

HERSPORT FOUNDATION

IMPACT REPORT 2024 / 2025



OUR VISION

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN SPORT
REGARDLESS OF GENDER**

WORDS FROM OUR FOUNDERS

In November 2024, we launched the Her Sport Foundation to strengthen opportunity, visibility and equality across women's sport in Ireland. Our mission is simple and unwavering: to ensure equal opportunity in sport for everyone, regardless of gender.

This mission spans the entire sporting ecosystem - the young girl picking up a ball in school; the coach or referee creating a pathway; the fan who has a right to see women's sport; and the athlete competing at the highest level. It is also about women of every age, each with the same right to the health, community and belonging that sport provides.

Sport is much more than winning and losing. It shapes careers, strengthens communities, inspires fans and drives equality across society. History has shown us that when girls and women are given space in sport, culture shifts, stereotypes are challenged, doors open and lives are transformed.

That is why we built the Her Sport Foundation: to ensure girls and women are never left behind and to make sport a place where they can belong and thrive.

In our first year, we focused where change is most needed, in classrooms, in communities, in policy and in the national conversation, proving that progress is possible.

This report shares that first chapter: the results after one year and the ambition to grow further. It shows what happens when education, visibility, advocacy and research come together with one purpose - to keep girls in the game and strengthen women's sport at every level.

With your support, we can shape a stronger future for Ireland - opening opportunities, strengthening communities and improving lives for girls, for women and for society as a whole, for generations to come.

Every girl deserves the chance to play. Ireland deserves the women they'll become if we keep them in the game.

Niamh & Mohammed





KEY **PI**LLARS

The Her Sport Foundation was established in 2024 to close the gender gap in sport. Our work is built on five pillars. Together, they form a pathway for girls and women to stay active, protect their health, grow in confidence and step into leadership.

ADVOCACY

We are the voice for girls and women in sport. It is crucial that their experiences shape policy and challenge outdated systems so that environments reflect their needs and ambitions.

EDUCATION

We equip girls, women and key stakeholders with the knowledge, confidence and practical tools to help more girls start, stay and succeed in sport. Education is our route to long-term cultural and systemic change.

GRANTS

Our grants reduce the financial pressures that push girls out of sport. By supporting schools, clubs and athletes with essentials like kit, travel and equipment, we remove barriers to participation and strengthen accessibility.

RESEARCH

We gather and share evidence that guides decisions. By bringing the voices and experiences of girls and women into the light, we ensure that real change is built on fact and lived experience.

VISIBILITY

We amplify female athletes and role models who inspire. Visibility changes culture and participation, showing every girl that she belongs and inspiring the next generation to take part.

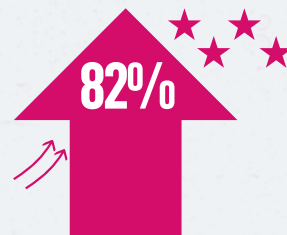
OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

IN OUR FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION

**1,986 STUDENTS
ENGAGED**



**38 WORKSHOPS
DELIVERED TO SCHOOLS**



**OF GIRLS NOT ALREADY ACTIVE
SAID THE WORKSHOP
ENCOURAGED THEM TO TRY SPORT**

**15 MILLION
PEOPLE REACHED**

Through sharing research that shaped
global sport and equality conversations.



TWO KEY POLICY SUBMISSIONS

Influencing the Oireachtas Committee on
Inclusion in Sport and the National Women &
Girls Strategy on equality, access, safety and
representation.



**46 SCHOOLS & CLUBS
SEEKING SUPPORT**



Requests for essentials highlight urgent need
for our Grants Programme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In our first year, 1,986 girls across 38 schools and clubs took part in our workshops - building confidence, opening conversations about body image and health and inspiring lifelong participation in sport. Our research and advocacy reached over 15 million people, shaping national dialogue and influencing how women's sport is represented, funded and prioritised.

EDUCATION AT THE CORE

In these sessions, girls were able to speak openly about their experiences in sport while learning practical tools to overcome barriers. They built confidence, normalised conversations around body image and the menstrual cycle and discovered ways to balance school and sport. Most importantly, they came away knowing that sport is a place where they belong.

