

Toward Safe Sport

Policy recommendations from
people impacted by violence



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SHORT SUMMARY

Centering Lived Experience in Safe Sport Policy

Sport can be a powerful driver of inclusion, wellbeing and sustainable development. Yet, it is not immune to the violence and abuse that affect wider society, and these harms remain endemic in sporting environments. Research reviews report lifetime prevalence of interpersonal violence in sport ranging from 44% to 86%, with risks heightened by gender, disability, sexual orientation and age.

Developed by UNESCO and the Sport & Rights Alliance, this report presents findings from a two-phase consultation with people impacted by violence in sport. Informing UNESCO's Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education, the consultation engaged 150 participants across 24 countries and 17 sports – including survivors, athletes, coaches, administrators and advocates.

Highlights from the consultation, detailed in the report, include the need for clearer and more accessible safe sport frameworks; stronger prevention, reporting, monitoring and support systems, and; survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches from policy design to implementation.

Policymakers, safeguarding professionals, sport system actors, civil society organizations, and athlete and survivor advocacy groups are invited to use this report to strengthen safe sport policies, implementation and accountability.

Lifetime prevalence
of interpersonal violence
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Toward Safe Sport

Policy recommendations from
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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

IOC	International Olympic Committee
KIN	Knowledge and Innovation Network
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
MINEPS	International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport
MINEPS VII	Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport
MINEPS VIII	Eighth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PE	Physical Education
PEPAS	International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport
SRA	Sport & Rights Alliance
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDDR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

About the Sport & Rights Alliance

The [Sport & Rights Alliance's](#) (SRA) mission is to promote the rights and well-being of those most affected by human rights risks associated with the delivery of sport. Our partners include Amnesty International, Builders and Wood Workers International, The Assist, Football Supporters Europe, Human Rights Watch, ILGA World (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), the International Trade Union Confederation, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Transparency International, and World Players Association, UNI Global Union. The SRA works together to ensure sports bodies, governments and other relevant stakeholders give rise to a world of sport that protects, respects, and fulfils international standards for human rights, labour rights, child rights and wellbeing as well as safeguarding, and anti-corruption. A signature programme of the SRA, the [Athletes Network for Safer Sports](#) brings together athletes, allies, survivors, victims and whistleblowers. The Network's mission consists of creating and strengthening safe spaces for people affected by abuse in sport – promoting healing, amplifying each other's voices, and advocating for systemic change.

About UNESCO

[UNESCO](#) is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. As the lead UN Agency for Sport and Physical Education (PE), UNESCO is home to the [International Convention against Doping in Sport \(2005\)](#) and to the [International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport](#) which was first adopted by Member States in 1978 and establishes access to safe sport as a fundamental human right. To deliver on this mandate, UNESCO launched the [Fit for Life](#) Sport Alliance in 2023, uniting its Member States and more than 30 public and private partners to pool resources, good practices and capacities which progress inclusive, equitable and safe sport and PE. Within this framework and responding to the call made by 110 Member States at the [Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport \(MINEPS VII\)](#), UNESCO is developing the Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education for endorsement at [MINEPS VIII](#). The Policy Standards are being elaborated iteratively, through broad collaboration with experts, institutions and people directly and indirectly impacted by violence and abuse in sport. This participatory approach aims at reflecting lived experience and embedding trauma-informed approaches across the Policy Standards.



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This report acknowledges and honours the courage and resilience of people with lived experience of violence in sport who chose to share their perspectives during a continuum of written and in-person consultations, often despite real and ongoing risks of retaliation. Their willingness to engage reflects the efforts of many advocates and survivors over decades who have worked to ensure that lived experience is recognized as essential to policy dialogue and decision-making in sport.

The consultation reaffirmed the importance of engaging people with lived experience not only as witnesses to harm, but as knowledgeable partners in shaping solutions and strengthening systems of prevention, protection and accountability. Their insights were central to the discussions and have directly informed the reflections captured in this report.

UNESCO and the Sport & Rights Alliance jointly express their appreciation to all participants for their trust, openness and commitment, including the following participants who consented to being named in this report: Mr Ian Ackley (England); Ms Diaba Konate (France); Ms Mhairi MacLennan, Co-Founder and CEO, Kyniska Advocacy (Scotland); Mr Ahmar Abdoulaye Maiga, Executive Director, Young Players Protection in Africa, Member of the Advisory Board, Athletes Network for Safer Sports – Sport & Rights Alliance (Mali); Ms Lola Mansour, Judoka, Co-founder of *Balance ton sport* (Belgium); Dr Cindy Ong, Sport Performance Researcher and Swimming Coach (Malaysia); Ms Emma Oudiou, Safe Sport Advocate, UNESCO Fit for Life Star; Ms Emma Thomas, Under the Ropes (United Kingdom); Ms Kim Shore, Project SafeKids (Canada).

Appreciation is also extended to those who contributed to creating the conditions for a safe, respectful and trauma-informed consultation process, enabling meaningful exchange and collaboration.

Foreword



Sport carries a powerful promise: to support well-being, foster inclusion and bring people together. It is also part of wider efforts to advance sustainable development, with evidence linking physical activity to 13 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.ⁱ Yet this promise cannot be fulfilled without systems that protect those who participate.

The world of sport has increasingly begun to recognize the detrimental impact of violence and abuse experienced by athletes and participants. As discussions around safe sport gain momentum, research reviews show that interpersonal violence in sport is widespread, with lifetime prevalence estimates ranging from 44% to 86%.ⁱⁱ Evidence also shows that risks can be heightened by gender, disability, sexual orientation, age, and in some contexts, higher training volume or intensity of practice.ⁱⁱⁱ

These figures are unacceptable. Systems and policies have been developed to address doping, competition manipulation, and other issues that threaten the integrity of sport. At the Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible

for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VII), ministers agreed to prioritize safety as a shared global sport policy priority. We now need stronger and more coherent action to protect athletes and participants from violence in all its manifestations. Safeguarding must be built into the policies, systems and accountability mechanisms that govern sport, so that it can truly become a force for dignity, equality and well-being. Ensuring that sport is safe is not only essential to protecting people and lives, it is also a precondition for broader and more meaningful participation in sport.

As the United Nations lead agency for sport and physical education, UNESCO works with its Member States and partners to advance dignity, equality and human rights in and through sport. Guided by the [International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport](#) and its specific provisions on gender-based violence and safe sport, and through our [Fit for Life Sport Alliance](#), we support collective action to strengthen safe, inclusive and equitable sport systems worldwide. Through our Global Safe Sport Taskforce, we are also working with partners across sport, human rights, civil society, academia and international institutions to support coordinated action on safe sport.

This is the ambition behind the development of UNESCO's forthcoming Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education. Responding to the call made by 110 Member States at MINEPS VII, the standards aim to provide governments with a harmonized, evidence-informed framework to strengthen policy design, implementation, monitoring and accountability.

To create global standards for safe sport that are effective and legitimate, they must be informed by those who understand, from lived experience, where systems fail and what meaningful protection requires. This is why we joined forces with the [Sport & Rights Alliance](#) to engage people impacted by violence in sport through a two-phase consultation designed to inform the development of the standards and identify broader policy recommendations for safe sport.

Drawing on perspectives from participants across 24 countries, this report offers insights into how we can better centre lived experience in policymaking. Participants called for standards that are clear, accessible, and grounded in lived realities. They emphasized the need for stronger prevention, reporting, monitoring and support systems, and for survivor-centred, trauma-informed approaches to be embedded from policy design to implementation. Their contributions have already helped shape the continued drafting of the forthcoming Policy Standards, including the development of a dedicated Standard on Safe Sport and Safe Delivery. Just as importantly, the process itself offers a practical example of trauma-informed engagement grounded in safety, trust, transparency and accountability.

