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Briefing Paper | July 2023

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AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023: FACTS, MYTHS & ISSUES

Grant Jarvie and Yujun Xu***

"These are the moments we live for. We're trying to bring back the light to Haiti for sure"[1].

[Haitian Women Footballer]

"Women's football in England could be a 'billion-pound industry' in next 10 years"[2].

[Karen Carney Chair of Independent Review Women's Football in England]

"It feels like a real opportunity to blow the lid off just in terms of fanfare and media and sponsorships and the larger business around this sport," [3].

[Megan Rapinoe, USA Women Footballer]

"We haven't even scratched the surface and it is a hundred years of underinvestment in women's football that has brought us to this point, where we have lost a number of different players for this World Cup, which is a shame that we won't get to see them"[4].

[Sarah Walsh, Head of Women's Football for Co-Hosts Australia]

"We have shown every Women's World Cup on the BBC since 1999 and we are happy to extend our partnership with FIFA for the upcoming tournament. The growth of the women's game is extraordinary, demonstrated by the 28 million who watched BBC coverage of the 2019 Women's World Cup and the huge audience of 17.4 million who watched our coverage of the Euro 2022 final on TV last summer. In partnership with ITV, we are delighted to make this World Cup available to the widest possible audience and free to air"[5].

[Barbara Slater, Director of BBC Sport]

"Nothing else in the world, including UN peacekeepers and good-natured politicians, can do what soccer does for African countries"[6].

[Fatma Samba Diouf Samoura, FIFA Secretary General.]

**** This "sports observations" briefing paper on the 2023 Women's World Cup is the latest of a series of research reports that we have recently undertaken on behalf of the football industry and the broader sports industry. [Access to University of Edinburgh Academy of Sport Research Reports](#).

The Sports Observations Briefing Paper is produced by the University of Edinburgh Academy of Sport (AOS)- Find out more about the AOS. Professor Grant Jarvie is Chair of Sport and the University of Edinburgh and Dr Yujun Xu is with Peking University

[1] BBC (2023). Women's World Cup 2023: Haiti's team are 'bringing the light back' after qualifying- [Accessed 15 July 2023].

[2] DCMS (2023). Raising the bar - reframing the opportunity in women's football- ["These are the moments we live for. We're trying to bring back the light to Haiti for sure"](#)[1]. [Accessed 15 July 2023].

[3] Inside World Football (2023). ["Women's football in England could be a 'billion-pound industry' in next 10 years"](#)[2], 29 June 2023 [accessed 11 July 2023].

[4] BBC sport (2023). ["It feels like a real opportunity to blow the lid off just in terms of fanfare and media and sponsorships and the larger business around this sport."](#) [3], 16 July 2023 [Accessed 16 July 2023].

[5] BBC Media Centre (2023). BBC and ITV confirm rights deal for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. <https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2023/bbc-itv-rights-deal-womens-fifa-world-cup> 14 June 2023 [Accessed 17 July 2023].

[6] Williams, K. (2023). FIFA's second-in-command reveals how she saw football work miracles after the Rwandan genocide and save child soldiers as young as eight in incredible eyewitness account. Daily Mail Online Australia. 1 May 2023- <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-12029963/FIFA-secretary-general-Fatma-Samoura-opens-power-football-ahead-2023-Womens-World-Cup.html> [accessed 11 July 2023].

Key facts

- 9th Women's Football World Cup.
- 8 teams qualifying for the first time.
- 32 team formats for the first time.
- More than 1,032,884 tickets sold, surpassing the previous 2019 tournament in France.
- 300% increase in prize money since the previous 2019 World Cup.
- Estimated prize money of \$152 million compared to \$440 million for the 2022 Qatar FIFA men's World Cup.
- FIFA partnership with the United Nations to highlight social issues.
- Dual nation hosting format across 10 stadiums and 9 host cities.
- 28 million watched the BBC coverage of the 2019 Women's World Cup.
- FIFA payment of £24,000 to every participant in the group stage.

Introduction

1. Billed as the biggest women's football event in the world the ninth FIFA Women's World Cup runs from the 20th of July to the 20th of August. The tournament presents a full month of visibility for women's football with success at the tournament probably meaning different things to the 32 teams that have qualified.

