



International
Olympic
Committee

GOOD PRACTICES TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN COACHES IN INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This collection of Good Practices to Encourage Women Coaches in International Federations (IFs) has been developed to support Olympic Movement stakeholders in advancing gender equality and inclusion within the coaching profession. It is aligned with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Gender Equality and Inclusion Strategic Framework and reflects the growing commitment to increasing the number and visibility of women in coaching roles.

Data from the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games highlights a clear underrepresentation of women coaches, with women accounting for only 13% and 10% of coaches at these Games editions respectively. Since 2020, the IOC has been deeply committed to addressing this imbalance and working closely with several IFs that are already focused on this area. A dedicated Women Coaches Working Group was established to identify barriers and propose actionable solutions. One of the areas of focus and support has been WISH – the Women in Sport High-Performance Pathway Programme – supported by USD 1 million in Olympic Solidarity funding. This programme has been the result of collaborative efforts led by the IFs, the WISH leadership team and the IOC. To date, the programme has seen 120 female coaches from 22 sports and 59 countries graduate, with each of them nominated by their respective IFs due to their potential to excel in high-performance coaching.

Despite the success of WISH and other initiatives led by the IOC and the broader Olympic Movement, the IOC remains committed to strengthening its efforts in this area. The content presented here is based on contributions from IFs through the 2024 IF Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey, as well as insights from the Good Practices Research Report supported by the Olympic Studies Centre. This guide highlights practical, effective actions implemented by IFs that have contributed to increasing the representation and visibility of and support for women coaches at international level.



ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORT THROUGH IOC PROGRAMMES, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS



The case studies presented in this document highlight some of the initiatives supported by the International Olympic Committee through the IF Development Fund and Olympic Solidarity programmes where IF engagement occurs.

The IOC works daily to promote gender equality on and off the field of play, as women and girls have historically been underrepresented in sport. Great efforts have been made over the years to narrow the gap at all levels, but much work remains to be done at the administrative and coaching levels within Olympic Movement organisations worldwide. In keeping with the IOC's [Gender Equality and Inclusion Framework](#), which seek to promote women in sport at all levels and in all structures, we ask National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to strive for gender parity in all Olympic Solidarity nominations.

For each programme, Olympic Solidarity targets a 50/50 split of male and female participants, and priority is given to female applications, for example for coaching scholarships. At least

40% of beneficiaries across all programmes should be women. We strongly encourage NOCs to use the same targets when hiring experts, lecturers, consultants, etc. for their projects.

All projects carried out through the Youth Athlete Development IF Opportunities programme should have equal numbers of girls and boys from each NOC/National Federation (NF), and the inclusion of female coaches and officials is considered very important. Coaches or officials who have taken part in WISH or Women's Sport Leadership Academy (WSLA) programmes should be considered for roles as experts/tutors in the Technical Course for Coaches, for athletes' entourage membership and for Development of National Sport System activities. As a reminder, IFs should work closely with their NFs to be sure that they are collaborating with their NOCs to consider opportunities that are available through Olympic Solidarity's Olympic Values programmes. Additionally, NOCs are required to put the necessary measures in place to ensure that everyone involved in the project can

operate in a safe environment, as this is important for advancing gender equality. This is of the utmost importance when minors are involved. Actions might include appointing a safeguarding focal point for the project, training staff, collaborating with local public authorities, developing a safeguarding framework/policy specific for the event, and implementing and communicating about different avenues for reporting concerns. If you need guidance on this topic, the Sports Department team can put you in contact with the IOC's Safe Sport Unit.

We encourage IFs to promote and communicate about their projects on their social media and other communication platforms so that their sports community can learn from good initiatives.

Looking Ahead

The aim of Olympic Solidarity is to provide assistance through multi-faceted programmes that prioritise athlete development, train coaches and sports administrators, and promote the Olympic values with all NOCs, in particular those with the greatest need. In order to achieve this, Olympic Solidarity works closely with a host of stakeholders and partners, including NOCs, IFs, training centres, academic institutions, etc.

