# FOSTERING GENDER EQUALITY (SDG 5) THROUGH AUDIOVISUAL FICTION Case Study of the Transmedia Women's Football Series *Irabazi Arte!* and its Impact on the Generation Alpha

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#### KEYWORDS ABSTRACT

Educommunication
Empowerment
Equality
Transmedia
Football
ODS
Series
Alpha

This research examines the second season of the transmedia children's series Irabazi Arte! in relation to promoting empowerment and gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal 5). Irabazi Arte!, broadcast on Basque public television (EITB), is produced entirely in Basque and its central storyline is women's football. Using a mixed methodology, it will be analysed if and how gender equality is promoted in its transmedia universe and if it has the potential to have an impact on its young audience. A quantitatively and qualitatively positive representation of SDG 5 is found. This transmedia narrative fits the characteristics of the Generation Alpha and contributes to the progress of gender equality through educommunication, promoting equality in the Generation Alpha.

Received: 22 / 03 / 2024 Accepted: 02 / 04 / 2024

#### 1. Introduction

s it possible that *Irabazi Arte!* (Until we win!), a transmedia series for children and young people in the Basque language, broadcast by the Basque Public Television (EITB), which focuses on women's football, can promote gender equality and empowerment among its audience?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to: take into account the characteristics of its audience, i.e. the Generation Alpha; analyse the specific characteristics of the audiovisual product; examine whether and how this content relates to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and the principles of gender equality and empowerment.

# 1.1. Gender Equality, Empowerment and Sustainable Development Goals

Gender equality, a universal legal principle and the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) (United Nations General Assembly, 2015), implies the effective enjoyment of fundamental rights by women and men on an equal basis. (Emakunde, n. d.). Women's empowerment, in turn, is defined as women's individual and collective self-awareness to set their own agenda, acquire skills, increase their self-esteem, solve problems, develop self-management and participate in decision-making processes, as well as access to power and influence. (United Nations [UN] Women Training Centre, 2011; Emakunde, n.d.; European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2016). Closely related to empowerment, and a way of achieving it, is the concept of sisterhood or a relationship of solidarity between women. (Emakunde, 2018).

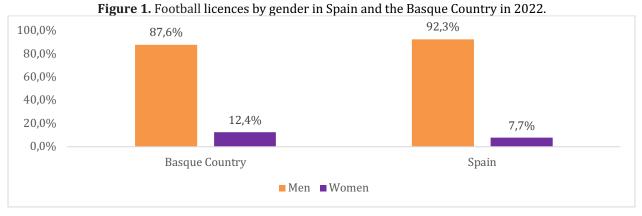
Even though sustainable development cannot be achieved and progress towards sustainable development cannot be made without the equality and empowerment of all women and girls (UN General Assembly, 2023), SDG 5 remains a challenge in our society. This is evidenced by data from international organisations on equal representation in political, economic and educational spheres (UN Women, 2023; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2023; The World Bank, n.d.) and progress reports on SDG 5 in each country (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2023).

Although some societies and specific areas have made progress on SDG 5, such as visibility and legislation on menstruation, it is not yet clear how much progress has been made on SDG 5. (Coloma-Moncayo, 2023; López-Insua, 2023). There are still many challenges to overcome.

#### 1.2. Gender Equality, Empowerment and Sisterhood in Football

The under-representation of women in federated sport in Spain is still a reality, despite encouraging data in school sport, where the gender distribution is balanced (Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Government of Spain, 2022, 2023).

In football, the sport with the most federal licences in Spain, women represent 6% of the total number of coaches and 7.7% of female football players, with the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (ACBC) being the region with the highest percentage of female players (12.4%) (Figure 1). (Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Spanish Government, 2022, 2023).



Source: Own elaboration

Female under-representation is not the only challenge in sport and football. Sport also continues to be associated with masculine characteristics (e.g. strength or competitiveness) and the historical exclusion of women on the grounds that "they are bad at some sports, or it is bad for their health, or it makes them ugly" (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024, p. 1227). Certain sports are still considered unacceptable (those characterised by direct, team competition) or acceptable (e.g. gymnastics) for women, thus perpetuating gender stereotypes (Metheny, 1965) and sexism (Román-San Miguel and Núñez, 2016), and result in certain sports, such as football, still being perceived as masculine (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024).

In addition, female athletes have low visibility in the media and when they do appear, they are often portrayed in very stereotypical ways, creating additional barriers to achieving gender equality (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2021).

To overcome these challenges and promote gender equality, it is essential that institutions, administrations, education (formal and non-formal) and the media work together to ensure that the implementation of equality legislation is accompanied by awareness-raising in educational and social settings such as the family, schools and sports clubs. (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024). Society as a whole must challenge gender stereotypes in sport (Preece & Bullingham, 2022) and in football by making gender stereotypes visible and in football by making visible the additional obstacles and difficulties experienced by women that are not experienced by their male counterparts (Mérida-Serrano et al., 2022).

# 1.3. Children's Series, Gender Equality and Generation Alpha

The educational potential of children's series to promote positive content, pro-social attitudes, values and human rights has been confirmed by Arranz-Lozano et al. (2023), Gil-Quintana & Gil-Tévar (2020), Igartua and Vega (2014), Junguitu-Angulo and Osuna-Acedo (2023) and Tufte (2004). This potential lies in their ability to mobilise, involve and interact with the community. (Ferrés & Masanet, 2017).and can counteract the messages of mainstream products, such as Disney films, formulated by the hegemonic class and society (Osuna-Acedo et al., 2018).

Research on Spanish series for children and young people shows that despite media literacy and edutainment strategies, 77% of them reproduce gender inequalities and stereotypes (Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023; Belmonte-Arocha & Guillamón-Carrasco, 2008; Gil-Quintana & Gil-Tévar, 2020). These data underline the importance of institutions, administrations and society in general addressing these issues, so that the series do not offer stereotypical and negative models, but rather egalitarian and positive ones, whose educational influences (Gil-Quintana, 2021) favour the formation of a solid and critical citizenship (Aierbe and Medrano, 2008; Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023; Gil-Quintana & Gil-Tévar, 2020; Junguitu-Angulo and Osuna-Acedo, 2023). Otherwise, and given that gender roles and the identification of gender patterns begin at an early age, the perpetuation of stereotypes or the presentation of genders as dichotomous in the series will favour their transfer to the younger population, hindering change both in the ways of learning and identifying with gender and in the relationships between boys and girls of the so-called by McCrindle (2015) Alpha Generation (Núñez-Gómez et al., 2020).

And it is precisely this Generation Alpha that is the most influential and vulnerable to the messages disseminated by both old and new media, as their age coincides with the beginning of the construction of identity, both through identification with other reference persons and through multiple media and platforms (Almazán-López & Osuna-Acedo, 2023), characteristic of post-digital culture (Escaño, 2023).