- 82% of girls who were not active said the workshop encouraged them to try sport.
- 91% of girls already playing said they were more likely to stay involved for life.
- Knowledge of gender equality in sport rose from 3.37 to 4.41 (out of 5).
- Knowledge of female athletes rose from 2.08 to 3.91 (out of 5).
- 97% left feeling more empowered to deal with obstacles in sport.
- 100% would recommend the workshop to a peer.

GRANT SUPPORT

We are designing the framework for our national grants programme, to launch in 2026. Since the Foundation's establishment, more than 46 schools and clubs have already requested support for essentials such as jerseys, travel and equipment - demonstrating the urgency and demand for this work.

ADVOCACY

Our policy recommendations have been included in the Oireachtas Report on Inclusion in Sport and the National Women & Girls Strategy.

In 2025, our coverage of the camogie players' call for uniform choice reached 17 million people and helped bring their voices to national attention, culminating in a Camogie Association Special Congress where players secured the option to wear shorts or skorts.

VISIBILITY

Through the Foundation's media work, we launched campaigns to showcase women's stories and elevate role models across sport. Our 2025 flagship International Women's Day campaign reached 11 million people, strengthening pride and participation across generations.

RESEARCH

Our 2025 Athlete Survey found that 40% of athletes are under financial strain, 60% lack a career plan post-sport. Our research underpins strategy and development of key initiatives. As an example, to alleviate financial strain we created more than 18 paid opportunities for athletes.

WHY IT MATTERS

Every year, one in five girls in Ireland drops out of sport between primary and secondary school - four times more than boys. By age 20, one in two girls will have stopped playing sport.

That represents around 340,000 girls - enough to fill Croke Park four times over. Behind every empty seat is a girl missing out on health, confidence and opportunity.

Physical inactivity contributes to 4,000 deaths a year and costs the Irish economy €1.5 billion annually in healthcare and lost productivity. Participation in sport and physical activity prevents nearly 97,000 cases of disease every year, saving over €405 million in healthcare costs.

On average

ONE IN TWO

girls drop out of sport
by the age of 20

That is the equivalent to a sold out

CROKE PARK

FOUR times over.

EDUCATION

THE HEART OF OUR WORK

Schools are where we can connect with every girl - those participating in sport and those who have already dropped out. In our workshops, girls explore the pressures and perceptions that shape their sporting lives: body image, menstrual health and balancing school with sport. They leave with practical tools to navigate challenges and the confidence to stay involved.

In just 11 months, we delivered 38 workshops to 1,986 students, including 283 in DEIS schools (14%). Through our workshops, we are reversing the trend where girls don't see a place for themselves in sport.

14 more workshops are scheduled for 2025, reaching an average of 52 students each. Beyond that, over 2,500 girls from 49 schools are on our waiting list, more than double our current delivery. With more support, we can meet this growing demand and ensure every girl has the opportunity to belong in sport.



of girls not already active said the workshop encouraged them to try sport.



of those already involved said they are more likely to stay involved for life.



felt more empowered to deal with obstacles in sport.



would recommend the workshop to their peers.

1,986 STUDENTS ENGAGED



“ ”

I've skipped training before because I hated how I looked in my kit and thought everyone would notice. I learned loads of girls feel the same and that my body doesn't have to be perfect to play sport.

15 year-old workshop participant

.....

Periods always made me nervous about training or matches. This gives me confidence to speak to my coaches about some of the things that concern me.

14 year-old workshop participant

.....

Most of the time it feels like the boys get treated better in sport and it makes me think they're more important. In the workshop we heard so many cool stories about women in sport and meeting Vikki Wall was amazing. I now feel like women do belong in sport.

14 year-old workshop participant



ADVOCACY

CHALLENGING THE SYSTEM

Her Sport is the voice for girls and women in sport in Ireland. We ensure that their perspectives are not overlooked but heard at every level, from classrooms and clubs to national decision-making. Through visibility, research and policy influence, we make sure those experiences reach the people shaping Ireland's sporting future, shifting culture and inspiring the next generation.

In 2025, we ensured that voices of girls and women in sport shaped national policy. Our submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Inclusion in Sport was cited in its recommendations, highlighting the barriers that limit participation, visibility and funding. We made the case that equal access to facilities, safe environments and fair investment are not optional but instead, foundations of equality.