2. The growth of women's football at all levels provides real opportunities for different countries to grasp, progress and sustain investment at different levels. Women's football remains unequal both within and between countries with FIFA not promising to level the prize money between the Men and Women's World Cup until 2026-27.

Background

3. It would be remiss not to recall that the existence of women's football in many countries' pre-dates the emergence of FIFA. For instance, an unofficial Scotland v England international match was reported in the Glasgow News on Monday 9th May 1881[7].

4. The head of women's football for World Cup co-hosts Australia, Sarah Walsh, has called for more research into women's football- pointing to 100 years of underinvestment into specific research about women's football [8]. Their remains a data equity gap between men's and women's football despite the fact that historical records of women playing football predate by centuries the founding of FIFA (1904).

5. FIFA governs the Women's World Cup. The tournament has enjoyed a number of unique moments during its 32-year history to date. Apart from China hosting the first and fifth tournaments the hosts up until 2023 have mainly been from Europe and North America as have the winners with the exception of Japan in 2011.

6. The average number of spectators at past FIFA World Cup Finals from 1991 to 2019 has been variable with the average number of spectators at games being 19, 615 (China, 1991); 4,315 (Sweden, 1995); 37,319 (USA, 1999); 21, 239 (USA, 2003); 37, 218 (China, 2007); 26,430 (Germany, 2011); 26, 029 (Canada, 2015) and 21,756 (France 1999)[9].

7. The first female officials who ran the line in the 1991 Women's World Cup were dubbed "lineswomen" but unlike their male counterparts, they had no FIFA tournament badges to describe their status. The women who ran the line in 1995 had a shield sewn into their shirts bearing the words "Lineswoman FIFA 95"[10].

8. The 1999 Women's World Cup become the first to feature only female officials. The foundations being laid at the 1991 tournament by Brazil's Claudia Vasconcelos, the first woman to referee a match in a FIFA competition. In 1995, Swede Ingrid Jonsson, became the first woman to take charge of a FIFA final[11].

9. The USA was the first to lift the trophy after a 2-1 victory over Norway in front of 63,000 spectators in Guangzhou[12]. Norway raised the same trophy after their 1995 title triumph - except they did not keep it for long because it disappeared in 1997 during renovations at the Norwegian Football Association [13].

[7] Macbeth, J. (2004). Women's Football in Scotland. University of Stirling. Phd.

[8] BBC sport (2023). <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/66215147> 16 July 2023 [Accessed 16 July 2023].

[9] Chadwick, S. Widdop, P. Anagnostopoulos, and Parnell, D (2022). The business of the FIFA World Cup. London: Routledge: pp20.

[10-13] BBC (2023). Women's World Cup 2023: Things you probably didn't know about history of tournament. 14 July 2023- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/66123135> [Accessed 15 July 2023].

10. The FIFA Women's World Rankings for football were introduced in 2003. Going into the 2023 tournament, the top 5 FIFA women ranked national teams remained the same as of June 2023, USA, Germany, Sweden, England, and France.

11. Scotland were ranked 23 as of June 2023, up 11.70 points from the previous ranking. Scotland's all-time high ranking of 19 was achieved in 2014. 6.1 million BBC viewers tuned into the England v Scotland 2019 Women's World Cup Match.

12. While a gap in media coverage of men's and women's sports still exists Media coverage is contributing towards the growing interest in women's football – and shifting dated perceptions of the sport. Comparing coverage of the 2015- and 2019-Women's World Cup in the UK the number of articles published by 5 selected mainstream newspapers about the competition rose from 124 in 2015 to 642 in 2019 [14]. The number of front-page articles increased from seven in the 2015 tournament to 22 in 2019. On the back pages, the number of articles rose from five in 2015 to 40 in 2019[15].

13. Although women's sport has become more visible in recent years in 2020 it still contributed to less than 10% of annual print and TV coverage in the UK. The 2023 Women's World Cup looks set to generate an increase in column inches but sustaining that increased coverage between tournaments remains a challenge for most countries[16].

