



STUDY

BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry

believe. | **tune**CORE | **LUMINATE**

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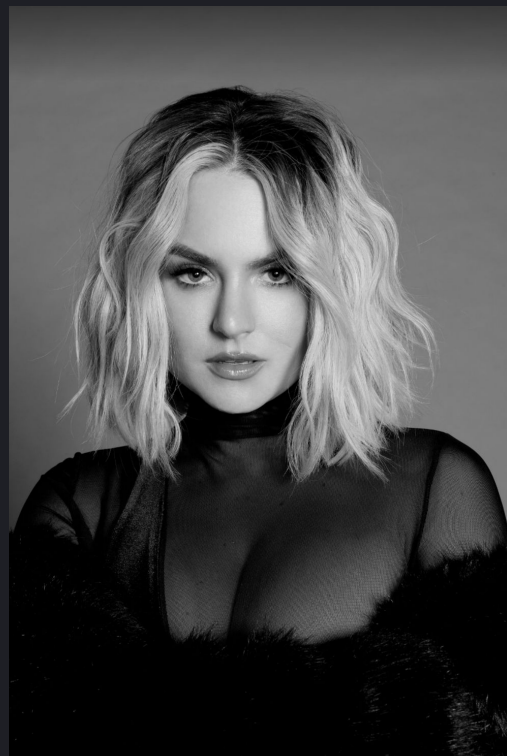
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A Word From...

JoJo

Change is possible when we reflect, learn and then choose to grow. There's a hopefulness found in refusing to let history repeat itself. Next year, I'll be celebrating my 20-year anniversary in the music industry as a public figure, a journey that started when I was a young teenager. When I reflect on that time, I realize it's hard for me to separate the formation of my identity as an adult woman from my identity as an artist. And while those blurry lines come from both external and internal influences, I've recently wondered if my male peers consider themselves "male artists." My suspicion is that the term is not as ubiquitous for them as the term "female artist" is for myself and my fellow women in music, whether in the press, in business meetings, or in the studio.

My hunch surrounding this issue rings true when I look at the data in the enclosed research. When I read that over 60% of industry professionals and creators have struggled with their mental health since working in the music industry, and that among women and gender expansive individuals that statistic climbs to 76% for women, 82% for transgender individuals, and 89% for those who are nonbinary, it's clear this is a pervasive issue. As someone who has been quite open about my own mental health journey, both in interviews and in my music, having this kind of information helps me to understand one of the many underlying roots of these issues. Although these issues are definitely not something I blame on or attribute to my gender exclusively, it's helpful to recognize that attitudes towards and expectations of women can exacerbate the harder times. Many of us women have been conditioned under antiquated pressure, more so than our male counterparts, to be seen as "perfect." As "female artists," some of us were handed down preconceived expectations of sitting in hair and make-up for hours before a public appearance. If we don't "look right," that could become the narrative, taking attention away from the project we're promoting or dominating conceptions surrounding our stories or abilities. I know from personal experience and shared anecdotes within the industry that male peers can spend less than half the time as females getting ready for a public appearance, which can often free up more time for creativity or productivity in their business ventures.



As women, we are constantly climbing an uphill battle to feel good enough and to prove our worthiness. We are often pitted against other women and picked apart mercilessly on the internet by passionate strangers. Recently, P!nk released an amazing new album, but instead of highlighting that in her promotion, the headline that media outlets ran with was a new tidbit of a story from 20-years ago, a conflict between her and Christina Aguilera that has long been resolved. P!nk, being the badass she is, called it out directly for what it is: gender inequality in the way women and men are treated by the media and in general. If we don't call out the discrepancies ourselves, will it continue to be more of the same? I'm encouraged when I see the younger generation of artists coming out the gate with an individualistic approach to what it means to look, dress, and act like a woman. There's a collective refusal to accept or engage with this long-standing girl-against-girl rhetoric. That stuff is old. Challenging the former norms is now the standard. And I love to see it.

The history of our industry does not have to be a vision of its future. By continuing to conduct studies like this to educate our peers on our diverse experiences, and providing actionable ways to lend a helping hand to one another in the face of gender-based discrimination, we can reshape the face of music. We can work together, all of us, to create a more equitable, representative, and inclusive industry, where people of all backgrounds, sexualities, and gender identities are granted the same opportunities for success, from the stage to the studio to the board room. We each have a part to play to make that vision a reality. We all have to take daily action to combat gender-based discrimination and let it be known that inclusivity is necessary for our industry to thrive. We all have to be the change.

An Introduction

The music industry thrives as a hub of creativity, culture, and change. Still, the industry contends with challenges unique to its environment. Everyone working in the industry - creators and professionals alike - operates in an environment beset by discriminatory practices interwoven into the fabric of the industry.

BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry, a groundbreaking study returns for its third year providing an intimate look into the experiences of communities in the music industry and how gender-based discrimination impacts them.

Women and gender expansive¹ individuals report enduring a plethora of issues in today's industry, from the safety of creators and the risk of sexual harassment in their non-traditional working environments, to industry professionals being passed up for promotion to leadership roles in historically patriarchal structures.

The 2023 report explores the opinions and experiences of over **1,650 creators, industry professionals and executives** from **109 countries**, allowing us a truly global view into the music industry. Also included are a range of music industry sectors (labels, management, sync, etc.) and roles (marketer, engineer, journalist, etc.) for a truly comprehensive perspective.

Expanding beyond the scope of last year's **BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry** study, the results are representative of male, female, and gender expansive perspectives, and adopt an intersectional approach that accounts for

respondents' ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status, parental status, location, and age among other factors. Further building on previous iterations of **BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry**, this year's survey was available in **13 languages** to encourage increased international participation.

The latest **BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry** data indicates that gender discrimination remains prevalent in the music industry, but also that there are clear opportunities for improvement. Women and gender expansive individuals continue to report barriers they face in the industry. Last year three issues were widely cited among industry professionals and creators (sexual harassment, ageism, and unequal pay).

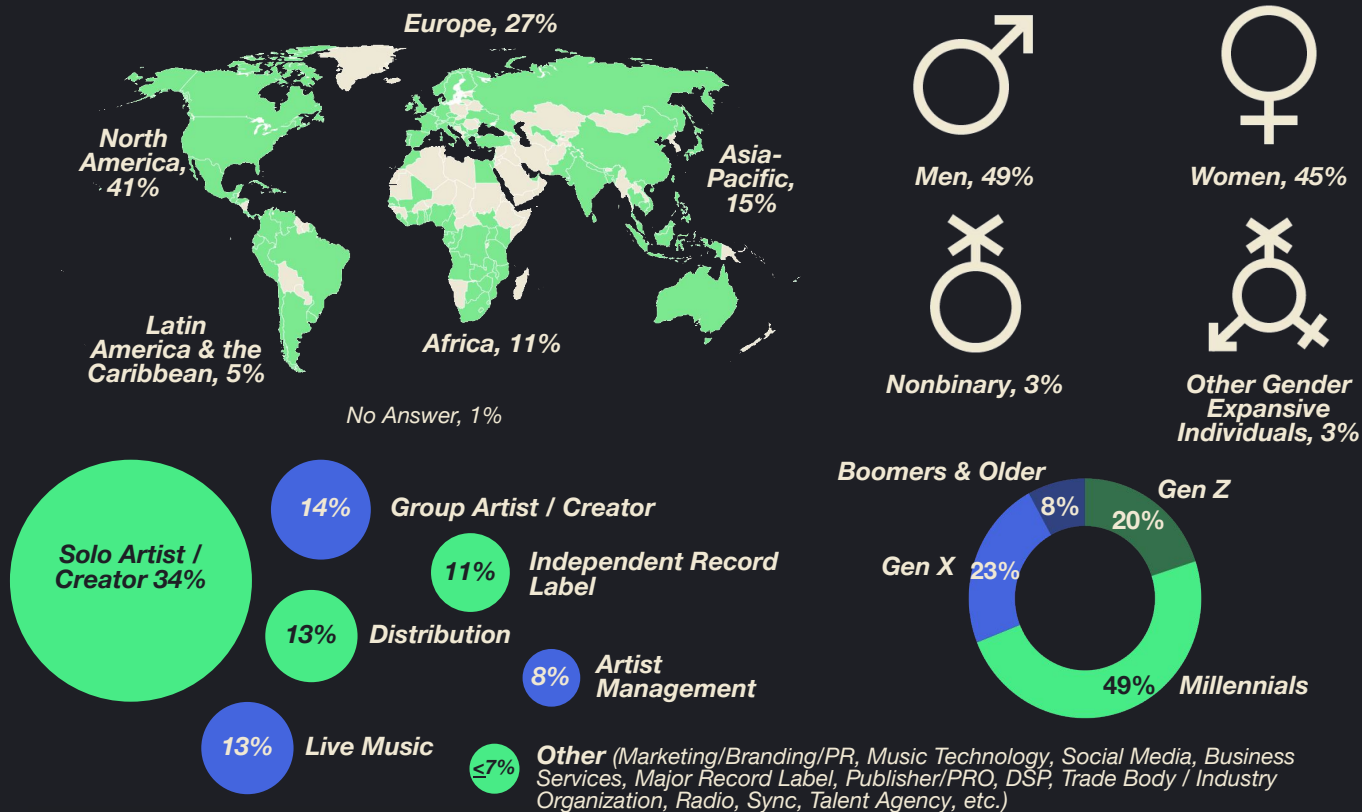
This year, we learned that **34%** of women in the industry had experienced sexual harassment or abuse, the majority of women (**60%**) and nonbinary² individuals (**62%**) felt that discrimination based on age was a major problem in the industry, and over half (**53%**) of the industry felt that cisgender³ men are paid more than others in the music industry.

Within the pages of this report, we highlight distinct issues and actionable solutions to create a more equitable future for all genders in the music industry. While the **BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry** study is an informational resource, consider all our calls to action as urgent instructions that individuals can advocate for and music organizations can enact.

Methodology

BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry is an annual survey among professionals and creators to research gender equality in the music industry. Data was collected using an online survey which was distributed globally.

In 2023, **BE THE CHANGE** surveyed **1,656 music industry professionals and creators** from **109 countries** around the world. Sample composition can be found below:



Key Findings

THE PERCEPTION GAP

The music industry has a clear disconnect in how we assume industry professionals and artists experience the industry and the reality. **Less than 60%** of artists and industry professionals believe gender discrimination is a major issue in the industry. Women and nonbinary individuals are more likely to see gender discrimination as a problem **(+28% and +46%, respectively)** compared to Men **(-32% less likely)**.