We need policies that prevent violence before it occurs, reporting systems that are safe and accessible, support mechanisms that uphold dignity and agency, and accountability systems that ensure commitments lead to real change.

We invite governments, sport bodies, safeguarding professionals, civil society organizations, athlete and survivor advocacy groups, and practitioners across the sport ecosystem to use this report as a basis for reflection and action, and to help build sport systems grounded in dignity, safety and equality.

Last but not least, we wish to thank all those who contributed to this consultation and to the development of this report, whether by sharing their experiences, perspectives and trust, or by contributing their time, input and expertise.



Abou Amani

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UNESCO

Executive Summary

Despite growing global momentum around safe sport and safeguarding, evidence shows that violence and abuse remain pervasive across sporting environments. As outlined in the UNESCO-UN Women Handbook on [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls in Sport](#), nearly 21% of female athletes report experiencing sexual abuse as children in sport – almost double the rate reported by male athletes. Broader research reviews also indicate that interpersonal violence in sport is widespread, with lifetime prevalence estimates ranging from 44% to 86%.^{iv} Risks are heightened by gender, disability, sexual orientation, and age.^v Women and girls report higher levels of sexual violence,^{vi} while men and boys more commonly experience physical violence. LGBTQI athletes face elevated risks across all forms of interpersonal violence, and athletes with disabilities report disproportionately high levels of psychological harm.^{vii}

To address this, UNESCO's Member States have called for strengthened coherence, protections and accountability in safeguarding, including through the development of the Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education. These Policy Standards aim to provide a harmonized, evidence-informed framework that supports governments and sport systems in preventing violence, strengthening reporting and response mechanisms, and ensuring that sport environments uphold dignity, equality and safety for all participants. Through broad Member State endorsement, such standards build shared norms and political momentum that can, over time, lay the groundwork for more binding international commitments.

To inform the development of these standards, UNESCO and the Sport & Rights Alliance conducted a two-phase consultation with people affected by violence in sport, including survivors, athletes, coaches, administrators, and advocates. The findings presented in this report align with broader trends in sport, where gender inequalities, discriminatory norms, and systemic barriers continue to expose certain groups to greater vulnerability.



Respondent Ratings

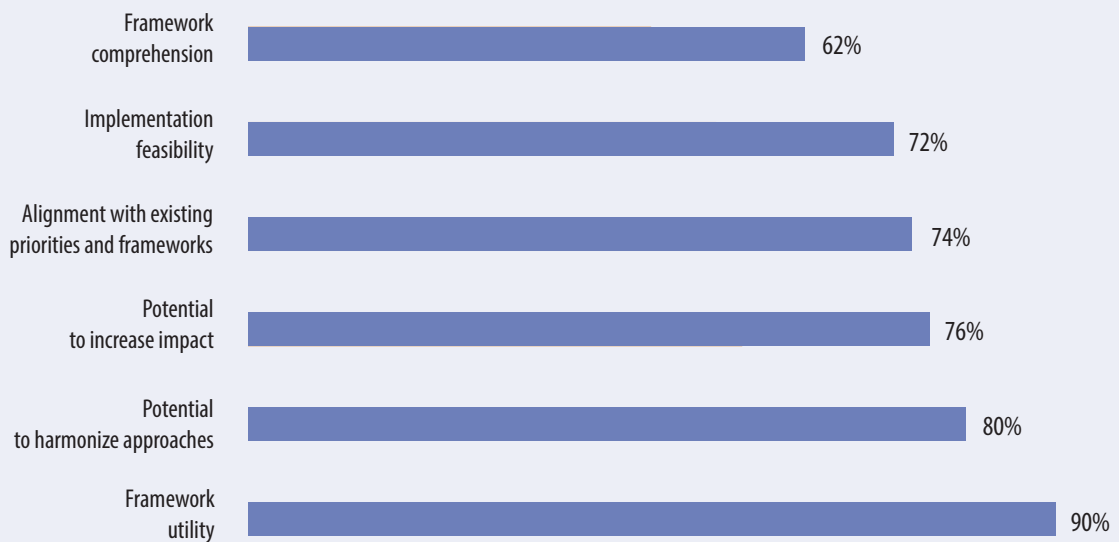
Phase 1 – Online Survey

138 participants
24 countries
17 sports
52% directly/indirectly impacted by violence in sport
49% of impacted people identified as survivors

Phase 2 – In-person consultation

10 people with lived experience of violence
8 countries
7 sports
4.8 / 5 rating of the overall process
4.9 / 5 value of engagement

Survey Results (Phase 1)



Key Takeaways (Phase 1)

- **75% of respondents found the language of the draft Policy Standards 'easy' or 'very easy' to understand.**
- **72% considered the framework 'highly' or 'very relevant' to aligning actions and approaches in safe sport.**
- **57% believed the draft Policy Standards have 'considerable' to 'high' potential to improve prevention strategies;** only 13% saw the potential as 'low'.
- **62% felt the Policy Standards reflected sector challenges 'well' or 'very well',** though 31% considered alignment only partial.
- **38% reported that the resources required for implementation are currently 'non-existent',** 33% expressed some confidence in existing capacity, and 27% were unsure.
- **68% agreed that the draft Policy Standards have good potential to advance safe sport** and 24% saw transformative potential.

The recommendations emerging from this consultation have already informed the ongoing development of the draft Global Policy Standards, including through strengthened terminology, an expanded glossary, clearer integration of survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches, and additional guidance on implementation, monitoring and accountability.

Recommendation 1

Strengthen clarity, accessibility and coherence

- Use clear, accessible, non-technical language to ensure understanding among policymakers, practitioners and the general public.
- Clarify key concepts such as 'safeguarding', 'safe sport', and 'violence' to address non-universal interpretations.
- Align terminology and definitions with existing international standards and guidelines.

Recommendation 2

Support context-specific and nationally- owned implementation

- Reinforce Member State ownership by inviting governments to articulate specific needs, gaps and priorities.
- Engage Member States in ongoing consultation to foster meaningful participation and strengthen legitimacy.
- Provide nationally- and regionally-adapted guidance to help translate high-level principles into practical action, taking into account gender norms, power relations and intersectional inequalities across contexts.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen accountability, reporting and harm-reduction mechanisms

- Establish monitoring mechanisms to sustain accountability over time.
- Establish independent supervisory bodies to oversee safeguarding and ensure conflict-free decision-making.
- Implement transparent case management systems supported by mandatory reporting obligations.
- Ensure strong protections for whistleblowers and safeguarding personnel.
- Develop adequately resourced harm-reduction mechanisms, including hotlines, emotional and physical support for impacted individuals.



Recomendation 4

Promote inclusive, multi-level and participatory engagement across sectors

- Balance inputs from experts, policymakers, civil society and people with lived experience of violence in sport.
- Adopt multi-level approaches that engage actors from community to global governance, including sport leadership and decision-making bodies, and encourage cross-sector and interministerial collaboration.
- Ensure inclusive participation of groups facing heightened risks of marginalization, exclusion and/or violence across all stages of policy development.¹

¹ For the purposes of this report, the terms ‘marginalized groups’, ‘groups facing heightened risks of marginalization, exclusion and/or violence’, ‘survivors’, and ‘people impacted by violence’ are, at times, used interchangeably. Survivors of violence in sport are frequently marginalized within sporting structures, and vulnerability may be compounded by intersecting factors such as age, gender, race, religion, disability, *inter alia*.

Recomendation 5

Invest in training, communication and awareness-raising

- Mainstream safeguarding training for teachers, coaches, administrators, athletes, parents and sport personnel, including volunteers, with a focus on gender-transformative and inclusive approaches.
- Develop communication strategies that raise awareness of rights, reporting pathways and available support services.
- Use media, high-profile athletes and major events to amplify safe sport messaging.
- Foster global solidarity and knowledge-sharing hubs to support capacity-strengthening and peer learning.