For detailed information and guidelines on the Olympic Solidarity programmes for the 2025-2028 cycle, please visit <https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Beyond-the-Games/Olympic-Solidarity/OS-Plan-2025-2028-Brochure-EN.pdf>

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide provides good practice initiatives and a checklist to assist International Federations in building on their current practices to support women as high-performance coaches at international level.



The initiatives were selected based on their relevance and distinctiveness, drawing on the information provided through the 2024 IF Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey and the Good Practices Research Report. They have been categorised according to the following criteria:

BUDGET (PER YEAR)

0

No associated cost

\$

USD 1-10,000

\$\$

USD 10,001-20,000

\$\$\$

USD 20,001-30,000

\$\$\$\$

More than USD 30,000

DURATION

- Less than 1 month
- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- More than 12 months
- Ongoing

SUPPORT SYSTEM

- International Federation
- IF Development Fund
- Olympic Solidarity
- Other

TYPE

- Educational tools (training activities, curricula, educational materials, etc.)
- Awareness-raising initiatives/materials
- Legislation, policies, standards and guidelines
- Research/study reports

More information and additional supporting materials can be found on our website:
<https://www.olympics.com/ioc/gender-equality>

If you would like to submit your own good practice, please scan the QR code





INTERNATIONAL BASKETBALL FEDERATION

FIBA MENTORING PROGRAM FOR WOMEN COACHES



BUDGET

More than USD 30,000

\$\$\$\$



SUPPORT SYSTEM

- FIBA
- Erasmus +



DURATION

6–12 months



TYPE

Educational tools (training activities, curricula, educational materials, etc.)

Aim and Objectives

To increase the number of female coaches entering the professional environment.

Description

FIBA Europe organises, on an annual basis, the Women's Basketball Summit in Slovenia, where all 50 NFs can nominate female coaches with high potential. After five-day clinics in Slovenia, FIBA instructors select the best five or six coaches to go through a mentoring programme during the basketball season (from October to April).

Mentees are assigned to a mentor (an active top-level female coach) in twos. During the year, they have monthly webinars with mentors, psychologists, high-level coaches, etc. and visit various clubs/academies in Europe (mostly shadowing the mentors at their workplace).



Challenges

After a successful pilot in Europe supported by Erasmus+ Sport, FIBA is aiming to expand the programme to other continents. Oceania has already launched it, but in other regions, high travel costs are currently a barrier for senior management to give the green light for a global rollout.

Outcomes

All female coaches who have completed the programme now have major coaching roles in their countries – at club level or with national teams. The FIBA endorsement has been a powerful asset, helping many break into top-tier opportunities, including roles in men's clubs. The programme is now a permanent feature in the FIBA Europe calendar. It began as a pilot, supported by Erasmus+ funding, to develop a scalable concept, curriculum and mentoring model that can work across continents. The current budget is around EUR 70k, covering the Summit and mentoring. Travel costs are manageable within Europe, and expenses are reduced by using twin-room accommodation. Strong partnerships with clubs and academies – which host visits and coaching shadowing free of charge – also help make this programme sustainable.



INTERNATIONAL BIATHLON UNION

IBU ACADEMY COACH EDUCATION PROGRAMME



BUDGET

More than USD 30,000

\$\$\$\$



SUPPORT SYSTEM

- IBU
- Olympic Solidarity



DURATION

Ongoing



TYPE

Legislation, policies, standards and guidelines

Aim and Objectives

The IBU is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for female coaches within its structured coach education pathway.

