Only 24% of women in Canada participate in sport, compared to 45% of men.¹

Of the girls who take part in sport, the overall participation rate drops by 22% as they enter adolescence,² and the school sport participation drops by almost 26%³.

Girls and young women from diverse ethno-cultural communities are the most underrepresented in the Canadian sport and physical activity sector.⁴

In collegiate sports, women make up only 24% of athletic directors and 17% of head coaches.⁵

40% of senior staff and 33% of board members in national and multi-sport organizations are comprised of women.⁶
ADVANCING WOMEN IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

VISION

At the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS), we aspire to achieve equity for women in society through the power of sport.

MISSION

We are dedicated to creating an equitable and inclusive Canadian sport and physical activity system that empowers girls and women—as active participants and leaders—within and through sport. With a focus on systemic change, we partner with governments, organizations and leaders to challenge the status quo and to advance solutions that result in measurable change.

Everyone benefits when diversity and inclusion are prioritized. Sport has much to gain from harnessing the talents and contributions of girls and women. This in turn creates the conditions for women to achieve their fullest potential within and through sport, leading to a more open and inclusive society.

We all have a role to play in realizing this possibility and, at CAAWS, we are motivated by the opportunity to work collaboratively with organizations and leaders throughout Canada to bring it to life.
WHAT’S AT STAKE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS?

Despite being afforded the same rights as men and boys in Canada, women and girls face complex and varied obstacles in society that prevent them from experiencing full equity. We believe that equitable and inclusive sport is a powerful vehicle to change that.

Girls and women who play sports have higher levels of confidence and self-esteem.

Girls who play sports are more likely to graduate from college, find a job and be employed in male-dominated industries.

94% of women in the C-suite played sports; 52% played at a university level.

All girls and women deserve the chance to access these benefits through sport and physical activity; it is crucial that special attention be paid to those girls and women who are most excluded and thus have the most to gain.

“Sport is an invaluable tool to equip women and girls with leadership skills, reduce marginalisation and dismantle stereotypes.”

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women

“Positive sport experiences can contribute to the full inclusion of girls and women by:

- Enhancing their health and well-being
- Fostering their self-esteem and empowerment
- Facilitating their social inclusion and integration
- Changing gender norms
- Providing opportunities for female leadership and achievement”

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WHAT’S AT STAKE FOR SPORT?

Inclusion and diversity are the way of the future. These values are emerging as central tenets of the Canadian sport and physical activity system, and those who prioritize equity will be rewarded by stronger, more sustainable results.

Research on organizations consistently shows that organizations that are more diverse perform better, linking diversity to innovation and improved decision-making, among other advantages.\textsuperscript{xii}

Building a legacy of change: Gender equity is an opportunity to increase the value and impact of sport and physical activity in Canada’s future. It is also an opportunity to shape the culture of excellence in future leaders of Canada across all sectors.

Additional benefits for sport and physical activity include:

- A larger and healthier pipeline of participants, skilled leaders and volunteers
- Greater relevance to Canadians for the long-term viability of sport and physical activity
- Stronger alignment with funders, who increasingly prioritize equity and inclusion
- "We are working to be a best-in-class organization and gender equity, diversity and inclusion are a huge part of this. We still have a long way to go to, but when we consider the tremendous value that this brings, how it connects our organization with what the Canadian sport system stands for and the leadership we can demonstrate internationally, we know that we are doing what is right and our determination only strengthens as we progress."

Martin Goulet, Executive Director
Water Polo Canada
WHY CAAWS?

As the leading authority and voice, we are uniquely positioned to lead change for women and girls and sport and physical activity in Canada.

We offer:
- Centre of expertise and the only national, non-profit organization focusing exclusively on systems change for women and sport in Canada
- Distinguished and influential network of ambassadors from coast-to-coast
- 36-year history of committed leadership and impact
- Extensive reach, perspective and partnerships — nationally and within provinces and territories

We serve as a thought leader and effective partner for sport and physical activity organizations with an interest in expanding inclusion—from the field of play to the boardroom table.

At CAAWS, we are:
- Impact-led: We are motivated by measurable impact that represents real change.
- Evidence-based: Everything we do is grounded in research.
- Action-oriented: We offer practical tools, resources, networks and opportunities that enable action.
- Effective partners: We work in and through partnership to achieve more than what is possible by working alone.

As we look ahead, we are committed to building on these strengths to drive even greater change for girls and women and for sport.

“CAAWS has been a partner and an asset to the Dairy Farmers of Canada Fuelling Women Champion Program by sharing valuable insights and opinions on the status of women in sport. Partnering with CAAWS brought tremendous insight and a platform to educate, inspire and bring attention to the realities for women in sport and the challenges they face. CAAWS is definitely the best resource and expert on women and sport!”

Tania Crecco, National Sponsorships, Dairy Farmers of Canada
Our guiding values

Our values are inherent to our work, and as passionate champions for girls and women in sport and physical activity, we are committed to integrating these values in all we do.

