



# Gaming for Gender Justice

First Virtual Salon  
**June 10th, 2021**



Picture by **Girls Make Games**



# Introduction

While women and girls make up an increasingly larger proportion of gamers, online spaces remain places of brutal gender-based harassment and abuse. The esports and gaming industry is dominated by men, with marginal female access, involvement, and opportunities at its highest levels.

Gaming and esports are powerful tools to challenge gender norms and stereotypes, regain ownership of digital spaces, and fight for gender equity within virtual and physical communities. The rise in women and girls in esports and gaming must be met with an environment that empowers and welcomes them.

# Objectives

1. Share perspectives and experiences around how gaming and esports can be leveraged to fight for gender justice and digital inclusion within virtual and physical spaces.
2. Drive forward a sustained cross-sector movement that reimagines and transforms gaming and esports for women and girls.
3. Create professional networks of like-minded champions within the esports and gaming ecosystem.

# Participants

| Name                          | Organisation                                   | Title   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Eve Crevoshay                 | Take This                                      | Executive Director  |
| Anita Sarkeesian              | Feminist Frequency                             | Executive Director  |
| Nicole Merhy (aka CherryGums) | BlackDragon eSports, Nike Esports Ambassador   | CEO, Ambassador   |
| Jenn MacFrench                | Women in Games International                   | Director of Global Partnerships                                   |
| Gillian Langland              | Queer Women of Esports                         | COO   |
| Vivian Nguyen                 | Team Liquid                                    | Data Manager  |
| Ayan Abdu                     | YDX Innovation, OGAC Advisory Committee Member | Diversity Advisor   |
| Jihan Johnston-McGlotten      | Beatbotics, OGAC Advisory Committee Member     | Co-Founder  |
| Tesa Aragoness                | Discord  | Chief Marketing Officer   |
| Maura Everett                 | PUMA   | Senior Brand Strategist   |
| Dr. Lindsey Migliore          | Queer Women of Esports                         | Founder, Executive Director                                       |
| Dr. Kishonna Gray             | University of Illinois - Chicago               | Assistant Professor in Gender and Women's Studies; Communications |
| Kyra Wills-Umdenstock         | EGD Collective                                 | CEO, Fellowship Director  |
| Laila Shabir                  | Girls Make Games                               | Founder & CEO   |
| Nadia Majid                   | Apple Arcade                                   | Business Development  |
| Joanie Kraut                  | Women In Games International                   | CEO   |
| Lauren Premo                  | CORSAIR  | Director of Marketing, Gaming                                     |
| Anat Shperling                | Toya   | Co-Founder, CEO   |
| Laura Eichhorn                | Amuka Esports / YDX                            | VP of Events  |
| Rebecca Dixon                 | the*gameHERs                                   | Co-Founder and CMO  |
| Cat Wendt                     | Apple Arcade                                   | Games Writer, App Store   |
| Becky Wright                  | National Student Esports                       | Social & Community Manager  |
| Jenny Xu                      | Talofa Games                                   | CEO, Founder  |
| Kim Meltzer                   | Destination Esports                            | CEO, Co-Founder   |
| Olivia Hughes                 | UCLA Esports                                   | Team Manager  |
| Taylor Gach                   | Stay Plugged In                                | Director of Partnerships  |
| Daniela Branco                | NFA  | Marketing Director  |
| Ana Monte                     | YDX Innovation                                 | Creative Director   |
| Catarina Larsson              | MTG  | Engagement Manager  |
| Sheiva Yazdani                | Apple Arcade                                   | Integrated Marketing Manager                                      |
| Diana Jeanne (DJ) Moreau      | Games for Change                               | Senior Director of Partnerships and Programs                      |
| Sarah Wagg                    | Durham College, OGAC Advisory Committee Member | Esports Arena Manager, Professor                                  |
| Gina Cruz Rivera              | Riot Games                                     | Insights Analyst, Wild Rift                                       |
| Marie-Claire Isaaman          | Women in Games                                 | CEO   |
| Caitlyn Graulau               | Shenandoah University                          | Student   |
| Felipe Delphorro              | NFA League                                     | Head of Strategy  |
| Kathy Chiang                  | UCI Esports, OGAC Advisory Committee Member    | Assistant Director  |
| Jenny Nguyen                  | Arizona Esports                                | Vice President  |
| Alexa Patino                  | Ryerson Esports                                | Vice President  |
| Christian Bejarano            |  | Content Operation, NimoTV   |
| Valerie Shih-Lau              | Knights  | Esports Coordinator   |
| Kai Wong                      | Intercollegiate Game Network                   | Internal Executive  |
| Dr. Samantha Blackmon         | Purdue University                              | Associate Professor of English                                    |

