

SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS GLOSSARY

Co-creating a manual for responsible sport communication



Centre for Sport
& Human Rights

ABOUT THE CENTRE

Launched in 2018, the Centre for Sport and Human Rights (CSHR) is a human rights organisation for the world of sport. The Centre's mission is to advance a world of sport that fully respects human rights by sharing knowledge, building capacity and strengthening the accountability of all actors involved in sport through collective action and by promoting and supporting the Sporting Chance Principles.

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KEY **Now open for consultation** **Provisional definitions** **Consulted upon - Still open for feedback**



FOREWORD

SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS
GLOSSARY

Lucy Amis, Shubham Jain, & David Grevemberg

As diverse stakeholders in sport come together to realise a vision of [responsible sport](#), the ability to communicate clearly with one another is imperative. Whether we come from the world of sport, the world of human rights or elsewhere, we bring with us our own jargon and technical language, which can stand in the way of common understanding and impede progress. Amidst this, many stakeholders in the sport and human rights movement have asked for guidance on the terminology and language used in this area to ensure that our communication is responsible, inclusive, respectful and ethical. To support this, we have launched a process aimed at bringing greater clarity and coherence to the language we employ to discuss and advance human-centric sport.

Language plays a pivotal role in conveying information, as well as in reflecting and shaping social reality. Its usage determines if it reinforces or helps to deconstruct

systems of power. In parallel, language describes real world entities, systems and structures. Whether these terms originate from sport or from human rights, a clear understanding of what each term is seeking to convey also underpins our ability to make sense of the status quo and effect positive change or social transformation. In recognition of the power of language, responding to the need identified by the stakeholders, and in line with our strategy, [Convergence 2025](#), the Centre for Sport and Human Rights has initiated a process to co-create and develop a manual for harmonising responsible communication in the sports ecosystem. By helping to translate sport terminology for those who specialise in human rights, and conversely by applying a human rights lens to language and terminology used in sport and society more broadly, we hope that stakeholders will be better equipped to ensure their interactions positively impact individuals and communities, emphasising the centrality of people and their rights in sport.

In 2022, we launched an open [consultation](#) as the first step of an ongoing process to seek greater convergence in how language is used across the sport and human rights movement. The consultation process is ongoing, because language itself is dynamic and its usage and meaning are constantly evolving. This process aims to build a shared understanding and common point of reference for communication across the sports ecosystem in all its diversity. In particular, the objective is to encourage a clear, appropriate and respectful use of terminology by actors across sport, while prompting reflection on the language and terminology we currently use within our movement and how this can be improved or strengthened. Over the coming years, we will continue to consult on various terms, asking for input from experts and people with relevant lived-experience on how to define each term and, crucially, also how to use the terms respectfully.

This can only be the first step. The sport and human rights movement is global in nature. However, the current language and terminology is Anglo-centric and more specifically is derived from a primarily European-North American cultural and political context. We acknowledge that whilst we are starting this process in English, if the

sport and human rights movement is to continue to grow and reflect the truly global phenomenon it is, this consultation must also extend to other languages. It is also necessary to recognise that national, regional or cultural variations may affect how terms are translated, understood and used in other languages. Therefore, over time, we will endeavour to both consult on contextual variations in language usage and appropriate translations into other official UN languages.

This first iteration of the Glossary includes 50 terms that are frequently and widely used across the ecosystem. Terms are released for consultation in batches, with those terms used most commonly being released first. Of the 50 terms released in this edition:

1. Ten terms have already been **consulted upon**, and we thank those who have already given their input (noting we remain **open to new feedback**);

2. Fifteen terms are now **open for consultation** and feedback for the first time; and

3. A further twenty-five terms are included as **provisional definitions** to give an indication of what we have in the pipeline.

All definitions use as their starting point recognised and credible official sources wherever possible. These include official UN instruments and authoritative, widely recognised, documents found within sport, which are supplemented by insights from our team and members of our Advisory Council and Engaged Organisations based on collective expertise and work within and across the sports ecosystem. The provisional definitions are offered to meet the demand for guidance on a wider range of terms. These are based on desk research from a more limited number of sources. We will open them for consultation after further research and drafting.

Each term comes with a short definition and fuller explanation, as well as alternative or related terms and guidance for respectful usage where that is applicable. Throughout, we have aimed to use language that is as accessible as possible to the reader. As such we have

strived for accuracy while minimising any descriptions that are so technical that they would not make sense to educated users coming to them fresh from different disciplines or walks of life.

The Glossary as a whole is published as a living document, meaning we remain open to further feedback and to making possible amendments as language, understanding and usage evolves. The Centre commits to being responsive as the field develops and consensus on language solidifies or matures. Our dedication is rooted in the belief that to remain relevant and valuable, the Glossary must reflect the latest advances, insights, and best practices across the global sports ecosystem.

To uphold this commitment, we pledge to:

- **Regular Review and Assessment:** Conduct periodic reviews of the Glossary, at least annually to evaluate its content for accuracy, relevance, and alignment with our current goals and the evolving ecosystem landscape.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage diverse individual

and institutional stakeholders in the review process to gather a broad spectrum of insights and feedback, ensuring the document benefits from varied perspectives and expertise.

- **Incorporate Emerging Trends and Technologies:** Stay informed about the latest trends, technologies, and methodologies in our field, and proactively incorporate such advancements in the Glossary to ensure it remains at the forefront of sport and human rights practice.
- **Transparent Updates:** To foster trust and understanding among all stakeholders, we will communicate updates through specific channels and maintain transparency about any changes made to the Glossary, including the rationale behind updates.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** We will ensure that the Glossary is accessible to all intended users, considering various needs and preferences. We commit to making the document available in multiple formats [if applicable] and considering inclusivity in its language and presentation.
- **Training and Education:** We will provide the necessary training and resources to our team and stakeholders so that they can understand and effectively utilise the updated document, ensuring its maximum impact and utility.

- **Feedback Mechanism:** Establish an open and easily accessible feedback channel, allowing stakeholders to contribute suggestions and concerns about the document at any time.

By making this commitment, we affirm our dedication to the excellence of the Glossary and the principles of adaptability, inclusivity, and collaboration. We believe that through continuous improvement and engagement, the Glossary will be a dynamic tool supporting our mission and enhancing our collective effectiveness across the global sport ecosystem.

In the meantime, we welcome any feedback you may have, as well as requests for which terms you would like us to prioritise next for consultation. We hope that these terminologies and pledges accompanying them, based on the collective knowledge and experience of stakeholders in the sport and human rights movement, will enhance usage of responsible language and further promote human rights and respect for people.



INTRODUCTION

SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS
GLOSSARY

A note on usage, inclusivity and the nature of language

Language and its usage are often evolving and can be context-specific. While some terms deal with matters of process, others address issues of people's identity, and as such should be used with respect, humility and care since not all individuals and social groups will relate their own experiences to a particular definition or usage. It is best to always be clear that your intention is to be inclusive, listen to the views of relevant (potentially)

affected people themselves, learn from them, and signal a willingness to amend terminology or make context-specific adaptations. Where possible respect how individual people or groups prefer to be referred to. If you are unsure what term to use, check with those concerned or relevant expert organisations in the field and in the area/country/region in which you are working.



TERMS

SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS
GLOSSARY

ABLEISM

Ableism is intentional or unintentional discrimination against people with disabilities and in favour of people without disabilities. It assumes that not having a disability is the norm and so risks devaluing people with disabilities who do not or are unable to conform because public and private spaces, services, education, workplaces, sports, etc. are designed for non-disabled people.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Ableism creates barriers for people with disabilities to fully participate in society. In the context of sport, ableism can result in the prioritisation of non-disabled sports (and bodies) and devaluing sports for athletes with disabilities and can undermine the achievements of para-athletes as well as long-standing efforts to gain acceptance for people with visible and invisible disabilities in sport and society at large.

