte:**  
One of Matthew's  
female players



# The Impact of Gender Equality / Inequality on Young Athletes

- Equality can lead to greater equality – challenging gender norms
- Consistent involvement in sport can effect positive psychological change.
- Sport as a safe space
- Female athlete drop out = less athletes
  - *Style of coaching practices do not fit*
  - *Negative / unenjoyable coach-athlete relationship*
    - Gender stereotypes are impacting performance development
    - The foundations of a male dominated system

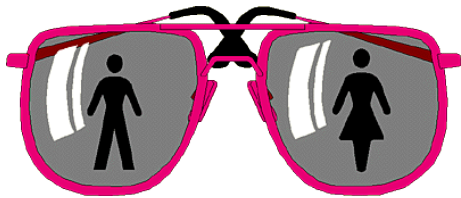


# Achieving Gender Equality in Sports Organisations

- Mainstreaming
- Change the ideological framework underpinning the gender equality 'problem':
  - ~~Fix the women~~
  - ~~Value the feminine~~
  - ~~Create equal opportunities~~
  - A new, non-traditional approach
    - Redefine gender
    - Examine social practices within the organisation that support gender inequality
    - Have a vision



# How Coaches Can Contribute to Gender Equality in Sport



Become a gender responsive practitioner



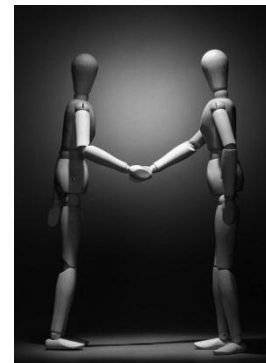
Examine your styles, practices, relations & language



Build and maintain a positive coach-athlete relationship



Who are you?



Improve relational expertise



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Challenge and Educate

# Concluding Thoughts



- Gender matters – see gender
- Be gender-responsive, not gender-neutral
- Equality is more than legislation, access, inclusion, or a ‘women’s issue’ – it is in the lived, day-to-day experiences of athletes, coaches & administrators
- Gender is more than biological sex
- Gender (in)equality can significantly affect the sporting experiences of young athletes
- It’s everyone’s responsibility
- It’s not just an issue of morality: it makes good business sense!



**Equality** is not in regarding different things similarly.  
**Equality** is in regarding different things, differently.

Tom Robbins