The main objectives are:

- To establish a professional, high-quality coach education system across four progressive levels, guided by international experts and elite coaching professionals
- To secure equitable access for female coaches through structured gender balance policies and proactive inclusion mechanisms
- To contribute to the long-term development of biathlon by fostering diversity in coaching expertise and leadership roles

Description

The IBU offers a professional four-level education system supported by international experts and experienced coaches. Central to this initiative is a gender-balanced admission policy that ensures equal access for female coaches at every stage of certification. The IBU Coach Education Programme includes four levels: Basic, First-Level, Second-Level and Third-Level Courses. Each National Federation can nominate two participants per course – one male and one female – ensuring built-in gender balance from the start. This system promotes fairness in access and encourages National Federations to identify and support promising female coaches. The programme is delivered by international experts and seasoned coaches, offering high-quality content and practical tools relevant to both developing and elite-level coaches. The IBU works with NFs to integrate these coaches into other activities at national, regional and international level, such as IBU IOC Camps and the IOC WISH programme. The intentional gender design helps normalise the presence of female coaches across course levels and enhances the learning environment through diverse perspectives.



Challenges

While the Basic and First-Level Courses show strong gender parity (~50/50 participation), the transition to higher levels still reflects a gender gap, with significantly fewer female participants. Structural and cultural barriers, combined with limited female representation in advanced roles, may discourage progression. Ensuring continued engagement and support for female coaches between certification stages remains a challenge for both the IBU and its member nations.

Outcomes

To date, the IBU has reached a level of 42% female participation across all education courses, reflecting substantial progress towards gender equity. The success in maintaining balanced entry-level participation provides a solid foundation for increasing female presence at advanced levels in the future. The practice is recognised as a key strategic step for the development of biathlon, aligning with both performance and inclusion goals. It creates a growing pipeline of qualified female coaches who can lead at both national and international level, shaping a more equitable future for the sport. This approach has increased the IBU's ability to have more female Academy Educators and IBU Camp Coaches in the pipeline.



INTERNATIONAL BOBSLEIGH AND SKELETON FEDERATION

IBSF WOMEN COACHES - A STRATEGIC PRIORITY

BUDGET
USD 1-10,000

\$

SUPPORT SYSTEM
IBSF

DURATION
Ongoing

TYPE
Legislation, policies, standards and guidelines



Aim and Objectives

To make the development and support of women coaches a strategic priority.

Description

A range of initiatives, focused on supporting women coaches, have been implemented, including:

- 1. Creation of the IBSF Academy:** Providing coaching education and training courses, including online and practical components, where women are actively sought with a view to being certified as trainers and attendees.
- 2. Identification of talented women coaches:** Providing women coaches with opportunities to gain advanced coaching experience and build their reputation as elite coaches.
- 3. Provision of formal and informal mentorship and support:** Helping women coaches navigate the challenges they may face in a traditionally male-dominated environment.

Challenges

Women in bobsleigh and skeleton often face gender bias, with perceptions that they are less knowledgeable or experienced, particularly in the four-person discipline. The lack of female role models at all levels of the sport reinforces these stereotypes and discourages participation. In addition, the demanding schedule, which includes long and irregular hours as well as extended periods away from home, can make it difficult for women to balance coaching with personal and family responsibilities.

Outcomes

The initiative has increased the number of women coaching at elite level, including at the Olympic Games, and has contributed to a cultural shift within the sport. Women coaches are now more widely respected for their expertise, and discussions questioning their role have largely disappeared among male coaches.



INTERNATIONAL GYMNASTICS FEDERATION

GENDER BALANCE IN WOMEN'S ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS COACHING



BUDGET

0

No associated cost



SUPPORT SYSTEM

IGF



DURATION

Ongoing



TYPE

Legislation, policies, standards and guidelines

Aim and Objectives

To ensure gender balance among coaches at high-level competitions, particularly in women's artistic gymnastics.

Description

Under this initiative, if a country has two accredited coaches accompanying their female athletes, at least one of them must be a woman. This policy aims to promote gender equity among coaching staff and provide better support and representation for female athletes.

Challenges

There were no major challenges reported. Since the implementation of the rule, the initiative has been smoothly enforced and accepted by stakeholders.

