



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Gender Equality in Coaching

Interactive Tool Kit



Click [to go on a page](#)

Click [to go back a page](#)

Click [to go to the main menu](#)

Press ctrl + F to search



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Strengthening Coaching with the Objective to Raise Equality

'Strengthening Coaching with the Objective to Raise Equality' (SCORE) is a European project supported by the Erasmus+ Programme, led by the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO), which promotes equal opportunities, namely gender equality in coaching, and focuses on increasing the number of employed and volunteer women coaches at all levels of sport, as well as enhancing knowledge on gender equality in coach education. The project is targeted at sports and coaching organisations at all levels, more specifically coaches, trainers, former athletes, volunteers and decision makers in the field of coaching.

Objectives

- To promote gender equality in coaching
- To promote the representation of employed and volunteer women coaches in the coaching workforce
- To increase the number of women coaches by creating tools to support women coaches to develop towards the coaching of high performance
- To include evidence-based information about gender and gender equality in coach education appropriate to all levels



Tel: +32 27 38 03 25

Email: info@score-coaching.eu

European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO)

52, avenue de Cortenbergh, B – 1000 Bruxelles

Tool Kit Work Package Leader



sports coach UK

Chelsea Close

Off Amberley Road

Armley

Leeds LS12 4HP

Tel: 0113-274 4802

Fax: 0113-231 9606

Email: coaching@sportscoachuk.org

Website: www.sportscoachuk.org

© SCORE Project/ENGSO, 2016

This resource is copyright under the Berne Convention. All rights are reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of private study, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, no part of this publication can be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Cover photo © sports coach UK



A Guide to Using this Tool Kit

You will see the tool kit is broken down into four separate sections:

- Plan
- Recruit
- Develop
- Retain.

Each section contains:

- a flow chart to provide you with an overview of the contents of the section
- information and guidance
- links to external documents and further information contained within the Additional Information Folder
- a 'cloud' page to help you gather your thoughts and understand what steps you can make towards change.

Throughout the project we have collected as much information as possible from the SCORE partner countries. We thank all our partners for their support in creating this content.

What next for you?

Change happens through a series of small steps. Once you have read through this information make a plan on what changes you can make within your own organisation. We recognise that some of this information will be more relevant to you than other parts, but we hope that you continue to refer to it as you create your new coaching strategies over time.

Within the Additional Information Folder you will see some examples of how SCORE partner countries are developing gender equality in their coaching systems. These give you practical ideas on the different topics explained in the tool kit, and can be very useful in your work to bring about change.

We wish you all the best for creating gender equality in your coaching systems.

Kind regards

The SCORE team



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Table of Contents

Additional Information Folder





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



An Introduction to SCORE



Why do we need more women in coaching?

It is the ambition of the EU that by 2020:

- women should make up 40% of the coaching workforce
- women should make up 30% of all national team coaches
- evidence-based knowledge about gender and gender equality should be included in coach education at all levels.*

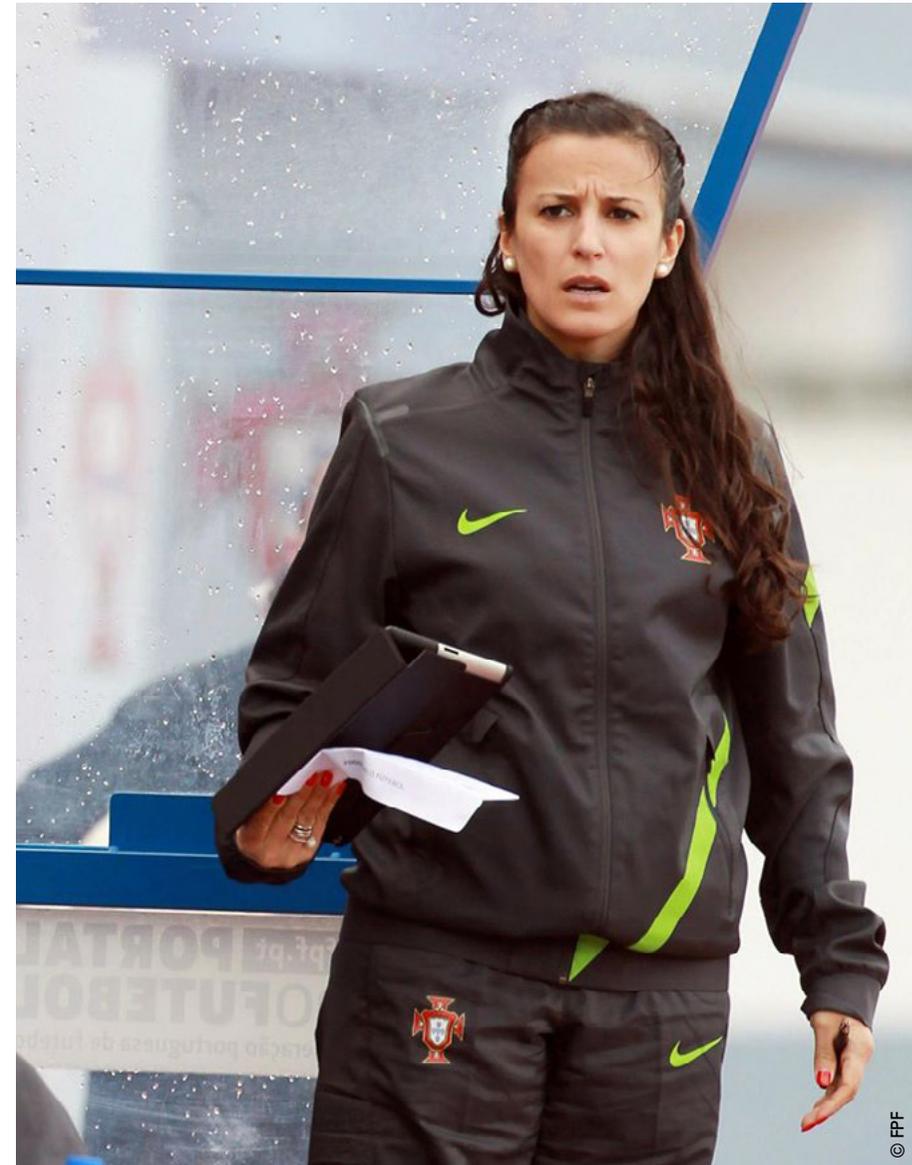
From the [Baseline Data](#) (see Additional Information Folder) this programme has collated through the SCORE programme, we can see there is a lot of work to do.

For the purpose of this tool kit, the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) defines coaching as 'a process of guided improvement and development in a single sport and at identifiable stages of development'.

Coaching is still recognised as a gendered role, dominated by men. Stereotypes such as 'women are the best coaches for young children' or 'women shouldn't coach men' are social barriers to developing a career in sport, but these aren't the only barriers in place.

Women should have equal opportunities to instruct or coach the sport or physical activity of their choice. The sport sector could increase women's skills and knowledge, which makes them more employable in sport and the wider labour market. By doing this the sector could also benefit from more women coaches, as there is a lack of coaches in general, but more female coaches could also lead to more women being physically active in sport. Due to their own personal preferences, cultural traditions or religious beliefs, some women feel more comfortable with female coaches.

A more inclusive coaching workforce may also start to attract women from under-represented backgrounds (eg migrants, people with a disability) to participate in sport or be involved in a coaching role, but also in development/executive roles. It is important that male and female coaches are gender sensitive in their practice. A larger focus is necessary on the content of the coaching role itself; for example, the development of different and new coaching styles and practices which may attract not only more girls and women into sport, but also more boys and men. It could be anticipated that gender sensitivity and more female coaches will lead to a reduction in sexual harassment and abuse, which unfortunately also occurs in sport.



*Taken from the Gender Equality in Sport, Proposal for Strategic Actions, http://ec.europa.eu/sport/events/2013/documents/20131203-gender/final-proposal-1802_en.pdf published by the EU (February, 2014)



The benefits of gender equality in coaching

It is becoming increasingly recognised that a more diverse workforce brings many benefits to an organisation. Why should sport be any different? Currently our coaching workforce is populated predominantly by white, middle-aged men. They are doing a great job and we should all want them to continue coaching – however, we also want to develop our sports culture to welcome more women into coaching.

