



World Rowing Women in Coaching Toolkit

January 2022



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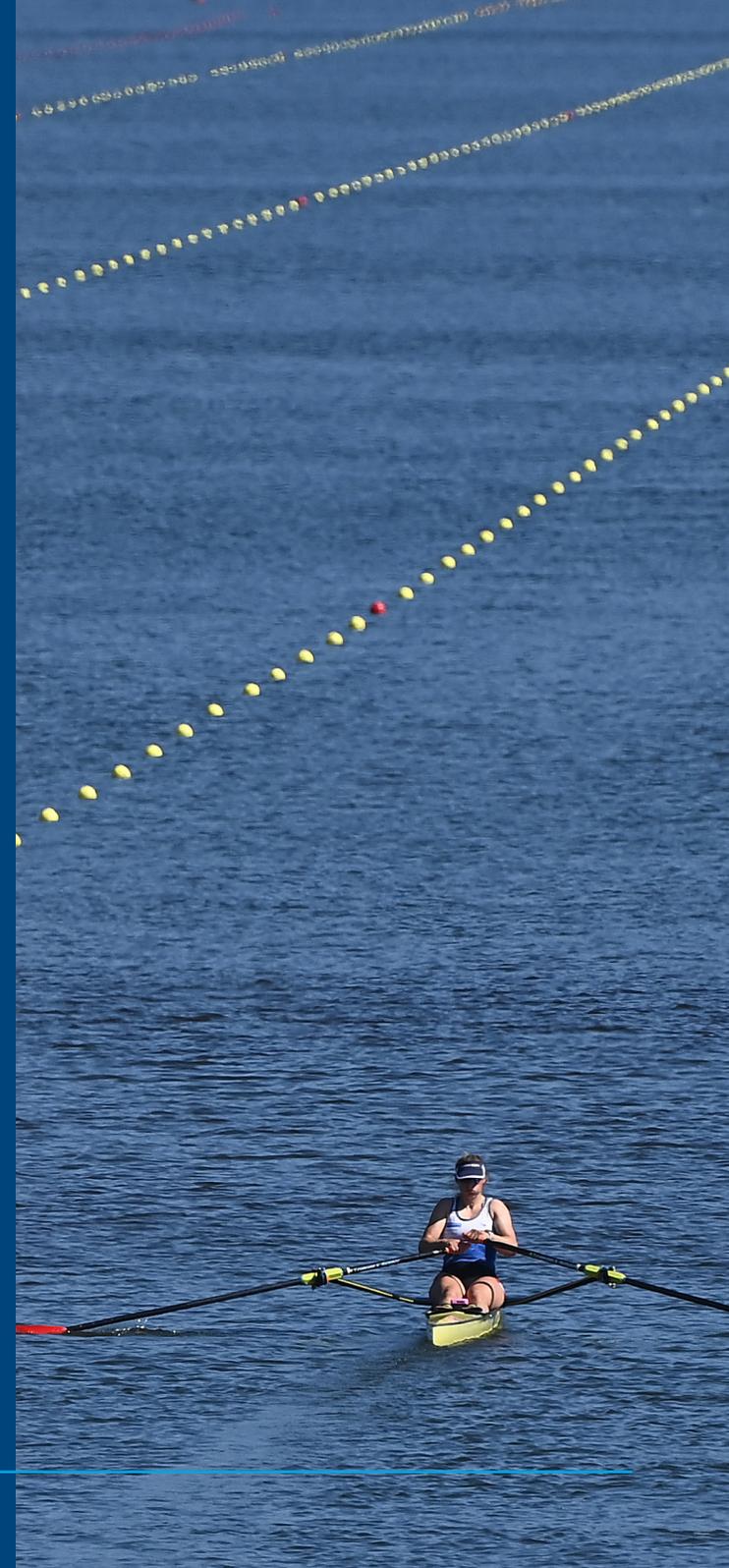
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Glossary of Terms

World Rowing: The World Rowing Federation, previously named FISA (from the French, Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d’Aviron) is the governing body of the sport of rowing. It is empowered by its 156 member National Rowing Federations.

Coaching: A process that provides guidance, feedback and direction to enable participants or performers to achieve their goals in their chosen sport /physical activity.

Coach: A qualified person who plans and delivers sports training, by applying demonstrable skills and knowledge, for performance, recreation or healthy goals in a safe manner.