Outcomes

The policy has improved gender balance within coaching teams at international competitions, ensuring female coaches are consistently present alongside male coaches when working with female athletes. This has strengthened athlete support and increased visibility for women in coaching roles.





INTERNATIONAL JUDO FEDERATION

WOMEN IN JUDO COACHING STRATEGIC PLAN

BUDGET
USD 20,001-30,000

\$\$\$

DURATION
Ongoing

SUPPORT SYSTEM

- IJF
- Olympic Solidarity

TYPE

- Educational tools (training activities, curricula, educational materials, etc.)
- Legislation, policies, standards and guidelines

Aim and Objectives

To foster environments where women can remain actively engaged in judo through coaching and leadership roles.

Description

To tackle the gender gap in coaching, the IJF has implemented a multi-pronged strategy:

- 1. Continental IJF Academy Scholarships for Women Coaches:** Five annual scholarships (one per Continental Union) are allocated to support women in accessing coaching education.
- 2. Dedicated IJF Academy Practical Session for Women:** Data from the IJF Academy revealed that, while many women complete the theory-based modules, fewer proceed to the in-person session. To overcome this barrier, a dedicated, co-financed practical session will be held in Rome in October 2025, supported by Olympic Solidarity.
- 3. WISH Programme Participation:** The IJF is nominating one or more standout women coaches (from various continents), based on their IJF Academy performance, to participate in the WISH programme, trying to have at least one judo coach in every WISH Cohort, with the goal of advancing them to elite coaching levels.



Challenges

A key challenge is ensuring that nominated coaches are the most suitable candidates, which is why IJF Academy performance remains a central selection criterion. While the Academy’s mandatory standards for the IJF World Judo Tour have improved quality, many women still face difficulties balancing the travel demands of elite coaching with other professional and personal responsibilities. In addition, long-term cultural and structural changes are required to fully embed gender balance within coaching structures.

Outcomes

The initiative has increased support and visibility for women pursuing coaching careers in judo, creating stronger pathways to the elite level. Collaboration between the IJF, Continental Unions and National Federations has been strengthened through aligned educational strategies, ensuring a more coordinated approach to development. These efforts contribute to the long-term goal of building a gender-balanced coaching community and promoting a lasting cultural shift within the sport.



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

GUARDIAN GIRLS KARATE PROGRAMME



BUDGET

More than USD 30,000

\$\$\$\$



SUPPORT SYSTEM

World Karate Federation



DURATION

Ongoing



TYPE

Educational tools (training activities, curricula, educational materials, etc.)



Aim and Objectives

To empower women in karate and prevent gender-based violence (GBV) through female self-defence seminars by advancing confidence, and at the same time providing development opportunities for women coaches and showcasing role models.

Description

To address the gender gap in coaching, the WKF has implemented a programme to enhance the visibility of women coaches:

- 1. Development of female self-defence seminars and instructors' training:** The programme travels around the world to inspire and motivate girls and women to pursue leadership positions.
- 2. Creation of a platform for women coaches:** Helps female coaches connect with each other and network, fostering a sense of belonging and collaboration.
- 3. Showcasing of successful women coaches:** Builds the visibility of women as role models, providing a pathway to elite coaching levels.

Challenges

The expansion and sustainability of the programme face challenges due to budgetary constraints and the varying levels of commitment from National Federations. In some cases, institutional support is limited, making it difficult to ensure consistent implementation across all regions. Strengthening collaboration between the WKF, Continental Unions and National Federations is essential to build momentum and maintain the programme's impact in empowering women coaches and promoting safe and inclusive environments.

Outcomes

The programme has empowered participants by building their confidence, self-esteem and leadership abilities, encouraging them to seek higher coaching positions. It has also created a sense of community and increased participation among women coaches, with many taking the programme's activities back to their National Federations. Collaboration between the WKF, Continental Unions and National Federations has been strengthened, supporting the long-term goal of a gender-balanced coaching community.