We secured a voice for sport and physical activity in the National Women and Girls Strategy and joined Plan International at the Mansion House to ensure that sport was recognised within a broader gender equality framework. There, we put forward the realities faced by girls and women every day: poor lighting in parks, safety concerns when running or training and the absence of toilets and sanitary products in sports clubs.

We also helped bring player voices to national attention as camogie players sought choice in uniform design. When 83% of players surveyed by the Gaelic Players Association supported the option of shorts, we amplified their message across national media and kept the issue on the agenda. Our coverage reached 17 million people and contributed to a May 2025 Camogie Association Special Congress, where members voted overwhelmingly to give players the choice to wear shorts or skorts.

Our #DoItForHer campaign on International Women's Day 2025 reached 1.1 million people, highlighting the power of language and the importance of safe, inclusive environments for girls in sport. The campaign reinforced that identity and confidence begin early - by age nine, only 7% of girls say they want to be a sportsperson, compared with 43% of boys.*

Growing Up in Ireland, (Department of Children & Youth Affairs/ESRI)

43%

7%

By age 9, boys are about 6 times more likely than girls to say they want to be a sportsperson.

55%

of 11-18 year-old girls agreed that watching professional athletes inspires them to do more sport

Women in Sport Report (Public First, commissioned by Sky, 2025)

1. Growing Up in Ireland, Department of Children & Youth Affairs/ESRI

RESEARCH

DRIVING SYSTEMIC CHANGE

The Her Sport Foundation is building the evidence base that Ireland has long needed to close the gender gap in sport. Research is the anchor that ensures every programme we deliver, every campaign we lead and every call we make to government is grounded in fact and informed by lived experience.

In 2025, we conducted Ireland’s first national Athlete Survey, capturing the voices of women across a wide range of sports. The findings provided a clear picture of the pressures athletes face, from financial strain and uncertainty about post-sport careers to gaps in media literacy and institutional support.

These insights are shaping the next phase of our work. Athletes identified financial, legal and media literacy as essential supports for sustaining their careers during and after competition. Our research ensures that every new programme reflects what athletes themselves have said they need.

In the past year, 18 athletes have been supported financially through the Her Sport Foundation and Her Sport Media Ltd. Opportunities ranged from corporate speaking, media campaigns and school workshops. These opportunities provide flexibility that fits alongside their training and competition schedules.



The Her Sport Foundation is building authority as a national knowledge hub. We take the best available evidence on health, body confidence, leadership and the economic value of sport and translate it into insights that decision-makers, educators, parents and the public can use. In 2025, the research we amplified reached more than 15 million people. It has been cited in the Oireachtas, referenced in policy conversations and shared on international stages, including by FC Barcelona. By curating and elevating this evidence and connecting it to the lived realities we see every day, we are shaping the conversation on gender equality in sport

FUTURE RESEARCH PRIORITIES

Leadership Pathways	Researching the correlation between playing sport and opportunities in the workplace. This includes the gender pay and pension gap, representation in CEO/C-suite and board positions and entry into stereotypically male dominated fields such as STEM.
Visibility & Commercial Value	Analysing level of media coverage, language used including from national sporting governing bodies and social discourse. Research will also examine the commercial value of women’s sport, from the role of fans to how brands view women’s sport.
PE & Participation	Exploring girls’ experience sport in schools, both in PE and extracurricular settings. This includes the culture in single-sex vs mixed schools, the impact of periods, showers, uniform and access to facilities. The research will also examine the range of sport options available across schools and the standards of coaching provided.

GRANTS

BREAKING THE COST BARRIER

Cost remains one of the most persistent barriers to girls' participation in sport. Membership fees, transport, kit and equipment too often decide who can play and who is left out. A recent UK survey found that 32% of 11–18-year-old girls had been prevented from taking part in sport because it was too expensive, compared to 20% of boys.

In 2025, the Her Sport Foundation is building a national grant programme to remove these barriers. Developed in partnership with experts, it will be transparent, fair and robust - with clear application criteria, independent review and an explicit focus on equity.

Demand has already been overwhelming. Even before launch, more than 46 schools and clubs have approached us for support with essentials such as jerseys, travel and equipment - proof that cost remains one of the biggest threats to girls' continued participation.

94% OF WOMEN

in executive managerial positions have a background in sport.