Recomendation 6

Embed survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches throughout the Policy Standards

- Integrate trauma-informed principles to protect the dignity, agency and rights of impacted individuals.
- Ensure meaningful, continuous, non-tokenistic² engagement of people with lived experience in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Policy Standards.
- Recognize and appropriately compensate survivor expertise to avoid extractive practices.

² Tokenism refers to ‘the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of diversity. Essentially, it gives the appearance of equality without achieving it, and can give a false sense of achievement’ ([International Organization for Migration](#)).

Note on terminology

For the purposes of this report, the terms ‘**marginalized groups**’, ‘**groups facing heightened risks of marginalization, exclusion and/or violence**’, ‘**survivors**’, and ‘**people impacted by violence**’ are, at times, used interchangeably. Survivors of violence in sport are frequently marginalized within sporting structures, and vulnerability may be compounded by intersecting factors such as gender, race, religion, disability, *inter alia*.

- **Impacted people:** The term ‘impacted people’ refers to individuals or groups directly or indirectly affected by incidents of psychological, physical, sexual, economic or symbolic violence in the context of sport. This may include but is not limited to grassroots sport participants, current or former elite athletes, whistleblowers, advocates and bystanders who have experienced, witnessed or reported harm.
- **Meaningful participation:** Drawing on the [OHCHR](#)’s understanding of meaningful participation, the term is used here to refer to participation in which all relevant information is accessible and stakeholders have safe and adequate space, time and opportunity to form and freely express their views. It further requires that participants’ input be genuinely considered in decision-making, and that timely feedback be provided on outcomes and the extent to which their views influence the process.
- **Survivor-centred approach:** Drawing on the [UNCHR](#)’s definition, the term refers to ‘a way of engaging with [people with lived experience of violence] that prioritizes listening, avoids re-traumatization, and systematically focuses on their safety, rights, well-being, expressed needs and choices. The purpose is to give back as much control to survivors as feasible and ensure the empathetic delivery of services in a non-judgmental manner’.
- **Tokenism:** According to the [International Organization for Migration](#), tokenism refers to ‘the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of diversity. Essentially, it gives the appearance of equality without achieving it, and can give a false sense of achievement’.
- **Trauma-informed (approach):** The term refers to a strengths-based, system-wide framework that recognizes the widespread impact of trauma on individuals’ physical, psychological, emotional and social wellbeing, and integrates this understanding into policies, practices, environments and interactions. It prioritizes safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment, and seeks to prevent re-traumatization. It is not a clinical intervention, but a universal practice that requires awareness of trauma and its effects, appropriate staff training, respectful and culturally responsive engagement, and collaboration with affected persons to support dignity, autonomy and healing across sport systems.^{viii}
- **Violence:** For the purposes of this report, the definition of ‘violence’ is adapted from the [UNDDR](#) and the [UNHCR](#), and refers to non-accidental physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or symbolic harm against an individual, a group of people, or a community. Violence includes threats, coercion, manipulation and cyber-harassment. It can be targeted or indiscriminate, inflicted in private or public, and happen in conflict and non-conflict settings.

Background



Box 2

A renewed mandate for safe sport

In October 2024, UNESCO's Executive Board adopted a landmark Decision (220EX/43), 'UNESCO's Fit for Life Sport Initiative – tackling violence against women and girls and advancing safe sport for all', co-sponsored by 74 Member States from all regions. The Decision reaffirmed the call made at MINEPS VII and underscored the urgency of addressing violence and abuse in sport, calling for survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches, and for strengthened coordination across governments and partners.

UNESCO is the United Nations' lead Agency for Sport and Physical Education (PE). The Organization works to support its 194 Member States in developing and delivering policies that center inclusion, equity, integrity and safety, in line with its [International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport \(PEPAS\)](#) and [International Convention against Doping in Sport](#), and with the active engagement of its [Fit for Life Sport Alliance](#).

To advance this mandate and respond to the call made by 110 countries at the [Seventh International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport \(MINEPS VII\)](#), UNESCO is developing draft Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education (PE) for endorsement at MINEPS VIII in 2027.

The Policy Standards are intended to provide a normative framework for governments, supporting the alignment of protections, investments and accountability mechanisms related to safe sport and physical education. In this sense, they serve as a policy harmonization tool to help Member States assess existing frameworks, identify gaps and strengthen national policies using an evidence-informed approach. To increase impact, reflect lived experience of violence, strengthen prevention pathways and embed a trauma-

informed approach across the Policy Standards, the framework is being elaborated iteratively, through broad collaboration with experts, institutions and people directly and indirectly impacted by violence and abuse in sport.

To date, UNESCO has organized a series of [workshops](#), [policy dialogues](#) and written consultations engaging more than 5,000 stakeholders. These engagements have brought together governments, survivors of abuse, researchers, sports organizations, and other stakeholders who have consistently called for a harmonized global approach to safeguarding in sport and emphasized UNESCO's unique standard-setting role in this work.

To further inform and strengthen the development of the draft Policy Standards, UNESCO established a Global Safe Sport Taskforce in May 2025. The Taskforce is co-chaired by the Sport & Rights Alliance (SRA) and the African Union Sports Council, bringing together 22 leading organizations working on safe sport, from international and regional sport governing bodies, UN agencies, NGOs, academia and civil society organizations representing athletes with lived experience of violence.

Input from the engaged stakeholders has been consolidated with a sport and PE policy content analysis, literature review and global sport and PE surveys to establish baselines for the draft Policy Standards and build from existing good practices. The framework currently comprises 13 Standards, each including:

1. A definition, covering different aspects of the policy cycle such as political commitment, leadership diversity, and inter-ministerial cooperation;
2. An alignment reference to the International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport, anchoring each Standard to Member State commitments;
3. A minimum standard, outlining the essential requirements expected of all countries;
4. An aspirational standard, describing more advanced or systemic implementation;

Box 3

5. A set of global and national indicators to help monitor Member States' progress toward the aspirational standard;
6. A set of recommended actions and practical implementation guidance drawn from existing resources; and
7. Case studies of good practices to inspire Member States and promote knowledge sharing across countries.

The development of the draft Policy Standards has been iterative and consultative, including written consultations and online and in-person exchanges with experts over an 18-month period, and will be further strengthened through consultation with Member States prior to finalization and submission to MINEPS VIII.

Within this broader process, and to ensure that people impacted by violence in sport are meaningfully engaged in the development of the Policy Standards, UNESCO partnered with the SRA to organize a two-phase consultation process with athletes impacted by violence in sport. Further details on participant outreach, selection and safeguards are provided in the Methodology section and in Annexes I and II. This Report details the methodology, approach, participant demographics and key findings of that consultation.

Who is this report for?

This report is intended for a specialized policy and practitioner audience involved in the development, implementation and oversight of safe sport and safeguarding frameworks. This includes government officials, policymakers, intergovernmental and international organizations, safeguarding professionals, researchers, civil society organizations, athlete and survivor advocacy groups, and sport system actors involved in policy implementation. It is also relevant to people with lived experience of violence in sport engaged in advisory, consultation and advocacy roles. By translating lived experience into policy-relevant findings and recommendations, the report aims to support evidence-informed policymaking, multilateral dialogue, and the drafting, testing and implementation of UNESCO's Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education.



Methodology



A. Consultation design and overall approach

Recognizing the scarcity of effective channels for meaningful engagement with people impacted by violence in sport and the urgent need to broaden and deepen their participation in global policy development, the consultation process was designed in two stages. Phase I consisted of an online survey, open from 25 September to 15 October 2025, which gathered responses from 138 participants across 24 countries. Phase II comprised a one-day in-person consultation, held at UNESCO Headquarters on 21 November 2025, bringing together ten participants with lived experience of violence in sport. The two-phased approach enabled

the identification of broad patterns, key issues and priority gaps through a larger pool of respondents, followed by deeper, facilitated reflection with a smaller focus group to identify underlying challenges and practical policy implications.