WORLD ROWING



WORLD ROWING COACH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (WRCDP) – ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY



BUDGET



USD 10,001-20,000



SUPPORT SYSTEM

- World Rowing
- Olympic Solidarity



DURATION

Ongoing



TYPE

- Educational tools (training activities, curricula, educational materials, etc.)
- Awareness-raising initiatives/materials
- Legislation, policies, standards and guidelines
- Research/study reports

Aim and Objectives

To increase the representation of women in rowing coaching positions, aim for gender equality in participation and foster a culture that champions the success of women coaches.

Description

The WRCDP supports coaches' development in line with World Rowing's strategy and gender equality assessment framework. It includes annual funding and progress tracking, such as monitoring participation at club and national level. The WRCDP applies a dual-track approach, with gender mainstreaming across all development activities as well as targeted initiatives for female coaches. Key activities/tools include:

- A structured coach education and mentoring pathway
- The Women's Sport Leadership Academy for High-Performance Coaching
- The High-Performance Coaches Network (2022), offering online workshops and peer discussions – activities include "Coffee and Chat" sessions to foster connections
- Value-in-kind support to help female coaches attend events and camps – a system-wide commitment to prioritising female coach participation at World Rowing events
- A Women in Coaching Toolkit to guide the recruitment, development and retention of female coaches
- A Global Coach Educator training system led by experienced instructors, with women accounting for 39% of educators by 2025

Challenges

Efforts to increase women's participation in coaching have faced several challenges. Limited resources restrict the number of countries and candidates that can be supported, and inconsistent information flow – particularly at National Federation level – has resulted in low engagement. International training opportunities are not always cascaded down to national structures, limiting broader access. Representation and visibility remain limited, with few female role models, mentors or leaders in elite coaching roles. In some countries, cultural barriers hinder the appointment of women to coaching positions, and those who are present in small numbers often feel pressure to represent all women and exceed expectations. Recruitment and advancement pathways are also affected by unconscious bias, a small pipeline of qualified female coaches and confidence gaps that discourage women from pursuing opportunities. Furthermore, women coaches often lack strong peer networks and support systems compared to their male counterparts, and have limited access to high-performance environments where they could further develop and gain exposure.

Outcomes

World Rowing has cultivated a culture that genuinely supports the success of both women and men, embedding gender equality as a core organisational value. Providing women with access to development opportunities has led to increased participation and representation, enhancing the programme's reach and impact. A key focus continues to be placed on strengthening capacity-building efforts and assisting member federations in developing their own national pathways.

Key Progress Indicators – Member Federation Trends (% women, 2013 → 2015 → 2018 → 2021 → 2025):

- Registered coaches: 26% → 27% → 23% → 31% → 34%
- National team coaches: 13% → 15% → 17% → 20% → 27%
- World Rowing Championships (all age groups) women coaches' accreditation: 2018 (12%) → 2021 (17%) → 2024 (21%)





WORLD RUGBY

WORLD RUGBY HIGH PERFORMANCE ACADEMY – FEMALE COACH INTERNSHIP

 **BUDGET**

More than USD 30,000

\$\$\$\$

 **DURATION**

6-12 months

 **SUPPORT SYSTEM**

- World Ruby
- Gallagher
- Olympic Solidarity

 **TYPE**

Educational tools (training activities, curricula, educational materials, etc.)

Aim and Objectives

The Female Coach Internship Programme aims to increase female representation within high-performance rugby by equipping coaches with enhanced leadership, technical and tactical competencies. Using a structured approach, the programme seeks to create sustainable pathways for women to excel as coaches in elite rugby environments. The programme is structured around three key areas of development. For personal growth, coaches are supported to define their coaching philosophy, reflect on structures feedback and establish strong professional support networks. Secondly, the programme promotes leadership and performance, with a focus on strengthening teamwork, improving communication and developing strategic planning and stakeholder management skills. Thirdly, participants engage in practical placements within squads, gaining experience in planning, delivery and review. This is complemented by opportunities for coaching observation and self-assessment.