Principle sources

- [Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide](#)
- [Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology](#)
- [Fix It: Glossary of Terms](#)

ABUSE

Abuse refers to a single or repeated action that intentionally causes harm to another person. Abuse can include physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, neglect, and exploitation.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

In the context of sport, examples include all forms of sexual abuse or harassment, physical assault such as beatings, training whilst injured, inappropriate training loads, forced doping or drug use, and financial abuse, as well as verbal assaults, confinement, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which diminishes an athlete, volunteer, fan or other person's sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth. Abuse also encompasses neglect by coaches or others with a duty of care towards an athlete, volunteer, etc whose failure to provide a minimum level of care allows harm to be caused, or creates an imminent danger of harm. Abuse includes 'systems abuse', which refers to mistreatment experienced because of system failures. All such situations may amount to a deliberate violation of human rights.

Principle sources

- IOC: The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport
- Fix It: Glossary of Terms

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility is a fundamental principle that enables people with disabilities to participate fully in all aspects of life on an equal basis with others.

Related terms

Disability, Disability Rights

Status: Provisional Definition

Read more

Governments, and by extension through international, regional, and domestic laws non-governmental actors including sports bodies and corporations – are tasked with taking steps to ensure buildings, roads, transportation, and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including stadiums, schools, housing, medical facilities, and other workplaces, as well as information, communications technologies and systems and other services (e.g. electronic services and emergency services) that are generally open to the public are also accessible to people with disabilities, and that obstacles to that access are identified and removed.

Principle sources

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Article 30: List of illustrative indicators on participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport
- World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons
- Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations Enable FAQs
- FIFA "FIFA celebrates accessibility and inclusiveness in football on International Day of Disabled People"
- UN Disability and Sports
- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport
- IPC Guide to Para and IPC Terminology

AFFECTED PERSON OR GROUP

Any individual (or group of people) who in a specific situation is at risk of - has experienced or been affected by - a human rights abuse.

Alternative terms

Affected people, Affected individual

Related terms

Survivors, Victims

Status: Consulted upon - Still open for feedback

Read more

Affected people include those directly impacted by human rights abuses, such as victims and survivors of human rights harms such as discrimination or sexual abuse, and those indirectly impacted by abuse, such as whistleblowers. Affected persons vary by context and may include athletes, coaches, members of their family or entourage, administrators, local communities, the general public, fans or patrons, journalists, technical officials, volunteers, and workers. Some affected persons have specific characteristics or vulnerabilities that put them at greater risk of human rights abuse, such as children, people with disabilities, historically and/or structurally disadvantaged groups, human rights defenders, indigenous people, LGBTQI+ people, migrants, minorities, refugees, and women and girls.

Usage

The term affected people is sometimes used interchangeably with 'victim' or 'survivor'. The term 'victim' is a technical legal term (e.g. used in the criminal justice system). However, because 'victims' are sometimes framed as 'weak', 'passive', or 'powerless', the term 'survivor(s)' is sometimes preferred since it carries a greater sense of empowerment & suggests that a person has started a healing process, may now be thriving or in some instances found justice.

Principle sources

- CSHR: Convergence 2025
- CSHR: Roadmap to Remedy Output One: Effective responses to abuse in sport
- Victim? Survivor? The importance of the language we use to talk about people who have experienced sexual violence - RSACC
- Should We Use "Survivor" or "Victim" After Sexual Assault? | Time

ATHLETE / PLAYER

An athlete/player is any individual who takes part in an organised team or individual sport; recreationally, as an amateur, or as a professional. The two terms are often used interchangeably, and by certain sports, more than others, e.g. 'player' is more commonly used in football, cricket, or rugby, whereas 'athlete' is more often used across track and field discipline or as an umbrella term.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Typically the main difference between professional and amateur athletes/players is the fact that those who take part at the amateur level do so largely or entirely without remuneration, whereas professional athletes/players are not only paid, but may also enjoy a greater degree of organisation or competition, with a high premium placed on performance, excellence and achievement, and full-time, systemic and intense training with the purpose of winning matches and tournaments.

In most cases, professional athletes engage in sports full-time. In contrast, amateur athletes frequently hold full or part-time jobs separate from their athletic career to supplement their income and only participate in local or regional tournaments. This distinction however often varies from sport to sport, for instance, in sports like boxing, wrestling, or golf there are different international tournaments and rules for amateur and professional athletes. Recreational sport would mostly be unorganised grassroots sports but may also be organised in some cases.

Principle sources

- World Athletics Generally Applicable Definitions
- FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2022
- World Rugby regulations
- International Paralympic Committee Handbook
- International Paralympic Committee Constitution

BULLYING

Bullying (or cyberbullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated, and intentional, aggressive behaviour usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally, and deliberately excluding someone.

Related terms

Abuse

Status: Provisional Definition

Principle sources

- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport

CHILD RIGHTS

Child rights are a subset of wider human rights that apply to individuals under the age of 18 (unless majority is attained at a younger age under national-level laws).

Alternative term
Children's Rights

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Children due to their physical and mental immaturity need special consideration. Child rights help ensure that children are properly protected from harm, abuse, or neglect, are nurtured, and empowered to participate in society and decisions affecting them in line with their evolving capacities.

Child rights are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and are embedded in the national laws in virtually every country. There are four overarching child rights principles:

- Non-discrimination - every child should have the same opportunities and protections without distinction of any kind;
- The best interests of the child - when an organisation or authority takes decisions that affect children they do so in the child's best interest;
- The right to life, survival, and development – children's physical health, emotional, cognitive, social, and cultural development is provided for as fully as possible; and
- The right of children to hold opinions, be listened to and taken seriously – and have their voices heard, respected, and taken into account in all decisions that affect them.

Child rights include the right to health, education, a clean environment, a safe place to live, freedom from child labour, and the right to protection from all kinds of harm. They have the right to play, rest, and leisure including participating in any capacity in sports, and to do so safely. Child rights considerations should be included in organisations' human rights due diligence, and children given a voice, in matters that affect them (with support if necessary). Across day-to-day sports, elite youth competitions, and mega sports events, children must be protected from all forms of harm (in person and online), with perpetrators held to account. Children participating in sports (e.g. athletes, volunteers, coaches, or referees) must have time for non-sporting activities e.g. their education, family life, and rest and recreation outside of sports.

Principle sources

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UNICEF- Child rights and why they matter
- Amnesty International- Children's Human Rights
- Children's Rights in Sport Principles

CISGENDER (CIS)

A person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth.

Status: Provisional Definition

Read more

Previously there was no recognition that alignment of sex and gender roles is anything other than the 'norm'. It is important to think about inclusion when talking about gender and understand that not everyone is the same and that people experience discrimination differently. In the absence of a term to describe a person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth, this is assumed to be 'normal', which has implications for those with different experiences and contributes to the 'othering' and marginalisation of transgender people. By recognising the diversity of people's experiences and using the term 'cis' or 'cisgender' in discussions on gender, it serves as an act of solidarity with trans people, who experience extreme and often violent discrimination around the world.

Usage

When using 'cis' or 'cisgender' it should be framed in the context of power. As this is a relatively new term that is still unknown to many people, it can be helpful to add a footnote to explain its meaning and why it is being used.

Principle sources

- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide

COMPLAINT

Complaint is the act of bringing wrongdoing to the attention of relevant authorities or organisations and/or its filing in relevant complaints or reporting systems. It can also refer to the act of bringing wrongdoing to the attention of an operational level complaints, grievance, or dispute resolution process set up by a private entity, e.g. sports body or private enterprise.

Related terms

Reporting, Grievance Mechanism

Status: Provisional Definition

Principle sources

- CSHR expert input

DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is treating any individual or group of people unfairly or less favourably than others because of their identity, or a perception of their identity, based on their race, colour, descent, sex, gender, gender identity, language, religion, political or other opinions, disability, age, refugee status, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. These categories are referred to as protected characteristics in law.