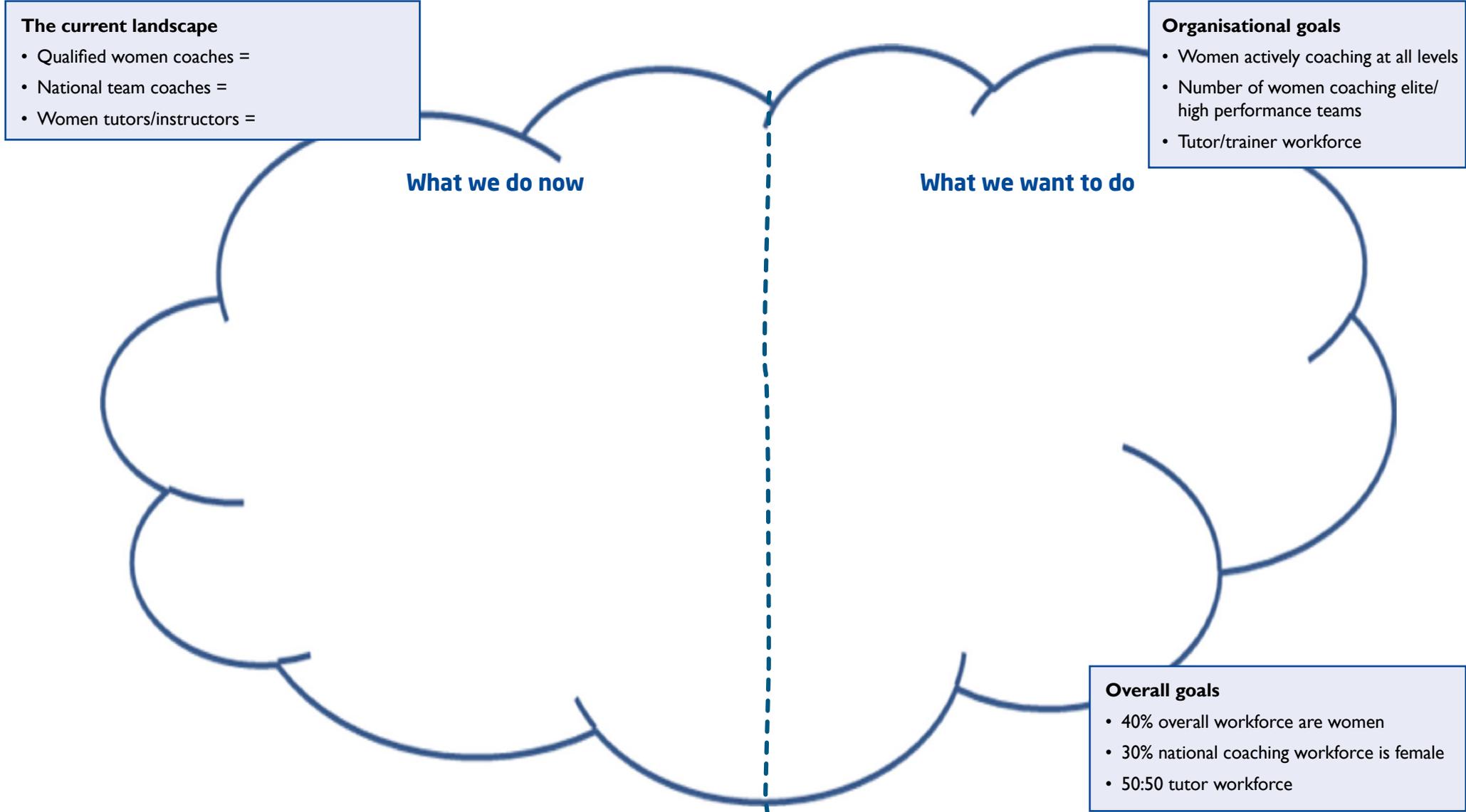
Diversity brings many benefits:

- Different and diverse minds coming together may mean more solutions arise as every individual brings in their way of thinking, operating and solving problems, and decision making.
- People from different backgrounds can relate to people from different backgrounds. In other words, your participants will have a better experience in your sport if you have a more diverse workforce and therefore a choice of who coaches them. Empathy is a powerful tool that can help your retention figures!
- More women coaches means more coaches.
- Diversity brings with it different talents and skills sets from which your other coaches can learn and develop.

The SCORE programme team has worked to create a tool kit of information which can be used by any organisation wishing to recruit, develop or retain women in their coaching workforce, at any level. The information included is not sport-specific to allow organisations to use whatever guidance they may find useful.

As we are looking to effect a cultural change in sport, it should be recognised that changes made, based on the information within the tool kit, may take time to embed and show any real impact. There are no quick fixes when effecting sustainable change.







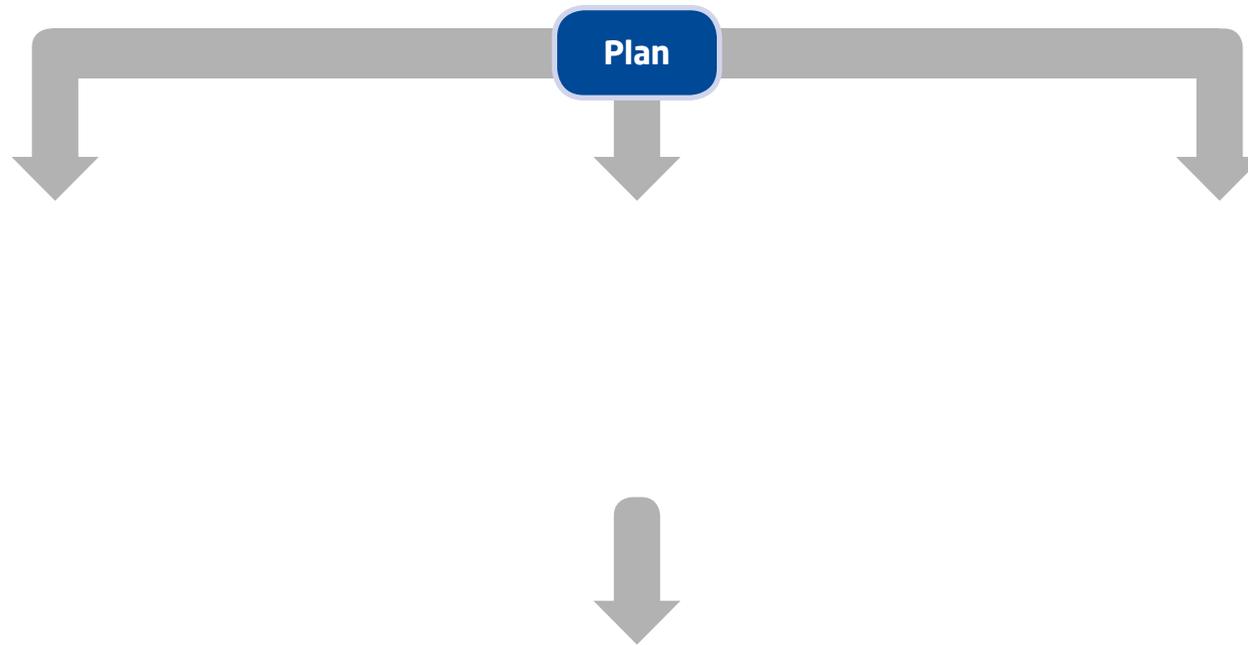
Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Plan Flowchart



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Plan Factsheet



Introduction

Planning is essential prior to making any changes in your organisation.

To make changes that are effective and sustainable you have to:

- raise awareness – understand your current situation and let everyone know
- take responsibility – recognise it is you that needs to make this change
- take action – what are you going to do about it?

But where do you start?

Where are you now?

Audit your current coaching workforce

Unless you know what you have, how do you know what you need to change?

Firstly you need to agree who you class as coach.

For the purpose of this tool kit, the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) defines coaching as ‘a process of guided improvement and development in a single sport and at identifiable stages of development’.

- How many women coaches are actively coaching?
- Who are they coaching?
- Where are they coaching?
- What qualifications do your women coaches have?
- How many women coaches are paid, how many are voluntary?

If possible, track this information over as many years in the past as you can. Can you see any trends in your coaching workforce that may help your future planning?

How do your findings fit against the rest of your country, or against your sport in other countries?

Also agree what information you need to collect.

For an example from the UK, see the [Data Fields Paper](#) in the [Additional Information Folder](#).

Visit the [Additional Information Folder](#) for more information on the [Croatian Judo Federation's case](#).

Visit the [Additional Information Folder](#) for more information on the [Gender Equality Plan of the Swedish Sports Confederation](#).

Consultation

Speak to your women coaches. Sport and coaching is all about people. Unless you understand your coaches you will not be able to provide what they need.

- Why do they coach?
- What do they enjoy about coaching your sport?
- What challenges have they faced as a coach?
- What would they change about your sport?

It is equally important to speak with women who have stopped coaching. Why have they left coaching? Is there anything your federation could have done to retain that coach?



By speaking to women who no longer coach, you will start to build up a picture of what barriers your federation puts in place.

Where do you want to be?

By now you should know your current (and possibly past) landscape so you understand the make-up of your current coaching workforce from a gender perspective. How do you know where you want to be and why?

The guidance from the EU, derived from the [Gender Equality in Sport, Proposal for Strategic Actions](#) (February, 2014) identifies the following targets for women coaches:

- Women as volunteer and employed coaches should be 40% of the coaching workforce.
- Women as coaches should be 30% of all the national team coaches.

And also, not forgetting your current coaching workforce. Are your male coaches aware and confident to support their female peers developing as coaches within your sport? Gender equality is all about men and women having equal opportunities to coach and progress as they want to. It is imperative that your federation as a whole is aware and supportive of this approach.