EY & espnW : Making the Connection: Women, Sport and Leadership (2015)

NEARLY 1 IN FOUR GIRLS

SAY BOYS' TEAMS GET BETTER
PITCHES, TIME SLOTS AND
EQUIPMENT



THE PROBLEM

THE DROP-OFF

One of the clearest challenges in girls' sport is participation. While 97% of girls in primary school play sport weekly, by the end of post-primary school one in five has dropped out entirely [2].

By the age of 20, the gap has widened into a gulf: half of young women are gone from sport altogether.

ONE IN FIVE

DROP OUT OF SPORT
BETWEEN PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL

JUST 11%

OF TEENAGE GIRLS IN IRELAND
ARE MEETING THE DAILY ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

HEALTH ACROSS A LIFETIME

Physical inactivity is a public health crisis. Only 11% of teenage girls in Ireland meet daily activity guidelines, compared with 19% of boys. The result is profound: inactivity contributes to about 4,000 deaths each year, 14% of all mortality and costs the State an estimated €1.5 billion annually in healthcare and lost productivity. [4].

In contrast, every year, sport and physical activity prevent over 97,000 cases of disease and save Ireland more than €400 million in healthcare and productivity costs. [5].

The benefits of girls staying active are profound:

The Million Women Study (University of Oxford, 2015).

20% LOWER RISK OF HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

Alzheimer's Society: Physical Activity and Dementia Risk (2019)

20% LOWER RISK OF DEMENTIA

National Cancer Institute: Physical Activity and Breast Cancer Risk (2016)

21% LOWER RISK OF BREAST CANCER

Women's Sports Foundation: The Transformative Impact on Girls' Mental Health (2024)

2.5X UP TO 2.5x LESS LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS



2. Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity (CSPPA) Study: National Report, 2022

3. Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity (CSPPA) Study: National Report, 2022

4. National Sports Policy 2018–2027

5. Sport Ireland, Value of Sport in Ireland, 2021

ECONOMIC & LEADERSHIP COSTS

When girls leave sport, Ireland loses future leaders. Research by EY shows that 94% of women in C-suite roles played sport and Public First analysis found that girls who stay active after school are 50% more likely to reach senior management later in life.

In Ireland

1 IN 6 BUSINESSES

don't have women in senior management.

Grant Thornton: Women in Business Ireland Report (2025)

In Ireland, one in six businesses has no women in senior management. Only 6.2% of CEOs and 2.5% of Chairs in mid-market firms are women. At the current pace, gender parity will not be reached until 2051. [6]

INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN'S SPORT

Visibility matters. You can't be what you can't see.

Media coverage of women's sport in Ireland is notoriously low — often cited at just 6% of all sports media coverage, though some breakdowns suggest even lower shares in print (3%) and online (4%) [7].

55% of girls say watching professional female athletes inspires them to play sport.

6. Grant Thornton: Women in Business Ireland Report, 2025

7. Irish Sport: Gender & Sport Media Report, 2024

GIRLS WHO PLAY SPORT BECOME WOMEN WHO LEAD

94%

OF WOMEN IN EXECUTIVE
MANAGERIAL POSITIONS HAVE
A BACKGROUND IN SPORT

91%

OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
BELIEVE THE SKILLS DEVELOPED
THROUGH SPORT WERE
IMPORTANT TO CAREER SUCCESS

88%

OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
BELIEVE THE SKILLS LEARNED
THROUGH SPORT CAN BE
TRANSFERRED TO THE
BOARDROOM.

TOP SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH SPORT

TEAMWORK
CONFIDENCE
COMMUNICATION

LEADERSHIP
SELF-BELIEF
RESILIENCE



BODY IMAGE AND CONFIDENCE

Sport, physical activity and confidence go hand-in-hand. Research shows that 87% of Irish girls lack body confidence - this is amongst the lowest globally. Nearly two-thirds of girls skip school events because of how they feel about their appearance and two-thirds avoid medical appointments [8].

At 13, only 20% of girls rated their physical appearance above average, compared with 39% of boys. By 17/18, 68% of girls said their weight affects how they feel, almost double the rate of boys [9]

Irish girls have amongst

THE LOWEST

body confidence levels

GLOBALLY

CULTURAL BARRIERS

Girls face systemic barriers that make sport feel unwelcoming and unequal. These pressures don't come from within, they are built into the environments around them. By as early as age nine, only 12% of girls say sport makes them happy, versus 27% of boys [10].

