

Innovations in Sport: Utilising Technology to Combat GBV

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The Role of Technology in Combating GBV

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive issue, even in the world of sports. However, technological developments offer innovative and far-reaching solutions to raise awareness, educate, and empower individuals to prevent and report GBV in sports. From comprehensive online resources to empowering mobile apps, digital tools are making a real difference.

Spreading the Word: Digital Platforms for Awareness and Education

Digital platforms are revolutionising how we disseminate vital information and launch targeted awareness campaigns against GBV in sports. They provide accessible avenues for everyone, from athletes and coaches to sports organisations and parents, to learn about prevention, recognition, and response.

- **Online Toolkits and Guides:** These resources are invaluable for equipping individuals with the knowledge to identify and address GBV. For instance, the **Finnish Sports Federation's "Allowed to Care, Allowed to Intervene" guide**, first published in 2002 and regularly updated, offers comprehensive information on preventing and managing sexual harassment and abuse in sport. Similarly, the **Czech Olympic Committee's guide on preventing sexual harassment** has reached an impressive 5,000 sport federations, clubs, and schools since 2006, showcasing the immense potential of digital distribution for broad reach. More recently, the Council of Europe (2019), developed an interactive toolkit on how to make an impact on gender equality in sports. This toolkit provides users with information, concrete tips, good-practice examples and strategies to develop a gender mainstreaming approach to achieve equality between women and men in sport. At the same time, the World Players Association in consultation with The Army of Survivors and the Sport & Rights Alliance developed an online guide including the key principles and essential functions to be embedded in any safe sport entity. It also provides sports bodies and player associations with a clear benchmark to ensure they are able to prevent and respond to abuse that impacts athletes.
- **Dedicated Educational Websites:** These online hubs serve as central repositories for information and resources.
 - The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** launched an educational website in 2012, providing theoretical information and interactive videos on crucial topics like sexual harassment, abuse, gender harassment, homophobia, and hazing. Available in six languages, it targets sports organisations, athletes, and coaches, demonstrating a global reach for critical information.
 - **Australia's "Play by the Rules"** (since 2001) is an interactive powerhouse, offering training, resources, and advice on discrimination, sexual harassment, and child protection in sport, including free online courses and toolkits.
 - The **Dutch Olympic Committee and Sports Federation (NOC*NSF)** also hosts a freely accessible website with a toolkit for preventing sexual intimidation.

Mobile Apps and Social Media Campaigns

Technology is also bringing safety directly to users' fingertips and amplifying awareness through powerful social media campaigns.

- **Mobile Applications:** These apps are transforming how individuals access support and report concerns. The **Irish Sports Council's "Safe Sport" app** (launched in 2000) provides information and guidance on safeguarding children in sport. It includes direct links for reporting concerns and even a location tracker for parental oversight.
- **Social Media Campaigns:** Utilising the vast reach of digital platforms, social media campaigns are proving incredibly effective at raising awareness and challenging harmful norms.

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- The "**Belgian Football Versus Homophobia**" campaign effectively used rainbow laces and workshops to promote inclusivity for LGBTQ+ individuals in football.
- France's "**National Communication and Awareness-Raising Campaign**" (2008) utilised digital dissemination of posters, leaflets, and videos nationwide to address sexual violence in sport.
- Germany's "**Strong Networks against Violence**" campaign (2008) uses digital channels to promote self-defence and assertiveness training for women and girls through martial arts, empowering them with practical skills.
- In 2024, a new campaign, named "**1in3**" was launched by Olympians and world-class athletes to combat gender-based violence. The campaign's name, "1in3," is inspired by a UN statistic that one in three women globally experiences violence. The initiative, which was launched on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, aims to raise awareness, demand action, and drive systemic change through athlete-led voices. It was initiated following the murder of Ugandan Olympian Rebecca Cheptegei.

Technology is a game-changer in the fight against GBV in sports. From empowering apps to global awareness campaigns, digital tools are making sports safer and more inclusive for everyone. By embracing these innovations, important steps can be taken to build a future where every athlete can truly play free from fear.



Image Source: Gemini

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