Targets

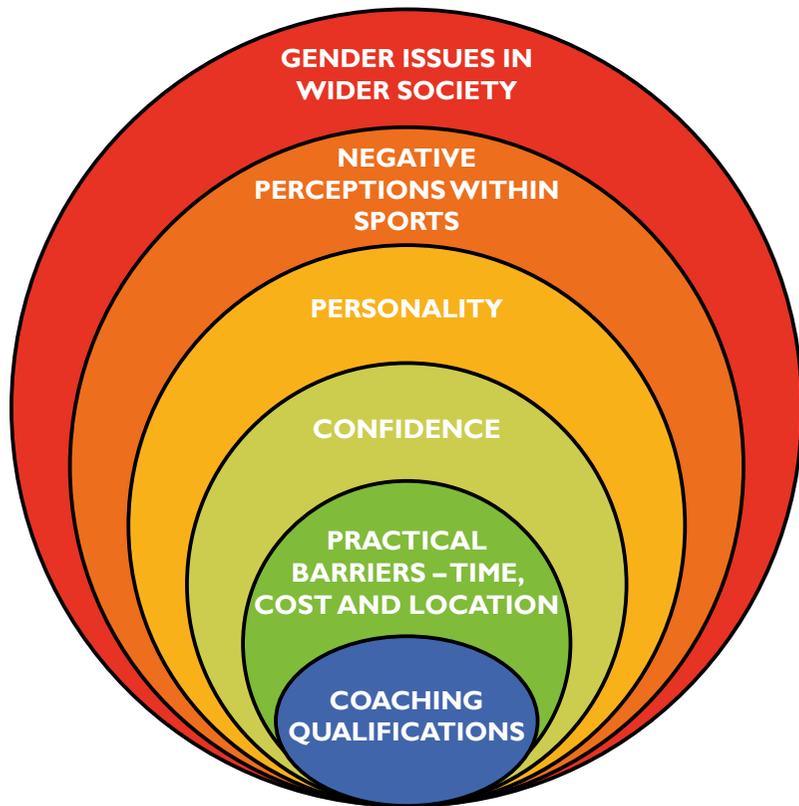
We have to be realistic on our targets, and ensure they are meaningful to your own federation. If you set your targets too high it is possible that you will put measures in place which disengage your existing coaching workforce, and create programmes that are not meaningful or sustainable in the long term.

Choose a goal that you are comfortable can be attained with achievable changes to your existing coaching system. This series of factsheets looks at what changes you can put in place which will lead to long term, sustainable change and gender equality within future coaching workforce.



Barriers and challenges

sports coach UK published research in 2013 to understand what barriers women face in coaching. We have already discussed the negative perceptions within sport and the wider society, but there are other barriers which should be addressed if you are to develop gender equality in your coaching workforce.



GENDER ISSUES IN WIDER SOCIETY

Negative perceptions in society that place women in specific roles (ie primary childcarer). These can impact negatively on their ability to start coaching qualifications (eg due to a lack of time).

NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS WITHIN SPORTS

Specific sports including football, cycling and rugby are perceived as male dominated, with women coaches perceived as inferior to males.

PERSONALITY

The view that only a certain type of woman with predefined personality traits will be successful in coaching and on coaching qualifications.

CONFIDENCE

Lacking confidence can be a key barrier to accessing qualifications, particularly if women think they will be the only woman on a training course.

PRACTICAL BARRIERS - TIME, COST AND LOCATION

Accessibility challenges relating to the amount of time women have available, the cost of qualifications and where training is located.

Click here to see more on barriers within the Develop Factsheet.

It is important for you to understand what barriers your women coaches face in order for you to see what measures you need to take to appropriately recruit, develop and retain women in your coaching workforce. Speak to women that have dropped out of coaching your sport to understand what barriers your federation can remove to ensure equality and inclusion for your coaches.



How are you going to get there?

Identify the gaps between what you want to achieve and what you already have – this is known as a gap analysis. This includes your organisational staff. Have they the capacity and skills to implement the plan? You may need to offer training to existing staff or recruit additional staff.

One of the most important parts of planning is setting goals – it is a way of focusing the implementation of the plan and is a tool to monitor the project as it rolls out. Each of the three elements of **recruiting, developing** and **retaining** have to be planned and have short-, medium- and long-term goals.

When you are planning for the **recruitment, development** and **retention** of your women coaches, think about the following elements and include them in the plan.

Scoping - What insight can you learn from?

- What projects with a gender equality focus has your sport run in the past? Can you learn from their findings?
- What projects have run in other sports or sports organisations in the past few years that you could learn from?
- What organisations outside of sport can you learn from? Many private sector companies now run women's leadership programmes that could provide learning that is equally applicable to coaching.

Scoping - Understanding your own sports organisation

How are women perceived in your sport – either as coaches or athletes/ participants? If carried out positively, the steps our sports sector makes towards gender equality will, over time, have an impact on how women are perceived in society. This is a long-term goal, but by making small and consistent changes, over time, gender inequality will be addressed.

You can start this change process by looking within your own organisation and its culture.

- What is the perception of your sport in your country? Is it 'a sport for men'?
- How many women work in the development of your sport?
- How many women are on your senior management team and Board?
- How do you publicise your sport externally? Do you predominantly use images of men playing and coaching your sport?
- What policies do you have in place that support and protect your coaching workforce (eg employment, health, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment/bullying policies)

Scoping - Understanding women in sport and coaching

Although this varies from country to country, overall sport is often seen as gendered to favour men, both in terms of playing sport and coaching it. This is due to existing coaching systems within sports organisations having been created by men. To move forward, sport should provide tailored opportunities that welcome and retain men **and** women playing your sport, and also market coaching to women a viable opportunity.



Understand their motivations and values

Recent research from Women in Sport, based in the UK, has identified values that motivate women to take part in sport:



Although these values can be specifically attached to women participating in sport, they can also work as motivations into coaching.

It should also be noted that some of the values identified may also be relevant for men engaged in sport, however, this specific research looked only at the motivations of women in sport.

Click here to see more on motivation within the Recruit Factsheet.

Areas of focus for your plan

This tool kit looks into three specific areas that will help you develop your strategy for gender equality in your coaching system. Click on the following links to access each factsheet:

- Recruit
- Develop
- Retain

Creating your plan

By completing the scoping element of planning you are now in a great position to develop a plan that is appropriate to the needs of your sport and the women you will be recruiting, developing and hopefully retaining as coaches.

A guide to help you develop your plan has been created by sports coach UK. Section 4 of this book specifically looks at how you can write your plan.

See Develop Your Coaching Strategy in the Additional Information Folder.



This document contains advice on:

- setting and measuring objectives
- creating planning milestones
- integrating your strategy/plan
- monitoring and evaluation.



The importance of monitoring and evaluation

It is vital to any project to have a plan to monitor and evaluate your progress embedded from the start. Your audit will have identified the position your organisation is in before the project starts. Use this as your baseline so you can see how your actions are making the changes you want to make.

Identify measurable milestones – set goals at the start of the project to ensure it stays on track against the agreed plan. Set short-, medium- and long-term goals to build an overall change within the sport scheme.

Measuring success – what will success look like? It should include a target in number form and identify scheme changes – these can be used as case studies.

Measuring impact – it is important to recognise that the work you start to do in this area may not have any measurable impact until 12 months/two years/five years later, but it is important to set your measurements in place from the start so you can report on your achievements and learn from the project as it goes along.

Learn from what doesn't work, and change it – ongoing monitoring also helps you recognise what actions have been put in place that are not working. Learn from these mistakes and look to rectify them – how could you amend the approach to make it work?

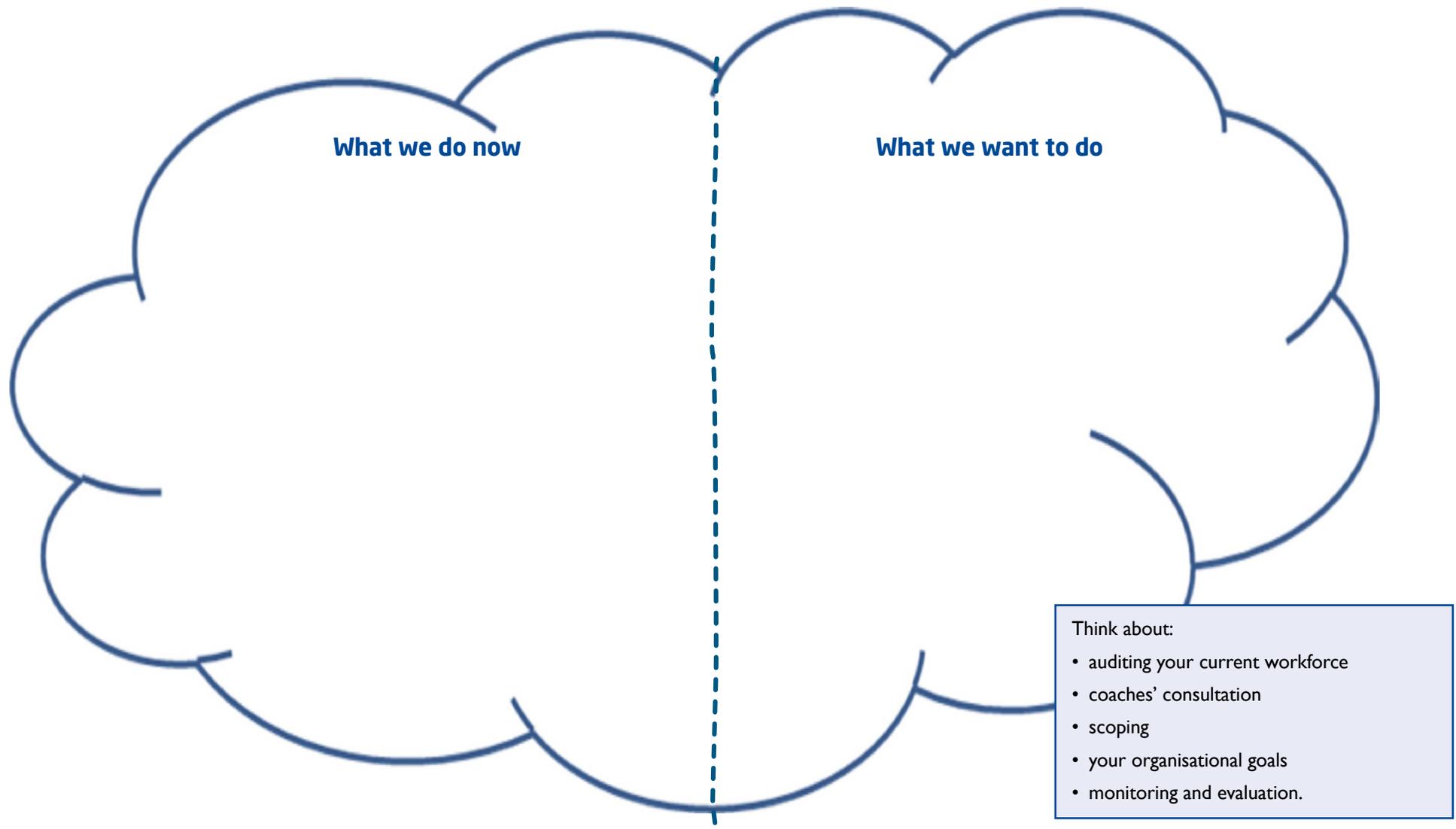


View the *Impact Measuring Toolkit* from sports coach UK in the Additional Information Folder.