Description

The programme offered all 12 participating unions in the SVNS 2024 series the opportunity to nominate a female coach to join their women's squad for the Vancouver and Los Angeles tournaments. Intern coaches were embedded within the team environment, contributing to preparation, training and competition. World Rugby provided support with accreditation, travel, accommodation, board, workshops and mentoring. The programme combined online and in-person workshops, mentoring, individual performance planning, observation and review sessions, and integration into squad management structures. Running from January to May 2024, the programme provided a structured framework for coaches to develop their leadership, technical and tactical skills. It was a collaborative initiative that ensured coaches received high-quality support and resources, enabling them to progress as high-performance rugby sevens coaches and future leaders within the game.



Challenges

One of the key challenges of the Female Coach Internship Programme was the financial commitment required. Successful delivery of the programme involved significant investment in travel, accommodation and subsistence for participating coaches, which was supported by funding from World Rugby, Olympic Solidarity and Gallagher. Another challenge included the lack of full engagement from all unions. Of the 12 participating SVNS unions, 10 nominated coaches for the programme. This limited the reach and potential of the programme, and in the future the aim will be for all participating unions to nominate a participant. Despite these challenges, the programme was successfully implemented, with strong outcomes achieved for the coaches involved.

Outcomes

The programme successfully supported 10 female coaches, who developed their leadership, technical and tactical competencies through structured placements, mentoring and workshops. Coaches reported significant growth in the areas of personal development and leadership, demonstrating greater confidence and capacity in high-performance environments. The impact of the programme extended into the global game. By the beginning of SVNS 2025, six of the 12 teams had appointed female head coaches, reflecting tangible progress in representation at the highest level. Additionally, one of the participating coaches advanced to coaching at the World Rugby Women's World Cup 2025 (15s). Post-programme reporting highlighted the value of the initiative, with 100% of participants stating that the workshops had been useful for their development as coaches. These outcomes underline the effectiveness of the programme in strengthening pathways for women in rugby sevens and beyond.



WORLD SAILING

STEERING THE COURSE – WORLD SAILING'S PLAN TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN SAILING



BUDGET

USD 20,001-30,000

\$\$\$



SUPPORT SYSTEM

World Sailing



DURATION

Ongoing



TYPE

- Educational tools (training activities, curricula, educational materials, etc.)
- Awareness-raising initiatives/materials



Aim and Objectives

To increase the representation and visibility of and support for women coaches, instructors and team leaders through targeted training, clear participation targets and global promotion.

Description

Guided by international best practices such as the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration, UN Women's Sports for Generation Equality Framework and the IOC Gender Equality and Inclusion Objectives, World Sailing created a roadmap outlining key projects and milestones.

Focusing on coaches, instructors and team leaders, World Sailing conducted an internal review of participation data from major events to establish accurate baselines. Based on this, ambitious targets were set:

- women to account for 30% of coaches at the 2026 and 2027 World Sailing Championships
- women to account for 35% of coaches at the 2026 Youth Sailing World Championships
- 50:50 gender balance in Technical Courses for Coaches during the 2025–2028 cycle

To reach these targets, World Sailing committed to increasing training opportunities for women, participating in international scholarship programmes and reviewing training materials.

These clear targets and commitments guide strategic decisions and daily actions, ensuring progress is measured and reported across the Federation.

Challenges

The main challenge faced was how to create an overarching international strategy that could also be updated to reflect new and emerging priorities, as well as celebrating if milestones were achieved.

To ensure the plan had global relevance, World Sailing decided to embed the three guiding documents from internationally renowned and world-leading organisations, to ensure it was following in the right footsteps.

World Sailing has also faced the challenge of ensuring that these changes are embraced within the National Federations and that they too understand the importance of such programmes and priorities.