14. From a legal perspective, the formally private nature of sports governing bodies (SGBs) has historically acted as a shield against the recourse to human rights laws to pose demands of international and national SGBs and challenge their policies and decisions. FIFA introduced human rights criteria for the first time in the bidding process for the 2026 World Cup, following controversies around the process to

award the 2018 and 2022 tournaments to Russia and Qatar respectively.

15. The Australian Human Rights Commission, in partnership with FIFA and the New Zealand Human Rights Commission, released a human rights assessment report which was conducted in 2021. The report noted that as the organizer of the 2023 Women's World Cup in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, FIFA had a responsibility to ensure that the competition does not cause or contribute to human rights abuses – either in the preparation for or during the tournament itself.

16. The pre-tournament report suggested that hosts should actively seek to prevent, mitigate, and provide solutions for negative human rights impacts that are linked to their operations, even if they have not directly contributed. The report highlighted a range of areas in which the scorecard was very much work in progress with more needing to be done to ensure gender equity, freedom of association and expression, decent work, and freedom from discrimination, and protected human rights for all those who attend, work at, or play in the tournament.

17. As highlighted by Professional Footballers Australia, all athletes at the tournament should be recognised as workers, with rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and other workers' rights which are under threat in many countries sending teams to Australia and New Zealand. Key risks for migrant and young workers and volunteers, as well as for workers in construction, hospitality, cleaning, consumer goods and security were also identified in the risk assessment for this World Cup.

18. Both Australia and New Zealand have used major sporting events in attempts to reconcile the past. In New Zealand at the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland, a 16-year- old Catherine Astrid Salome

[14-15] Pope, S (2023). From girls to Lionesses: How newspaper coverage of women's football has changed. The Conversation. 6 July 2023. <https://theconversation.com/from-girls-to-lionesses-how-newspaper-coverage-of-womens-football-has-changed-209082>. [Accessed 17 July 2023].

[16] Record-breaking broadcast audience figures for the Women's Super League have already been seen for the 2022-23 season, with 16.5 million UK viewers watching 3 minutes or more of live coverage, an increase of 9% on viewing figures for the previous season. There is also definite commercial growth in the women's game - Barclays extended its sponsorship of the Women's Super League and became the first title sponsor of the Women's Championship from the 2022-23 season. In Scotland 2022-2023 viewing and attendance figures have increased with more than 100,000 attending SWPL matches for 2022-23 season.

Freeman became the first Indigenous Australian to win a Commonwealth gold medal in track and field. The following year she was named young Australian of the Year. She became a symbol of reconciliation. As Cathy Freeman held the Olympic torch aloft during the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, a games at which she won gold in the 400 meters, she did so in a different Australia from the one experienced by her parents.

19. Freeman became a symbol of reconciliation between a Black and white Australia in which she had much to forgive[17]. Her grandmother, Alice Sibley, was one of the so-called stolen generation, taken from her parents at the age of eight by a reviled Australian government policy that was supposedly designed to help integration. As a consequence of this 1950s programme which saw Aboriginal children removed from their parents and settled with white families, Freeman remained unaware of her ancestry on her mother's side[18].

20. Her father, an outstanding footballer, left home when she was five, died of an alcohol-induced stroke aged 53. The Sydney Olympic reception following her victory in the final of the 400 metres stood in stark contrast to the day she travelled to athletics meeting aged 13. Waiting outside Melbourne's Flinders Street Station, she was ordered to move on by a group of middle-aged Australian women, when the whole adjacent seating area lay vacant[19].

21. Amnesty International's 2022 assessment of Australia's track record on human rights highlighted new laws restricting the right to peaceful protest in several states and territories. Discrimination against First Nations peoples continues. While Australia accepted an offer by New Zealand to resettle refugees, the indefinite detention of asylum seekers continues. New carbon reduction targets were enshrined in legislation but fell short of required levels.

2023 Women's FIFA World Cup

Participation

22. The 2023 tournament is the ninth FIFA Women's World Cup, with the number of qualifying teams growing from 12 in 1991 to 24 in 2019 to 32 in 2023[20].