IDENTITIES & INTERSECTIONALITY

Gender discrimination in the music industry is compounded by discrimination based on other marginalized groups. Poor representation and tokenism complicate women and gender expansive individuals' experience in the industry. Minority women, for example, are **+114%** more likely than average to feel that their hiring decision was, in part, based on their racial, ethnic, tribal background, or country of origin.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT & ABUSE

Alarming rates of sexual harassment and abuse occur in the music industry, often against women and gender expansive individuals, without proper resources for survivors or consequences for offenders. Women **(34%)**, trans individuals **(42%)**, and nonbinary individuals **(43%)** in the industry report being sexually harassed or abused at work in the music industry.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mental health is a prevailing issue in the music industry for women, nonbinary, and trans individuals. Women **(76%)**, trans individuals **(82%)**, and nonbinary individuals **(89%)** are all more likely to report struggling with their mental health since joining the music industry. Individuals with disabilities also face poor accommodations and resourcing in the industry.

RECOGNITION & COMPENSATION

The wage gap still impacts women and gender expansive professionals and creators in the music industry and is a barrier to a flourishing career. Roughly half **(53%)** of those working in the industry agree that cisgender men are paid more than others in the music industry. Half of women report having their or another's professional or career experience discredited which impacts earning potential in the industry.

LEADERSHIP

Fewer women and gender expansive professionals are in positions of power in the music industry and barriers exist to leadership positions. **58%** of people we spoke to disagree with the notion that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed in the music industry. Women **(+30%)**, underrepresented ethnic groups **(+30%)**, and transgender individuals **(+74%)** are all more likely to report being passed up for a promotion.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT

Women **(+42%)** and transgender individuals **(+98%)** in the industry are more likely to say that they don't have access to professional training/development opportunities. There are also barriers to entry into the industry as just **41%** of industry professionals and creators recommend a career in the music industry today (an additional **22%** would recommend a career in the industry if it advanced gender equality).



Image Description: Singer with music production equipment.

SECTION 1

The Perception Gap

It is difficult to solve a problem that some people don't believe exists. This is especially true as we seek to understand the impact of gender discrimination in the music industry.

While **81%** of industry professionals and creators believe that discrimination exists in the music industry, just under **60%** believe that gender-based discrimination is a major problem in the music industry. Unsurprisingly, gender is a major factor that dictates the belief in gender discrimination. While **73%** of women and **83%** of nonbinary individuals believe discrimination exists in the music industry, only **39%** of the men surveyed believe the same.

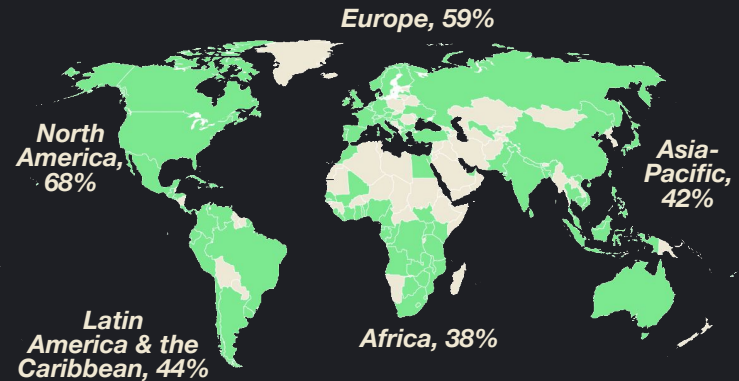
These statistics align with the relative perception of the music industry versus other industries, with less than half of industry professionals and creators (**46%**) viewing the music industry as more progressive in terms of gender equality than other industries. Conversely, roughly **1-in-4** feel that the music industry is less progressive than others.

More stark differences emerge when we hear directly from specific audiences. When asked whether or not they feel the music industry is progressive in terms of gender equality, the gender of the respondent is again a clear demarcator in the perception of progress in the music industry. Male industry professionals and creators are more likely to find the music industry as more progressive, while female & gender expansive individuals find the industry to be less progressive than others.

Interestingly, these perception gaps don't always look the same in the music industry around the world. Music industry professionals and creators in Africa and Asia-Pacific tell us that they are less likely to view gender discrimination as a major problem in the music industry.

PERCEPTION OF A PROBLEM

FIGURE 1: Please indicate what types of discrimination, if any, you believe exist in the music industry. Also, please indicate to what degree each type of discrimination is a problem in the music industry. (% in **Agreement**; Discrimination Based on Gender)



An exploration into these differences by gender around the world prove that personal experience of gender discrimination directly correlates with changes in perception of this type of discrimination.

SECTION 1

The Perception Gap



Image Description: Person wearing headphones sitting on floor with laptop.

Our research shows that gender discrimination is disproportionately experienced by women and gender expansive individuals. Women are **+25%** more likely to report being told that their gender is not a good fit for a job. Nonbinary individuals are **+200%** and transgender individuals are **+250%** more likely to report being told the same.

What's fascinating is that gender diversity in an industry environment does not immediately equate to more positive perceptions of progress and gender equality.

For example, more women than average report that they work within certain genres including K-Pop (**+40%**), Pop/Top 40 (**+23%**), and Folk (**+13%**). However, these three genres all have lower perceptions of progress and are more likely than average to report gender discrimination being a major problem in the industry.

Given these stark disparities, it is imperative to educate ourselves about the often harsh realities and lived experiences of women and gender expansive individuals in every corner of the music industry.

SECTION 2

Identities & Intersectionality

While the focus of this report is gender discrimination in the music industry, we recognize that gender is just one part of a person's lived experience. Individual identities are complex, and no part of ourselves is "left at the door" as we begin our workday. We cannot view gender discrimination through a single lens or solve problems based on the experience of one group assuming it to be representative of all identities and experiences. As part of this study, we spoke to a diverse group of industry professionals and creators:

- **37%** identified as having a disability
- **34%** were parents
- **30%** were LGBTQ+
- **22%** were a racial or ethnic minority in their country

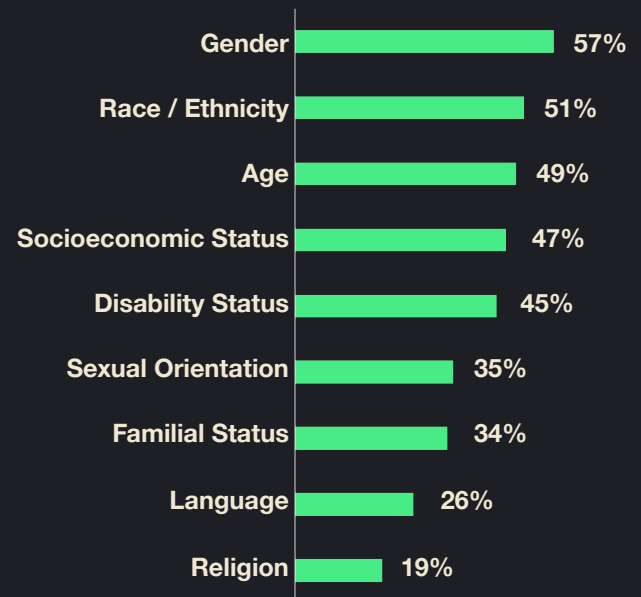
...among many other essential pieces of their identities.

What we know is that having an intersectional identity⁴ and experience unfortunately leads to compounded discrimination in the workplace. As previously stated, **57%** of industry professionals and creators believe that gender discrimination is a major problem in the music industry. However, discrimination based on race & ethnicity, age, socio-economic status or class, ability & disability status, and sexual orientation are all recognized as major problems existing in the music industry.

As these professionals and creators tell us about their common struggles,

TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

FIGURE 2: Please indicate what types of discrimination, if any, you believe exist in the music industry. Also, please indicate to what degree each type of discrimination is a problem in the music industry. (% in Agreement)



we also learn about their unique experiences in the music industry.

RACIAL & ETHNIC MINORITIES

Individuals of racial or ethnic minorities are less likely to view the music industry as progressive in terms of gender equality compared to other industries. We also know that they disproportionately experience discrimination based on gender and racial or ethnic identity.

SECTION 2

Identities & Intersectionality



Image Description: Person singing into microphone.

Minority industry professionals and creators face heightened discrimination early on in their careers as they are **+30%** more likely to report being told that their racial, ethnic, tribal background or country of origin is not a good fit for the job. **1-in-4** minority professionals and creators also tell us they believe that they were hired specifically because of their minority identity (e.g., tokenism⁵). Conversely, nearly **1-in-5** feel that they were not hired for a specific position in part because of their minority identity.

This lack of racial and ethnic diversity, and its fallout effects, has long been observed in the music industry. UK Music's 2022 report on diversity in the industry found that just **one-fifth** of the UK's industry employees

identified as Black, Asian, or minority ethnic - a rate that had fallen since they analyzed the industry two years prior.⁶

When we consider gender, minority women are **+114%** more likely than average to feel that they were hired in part, based on their racial, ethnic, tribal background, or country of origin. The expectation to be diverse in hiring practices, without doing so for the right reasons, leads to a feeling of tokenism among some multi-identity individuals and fears of "quota filling" in hiring practices of the music industry.

The inequality and fight for acceptance of minority women in the industry plays out in real time as we learn that, as published by the not-for-profit Women in CTRL, findings indicate that among 11 music trade body boards in the UK, none had a single black woman CEO or Chairperson in 2020 and 2021.⁷

Similar results were found by the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (AII). In their annual report on inclusivity in the music industry, they analyzed senior leaders across 6 industry categories: Music Groups, Labels, Publishing, Radio, Streaming, and Live Music.

Sampling from 119 different companies, they found that: "Overall, **17.6%** of 125 top executives (e.g., CEO, Chair, President) identify with an underrepresented racial/ethnic group and **10.4%** were Black. Women clocked in at **12.8%** of all top executives, though women of color filled only **3.2%** of all top roles."⁸

SECTION 2

Identities & Intersectionality

ABILITY & DISABILITY STATUS

Industry professionals and creators with disabilities also face unique battles of ignorance and a lack of support in the workplace. **One-fifth** of those with a disability have been told that this makes them a poor fit for their job.

This is, in part, due to a lack of knowledge by many employers. Just **14%** of professionals and creators feel that their employer is knowledgeable on the laws and policies regarding accommodations in the workplace. On top of this, a dismal **7%** feel that the proper accommodations are available to them at their job.

Professionals and creators with a disability also report being **+50%** more likely to feel the impact of gender discrimination highlighting the compound suffering of multi-identity professionals in the music industry.

Creators with disabilities, in particular, face unique experiences in the music industry. They are **+35%** more likely than average to feel that there is a lack of safe spaces for them to record, promote, or perform their music. They also contend with non-ADA (and global equivalents) performing venues.