The generational characteristics of Alpha, as well as the increased consumption of the Internet compared to traditional television, lead to a decline in traditional linear broadcasts in favour of nonlinear ones: YouTube to watch series (Gil-Quintana & Osuna-Acedo, 2020); streaming platforms; increased reading of comics and graphic stories on mobile devices; and the popularity of podcasts (Amoedo-Casais et al., 2023). Despite these trends, television consumption among the Generation Alpha in Spain remains high compared to other countries (Barlovento Comunicación, 2023).

As a result, television in the post-digital society (Jandrić et al., 2019) must adapt to the new media ecosystem by collaborating with other (old or new) media and articulating new narrative forms (Scolari, 2014). This dispersal of content across new and old media on multiple channels, platforms and media types characterises transmedia narratives (Jenkins, 2007; Livingstone, 1998), which involve "a change

that often leads to a fundamental shift in the relationship between author, work and audience: the latter's ability to interact with the creation" (Escandell-Montiel, 2020, p. 97).

These transmedia narratives are very attractive to the Generation Alpha, as they offer them the possibility to intervene, participate and contribute content (Azurmendi, 2018; Larrondo-Ureta et al., 2020) and to "dive into the stories, reconstruct the past of the characters and connect them with other elements within the same franchise" (Scolari, 2013, p. 24). Thus, the new media, with their corresponding new literary and cultural genres, such as YouTube, podcasts and APP comics, offer the younger population both models of identification and the possibility of testing, creating and recreating one's own identity by forming a digital version of this construct (Almazán-López and Osuna-Acedo, 2023; Scolari, 2018). Moreover, they allow the exploration of other models of communication, expression and creation (Escandell-Montiel, 2020), strengthen the emotional connection and engagement with their fans (García-Marín & Aparici, 2018; Marin-Pérez and Bañon-Castellón, 2022; Pedrero-Esteban et al., 2023), provide for the development of imaginative leisure skills outside of screens and offer new educational resources for the classroom (Onieva, 2015).

Despite this potential of children's fiction series, they have almost disappeared from generalist television in Spain, constituting an almost complete abandonment of 'the mechanisms of control and regulation of content that the State had and has as its competence' (Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023, p. 7). (Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023, p. 7) and the possibility of using them as a means of promoting community building, participation and diversity (Azurmendi, 2018). This situation has some notable exceptions in Spanish (RTVE) and Catalan (TV3) public television (Anguiano et al., 2018; Azurmendi, 2018; Cambra-Badii, 2020; Gil-Quintana & Gil-Tévar, 2020; Hidalgo & Segarra-Saavedra, 2020; Maroto-Gonzalez & Rodriguez-Martelo, 2022; Mastandrea et al., 2023), which offer quality products for younger audiences.

EITB, the Basque public television channel, is also committed to transmedia products entirely in Basque for the younger population: *Ene Kantak!* (Zufiaurre et al., 2019-); *Go!azen* (Zabaleta & Zeberio, 2008-); *Go!azen!* (Junguitu-Angulo, 2023; Junguitu-Angulo & Osuna-Acedo, 2023); and *Irabazi Arte!* (Zeberio, 2022-), the second season of which is the subject of this research.

#### 1.4. Irabazi Art!

*Irabazi Arte!* (Zeberio, 2022-) is a Basque language transmedia series traditionally broadcast on ETB1. After the broadcast of each episode, it is available on EITB's on-demand television (*EITB Nahieran*), on EITB's Youtube channel, in the section of the APP of EITB's transmedia series also aimed at the same audience, *Go!azen*, and on the free streaming platform in Basque *Primeran. Disney Plus* also offers the first season of the series dubbed into Spanish under the title *Hacia la victoria*.

The plot of the first (IA!T1) and second (IA!T2) seasons of *Irabazi Arte!* revolves around a teenage girl, *Arene*, who lives with her father, *Peio*, and younger sister, *Lili*, in the home of their grandfather, *aitona* (grandfather), in the fictional village of Learo after the sudden death of their mother (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Peio, Arene, Lili and aitona

Source: Eitb.eus, 2021.

In addition to *Arene* and her family, the other main protagonists of the series are the women's football team of the Learo club, the *Printzesak* (Princesses). The *Printzesak*, its players (*Arene, Nora, Olatz, Itsaso,* 

Leire and Esti), its president (Martxelo), its ex-coach (Larra), the players of the men's team and the coach (Eunate) are the protagonists of the plots about the team's competition, obstacles and difficulties.

The narrative universe of IA!T2 includes:

- The series is available on ETB1, ETB3, EITB *Nahieran*, EITB YouTube channel, *Go!azen* APP and *Primeran*.
- Two interactive comics in Basque, Spanish, Catalan, French and English, available in the *Komiki APP* application (Figure 3): *Irabazi Arte: iraganeko mamua* (Ghost of the Past). (Loiola and Alonso, 2022) associated with IA!T1; and *Irabazi Arte: inor ez da ilegala* (No one is illegal) (Loiola and Alonso, 2023) associated with IA!T2.



Figure 3. Vignette of Inor ez da ilegala

Source: Screenshot.

- Podcast on the *EITBPodKast* (https://www.eitb.eus/eitbpodkast/aisia-fikzioa/irabazi-arte/).
- Section on the EITB website (https://www.eitb.eus/eu/telebista/programak/irabazi-arte/).
- EITB Youtube channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCJLkQ-AZXA): chapters and additional content.
- Digital social networks: TikTok (@irabazi\_arte) and Instagram (@irabaziarte\_eitb).
- Official Spotify playlist (IA!T1 and IA!T2): https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6r7FXmtaEnbuSfbhBGH8JL?si=e6fbb494caba4513
- Live experiences (e.g. previews)
- *Barnetik* (From the inside). Extra content where actors and actresses comment on the episodes broadcast on IA!T2. Available on the EITB *Youtube channel* and on the EITB website (https://www.eitb.eus/eu/telebista/programak/irabazi-arte/bideoak/).

# 2. Hypothesis and Research Question

The hypotheses and research questions are as follows:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1). IA!T2 promotes gender equality and empowerment of its audience.
- Question 1 (Q1). If IA!T2 promotes gender equality and empowerment, how does it do so?
- Hypothesis 2 (H2). IA!T2 has the potential to influence its audience.

# 3. Methodology

In order to study gender equality in IA!T2 from a pedagogical-communicative point of view, a mixed methodology with a triangulation of techniques and instruments is proposed.

# 3.1. Interview with Privileged Observers

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted with privileged observers (Table 1).

Table 1. Persons interviewed.