23. The teams are competing across 64 matches (an increase from the 52 matches held in 2019) played in 10 stadiums, across nine host cities. There are five host cities in Australia and four in Aotearoa New Zealand.

24. Australia's opening match against Ireland switched venues to the 83,500-capacity Stadium Australia, the tournament's largest stadium, due to high public demand for tickets[21]. The other host nation, New Zealand, face former World Cup winners Norway earlier the same day at the 50,000 capacity Eden Park in Auckland, which hosted the opening ceremony prior to the game.

25. The 32 qualifying teams being Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Haiti, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, Vietnam, and Zambia.

26. 25% of the nation's competing in Australia and New Zealand have qualified for the first time. These teams being Haiti, Morocco, Panama, the Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Vietnam, and Zambia.

27. Others have a sustained appearance at every World Cup. Australia have qualified for the past seven editions of the Women's World Cup, reaching the quarterfinals in three successive tournaments in 2007, 2001 and 2015, but New Zealand have never progressed past the group stage.

[17-19] Jarvie, G. (2006). Sport, culture and society. London: Routledge.

[20] Chadwick, S, Widdop, P, Anagnostopoulos and Parnell, D. (2022). The business of the FIFA World Cup. London: Routledge, pp33-34.

[21] Australia News (2023). [Women's World Cup Opener - Sold Out - 27 June 2023](#) [accessed 11 July 2023].

Visibility, Opportunity & Issues

28. For all of the teams the tournament provides the opportunity for increased visibility, the opportunity to grow the game at home and an increased financial take for teams and players. For all of the teams present and for those do not present the opportunity to harness the appetite for women's football is there to be taken but it is not an even playing field between nations which in part reflects the geo-political economy of women's football and football in general.

29. For the host countries, Australia and New Zealand, football has arguably still to make a breakthrough[22]. The fanfare that normally accompanies a tournament of this magnitude was slow to start in both countries. Tickets for the opening match against the Republic of Ireland at Stadium Australia sold out four weeks before the tournament started[23].

30. In rugby-dominated New Zealand - perhaps the first and only World Cup host country with just one professional club side, Wellington Phoenix – a crowd of 40,000 was expected for the opening match at Eden Park against Norway.

31. FIFA have agreed to fly First Nations and Māori flags at all World Cup 2023 venues. First Nations and Māori cultures will also be strongly represented throughout team welcomes and on matchdays, including in ceremonies and through team captains' armbands.

32. Fifty Indigenous children from Northern Territory and Western Australia were invited to Australia's opening match with a similar programme in place for Māori children in Aotearoa New Zealand. The engagement is tied to UNESCO's International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9th August) with the 2023 theme being Indigenous Youth as agents of change for self-determination.

33. In Sam Kerr (Chelsea) Australia have a genuine superstar and should she help to deliver either a World Cup or a 2024 Olympic gold medal, she will further cement her place amongst Australian sporting greats of

which there are many including Don Bradman, Shane Warne, and Ashleigh Barty[24].

34. Canada boast one of the superstars of the women's game in Christine Sinclair. Her current tally of 190 goals makes her the highest scoring player in international football. A tally that is well ahead of Cristiano Ronaldo's tally of 122[25].

35. One USA superstar Megan Rapinoe who is in the USA squad but has announced her retirement has argued that the 2023 tournament will act as a game-changing watershed for the sport. "It feels like a real opportunity to blow the lid off just in terms of fanfare and media and sponsorships and the larger business around this sport" [26]. For her and Alex Morgan it will be their fourth World Cup representing the USA.

36. Rapinoe has been one of the many sport stars who have used the platform that sport and football has provided to call out many injustices in the world[27]. There are times when sport can and does lead. A new wave of sporting activists and philanthropists are on the march and need to be supported long after the protests fade. Sport has always been political. Athletes have always had social and political consciences. The public can't always depend on sport stars to tackle social inequality alone, nor should they. The world needs them and others.

37. While the campaigning and coverage of social and political issues may not yet be as extensive as those covered during the 2022 Men's FIFA World Cup in Qatar the 2023 Women's World Cup has witnessed disputes over TV media rights and player payments.