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

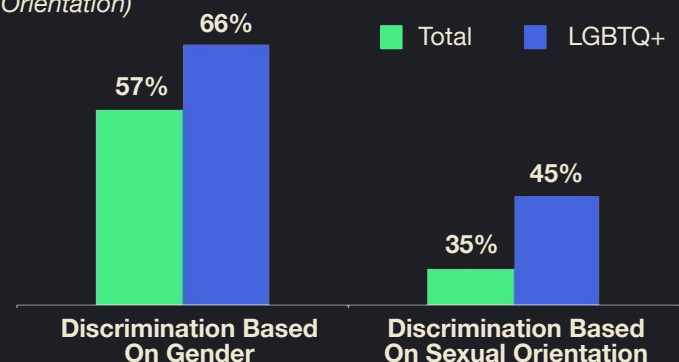
LGBTQ+ professionals and creators are **+16%** more likely to recognize gender discrimination as a major problem in the music industry. They are **+29%** more likely to view discrimination based on sexual orientation in the same light.

LGBTQ+ individuals often contend with unsafe working environments which impact their lives and careers. We asked about these experiences and **1-in-4** told us that they have felt unable or unsafe to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace. Many individuals also feel afraid to, and refrain from, discussing their personal lives with coworkers. As one individual told us, gender discrimination impacts the LGBTQ+ community in different ways, and it is not always from the source you might assume:

“We focus a lot on cisgender men in these conversations, but there's a high volume of interactions with women who belittle, undermine, devalue and shame trans folks, believing that including them in a fight for equity would somehow dilute their power or capacity.”

LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

FIGURE 3: Please indicate what types of discrimination, if any, you believe exist in the music industry. (% in Agreement; Discrimination based on Gender, Sexual Orientation)



SECTION 2

Identities & Intersectionality

PARENTS

Becoming a parent changes anyone's life - music industry professionals and creators included. **One-third** of parents in the industry tell us they feel that discrimination based on familial, parental, or pregnancy status is a major problem in the industry.

As we aim to understand the experiences of parents in the music industry we need to recognize that the experience is no longer only that of the industry professional or creator, but instead includes their families as well.

Parents must adapt their working styles, and often their working hours, as they care for their families. Nearly **one-third** of parents tell us that they find it hard to maintain a work-life balance in the music industry. An equal amount report feeling guilty about missing a family or personal commitment because they had to work.

Women who are parents report increased pressures and stress in balancing their roles. They are more likely than parents of all genders, on average, to report difficulties in maintaining a work-life balance.

What's more troubling is that women who are parents are more likely to report financial hardships while working in music. **30%** of all parents already tell us that they are either unable to afford their basic living expenses or afford much beyond those expenses, but **1-in-4** women who are parents explicitly tell us that their

compensation has not allowed their family to keep up with their needs. Still, nearly **40%** have the additional expense of childcare so that they can continue their careers.

We cannot expect professionals and creators to give 100% of themselves to their work when we don't create a space for their full selves to exist in the workplace nor the resources to help them do that.

WORKING PARENTS' EXPERIENCE

FIGURE 4: Please indicate what types of discrimination, if any, you believe exist in the music industry. (% in Agreement; Discrimination based on Familial Status); How has becoming a parent or guardian affected your career?; Financial Stability.



SECTION 3

Sexual Harassment & Abuse

Note: This section will cover aspects of sexual harassment and abuse. Please read with caution.

In truth, no matter how many conversations and anti-discrimination trainings (based on gender and beyond) occur in the music industry, action needs to follow.

Industry professionals and creators tell us that gender discrimination needs to stop, but when it does happen, procedures must be in place to provide resources for those who need it and consequences for those who commit it.

One of the most severe acts of discrimination in the workplace, sexual harassment and abuse, can be perpetrated against people of all genders, yet it is no secret that women and gender expansive individuals are disproportionately affected.

We asked respondents about the consequences of inaction against sexual harassment and abuse in the music industry - and how to change course.

One-in-five industry professionals and creators report experiencing sexual harassment or abuse at work. Individuals more often impacted by gender discrimination in the industry are more likely to experience this violation.

- **34%** of women in the industry report being sexually harassed or abused at work (+**70%** more than average)
- **43%** of nonbinary individuals in the industry report being sexually harassed or abused at work (+**115%** more than average)
- **42%** of transgender individuals in the industry report being sexually harassed or abused at work (+**110%** more than average)

This is not a new problem. As reported in VICE with gal-dem, DJ Rebekah said, in part, ***“I’ve been around this industry for over 20 years and nothing’s changed”***⁹ when responding to sexual assault allegations against other DJs. Rebekah also set up a campaign, #ForTheMusic, which provides opportunities for survivors of sexual harassment and abuse to share their stories to “raise awareness and combat a culture of silence”¹⁰ in the Dance Music industry. Within this research, we find that individuals working in EDM were **+25%** more likely than average to report experiencing sexual harassment or abuse in their workplace.



Image Description: Person wearing headphones singing into microphone.

SECTION 3

Sexual Harassment & Abuse

Industry professionals taking on roles in male-dominated spaces are more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment or abuse in the workplace. Those working in Music Technology, Engineering, and Social Media are more likely to report being a survivor of workplace sexual harassment or abuse, and are employed in industry sectors with a smaller representation of women and gender expansive individuals.

The already troubling statistics we've shared are even more shocking when we find that **34%** of *all* industry professionals and creators have either experienced and/or witnessed another experience sexual harassment or abuse in the workplace. Broken down again by gender, roughly half of women and nonbinary individuals have experienced this and/or seen it happen to someone else.

Creators are in an especially vulnerable position. While **19%** of all creators surveyed report being victimized, the impact of gender discrimination is evident when we realize that nearly **40%** of women and gender expansive creators have been sexually harassed or abused at work.

Like EDM, for those working in certain genres, these concerns are amplified. Within our research, we find that creators in K-Pop (**31%**) and Folk (**27%**), as examples, report feeling sexualized as a creator and are more likely to report being a survivor of workplace sexual harassment or abuse.

When we investigate the causes of this, there are many.

- **70%** of industry professionals and creators feel that women are oversexualized in the music industry
- Over **60%** believe that the music industry needs safe spaces in studios, live music venues, etc. and online for those more likely to be victimized, but many feel that this hasn't happened yet
- Nearly all (**97%**) of those who have experienced sexual harassment / abuse in the industry felt that resources were not available to them after an incident occurred

EXPERIENCES AFTER SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR ABUSE

FIGURE 5: When you experienced sexual harassment / abuse at work, did any of the following scenarios apply to you? (Among those who have experienced sexual harassment / abuse)



SECTION 3

Sexual Harassment & Abuse



Image Description: People walking on ramp with music equipment.

Not only is sexual harassment and abuse a major problem in the industry (especially for women and gender expansive individuals), the reaction to it, or lack thereof, is just as damning.

When we listen to those who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse at work, we learn that not only are crucial resources unavailable to them (as noted above), but crucial support is lacking as well.

Our research found that sexual harassment and abuse, while prevalent, is wildly underreported. Just **13%** of industry professionals and creators who were survivors of sexual harassment and abuse were able to, or felt comfortable to, report

their sexual harassment or abuse to an authority (within their company or to law enforcement). This is clearly a breakdown in the processes in place to protect survivors of sexual harassment or abuse in the music industry.

What's more, nearly **1-in-3** survivors' claims of sexual harassment or abuse were ignored or dismissed and nearly **1-in-5** were explicitly told to keep quiet about their harassment or abuse.

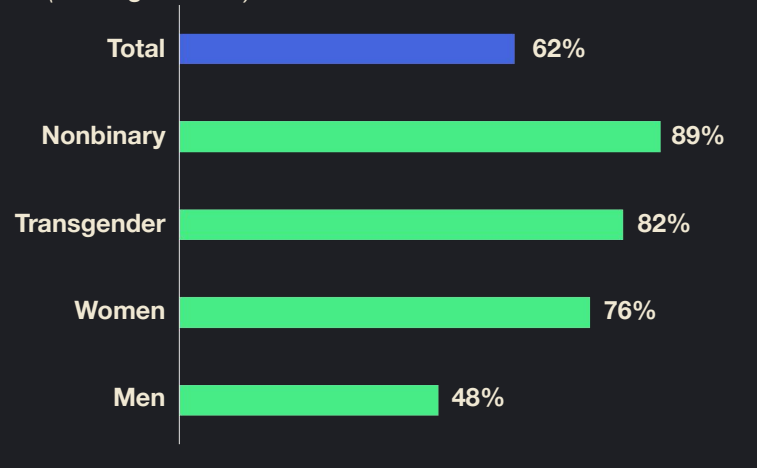
These actions, or lack thereof, not only contribute to slowing down progress made towards gender equality, but they also widen the gap between perception and reality creating a presumption of safety and equality in the industry.

SECTION 4

Health & Well-Being

MENTAL HEALTH

FIGURE 6: Since working in the music industry, have you struggled with your mental health? (% in Agreement)



Work experiences can directly affect a person's mental and physical health and well-being, and this is particularly salient for underrepresented and under-resourced groups within the music industry. In our research, **over 60%** of industry professionals and creators shared they have **struggled with their mental health** since working in the music industry. Among women, nonbinary, and trans individuals, this statistic climbs to **76%** for women, **82%** for transgender individuals, and **89%** for those who are nonbinary. This is amplified in those with diagnosed mental health conditions.

These staggering statistics highlight the importance of providing mental health services for these groups. Organizations like Music Minds Matter¹¹ are already working towards this goal, providing 24/7

mental health support to UK-based music industry professionals.

Although direct discrimination can be easy to spot, there are more subtle forms that industry professionals and creators experience. Just under **1-in-4** respondents indicate that they have been left out of work social events. However, while men are **-43%** less likely to report being left out of work social events, women and transgender individuals are **+35%** and **+74%** more likely to be left out of such events, respectively. This contributes to an "old boys club" mentality in the workplace, the studio, and on tour. It also compounds the problem many women and gender expansive individuals have with upward mobility in the music industry, as they are less likely to build relationships in their companies if they are excluded in this way.

In addition to being frequently excluded from events, conversations, and other activities, mental health struggles can also arise from safety concerns and an attitude of irreverence towards personal identities. Nearly **two-thirds** of transgender and/or nonbinary individuals report having their pronouns ignored, or witnessing this happen to someone in the workplace. Transgender respondents also indicate that they have been deadnamed¹² by coworkers and management (**34%**). When facing such exclusion and disrespect on a frequent basis, it is logical that **27%** of LGBTQ+ respondents report feeling unable or unsafe to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in the workplace.

But fear not – It's not all doom and gloom.