Across both phases, the consultation was designed and implemented in line with trauma-informed and ethics-of-care principles. Participation was voluntary, no disclosure of personal experiences was required, and measures were put in place to ensure participant agency, harm-reduction and access to support services.

Box 4

Trauma-informed safeguards used during the in-person consultation

The in-person meeting adopted an ethics-of-care and trauma-informed approach throughout the process. A range of safeguards were put in place to help ensure that participation posed minimal risk of discomfort and remained trauma-informed throughout, including:

- **Transparency:** participants received the list of other consultation members, preparatory documents and the agenda in advance.
- **Choice:** participants were given full agency over how they contributed and were reminded that they were under no obligation to remain in the room.
- **Focal points:** two trauma-informed professionals, fluent in both English and French, were available to provide support to participants if needed.
- **Medical support:** medical staff, including a psychologist, were available on site.
- **Hotlines:** information on local support hotlines was provided as additional resources.
- **Safe room:** a separate space was created for participants to decompress in case of discomfort, equipped with handcraft activities and other supportive materials.
- **Walk in and out:** participants were informed of ways to exit the building if needed, including access to outdoor areas.
- **Agenda design:** multiple breaks were scheduled between sessions to avoid overwhelming participants with emotionally-taxing content.

The findings presented in this report are based on the integrated analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from both phases. Detailed information on the consultation methodology is provided in Annex I (Phase I: Online Survey) and Annex II (Phase II: In-Person Consultation), including the safeguards put in place.

As participation was open and voluntary, the survey sample should be understood as illustrative rather than fully representative, including in relation to the number of participants and countries reached. Several limitations should therefore be acknowledged. The consultation process was conducted primarily in English, with French-language facilitation also available during the in-person consultation, which may have affected participation from regions where proficiency in these languages is more limited. The online format may also have created barriers for people with limited digital access and/or limited digital literacy. In addition, because participation the survey was disseminated primarily through safe sport networks, respondents may have been more likely to be already engaged with safe sport issues, which may have shaped the perspectives reflected in the findings. The findings therefore reflect the perspectives of those who chose to engage in the process and should not be interpreted as representative of all regions, sports contexts or UNESCO Member States.

B. Demographics

Phase I: Online survey respondents

A total of 138 respondents participated in the online survey,³ with responses received from 24 countries across both the Global North and Global South, reflecting a broad range of cultural and institutional contexts. Women constituted the majority of respondents (67%) compared to men (33%), and 22% of respondents identified as members of the LGBTIQ community.

3 Of the total number of respondents, 26 responded to all survey questions. Surveys with no mandatory questions often lead to lower level of completion and are defined as best practices when assessing thoughts and views of people impacted by trauma. Missing numbers were not treated as part of the data analysis. Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers presented in this report are based on the respondents who answered the relevant question.

In terms of engagement in sport, half of respondents reported participation at an international level, with a further 22% having competed at national level – indicating substantial representation of individuals with experience in high-performance sporting environments. Out of 138 participants, 22 indicating affiliation with 28 organizations took part in the survey ranging from human rights groups, national and international sports governing bodies, and coalitions.

Over half of respondents (53%) reported having been directly or indirectly impacted by violence in the context of sport. Within this spectrum, survivors constituted the largest group (49%), followed by bystanders and whistleblowers (19%). A smaller proportion identified under other roles, including advocates, researchers, safeguarding professionals and sports lawyers.

Phase II: In-person consultation participants

The in-person consultation gathered ten participants with lived experience of violence in sport – eight women and two men – from eight countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and North America, and seven sport disciplines (athletics, basketball, football, gymnastics, judo, muay thai, and swimming).

The consultation was intended to deepen insights emerging from the broader online survey and to support a more nuanced understanding of lived realities, implementation gaps and policy considerations; it was therefore designed to prioritise depth of insight over statistical representativeness.

Participants were identified through the Sport & Rights Alliance's network of athlete-survivors and safe sport advocates, and brought experience from professional and elite sport, grassroots initiatives, advocacy networks and international safeguarding programmes.

All participants were working with organizations or in an individual capacity on athlete protection, gender equality, survivor advocacy and safe sport, including with groups facing heightened risk of marginalization, exclusion and/or violence, such as refugees and displaced athletes, survivors of abuse, women and girls, and communities affected by religious discrimination, *inter alia*. Further details on participant selection and consultation methodology are provided in Annex II. Phase II: In-person consultation participants.

4 n= number of respondents

Survey Respondents - At a Glance

Category	Detail	% / Value	n ⁴
Total Respondents		138	138
Gender Identity	Women	66%	35
	Men	33%	17
LGBTQI	Yes	22%	51
Sport Level	International	48%	24
	National	22%	11
	Regional	12%	6
	Grassroots/Recreational	18%	9

Category	Detail	% / Value	n ⁴
Impacted by Violence	Yes	53%	73
Self-Identified Role	Survivors	49%	25
	Bystanders	19%	9
	Whistleblowers	19%	9
	Other	16%	8

List of countries

(from most represented to least represented):

- Brazil
- United States of America
- United Kingdom
- France
- Canada
- Serbia
- Greece
- Kenya
- Belgium
- Spain
- Germany
- Switzerland
- Ireland
- Netherlands
- Australia
- Mali
- Thailand
- Türkiye
- Croatia
- Afghanistan
- Hungary
- Japan
- Morocco
- Nicaragua

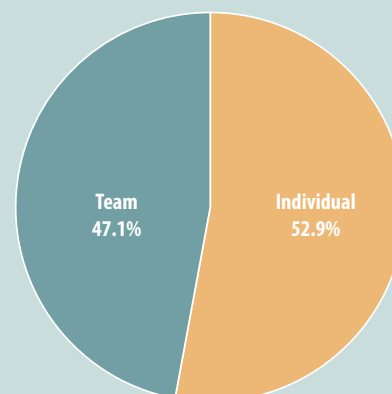
Countries represented, by regions (n = 51): 24

Asia and the Pacific	20.8%
Africa	4.2%
Arab States	4.2%
Europe and North America	62.5%
Latin America and the Caribbean	8.3%

Participant Feedback on the draft Policy Standards

Framework comprehension	3.1 / 5
Framework utility	4.2 / 5
Potential to harmonize approaches	4.0 / 5
Potential to increase impact	3.8 / 5
Alignment with existing priority and needs	3.7 / 5
Feasibility, capacity and level of ambition	3.6 / 5

Sport type



Sports represented (17)



Findings and Recommendations



This section presents the findings of the consultation in three parts. Section III.A and III.B outline the data overview and key findings from each phase separately, distinguishing descriptive information about participants from analytical synthesis of feedback. Section III.C then integrates insights from both phases to identify converging findings and recommendations.

A. Online survey: Findings

Survey participants were invited to assess the draft Policy Standards across four dimensions: clarity and relevance; alignment with priorities and needs; scope and coherence; and feasibility, capacity and level of ambition. Overall, findings indicate strong confidence in the draft Policy Standards, with average ratings ranging from 3.1/5 to 4.1/5, along with positive perceptions of the relevance, utility and ambition of the draft Policy Standards. There was strong consensus around the need for a multi-level approach, with repeated emphasis on including stakeholders facing heightened risks of marginalization, exclusion and/or violence. On the other hand, feedback also highlighted areas of uncertainty related to terminology, coherence with existing frameworks and feasibility of implementation.

The findings⁵ presented below draw on both quantitative ratings and qualitative comments to highlight areas of convergence, divergence and uncertainty in respondents' perceptions.