At our core, we lead with unwavering:

**Inclusivity**
All are welcome and encouraged to contribute and participate.

**Courage**
We are brave leaders.

**Impact**
Our work makes noticeable, meaningful and positive change.

**Integrity**
Honesty guides our actions. We work with purpose and principle.

In our essence, we thrive with:

**Respect**
We honour and value each other. We are kind. We listen intently and without prejudice.

**Equity**
We act with fairness to level the playing field.

**Inclusivity**
All are welcome and encouraged to contribute and participate.

**Collaboration**
We deliver on our passion. We share. We build partnership for impact.

**Accountability**
We expect and accept responsibility. We take initiative. We trust in our abilities. We exceed expectations.
Through three key areas of focus, we will accelerate the retention and advancement of girls and women in sport and physical activity in Canada.

**OUR FOCUS AREAS (2017-2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR FOCUS</th>
<th>RETAIN GIRLS (AGED 12-16) IN SPORT</th>
<th>INCREASE FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN SPORT</th>
<th>INFLUENCE THE INFLUENCERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| HOW       | • Build knowledge  
|           | • Change attitudes  
|           | • Develop competency  
|           | • Build knowledge  
|           | • Change attitudes  
|           | • Develop competency  
|           | • Provide thought leadership  
|           | • Mobilize knowledge  
| WHERE WE WILL PLAY | Sport organizations and sport leaders  
|           | Sport organization boards and sport organization management  
|           | Government, corporate, media, and like-minded organizations  
| SHORT TERM OUTCOMES | Sport organizations and sport leaders are creating safe, welcoming and supportive environments for girls  
|           | Organizations and boards are creating supportive environments and intentional inclusion and advancement of women in sport leadership  
|           | Influencers are creating more favourable policies, practices, funding, and narrative to accelerate the retention and advancement of women in sport  
| LONG TERM OUTCOMES | Increased retention of girls and young women in sport and physical activity  
|           | More women in senior leadership within sport and physical activity  
|           | The culture around sport is fair and equitable for girls and women  

Creating an equitable and inclusive Canadian sport and physical activity system that empowers girls and women—within and through sport.

As a cross-cutting priority within these themes, we will ensure that our work is inclusive of the diversity of girls and women in Canada.

In developing our strategic direction and plan, we benefitted from input from a wide range of subject matter experts, practitioners and key stakeholders across Canada. We are grateful for the contributions of many throughout this process.
OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As an organization, we are focused on ensuring that the necessary conditions are in place to achieve our intended impact of systemic change.

Programs and Initiatives: Develop and scale offerings that facilitate tangible action.
- Mobilize knowledge to educate and support constructive decision-making within organizations.
- Provide high impact, relevant programs and solutions that remove obstacles and enable change.

Brand and Communications: Increase reach and the ability to engage audiences, expanding the potential for impact.
- Refresh the brand to increase its relevance within and beyond sport.
- Leverage communications platforms and partnerships to drive new engagement with issues and solutions.

Revenue generation: Increase scale and sustainability of initiatives through expanded investment.
- Secure partnerships that bring new value and resources for creating change.
- Diversify funding for greater sustainability.

Operational excellence: Enable impact as an operational imperative.
- Align resources, policies and practices against priorities to optimize organizational performance.
- Pursue continuous innovation to expand capacity for impact.
In challenging the status quo in the sport and physical activity system, anyone can be a leader and everyone has a role to play in creating sustainable change.

Activate your leadership for girls and women by considering the following:

1. Where are women underrepresented or at a disadvantage in your organization or in its work?
2. Do your policies and practices ensure inclusion?
3. How ready is your organization to address these gaps?
4. How could improving participation and leadership of girls and women in your work produce new value for all involved?
5. What is your sphere of influence through which you can advance change for girls and women?
6. What help would you need to lead this forward?

“The leadership of CAAWS is an important voice for equity in Canadian Sport. Their vision, passion and vigilance creates opportunity for change which would not exist without their influence. Their reach extends far beyond sport and into Canadian society – as young boys and girls experience the impact of female leadership in building a stronger and healthier Canada.”

Lorraine Lafrenière, CEO, Coaching Association of Canada
Ontario Soccer is very pleased to have a strategic relationship with CAAWS. Advancing opportunities for women in leadership positions within our beautiful game is a focus area for our organization and CAAWS has been a valuable resource in assisting us with our strategy, policy and programming.

Johnny R. Misley,
CEO, Ontario Soccer

CAAWS IS HERE TO HELP

We support sport and physical activity organizations and leaders to identify opportunities for change and to take action.

Our pragmatic, turnkey tools and solutions provide:

- Education to expand knowledge and understanding
- Expert consultation and advice
- Professional development and leadership enhancement
- Networking opportunities
- Program development and implementation expertise
- Industry best practices and success stories

Contact caaws@caaws.ca for customized consultation and specific resources, tools and workshops to serve you in developing and implementing your action plan for girls and women.

Join @CAAWS on Twitter and Facebook to be part of the national conversation.
Sport helps empower girls and women because it changes attitudes...
When a woman athlete triumphs, she often becomes a role model for her family, her community, even her country.

Anita De Frantz, IOC Executive