Table 1.1 ersons interviewed.				
Person interviewed	Code	Gender	Speciality	
Aranburu, Julene	E-ARJ- 01	Female	Scriptwriter and creator of Irabazi Arte!	
Raventós, Isabel	E-RAI- 02	Female	First Vice-President of the association of women filmmakers and audiovisual media (CIMA), which in 2023 obtained special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).	
Martinez, Ricardo	E- MAR- 03	Male	Pedagogical coordinator at an educational centre; special education and early childhood education teacher; and member of the board of directors of the Alavesa Football Federation (2020-2024).	
Jiménez, Estefanía	E-JIE- 04	Female	PhD in Audiovisual Communication from the University of the Basque Country. Researcher at <i>EU Kids Online</i> .	

Source: Own elaboration

## 3.2. Registration list

To measure the presence of women in IA!T2 a registration list has been used (Table 2).

Table 2. Registration of women in Irabazi Arte!

Presence of women in IA!T2 No. Women No. Men

Writers of the series

Executive Production

Address

Protagonists

Co-stars

Voice-over

Podcast

Comic

Social media

Extra content

Source: Own elaboration

Live experiences

#### 3.3. Estimation Table

In order to quantify the level of gender equality in the series and its transmedia universe, an estimation table was created based on those used in Arranz-Lozano et al. (2023) and Gil-Quintana and Gil-Tévar (2020). The table (Table 3) was filled in by the expert observers, who rated each item from 1 to 5 in order to obtain the average score for each item and section.

**Table 3.** Analysis of gender equality in IA!T2.

Section	Item with value 1	Item with value 5	
_, , ,	He plays a central role in the series	It is a further element of the series	
The family	Women are the central role in the family	Balance of women and men in the family	
Peer gangs	Predominantly male over female	Females predominate over males	
	Rivalry between women	Sorority	
Sexism	Sexist and discriminatory language	Inclusive and non-sexist language	
•			

	Male chauvinist position	Feminist perspective	
	Sexist practices	Absence of sexism	
War between the sexes	War between the sexes	Collaboration and harmony between people of different sexes	
	Female characters reproduce roles typical of femininity	Women in non-feminine roles	
	Colour stereotypes	Absence of colour stereotypes	
	Female character rescued by male character	Female character rescues male character	
	Male heroes solve problems	Heroines solve problems	
	Sexualised clothing	Clothing appropriate to the context	
Stereotypes	Female/slim, male/strong	Richness in the diversity of roles	
	Lack of competitiveness (female)	Absence of stereotypes in relation to competition	
	Absence of affective expression (male)	Absence of stereotypes in relation to emotional expression	
	Male-public/ female-private	Common spaces (home, work and leisure)	
	Character leadership: men	Character leadership: women	
	Initiated by male characters	Initiated by male characters	
Romantic	Heterosexuals only	Sexual diversity	
relationships	Raising awareness, preventing and combating gender-based violence: implicit violence	Prevention and awareness-raising	
	Female characters with typically female professions	Female characters with non-typically female professions	
Professions	Male characters with typically male professions	Male characters with non-typically male professions	
	No work-life balance	Men and women reconcile family and work	
	Women in unpaid domestic work	Women in paid work	
	The woman is uneducated	Women have an academic backgroun	
	Women in subordinate employment	Women hold a high position in the labour market	

Source: Own elaboration based on Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023; Gil-Quintana and Gil-Tévar, 2020.

## 3.4. Bechdel test

The Bechdel test (n.d.), which has been used in previous research on fictional series (Alonso-González, 2023; Gil-Quintana & Gil-Tévar, 2020; Marín-Ramos, 2019), consists of three criteria that the product under analysis must meet: Include at least two named women who have at least one conversation about something other than a man.

The test was applied to the content of the IA!T2 transmedia universe (Table 4): eight episodes of the series, *Barnetik*, three episodes of the comic and the podcasts in which *Nora* and *Arene* (in podcast 12 *Leire* replaces *Arene*) interview female athletes.

**Table 4.** Contents of IA!T2

Type of content	Title	Coding	Link	
	Sorpresak (Surprises)	IA!T2E1	https://acortar.link/cHTpzh	
_	Maitasuna eta futbola (Love and Football)	IA!T2E2	https://acortar.link/Iftt57	
_	Zalantzak (Doubts)	IA!T2E3	https://acortar.link/IVcsU5	
Series	<i>Iruzurrak</i> (Traps)	IA!T2E4	https://acortar.link/ms0Doj	
Jerres .	Kapitainak (Capitanas)	IA!T2E5	https://acortar.link/134mFR	
_	Gezurrak (Lies)	IA!T2E6	https://acortar.link/CMnFLR	
_	Izarrak aurrez aurre (The stars face to face)	IA!T2E7	https://acortar.link/8z7DSv	
	Egia biluzik (The uncovered truth)	IA!T2E8	https://acortar.link/rMJX06	
_	Alba Menendez	Pódcast-9	_	
	Garazi Sánchez	Podcast-10	_	
	Ziortza Isasi	Podcast-11	_	
	Maialen Oiartzabal	Podcast-12	https://www.eitb.eus/eitbpo dkast/aisia-fikzioa/irabazi-	
Podcast	Klara Olazabal	Podcast-13		
_	Amaia Aldai	Podcast-14	<u>arte/</u>	
	Irene Paredes, Maddi Torre, Lur Errekondo. Live Podcast-15		_	
	Oihane Otaegi	Podcast-16	-	
_	Arene, Nora, Leire and Itsaso	Barnetik-0	https://acortar.link/BkvZeU	
_	Arene and Olatz	Barnetik-1	https://acortar.link/owXzaZ	
_	Itsaso and Amets	Barnetik-2	https://acortar.link/99W9Bv	
_	Arene and Jon	Barnetik-3	https://acortar.link/jDRWU2	
Barnetik	Leire and Itsaso	Barnetik-4	https://acortar.link/3qfYTg	
_ _ _	Esti and Nora	Barnetik-5	https://acortar.link/jY0eee	
	Leire and Malen	Barnetik-6	https://acortar.link/4M0eZw	
	Lili and Nora	Barnetik-7	https://acortar.link/htWhvQ	
	Olatz and Gorka	Barnetik-8	https://acortar.link/BLU2Qb	
Comic: No	Erraza izango da (It's going to be easy)	Comic-NEI-1		
One Is	Hawa	Comic-NEI-2	https://cutt.ly/JwJvxSLB	
Illegal	Oztopo guztiei gola (Goal to all obstacles)	Comic-NIS-3		

Source: Own elaboration

## 3.5. Content Analysis

Content analysis was carried out on all conversations in the transmedia universe that passed the Bechdel test. This analysis is carried out as a complement to the Bechdel test, as the Bechdel test is limited to showing whether or not there is a representation of female conversations that do not revolve around men, so it does not measure the sexism or feminism of the product. The content analysis, however, provides information about the themes and messages that female characters talk about and whether there are any related to equality, empowerment or sisterhood.