38. The players Union FIFPRO while noting the progress being made wrote to FIFA in October 2022[28]. Key Areas of inequity listed were equal regulations and conditions, fair redistribution of prize money to players, and a pathway to equal prize money, as well as an agreement that protects these commitments -- both now and as a legacy for the players in the future[29].

[22-24] Nash, B (2023). Women's World Cup 2023: Can football shine in Australia and New Zealand? BBC Sport in Australia- [7] Macbeth, J. (2004). Women's Football in Scotland. University of Stirling, Phd. [accessed 11 July 2023].

[25] McConnell, A. (2023). <https://www.scotsman.com/sport/football/womens-world-cup-2023-megan-rapinoe-swanson-as-usa-bid-for-historic-treble-englands-chances-scottish-envy-4219788> The Scotsman. 16 July 2023 [Accessed 17 July 2023].

[26] Inside World Football (2023). <https://www.insideworldfootball.com/2023/06/29/rapinoe-says-world-cup-2023-will-blow-lid-off-business-womens-football/> 29 June 2023 [accessed 11 July 2023].

[27] Jarvie, Trimbur and Xu (2020) Sports Observations Briefing Paper. Academy of Sport. University of Edinburgh- <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/mh-aos-sport-observations-briefing-paper-20200912.pdf> [Accessed 17 July 2023].

[28-29] Hamilton, T. (2023). https://www.espn.co.uk/football/story/_/id/37637205/women-world-cup-prize-money-300-percent-one-third-mens ESPN Football 23 March 2023 [accessed 11 July 2023]

Broadcasting deals

39. The bids to broadcast the event were staggeringly low in the build-up to the tournament prompting FIFA to call out Italy's initial bid which amounted to less than 1% of the equivalent fee for the 2022 Men's World Cup in Qatar. The opening offer from Italy was £283,000 (300,000 euros) compared to the 160m euros for the rights to Qatar.

40. Threats of a television blackout in Europe and the UK have been avoided. The BBC and ITV agreed a deal to show live coverage of every match of the tournament[30]. All 64 matches from the tournament will be broadcast in the UK on either the BBC or ITV, except for the final on 20 August, which will be shown across both BBC One and ITV1. The joint bid from ITV and BBC was believed to be around 9m euros - 8 per cent of what was paid for coverage of the men's tournament. Although Scotland have not qualified for this World Cup if the Barnett consequential rule of 10% was applied to this BBC offer it could have significantly helped with TV sourced funding and coverage of football in Scotland – alas such rules don't apply in this instance.

41. On agreeing the deal BBC Director Barbara Slater stated "We have shown every Women's World Cup on the BBC since 1999 and we are happy to extend our partnership with FIFA for the upcoming tournament. The growth of the women's game is extraordinary, demonstrated by the 28 million who watched BBC coverage of the 2019 Women's World Cup and the huge audience of 17.4 million who watched our coverage of the Euro 2022 final on TV last summer. In partnership with ITV, we are delighted to make this World Cup available to the widest possible audience and free to air"[31].

42. FIFA have reportedly fallen \$100 million short of its goal for overall broadcast fees. According to the Wall Street Journal Media payments will total \$200 million. FIFA have been hoping for \$300 million[32].

Financial Disputes

43. Financial arguments have underpinned the build-up to the tournament. Canada, the reigning Olympic champions, have been dispute with the Canadian Soccer Association. T-shirt protests with "Enough is enough" printed on them and planned strikes resulted in a deal which reflected the Canada men's game-by-game incentives and results based financial compensation.

44. The Canadian women agreed an interim funding deal some 4 months before the 2023 World Cup[33]. The CSA spent \$11m (£6.72m) on the men's programme in 2021 and \$5.1m (£3.11m) on the women's programme[34]. The Canadians, who are the Olympic champions, will face Australia, Nigeria, and Ireland at the World Cup. They will open their campaign against Nigeria on July 21 in Melbourne.

45. The South Africa Football Association (SAFA) resolved a pay dispute with its Women's World Cup squad only after a charity set up by Confederation of African Football President and billionaire businessman Patrice Motsepe stepped to reportedly pay \$320,000, to be shared between the 23 players.