Plan





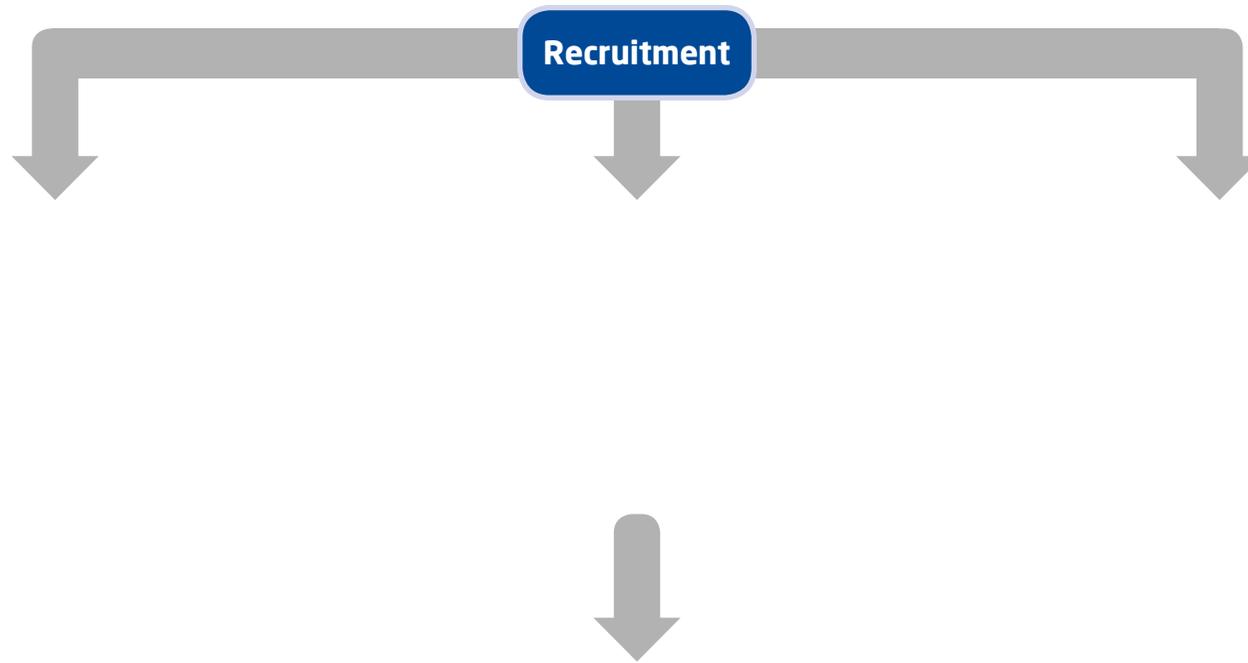
Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Recruit Flowchart



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Recruit Factsheet



Introduction

Coaching is an important aspect of sport. Recent research from sports coach UK (Impact of Coaching on Participants' Survey, 2015) has identified that coaches have an impact on people getting involved in sport and staying active. It is therefore important that you have a diverse coaching workforce that can meet the needs of each one of your participants.

The benefits of gender equality in coaching can be summarised in five key areas:

- **More choice:** More coaches = more choice = greater participant satisfaction.
- **Additional skills:** Participants and coaches have access to a wider skill set.
- **Untapped resources:** More inclusive recruitment practice will reduce shortages in club coaching.
- **Economic benefit:** For example, in the UK, additional coaches introduced through gender equality practice would bring the equivalent of £188m coaching value each year.
- **Cultural change:** Equality within the coaching environment making a better world.

This factsheet aims to provide information which will support effective recruitment of women into your coaching workforce at all levels. It is important to continue to value and support your existing coaching workforce while addressing your gender imbalance.

What motivates her?

Everyone has different reasons or motivations to becoming and developing as a coach. Each individual brings with them their life experiences both within and outside of sport. We need to harness these and show how they can enhance them as a coach and those who they coach.

Values

Understanding the values that women have in sport is important to recognising her motivations.

Click here to see more on understanding her motivations and values in the Plan Factsheet.

There are two types of motivation, **intrinsically motivated**, which involves performing an action because you enjoy it, and **extrinsically motivated**, which involves engaging in a behaviour in order to gain reward. Understanding these motivations can help in your recruitment strategy.

Intrinsically motivated

- To support participants to develop their skills
- To put something back into the sport they have been involved in
- To have a sense of belonging
- To gain a sense of personal achievement
- Provides an opportunity to stay involved in their sport

Extrinsically motivated (involves engaging in a behaviour in order to gain reward)

- Staying involved in the sport in which they have participated
- Encourage more women to participate in sport
- To support their daughter or son to participate in sport
- To develop their own coaching, teaching or interpersonal skills

Video: Get started – #ThisGirlCanCoach

How do we market coaching to her?

Appealing to women: Your organisational profile

How is your sport viewed by the general public? What is your organisational culture? Sport is a gendered activity which is heavily biased towards men. If your sport is mostly coached and played by men and your marketing reflects this, how can you expect it to appeal to women?

Knowing your organisation and changing its culture and profile is not a short-term fix, but recognising where women are under-represented in your organisation is a good starting point on making those changes.

Click here for more information on understanding your own sports organisation in the Plan Factsheet.



Appealing to women: Go where women are

What you could put in place to attract more women to get involved in coaching?

- **Change the offer to suit the women you are targeting – don't expect women to change to fit your sport.**

The current offer doesn't appeal or appear to be relevant for many women who would like to be involved in coaching. Listen to what your audience care about and tailor how coaching can be delivered by women who are passionate to do so.

- **Don't just talk about 'coaching'.**

The word 'sport' and its traditional image can trigger negative associations for many women. Likewise, coaching could be viewed in the same way due to their perceptions of what coaching is. Provide opportunities to get involved in coaching initially through a supportive role to help overcome their preconceptions.

- **Differentiate coaching from other interests by promoting (not preaching) the additional benefits – sell what your audience is asking for.**

In addition to health benefits, which many women do already recognise, coaching can provide the opportunity to socialise, by supporting their local community to get active, while develop their existing skills and learning new ones.

We have created some information that can help the women you are recruiting understand what coaching involves and how they can get into coaching. Visit [Your Guide to Becoming a Coach in the Additional Information Folder](#).

- **Seeing is believing. Making coaching the 'norm' for women relies on local women of all ages, sizes and faiths not only becoming active but celebrating it and encouraging others to join in.**

Role models are a powerful marketing tool for women in coaching. It can reinforce the message that coaching could be for them.

- **Use positivity and encouragement to support your coaches.**

Help women recognise the skills that they have are valuable in coaching. Provide support for their development and put mechanisms in place which provide ongoing motivation and encouragement (for example: providing effective lines of communication, local coaching networks and mentoring) as it shows you value and care for them.

- **Make it easy for women to get involved: right time, right place, right welcome, right company, right gear.**

Address both practical and emotional barriers together to ensure that neither outweigh the motivation to be active. A more convenient crèche facility may only attract those who feel confident with the activity or who are already in a sporting environment.



Where can we find coaches?

Elite sport – if you want coaches for elite sport, you need to look at your existing pool of coaches. Women who have competed in your sport are a good option as they understand the technicalities of the sport. Creating an athlete to coaching programme at the elite or high performance end of your sport would help raise awareness of coaching as a potential opportunity to your female athletes. However, being a talented athlete does not necessarily equate to being a good coach.

Look at supporting, developing and recruiting the pool of women coaches coming up through your coaching pathway. Their experience, knowledge and strong interpersonal (soft) skills may make them highly suitable candidates.

Visit the Additional Information Folder for more information on the [Cyprus Sport Organisation's workshop entitled 'Encouraging Women into Coaching'](#).

Look at your current participants – if you want more women coaching your community-based sport, looking towards the local community is very important. Which women locally who are active are also great organisers? Who has a passion for your sport or being active? Who brings along friends and family members to your session?

Speak to these women, ask them to get involved. They know their community and can act as influencers in getting more people active and motivated.