## 3.6. Dichotomous Questionnaire Survey

## 3.6.1. Population and Sample Size

The target audience is the IA!T2 audience, with an average of 20,875 people per episode. ("Irabazi arte! [telesaila]", 2023). Its audience is the Basque-speaking population living in the Basque Autonomous Community or neighbouring provinces and aged between 4 and 12. For this population, with a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%, the sample should consist of 378 people.

In the absence of a census of the population, the methodological decision was to carry out a non-probabilistic quota sampling through educational centres, selecting students who had the ability to complete the questionnaire independently (4th, 5th or 6th year of compulsory primary education [EPO]) and who attended exclusively Basque schools.

# 3.6.2. Questionnaire

A dichotomous questionnaire of eleven questions was designed, one for each IA!T2 youth character. The questions are accompanied by a photograph of their character and the questions are answered with 'Yes' or 'No' to the statement: "Character X has a lot in common with me".

The questionnaire asks whether or not each person considers that they have things in common with the male and female youth characters (Figure 4) in IA!T2.



Source: EITB.eus (https://www.eitb.eus/eu/telebista/programak/irabazi-arte/pertsonaiak/), 2023

# 4. Results

# 4.1. H1. The second season of Irabazi Arte! promotes gender equality and empowerment in its audience.

## 4.1.1. The Bechdel test

All elements of the transmedia universe pass the Bechdel test (Figure 5).

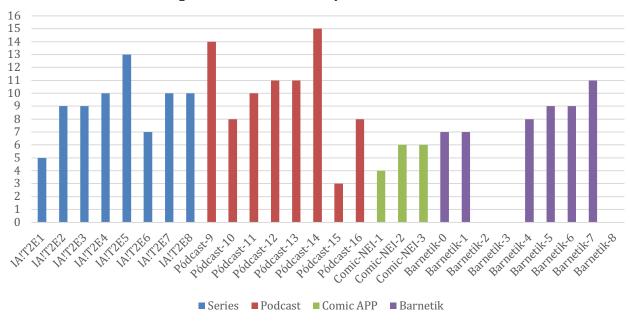


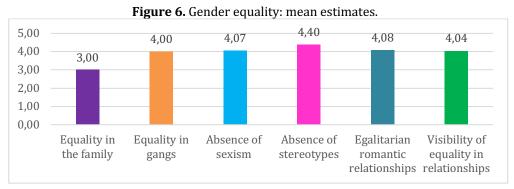
Figure 5. Conversations that pass the Bechdel Test

Source: Own elaboration

All episodes of IA!T2 pass the test, with 73 conversations across the eight episodes (Figure 5). All eight podcasts pass the test because in all of them the two interviewers, *Nora* and *Arene*, talk to at least one athlete (Figure 5). In the *APP comic*, there are also 16 conversations that pass the test (Figure 5). *Barnetik* passes the test in six of the episodes (*Barnetik-2*, *Barnetik-3* and *Barnetik-8* do not pass the test because the three male co-stars appear), for a total of 51 conversations (Figure 5).

#### 4.1.2. Estimation Table

The mean estimates (1 = lowest score or inequality; 5 = highest score or equality) of the four experts (E-ARJ-01, E-RAI-02, E-MAR-03 and E-JIE-04) in relation to the 6 assessed aspects of gender equality in IA! T2 (Figure 6), the highest score is for the absence of gender stereotypes (4.4), followed by egalitarian romantic relationships (4.08), absence of sexism (4.07), visibility of equality in the workplace (4.04), equality in gangs (4) and equality in the family (3).



Source: Own elaboration

In the individual item analysis (Figure 7), all items score above 2.5, with 19 items scoring 4 or above, while only 2 items score below 3: the central role of the family (2.5) and male characters in non-typically male occupations (2.75).

The highest scores are for the appropriateness of the characters' clothing to the context (5), followed by the heroines' problem solving (4.75), the absence of stereotypes about female competitiveness (4.75), female leadership (4.75), the sexual diversity shown (4.75), women with an academic background (4.75) and women in paid work (4.75) (Figure 7).

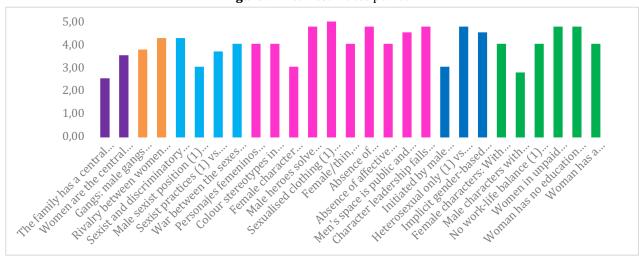


Figure 7. Mean estimates per item

Source: Own elaboration

In terms of gang relations, there is an important visibility of fraternity (4.25), as well as cooperation and harmony between people of different genders (4) (Figure 7).

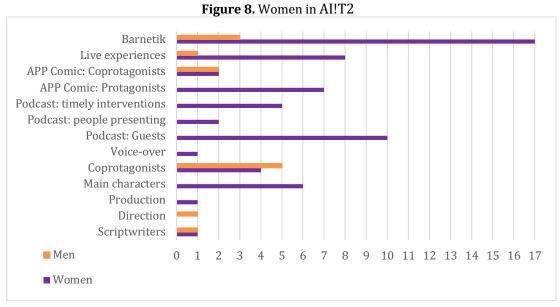
The mean of the estimates (Figure 6) shows the overcoming of gender stereotypes (4.4), as a result of clothing adapted to the context (5), the absence of stereotypes related to women's competition (4.75), women's leadership (4.75), women's problem solving and heroic status (4.75) and where men and women appear (4.5) in both private (e.g. home) and public (e.g. work and leisure) spaces (Figure 7).

As for romantic relationships (Figure 7), they are initiated by both boys and girls (3), there is sexual diversity (4.75), and there is an absence of explicit and implicit gender-based violence (4.5).

The adult characters' occupations (Figure 7) also contribute to the visibility of women with an academic education (4.75), in paid jobs (4.75), in high positions (4) and in occupations that are not typically female (4); in addition, men and women reconcile work and family life (4), but there is no visibility of men in typically female occupations (2.75).

# 4.1.3. Women's Registration List

The presence of women in IA!T2 (Figure 8) is greater than that of men in terms of fiction and narrative universe, but not in the case of technical issues (scriptwriters, direction, production) where, although the presence is equal (2 men and 2 women), the person who directs the central product, the series, is a man.



Source: Own elaboration.

In the narrative structure (Figure 8), the main characters are the 6 female protagonists of *Printzesak*, including *Arene*, whose family consists of two men (father and grandfather) and two girls (*Arene* and *Lili*). As for the co-protagonists, there are 5 male and 4 female characters (Figure 7). The series incorporates the voice of the female character *Arene* in different scenes of each episode (Figure 7), providing a first-person view of her reflections, thoughts and emotions.

In the APP comic, all 7 main characters are female (6 *Printzesak* players and the young illegal immigrant, *Hawa*). As for the supporting characters, there are 2 girls and 2 boys.