46. The Australian Matilda's have criticised the gender disparity in World Cup prize money and the fact some nations do not have collective bargaining rights[35]. They called out FIFA on the \$300 million pay gap with the men, three days before the tournament was due to start.

47. England women have also been engaged with the English Football Association over performance related bonuses. The FA line being that the FIFA payment of £24,000 to every participant in the group stage, with the amount rising the further the team goes, covers this[36].

48. FIFA payments range from £23,500 for players whose teams are knocked out in the group stages to £211,000 if they win the tournament. Nations will also receive increased prize money, with the winning country set to be paid £3.4m[37].

[30] BBC (2023). Women's World Cup: BBC and ITV agree on a deal with FIFA to broadcast tournament in the UK- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/65901075> [Accessed 19 June 2023].

[31] BBC Media Centre (2023). BBC and ITV confirm rights deal for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup. [22-24] Nash, B (2023). Women's World Cup 2023: Can football shine in Australia and New Zealand? BBC Sport in Australia- [7] Macbeth, J. (2004). Women's Football in Scotland. University of Stirling, Phd. [accessed 11 July 2023].

[32] Bachman, R. (2023) How FIFA's Sale of Women's World Cup TV Rights Went Wrong. The Wall Street Journal. July 13, 2023.

[33] Canada Soccer has already been investigated by the Canadian parliament because of poor governance and allegations of abuse. Earlier this year, the country's minister for sport, Pascale St-Onge, ordered an audit into the federation because of a lack of financial transparency.

[34] BBC (2023). Women's Football- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/64833593> [accessed 11 July 2023].

[35] BBC Sport (2023). Women's World Cup 2023: Australia criticise gender pay disparity and question bargaining rights. 17 July 2023.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/66219752> [Accessed 18 July 2023].

[36] Putting a price on playing for England- The Sunday Times 16 July 2023:p17.

[37] BBBC (2023). Women's Football- 3rd July 2023- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/66087187> [accessed 11 July 2023].

49. 2023 will also see the introduction of a new distribution model where players will receive individual payments distributed by FIFA. Money from FIFA was previously given to national football associations competing in a Women's World Cup, who would then choose how to distribute it, including any payments to the players. The new FIFA model guarantees that players from all nations will receive payments, following discussions with the global players' union, FIFPRO. The English players feel that the FA, which considers itself to be a leading federation in women's football, is being overshadowed by rivals - including Australia, the United States and Spain - who are willing to provide bonuses to their squad members.

50. The players want the FA to provide bonuses as well. Lucy Bronze stated that "the dispute is about taking the game to the next level and pushing the ceiling and not wanting to have a ceiling put on our game"[38].

51. The Carney Independent Review of football in England has called for a reframing of the opportunity in women's football. but notably called out the fact that to date the women's pyramid has been dependent on investment from affiliated men's teams, and the game now needs to grow in its own right to reach its true potential and stand on its own two feet[39]. The chair of the review pointed out that "Women's football in England could be a 'billion-pound industry' in next 10 years"[40].

52. The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) estimates that European women's football could see a sixfold increase in commercial value over the next decade, reaching an annual value of €686 million by 2033, with club sponsorship set to increase to €295 million in that time.

53. In March 2023 FIFA confirmed it would be tripling the prize money for teams competing at the Women's World Cup to \$152m (£120m). It is committed to making the men's and women's World Cup prize pots equal by the 2026 and 2027 editions. The 32 Teams at the FIFA Men's World Cup shared \$440m.

Symbol of change

54. England are ranked fourth in the world Haiti fifty third. For some teams like Haiti, it is the first appearance in the FIFA Women's World Cup. The message from Kerly Theus the goalkeeper is that for the girls in Haiti: "Keep pushing, keep driving and this moment, you'll have it too when it's your time"[41]. The goalkeeper is aware that this World Cup and the media attention which goes with it could be crucial in helping to change the conversation about Haiti.

55. One of the other players recalls that it is unfortunate that Haiti is often talked about in terms of some of the troubles, the earthquake[42], gang violence, and that "many think we're resilient people because we have so much struggle, I think we're resilient because we've had so many successes"[43].