⁵ At the time of publication, feedback from this consultation has been reflected in the ongoing development of the Global Policy Standards as part of UNESCO's iterative drafting process. This includes refinements to terminology and definitions across the framework; an expanded glossary; stronger references to survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches; additional indicative actions and priority national metrics related to implementation, monitoring and accountability; and the introduction of a dedicated Standard on Safe Sport and Safe Delivery. The feedback has also helped identify areas where complementary guidance, plain-language materials and communication tools would be needed to support future uptake by Member States and sport stakeholders.



Finding 1

Strong perceived relevance and utility of the Policy Standards, alongside areas for improved clarity

Respondents reported generally positive perceptions of the relevance and utility of the Policy Standards.

The majority of respondents (75%) found the language of the draft Policy Standards 'easy' or 'very easy' to understand, while 24% considered it 'difficult' or 'very difficult'. Ratings for the Policy Standards' utility (4.3/5) and potential to support more harmonised approaches across sport and physical education systems (4/5) were particularly high.

Participants' perception of the draft Policy Standards' potential in harmonizing actions and approaches in safe sport was very positive, with 72% considering the framework 'highly' or 'very relevant', 23% 'moderately relevant', and only 3% 'slightly relevant'. Finally, when asked about the potential of the draft Policy Standards to improve prevention strategies, 57% of respondents indicated that the document has 'considerable' to 'high potential', with only 13% considering its potential for improvement 'low'.

At the same time, responses revealed areas where clarity could be strengthened. While most respondents (70%) agreed that the draft Policy Standards adequately cover the full spectrum of harm, a minority either disagreed (14%) or were unsure (14%), pointing to continued ambiguity around certain concepts. Uncertainty was most frequently associated with terminology and the framing of 'harm' and 'violence', rather than with the overall intent of the draft Policy Standards. In this context, 76% of participants reported that the definitions included in the glossary were clear and appropriate, suggesting that while the glossary was generally well received, further clarification and consistency in the use of key terms throughout the text may be beneficial.

These findings underline the importance of ensuring that key concepts are defined in the glossary, and used consistently and accessibly throughout the Policy Standards.

Finding 2

Mixed perceptions of alignment with lived realities and coherence with existing frameworks

Perceptions of alignment between the draft Policy Standards and the specific safeguarding challenges faced by sports participants – particularly those at increased risk of experiencing violence and abuse – were generally positive, with 62% of respondents indicating that the draft Policy Standards reflected these challenges 'well' or 'very well'. However, nearly one third (31%) felt that alignment was only partial and 7% felt they reflected them 'poorly'.

Respondents expressed mixed views regarding the coherence of the draft Policy Standards with existing safe sport frameworks. There was a balance between those who saw alignment between the draft Policy Standards and existing good practices (38%) versus those who reported potential overlap with existing frameworks (26%). Additionally, 34% of the respondents indicated they were unsure how to answer this specific question.

This level of uncertainty may reflect the fragmented and non-binding nature of existing safe sport policies and procedures, which are largely provided as guidance or are specific to particular sports or countries. As a result, respondents may have lacked a clear reference point from which to compare the draft Policy Standards with.

This points to the need to more clearly articulate the added value of the Policy Standards within the existing safe sport landscape, while strengthening alignment with relevant international and regional frameworks.

Broad support for the draft Policy Standards' ambition alongside uncertainty regarding feasibility

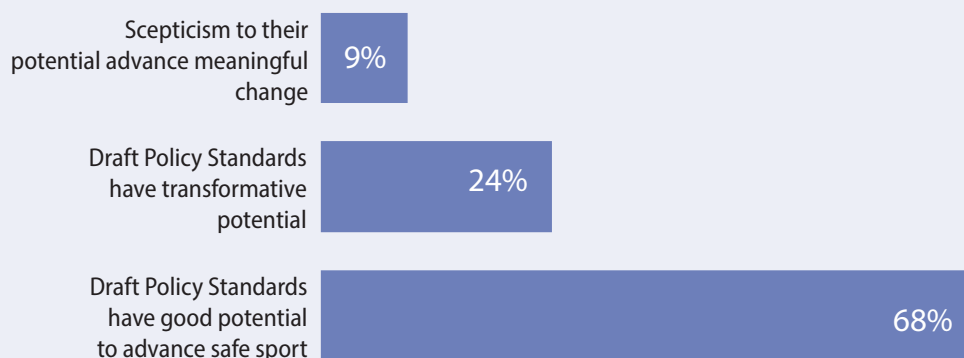
Responses related to feasibility and capacity revealed significant divergence. More than one third of respondents (38%) reported that the resources (human, financial, and technical) required to implement the Policy Standards were 'non-existent', while 33% expressed some confidence in existing capacity and 27% were unsure.

Despite these concerns, respondents expressed strong support for the minimum-to-aspirational structure of the draft Policy Standards (68%).

These findings underscore the importance of accompanying implementation support, particularly for Member States with limited resources. In this regard, the Policy Standards are embedded within the broader Fit for Life Framework – as outlined in the [MINEPS VII Outcome Document](#) – which provides a structured national implementation plan (from situation analysis and stakeholder mapping through to pilot projects and a Champion Country Change Programme) alongside capacity-building resources, trainings, and a digital hub connecting Member States with practical tools and peer learning opportunities. This tiered approach, combined with the Policy Standards' own distinction between minimum and aspirational benchmarks, is designed to ensure that no Member State is left without a viable entry point for implementation.

Perceptions of the appropriate level of ambition were more mixed. While 53% agreed that the draft Policy Standards hit the right level of ambition; 46% were unsure how to answer. Qualitative feedback highlighted concerns that minimum standards could be implemented as a procedural or 'tick-box' exercise for Member States in the absence of strong accountability mechanisms, suggesting that the exploration of more binding frameworks may be necessary over time to ensure effective implementation and compliance.

In terms of overall impact, 68% agreed that the draft Policy Standards have good potential to advance safe sport, 24% felt they have transformative potential, and 9% expressed scepticism to their potential to advance meaningful change.



B. In-person consultation: Findings

The in-person consultation provided in-depth qualitative insights grounded in participants' lived experiences of violence in sport.

Overall, discussions reaffirmed the relevance, ambition and timeliness of the draft Policy Standards, while highlighting important considerations for their interpretation, implementation and monitoring. Throughout the consultation, participants underscored the importance of meaningful, trauma-informed, continuous and non-tokenistic engagement of people with lived experience in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the draft Policy Standards.

The findings presented below synthesize participants' perspectives to highlight areas of convergence and nuance. Across these discussions, several key topics emerged, including:

- Overall process and context
- Language and terminology
- Education and communication
- Capacity and implementation
- Survivor engagement
- Reporting and monitoring
- Feedback on the in-person consultation

Themes of the focus groups discussions:

1. Experiences
2. Policy
3. Impact

Finding 1

Uncertainty regarding the role, authority and influence of the Policy Standards for the global policy landscape

'As a professional and as a person with lived experience, I am very aware of the importance of language choices. I would like to see a global agreement in principle.'

Discussions reflected uncertainty regarding the role, authority and intended influence of the Policy Standards, particularly in light of their non-binding nature. Questions were raised about how the Policy Standards are expected to influence national policy and accountability in practice, and why they were not framed as a Convention or Treaty.

Clarifications were provided on the broader geopolitical landscape, the need for increased awareness among decision-makers regarding the severity and scale of violence in sport, and the role of the Policy Standards in supporting inter-governmental discussions through a shared language, common definitions and a practical reference point for policy development. A long-term objective of moving toward a binding Convention was also noted, contingent on political will similar to that which enabled the Anti-Doping movement in the early 2000s.

Participants raised concerns about existing political and institutional structures, noting that Sport Ministers often come from sporting backgrounds but may have competing priorities, which can limit sustained attention to survivor protection. They further highlighted perceived disparities between the level of attention and resources devoted to addressing violence in sport and those allocated to other integrity-related issues, such as doping.