Look outside of sport – think about the skills of a coach and where you find these in other roles or jobs. These women often sit outside of the sport system yet both the individual and the sport could benefit from them being involved.

Go out and find them – set up informal sessions in local clubs which introduce what coaching is and what skills and knowledge a woman would need to get involved. Advertise the event around the club and local area and use images of women coaching.

Always be honest in what commitment is required but also sell the benefits of being involved. Understand what motivates women and create a coaching offer that would appeal to them (for example, co-coaching or coaching in a team, support available from the club, sport and other coaches).

Gather information on who attends and who takes up coaching following your session. Tracking this learning will help you in future recruitment events.

Promote coaching – create a short (max 4 minutes) film which promotes coaching your sport. Use real women coaches and explain what coaching involves. At the end of the film add appropriate links to more information and contact details so any interested women have someone relevant to talk to in your organisation. Post the film on your website, Facebook page, Twitter and via other social media. Look to post it out on channels that women access.

Have a look at the video clips and web pages:

Video: Get started – #ThisGirlCanCoach

Webpage: Judge coaches on their ability and effectiveness not on their gender



Proactive, open and transparent recruitment

The right person for the job should always be recruited, but no one should be just given a job or role because they happen to know the person recruiting. This can lead to an exclusive approach to recruitment and will generally reduce the pool of skills within any given group. However, there is no problem in encouraging or inviting someone to apply for a coaching role or job as long as the same process of shortlisting and interviewing is applied to all.

You will need to be aware of any employment legislation in place relating to fair recruitment practice for women. Ensure your recruitment policies adhere to this legislation.

- **Provide information about the role.**

Provide details of what coaching entails and what commitment and knowledge is expected. Be aware that technical knowledge can be taught. Interpersonal/soft skills are much harder to teach but just as valuable in coaching.

Advertise your coaching positions through:

- posting information on your website
- promoting this information through various social media channels (so you can monitor interest and field questions)
- linking with women's sports and coaching networks to advertise the post
- word of mouth: inform your existing coaches to talk to participants, mums standing on court side or sideline, their own social circle
- promoting the role in places where women are (eg community halls, libraries, schools, sports clubs and gyms).

- **The job descriptions and application process.**

Research has shown that women look at a job description and won't apply for the role even if they meet around 70% of the criteria, as they often concentrate on the 30% they can't do. Men's approach to this could be the opposite. This is known as **the confidence gap**.

To make the application process more inclusive, consider the following:

- **letters of application**, which allow women to write about their achievements and experiences, rather than filling out a five-page application form.
- **phone calls** where prospective applicants can talk through the role and have a person to person discussion about their suitability.

As such it is important that you add a **point of contact** with an email address and phone number and advise that this person is available to discuss the role further. Check the person or people who will receive the calls have the correct knowledge of the role being advertised.

Wording – research outside of sport in engineering (another male-dominated industry) saw how changing the wording in the job description can reduce the unconscious bias towards male recruitment. Importantly, the research did show that the changing of words didn't lead to a reduction in males applying.

Webpage: Gender bias in job descriptions

Webpage: Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality

- **The use of images as a marketing tool.**

Images can be very powerful so ensure they reflect the women you are aiming to recruit.

Look at the images you currently use – what message might this send to women? Do they convey a sense of welcoming?

Spending time and funds to build up a bank of positive images of women coaching and participating could pay dividends in the long term and help your organisation market itself as one that welcomes and values women in all aspects of their sport.



- **Personal invitations to coach.**

Women who are successful in sport or coaching have often talked about the ‘nudge’ received to push them to try something new or have a go.

It is important that the sports organisation advocates for its entire coaching workforce to support and welcome women as coaches. Unfortunately bullying and harassment in sport is commonplace, even more startling is the sexist behaviour exhibited by male coaches towards their female peers (Norman, L. and Rankin, A.J. [in prep] ‘Towards a sociological understanding of well-being: The case of women coaches’, *Sociology of Sport Journal*).

The UN launched an international campaign #HeforShe which resolves to promote gender equality by raising awareness among men that they can play a role in supporting women.

- **Mixed gender review and interview panels.**

The starting point for women being represented more equally in coaching is for sports organisations to aim for gender equality in their senior management team and Board. These are the key decision makers in the federation and should be advocates for the rest of the organisation. Greater representation by women at decision-making level should allow for greater representation throughout the workforce, including coaching.

Related blogs from the sports coach UK website:

Webpage: Judge coaches on their ability and effectiveness not on their gender

Webpage: Being coached by a female – did it make a difference?





Planning for recruitment

Application process

Paid coaching roles should have a transparent application, interview and feedback process in place to ensure the candidate is being given a fair chance of being successful.

Depending on your national employment laws, it may be unlawful to not employ or provide equal opportunity to apply for a coaching role based on their gender. For example, in England and Wales, the 2010 Equality Act recognises gender (sex) as a protected characteristic. As such, any unfavourable action towards women (or men) based on their gender is unlawful.

Be aware of and adhere to employment legislation in your country in relation to gender equality.

Policy

The occupational well-being of your coaches is of paramount importance. Not only because it relates to the good health and well-being of your coach, but it also impacts on the retention of your workforce. The policies you put in place show that you respect and support your coaching workforce and want to protect them. Are you a federation that both men and women want to coach for?

Ensure you promote that you are an equitable employer when recruiting new coaches.

Coaches must be supported in their role, irrespective of the level at which they coach. Does your organisation have an anti-bullying/harassment policy in place to protect coaches from both the player or athlete and other coaches?

For paid coaches, do you provide (where applicable in your country):

- pension schemes
- maternity/paternity/adoption leave policy
- fixed-term employment contracts
- health benefits?

What provision do you make for flexible working? Do you support and promote co-coaching or team coaching to share the commitment needed from all your coaches?

Do you provide leave from international or national tours?

Do you allow family visits while your coaches are on tour?

Monitoring

Irrespective of the level of coach you are recruiting, make sure you record details of all applications submitted, including monitoring data relating to the person applying for the job. This will help you understand what interest you are receiving from different demographic groups, and therefore what you can do to support applications from those groups under-represented.

The monitoring data you collect following a recruitment drive should feed into your overall coaching workforce data.

If you are not receiving applications from women, or other groups you are targeting, look into why this could be. Try to address the reasons why specific groups are not applying.

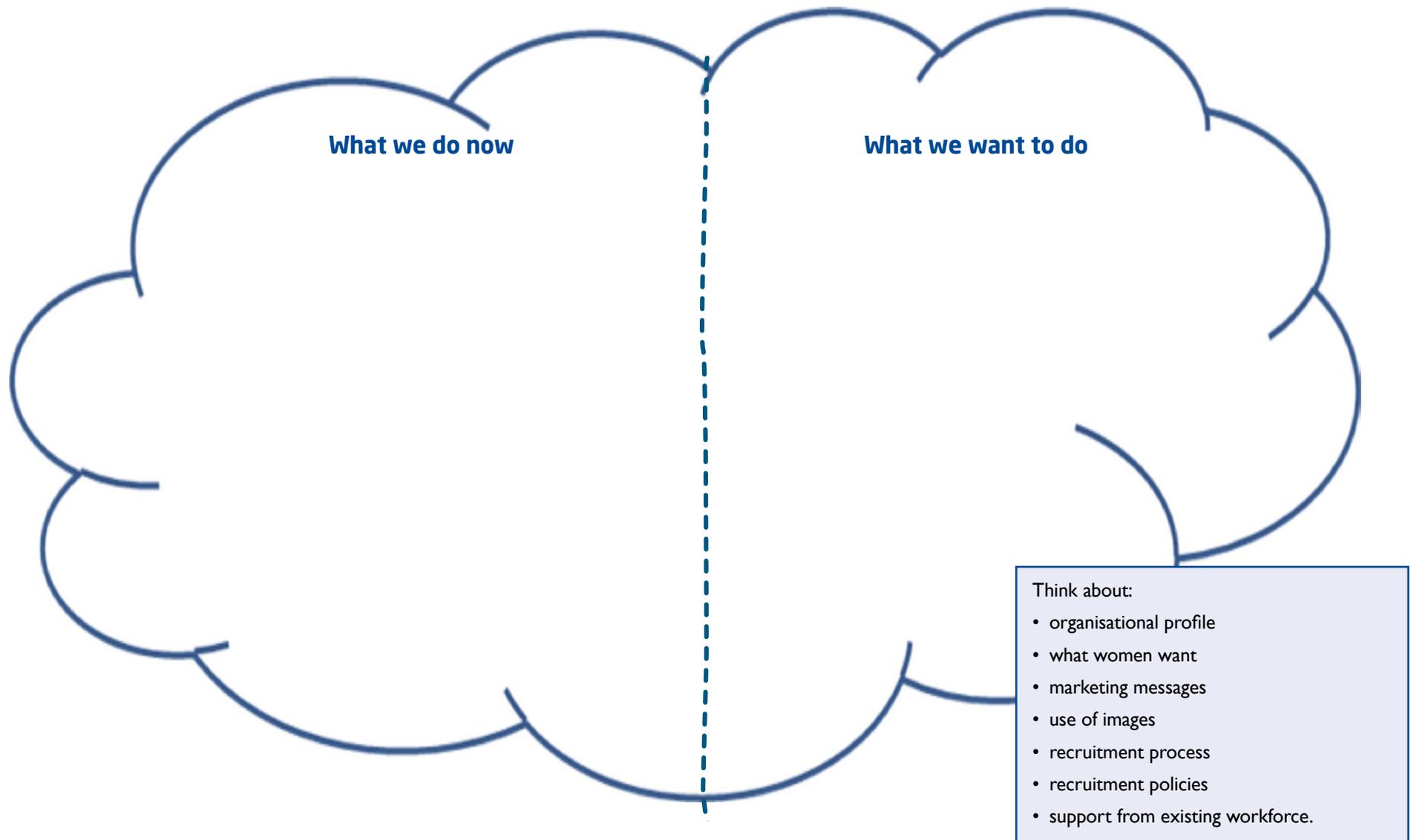
Please note, only collect data on your coaching workforce that is going to be used to inform or change your recruitment process.