Related terms

Structural discrimination, systemic discrimination, institutional discrimination

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Non-discrimination and equality before the law are fundamental principles of international human rights law. Discrimination covers any unfair distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference encountered by any individual or a group of people. For those affected, it can greatly impair a person's enjoyment of their rights on an equal footing with others across any political, economic, social, or cultural sphere of life.

States have an obligation to effectively protect against discrimination based on any protected characteristic and must respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all persons without distinction of any kind. This can include sometimes taking affirmative action to diminish or eliminate conditions that perpetuate discrimination and inequality.

Non-discrimination is imperative and underpins the equal enjoyment of all other human rights and fundamental freedoms. As a result, States have agreed to specific anti-discriminatory obligations in relation to particularly vulnerable groups, including based on race or origin, sex, age, migrant worker status, and disability.

Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurs when an action, omission, or policy explicitly and unfairly distinguishes between two classes of people based on a protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination occurs when an action, omission, or policy has a discriminatory motive or effect but does not explicitly or directly discriminate on the basis of one of the protected characteristics. For instance, if a sports event prohibits athletes from wearing any conspicuous religious symbols during their event and the ban applies to all people without distinction, then it would not meet the threshold for direct discrimination. However, the ban's effect would be indirectly discriminatory because it disproportionately affects Muslim women who wear a hijab (even though that is not always a religious symbol), because the hijab cannot be as easily concealed as say a crucifix tattoo or Star of David pendant.

Discrimination can also be intersectional, meaning an individual or group could experience several cross-cutting disadvantages based on their having several different or overlapping identities, e.g. a woman of colour who is also disabled could be discriminated against based on their sex, race, and their disability. These can amplify the deprivation, subordination, exclusion, marginalisation, violence, etc. experienced by a person or group which can greatly increase the negative experience.

Principle sources

- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 9)
- Understanding legal definitions of discrimination and unlawful behaviour in the Equality Act
- Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination | OHCHR

DISABILITY / PERSON WITH DISABILITY

A person has a disability if they have a physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, and which in interaction with certain barriers (e.g. social, physical, cultural or attitudes), may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Status: Now open for consultation

Usage

Use the term: 'People / People with a disability/disabilities'. This is more respectful as it places the emphasis on the individual, as opposed to defining the person by their disability.

Avoid: The disabled, disabled people, the handicapped, and offensive terms such as cripple, blind, midget, etc.

Principle sources

- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide
- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- FixIt: Glossary of Terms
- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Disability rights are a subset of human rights that relate to people with disabilities. These rights promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by all those with disabilities and respect for their inherent dignity.

Alternative term

Disability Rights

Related terms

Accessibility, Disability, Person with a Disability

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Disability rights are set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2009 (UN CRPD) which is widely ratified and embedded in the national laws of most countries. The general principles of the CRPD cover:

- Respect for the basic dignity and individual autonomy of people with disabilities, the freedom to make choices of one's own and to be independent, even if more intensive support is required;
- Non-discrimination - so persons with disabilities have equality of opportunity for full and effective participation and inclusion in society regardless of their ability, with equality for men and women, and recognition of the fact that people with disabilities are not a homogenous group with many having other intersectional and overlapping identities;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities; and
- Accessibility to the same jobs, training, facilities, and experiences as everyone else.

People with disabilities specifically have a right to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport. Governments are expected to encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of people with disabilities in mainstream sports at all levels, ensure they have an opportunity to organise, develop and participate in disability-specific sports and recreational activities, and receive appropriate instruction, training, and resources; with children with disabilities having equal access as other children to play, recreation and leisure and take part in sport, including in the school system.

Sports organisations have an active role to play, ensuring that development strategies for the future of their sport are inclusive of people with disabilities, including in terms of employment opportunities at all levels, decision-making, funding, equipment, and equal access to training and education, while enjoying access to the event's services and venues on an equal basis as others, employing adaptations and applying principles of universal design.

This applies to parasport events, like the Paralympics, Special Olympics, and Deaflympics, as well as non-para sports events.

Sport can help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with disability by transforming community attitudes about persons with disabilities, highlighting their skills, and reducing the tendency to see the disability instead of the person, with positive legacies reported following several Paralympic Games from Barcelona in 1992 to Rio in 2016, with London 2012, for example, stimulating increased employment in media companies. The daily realities for people with disabilities, both athletes and non-athletes, however, are not a guaranteed legacy.

Usage

Avoid: Disabled people, and offensive terms such as cripple, blind, midget, etc.

Principle sources

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Article 30: List of illustrative indicators on participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport
- World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons
- Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations Enable FAQs
- FIFA "FIFA celebrates accessibility and inclusiveness in football on International Day of Disabled People"
- UN Disability and Sports
- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport
- IPC Guide to Para and IPC Terminology

DUTY HOLDER

A duty holder is any actor that has a responsibility to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil the human rights of right holders. These actors include the State (including public sector entities) as the primary duty bearers, as well as non-State actors such as businesses and other private entities like sports bodies or event organisers.

Alternative term

Duty bearer

Related term

Right holder

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

States (including all public sector entities) are the primary human rights duty-bearers with an obligation to 'protect' people from abuse, 'respect' people's rights from harm or curtailment, 'promote' the adoption of and compliance with human rights norms and 'fulfil' people's rights through positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights.

At the same time, non-State actors including businesses, private associations, commercial and non-commercial actors, and other private actors - via the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), mandatory human rights due diligence legislations and other instruments, decisions of various judicial bodies, and through self-regulation - have a responsibility to respect human rights through policies, human rights due diligence and efforts to ensure access to effective remedy for affected persons.

As such, in the context of sports and sports events, ecosystem actors such as governments and public authorities (from national to the city/local level), sports bodies, public or privately run local organising committees, sponsors, broadcasters, suppliers, and other commercial partners are the duty bearers with the responsibility to respect, protect, promote, and fulfil human rights of right holders.

Principle sources

- Council of Europe Human Rights Approach
- Mega-Sporting Events Platform for Human Rights, "Championing Human Rights in the Governance of Sports Bodies"
- CSHR's Operational Principles

GAMES TIME

The final preparation and execution stage in the overall lifecycle of a major sporting event, including the event delivery and operation and the sporting competition itself. Games time can run from around 6 months before the start of the event to right up until the end of the final race/match.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Games time is the period where there is often the greatest public attention and scrutiny of the event and its delivery, and this frequently coincides with heightened human rights risks. The human rights issues that often arise during games time include discrimination - e.g. in employment, access to goods and services and unequal treatment of stakeholders; safety and security risks - including over crowd control; workers' rights violations; forced labour and human trafficking - including for migrant workers; denials of freedom of expression and press freedom; heightened risks to women and child rights; and pressures on housing, land and property rights - such as rental price gouging.

Many human rights challenges intensify before or during games time because of immovable deadlines linked to events like the Olympic and Paralympic Games and FIFA World Cups. Large influxes of fans, athletes, coaches, entourages, officials, press, and other visitors, can also put a strain on public services such as transportation and health and medical services with human rights implications.

Principle sources

- Centre for Sport and Human Rights Games time Guide
- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 16)

GENDER

Gender can be understood as the roles, behaviours, attitudes, activities, attributes, opportunities, and relationships that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and boys and women and girls. These expectations are socially and culturally constructed; we learn them through the socialisation process, and they vary from one place to another and also through history.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Gender roles are usually attributed to people differently on the basis of their sex assigned at birth. Gender determines what is expected of an individual in different contexts and is learned through their interactions with society.