Participants further emphasized that meaningful change requires multisectoral engagement, as sport ministries alone often lack the authority or capacity to drive systemic reform, particularly where safeguarding issues also fall within the remit of education and related institutions, in which physical education and sport also take place. They therefore stressed the need for coordinated approaches involving relevant ministries, sport bodies and international actors to strengthen policy alignment, outreach, protection and accountability.

Finding 2

Language accessibility and interpretability as a cross-cutting concern

'The current language of the draft Policy Standards is highly technical even for native English speakers.'

Participants consistently characterized the language of the draft Policy Standards as comprehensive but highly technical and legalistic, noting that this complexity may hinder understanding and engagement across different audiences. Concerns were raised not only in relation to the general public, but also with regard to policymakers and decision-makers who may not have technical or legal backgrounds.

In this context, concerns were raised about the clarity of key concepts used throughout the document, including 'safeguarding' and 'survivor-centred', which were perceived as not being consistently or explicitly defined. Participants also raised the issue of linguistic accessibility, and the need for translation in multiple languages.

To address these challenges, participants recommended developing complementary plain-language materials tailored to different audiences as well as practical communication tools, including infographics and 'how-to' guides, to support understanding, dissemination and coherence.

When engaging survivors, re-traumatization and the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder cannot be overlooked. Survivors should be engaged intellectually instead of just emotionally.

— Consultation participant

Finding 3

Education, communication and awareness as central considerations for the framing of the Policy Standards.

'We are conditioned to push our bodies and minds – we cannot tell the difference between abuse and sacrifice sometimes.'

Feedback underscored the importance of education and awareness in shaping how violence in sport is recognized and addressed, and in informing how the Policy Standards are framed and understood. Several participants, drawing on lived experience, suggested that prior knowledge of unacceptable behaviours and boundaries – had it been made available – could have played a preventive role. In this regard, participants noted that performance-driven sport cultures often normalize harmful behaviours, with unclear boundaries around acceptable coaching practices contributing to a broader climate in which harm may be normalized, minimized or insufficiently recognized.

Education and awareness were also linked to broader questions of access to sport. It was noted that many safe sport initiatives tend to focus on inclusion within existing sport settings, while overlooking gender-related, cultural, religious, financial and legal barriers that prevent some individuals from accessing sport at all. Without addressing these barriers, education on rights, safeguarding and reporting mechanisms risks excluding those facing heightened risks of marginalization, exclusion and/or violence.

Beyond formal education, participants emphasized the role of public awareness in improving understanding of rights, risks, and available support, particularly for children and caregivers. They further stressed the importance of greater media engagement and coalition-building to amplify the Policy Standards and support their enforcement. Mega sporting events and high-profile athletes were identified as important advocates and timely opportunities to raise public awareness and amplify the objectives and transformative potential of the Policy Standards.

Finding 4

Uneven implementation capacity and institutional constraints could hinder impact

‘We lack structures and representation; there are legislative contradictions and entrenched laws and standards in national contexts that hinder full impact.’

While participants acknowledged the intention of the Policy Standards to be applicable worldwide, they also pointed out that diverse regional realities, limited funding and political contexts may hinder implementation and its effectiveness in protecting people from violence in some settings.

In this context, participants emphasized the value of the proposed sliding-scale approach – combining a minimum-to-aspirational structure, supported by a range of indicative actions and corresponding capacity-strengthening programmes – in addressing these challenges and increasing the feasibility and likelihood of global implementation across diverse contexts.

Finding 5

Reporting, response and monitoring mechanisms perceived as central to protection and accountability

‘You start doubting yourself when you are the one paying the costs for speaking out.’

Participants repeatedly highlighted the absence of effective, trauma-informed, and fit-for-purpose reporting and response mechanisms, as well as consistent failures to protect whistleblowers. Discussions highlighted that reporting pathways alone are insufficient if they are not accompanied by confidential, timely and independent follow-up, meaningful human contact, appropriate support and safeguards against retaliation. Reporting, response and monitoring were described as central to safeguarding and accountability in the context of violence in sport.

Participants also emphasized the importance of monitoring implementation over time, including through systematic data collection. Meaningful engagement of people with lived experience was highlighted as essential throughout the monitoring process.

Finding 6

In-Person Consultation process perceived as enabling meaningful participation and engagement

‘This was a real privilege. It was also trust building from my perspective to see people in an institution doing their very best to influence leaders at the highest level to do sport better.’

Participants rated their overall experience as 4.8/5, and the value of this type of engagement as 4.9/5, via the anonymous online feedback form.

Participants described feeling welcomed and valued, and the verbal feedback shared during the meeting reflected strong emotional engagement, with many praising the speakers, the organization of the day, and the diversity of lived experiences represented.

While feedback was overwhelmingly positive, three participants suggested extending future consultations over two days and providing interpretation in additional languages for non-English speakers.

Several participants also acknowledged the team’s leadership and expressed confidence in its role in moving this work towards system change, while emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

Box 5

A note on process and ethics of care

It is important to highlight that when engaging with people with lived experience, the process itself is as important as the policy outcomes. Any consultation of such kind must be grounded in psychological, physical and emotional safety, ensuring that participants feel respected, valued, and trusted as the experts they are. Consultations with impacted individuals require greater sensitivity to the impacts associated with experiencing violence in sport. Based on participants' feedback, this project represents a further step toward embedding trauma-informed, survivor-centred engagement as a norm rather than an exception.

1. Recommendations

The following recommendations are grounded in the perspectives and priorities shared through the two-phase consultation process, recognizing the limitations on representation outlined in the methodology.

Conceptual Clarity, Language and Accessibility

- **Clarify and standardize core concepts and terminology related to violence in sport.**
Ensure consistent and precise use of key terms such as 'harm', 'violence', including clear definitions of systemic violence and recognition of nuanced forms of violence (including humiliation and other non-physical manifestations).
- **Acknowledge diverse interpretations of safeguarding and safe sport across context.**
Recognize that these concepts are not yet universally understood or applied in the same way across regions and governance systems. The Policy Standards should therefore promote shared minimum understandings while allowing for contextual adaptation that does not dilute core principles or obligations.
- **Simplify language and adopt a dual top-down and bottom-up approach to enhance usability and implementation.**
Reduce unnecessary technical complexity and streamline references to ensure the Policy Standards are accessible to a broad range of stakeholders, including policymakers, sport administrators, practitioners, community-level actors, and the general public.
- **Explicitly address the social and economic costs of violence in sport and strengthen prevention.**
Integrate clear language on the social, health and economic consequences of violence in sport in order to strengthen policy justification, support resource allocation and reinforce the urgency of preventive and protective measures.
- **Strengthen accessibility through translation and complementary communication tools.**
Translate the Policy Standards into multiple languages and develop accompanying materials such as infographics, advocacy briefs and media/or media assets to facilitate comprehension, dissemination, and uptake across diverse contexts and audiences.