Make sure you store your data in a secure place. There should not be free and open access to people's personal data.

See [Data Fields Paper](#) in the Additional Information Folder for an example of what data to collect.



Recruit





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Develop Flowchart



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Develop Factsheet



How can she develop?

There are many ways a coach can develop their skills, for example:

Mentoring	Workshops
Co-coaching	Social media and online resources
Coaching qualifications	Appraisals/reviews
Seminars/conferences/webinars	Coach observations
Coaching practice and self-reflection	Training needs analysis
Resource books and journals	Personal development plan
Formal education	Coach shadowing

How a coach learns depends very much on their own personal approach to learning. Women may face barriers in becoming a coach and also when developing their coaching skills.

Click here to see more in the Barriers and Challenges diagram.

Barriers

We have mentioned the barriers faced in the Planning factsheet within this tool kit.

How can your federation overcome these barriers and support women to develop as coaches?

There are three key elements to ensuring your women coaches are supported appropriately:

- Providing and promoting support networks
- Providing accessible and flexible learning opportunities
- Ensuring the organisational culture values women in the coaching workforce.

Providing and promoting support networks

Coaches benefit greatly from having support networks around them.

Women value having access to support – either one-to-one or in a group environment. Providing buddies or mentors is an excellent way of providing one-to-one support.

• Mentoring.

According to sports coach UK's Mentoring in Sport training 'Mentoring traditionally involves the provision of long-term support, guidance and advice from a mentor to a mentee (CIPD, 2010). Across the different definitions, mentoring is characterised by an intense "caring" and "guiding" quality. Accordingly, a mentor is "an accomplished and experienced performer who takes a special, personal interest in helping to guide and develop a junior or more inexperienced person" (Gibb, 1994, p.32). To be a mentor carries the connotation of being "a trusted adviser, a challenger and an encourager" (Field and Field, 1994, p.65).'

Mentoring is not about telling them what and how to develop, but guiding them to self-discover and signpost them. The approach to mentoring and the level of support required will also depend on the individual being mentored.

Setting up a mentoring programme within your organisation can be resource intensive, however, the benefits of being able to provide someone who can build a professional relationship with your coach and be able to recognise what individual support they may need is invaluable.

To see an example of good practice view [Women Taking Responsibility in Coaching – Team Sports Project Using Mentoring as a Tool in Finland 2014-2018](#) in the Additional Information Folder.

As part of the SCORE programme, a group of women mentors are being trained and supported so they can mentor more women coaches in their own countries. Read more about this in the [SCORE Mentorin Programme file](#) in the Additional Information Folder.



- **Shadowing other coaches/co-coaching.**

Co-coaching can provide a great opportunity for new coaches to find out what coaching entails and see if it is for them without committing right from the start. Providing a positive first step into coaching is invaluable in allowing women to build up their confidence slowly and recognise that they do have the transferable life skills needed.

Likewise, shadowing or co-coaching at the higher level will not only build knowledge and experience, but it will also expose women coaches to the often closed networks of high performance and elite coaching. This example of how a sports federation can change its systems to provide greater support for women coaches will increase their experience and exposure along the pathway to high-performance coaching.

- **Conferences and forums.**

Face-to-face networking events are invaluable. Technology increasingly shows its value in saving us time, but social gatherings foster quality relationships and meaningful exchanges. This is because trust is more easily gained when people can read social cues (such as eye contact and posture) in the person in front of them.

As we increasingly recognise the importance of diversity in a coaching workforce, it is also important to recognise that women coaches should not just engage with other women coaches in an exclusive network. Many coaches see the value in learning from other coaches (of both genders), in other sports and other countries.

- **Direct contact with the sport to feed back on their personal development needs.**

Direct contact with your coaches is invaluable as it will allow you to better understand the development needs of your workforce. It will also help you identify which of your coaches are still actively coaching, which will help your ongoing workforce monitoring.

Keep in touch through regular emails, newsletters and surveys. Direct mailing will allow you to update the coach on developments within your organisation and opportunities available to them, but surveys can provide a platform on which you can get direct feedback. This direct feedback is invaluable in supplying you with insight into what your coaching workforce needs to develop them and retain them within your sport.

By showing you value your coaches, you are fostering a sense of belonging and support, which is vital to your coaches.

Providing accessible and flexible learning opportunities

- **Development opportunities that allow personal growth.**

Coaching is wider than just knowing and being confident in the technical and tactical aspects of your sport. A coach engages regularly with people. As such they need to have strong interpersonal and relationship-building skills.

Look at providing learning opportunities which:

- develop self-confidence
- build networks
- develop self-reflection skills
- promote the coach's well-being (physical and mental/emotional).



However, achieving 'traditional' coaching qualifications and accessing training is important for women coaches for three reasons:

- They feel a sense of achievement which develops their self-confidence.
- It provides evidence that they are qualified and safe to coach.
- They can evidence their coaching achievements to other coaches and athletes.

Unfortunately, many women coaches feel they need to be able to prove their level of coaching to gain the respect of their peers and participants.

It is the work of the federation to not tolerate a culture of sexism which can exist within coaching, whereby a female coach is not valued as highly as a male coach. A female coach should not have to prove herself to be respected by her male peers.

Spending time with coaches individually is important to identify what development they need. A simple training needs analysis and personal development plan will help them feel valued and supported, as well as providing you both with a log of what development opportunities are needed and being accessed.

Do you currently have two-way conversations with your coaches?

What methods of communication can you put in place to support your coaches individually?

- Surveys
- Telephone/email/Skype conversations
- Creating personal development plans.

Visit the Additional Information Folder for more on the [Croatian Skating Federation's educational programme, organised in partnership with the Faculty of Kinesiology in Zagreb.](#)

• **Modularise learning in different formats.**

Traditionally, coach education training programmes take place in blocks. These training events often take coaches away from their homes and families, sometimes overnight and for many days. Some coaches may view this time away from their home lives as a barrier to developing their coaching skills. Women still remain, on the whole, primary carers for their children and other family members, so time away creates logistical problems which cannot only make it difficult to attend the event, but also can create stress which could affect their ability to concentrate on their learning and achieve their potential.

These learning events could be modularised and delivered a day at a time over a longer period, with elements of learning delivered online. As technology develops, the number of different formats in which learning can be delivered is growing all the time. As such, individual learners are able to identify the ways in which they best learn, and can access learning.

Face-to-face contact, as previously mentioned, is still important to women coaches, but modules can be delivered online which complement a specific learning programme by remaining both responsive and personalised. Webinars and online forums can still provide interaction while reducing the need for travel and going to the expense of booking costly venues.

Think about how you currently deliver training to your coaches. Have you spoken to them to understand how better this could be delivered, to suit their own lifestyles?



- **Mixed gender learning events.**

Learners/delegates attending

Due to the coaching workforce consisting predominantly of men in most sports, the likelihood is that coach development learning events will be attended and delivered mainly by men. Being outnumbered in an environment can be uncomfortable for some people and may impact on their learning experience or completion of the training/session.

Monitor your attendees at these learning events and take the time to proactively invite women coaches to the session. The benefits of male and female coaches learning together can include:

- sharing different approaches to coaching
- learning from each other's own personal experiences
- reducing the instance of gender-based negative attitudes as relationships can be developed in a neutral environment where everyone is learning together.

Female-only learning events should only be run on request from the women coaches themselves. Running separate events for male and female coaches may only serve to increase the gender gap and exacerbate negative attitudes towards women as coaches.

The tutor/trainer workforce

As with coaching, tutor and training workforces are predominantly male. The presence of a female tutor or trainer can provide a more balanced approach to learning, as diversity can bring different approaches, views and life experiences.

A mixed gender team of deliverers at a learning event will provide diversity in how the content is being delivered, which will create a more effective learning environment for all coaches.

- **Pre-course information.**

By providing information about a learning programme, you are more likely to receive more women coaches at the event. This information can be made available on the website, but think also of sending out personalised information inviting them to attend, and supply the following:

- Date, time and location of the event
- The schedule of events including a breakdown of classroom-based learning, practical exercises and assessments taking place
- What the learning outcomes will be
- Information about when the on-course breaks and 'downtime' is
- Who is leading each session (with contact details if possible)
- What clothing and equipment is needed
- Details of accommodation (if relevant)
- Who else is expected to attend the event
- Who to contact about logistical information of the course.

Ensuring the organisational culture values women in the coaching workforce

As discussed in other parts of this tool kit, the approach your organisation takes towards promoting the value of women coaches and proactively welcoming women coaches to develop is of paramount importance.

- **Pro-active in the support you provide.**

Keep in touch regularly with your women coaches and be interested in their development. Ensure there is a workforce available to support them and provide access to networking opportunities both inside and outside sport. Advocate the importance of attending these events. A lack of self-confidence and need for a 'nudge' to attend these events can easily be overcome by personal support from your organisation.