What word comes to mind when you think about gaming and gender justice?

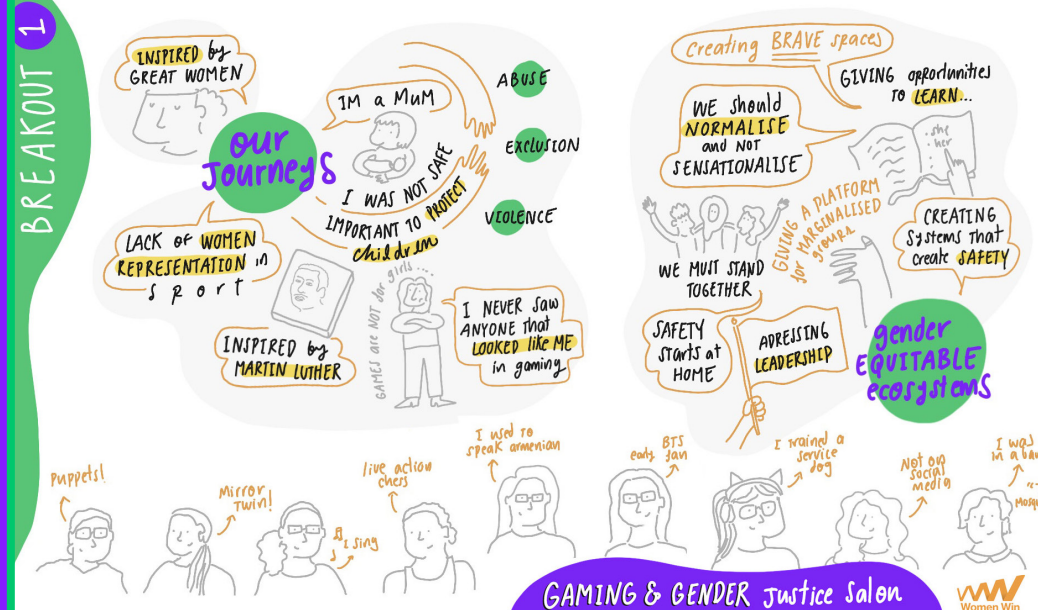


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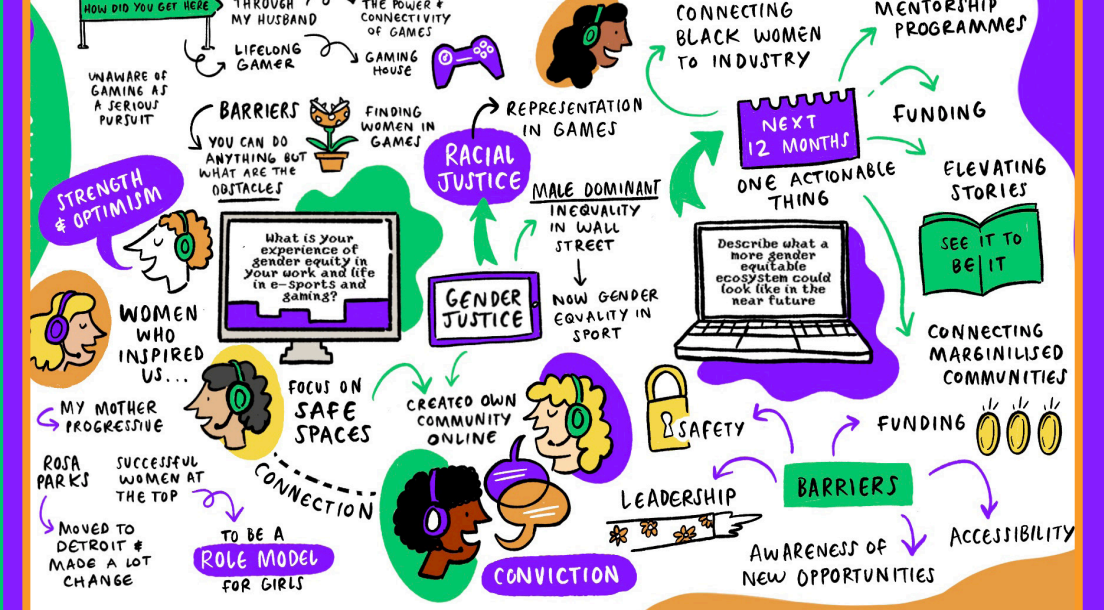
# What a more gender equitable system could look like in the near future...

## BREAKOUT 1



### Action Points

- Connect black women to industry/corporate partners
- Create a mentorship program for girls and women interested in studying game development and joining the industry, and focus on identifying goals and career strategies.
- Provide funding opportunities to girls and women to realize their gaming career aspirations, especially towards students to mitigate financial barriers that prevent them from participating and studying these topics.
- Connect more women/femmes/non-binary folks with partners as they are often overlooked
- Elevate the stories and opportunities for girls and young women



### Action Points

- Support a hotline to make people feel supported and safe in digital spaces, enabling them to feel welcomed as opposed to a target.
- Continue to have open and honest conversations around diversity and representation in gaming to break down harmful stereotypes.
- Normalize being matched with other women.
- Stand together and fight harder!

## BREAKOUT 3



### Action Points

- Increase the representation of women in leadership positions - requires allies to pull women into spaces where decisions are made, making sure their teams are as diverse as possible, and creating teams and making space for success.
- "Give us the resources to do what we're passionate about, and we'll get it done. We're ready, we have the courage, let's go."
- More diverse characters are needed. Diversity initiative councils help to ensure voice actors are matched to their characters and not whitewashed. More diverse characters are needed.
- Design with and not for!