Survivor-Centred, Trauma-Informed and Ethical Engagement

- **Embed a survivor-centred and trauma-informed approach across the Policy Standards.**
Ensure that the rights, dignity, agency and safety of impacted people are prioritized throughout prevention, reporting, response and accountability mechanisms. All measures should be grounded in trauma-informed principles that avoid re-harm and recognize the diverse ways violence is experienced in and through sport.
- **Approach inclusion and advocacy efforts with care to avoid exposing individuals to further harm.**
Recognize that advocacy efforts to increase participation among underrepresented and/or marginalized groups must go hand in hand with robust safeguarding measures. Encouraging greater inclusion without adequately preparing participants for, and protecting them against, the risks of violence they may face – whether directly or indirectly – can inadvertently expose them to further harm.
- **Prioritize accessible and effective harm-reduction, reporting and support mechanisms.**
Require the establishment of clear, confidential and accessible reporting pathways, including anonymous and technology-based options such as hotlines, apps or secure digital platforms. These mechanisms should be accompanied by timely emotional, physical, psychosocial and legal support, particularly for individuals and groups at higher risk of violence and abuse.
- **Meaningfully integrate lived experience into policy design and prevention strategies.**
Ensure that individuals with lived experience of violence in sport are actively involved in shaping policies, prevention measures, and response mechanisms. Engagement should explicitly take into account power dynamics traditionally present in sport systems and global policy-making processes, to strengthen legitimacy, relevance and effectiveness.
- **Strengthen protections for groups facing heightened risks of marginalization, exclusion and/or violence.**
Explicitly recognize and respond to the heightened and intersecting risks faced by women and girls, youth, LGBTQI persons, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Decision-making structures should be designed to promote the inclusion of athlete and survivor voices and to address intersecting forms of discrimination and power imbalance.
- **Ensure ethical, non-extractive engagement and fair recognition of survivor expertise.**
Design consultation and engagement processes that avoid performative or extractive practices, where survivors are invited to contribute without adequate support, follow-up or recognition of their expertise. Engagement should offer multiple, safe and flexible pathways for participation and be grounded in trauma-informed principles to prevent re-traumatization. Survivors' expertise should be recognized and appropriately compensated.

Independent Governance, Power and Accountability

- **Address power imbalances in governance and policy development process.**
Acknowledge and actively mitigate power imbalances that may arise from the involvement of actors in positions of authority, including representatives of sports governing bodies. The development and implementation of the Policy Standards should balance inputs from policymakers and experts with those of individuals with lived experience of violence in sport, in order to strengthen legitimacy, credibility and inclusion.
- **Establish adequately funded and independent safeguarding or supervisory bodies.**
Create robust, accessible and independent safeguarding or ombudspersons, structurally and financially independent from sports governing bodies, and equipped with adequate and sustained funding. These mechanisms should be mandated to ensure confidentiality, timely response and ethics of care in the handling of cases. They should include advisors and experienced regional investigators and/or safeguarding experts.
- **Ensure transparent case management and accountability mechanisms.**
Require sports organizations to implement transparent internal case management and monitoring systems, including by mandatory reporting obligations, defined follow-up mechanisms, and precautions against conflicts of interest.
- **Protect whistleblowers and Safeguarding Leads from retaliation.**
Establish explicit protections for whistleblowers and Safeguarding Leads, including the development of 'safety-net' systems to prevent retaliation, isolation or professional harm. In practice, these should include confidential reporting channels, legal safeguards against dismissal or career penalties, access to independent legal and psychosocial support, and clear accountability mechanisms for those who retaliate, inter alia.

Education, Prevention and Cultural Change

- **Mainstream safeguarding education across sport systems, with targeted training for high-risk roles.**
Require comprehensive safeguarding education for all stakeholders in sport, including coaches, sport personnel – including volunteers – teachers, administrators, athletes, and parents. This should be complemented by tailored and specialized training for roles involving associated risk, particularly those working with minors, to ensure appropriate prevention, identification and response to violence.
- **Integrate safe sport, violence prevention and children's rights into formal and non-formal education.**
Embed safe sport principles, children's rights and violence prevention into curricula, especially within physical education and sport programmes. Explicit education provisions should be included within the Policy Standards.
- **Promote awareness-raising and hope-based approaches to foster cultural change and institutional courage.**
Encourage awareness-raising on the social and economic costs of violence in sport and weak safeguarding frameworks, alongside the adoption of hope-based approaches that inspire institutional courage. Members States should be supported to articulate their own needs and challenges in implementing the Policy Standards, fostering ownership, meaningful engagement and sustained cultural change.

Across these thematic areas, the consultation recommendations informed the further development of the draft Policy Standards, including refinements to terminology and definitions, the addition of indicative actions and proposed indicators, the introduction of a dedicated Standard on Safe Sport and Safe Delivery, and the inclusion of illustrative case studies. The table at the end of the section summarizes how each recommendation areas has been reflected or will be taken forward.

Policy Integration, Legal Alignment and State Responsibility

- **Ensure coherence and alignment with existing international and regional frameworks.**
Strengthen the alignment of the Policy Standards in language, definitions and scope with existing frameworks, such as the [International Safeguards for Children in Sport](#), [Council of Europe 'Start to talk'](#), IOC's [International Safe Sport Framework](#) (currently under development), the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), [UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities](#), the [ILO Convention on Reducing Violence and Harassment at Work](#), and [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#). Consistency in terminology should be prioritized, as frequent or uncoordinated changes in language can undermine accountability, comparability and effective implementation.
- **Strengthen legislative anchoring and expert oversight at national level.**
Encourage Member States to embed the Policy Standards within national legal and policy frameworks, accompanied by clear calls to action and potential consequences for non-implementation, such as proportional sanctions. The development, adaptation and application of policies should be supported by expert oversight from child protection, human rights and safeguarding specialists.
- **Promote cross-sectoral coordination and regionally adapted implementation guidance.**
Support strong collaboration across ministries, including gender equity, justice, health, education, inter alia, and across levels of decision-making, fostering both horizontal coordination between sectors and vertical coordination between national and local authorities, to ensure shared understanding and coherent implementation. To address concerns regarding feasibility, develop regionally adapted guidance that strengthens practical implementation across different contexts without diluting the core principles.

Monitoring, Data, Resources and Adaptive Implementation

- **Establish robust and independent monitoring mechanisms to assess implementation of the Policy Standards.**
Building on the independent supervisory arrangements outlined above, require the establishment of functional and independent mechanisms to monitor and assess implementation by Member States. Monitoring systems should support transparency, accountability and continuous improvement, while ensuring confidentiality, ethics of care and whistleblower protection.
- **Strengthen systemic data collection and the use of standardized indicators.**
Promote the systematic collection of data and the establishment of national or regional databases using standardized indicators and key performance indicators (KPIs). Monitoring frameworks should include baseline readiness indicators to enable Member States to track progress over time and to encourage proactive self-assessment rather than silence or concealment.
- **Link resources and funding to safeguarding compliance and implementation.**
Encourage the alignment of funding and resource allocation with demonstrated safeguarding compliance and implementation of the Policy Standards.
- **Foster global knowledge sharing, solidarity and meaningful engagement in monitoring process.**
Support the creation of global solidarity and a knowledge-sharing hub to exchange good practices, tools and lessons learned. Monitoring and evaluation processes should meaningfully engage individuals with lived experience of violence in sport, ensuring their perspectives inform learning, adaptation, and continuous improvement.

RECOMMENDATION AREA	HOW THIS HAS BEEN REFLECTED IN THE DRAFT STANDARDS	NEXT STEPS
 1. Conceptual clarity, language and accessibility	Refined terminology and definitions; expanded glossary; more consistent use of key concepts; clearer distinctions between concepts such as ‘safe sport’ and ‘safety’.	Plain-language guidance, translations, public-facing summaries, infographics and communication tools to support uptake across audiences and contexts.
 2. Survivor-centred, trauma-informed and ethical engagement	Stronger integration of survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches across the framework; dedicated Standard on Safe Sport and Safe Delivery; provisions related to safe and confidential reporting pathways, access to appropriate support services, ethical engagement with people with lived experience, and recognition of survivor expertise.	Continued engagement with people with lived experience through safe, meaningful and non-extractive consultation, implementation and monitoring processes.
 3. Independent governance, power and accountability	Stronger attention to independent safeguarding mechanisms, reporting and response systems, case management, oversight, whistleblower protection, access to remedy and accountability.	Further development through the forthcoming Implementation Model.
 4. Education, prevention and cultural change	Stronger attention to safeguarding education, safe sport awareness, prevention and social norms change.	Communication, advocacy and capacity-strengthening tools for different audiences.
 5. Policy integration, legal alignment and State responsibility	Stronger operational framing to support adaptation across different legal, institutional and governance contexts. Inclusion of related components in the second written consultation, for review and refinement, including through feedback on relevant government-led good practices.	Continued refinement through consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders.
 6. Monitoring, data, resources and adaptive implementation	Stronger attention to monitoring and evaluation, disaggregated data, data infrastructure, resource allocation and accountability over time.	Implementation support, knowledge-sharing, capacity-strengthening and practical tools to support Member States in applying the Standards.