A central online network of your women coaches, mixed with face-to-face events, will ensure that a two-way line of communication continues and you have a better understanding of your coaches' development needs, and they feel supported and part of the sport.

- **Allow time to coach and reflect.**

Coaches, especially at the high-performance level, may not get time to focus and reflect on their own coaching as they are managing other coaches, writing coaching programmes and juggling home life at the same time. Providing support to cover administration tasks, for example, would free up time to allow the coach to coach and reflect on their practice. Once reflected they would be in a better position to recognise their own development needs.

Your organisation should recognise and value the importance of coaching and reflection time, and advocate the need for it by the coach.

- **Provide information relating to opportunities within the sports development [office] or wider coaching opportunities.**

Coaches should be a valued part of the wider organisation. As such you should be keen to support their development. Women coaches do struggle with juggling coaching, work and family life to an extent that being a coach is no longer tenable for them. Provide information to your coaches about job vacancies that come up within your organisation and, if applicable, support their application.

- **Positive imagery in development materials.**

Women need to see that they are valued in the organisation for whom they coach. As such, images of women, alongside men, playing and coaching your sport should be used in all your publications, promotional and educational resources. Female role models within your sport should be promoted and celebrated.

Promoting your organisation as one that values gender equality at all levels will start to change the culture of sport and help women to recognise the importance of their involvement.

What can she do to develop?

What coaches want?

An inexperienced coach may not necessarily know what they need to know when they start coaching. More experienced coaches may want to know how they can develop in certain areas. It is important that, at any level, coaches are supported in their development if you want to keep them coaching your sport. It is the role of each organisation to support them in reaching goals. As a starting point, a training needs analysis (TNA) is a tool to find out what the gaps are in the coaches' experience, skills and knowledge. This will make it easier to identify what and how these gaps can be filled.

What coaches need

Once the TNA has been completed the next step is for the coach, with the help and support of a mentor or other coach, to work on a personal development plan (PDP).

Although both the TNA and PDP have to be completed by individual coaches, it can be done in groups, with either a leader facilitating the group or even peer-to-peer support. Whoever supports the coach, it is not about telling them what and how to develop, but guiding them to self-discover and signpost them.

Both the TNA and the PDP are great tools for an inexperienced mentor to use as a guide of what to ask and how to signpost.

View this document online here or find it in the Additional Information Folder.

Relevant Blogs

Webpage: Determination, dedication and ability

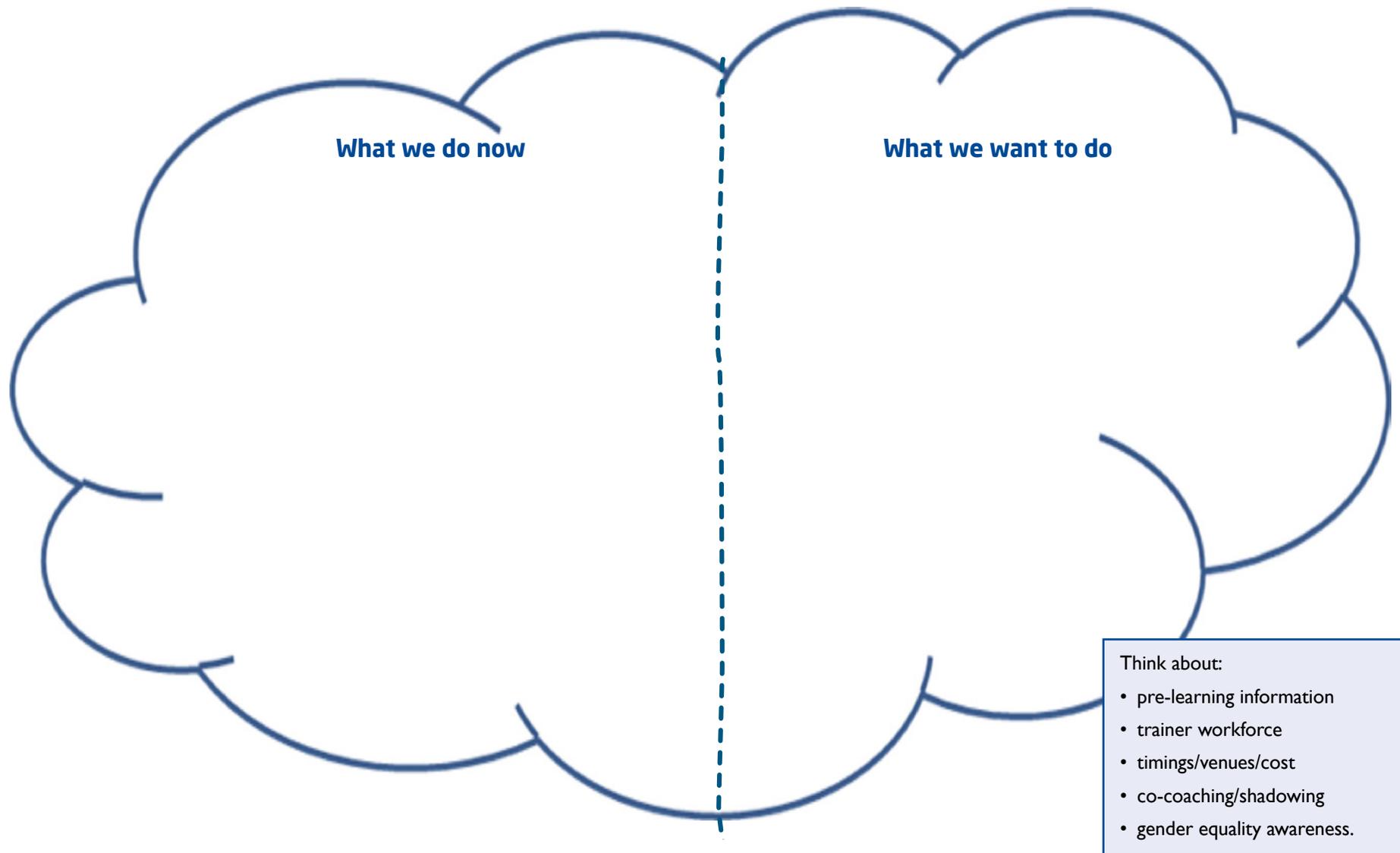
Webpage: My journey into high-profile coaching

Webpage: An exciting career in cricket coaching – thoughts of Lisa Pagett





Develop





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Retain Flowchart



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Retain Factsheet



In the UK, on average, women stay in high-performance coaching roles for only five years. This indicates the need for organisations to put measures in place which support women to stay coaching.

Retaining women coaches is built around providing opportunities that engage and excite her in an environment that values her and supports her to develop. The following principles highlight how you can ensure that your women coaches remain coaching your sport.

Gather data to understand how long your coaches stay coaching your sport. Is there a difference between men and women?

Are there any patterns around the age at which a coach starts or drops out of your sport?

Supporting her

Providing and promoting support networks

Research identifies that women coaches highly value coaching networks. These networks allow currently under-represented women coaches to share their experiences and support each other to find solutions. Women may feel more comfortable sharing their experiences in all-women environments if their experiences of coaching to date have not been positive. However, do not assume that women coaches only want to be part of women-only coaching networks. Proactively support them to join any coaching networks your federation runs. Bringing male and female coaches together in the right environment can benefit everyone. As we have discussed previously, diversity in any workforce promotes the sharing of different experiences and approaches. By working towards equal representation of men and women at your coach networking events, you are working towards 'normalising' women as coaches of your sport.

Visit the Additional Information Folder for more information on the [Swedish Sports Confederation's national network of female coaches in national teams.](#)

• Social media as a networking tool.

Social media is a very powerful resource for women – research shows that women are more likely to use Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram, however men are quickly catching up on women in this trend (80% to 73% respectively; Pew Research Center, 2015). Providing access to local, national and international coaching networks can be invaluable for your coaches. A less resource-intensive approach to providing support networks for your women coaches is by identifying local, national and international coaching networks and linking them in.

Interestingly, online discussion forums are especially popular among men. One-in-five male Internet users say they read or comment on sites such as Reddit, Digg or Slashdot, compared with only 11% of online women. A Pew Research survey from 2013 that only asked Internet users about their Reddit use shows a similar division by gender.

While most of these gender differences tend to be consistent across Pew Research Center surveys, the gender gap for LinkedIn has narrowed over time. Today, a roughly equal proportion of Internet-using men (26%) and women (25%) use the professional networking site. The share of women who use LinkedIn has steadily increased since 2010, when only 12% of women used the platform.

Mentoring

Mentoring is an essential part of retaining and developing women coaches as it gives them access to personal support when it is needed. It also provides the coach with a sense that they are a valued part of your organisation as effective mentoring programmes are often costly to run and resource intensive.

Visit the Additional Information Folder for more information on the [Finnish Coaches' Association Mentoring Project.](#)

Visit the Additional Information Folder for more information on the [SCORE Mentoring Programme.](#)



Managing transition

People go through periods of transition throughout their life, some experiences in life may just happen to women or may have a greater impact on some women than men. These life transitions take many forms and can have an impact on her coaching in terms of her being able to attend her sessions, to her levels of concentration during the session.