SECTION 4

Health & Well-Being

When mental health resources are made available, they are put to good use. Respondents who have had these resources available to them indicate that they have made use of therapy/counseling (50%), modified work schedules (36%), medication (33%), and mental health education (29%).

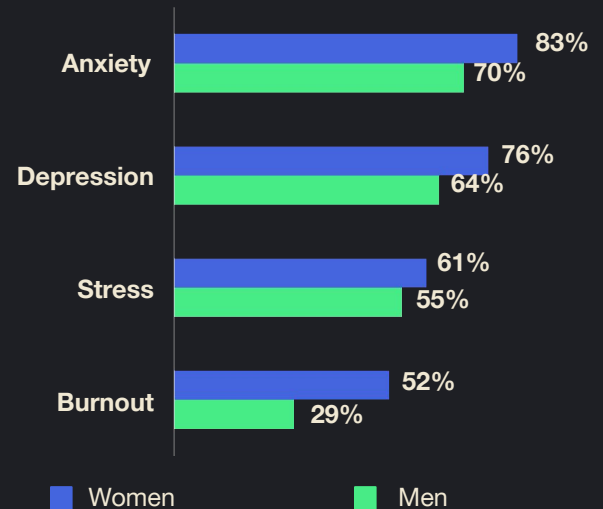
When these resources are not available, non-profit organizations like Backline¹³ and MusiCares¹⁴ can help. Designed for creators and professionals in the music industry, these organizations offer access to mental health and wellness resources, health services, and other support services. In addition, nonprofits like Backline provide extensive resource lists that refer professionals to other organizations that provide specific support tailored towards those with intersectional identities or unique needs, and MusiCares has a focus on inclusivity with all of their services. Despite non-profits trying to fill the resource gap, more must be done in industry professionals' and creators' day-to-day environments.

DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

For those who are disabled, workplace experiences can have an even greater impact on their health and well-being. With **one-third** of respondents in our research indicating that they have a disability, discrimination based on (dis)ability status has become a common experience. Among those disabled, **16%** express that they have lost out on career opportunities because of others' perceptions of their disability alone.

MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS

FIGURE 7: If you feel comfortable sharing, what symptoms or diagnosed illnesses have you struggled with? (Among those with mental health concerns)



Moreover, women and transgender individuals with a disability have witnessed or personally experienced being told their disability makes them unable to do their job in the industry to the fullest extent at higher rates (26% and 38%, respectively).

Regardless of whether instances of discrimination are blatant or subtle, it is clear that the issue is quite prevalent as nearly **half** of industry professionals and creators agree that such discrimination based on disability is a major problem in the music industry.

SECTION 4

Health & Well-Being



Image Description: Person using music production equipment.

It's also important to note that not all disabilities are visible. While many consider physical disabilities when they hear the word "disabled," disability is much more nuanced. Among those with a disability who participated in our research, **57%** indicate they have a physical disability, **67%** say they have a mental health disability, and **70%** express they have a cognitive disability. For women and transgender people specifically, they are **+16%** and **+89%** more likely to have a disability, respectively. Regardless of the visibility, complexity, or severity of one's disability, it is important to ensure that appropriate resources and accommodations are provided to allow disabled people the same access to the industry as their non-disabled peers. In the various environments one could work in the music industry, this is especially important as we consider job responsibilities such as touring and traveling, reading contracts, and more.

Though the availability of supportive resources is crucial, the work doesn't stop there. It is extremely important to ensure that these resources are accessible in the industry.

When looking at the availability of disability accommodations in the music industry, only **7%** said there are resources available to support them.

These accommodations often look like having braille/large-print text and audio transcriptions available (for tasks such as reading contracts), or having a flexible work schedule to accommodate symptom/disability management (which can be especially necessary in the demanding careers of tour crews). Also often missing in the industry is access to equitable healthcare options that address disability needs (e.g., adequate coverage for medications and specialist referrals).

When asking respondents with a disability about their experience in the industry, we learn that accessibility needs often go unmet and questions unanswered. Speaking to this, only **14%** of disabled respondents say that they have someone to reach out to about accessibility concerns. This is an even greater struggle among creators in the industry, as they are **-21%** less likely to have someone to speak to about their accessibility concerns. Furthermore, only **14%** indicate they feel their employer is knowledgeable on laws and policies regarding accommodations.

In light of these drastically low rates of support for those struggling with their health in the music industry, it can be hard to see hope for the future.

SECTION 5

Recognition & Leadership

INCOME DISPARITIES IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

FIGURE 8: Attitudes towards the music industry.
(% in Agreement)



65% *"It is generally discouraged to talk about income / compensation with others"*



53% *"Cisgender men are paid more than others in the music industry"*



85% *"There is not enough transparency regarding income and benefits in the music industry"*

While passion makes for good music, and productive employees, it doesn't always put food on the table.

Income disparities occur across the music industry and are not dependent on the type of company, the role of the professional, or their demographics (e.g., age, gender, geographic location). Nearly **one-third** of industry professionals and creators report being unable to afford their basic living expenses or unable to afford much beyond those living expenses. Even when an individual is established in their career, income disparities by gender continue with roughly **1-in-4** later career women reporting being unable to keep up with their expenses. Of note, creators are **+31%** more likely to find themselves in these precarious financial situations.

What we do recognize, is that income disparities, like many other discriminatory practices in the music industry, fall prey to a gendered difference. Roughly half (**53%**) of those working in the industry agree that cisgender men are paid more than others in the music industry. However, some fail to recognize this disparity, widening the perception gap that we've discussed at length. Men are **-62%** less likely to agree with this sentiment, while women and nonbinary individuals are more likely to agree (**+45%** more and **+64%** more, respectively).

Income and benefits, and the issues surrounding them, are rarely discussed in the music industry. **65%** agree that it is generally discouraged to talk about income and compensation with others. This aversion to discussing income has real world consequences - **60%** agree that there in fact is not enough transparency regarding income and benefits in the industry.

The wage gap widens when we understand how a lack of upward career mobility impacts industry professionals and creators. Roughly **1-in-3** women have been passed up for a promotion in the music industry which directly impacts compensation levels. This could be in part due to the fact that over **40%** of women report having their own career experience discredited and that it was assumed they were in a more junior position than they were. Even more have experienced not receiving credit or recognition for their work (**58%** and **60%**, respectively).

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It is no longer acceptable to check a box with one token female leader, leaving other women and gender expansive individuals behind. The music industry needs genuine gender equality and diversity woven throughout the hierarchy of each organization and upward career mobility via promotions is an essential part of that.

As one participant stated, “I have seen many opportunities open up in recent years for women and [gender non-conforming] individuals and for queer individuals, however these opportunities are limited to entry-level and non-management positions. Especially in creative and strategic positions, I’ve seen the lowest gender equality. A&R is a prime example in the label world.”

58% of people we spoke to disagree with the notion that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed in the music industry. This feeling of unfairness is in part due to the fact that it has been challenging for women and gender expansive individuals to climb the ladder into leadership positions, as stated by this individual.

Also as reported in our research, women in particular face a tougher climb in certain genres and professions. Female industry professionals and creators working in Country (**+39%**), World (**+35%**), and New Age music (**+35%**) report being more likely to be passed up for a promotion, as do women working in Radio (**+48%**), at DSPs (**+39%**), and in Creator Management (**+39%**).

What we realize is that there is a desire and yearning for growth that is not being met with the opportunity to rise within the music industry for many of these individuals. It is the responsibility of leadership teams to foster the careers of their employees by providing resources, structure, and coaching. While these basic pillars of success are set in place by most organizations, there is still a chasm between these goals and reality.

While we have seen the impact of promotions, or lack thereof, for women and gender expansive individuals, the difficult road to upward career trajectory starts with seemingly innocuous events throughout one’s average day. **51%** of women in the industry share that they are being left out of important conversations, which is **+45%** more than average, and removes the perspective of women in crucial decision making.



Image Description: Person sitting on couch writing with guitar.

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Image Description: Person walking down street.

How can women progress in their careers and support the growth of the business when they aren't heard or included? However, the solution is not as simple as including everyone in relevant conversations.

If this initial barrier is removed, there are still times when the ideas and opinions shared by women, gender expansive individuals, and other underrepresented groups are dismissed. Our research shows that **35%** of respondents experienced a time where their opinion was not respected by other industry professionals and creators, but when looking deeper into who experiences this the most, the data shows that women (**+45%**), underrepresented ethnic groups (**+14%**), and transgender individuals (**+57%**) in the industry are more likely to report this experience.

Experiencing these types of exclusionary behaviors hinders more than just an individual's work flow. These actions affect one's confidence and self assurance, as well as their willingness to share more ideas and opinions in the future. In the end, everyone loses - even the business. As one respondent reflected, ***"My biggest problem is that I feel absolutely discouraged, because I feel the access to a successful path is blocked."***

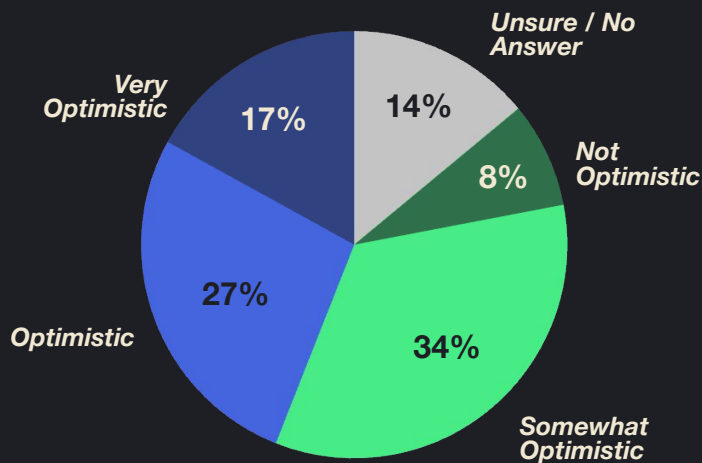
As we advocate for more gender-diverse workplaces and speak to the experiences of those facing gender discrimination in the music industry, we must take action on a monetary level to ensure everyone is compensated appropriately and career growth is possible.

SECTION 6

Opportunities for Advancement

FUTURE OPTIMISM FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

FIGURE 9: Are you optimistic about the future of gender equality in the music industry?



Despite a push for more gender equality among leadership in the music industry, the industry, as is, does not currently support the careers of everyone equally. This not only impacts individual creators and professionals, but the industry as a whole.

When asked about whether they would recommend a career in the music industry to someone, respondents had mixed feelings.