2. Conclusions

The overall consultation process highlighted the essential role of people with lived experience of violence in sport in shaping the Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education. Concretely, the consultation with people with lived experience called for clarification and strengthening of key terminology – including the definitions of ‘safeguarding’, ‘survivor-centred approaches’ and ‘violence’ – alongside recommendations for plain-language materials and practical communication tools to broaden accessibility.

Participants also put forward proposals related to the need for strategic partnerships with civil society and the meaningful and sustained engagement of survivors in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Policy Standards.

The process brought attention to specific gaps related to access to sports for women and girls, lack of resources for implementation and suggested guidance on how the expertise of people impacted by violence in sport can strengthen prevention efforts, support awareness raising and refine monitoring of implementation. Maintaining continuous dialogue, meaningful engagement opportunities and ongoing clarity around the process will be critical to ensuring that the Policy Standards effectively serve those it is intended to protect.

While this type of engagement has inherent limitations given the global scale of the issue, bringing together a diverse group of participants from different countries, across different sports, and with different backgrounds, demonstrated that the long-standing call from activists and advocates is both feasible and necessary: policies can and must be informed by the voices of those directly impacted by violence in sport.

Looking ahead, insights from this consultation have already informed the second iteration of the draft Policy Standards, which incorporates refined language, an expanded glossary, new indicative actions and priority national metrics, and a dedicated new Standard on Safe Sport and Safe Delivery. As of early 2026, the framework is undergoing a second written consultation with expert networks, leading into consultations with Member States and a parallel pilot implementation phase with selected countries. The final Policy Standards will be presented for official endorsement by all Member States at the 8th International Conference of Ministers Responsible for Sport (MINEPS VIII) in 2027.

Annexes



Annex I. Methodology — Phase I: Online Survey

Purpose and scope

Phase I consisted of a written online survey designed to gather quantitative and qualitative input from people impacted by violence in sport on the clarity, scope, relevance, coherence and feasibility of the draft Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education (PE).

Survey platform and timeline

The online survey, hosted on UNESCO's LimeSurvey platform, was open from 25 September to 15 October 2025. Information about the consultation scope, objectives and process was published on the Sport & Rights Alliance (SRA) [website](#), alongside a link inviting people impacted by violence in sport to participate in the online survey. To support informed respondent engagement, UNESCO's mandate and work to advance harmonized Policy Standards was summarized, together with key definitions, information on data management, expected inputs and available support services. Respondents also had access to the draft Policy Standards as a reference point for their responses.

Dissemination and outreach

It was also disseminated via SRA and UNESCO social media platforms (Instagram, X and LinkedIn), accompanied by a [short video](#) featuring athletes, advocates and allies explaining the purpose of the survey and inviting participation. In addition to online dissemination, targeted outreach was conducted through partner meetings and email communications, including circulating the survey and related communication materials through UNESCO expert networks such as the Global Safe Sport Taskforce, the Fit for Life Network Against Racism, participants of the 2025 International Symposium of Adapted Physical Activity (ISAPA), and members of the Knowledge and Innovation Network (KIN) to encourage cross-promotion.

Survey structure

The survey comprised 27 questions. The first ten focused on demographic information, including respondent's country, sport type, gender identity, engagement in sport, sport level, and whether they identified as being impacted by violence in sport. The remaining questions collected substantive feedback on the draft Policy Standards using a mixed-methods participatory approach. This included closed-ended Likert-scale questions assessing clarity and relevance; alignment with priorities and needs; scope and coherence; and feasibility, capacities, and level of ambition, as well as open-ended questions for additional qualitative input.

Safeguards and data management

To support a trauma-informed approach, participants were not asked to disclose personal experiences of violence in sport. Instead, they were invited to assess whether the draft Policy Standards were relevant, effective, trauma-informed and rooted in the perspectives of those directly impacted.

Use of responses

The survey took an estimated 30–45 minutes to complete, and no questions were mandatory – respondents could pause, skip questions or exit the survey at any point. Additionally, a link to local support services was provided at the end of the survey to ensure access to assistance if needed.

Annex II. Methodology — Phase II: In-Person Consultation

Purpose and scope

Phase II consisted of a one-day in-person meeting, held at UNESCO's Headquarters on 21 November 2025. The consultation gathered ten participants with lived experience of violence in sport from eight countries and seven sport disciplines, prioritizing depth of insight over statistical representativeness. Participants were selected with attention to balanced representation across (i) regions (Global North and Global South); (ii) gender identities; (iii) diverse lived experience of violence in sport; (iv) sport types; and (v) levels of participation in sport. UNESCO covered all travel and accommodation expenses to ensure that financial constraints did not limit participation.

Consultation design and thematic focus

The in-person consultation was designed to deepen insights gathered through the online survey and to enable a more nuanced understanding of existing gaps, as well as how the Policy Standards could better address them in practice, by guiding reflections on lived realities, policy design and implementation considerations. Discussions were structured around three thematic segments: Experiences, Policy, and Impact.

Participants discussed a range of themes, including: (i) overall process and context; (ii) language and terminology; (iii) education and communication; (v) capacity and implementation; (v) survivor engagement; (vi) reporting and monitoring; (vii) feedback on the in-person consultation.

At the conclusion of the in-person consultation, participants were invited to share reflections through an anonymous online feedback form and/or verbally, including their feelings, suggestions, and overall impressions.

Trauma-informed approach and safeguards

The in-person meeting adopted an ethics-of-care and trauma-informed approach throughout the entire process. Participants were given full agency over their engagement, including how and whether

they contributed to breakout sessions and plenary discussions. At the beginning of the session, housekeeping rules, including recommendations for respectful discussion and disagreements, were established among the group. A short ice-breaker exercise was also performed to encourage connection among participants.

A range of safeguards were put in place to ensure that participation posed minimal risk of discomfort and that the process remained trauma-informed throughout:

- **Transparency:** Participants received the list of other members from the consultation, preparatory documents and the agenda in advance.
- **Choice:** Participants were given full agency over how they contributed and were reminded that they were under no obligation to remain in the room.
- **Focal points:** Two trauma-informed professionals, fluent in both English and French, were available to provide support to participants if needed.
- **Medical support:** Medical staff, including a psychologist, were on sight and accessible to participants.
- **Hotlines:** Information on local support hotlines was provided as additional resources.
- **Safe room:** A separate space was created for participants to decompress in case of discomfort, equipped with handcraft activities, and other supportive materials.
- **Walk in and out:** Participants were informed of ways to exit the building if needed, including access to outdoor areas.
- **Agenda design:** Multiple breaks were scheduled between sessions to avoid overwhelming participants with emotionally-taxing content.

Endnotes

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Toward Safe Sport

Policy recommendations from
people impacted by violence

Developed by UNESCO and the Sport & Rights Alliance, this report presents the findings of a two-phase consultation with people impacted by violence in sport, conducted to inform the development of UNESCO's Global Policy Standards for Inclusive, Equitable and Safe Sport and Physical Education.

Drawing on perspectives from around 150 participants across 24 countries, the report showcases how lived experience can inform safer, more effective and more accountable sport policy. It captures participant feedback on the draft Policy Standards and translates their insights into action-oriented recommendations framed to enhance prevention, reporting, response, monitoring, support, and survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches.

Intended for policymakers, safeguarding professionals, sport system actors, civil society organizations, and athlete and survivor advocacy groups, the report supports efforts to strengthen safe, inclusive and equitable sport and physical education for all.



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