In *Barnetik*, the first video introduces the season with a conversation between 4 of the main characters (*Arene, Nora, Leire* and *Olatz*). The other 8 videos are organised by couples, 3 of them mixed and 5 females. A total of 20 actresses and actors take part: 17 girls (5 actresses in 2 episodes and 4 in the introductory episode) and 3 boys.

The podcasts are hosted by two girls, with occasional appearances by other *Printzesak* players in each episode, except in Pódcast-4 where *Lili* appears. All interviewees are female athletes. Similarly, in the live experience during the recording of Pódcast-15, 3 female athletes, a monologuist and Sua Enparantza (the actress who plays *Arene*) sing the soundtrack of the series live.

#### 4.2. H2. The Second Season of Irabazi Arte! has the Potential to Influence its Audience.

#### 4.2.1. Dichotomous Questionnaire

The total sample consisted of 188 people: 120 girls (63.8%), 62 boys (33%) and 6 people who do not identify with any gender (3.2%). Of the total, 56 people (29.8%) were in the 4th grade, 104 (55.3%) in the 5th grade, and 28 (14.9%) in the 6th grade. The age frequencies are 38 (20.2%) at age 9, 88 (46.8%) at age 10, 55 (29.3%) at age 11, and 7 (3.7%) at age 12. The questionnaires guarantee the anonymity of the answers and were completed during the months of March and April 2023.

With regard to the possible influence of IA!T2 on the audience (H2), we analysed whether the audience identified with the characters by means of a dichotomous questionnaire survey. The lack of a census of the series' audience made it difficult to obtain a sample of the desired size and with a normal distribution of the independent variables (gender, age, academic year). The sample obtained (N=188) is therefore limited by the confidence level (90%) and the margin of error (6%), as well as by the nonnormal distribution of the independent variables: gender (Shapiro-Wilks: W = 0.79, p < 0.001), age (Shapiro-Wilks: W = 0.85, p < 0.001) and academic year (Shapiro-Wilks: W = 0.79, p < 0.001). Therefore, non-parametric statistical tests were used.

Regarding the identification or not with the characters according to the gender of the audience, the chi-square test gives significant results with the characters of *Lili* (p=0.041), *Gorka* (p=0.000), *Amets* 

Boy
Girl
Does not identify with Amets
Girl
Does not identify with Jon
Does not identify with Gorka
Identifies with Gorka

O 50 100 150

(p=0.000) and Jon (p=0.000), as girls identify significantly more with *Lili* and significantly less with the 3 male characters (Figure 9).

Source: Own elaboration.

There is no significant relationship between the age of the audience and identification or not with the characters, but there is a significant relationship between the year studied and identification with the character of Jon (p=0.043), with the 5th grade audience being the most likely to identify with the character.

## Q1. How do you Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment in your Audience?

## 4.3.1. Content Analysis of Conversations Between Female Characters

The results of the content analysis of the conversations that pass the Bechdel test (Figure 5) show that the dominant theme is empowerment with 55 interactions (Figure 10): positive leadership (14), conflict resolution (11), individual empowerment (9), non-dependence on another person or group (6), internal barriers to collective empowerment (5), individual (5) and collective empowerment strategies (3), and collective empowerment (2).

The second most common theme, with 23 interactions, is stereotypes (Figure 10): the visibility of women in non-typical female roles (21), which is the most common theme overall, and women's physical diversity (2).

The family comes third with 15 interactions (Figure 10): daughter-mother relationships (7); family referents (5); family bereavement (2); and identity traits (1).

Friendship comes fourth with 14 interactions (Figure 10): its values (9) and relationships and status in groups (5).

Gender equality is mentioned in 11 conversations (Figure 10): visibility and normalisation of menstruation (5); female role models (3); difficulties for women in sport (2); and patriarchy (1).

Affective relationships between women are mentioned in 8 conversations (Figure 10): sexual diversity (5) and romantic relationships (3).

Finally, 6 conversations are linked to sorority (Figure 10).

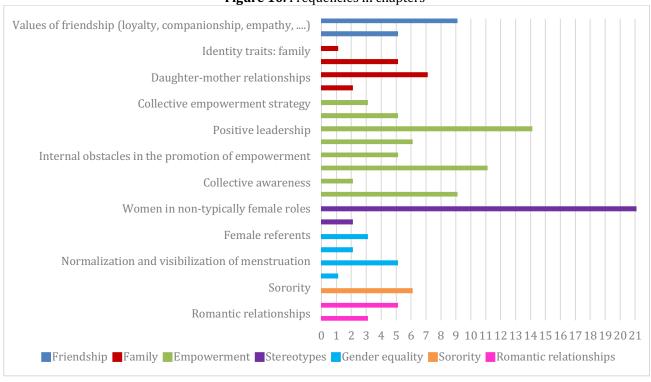
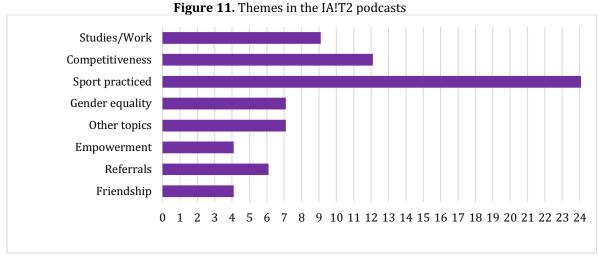


Figure 10. Frequencies in chapters

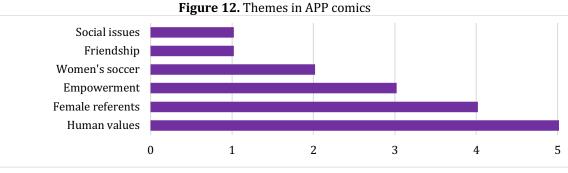
Source: Own elaboration.

In terms of the transmedia universe, 62 conversations that pass the Bechdel test were identified in the 8 IA!T2 podcasts. In 24 cases (Figure 11), the topics (e.g. professionalisation) are related to the sport practised. Other themes also appear (Figure 11), such as: competitiveness (12); compatibility with studies and work (9); gender equality and inequality (7), including menstruation or salary differences with respect to male categories; references they have had in sport (6); and empowerment (4).



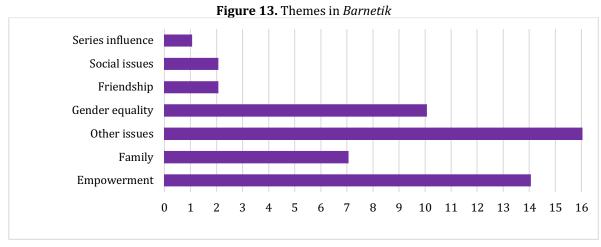
Source: Own elaboration

The APP comic also passes the Bechdel test, identifying 17 conversations across the three chapters (Figure 12) on: human values (5); female role models (4) in sports and music; empowerment (3); women's football (2); friendship (1); and social issues (1) such as unaccompanied foreign minors.