Below is a list of life transitions that some women may face. An organisation should be aware of these transitions and plan how women can be supported to stay in coaching, or how they can manage time away from responsibilities and then return in a sensitively managed way. Having these policies in place will show you value your women coaches. Promoting the existence of these policies will help women recognise that their position within your organisation is valued.

Moving house	Moving city/country
No longer fit to participate	Disability (of self or partner caring for a child or other family member)
Having children (pregnancy or adoption)	Divorce
Caring for children or family member	Change of jobs
Menopause	'Milestone' birthdays
Death of a loved one	Children leaving home

It may be that the issue doesn't become apparent until they are not doing their job as expected. For example, being late for training consistently, or not planning a session thoroughly. Initial discussions should be approached in a sensitive, empathetic and non-judgemental way.

The initial stage of supporting a coach through managing a difficult part of their life is essential. Depending on the situation, think about the following:

- offering the coach time off
- offering professional counselling
- providing her with a personal contact within your organisation (maybe a welfare officer)
- confirming the position within the club is still hers, but you may need someone to step in to take over in the interim
- providing a clear way of keeping the club/organisation informed over a period of time that is mutually acceptable
- reassuring, empathising and keeping in contact.

It is up to the organisation how these transitions are supported to ensure the coach can take time off and return to her post when it is appropriate to do so.

Sense of belonging

Keep in touch with your women coaches and keep them involved in coaching surveys, local and national networks, and ask for feedback on how you as an organisation are doing for coaches.

All coaches feel valued when they belong to a group and their position is recognised.



Raise her profile

Public recognition and awards

Recognising the work your coaches do is important, it can be what motivates them to continue. Recognition can take many different forms, but it doesn't have to be complicated or costly. The simplest is to say thank you.

Presentation of certificates for training or qualification can be made at local community events, with articles on websites, social media or press.

Receiving nominations and awards for your coaching is a very exciting way for women coaches to be recognised by your sport, your industry or other women.

Do you provide a female coaching award? There are two points of view here. Firstly, having a women-only award would raise the profile of women coaches in general and would easily help to identify women coaching role models who can be promoted through your communications channels. On the other hand, this may appear to marginalise or set women coaches aside from their male peers, which could lead to separating your coaching workforce by gender (why shouldn't women be able to win your 'Coach of the Year' award?)

The objective should be to have a coaching award that receives equal nominations for both men and women coaches.

In both cases, being nominated regardless of winning can build self-esteem for the coach and start to create those positive role models that coaching needs. The publicity it can produce can be priceless and can very much be linked to raising the profile of women coaches.

Build into the plan time and resources to:

- investigate the various awards that can be linked to coaching
- identify how and who should nominate the coaches
- offer publicity around the nomination
- proactively support the nomination of women coaches
- monitor the number of nominations you receive and the winners from each category.

Further information on criteria set out for various coaching awards can be found in the Additional Information Folder.

Ambassadors

Ambassadors can be created to support your work in promoting women coaches. They may/may not be directly linked to your sport, but have a passion to promote this specific area. For maximum impact, ambassadors should have a high media profile with credibility in the area of sport and/or coaching and be 'on message' when presenting the key facts about women in coaching. They should be happy for you to use their image and words to promote your women coaches. The ambassador will be speaking for your women coaches so you must ensure that their work is received favourably by them.

Role models like her

A role model can be described as a person who serves as an example of the values, attitudes and behaviours associated with a role.

Women in the media can be role models for other women in life, but in sport and coaching, women tend to identify most with 'Someone like me'. As such it is vital that you not only celebrate and promote your high-performance female athletes and coaches, but also the women who coach at a local level. Being acknowledged by your sport and promoted as a role model is very powerful. This role model is likely to stay coaching if they feel their coaching is valued.

Coaches are accessible role models to sports participants: they motivate people to play sport, be active and keep coming back. It is vital that you support and promote your women coaches if you want to retain your participants.

- Boys are predominantly coached by men: that will shape their perceptions of a women's role in sport from an early age.
- Girls need to have a coach that can empathise with them and support them to stay active throughout puberty – a time at which sporting activity levels drop off dramatically.
- Women in the community: there are many women who are themselves active and hold a position of influence within their local community; their ability to get people motivated should be directed towards leading their own sessions and promoting physical activity locally.



How do you market role models?

Show the value you place on your female role models – promote them to the world!

Case studies tell a story and get a message across in a way that people can identify with. Use pictures of the coach being role modelled to help create an emotional link with the reader, and think about further content:

- How did she get into coaching?
- Who does she/has she coached and why?
- What are her motivations to coach?
- What is the best part of coaching for her?
- Did she overcome any challenges either becoming a coach or developing as a coach?

The idea is that the women reading this story can relate to this coach and think 'I'm like her, I can do that'. As such, always follow this case study with details on what next steps the reader can take to get into coaching. Make the access to further information as easy as possible. If possible, direct her towards a person to speak to at a local sports office or club.

Men as coaching advocates

As we have discussed, men make up the majority of the coaching workforce. As such, they have an important role in advocating coaching to women. For example, these could be:

- participants they coach
- mothers of children they coach
- women within their social circle.

One of the most important routes into coaching is through participation. To help all coaches coach women and girls effectively we have created [Coaching Women and Girls](#), which can be found in the Additional Information Folder.

Advocates can also be male role models in sport and coaching and can use their media status to promote the value of coaching to women.

Recognising the unequal distribution of power that men have around the world, the UN launched the HeforShe campaign in 2014.

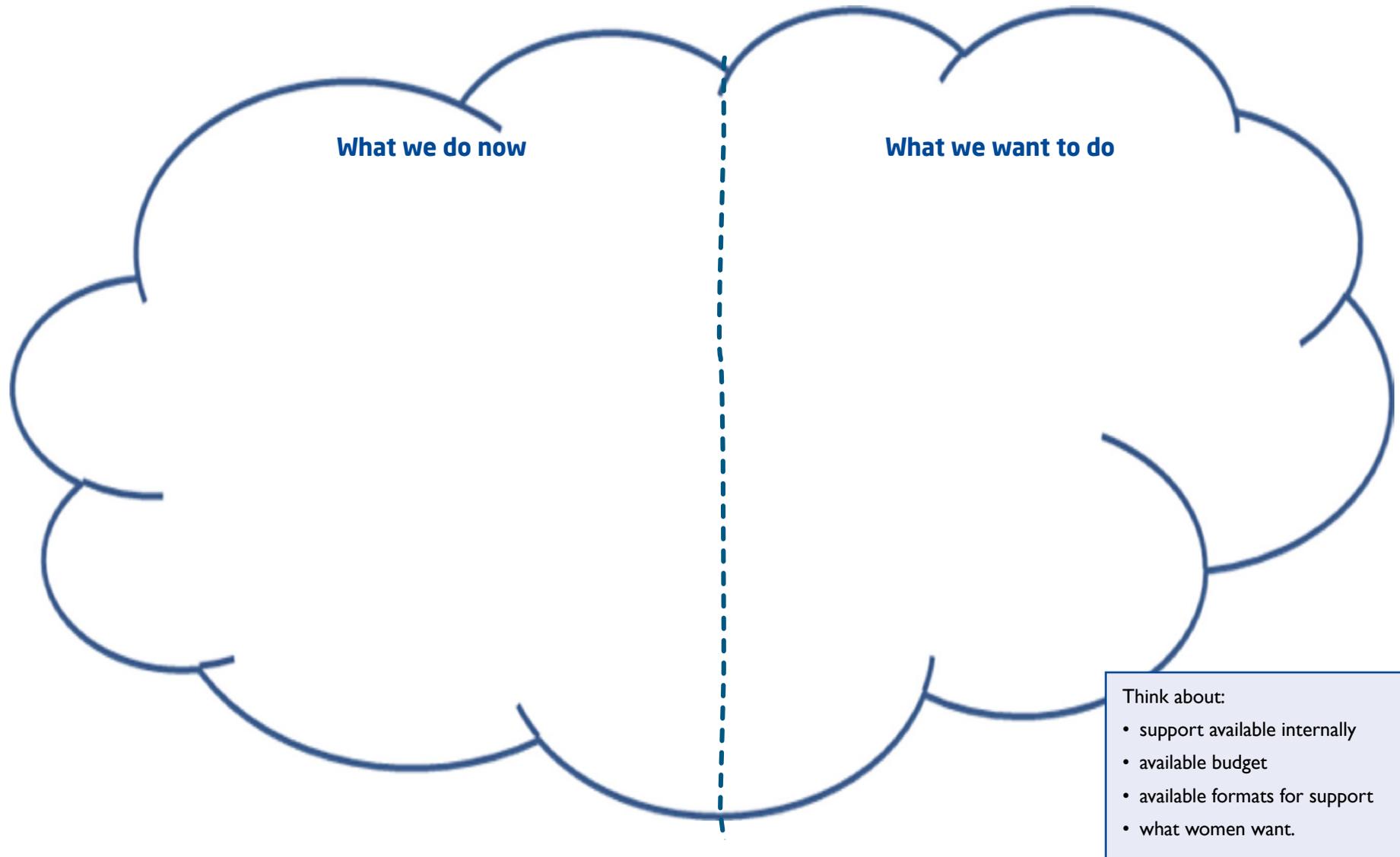
Developing as a coach

To ensure women stay coaching it is important that they stay engaged, motivated and valued: promoting a sense that they belong to your team.

[To identify ways that can develop your women coaches, see the Develop Factsheet.](#)



Retain





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Partners