In most societies, these differences between girls and boys, women and men, create a whole system of inequalities and discrimination for women and girls. Established gender norms create a hierarchy and can increase the likelihood of an individual being subjected to discrimination and violence. This is due to how gender can be used to dictate who is in a position to control resources and make decisions, frequently forcing individuals into predetermined roles and responsibilities. Due to gender being a social construct, it can vary from culture to culture as well as change over time. Gender can also be understood as an identity (for more, see 'Gender identity'). A person's innate sense of their gender may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth, for example, trans men and women, non-binary people, and people of other genders as differentially expressed in various contexts and cultures.

Usage

Be specific about whether you are referring to gender or sex, and seek to understand the differences between these terms, including by getting advice from gender specialists if needed.

Principle sources

- UN Women Training Centre
- UN Women
- United Nations
- ILGA Europe
- World Health Organisation
- UNHCR
- IOC Gender Equality Review Project
- ILGA Europe's Glossary
- ILGA-Europe's Guidelines for Journalists
- TGEU Trans Media Guide
- Translating Queer Identities: A Glossary of Terms
- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide
- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology

GLOBAL MAJORITY, GLOBAL SOUTH, GLOBAL NORTH

'Global South' and 'Global North' have been used to help discern countries with majority Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) populations from rich countries, with mainly white populations that may have colonised, oppressed or internally displaced them. These are widely used but imperfect terms, that are contested due to geography (e.g. Australia which today has a predominantly white population but is in the Global South in terms of latitude) and overlook the differences in contexts and cultures (e.g. income and other disparities in so-called Global North countries). The term 'Global Majority' is increasingly being used to refer to the proportion of the world who are BIPOC irrespective of country or geography.

Status: Provisional Definition

Alternative term

Global Majority when referring to countries with majority Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour populations historically often referred to as developing countries, or during the Cold War period as 'Third world' countries.

Usage

Avoid the terms: Third world, First world, Developing countries, and Developed countries.

Principle sources

- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide
- CSHR expert input.

GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

A process or procedure through which affected people whose human rights have been harmed, and/or people who have witnessed harm, can bring their concern, complaint, or dispute to a body, have it heard, and which has a process for settling the complaint.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

A patchwork of grievance mechanisms may be available for affected persons, including victims, witnesses, or whistleblowers to use to report concerns and/or access remedy, or none at all. Each has certain advantages or disadvantages, for example in terms of cost, whether it can deliver quick results or intervene to stop a situation from deteriorating, is local, or can provide users with the particular outcome they seek. Often more than one avenue can be pursued in parallel, in some cases however these may be beyond reach, e.g. because they are cost prohibitive, of language barriers, or due to (fear of) reprisals.

Grievance mechanisms are typically adjudicative, mediation-based, or follow particular culturally appropriate processes, or a combination of each. The most common categories are:

'State-based' mechanisms - i.e. run by the State or public bodies, nationally or locally, these can be:

- 'Judicial' such as with civil or criminal procedures (e.g. courts, labour tribunals), or
- 'Non-judicial' such as investigatory bodies or those that deliver mediation/arbitration (e.g. ombudspersons, national human rights institutions (NHRIs) or the National Contact Points of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises).

'Non-State based' mechanism - i.e. not administered by the State, which include:

- International mechanisms - e.g. European Court of Human Rights, International Labour Organization (ILO) complaint procedure,
- 'Judicial' but privately run - e.g. Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS),
- Operational level grievance mechanisms administered / co-administered by an organisation or company (e.g. London 2012 Olympic Complaints and Dispute Resolution Mechanism). These should never undermine, or preclude access to judicial or other non-judicial grievance mechanisms, or, for example, the role of legitimate trade unions in addressing labour-related disputes.

From a human rights point of view, users should be able to access complementary or alternative channels to raise, correct, or compensate for the human rights harm they have witnessed or suffered. Many barriers exist though, for example, both the IOC and FIFA prohibit recourse to ordinary courts of law for sport-related disputes. This is an evolving landscape, however, and new precedents are being set.

Examples of operational channels for receiving complaints and/or for addressing them include hotlines (e.g. for whistleblowers, supply chains, etc), human resources complaints processes, trade union / industrial relations processes, community-level grievance mechanisms, and operational level mechanisms such as the FIFA World Cup 2022 grievance mechanism.

Under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, all grievance mechanisms should meet certain 'effectiveness criteria', meaning they need to be: legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent, rights-compatible, based on dialogue and engagement, and a source of continuous learning. As such mechanisms should be designed to meet the needs of the end-users in mind, be impartial, and set up to avoid repercussions for those who bring complaints.

Principal sources:

- CSHR: Mapping Accountability and Remedy Mechanisms for Sport
- Remediation, Grievance Mechanisms and the Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights
- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (Ch 10)

HATE CRIME

Hate crimes are criminal acts that are perceived by an affected person or anyone else to be motivated by hostility, bias, or prejudice towards particular groups of people based on their actual or perceived race, colour, descent, sex, gender, gender identity, language, religion, political or other opinions, disability, age, refugee status, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Status: Provisional Definition

Read more

Hate crimes comprise two elements: a criminal offence and a biased motivation. A hate crime takes place when a perpetrator intentionally targets an individual or property because of one or more identity traits or expresses hostility towards these identity traits during the crime.

People or property associated with – or even perceived to be a member of – a group that shares an identity trait can also be targets of hate crimes, such as human rights defenders, community centers, or places of worship.

Principle sources

- OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology

HOMOPHOBIA

Homophobia refers to antipathy, irrational fear, contempt, prejudice, aversion or hatred towards lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals, or of homosexual feelings within oneself, and typically assumes that heterosexuality is superior.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principle sources

- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to all human beings from birth and cannot be taken away. Human rights recognise and protect the inherent dignity and equal worth of us all, so that people are treated, and treat each other, fairly, equally, and with respect. They are set out in international human rights treaties with the expectation that they are guaranteed by national laws.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

Human rights are universal, meaning they belong to everyone and are equal, indivisible, independent, and rooted in moral values and norms. They are inherent to individuals and, to some extent, groups; and are articulated in international treaties, customary international law, bodies of principles, and other sources of law and standards that are legally binding on States, and are widely embedded in domestic laws.

Human rights laws require States to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses (e.g. from slavery), to respect human rights by not curtailing people's enjoyment of their rights (e.g. forcefully evicting people from their homes), and to fulfil human rights by progressively releasing certain rights (e.g. right to education or affordable health care). Individuals and organisations – including private enterprises and sports entities – also have a responsibility to respect people's human rights and avoid causing harm.

International labour rights and international humanitarian law are complementary and related to human rights.

Related Terms

Civil liberties – Labour rights – Social justice – Civil and political rights – Economic, social and cultural rights

Principle sources

- Frequently asked questions on a Human Rights-Based Approach to development cooperation
- International labour standards as human rights – Social justice

HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

A way of working that puts people's human rights at the heart of policies and practices. It means rooting decision-making and institutional activities in international human rights standards and applying principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, empowerment, and legality to everything you do.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

A human rights based approach requires:

- a) Duty holders to meet their human rights obligations - this means that State actors (i.e. governments and public bodies) should protect people from human rights abuse, respect people from harm or having their rights curtailed, and fulfill people's rights through positive action that facilitates people's enjoyment of their rights. In parallel, non-State actors (e.g. companies, sports bodies, universities) also have a responsibility to respect peoples human rights.
- b) Rights holders (of human rights) having the capacity to claim their rights, and
- c) Being human rights principles-led.