Outcomes

Significant progress has been made in coaching through the following key actions:

- Launched an online Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training module through the World Sailing Academy, now integrated into all Technical Courses for Coaches
- Supported coaches through the Olympic Solidarity WISH Programme since 2023, including one coach participating at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games
- Provided funding for women-only coaching courses, training nearly 100 coaches since 2023, with a commitment to run at least three courses per year
- Promoted female coaching role models through social media campaigns such as #SteeringMyCourse and #SteeringMyOlympicCourse
- Showcased national federation initiatives, including a webinar on International Women's Day highlighting programmes that drive structural and cultural change in coaching



CHECKLIST

A sporting environment that continually works towards respect and equality



CHECKLIST

This checklist was developed from 30 interviews with managers representing small, medium and large sports for which women accounted for over 10% of coaching staff beginning from the Tokyo 2020 Summer Games or PyeongChang 2018 Winter Games. Findings revealed good practices that encouraged women coaches and, at times, did not require funding (1). Positive outcomes were particularly evident when IFs recognised women coaches in their organisational strategic plans.

The checklist framework was adopted from the Ecological Intersectional Model (2). Interview findings revealed good practices were spread across four levels, entitled:

- Focus on the individual
- Support from others
- Build organisational momentum
- Embrace flexible systems

Designed as a reflective tool, the checklist enables IFs to assess and enhance their practices to encourage women to become high-performance coaches within their sport.

1. Hanlon, C., Mesagno, C., Flowers, E., & Khoo, S. (2025). Identifying good practices that encourage women coaching at the international and Olympic level. IOC Advanced Olympic Research Grant Programme, Olympic Studies Centre.

2. LaVoi, N.M. (2016). Women in sport coaching. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315734651>

1

FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

GOOD PRACTICE	ACTIONED
Recognise the unique qualities each woman brings as a coach, e.g. empathy, strong communication skills, a focus on holistic athlete development, and their role in safeguarding athletes and women coaches	☐
Identify individual athletes who demonstrate the skills to become a good coach and invite them to coach	☐
Target individuals, who may not be athletes, for key coaching roles	☐
Focus on coach retention at the start of coaching training, rather than immediately focusing on the athlete	☐
Build confidence and self-esteem to empower each woman	☐
Provide training to enable each woman to build their mental health, well-being and resilience to gender inequity	☐
Identify what each woman needs to make them feel happy, welcome and protected	☐
Create educational programmes tailored to individual needs	☐
Create clearly visible opportunities for women to coach	☐



2

SUPPORT FROM OTHERS

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Enable women to confidently share opinions and not feel judged	☐
Initiate a network with women coaching at international level, e.g. to exchange issues, identify where to find help and how to solve problems faced as female coaches, and know that support is there	☐
Expand this network to include a formal educational component	☐
Approach women individually, encouraging them to join women's coaching networks, both internal and external to the sport	☐
Educate male coaches and staff on how to support women coaches	☐
Increase the number of women coaching at youth level	☐
Provide women with supportive coaching experiences that enable them to learn how to address challenging situations	☐
Enable cross-over when it comes to coaching elite female and male athletes, e.g. a woman moves from coaching female athletes to male athletes, then returns with learnings to coach female athletes	☐
Embed coaching internships for women in every team	☐

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Mentoring practices:

Establish a mentoring initiative pairing women with experienced coaches from the national men's league, enabling skill acquisition and learnings specific to coaching elite male athletes	☐
Activate an online mentorship programme focused on an individual needs approach, where each mentor provides advice to two mentees on how to respond in difficult situations	☐
Facilitate a coach mentorship programme that supports the development pathway of women, beginning as youth coaches	☐
Provide support to National Federations in developing coach mentorship programmes for women	☐
Enable women to coach and mentor male and female coaches	☐
Introduce a mentoring and shadowing programme, e.g. shadowing a mentor who coaches at international/Olympic level (preparation, scouting, motivation, etc.) before and after the Games	☐