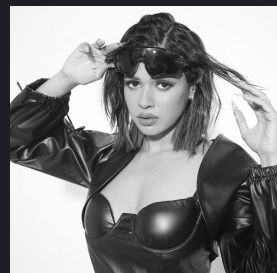
The reasoning behind some of these statistics lies in the fact that women and gender expansive individuals, and those from underrepresented ethnic and racial groups, don't have the same pathways to success as others in the music industry.

Women (+42%) and transgender individuals (+98%) in the industry are more likely to say that they don't have access to professional training/development opportunities.

Creators, who often don't have access to the resources and departments that are provided at traditional companies, have been hit hard by these experiences of unequal distribution of growth opportunities.

Even when they have had opportunities, women (21%) and nonbinary (31%) creators expressed that such opportunities have felt disingenuous, or are unnecessarily competitive due to scarcity (47% and 55%, respectively). So, for many, it means making their own opportunities.

How can the industry cultivate a thriving environment where all employees, current and future, can succeed and advance?



"I'm proud to say that women in 2023 are more than just voices on tracks. We are writing our own music and composing. I've written and released 3 albums since 2021, of which one is a film album. It gives me a lot of solace knowing that the fate of my career doesn't rest in the hands of those who can give me work. I can take charge and steer my own ship."

Shalmali Kholgade (India) - Believe

SECTION 7

Solutions

For each issue we have discussed thus far, we also would like to share proposed solutions as recommended by industry professionals and creators in our research.

CLOSING THE GAP

Despite the clear perception gap that we have discussed, there are signs of hope that this is not an insurmountable problem – and several courses of action that can be taken now towards creating a more equitable industry.

OPEN CONVERSATIONS

Conversation is the first place to start. **70%** of industry professionals and creators tell us that they are open to and feel comfortable discussing issues of social equality in the workplace. Even more (**73%**) feel that they have a role to play in making the industry more equitable for all genders. This majority of the industry must turn their thoughts into action as most recognize that some level of inequality exists in the industry, and just **27%** agree that “everyone has equal opportunity to succeed in the music industry.”

But, as we know, conversations are just the beginning of change and more concrete, continuous action must be taken to see true change in the experience of all genders in the music industry. As one respondent stated in part, ***“I have seen various initiatives to improve gender inequality. These have been good but something I have observed is that often they are isolated and short-term. In this way they are not ineffective, but their impact is curbed... Longer term funding schemes would help create a deeper impact.”***

EDUCATION + SPACES TO LEARN

These conversations must be rooted in education and awareness-building. **70%** of those in the industry tell us they feel that there should be training on how to manage biases and unlearn stereotypes in the workplace. Nearly as many also find training on gender discrimination, with a focus on training cisgender men on what it means to be an ally in the workplace, to be essential in advancing gender equality in the music industry (**67%** and **66%**, respectively). It is clear that allyship is at the center of closing the perception gap. This will be especially important in areas of the industry with less gendered representation such as Hip-Hop/Rap and Afropop which see fewer women and gender expansive individuals working within these genres, as found in this research.

It's equally important that educational initiatives related to gender discrimination are as non-judgemental as they are honest and direct.



Image Description: Person holding guitar writing in notebook.

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Over **one-third** of those in the industry tell us that they are afraid of “saying the wrong thing” when talking about gender. That being said, it is important to recognize that every individual holds different views and is on their own proverbial journey as they educate themselves on these topics and implement changes in their own lives. Therefore, we must meet people where they are on that journey.

One clear opportunity to meet people where they are is through employee resource groups (ERGs) that many larger companies in the music industry already maintain. Over **60%** of industry professionals and creators believe that providing employee resource groups can help advance gender equality in the music industry. We already see these resource groups existing within the music community such as Spotify’s “Women” and “Remix” employee resource groups that cater to their employees of all genders and identities.¹⁵

And while the onus should not be on women, nonbinary, and trans employees to educate others or create solutions to their own oppression, they can be valuable partners in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of specific workplaces. Women (**51%**), nonbinary (**51%**), and trans individuals (**40%**) report being left out of important conversations at work more than their cisgender, male counterparts which is a shortfall that must be corrected as we have conversations in hopes of moving towards gender equality in the industry.



“I didn’t get into the music business to be a spokesperson for women, or to fight for my right to be here. I got into this business because I wanted to create and perform music.”

As a young teen starting out I was not warned, prepared, or aware of the sexism, and inequality I would have to face simply because of my gender. Looking back I am thankful for my naivete in the beginning of my journey. But that blissful ignorance soon faded and turned to defiance. Like a thousand tiny razor cuts, it eventually became a part of my life. Something I just had to “deal with” every step of the way. I was left no choice but to take those scars and turn them into fuel for my fire to succeed. But I shouldn’t have had to do that. I should’ve had the same thing all my male peers had. Freedom.

It’s inspiring to see work that’s being done like the “BE THE CHANGE” study, especially seeing a finding like 66% of the music industry wants to see more women and gender expansive individuals in positions of power within the industry.

For women and minorities, it is important that we talk about our battles in order to light a torch for the ones that follow us down this path. It is imperative that they know that the inequality we face is not normal, it is not “just the way it is” and should not be tolerated. It’s going to take all of us to stand firm against this inequity so that the next great female artists no longer have to carry this egregiously unnecessary burden.”

Lzzy Hale

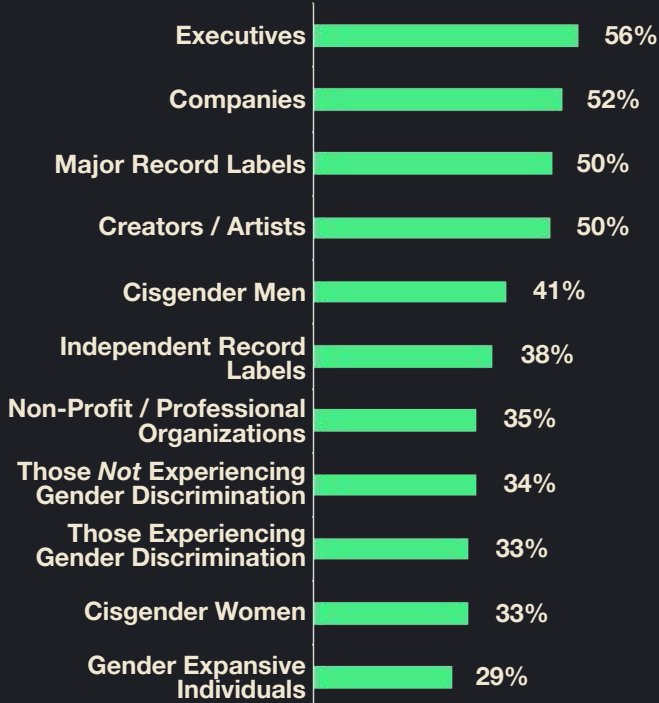
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Implementing these changes in the workplace fulfill a duty that many individuals in the music industry place upon companies and executives. Over **half** of industry professionals and creators feel that companies in the music industry, and executives in particular, are the most capable agents of change in the fight for gender equality in the music industry. So, what does change look like and how do we close this gap in perception?

WHO CAN MAKE A CHANGE

FIGURE 10: Who do you think has the ability to effect changes to gender inequality in the music industry? (Not mutually exclusive)



REEVALUATE & FACE REALITY

Things get done in the workplace, and perception gaps close when people build relationships and work together towards a common goal. When the relationship breaks down, work grinds to a halt. The importance of these relationships should not be sacrificed in the name of the bottom line, because in the end, both suffer.

As we work towards opportunities to build these authentic relationships, we need to recognize and validate all parts of ourselves and others. Breaking down bureaucratic barriers to being one's full self at work and changing the pervasive social stereotypes of identity often found in the music industry will impact individuals' experience as influenced by gender and beyond.

CHANGE THE INTERVIEW

The first barrier everyone in the music industry must overcome is before the first day on the job even happens - the interview.

The majority of industry professionals and creators agree that it's never too early to dismantle discrimination in the workplace. **57%** of industry professionals and creators we asked support removing demographic information (gender, age, race/ethnicity, etc.) from hiring decisions. Minority professionals and creators - those more likely to be impacted by stereotyping in the hiring process - are even more likely to be supportive of this move.

Some in the industry have adopted such practices even in non-traditional environments.

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As published by the Gender Action Portal and Harvard Kennedy School, blinded orchestral auditions reduced sex-biased hiring and increased the number of female musicians.¹⁶ These changes in hiring practices, especially as they impact creators, have been observed since the 1950s in these isolated environments. However, the music industry as a whole can take note of such practices and resulting successes.

There's also a need to diversify who is on the other side of the hiring conversation. **Two-thirds** of those in the industry support the creation of diverse hiring committees. And as we look at those more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace... Women (**78%**), nonbinary (**87%**), & transgender (**76%**) employees want to diversify hiring committees. Employees of racial/ethnic minorities share in their support (**71%**), and those with disabilities hope to see this change as well (**75%**).

There is no shortage of qualified, passionate, diverse candidates and creators at the music industry's disposal and it is time the industry takes full advantage of that.

CHANGE THE THOUGHT PROCESS

Those in power also have tremendous influence to help change how their teams are formed. **80%** of executives want to ensure more women and gender expansive individuals are in positions of power and are willing to help make changes to accomplish that by such actions as creating diverse hiring committees (**79%**) and removing demographic information from hiring decisions (**79%**).

As we have discussed elsewhere in this report, everyone in the music industry has their own “starting point” as the industry evolves and advances towards gender equality. Roughly one-third of industry professionals and creators feel that...

“They are afraid of saying the wrong thing when it comes to gender”

“Personal identities are becoming too complicated”

“Workplace trainings on diversity are patronizing”

Rather than understanding such beliefs to be a barrier to greater gender equality in the music industry, they instead create opportunities for open dialogue.



Image Description: Person singing into microphone.

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As we work towards greater gender equality in the music industry, a catered approach is needed as to not alienate those in the industry that feel this way. Peer-to-peer learning and mentorship allows for more open and continuous discussion. This is in contrast to one-time trainings held by outside organizations who do not intimately know the individuals and organizations involved. This can also assuage the feeling that “workplace trainings on diversity are patronizing” and in turn, celebrate the relationships we know exist in the music industry.

In using a peer-to-peer model, you harness the power of the **64%** of industry professionals and creators who say they know how to help create a workplace that is equitable for all genders. However, utilizing an outside expert to initiate these initial conversations does remove any potential conflicts of interest and promotes a more objective intervention.

Pledging to create an inclusive workplace environment so that these trainings can occur is essential. Making the pledge to do so has the support of **71%** of industry professionals and creators. Just as many working in the industry support holding conversations about gender equality in the workplace (**70%**). Take Keychange,¹⁷ for example, who organizes a pledge for music industry organizations to “[build] a network of music festivals and organizations who are committed to achieving and transforming representation throughout the music industry” and has seen great success with over 600 festivals and music organizations working towards this goal.