The core "PANEL" principles that underpin a human rights based approach are:

- **Participation** – everyone has a right to actively participate in decision-making processes in matters that affect them in a way that is objective, fair, and inclusive.
- **Accountability** – duty-bearers - including governments, corporate partners, event organisers, and sports bodies - are held accountable if they fail to meet their obligations towards rights-holders, and access to justice and effective remedy is in place for victims when human rights breaches occur.
- **Non-discrimination and equality** – all individuals are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind, this includes purposeful discrimination, and omissions or practices that have a discriminatory effect. All types of discrimination should be prohibited, prevented, and eliminated.
- **Empowerment** – everyone is entitled to claim, defend, and exercise their human rights. Individuals, groups, and communities need to be able to understand their rights, have equal access to information, and where necessary be supported (e.g. for children or people with certain disabilities) in claiming or exercising their rights.
- **Legitimacy & Legality** – practices should be in line with, and gain legitimacy from, legal rights set out in domestic and international laws. International human rights norms should apply where national laws are weak, non-existent, or poorly enforced >>

Principal sources:

- CSHR's Operational Principles
- The Panel Principles: Taking a Human Rights Based Approach
- UN Sustainable Development Group, Human Rights-Based Approach
- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
- Care About Rights
- European Network of National Human Rights Institutions
- Future Learn
- The Commonwealth Consensus Statement on Promoting Human Rights in and through Sport
- GIZ Guideline – Sport for Development and Human Rights
- United Nations Population Fund

HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE

A one-time and ongoing process to proactively uncover and assess the human rights (and environmental) risks and impacts of an organisation across its operations and its supply chain and business partnership, which aims to understand facts and identify, prevent, reduce and account for how adverse human rights impacts are addressed.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

Human rights due diligence is a process set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011) and subsequently adopted in a range of compatible international instruments and within the national laws of some countries. Human rights due diligence goes beyond identifying and managing material risks to an organisation and its suppliers or business partners and is focussed on risks to people. It consists of four steps:

- assessing actual and potential adverse human rights (and environmental) impacts,
- integrating assessment findings across the organisation's management systems and taking appropriate action,
- tracking the effectiveness of measures to address and respond to its impacts, and
- communicating with stakeholders about how impacts are addressed.

Alternative term

Human rights and environmental due diligence

Principle sources

- Corporate human rights due diligence: emerging practices, challenges and ways forward
- The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: An Introduction
- Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

HARM

A negative impact on an individual or group's physical or mental health, bodily integrity, well-being or living conditions caused by the actions or omissions of public or private bodies, individuals or groups, which can violate their human rights.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

This includes physical, emotional, financial, psychological, behavioural, social, or spiritual harms, and can take the form of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, and other actions, omissions, or mistreatments that adversely affect an individual or group.

Principle sources

- CSHR in-house expertise
- Consultation

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS/ INVESTIGATORS

Any investigations or investigators where the process is undertaken without any ties to parties or organisations that could potentially lead to actual or perceived bias or conflict of interests. This also means that the investigating entity should not be contracted or commissioned by the respective sports organisation, and/or that any such arrangement should be transparently communicated alongside the steps taken to mitigate any risk of bias or the perception of bias by virtue of such contracting or commissioning.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principle sources

- CSHR expert input

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION (IF)

The internationally recognised governing body responsible for administering a sport or group of related sports disciplines, with a duty to manage the everyday running of their sports or disciplines, create a common set of rules and regulations, organise regular international competitions, and ensure the sport is promoted, developed and financially stable and sustainable worldwide.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

Typically constituted as international non-governmental organisations and governed by statutes, IFs are made up of, and represent their National Federations to regulate their sport and/or disciplines and promote them to the various stakeholders. Examples include World Athletics (WA), FIFA (football/soccer), the ICC (cricket), FIBA (basketball) and FIH (hockey). IFs are expected to monitor the everyday administration of their sports, ensure rules are followed by their member federations to enable good governance and coherent international competition and guarantee the regular organisation of competitions as well as respect for the rules of fair play.

IFs are the mechanism by which grassroots sport, including sports at the local and national level, is connected with elite international competitive sports via results from a calendar of international events, ranking systems and in some cases ongoing records and statistics. IFs are responsible for the technical aspects of their sports at major competitions, including multi-sport events, and for supervising the development of athletes practising their sports at every level.

To discuss common problems and agree on and coordinate event calendars, many IFs are members of associations (e.g. the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF)). Over 30 IFs are recognised by the International Olympic Committee, represent their sport at the Olympics, and as part of the Olympic Movement are expected to abide by the Olympic Charter. Separately, many IFs are recognised by the International Paralympic Committee, while dozens of others are stakeholders of SportAccord, or remain non-associated.

Alternative term

International Sports Federation (ISF)

Related term

Sports Governing Body (SGB), National Federation (NF) National Governing Body (NGB)

Usage

The terms "International Federation" and "Sports Governing Body" are often used interchangeably both within and outside the world of sport. IFs sit under the larger umbrella of Sport Governing Bodies.

Principal sources:

- International Sports Federations (IFs) with Olympic Recognition
- International Paralympic Committee Style Guide
- What is the role of the International Sports Federations (IFs)? | IOC FAQs
- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 21)

INTERSEX

Intersex refers to a range of physical traits or variations that lie between stereotypical expectations of male and female bodies. Intersex people are born with physical, hormonal, or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male.

Alternative Terms

Sex Variations, Variations in Sex Characteristics, Differences in Sex Development (DSD)

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Intersex is an umbrella term for differences in sex traits or reproductive anatomy. Although intersex characteristics are congenital, intersex bodies can present themselves as intersex at birth, during childhood, in puberty, or adulthood. A person may realise they are intersex at a very early age or later on in life. People with intersex bodies may have an intersex gender identity or they may have any other gender identity.

Many forms of intersex exist. It is estimated that 2% of the global population has some form of sex variation.

Intersex individuals are persons who do not match medical and societal norms of so-called female and male bodies with regard to their chromosomal, gonadal, endocrine, or anatomical sex. The latter becomes evident, for example, in secondary sex characteristics such as muscle mass, hair distribution, and stature, or primary sex characteristics such as the inner and outer genitalia and/or the chromosomal and hormonal structure.

The most recent medical term used to describe individuals with such characteristics is DSD - Differences in Sex Development (formerly known as disorder in sex development. The term "disorder" is no longer used).

Usage

The term intersex has gained a connotation of identity. Some people will identify with the term and call themselves intersex. Others, despite having variations in their physical, hormonal, or genetic features associated with sex, do not identify as intersex. The term intersex does not describe sexual orientation.

Some women prefer the term "women with naturally occurring high levels of testosterone". Terms such as "women with sex variations" and "women with variations in sex characteristics" are increasingly being used.

Some stress the need to say "naturally occurring" or "innate" sex variations or variations in sex characteristics to differentiate these individuals from transgender people, who might have changed their sex characteristics through medical interventions.

Principal sources:

- Athlete Ally - K12 Coaches course
- OII Europe (Organisation Intersex International Europe): Resources

LGBTQI+

Is an acronym used to indicate the spectrum of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and other people such as those who are asexual, pansexual, or whose identities are not heterosexual and cisgender.

Status: Provisional Definition

Read more

Previously the term LGBT+ was widely used where the '+' indicated others not explicitly covered by letters in the acronym, some however felt this was insufficient and that greater representation should be included, and as such it remains an evolving and debated discussion.

While 'LGBTQI+' serves to describe the spectrum of people who face adverse human rights impacts in the form of discrimination and exclusion, there are other groups of people with diverse SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) that do not necessarily identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex and still are differently and disproportionately impacted in human rights terms. The evolving nature of identity and recognition therefore should be acknowledged to prevent further discrimination.

It is also important to note that the acronym can be context-specific. For example, in parts of North America '2S' is sometimes added to denote 'two-spirit' as historically this term has been used by First Nation peoples.

Usage

Avoid: LGBT in isolation, without the 'T' as this has been linked to anti-trans movements, or single out homosexual(ity), gay or lesbian when referring to the community or spectrum of people as a whole.

Principal sources

- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide
- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- ILGA Europe's Glossary
- ILGA-Europe's Guidelines for Journalists
- TGEU Trans Media Guide
- Translating Queer Identities: A Glossary of Terms

MEGA-SPORTING EVENT (MSE)

A high profile one-time or regularly recurring sporting event or competition of substantial scale and short duration that is organised at the international, regional or national level, and which carries mass popular appeal and attracts sponsorship and significant media interest.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

A high profile one-time or regularly recurring sporting event or competition of substantial scale and short duration that is organised at the international, regional, or national level, and which carries mass popular appeal and attracts sponsorship and significant media interest.