Women in Sport Report (Public First, commissioned by Sky, 2025)

33%

OF GIRLS AGED 11-18 FACE SEXIST REMARKS IN SPORT
(RISING TO 42% FOR OLDER TEENS)

24%

HAVE ENDURED SEXUALISED COMMENTS ABOUT
THEIR BODIES

32%

HAVE BEEN TEASED BY BOYS WHILE PLAYING,
WITH 27% SAYING IT PUSHED THEM OUT

29%

HAVE LIED TO AVOID PE AND 15% HAVE
SKIPPED SCHOOL ENTIRELY

“

”

In the clubhouse there are four walls with photos and trophies of all the boys and men but none for the girls. It feels like we don't exist.

17 year-old workshop participant

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8. Dove Self-Esteem Project, 2022

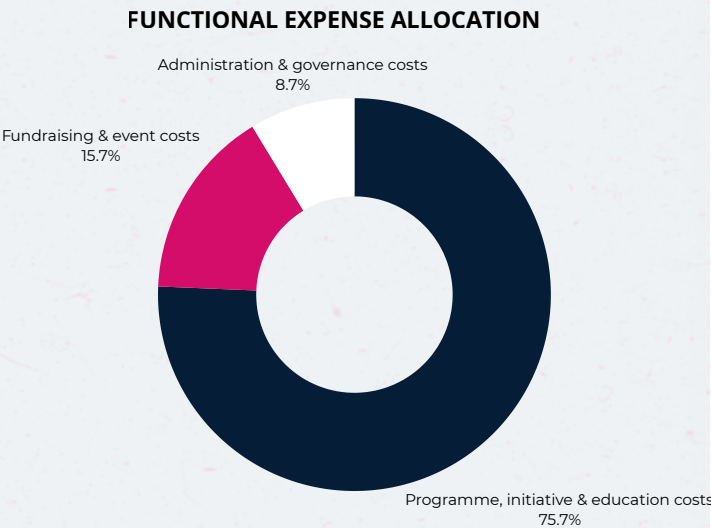
9. Growing Up in Ireland, Department of Children & Youth Affairs/ESRI

10. Growing Up in Ireland, Department of Children & Youth Affairs/ESRI

Financials

Financial Overview – Year Ended 30 September 2025 (€)

REVENUES	FY2025 (€)
Corporate income	12,746.76
Fundraising income	57,716.55
Individual donations & community fundraising	24,751.91
Grants funding (restricted)	18,738.00
TOTAL REVENUES	113,953.22
EXPENDITURE	
Programme, initiative & education costs	67,162.36
Fundraising & event costs	13,893.40
Administration & governance costs	7,710.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	88,765.76



In its first full year of operation, the Her Sport Foundation CLG raised €113,953 to advance equality and participation in sport. This funding came from a balanced mix of corporate partnerships, community fundraising, individual donations and restricted grants.

- 76% of total expenditure (€67,162) was invested directly in programme, initiative and education delivery — including workshops, advocacy projects and the design of future grant programmes.
- 16% (€13,893) was invested in fundraising and events to support long-term sustainability.
- 8% (€7,710) covered administration and governance, ensuring compliance, oversight and transparency.

The Foundation closed FY2025 with a positive balance of €25,187, comprising restricted funds allocated for 2026 programme delivery and resources to expand education and community initiatives nationwide.



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TOGETHER WE CAN ENSURE
EVERY GIRL
HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO
ACHIEVE HER FULL POTENTIAL
AND IN DOING SO – UNLOCK IRELAND'S

WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

PARTNER WITH US

From national campaigns and school programmes to community events and research partnerships, as a corporate partner, you can drive real change for women and girls in sport. Support our work through financial contributions, staff engagement, or in-kind expertise that helps expand visibility, education and equality.

DONATE

Every contribution makes a tangible impact. Your support helps deliver workshops, fund research and provide grants to schools, clubs and athletes who need it most. Whether through a one-off gift, a recurring donation, or a company match, your generosity helps more girls and women access the opportunities they deserve in sport.

ADVOCATE & ATTEND

Use your voice to help create lasting change. Share our message, highlight our work and encourage others to support equality in sport.

Join us at one of our national events, including the annual Her Sport Foundation Gala in October and be part of a growing movement empowering women and girls across Ireland.