STOP IT BEFORE IT STARTS

As you may recall, we previously discussed one of the most severe acts of gender discrimination in the workplace. Realizing that sexual harassment and abuse happens in the music industry behind the proverbial curtain is essential. To combat sexual abuse and harassment in the music industry, we need to not only educate and regulate, but also ensure all survivors have the ability to report and receive resources as necessary.

Educate: Make everyone aware of the many different ways (e.g., inappropriate / unwarranted physical contact, making opportunities contingent on sexual favors, etc.) and places (recording studios, live music venues, corporate offices) that sexual harassment or abuse can occur in the industry.

Regulate: Construct zero-tolerance policies explicitly stating expectations of workplace behavior, regardless of the working environment, and clearly defined repercussions for sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.

Report: As reported in the ongoing UK parliamentary inquiry on misogyny in music (run by the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee), nondisclosure agreements included in legal settlements prevent survivors of sexual harassment or violence to speak out about their experience. Vic Bain (The F-List for Music) noted that women who would like to speak out are legally gagged from doing so.¹⁸

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“Gaining the opportunity to succeed in this industry costs twice the effort for women than it does for men. In the 20 years I’ve spent writing songs in the Regional Mexican genre, on average, only one woman makes the Top 50 charts—and not every year. This comes in addition to the burden female artists carry, fighting for credibility while also being critiqued for our looks and physique in ways that men are not. Those in charge of deciding which songs are recorded have to recognize that they are responsible for combating the existing gender equality gap and giving female songwriters the opportunity to be heard. If we continue to work, I hope we can see the number of successful women grow to reflect the amount of talent that women bring to the industry.”

Erika Vidrio (Mexico) - TuneCore

That being said, there must also be policies protecting survivors and their ability to report which can include the removal of such power in NDAs and other legally binding documents often seen in the industry.

For creators working in non-traditional environments, the steps to combatting sexual harassment and abuse before it happens can look a bit different.

Confront: Challenge society’s perception of “the creator.” Currently, **70%** agree that women, in particular, are oversexualized in the music industry and **36%** of non-cisgender¹⁹ male creators have felt sexualized as a creator.

Create: Provide safe spaces for creators to practice their craft. **80%** of creators don’t currently have safe spaces to record, promote, or perform their music. **29%** of women and gender expansive creators have been put in unsafe environments due to their non-traditional working hours.

Protecting creators can be accomplished by action such as:

- Increasing availability of recording studios (e.g., daytime availability) and holding events such as women-only recording sessions
- Making substance-free zones available in recording and performing venues
- Diversifying the teams working in such spaces

As a matter of fact, these spaces already exist and more are being founded every year. Women’s Audio Mission out of San Francisco operates the “only professional recording studio in the world specifically built and run entirely by women and gender expansive staff.”²⁰ There is also the work of the Women in Salone Music Organisation out of Sierra Leone which owns and operates a recording studio that is used by “women and girls interested in doing music and wishing to record their songs” with the goal of “help[ing] [female musicians by giving] voice to issues they may face by fostering their creativity and giving them the visibility they need to become leaders in Sierra Leone’s Music Industry.”²¹

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STOP IT WHEN IT HAPPENS

If sexual harassment or abuse does occur, there needs to be clear steps for both survivors and leadership to follow.

Report: Allow spaces (in-person & virtual, identifying & anonymous) for individuals to report cases of sexual harassment or abuse. This will assist the **97%** who were not able to report their experience. This is especially important as we learn from Raising Their Voices, an independent report and review of sexual harassment within the Australian music industry. This report found, as reported in NME, that “only [three percent who had experienced sexual harm or harassment] made a formal complaint.”²²

Intervene: Investigate all reported cases of sexual harassment or abuse and have a clearly defined procedure to intervene in all necessary circumstances.

The procedures created for each workplace should also include steps to react to online discrimination and harassment as you do for in-person discrimination. This holds importance among the **58%** of total respondents who report witnessing discriminatory behavior online.

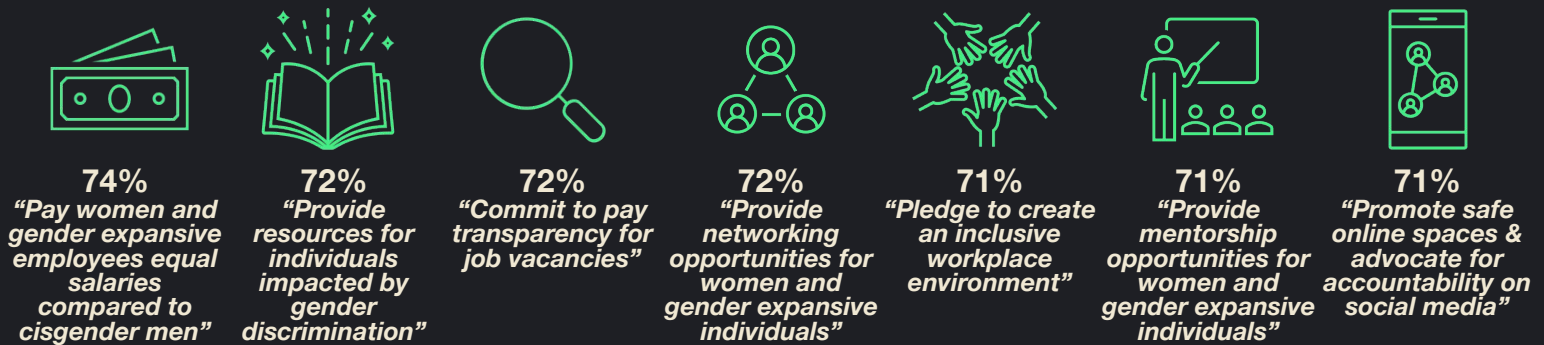
There is also an opportunity to promote safe online experiences and advocate for accountability in virtual spaces. This has support from **71%** of all industry professionals and creators (**79%** of women and **77%** of creators in particular).

Discipline: Enact and stand by disciplinary actions against offenders. **71%** of industry professionals and creators are in favor of repercussions for the perpetrators of sexual harassment and abuse in the music industry.

Those experiencing sexual harassment or abuse should see no impact to their career progression in the industry based on their experience and decision to report.

TOP CHANGES TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

FIGURE 11: Please indicate if you think the music industry should make each change and, if so, whether or not you are already seeing this change take place.



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Image Description: Person singing into microphone playing guitar.

SUPPORTING NEEDS AND REMOVING BARRIERS

When deciding on actions to take towards equitable solutions in matters of safety, representation, and resourcing, it is essential to include those from under-resourced groups in the decision making process.

TAKE AN ACTIVE APPROACH

One of the most common barriers to having access to mental health care, for example, is not having enough information about what accommodations are available and how to access them.

When asking industry professionals and creators about resources that are available to support their mental health, many were unsure. Roughly **1-in-4** didn't know if they had access to support groups or mental health education. Therapy / counseling, medication, and modified work schedules are not known to be prevalent in the music industry workforce.

As we know from this research, women and nonbinary individuals are more likely to report mental health issues since joining the industry (**+23%** and **+44%**, respectively). To fulfill the gap in care we see in the music industry, many female creators are spearheading the cause themselves. Selena Gomez, Mandy Teefy (Selena's mother), and Daniella Pierson founded Wondermind which is billed as the "world's first mental health ecosystem."²³ And Megan Thee Stallion introduced Bad Bitches Have Bad Days Too²⁴ providing mental health resources for the Black community and LGBTQ+ people of color.

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ACCOMMODATE TO ALLOW EXCELLENCE

For those with disabilities, the industry must find ways to accommodate and allow industry professionals and creators with disabilities to thrive in their working environments. What we do know is that women and gender expansive individuals with disabilities are compoundly affected as they face gender discrimination and discrimination based on their disabilities. Therefore, when developing solutions to better accommodate those in the industry with disabilities, we must also dismantle gendered barriers to access.

As we have stated, **86%** of individuals in the industry with a disability feel that they do not have someone to whom they can reach out to about accessibility concerns. This is further compounded as we realize that nearly **1-in-5** women with a disability in the industry report being discriminated against based on their disability and **1-in-6** report being discriminated against based on gender.

Creators, in particular, with disabilities in the industry are already championing not just increased awareness, but also increased opportunities for those in the industry. RAMPD (Recording Artists and Music Professionals with Disabilities), founded by award-winning recording creator and advocate Lachi, “connects the music, entertainment and event industries to a fast-growing global network of established music professionals with disabilities.”²⁵ The industry must also make strides by booking more women and non-cisgender creators for live music events, which has the support of **73%** of industry professionals and creators with a disability.



Image Description: Person singing into microphone playing guitar.

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INCOME IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

FIGURE 12: Attitudes towards the music industry. (% in **Agreement**); Please indicate if you think the music industry should make each change and, if so, whether or not you are already seeing this change take place.



53%
“Cisgender men are paid more than others in the music industry”



74%
“Pay women and gender expansive employees equal salaries compared to cisgender men”

REMOVING THE GENDER TAX

Even when resources are made available, the industry must combat the wage gap to ensure everyone can make a living working in the music industry. Employers in the industry, in particular, have an inherent responsibility to change the conversation around income.

Provide Transparency: Future music industry employees must know if they’ll be able to live on the salary of a position. **72%** of industry professionals and creators want companies to commit to pay transparency in job descriptions (similar to the recently passed law in New York City requiring employers to include salary ranges in posted job descriptions).

Pay Fairly: Remember, **53%** feel that cisgender men are paid more than others in the music industry. **74%** of industry professionals and creators recognize a need for change and state that the industry should in fact pay women and gender expansive individuals salaries equal to that of cisgender men.

A highly publicized example of this gender pay gap resulted in acclaimed group HAIM firing their booking agent in 2017 after learning they were paid one-tenth the amount of another male creator (represented by the same agent) to play the same festival.²⁶

For parents in the industry, this is especially important. **1-in-4** women who are parents in the industry state that their pay does not keep up with their family’s needs. Unequal pay by gender not only impacts the person employed, but it has a dangerous ripple effect for those with families.

On the contrary, one exemplary practice by Spotify provides parental support not often seen beyond the Nordics. Since 2016, the DSP offers a flexible six months, 100% paid parental leave for parents of any gender for all their employees worldwide.²⁷

Is this an important step towards gender equality in the workplace that reflects what the industry wants? In short, yes. When we ask those in the industry, half explicitly say that equality in the industry looks like everyone receiving equal pay for equal work regardless of gender. However, compensation must also grow alongside opportunity in the music industry.