These events are usually owned and awarded by an International Federation or Sports Governing Body and often organised by a special local entity (e.g. a local organising committee) together with public and private partners. MSEs may also be promoted and organised by private or sovereign entities.

Beyond their sporting significance, mega-sporting events have a large economic, social, political, cultural, and environmental impact and legacy on the area(s) hosting them and yield high levels of media coverage because of the event's status. Given this impact, these events often need to have political and financial support from the city, region, or country acting as host(s). Even relatively small events for the sports industry can be considered 'mega' depending on the context. MSEs are often accompanied by parallel activities such as festivals or cultural events.

Examples of MSEs include international competitions such as the Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, Special Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Jeux de la Francophonie; world championships such as FIFA World Cups, ICC Cricket World Cups, World Athletics Championships; regional competitions such as the Asian Games, the Pan American Games, UEFA European Football Championship; significant one-off events like the UEFA Champions League Final and the NFL Super Bowl; and series events taking place in multiple locations like Formula One Grand Prix. In some contexts, youth editions of international competitions, world championships, regional competitions, and significant one-off events can also be considered an MSE.

Alternative term

Major Sporting Event

Principal sources

- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 1, 3)
- Existing CSHR documents definitions
- Consultation

PATRIARCHY

Patriarchy is a system in which men hold power at the expense of women, and/or where male attributes are valued or privileged over female attributes. Patriarchal systems serve to perpetuate sexist and hierarchical power relationships.

Patriarchal relationships, beliefs, and values are often embedded in political, social, or economic systems, and within organisations e.g. sports bodies, as well as in the private sphere or home life within many countries. Patriarchal systems create or preserve gender inequality between men and women, and legitimise discrimination against, and the exclusion of women, as well as in many cases gender non-conforming people.

Patriarchy is often discussed alongside other systems of oppression and exploitation such as colonialism, racism, xenophobia, and homo- and transphobia, which have, or continue to, marginalise(d) already vulnerable groups or those with less power.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- [Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide](#)
- [Patriarchy - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics](#)
- [Oxford Languages](#)

REMEDY

Remedy means correcting or making good of a wrong, harm, or injury to an individual or group of people, by enforcing a right and/or redressing a wrong. The aim is to restore victims/survivors to the situation they would have been in beforehand if that is still possible, or to compensate them in some way if it is not. Organisations operating commercially (including sports bodies) that cause or contribute to a harm, have a responsibility to provide or contribute to remedy for those who have been harmed.

Alternative term

Remediation

Related terms

Grievance Mechanism, Complaint, Complaints, Dispute Resolution Mechanism

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

Everyone has a right to remedy if their human rights have been negatively impacted. Remedy refers to the process of making good a wrong, and to the outcome of the wrong being corrected. The remedy process may seek to investigate, punish, or redress a human rights concern or violation.

Forms of remedy are varied and include recognition or cessation of the violation and adequate reparation, for which an independent assessment is needed.

Remedy outcomes may include:

- an apology,
- restitution (giving back to someone what was rightfully theirs),
- compensation (financial or non-financial),
- punitive sanctions (e.g. fines), and
- prevention of future harm (e.g. injunctions).

Effective remedy mechanisms include: courts, labour tribunals, mediation-based dispute resolution systems like those run by national human rights institutions (NHRIs), ombudsperson offices and the National Contact Points of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and Government-run complaints offices, as well as operational level grievance systems (e.g. the one operated by FIFA for the 2022 World Cup). They may include opportunities for truth and reconciliation.

Remedy mechanisms rely on several actors including specialist police units, legal aid services and guardians of proceedings, human rights lawyers, rights advocates, ombudspersons and investigators specialised in child protection, human rights, harassment, and abuse cases.

Usage

Remedy should not be confused with 'remediation' in the context of social audits, where the concept normally refers to forwarding looking preventative steps to stop a non-compliance from recurring.

Principal sources

- CSHR: Existing CSHR documents definitions; Consultation; UNGPs
- Mapping Accountability and Remedy Mechanisms for Sport
- IHRB: Remedy Mechanisms for Human Rights in the Sports Context
- CSHR: Roadmap to Remedy Output One: Effective responses to abuse in sport
- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 10)

REPORTING

This term has two distinct meanings relevant to actors in the sports ecosystem, each of which is context specific:

1. Reporting (organisational communications) – meaning the process by which an organisation communicates publicly about the impact of their activities on the people and planet, and provides a measure of transparency and accountability to individuals or groups who may be impacted by their activities, as well as to other relevant stakeholders, including investors.

Related terms

Human Rights Due Diligence

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- Shift: Human Rights Reporting

REPORTING

This term has two distinct meanings relevant to actors in the sports ecosystem, each of which is context specific:

2. Reporting (complaint/whistleblowing) - refers to the initial act of bringing wrongdoing to the attention of someone, either through an organisation or public body's official reporting mechanism(s) or channel(s) or through alerting officials and relevant authorities in other ways, and to the various ways in which affected persons may give testimony about the wrongdoing.

Related terms

Complaint, Safeguarding, Remedy, Whistleblower, Grievance Mechanism.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- CSHR expert input
- FixIt: Glossary of Terms

RIGHTS HOLDER

This term has two distinct meanings relevant to the sports ecosystem, the first being a human rights term while the second is a commercial designation:

1. Rights holder (holder of human rights) -

All human beings are rights holders under international human rights standards. Rights holders include individuals and social groups and are entitled to claim their human rights in relation to duty-bearers.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

A human rights-based approach recognises the entitlement of rights holders to have their rights respected, protected, promoted, and fulfilled, it also considers rights holders as active agents in the realisation of human rights – both directly and indirectly (e.g. via organisations who represent their interests).

Rights holders should be able to claim their human rights, with additional support provided where that is appropriate (e.g. for children of different ages and persons with certain disabilities).

In many contexts, there are specific social groups and people whose human rights are not fully upheld, frequently these include women and girls, people of the Global Majority, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQI+ community, youth and other historically or structurally disadvantaged communities.

In the context of sports and sports events, duty holders should strengthen meaningful engagement with rights holders such as local communities, athletes, workers, human rights defenders, and other disadvantaged groups, and consult with rights holders themselves or their representatives to strengthen their voice in decision-making in sport in matters that affect them, and support ways to empower them to demand their rights and have access to parity of information and to effective remedy.

Related terms

Affected people, Stakeholders

Principal sources

- Council of Europe Human Rights Approach
- Mega-Sporting Events Platform for Human Rights, "Championing Human Rights in the Governance of Sports Bodies"
- CSHR's Operational Principles
- Right to Education Glossary

RIGHTS HOLDER

This term has two distinct meanings relevant to the sports ecosystem, the first being a human rights term while the second is a commercial designation:

2. Rights holder (the holder of commercial rights) -

This refers to a commercial actor who holds rights under a contract. In the sporting context, this is commonly used to refer to a broadcasting company that is referred to as the broadcasting rights holder for a particular sports event. Sponsors, suppliers, licencees, and other corporate actors might also be referred to as rights holders in legal documents or common parlance.

Status: Now open for consultation

Principal sources

- CSHR expert input

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is the responsibility organisations have to all people to prevent and respond to abuse of any kind, especially with regard to children and adults at risk. Safeguarding involves the prevention of harm and abuse by identifying and minimising risks, training, and responding appropriately when concerns arise that people have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, harm.