3

BUILD ORGANISATIONAL MOMENTUM

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Build inclusive environments before focusing on increasing the number of women coaches	☐
Recognise having more women coaches as a priority within the organisation's strategic plan	☐
Support member federations' cultural changes and build safe environments targeted to women coaches	☐
Celebrate gender equality in elite coaching	☐
Conduct female-specific coaching projects in each continent	☐
Gain Women's Coach Committee (or equivalent) feedback to make good choices and enhance practices	☐
Conduct an IF women coach development programme	☐
Introduce scholarship targets for women in leadership programmes or ensure scholarships are gender balanced	☐
Establish measurement targets, e.g. 50% gender representation or a 30% minimum of either gender on the coaching team	☐
Recommend women coaches overlooked in male-dominated member federation coach proposals	☐
Facilitate the sharing of opinions and experiences by small groups of female and male coaches	☐
Conduct female-only coaching courses alongside tailored/individualised programmes, e.g. mentoring	☐

GOOD PRACTICE

ACTIONED

Fast-track coaching courses for former elite women athletes, e.g. eight days instead of the set 11 days	☐
Regularly share information on training opportunities, networking events and career advancement paths	☐
Recognise that diversity among coaching staff is required in coach job descriptions	☐
Support member federations during coach selection, e.g. attend the selection process	☐
Invite women coaches to give presentations at training and network events	☐
Showcase women coaches on websites and in newsletters	☐
Select women to be involved in IF coaching programmes	☐
Showcase women coaches as role models, to inspire women athletes to become coaches	☐
Establish the rule that, when celebrating the athlete, the coach is also celebrated	☐
Build baseline data and longitudinal tracking to monitor progress and trends and identify shortfalls	☐
Gain feedback from women coaches to enhance IF coach development programmes	☐
Give priority on accommodation and travel expenses to women coaches and, if applicable, young family members, when attending camps	☐

**GOOD PRACTICE****ACTIONED**

Reduce the amount of travel by swapping coaches during international training and events

☐

Enable strong connections with continental coordinators to identify how the IF can support senior women coaches individually and/or in groups

☐

Address the investment gap and maintain support to ensure increased numbers of women are in the coaching pipeline

☐

Ensure a structured and transparent coaching pathway, with well-defined opportunities for progression at every level

☐
**4****EMBRACE FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS****GOOD PRACTICE****ACTIONED**

Increase the number of women in senior positions, e.g. Presidents, Vice-Presidents

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Ensure women coaches are represented in senior committees

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Review the Coaching Commission's composition to ensure strong representation of women coaches

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Provide fixed-term contracts aligned with major events

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Change traditional cultural norms, e.g. visibility of women coaches in men's teams

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Educate leaders using data that showcases the success of women coaches for their sport

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Provide accessible education such as e-learning to gain a coach licence

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Pause the coach licence expiry date during paternity leave

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Ensure a smooth return to high-performance coaching from maternity and paternity leave

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Provide an additional funding stream for women coaches to bring their family when travelling (also noted at the organisational level)

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Introduce a rewards system for member federations that activate sustainable programmes to encourage women coaches

☐

Listen to and address the needs of coaches from a global perspective

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This collection of good practice initiatives was selected from the following sources: the 2024 IF Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Survey and the Good Practices Research Report.

The Good Practices Research Report (2025) was presented to the IOC Olympic Studies Centre, the IOC Gender Equality & Inclusion Unit and the IOC Sports Department.

The research entitled “Identifying good practices that encourage women coaching at the international and Olympic level” was conducted by Professor Clare Hanlon, Dr Christopher Mesagno, Dr Elliott Flowers (Institute of Health and Sport, Victoria University, Australia) and Professor Selina Khoo Phaik Lin (University of Malaya, Malaysia), as part of the Advanced Olympic Research Grant Programme, IOC Olympic Studies Centre.

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