



In conversation with  
**Raphaella  
Gordon-Saker**



**Raphaella Gordon-Saker is part of the Social Impact team at Formula E.**

Formula E is the world's premier all-electric motorsport championship, combining high-performance racing with sustainability and innovation. As part of the FIA, it partners with global cities and brands to advance clean energy and social impact through sport.

With a background in social impact and sustainability, Raphaella has a proven track record of designing and delivering strategic initiatives that drive meaningful change. Since joining Formula E, Raphaella has led global programs focused on community empowerment, diversity and inclusion, and sustainable legacy-building.

***Can you give an overview of the Girls on Track initiative, and explain your role in the programme?***

FIA Girls on Track is a global initiative organised by the FIA, the regulatory body in motorsport, designed to inspire and empower young women to explore careers in the industry. This includes roles as drivers, engineers, mechanics and commercial positions in media, broadcasting and communications, helping to raise awareness of the wide range of opportunities available.

At Formula E, we license and adapt the programme for our championship and race events, offering young women a day of immersive workshops and behind-the-scenes access at races. They get unique experiences like pit lane walks and direct exposure to female leaders in the industry. This hands-on learning, mentoring and access showcases the many career pathways available in motorsport.

I work in the sustainability team, focusing on the programme's impact strategy. I collaborate closely with the operations and commercial teams to ensure we're making a tangible difference. We also build relationships with schools, universities, and charities to engage young women who may have never considered motorsport before, broadening access and making the programme as inclusive as possible.

***How do you ensure the Girls on Track initiative has an impact across each of the markets you work in?***

Formula E's FIA Girls on Track is a truly global initiative, delivered in every race

market where we compete. This international scope brings unique considerations that national programmes may not face. Each region has its own cultural context, educational landscape, and perceptions of motorsport and gender roles, which shape how the programme is received.

Sometimes, small logistical adjustments like how we structure the day helps to ensure smooth, culturally relevant delivery. We also see different interests among participants, often influenced by local access to STEM education or exposure to motorsport.

Our focus is on understanding these local nuances and adapting the programme to ensure it's engaging, inclusive and meaningful for every young woman we reach. This localisation ensures that the experience resonates regardless of geography, while still aligning with the programme's global mission.

***What do you believe are the main obstacles that women face in motorsports today?***

At Formula E as an organisation, we're fortunate to have a 50/50 gender split among employees, but women are still underrepresented in key motorsport roles. The most obvious example is drivers, there are no women drivers on the Formula E grid currently. Representation at the driver

level is critical because it's the most visible part of the industry. That visibility impacts technical roles and leadership as well. Without seeing women in these spaces, it's harder for young women to envision themselves in motorsport, to pursue careers with confidence, and to feel like they can thrive and grow into leadership roles.

Programmes like FIA Girls on Track helps to increase access, but it's also about dismantling the structures that slow women's progression compared to their male counterparts.



Workplace culture plays a big role in this. While progress is happening, motorsport is still a male-dominated industry. The language, culture and imagery used often reinforces stereotypes. Women are still frequently portrayed sitting on the car rather than inside it. Challenging these narratives and ensuring inclusive workplace practices is essential to creating an environment where women feel supported, valued and able to progress without stereotypes holding them back.

“ Women don't lack the talent to succeed in motorsport—they lack the opportunity. ”

## How can organisations within automotive and motorsports help create a more inclusive environment for women and underrepresented groups?

The first key point is increasing visibility and representation. By promoting female role models in motorsport we can showcase diverse talent at all levels - not just leaders but also entry-level positions. This helps young women see themselves in the industry and normalises the presence of women, inspiring future generations.

Next, improving access is essential. Removing financial and social barriers is crucial and initiatives like FIA Girls on Track, scholarships, grassroots programmes and mentorship can help young women take the first step into motorsport. It's also important to focus on inclusive workplaces - not just recruitment, but also retaining and developing talent.

Creating environments where women can progress and addressing biases with proper policies is key.

Lastly, collaboration and partnerships are vital. The FIA's programme is a great example of how the industry can work together. Formula E is fortunate that many commercial sponsors invest in impact initiatives like FIA Girls on Track. Partnering and leveraging networks amplifies the impact of these programmes.

Too often, diversity efforts focus solely on filling numbers, but the real value lies in creating a culture that supports diversity. Brands shouldn't shy away from targeting women as a demographic - they bring different

perspectives and buying habits. By aligning social goals with business goals, brands can drive meaningful change while also achieving commercial success.

“ *The real value lies in creating a culture that supports diversity.* ”

### Can you share any success stories from the Girls on Track initiative that stand out to you?

We have a great example from a young woman named Aisha who attended our Girls on Track event in Jakarta three years ago. That experience motivated her to pursue a career in motorsport, leading her to move from Jakarta to the UK to study journalism in Leeds. Since then, she's stayed closely connected with Formula E, doing work experience at our office.

Aisha, with her focus on journalism, is now the editor of our Girls on Track newsletter, allowing us to continue engaging with young women after our events. This is a paid role, which gives her valuable work experience in the industry that aligns with her degree. It's a full-circle moment, as she's now helping us engage the current community by promoting women in motorsport and sharing relevant opportunities.

This highlights why Girls on Track is impactful, it's not just about a single event but about creating long-term inspiration and building tangible pathways for young women, whether you're in Jakarta or the UK.

See more about Aisha's journey here



## Looking ahead, what are some of the changes or advancements you hope to see in motorsports in terms of gender equality and diversity?

I think it's about maintaining the current momentum. There's a real spotlight on women in motorsport, and it's important to keep breaking down barriers so that progress continues to build. Motorsport should become an inclusive industry where success is based on talent - not gender or background.

I hope we'll see more women in leadership, especially in executive roles, which remain rare across the industry. This level of representation will help drive meaningful change. Strengthening pathways for young women is also crucial - by expanding development programmes, scholarships, and creating more entry points. Transparency about these opportunities helps to make them more visible and accessible.

It's also about continuing the cultural shift - ensuring motorsport is a welcoming and supportive environment where women and underrepresented groups feel genuinely valued. This should be reflected not only in policy but in everyday conversations and culture across the sport.

True commitment must be embedded in long-term strategies and supported with proper resources - not just one-off initiatives.

While we're seeing encouraging signs, lasting change takes time, effort, and investment. The increased focus on diversity is promising, but the next step is ensuring that this momentum is sustained and delivers real, long-term results.

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