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Safeguarding includes the policies, procedures, measures, and practices organisations across the sports ecosystem should put in place to prevent, respond to, and protect individuals from harm committed by anyone who operates in and around sports and sporting events. Safeguarding processes exist for the safety of all, with a particular focus on children and adults at risk, who need additional protective factors in place so they can enjoy or participate in sports safely, free from abuse. Adults at risk include anyone in a position where they may be taken advantage of and be subjected to harm. Perpetrators of harm can be of any gender and include parents, coaches, medical staff, teammates, other competitors, members of the workforce, and anyone operating in and around sports and sports events.

Policies and Codes of Conduct are an integral part of any organisation's safeguarding armory, but they also have an obligation to train personnel likely to interact directly with children or at-risk adults, so they can recognise signs of harm or the situations in which harm is likely to arise and report concerns appropriately. Coaching and support personnel and all those who come into direct contact with children or at-risk adults should be properly vetted during recruitment and safe recruitment procedures should be followed. Safeguarding policies and practices need to be embedded across organisations, and continually monitored and strengthened to prevent and respond to evolving and new potential areas of abuse, such as online abuse.

Related terms

Abuse, Affected person, Harm, Reporting, Remedy, Sexual abuse, Sexual harassment

Principal sources

- UNICEF: International Safeguards for Children in Sport
- NSPCC: Safeguarding Children in Sport
- Bond: Safeguarding Resources
- OSCR: What is Safeguarding?
- Bond: Safeguarding Definitions
- CSHR: Roadmap to Remedy Output One: Effective responses to abuse in sport
- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide

SAFE SPORT

An athletic environment that is respectful, equitable, and free from all forms of non-accidental violence to athletes.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport

SEX

Sex is a combination of bodily characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, internal and external reproductive organs, and secondary sex characteristics. It refers to the biological and physiological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones, and their interactions, generally male or female, which is typically assigned at birth.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- Council of Europe

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse refers to any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact, or penetrative, where consent is coerced, manipulated, or is not or cannot be given. It includes threats of sexual acts and does not have to include physical coercion or violence.

Related terms

Abuse, Affected person, Harm, Reporting, Remedy, Sexual abuse, Sexual harassment

Status: Now open for consultation

Read more

Sexual abuse is behaviour towards an individual or group that involves sexualised verbal, non-verbal, or physical behaviour, whether intended or unintended, legal or illegal, that is based upon an abuse of power and trust. Sexual abuse involves any sexual activity where consent is not or cannot be given. Sexual abuse can involve a process known as "grooming".

The risk of sexual abuse is greater when there is a lack of protection (such as child protection policies and procedures, education and training; high motivation by abusers, a high level of athlete/stakeholder vulnerability) and if the 'affected person'/'victim' is young, immature or otherwise at heightened risk e.g. as a result of disability and maturation.

Sexual abuse in sports can seriously and negatively affect an athlete, volunteer, support staff, fan, or other participant's physical and psychological health because they may feel hurt, humiliated, upset, or lacking control. It can also result in sleeping problems, lack of concentration, and impaired performance and can lead to athletes and other participants in sports dropping out. Psychosomatic illnesses, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide are some of the serious health consequences. For athletes, sexual abuse also damages relationships with coaches, medical staff, and other members of their entourage and can lead to a general loss of trust in coaches and others who should be there to support them.

Sexual abuse involving athletes in team sports or groups of volunteers can undermine team cohesiveness, for example setting up jealousies and apparent favouritism, thus negatively affecting performance. Teammates or fellow volunteers who are aware of the problem and feel powerless can also suffer from psychological stress and drop out of sport.

Principal sources

- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport
- CSHR: Roadmap to Remedy Output One: Effective responses to abuse in sport
- FixIt: Glossary of Terms
- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment means any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, or physical.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- The IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation refers to an individual's capacity for emotion, affection, and sexual attraction (or lack thereof) to individuals of a different gender, the same gender or more than one gender. It can be experienced and expressed in a variety of ways, including attraction to different genders or sexes, or a lack of sexual attraction altogether. Along with romantic orientation, this forms a person's orientation identity.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- FixIt: Glossary of Terms

SEX WORKER

A person who works in the sex industry, e.g. receives money or goods in exchange for sexual services.

Status: Provisional Definition

Alternate terms

Women/People Who Sell Sex (or Sexual Services)

Related terms

Sex Work, Men/People Who Buy Sex

Usage

These terms are widely used by people who work(ed) in the sex industry, many of whom describe their (former) work as 'sex work'. These terms are descriptive and afford respect and dignity to those who engage in this work, and avoid the negative or discriminatory implications of other phrases. These phrases are preferred as part of the movement to respect the rights of people who engage in sex work.

Avoid

Prostitute, Prostitution, use of Prostitutes, Use of sex workers.

Principal sources

- Oxfam: Inclusive Language Guide

SPORT GOVERNING BODY (SGB)

An organisation that governs a sport, set of sports disciplines, or a sporting movement, which sets out and updates its rules and regulations, determines its disciplinary procedures for rule-breaking, and awards sports events, including defining competition calendars, and negotiates commercial partnerships.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

An organisation that governs a sport, set of sports disciplines, or a sporting movement, which sets out and updates its rules and regulations, determines its disciplinary procedures, and awards sports events, including defining competition calendars.

Sports Governing bodies can vary in scope, including those that manage single sports or a group of related sports disciplines, those that oversee a sports movement (e.g. the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee), major regional confederations like CAF or UEFA, those that administer or serve as a trade association for franchised teams (e.g. the National Football League (NFL) in the USA). Sports Governing Bodies will typically negotiate sponsorship deals with commercial partners; and sell television, radio, and social media broadcast rights, and licensing agreements for their brand.

Alternative Term

Sports Body

Related Terms

International Federations (IF), International Sports Federation (ISF) National Federation(NF), National Governing Body (NGB)

Usage

The terms "Sports Governing Body" and "International Federation" are often used interchangeably both within and outside the world of sport. "Sport Governing Body" is the larger umbrella term.

Principal sources

- CSHR expert input
- External consultation
- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 18)
- International Sports Federations (IFs) with Olympic Recognition
- International Paralympic Committee Style Guide
- What is the role of the International Sports Federations (IFs)? | IOC FAQs

SPORTS ECOSYSTEM

The sports ecosystem represents the range of individual and institutional actors involved in the world of sport and their complex web of interconnected and interdependent relationships and power differentials. Each ecosystem actor has rights, roles and responsibilities, and their actions, behaviours, and decisions can have an impact – positively or negatively – on other people within the ecosystem.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

An organisation that governs a sport, set of sports disciplines, or a sporting ecosystem approach focuses on both the institutional roles people play and upon the rights and characteristics of various groups. A trusted, legitimate, and credible ecosystem, for example, might be one that is people-centric and prioritises the rights, needs, and interests of all individuals and groups of people. The people in the ecosystem include athletes participating in sports from the local community to elite or professional level, athletes' families and entourages, coaches and administrators, the technical officials in sport, fans or patrons, workers, volunteers, the local community and general public, as well as journalists and human rights defenders. People in these different roles and capacities may be impacted by each other or any of the institutional actors also represented in the ecosystem.

In cases where any person's rights are impacted, how far they are impacted will depend in part on a range of characteristics or vulnerabilities and the extent to which these have protections in law, particularly at the national or local level. The characteristics include children, women, members of the LGBTQI+ community, people with a disability, historically and/or structurally disadvantaged groups, minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, and refugees.

At the same time, taking an institutionally focused approach means acknowledging the rights, roles, responsibilities, needs, and interests of institutions in the ecosystem. Institutional ecosystem actors include governments at various levels, including sports ministries; sports bodies including international and national federations and major event owners; their commercial partners including sponsors, media and broadcasters; supply chain providers including suppliers; event organisers like bid or local organising committees; professional sports bodies such as clubs and leagues; services and standards bodies including trade associations; and integrity and dispute resolution bodies such as World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS); as well as education and research bodies; civil society and human rights bodies including trade unions and national human rights institutions (NHRIs).