Source: Own elaboration.

Barnetik also passes the Bechdel test. While in three episodes, Barnetik-2, Barnetik-3 and Barnetik-8, actors intervene, in the remaining 6 episodes the actresses, in pairs (except in Barnetik-0 where there are 4), share their reflections on each episode, making a total of 48 conversations that pass the test. In these dialogues they talk about (Figure 13): strategies and processes of individual and collective empowerment (14); gender equality (10); the family (7); problems of the Generation Alpha such as online grooming (2); the influence of the series on the empowerment of girls in football (1); and other topics (16).



Source: Own elaboration

#### 4.3.2. Semi-Structured Interviews to Experts

All four interviewees state that IA!T2 promotes gender equality because its leitmotif is a group of girls in a traditionally male world, football, fighting to be able to play the sport they want to play.

The ultimate goal of IA!T2 is to entertain, but that is not the ultimate goal of IA!T2. (J. Aranburu, personal communication, 19 December 2023) Experts affirm that IA!T2 encourages and promotes values related to equality and overcoming inequality and gender stereotypes (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Interviews: gender equality and gender stereotypes.

Privileged observer	Equality	Gender stereotypes	
E-ARJ-01	• Sorority.	<ul> <li>Positive competitiveness of both individual women and a women's team.</li> </ul>	
E-RAI-02	<ul><li>Equality.</li><li>Empowerment.</li><li>Sorority.</li></ul>	<ul> <li>It gives visibility to women playing football.</li> <li>Positive competitiveness.</li> </ul>	

Privileged Equality		Gender stereotypes	
E-MAR-03	<ul> <li>Empowerment as a challenge for women.</li> <li>Gender perspective in football.</li> <li>Mixed audiences in men's and women's football.</li> </ul>	• Exposure of female models in traditionally male roles.	
E-JIE-04	<ul> <li>Plot of the series:</li> <li>Empowerment message for girls.</li> <li>It gives visibility to girls competing.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Positive competitiveness.</li> <li>It shows mothers with emotional lives of their own, with career ambitions, active, and not just caretakers of the family.</li> </ul>	

Source: Own elaboration

Gender stereotypes linked to a secondary female character, the teacher and headmistress *Idoia*, who, out of necessity for the dramatic development, is presented as an antagonist "as a hackneyed character that can be counterproductive because it represents a traditionally feminised profession, as well as showing school authority as something reprehensible" (E. Jiménez, personal communication, December 2023).

With regard to the series' referents and models, the experts affirm that IA!T2 provides referents with whom the audience can identify, who are positive models and who can demonstrate new behaviours related to equality that they have not seen before in their reality (Table 6).

Table 6. Interviews: benchmarks and models

Privileged observer	Identification	Positive models	Models of new behaviours
E-ARJ-01	Characters who speak the language of the audience.	Male characters who care, cook, show emotions. Diverse male and female characters are shown with their human imperfections.	Girls playing football. Learn the language spoken by the characters in the series.
E-RAI-02	Themes close to the audience.	Positive male characters for whom equality is indisputable ( <i>Peio</i> and the grandfather).  Diverse male and female characters.	Girls playing football.
E-MAR-03	Language of the Generation Alpha. Family diversity (single-parent, traditional, reconstituted families). Themes appropriate to the age of the audience.	Women performing traditionally male roles (e.g. female football coach and player), and vice versa (e.g. grandfather and householder). Mothers and fathers performing equal roles (outside work, care).	Normalisation of new words in sport: referee, coach.
E-JIE-04	Themes close to the audience that overcome difficult situations such as bereavement, moving house and school.  The female characters represent archetypes that are not watertight.  Deeply constructed female characters (e.g. rebellious character who behaves as such because she is full of fears and insecurities).	Positive models of resilience. Mothers and fathers are not only caregivers of their children, but also workers, caregivers who have emotional relationships, Male role models and families where equality is naturalised and assumed.	Girls who believe they can play football and achieve it

Source: Own elaboration

IA!T2 also shows the inequality and micromachisms present in society (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Interviews: exposing inequality

Privileged observer	Micromachismos	Situations of inequality
E-ARJ-01	Greater demands on mothers than on fathers in the concept of family ( <i>Nora</i> ).  Men false allies of equality ( <i>Martxelo</i> ).	Women's renunciation of sport due to motherhood ( <i>Eunate</i> ). Major obstacles for women in football ( <i>Eunate</i> ).
E-RAI-02	President of the club (Martxelo).	More difficulties in playing football for women.
E-MAR-03	Society's and men's fear of women's empowerment.	Exposure of non-inclusive or sexist or sexist language. Caricaturing male chauvinist characters in order to provoke reflection on their behaviour.
E-JIE-04	The boycotting behaviour of the club president who is presented as a "señoro" (a man who shows contempt for feminist demands (RAE [@RAEinforma], 2021).	More difficulties for women in the club (coach and players).

Source: Own elaboration

Expert observers E-RAI-02 and E-ARJ-01 consider that IA!T2 promotes equality because of the unusual presence of a female scriptwriter and the inclusion of a female writer and illustrator in the creative team, all three of whom provide a female perspective on equality. In addition, the experts consider that the central storyline of the series, which shows girls progressing in football, an area not usually represented by women, positively demonstrates elements of equality such as individual and team competitiveness.

Regarding the transmedia universe, E-RAI-02 highlights its quality and the series' contribution to reaching the Generation Alpha generation. The experts consider that the transmedia universe reaches an audience that does not consume traditional television and that it contributes to broadening the content, thus attracting the Generation Alpha and generating loyalty that keeps the conversation about the series and its messages active among the audience beyond the simple television broadcast.

Experts point to the educational potential of the series: promoting SDG 5 (E-RAI-02); addressing gender equality in line with the hidden school curriculum and family values (E-JIE-04); facilitating the learning of the Basque language with content suitable for young people (E-ARJ-01); and offering an egalitarian perspective of society through football and the development of soft skills such as leadership.

#### 5. Discussion and Conclusions

As a fictional product whose ultimate aim is to entertain, IA!T2 is not reality, but it does reflect and promote progress towards SDG 5. This is demonstrated not only by the representation of women within the fictional context of IA!T2, but also by its central theme: women's football.

The gender perspective permeates the transmedia narrative of IA!T2 and its technical sections of writing, directing and creation. The female characters, with their dialogue, actions and physical presence in the narrative, stand as potential drivers of empowerment, sisterhood and social change towards gender equality for their audience: the Generation Alpha.