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Promote Intentionally: Promotions in the workplace usually increase compensation, but the wage gap widens when earned promotions don't occur for all groups equally. Women (30%), nonbinary (34%), and trans individuals (39%) are more likely to be passed up for a promotion compared to their male (-35% less likely) and cisgender (-4% less likely) counterparts who are less likely to have experienced this than average.

Historically, cisgender men have held most positions of power in the music industry,²⁸ but two-thirds of the industry want to ensure that more women and gender expansive individuals are in positions of power.

For creators, in particular, closing the wage gap is all about opportunity. Nearly 60% of creators, and nearly 80% of women and gender expansive creators, want the industry to book more gender diverse creators for live music events.

EFFORT AT EVERY LEVEL

What's clear is that a primary solution to advancing gender equality in the music industry is by providing opportunity. One way to ensure equal opportunity for advancement is requiring a diverse slate of qualified candidates before moving on from initial screening interviews. The key word here is qualified as we know that there are plenty of qualified candidates of diverse backgrounds. If you can't find them, it's because you're not looking.

The good news is there are plenty of organizations that are full of qualified, diverse members that would be more than willing to partner on recruiting efforts. Organizations like Women in Music,²⁹ The Digilogue,³⁰ Queer Capita,³¹ and Gritty in Pink's INPINK,³² a public marketplace with a diverse community of talent and industry professionals, regularly circulate job openings and available talent to their members and can be a partner to your music industry organization in the journey to gender equality in your workforce.

MENTORING & NETWORKING

Empowering the people of the music industry through connection and shared knowledge is an opportunity not to be missed. 72% of industry professionals and creators see the benefits in networking opportunities for women and non-cisgender individuals. This will help foster a community of like-minded people and provide a safe space to share ideas and industry knowledge. SheSaidSo, a music industry organization which fosters a "global independent community of women and gender nonconforming people in the music industry" is a haven for networking events of such kind.³³

Enabling growth starts with de-stabilizing the idea that the same rules for success apply to everyone. 68% of respondents agree that providing clear paths to career advancement for women and gender expansive individuals will enable more successful growth numbers. Focusing on the growth of an individual instead of a cookie cutter promotional funnel will also help highlight and capture unique strengths that may have been previously overlooked.

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"For me, being within the music industry is a constant challenge. There is no denying that it is more difficult for a woman than for a man, not only because of gender but also because of age: the older you get, the more you have to reinvent yourself, and being taken seriously becomes doubly exhausting. In my experience, however, I've had the opportunity to work with other wonderful women, all with the same goal: the determination with which you work gratifies you and makes you feel not alone. I also always find consistency in my work when interfacing with other people. I think this is a characteristic that also sets women apart: empathy. Being able to understand the other person and their ideas, being able to unite several minds and respect them is precisely one of the challenges I love about this job, because teamwork is crucial."

Beatrice Dellacasa (Italy) - Believe LAS

DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP

Inspiring the people of the music industry can take many different forms, but there are few more powerful ways to do so beyond providing an example to strive for - **2-in-3** people want to ensure that more women and non-cisgender individuals are in positions of power.

Not only does it benefit the industry to have varied perspectives and experiences at the helm of organizations, but it also provides a mirror for which more junior employees can aspire.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

While the solutions we have presented are not exhaustive, these are actions the music industry can take, supported by respondents in our research, that would help to advance gender equality in the music industry.

- Provide mentorship opportunities for women and gender expansive individuals (**71%**).
- Provide clear paths to career advancement for women and gender expansive individuals (**69%**).
- Book more female and gender expansive creators for live music events (**67%**).

In fact, these are changes that are already being advocated for. Organizations like #BookMoreWomen³⁴ and Diversify The Stage³⁵ are dedicated to advocating for greater inclusion of women, gender, and ethnic minorities within live events, music festivals, and the broader music industry. In their campaigns, they outline key steps that everyone from creators to senior executives can implement. Diversify The Stage puts their words into action, offering apprenticeships and mentorship placements to help those from marginalized communities obtain greater access to concerts and event bookings.

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"Ever since I was a little girl, I've always wanted to play my guitar, sing, and write music. Growing up, I knew I was different and always wanted to know why the industry wanted me to change

the way I looked. I realized my "image" wasn't good enough. I realized being myself would be difficult. Sexism and inequality was very challenging because of my gender, so I turned that pain into power and decided to be myself anyway.

The work that's being done to quantify experiences like mine and others in the industries of all gender identities and experience levels around the world with "Be The Change" is a prime example of doing the work to help amplify voices to find positions of power and influence within the music community.

It's important that women are supported in finding their voices and having a strong platform to express themselves.

I believe in love for women, freedom, and creating new ways to enhance the beauty of our existence in our music community."

Jessica Betts

Now it's time for the rest of the industry to follow suit.

HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Despite the current state of the industry, we have the power to create a better future. Respondents are optimistic about the future of gender equality in the music industry, with 78% of industry professionals and creators holding this opinion.

Respondents are hopeful that there will be greater gender equality in the music industry in the next 5 years (34%) or in the next 6-10 years (24%). Only time and the actions taken by the industry will tell how quickly we achieve this goal, which is all the more reason to start today.

One participant stated in closing, ***"To me, gender equality in the music industry means that men and women have equal opportunities to succeed and be recognized in the industry. This includes equal pay for equal work, equal representation in leadership positions, and equal opportunities to perform and have their music heard."***

If we can integrate these changes, a more inclusive industry may not be as far away as we think.

While it won't happen in a day, there's ample opportunity to push the industry in the right direction, one creator, company, professional, and one song at a time.

SECTION 7

A Final Word



Image Description: Alysha Brilla

“Being a woman in the music industry, I have experienced a shift over the past two decades; we used to have to develop a thick skin—callusing our hearts—to survive. But now we are alchemizing the spaces that exist, creating our own tables and making room for the sacred aspects of music. My band is made up of majority female and non-binary musicians and the wonderful men I work with embody a sweet, harmonized energy. There is so much community care and interpersonal nurturing that we bring to studios, stages and spaces we create. Most folks I know, including myself, recognize that the old patriarchal and extractive models simply don't work, so it is exciting to be part of this wave of revolution in music and beyond; where we prioritize rest, health and the wellbeing of the collective.”

Alysha Brilla (Canada) - TuneCore

We would like to thank and acknowledge the following organizations for their contributions to this research: M.I. Therapy, PRS Foundation, Keychange EU, Keychange U.S., Shoobs, SheSaid.So, Music Business Association, Downtown Music, BMYD (Independent Record Labels Association of Turkey), and many more.

What Can You Do?

FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

Evaluate the current state of the industry by conducting and consuming research on gender equality in this environment. Read the full **BE THE CHANGE: Gender Equality in the Music Industry** study [here](#).

Assess the gender composition of executive teams, boards, and leadership and **ensure diverse representation** on such teams, reflective of the music industry as a whole.

Encourage dialogue about gender equality in the industry by creating spaces for discussion (e.g., workshops, open hours with an external expert, etc.) and allowing the learning process to occur without fear of retaliation or consequences of “saying the wrong thing.”

Pledge to create a more inclusive industry by committing to increase gender representation across all levels and sectors of the music industry.

Book more women and gender expansive creators and producers for live music performances and **employ more diverse creators behind the scenes** as producers, songwriters, engineers, and more, aiming for equal gender representation.

Increase availability of safe spaces for creators to record, promote, and perform their work (e.g., expand daytime availability in recording studios, designate substance-free zones at live venues, open women and gender expansive only studios, etc.).

Take Action Now! SIGN the global Keychange Pledge to craft personalized steps in your journey towards equal representation in the music industry.

FOR HR/LEADERSHIP

Commit to providing pay transparency in job descriptions, equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender, and **diversify hiring committees** so they reflect the entire music industry.

Provide clear paths to advancement, and invest in training and career development opportunities for women and gender expansive industry professionals and creators.

Require mandatory anti-sexual harassment and gender sensitivity trainings for all industry employees.

Ensure non-retaliatory and anonymous spaces both online and in-person to safely report cases of discrimination in the music industry.

Provide mental health resources and accommodations for those with disabilities in all music industry environments (e.g., in-studio, on tour, etc.) and make use of external resources, e.g., [Safe Tour](#).

Take Action Now! Check out these professional marketplaces and profiles that showcase women and gender expansive creators and industry professionals: Gritty in Pink's [INPINK Marketplace](#), [Sound Girls](#), [She is the Music](#), [Amplify Her Voice](#), and more.

FOR MEN

If you don't know where to start, **ask women and gender expansive individuals** in your organization how you can best support them.

Speak up and take concrete action to support, advocate, and fight for your fellow industry professionals and creators.

Recruit and hire women and gender expansive creators and industry professionals to develop diverse teams and perspectives.

Educate yourself on the realities that women and gender expansive individuals face in the music industry that stem from historically discriminatory practices in the industry.

Use your position of privilege to support the careers of women and gender expansive individuals, redistributing power among all genders in your industry.

Take Action Now! Speak out against gender discrimination, in-person and online, perpetrated against women and gender expansive individuals in the music industry.

What Can You Do?

FOR WOMEN & GENDER-EXPANSIVE INDIVIDUALS

Speak up about safety concerns and inequality in the music industry by reporting personal or witnessed instances of gender discrimination.

For leaders, provide mentorship to women and gender expansive individuals to help nurture the next generation of leaders in the music industry.

Take Action Now! Build or join music industry networks ([Women in Music](#), [SheSaidSo](#), [Color of Music Collective](#), [Queer Capita](#), etc.) and make use of their professional development resources and networking opportunities.

FOR CREATORS

Choose your team carefully and work with organizations, agents, and management that have pledged a commitment to gender equality (e.g., the [Reeperbahn Festival](#) which has taken the [Keychange Pledge](#) for gender equality).

Hire women and gender expansive individuals for traditionally male-dominated roles (e.g., producers, sound engineers, road crew, etc.). Organizations such as [#BookMoreWomen](#) and [Diversify The Stage](#) are great examples of inclusive booking practices.

Use your voice in the live music space to ‘share the stage’ with women and gender expansive individuals, providing opportunities and advocating for creators of all genders.

Designate spaces for women and gender expansive fans to safely enjoy live music (e.g., “Girls to the Front” championed by Punk Rock singer Kathleen Hanna).

Partner with organizations at live music events that work to create safe environments for women and gender expansive individuals at live shows (e.g., [Calling All Crows \(HereForTheMusic\)](#), UN Women UK’s [Safe Spaces Now](#)).

Invest in your own health and wellbeing by accessing services available to creators in the music industry (e.g., [Music Minds Matters](#), [Backline](#), and more)

Take Action Now! Consider adopting an **inclusion rider** that requires diverse representation among performing line-ups and crews.