Adopting an ecosystem approach that focuses on people's rights and characteristics and is institutionally focused, supports a holistic understanding of the world of sport, for example helping to facilitate and delineate avenues for collaboration and cooperation between the various actors and stakeholders in the ecosystem that among other things could strengthen sport's role as a positive force for good.

Principal sources

- CSHR: Sports Ecosystem
- CSHR: Convergence 2025
- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 3)

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To meaningfully include an individual or group of people in a process, decision or investigation that has or could affect(ed) them. The process should be safe and respectful and allow those (potentially) impacted by an activity or process to have their views or those of their representative(s) taken into account. In the context of human rights risks, we talk about 'meaningful' engagement to stress the importance of the process being more than perfunctory or performative, which means it must be a two-way process, conducted in good faith, responsive, and ongoing.

Status: Consulted upon – Still open for feedback

Read more

Everyone has a right to participate and have their voices heard in matters that affect them. This requires sports bodies, corporate partners, and event organisers to take an active, inclusive, accessible, and transparent approach, to reach out to hear from (potentially) affected people.

It starts with identifying all key actors who might be involved or impacted by an activity or process, and engaging them directly or seeking advice from representative/intermediary organisations on how to reach the most vulnerable or marginalised in society. This might require removing barriers that might stop certain people from taking part e.g. covering expenses, compensating survivors of abuse with lived experience, making information or venues accessible, addressing power imbalances, and supporting people with lived experiences to set the agenda and engage as equals in discussions. Effective stakeholder engagement requires regular and clear communication and transparency about the process itself and the expected or potential outcomes.

Each stakeholder brings unique perspectives, lived experience, and/or expertise to the table, and offers insights that can help inform effective responses to human rights challenges or opportunities (e.g. MSE legacy projects). Stakeholder engagement should include duty bearers, like governments, businesses, and international or UN bodies, as well as rights-holders i.e. (potentially) affected people or communities, grassroots groups, civil society organisations, trade unions, and human rights experts.

Formats range from online surveys to face-to-face consultations, roundtable discussions, focus groups, and public hearings. The benefits include fostering mutual understanding, building trust and in some cases consensus, facilitating open dialogue and collaboration, and developing and innovating joint solutions to address human rights matters. Stakeholder engagement can enhance the effectiveness and legitimacy of policies and practices, help to identify and address potential human rights violations early on and prevent situations from escalating or resulting in further harm. Stakeholder engagement can also ensure that human rights initiatives are contextually relevant and meet the needs of those affected.

Principal sources

- Human Rights Based Approach
- The Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights
- Stakeholder engagement | The Danish Institute for Human Rights

SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION

Systemic discrimination/bias involves the procedures, structures, routines, decisions, and organisational culture of any organisation or system that intentionally or unintentionally contribute to less favourable outcomes for minority (and/or disadvantaged) groups than for the majority of the population.

Status: Provisional Definition

Read more

Systemic discrimination shows up within an organisation's governance, policies, programmes, recruitment and employment practices, marketing, goods or services, etc. Systemic discrimination cannot be tackled on a one-off basis, it requires sustained attention from, and serious intent by, organisations with transparency and accountability systems. Responses to systemic discrimination must be informed by the voices of people with direct lived experience, being mindful of people's intersectional and overlapping identities.

Alternate terms

Structural discrimination, Institutional discrimination, Systematic discrimination

Related terms

Discrimination

Usage

Systemic, systematic, structural, and institutional discrimination are common terms used to define the same concept, though sometimes these terms may have more nuanced meanings depending on the specific context. The word 'bias' may be used interchangeably with 'discrimination' in these contexts. Sometimes 'racism', 'sexism', 'homophobia', 'transphobia', 'anti-semitism', 'islamophobia' etc. may be used in place of 'discrimination/ bias' to refer to particular kinds of discrimination affecting specific discriminated against groups.

Principal sources

- Routledge Handbook of Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights (ch 9)
- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- Council of Europe

TRANSGENDER (TRANS)

“Trans” is an umbrella term to refer to individuals whose Gender Identity and/or gender expression differ from the Sex/Gender they were assigned at birth. They may identify themselves with the opposite gender - trans women and trans men - or not. Because gender identity is a spectrum, people can also identify as gender fluid, gender non-conforming, gender neutral, or non-binary, among others. Transgender people might undergo gender-affirmative medical treatment - surgery and/or hormones - or not.

Status: Provisional Definition

Usage

Transsexual was used in the past as a more medical term (similarly to homosexual) to refer to someone whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. This term is still used by some although many people prefer the term trans or transgender.

Principal sources

- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- FixIt: Glossary of Terms
- ILGA Europe's Glossary
- ILGA-Europe's Guidelines for Journalists
- TGEU Trans Media Guide
- Translating Queer Identities: A Glossary of Terms

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency refers to being open, honest and straightforward about one's activities, and if something goes wrong not trying to hide it. In practice, this means sharing relevant information with stakeholders including about how decisions are made, and providing a clear understanding of what they can expect from any process that might affect them, as well as its likely outcome.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- [What is Government Transparency? | Granicus UK](#)
- [Forbes: Transparency in business - 5 ways to build trust](#)
- [CSHR's Operational Principles](#)

TRANSPHOBIA

Transphobia is the irrational fear, dislike, or hatred directed towards gender non-conformity or gender transgression, such as a fear of, or aversion to, masculine women, feminine men, cross-dressers, transgenderists, transsexuals, trans people and others who do not fit into existing gender stereotypes about their birth gender.

Status: Provisional Definition

Read more

Transphobia can also entail fear of or dislike directed towards trans people's perceived lifestyle, culture, or characteristics, whether or not any specific trans person has that lifestyle or characteristic. The dislike does not have to be so severe as hatred. It is enough that people do something or abstain from doing something because they do not like trans people.

It is based on prejudices against people who are perceived to be different. All individuals discover rather than choose their sexual identity, as a result, this understanding should be carried through into the sports world's approach to transgender people. Sports organizations should ensure protection from abuse and harassment through policies and practices including education, which demonstrates respect for the differences. It should be made clear in codes of conduct that transgender harassment is not acceptable.

Principal sources

- Kick It Out: Useful Definitions and Terminology
- FixIt: Glossary of Terms

TRAUMA

Trauma refers to the lasting emotional response that often results from living through a stressful, frightening, or distressing event or set of circumstances that are difficult to cope with or are experienced as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening. Trauma can have adverse and enduring effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. Trauma often occurs when a person is exposed "to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence".

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013

TRAUMA- INFORMED

Trauma-informed means firstly to acknowledge and understand the role that trauma plays in people's lives. It means that every part of an organisation or program understands the impact of trauma on the individuals they serve and promotes cultural and organisation change in responding to those served. A trauma-informed approach to investigation means applying trauma-informed principles and practices, for instance by reflecting at each stage of a process on the potential impact on the affected person's well-being, and how trauma may impact an affected person's ability to engage in an investigation and what associated adjustments need to be made for that individual's safe and effective engagement.

Status: Provisional Definition

Principal sources

- CSHR expert input

WHISTLEBLOWER

Whistleblower is any person who provides evidence or information that relates to an alleged offence, wrongdoing, human rights violation, or non-compliance with rules, regulations, and laws, to persons or organisations that may be able to take action.

Status: Provisional Definition

Read more

It is imperative that whistleblowers are protected from retaliation. Encouraging people to report wrongdoing without reprisals and to protect them when they do is essential to safeguard the public interest and promote a culture of transparency, public accountability, and integrity.

Whistleblowers can report any misconduct in sport. For instance, they may report instances of abuse, discrimination, poor working conditions, corruption, doping, match-fixing, or a wide variety of other safeguarding concerns or human rights harms.

Principal sources

- CSHR expert input
- FixIt: Glossary of Terms
- OECD Report: Committing to Effective Whistleblower Protection

SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS
GLOSSARY

sporthumanrights.org



Centre for Sport
& Human Rights