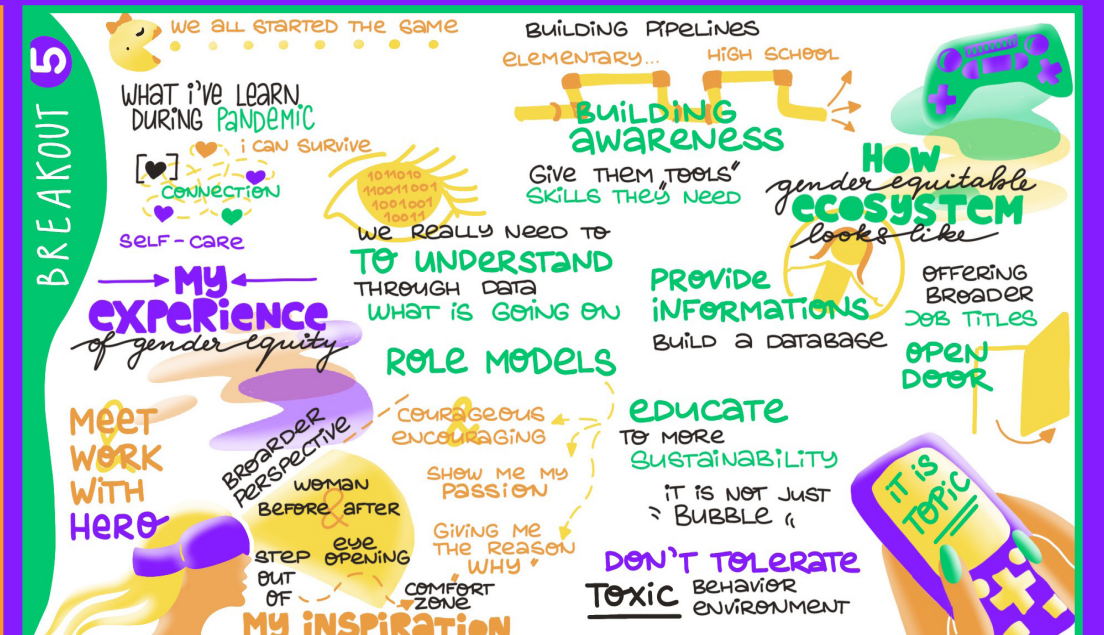
## BREAKOUT 4



### Action Points

- Equal compensation for women
- More women in leadership and executive positions to set examples for others
- More males having accountability for behavior that happens online and in the workplace
- Increased education surrounding equity/equality
- Networking opportunities for women to provide support to each other
- Gender equality does not only concern women.
- Bring all voices together

## BREAKOUT 5



### Action Points

- Bring gender justice to the forefront of the conversation, a salon like this would not have happened 10 years ago and we need to continue to push this conversation forward.
- Engage women and men when they're younger about respect in online communities.
- We need the same buy-in and money behind the events for men and women
- More commitment to gender equity from companies beyond having it as a marketing campaign or box-ticking exercise. It needs to be a fundamental piece of the culture, ethos, and behaviors of companies.
- Move past the anecdotal into the actionable and informed. Put data and hard evidence in the agenda, and make change at the high level.



## Conclusion.

Now that you have discussed in small groups, **what word comes to mind when you think about gaming and gender justice?**

support  
actionable  
connections  
possible  
systems  
possibility  
collaboration  
action  
inspirational  
tactics  
**education**  
dismantling  
**visibility**  
need data  
inspired  
integrating  
opportunity  
clarity  
community  
realization  
future

## Initiatives shared on the Chat Storm

- Girls Make Games: **3-week virtual summer camp**
- **Women in Games**
- Queer Women of Esports – **QWE mentorship program**, pairing industry leaders with early career marginalized gendered individuals, and providing the resources (tablets, audio/visual) for them to succeed
- **Live emotional support hotline** for people who make and play games
- **Esports Family** – supporting parents and their gaming literacy to better engage with their gamer kids
- <http://www.mygamemyname.com/>
- DEI in higher education through gaming <https://egdcollective.org>
- **@unigamenetwork** re-launching mentorship program to connect people working in the esports-gaming industry with students aspiring to get into it
- Parent training to help destigmatize gaming – <https://TakeThis.org>
- Esports awareness company – [www.beatbotics.net](http://www.beatbotics.net)
- Workshops, short programs, and 30-day mentorship program to promote the inclusion, advancement, and retention of women in the games industry– <https://www.getwigi.com/programs>
- Getting people from diverse backgrounds into game development – [www.igdafoundation.org](http://www.igdafoundation.org)
- Gen G. offering a \$500 **grant for Women in Gaming**
- **ONside Gaming** – advancing gender justice in esports and gaming

## Thank you!

We hope that, through this Salon, you have been able to meet some people you would not otherwise likely meet and who share our collective passion to advance gender justice in gaming and esports. We hope you have learned about some amazing work being done in different parts of the sector, and get excited about the potential for authentic collaborations to advance gender justice and digital inclusion for girls, women, non-binary and all other underrepresented groups and communities.

**We hope to continue the conversation with you in October.**