The drive for gender equality and empowerment (H1) in IA!T2 is evidenced by the predominance of the female gender in the transmedia universe, as confirmed by the quantitative analysis (Figure 8). This approach extends to the technical areas, where a female scriptwriter contributes to placing IA!T2 within the scarce 1.8% of Spanish children's series with female scriptwriters (Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023). Other technical aspects, such as executive production and the development of the APP comic strip, are also led by women, giving IA!T2 a female perspective on sisterhood, empowerment, positive female competence, and equality and inequality (Martínez-Pérez and Cuenca-Orellana, 2020). It should be

noted, however, that in the case of the series, this perspective may be modified when it is directed by a man.

In terms of female representation, all transmedia content is dominated by women: all the protagonists of the series and the APP comic are women; *Arene*'s voice appears in every episode; in *Barnetik*, actresses (17) outnumber actors (3); and the podcasts, which only interview female athletes, are presented by two women. In addition, the live experience of recording with an audience (Pódcast-15) features three female athletes, a monologuist and the actress Sua Enparantza.

However, female representation is not limited to the mere presence of female characters; the Bechdel Test (H1) reveals numerous interactions that go beyond this: 132 in the series, 62 in the podcasts, 48 in *Barnetik* and 17 in the comic. These data are relevant because only 7% of children's series in Spain pass this test. (Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023).

Finally, the promotion of gender equality (H1) in IA!T2 is also reflected in the average rating of the experts (Figure 6). Overcoming gender stereotypes (4.4) stands out, followed by equality in romantic relationships (4.08), absence of sexism (4.07), equality in professions (4.07), in gangs (4) and in the family (3). Although the family has a dramatic weight (2.5) and less equality (3) in the series, there is a perceived balance (3.50) between men (grandfather and father) and women (two daughters) due to the absence of the deceased mother figure (Figures 6 and 7).

The promotion of equality found in H1 is manifested through different strategies (P1). Firstly, the representation of diversity in family structures and gender roles in the series contributes to the normalisation of equality, highlighting *Arene*'s family where there is a normalisation of the equal distribution of domestic tasks, the expression of emotions by men and respect for the aspirations of daughters who challenge gender stereotypes in women's sport (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024. Secondly, the inclusion of a macho character, *Martxelo*, as the antagonist, associates macho attitudes with negative connotations by associating him with the villain of the plot, thus alerting the audience to the harmful aspects of such behaviour in everyday situations of inequality (P1). Finally, the series presents situations (P1) that highlight the specific challenges faced by women in sport, such as the coach's past experience that her pregnancy and postpartum recovery were incompatible with playing football, thus making visible the gender inequalities that result from the biological differences between women and men (Mérida-Serrano et al., 2022).

On the other hand, according to the experts, the promotion of equality (P1) is achieved through the humanisation of the female characters in the series and the comic. The physical and moral imperfection of these characters creates a strong connection with the audience, facilitates identification and thus promotes equality (P1). Similarly, the female characters find a community of belonging in *Printzesak* that creates a relationship of sisterhood based on a shared understanding of what the other girls have gone through as a result of being women in football. This idea of sisterhood is also at the heart of the podcasts, in which sportswomen talk about their under-representation in the federation and the gender stereotypes that still exist. (Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Government of Spain, 2023; Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2021, 2024) or the differences between men's and women's sport. Thus, the egalitarian nature of the entire IA!T2 transmedia universe, according to the experts, empowers girls and explicitly promotes equality (P1).

The promotion of equality (P1) is also facilitated by the content of the conversations that pass the Bechdel test in IA!T2. Not only are these numerous, but many of them directly address SDG 5 with dialogues (Figure 10) related to empowerment (39), breaking gender stereotypes (21), women's affective-sexual diversity (8), sisterhood (6) and other aspects related to gender equality (10). The most common conversations (21) are about women in non-typical female roles, such as the female coach, followed by positive leadership (14) and individual awareness of empowerment (9) (Figure 10). In the APP comic (Figure 12), there are dialogues about female role models (4), empowerment (3) and women's football (2). In *Barnetik* (Figure 13), the actresses talk about empowerment (14), gender issues (10) or examples of the show's influence in promoting girls' football (1). The podcast interviews discuss (Figure 11): characteristics of the sport played (24), such as mixed modalities (podcast-16) or wage differentials; competitiveness of women's sport (12); equality/inequality in sport (7), including difficulties in sport specific to women, such as pregnancy or menstruation; female role models (6); and empowerment (4). The conversations about menstruation in the podcasts, in the series (IA!T2E4) and in Barnetik-4 stand out as an outstanding example of promoting equality (P1). Specifically, IA!T2E4 and Barnetik-4 make visible both the possible feelings and shame that menarche can cause girls, and the

progressive normalisation of menarche in Western society, where it is moving from being a private and taboo subject to a public issue (Coloma-Moncayo, 2023; López-Insua, 2023).

On the other hand, the use in the narrative of the trainer, *Eunate*, explicitly shows the facilitation of empowerment mechanisms that support SDG 5 (P1). This includes conversations about the importance of self-confidence and trust in the team (IA!T2C3), independence based on self-esteem (IA!T2C5), and women giving up their professional or sporting careers due to motherhood (IA1T2C4).

Concerning the possible influence of IA!T2 on the audience (H2), the results cannot be extrapolated to the entire audience, due to the limitations resulting from the size (n=188) and the non-normal distribution of the sample. However, in the sample analysed, identification with the female protagonists is observed among viewers of all genders, ages and educational levels. Similarly, the secondary female character *Lili* is identified more by girls than by boys, probably because some of her actions, such as the experience of menarche, are an exclusively female phenomenon. Research with a larger sample size and a normal distribution would be necessary to validate H2 for the whole population and to explore the reasons for the greater identification of girls with *Lili*. Similarly, identification with male characters is lower among girls, which suggests a line of future research in relation to male characters.

It can therefore be affirmed that IA!T2, although its ultimate goal is to entertain, promotes SDG 5 by making many women visible in situations of empowerment, sisterhood, equality and inequality, overcoming stereotypes and addressing explicit themes around them, which is far from the 77% of Spanish children's series that perpetuate gender stereotypes (Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023). This promotion of equality in IA!T2 is in line with the characteristics of the Generation Alpha, offering a product that is not only present where this population consumes media, but also adapts to on-demand consumption, as well as the new products of post-digital culture and transmedia narratives (Azurmendi, 2018; Escaño, 2023; Gil-Quintana & Osuna-Acedo, 2020; Jenkins, 2007; Larrondo-Ureta et al., 2020; Livingstone, 1998; Scolari, 2014) and the possibilities of post-digital culture as an educational resource in the classroom (Onieva, 2015).

IA!T2's transmedia storytelling also generates loyalty from its audience. (García-Marín & Aparici, 2018; Marin-Pérez & Bañon-Castellón, 2022; Pedrero-Esteban et al., 2023) and provides future educational opportunities by retrieving knowledge previously developed in an informal context and bringing it into the classroom in a practice of transmedia literacy (Gil-Quintana & Osuna-Acedo, 2020).