56. She goes on "We had the first and only successful slave revolt to lead to a free country and its unfortunate that sometimes pain is all that's seen. 'We're going to a World Cup and these little moments show there is such much value in Haiti. Yeah, there might be things going on that are negative but there is even more that is positive. Haiti is still full of gold'[44].

57. As one of the players recalls "We have been through a lot together But These are the moments we live for. We're trying to bring back the light to Haiti for sure...The team is on an upward trajectory, a symbol for change"[45].

58. While many individual stars have drawn attention to multiple and single-issue campaigns FIFA also recognise that the popularity, scale and reach of football make it a powerful tool, perhaps like no other, in calling out and drawing attention to our universal humanity and crimes against it[46]. FIFA has agreed to partner with United Nations agencies to use the 2023 Women's World Cup to highlight a range of social causes[47]. The eight key messages to be targeted during the 2023 World Cup are:

[38] Putting a price on playing for England- The Sunday Times 16 July 2023: p17.

[39-40] DCMS (2023). Raising the bar - reframing the opportunity in women's football- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/raising-the-bar-reframing-the-opportunity-in-womens-football/raising-the-bar-reframing-the-opportunity-in-womens-football> [Accessed 15 July 2023].

[41, 43-45] BBC (2023). Women's World Cup 2023: Haiti's team are 'bringing the light back' after qualifying- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/football/66005504> [Accessed 15 July 2023].

[42] About 1.3 million people were made homeless by the 2010 Haitian earthquake.

[46] Reid, C et al (2022) Sport for mental health A global strengths-based change system- Sport for mental health A global strengths-based change system <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/sport-for-mental-health-report.pdf> [Accessed 18 July 2023]

[47] Inside World Football (2023) <https://www.insideworldfootball.com/2023/07/04/fifa-un-hook-social-messaging-programme/> 4 July 2023 [accessed 11 July 2023].

- Unite for Inclusion – in partnership with UN Human Rights
- Unite for Indigenous Peoples – in partnership with UN Human Rights
- Unite for Gender Equality – in partnership with UN Women
- Unite for Peace – in partnership with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency
- Unite for Education for All – in partnership with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- Unite for Zero Hunger – in partnership with the UN World Food Programme
- Unite for Ending Violence Against Women – in partnership with UN Women
- Football is Joy, Peace, Love, Hope & Passion – in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO)

Concluding Observations

59. The growth of women's football at all levels provides a real opportunity that needs to be fully grasped, sustained, and progressed. Investment, recognition, the closure of inequality gaps, the avoidance of strategic implementation gaps and genuine football for all remains work in progress.

60. The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup is likely to be the most viewed women's football tournament yet. The tournament comes on the back of a series of international reports benchmarking the progress and opportunity for women's football. Women led reviews of women's football have tended to call for minimum standards across four areas – corporate structures, the professional environment, fan experience and grassroots[48].

61. The 32 teams at 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup have all succeeded in overcoming different challenges and barriers. Success for some is being there, success for others will be nothing less than winning or getting through group stages and success for all will be making a difference in the opportunities for women and girls when the teams go back home.

62. Perhaps the greatest success will be off the pitch where nations finally understand and learn how to harness the reach and scale of football to enable a difference in some of the most challenging of circumstances.

63. The outgoing FIFA Secretary General is Fatma Samba Diouf Samoura. Someone who has worked for more than two decades for the UN in countries affected by war, violence, and a lack of women's rights. On arriving in Australia for the World Cup she reflected that she believes "nothing else in the world, including UN peacekeepers and good-natured politicians, can do what soccer does for African countries"[49].

Suggested citations

Jarvie, G. & Xu, Y. (2023) Australia and New Zealand 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup: Facts Myths and Issues. Edinburgh: Academy of Sport: University of Edinburgh.

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Notes:

1. [Guide to the University of Edinburgh Academy of Sport.](#)
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[48] DCMS (2023). Raising the bar – reframing the opportunity in women's football- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/raising-the-bar-reframing-the-opportunity-in-womens-football/raising-the-bar-reframing-the-opportunity-in-womens-football> [Accessed 15 July 2023].

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