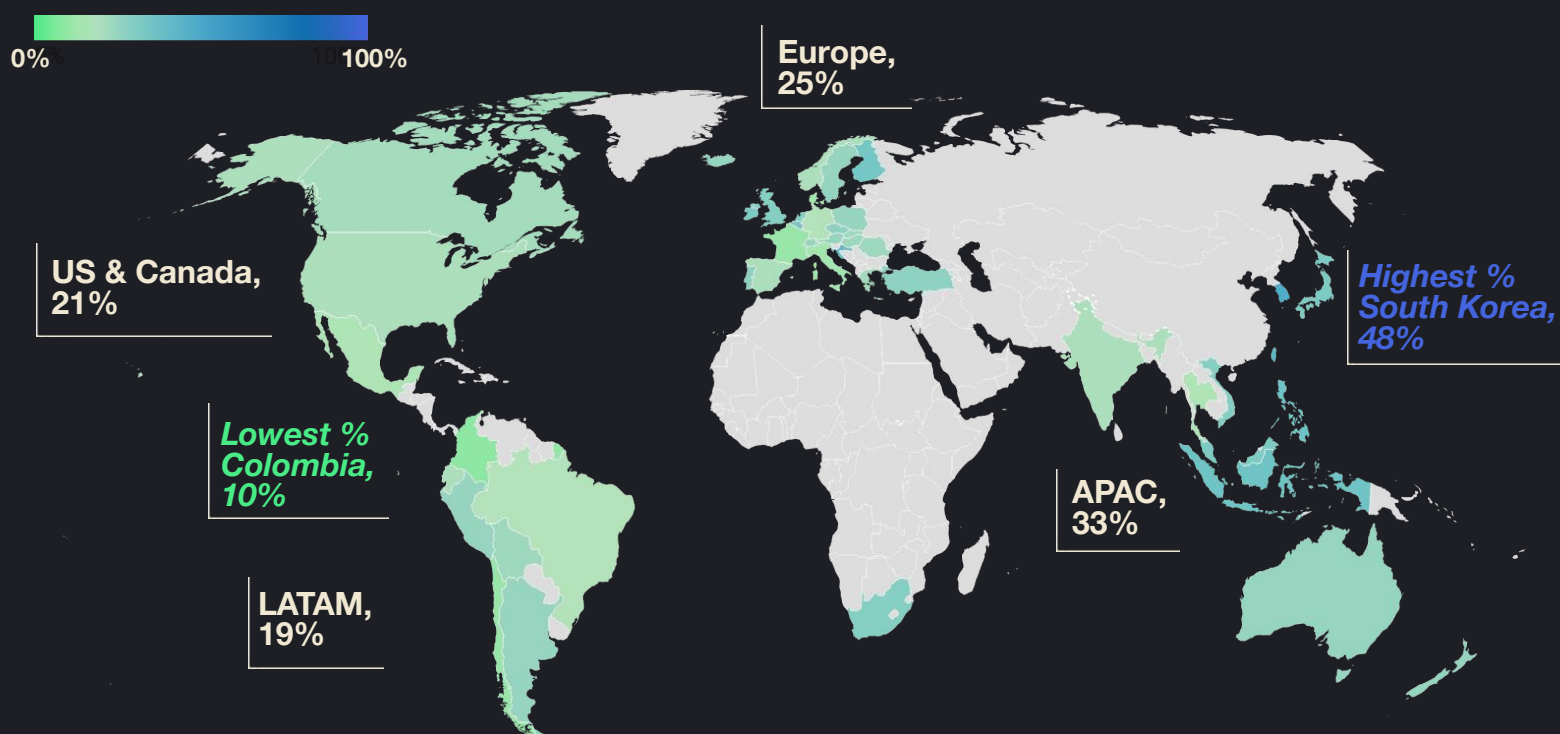


Image Description: Person wearing headphones in front of microphone.

Streaming Inequality

% of Female & Nonbinary Artists Among the Top 50 Artists by Combined Streams 2022 by Country

Only countries with available data included



APAC		Europe		LATAM		US & Canada		Africa	
Australia	26%	Austria	26%	Luxembourg	20%	Argentina	26%	Canada	22%
Hong Kong	30%	Belgium	34%	Netherlands	30%	Bolivia	24%	US	20%
India	20%	Croatia	40%	Norway	20%	Brazil	18%	South Africa	30%
Indonesia	36%	Czech Rep	28%	Poland	26%	Chile	12%		
Japan	32%	Denmark	14%	Portugal	28%	Colombia	10%		
Korea	48%	Finland	34%	Romania	24%	Ecuador	20%		
Malaysia	32%	France	12%	Slovakia	24%	Mexico	16%		
New Zealand	26%	Germany	18%	Spain	20%	Peru	26%		
Philippines	36%	Greece	22%	Sweden	26%				
Singapore	36%	Hungary	24%	Switzerland	26%				
Taiwan	42%	Iceland	26%	Turkey	28%				
Thailand	16%	Ireland	32%	United Kingdom	30%				
Vietnam	30%	Italy	14%						

Glossary

Accessibility - An environment in which the needs of people with disabilities are specifically considered, and products, services, and facilities are built or modified so that they can be used by people of all abilities.

Cisgender (also cis) - A person whose gender identity corresponds with their sex assigned at birth.

Deadnaming - The act of calling someone by a name they no longer use (e.g., birth name), despite their expressed discomfort; often used to disrespect one's gender identity or expression, and often accompanies ignoring someone's pronouns.

Gender Expansive - A person who embodies a wider, more flexible range of gender identity and/or expression than typically associated with the binary gender system.

Intersectionality (also Intersectional Identity) - Referring to the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

Nonbinary (also Non-Binary) - A person who identifies with a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female (outside of the gender binary).

Tokenism - The practice of making only a minimum or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.

Transgender (trans) - A person whose gender identity is different from their sex assigned at birth.

Resources

MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINES

International Association for Suicide Prevention (www.iasp.info/crisis-centres-helplines)

Helpline Direct-Link (International Search Available) (www.findahelpline.com/i/iasp)

Trans Lifeline (U.S.+Canada) (www.translifeline.org)

U.S. — Ph: (877) 565 – 8860

Canada — Ph: (877) 330 – 6366

Amplify Her Voice (www.amplifyhervoice.org)

Provides educational, networking, and creative opportunities for women.

Backline (U.S. Only) (www.backline.care)

Provides mental health and wellness resources for the music industry free of charge and/or reduced cost.

Color of Music Collective (www.colorofmusiccollective.com)

Dedicated to amplifying LGBTQ+ and POC's (people of color) voices in the music industry.

Diversify The Stage (www.diversifythestage.org)

Offers mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities for those of marginalized identities in the live entertainment and production industries.

Gritty in Pink (www.grittyinpink.co); Artist marketplace (**INPINK**) (www.inpink.com)

An online community advocating for gender equality in the music industry through their online marketplace and events featuring women artists and creators.

Keychange (EU+Canada) (www.keychange.eu)

Keychange (U.S.) (www.keychangeus.com)

A global network and movement working towards gender equality in the music industry.

M.I. Therapy (www.mitherapy.net)

M.I. Therapy is an organization aiming to raise awareness of mental health in the music industry through specialized treatment, workshops, conferences and panels.

MusiCares (www.musicares.org)

Provides a safety net of critical health and welfare services to the music community in three key areas: Mental Health & Addiction Recovery Services, Health Services, and Human Services.

MusicMindsMatter (www.musicmindsmatter.org.uk)

Music Minds Matter is Help Musicians' dedicated mental health support line and service for the UK music community.

Safe Tour (www.safetour.org)

Helps provide training and develop protocol for creating a safe, equitable, and inclusive workspace for marginalized groups within the touring industry.

SHE IS THE MUSIC (www.sheisthemusic.org)

A non-profit organization increasing the number of women working in music – songwriters, engineers, producers, creators and industry professionals.

SheSaidSo (www.shesaid.so)

A global independent community of women and gender nonconforming people in the music industry.

Women in Music (www.womeninmusic.org)

A non-profit organization committed to advancing equality, visibility and opportunities for women in the musical arts through education, support, empowerment and recognition.

About

ABOUT TUNECORE

TuneCore is the leading development partner for self-releasing artists to build audiences and careers – with technology and services across distribution, publishing administration, and a range of promotional services.

TuneCore Music Distribution services help artists, labels, and managers sell their music through Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, Deezer, TikTok, Tencent, and more than 150 download and streaming stores worldwide, while retaining 100 percent of their sales revenue and rights for a low annual flat fee. TuneCore Music Publishing Administration assists songwriters by administering their compositions through licensing, registration, worldwide royalty collections, and placement opportunities in film, TV, commercials, video games, and more. The TuneCore Artist Services portal offers a suite of tools and services that enable artists to promote their craft, connect with fans, and get their music heard. TuneCore, part of Believe, is headquartered in Brooklyn, NY, with offices in Los Angeles, Nashville, Atlanta, and Austin, and operates globally through local teams based in the UK, Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, India, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Singapore across 5 continents.

www.tunecore.com

ABOUT BELIEVE

Believe is one of the world's leading digital music companies. Believe's mission is to develop local artists and labels in the digital ecosystem by providing them with the solutions they need to grow their audience at each stage of their career and development. Believe's passionate team of digital music experts around the world leverages the

Group's global technology platform to advise artists and labels, distribute and promote their music. Its 1,610 employees in more than 50 countries aim to support local artists and labels with a unique digital expertise, respect, fairness and transparency. Believe offers its various solutions through a portfolio of brands including TuneCore, Nuclear Blast, Naïve, Groove Attack and AllPoints. Believe is listed on compartment A of the regulated market of Euronext Paris (Ticker: BLV, ISIN: FR0014003FE9). www.believe.com

ABOUT LUMINATE

We are Luminate, entertainment's preeminent data and insights company, unleashing access to the most essential, objective, and trustworthy information across music, film and television. Our work isn't just powerful — it's prescient. We're rooted at the intersection of tech and media, in today's challenges and tomorrow's plans. Never losing sight of our clients' needs, we deliver them essential guidance with the highest levels of quality and accuracy. But we always look ahead. We search for answers to questions no one has thought yet to ask. We pair exceptional technology with the most expansive and trusted database of its kind, consistently evolving, enabling our clients to make their most informed and impactful decisions. The result is a best-in-class level of predictive analytics, accompanied by expert, unbiased insight. We are music lovers and enthusiastic gamers, passionate film buffs and social engagers, scrolling online and tapped into the zeitgeist. We are technologists, experts across a myriad of subjects, scientists and developers. We are curious. That's why we do what we do. www.luminatedata.com