In the case of IA!T2, the promotion of SDG 5 is also added, as the entire transmedia universe of IA!T2 is based on a message that promotes female empowerment, equality and sisterhood by making women visible in a traditionally masculinised field, sport and football (Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Government of Spain, 2023), where women have been excluded (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024) and are not visible or are visible but in a stereotyped way (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2021). Thus IA!T2 promotes equality by making gender stereotypes visible and breaking them down (Metheny, 1965). (Metheny, 1965) and sexism in sport (Román-San Miguel & Núñez, 2016).

The predominance of women in the IA!T2 narrative also facilitates progress towards SDG 5 by providing the necessary representation of the female gender in the media. (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024) and by introducing the public to potential female role models through podcasts, series, comics or *Barnetik*. These female role models become educational influencers for the formation of a citizenry capable of participating in society. (Gil-Quintana, 2021) towards SDG 5.

But IA!T2 does not only show empowered women, it also shows examples of overcoming gender stereotypes, such as female competitiveness or the quality of women's sports practice. (Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024; Riemer & Visio, 2003). In addition, IA!T2 incorporates the gender perspective by showing women in traditionally masculine roles (e.g. female coaches, footballers, referees, elite athletes), including conversations about women's sexual diversity, highlighting specific situations of inequality (e.g. pregnancy and elite sport), addressing the difficulties and inequalities of women in sport, and offering real (podcast and *Barnetik*) and fictional (series, APP comic) female references.

Likewise, IA!T2 shows several examples of sisterhood in its plots, actions and relationships between characters. The revelation in IA!T2C4 of *Lili*'s pre-pubescent character's menarche (e.g. the shame of having soiled her trousers) prompts her to express how she is experiencing it, provoking not only the other girls to support her emotionally by sharing their own experiences, but also to stage a protest at school to make menstruation visible and normalised. This plot marks two key points in terms of equality. On the one hand, the girls' solidarity in the face of the experience of a purely feminine phenomenon:

menstruation. On the other hand, the explicit exposure of menstruation and its experience in adolescence favours society's progress towards SDG 5, as it has traditionally been a biological, social and cultural phenomenon that has not always been addressed from a gender perspective (Coloma-Moncayo, 2023; López-Insua, 2023). The second example of solidarity is played out by the *Printzesak* players, who oppose the dismissal of the coach by the club president when she does not submit to his authoritarian orders (IA!2C8). This plot reveals the suspicion and fear of some men of women's empowerment, so that once empowered, women have to overcome the new situations of inequality activated by men in an attempt to boycott their empowerment. Women must therefore continue to empower themselves individually or through sisterhood movements, such as that of the players of *Eunate*, in order to break down these new barriers erected by the fear of male chauvinists or false allies of equality. The third example of sisterhood (IA!T2C8) is led by the coach, *Eunate*, when, in an act of empathy towards *Olatz's* suffering with her body, but also of acceptance of herself as a woman, she literally and metaphorically undresses to proclaim the importance of accepting and loving one's body with its imperfections and singularities.

Finally, the name of the team, *Printzesak*, is presented in the series as an example of empowerment and sisterhood itself (P1). The name 'princesses' appears as a pejorative term by President *Martxelo* in IA!T1, referring to Disney princesses as examples of women who are not empowered and rescued by men (Osuna-Acedo et al., 2018). However, in IA!T1 and IA!T2, the name takes on a positive connotation of empowerment, referring to the group of girls led by the coach who not only want to play football, but do so and compete to win.

IA!T2's non-stereotypical gender visibility, empowerment and equality as a transmedia narrative favours the formation of a critical, participatory and humane Generation Alpha in relation to SDG 5, who can learn or maintain egalitarian practices within and outside of sport. (Aierbe & Medrano, 2008; Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023; Gil-Quintana & Gil-Tévar, 2020; Junguitu-Angulo & Osuna-Acedo, 2023). The series and their transmedia universe contribute to the establishment of new paradigms in society through the discourses and imaginaries that they transmit, promoting and normalising gender equality at an early age where egalitarian behaviours are still maintained, such as in the practice of school sports, and which are characterised by their egalitarian nature and by their high permeability to what is observed in the media (Arranz-Lozano et al., 2023) and by their state of identity formation based on their referents and media and platform characters (Almazán-López & Osuna-Acedo, 2023).

Therefore, the IA!T2 broadcast represents an exercise of responsibility on the part of the media and the institutions and entities involved to support and raise awareness of diversity and equality. (Azurmendi, 2018; Mujika-Alberdi et al., 2024), understood as a fundamental human right and one of the essential elements for building a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Through its message of equality, empowerment and sisterhood in sport (Preece & Bullingham, 2022) and in football, IA!T2 creates opportunities for change in favour of SDG 5 in both its audience and society, which can be extended to other social areas such as family and leisure.

This message, which promotes SDG 5, reaches its audience on the one hand through the characters of IA!T2, who become potential educational *influencers* and positive role models of equality with whom audiences of all genders, educational levels and ages can identify. On the other hand, the message uses old media such as traditional television, but also new media, formats and narratives specific to the Generation Alpha. (Barlovento Comunicación, 2023; Escaño, 2023; McCrindle & Fell, 2021; Scolari, 2018), which extend the message beyond the simple viewing of the series and are present in any place, time or situation. That is to say, IA!T2 and its transmedia universe ensure that its women and female characters become constant references for the audience when they use mobile devices to listen to the podcasts, watch content on YouTube or interact with the comic APP, thus giving the audience an active role. (Escandell-Montiel, 2020)

In summary, the IA!T2 audience is not loyal to the series because of its promotion of gender equality, nor should this be the ultimate goal of the product. However, the promotion of SDG 5, as evidenced in the research, is in line with the cross-cutting school curriculum of today's society. IA!T2 has educational potential around SDG 5 and transmedia literacy, which stands as a narrative reference for the promotion of gender equality, so that new generations build their identity based on an equality that they integrate and normalise, favouring the change of social paradigms towards a society where SDG 5 is unquestionable.

The results of the research suggest future lines of research, not only in relation to other transmedia content aimed at children and adolescents, but also with the research on *Irabazi Arte!* in relation to the human values promoted, the approach to other issues such as immigration or online grooming in the series, the promotion of sporting values or the deepening of the characters in relation to archetypes and physical representations.

# 4. Acknowledgements

The Alavesa Football Federation, the CIMA association and the following education centres have collaborated in the research: Aitor Ikastola, Almen Ikastola, Aresketa Ikastola, Arizmendi Ikastola, Assa Ikastola, Bastida Ikastola, CEIP Errekabarri HLHI, CEIP Gobea HLHI, CEIP Odón de Apraiz HLHI, CEIP Zabalgana HLHI, Laudio Ikastola, Lautada Ikastola, San Bizente Ikastola.

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