Athlete/Rower: a person of any skill level who participates in the sport of rowing.

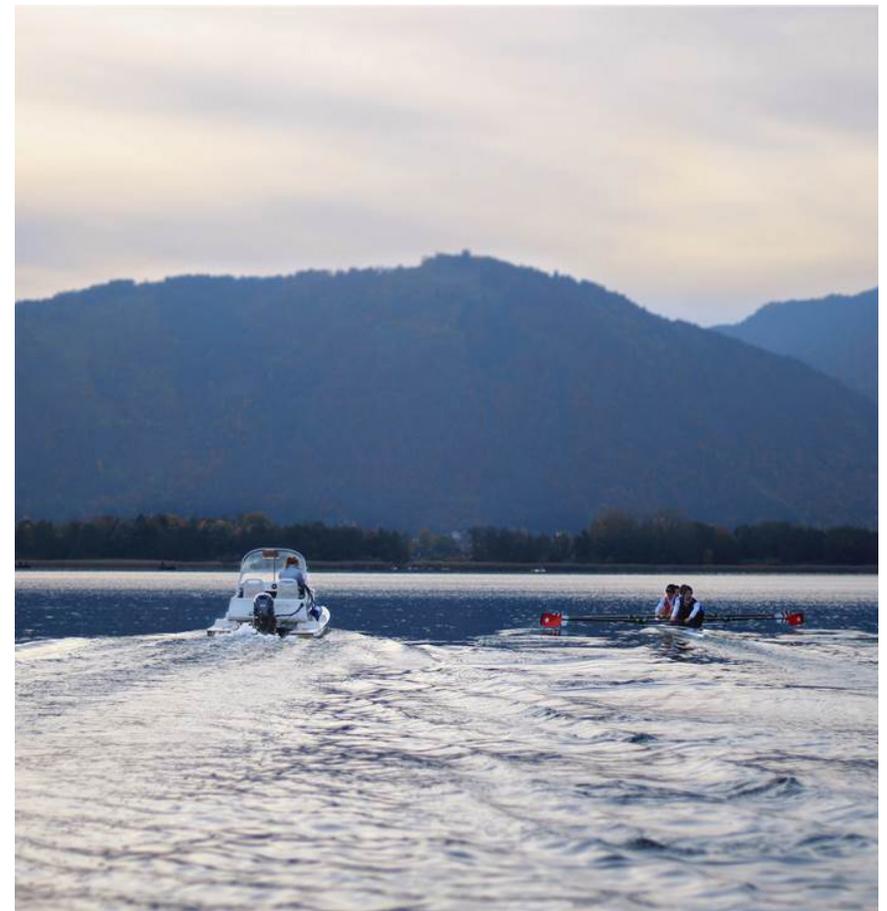
High Performance: refers to the highest level of the sport, requiring a strong understanding/grasp of the technical and physiological demands of the sport for the athlete and coach. High performance can refer to competing/coaching at continental and world level regattas, Youth Olympic Games and Olympic and Paralympic Games. Many National Rowing Federations classify their national programmes and teams as ‘high performance’.

Mentoring: Mentoring involves guiding and supporting the development of others. The mentor offers support to the coach they mentor on an ongoing basis. The mentor is central to help coaches find solutions to their issues and if appropriate, to help in developing coaches sport specific knowledge, skills and abilities. The mentor helps the mentee coaches identify what will work to develop their coaching in the environment where they operate.

Co-coaching: is a two-way learning opportunity. The coaches come together for a session or a longer period to learn from each other’s coaching style and methods, provide and receive feedback and gain multiple perspectives.

Shadow coaching or observing: Coach joins another coaches’ session to observe and learn from their coaching style, approach and methods.

Both co-coaching and shadow coaching are most effective when a framework is used for the observation and a discussion between the coaches follows the session.



Foreword

I am delighted to share this Women in Coaching Toolkit with you all. This guide has been designed to give you the facts about the numbers of women coaching, the main barriers stopping them from coming into coaching and most importantly to give ideas to help you recruit, develop and retain more women coaches.

I have been involved in rowing and coaching for a long time and have seen the huge rise in women rowing, but there is a time lag on women moving into coaching. A lack of role models, inflexible systems and the physicality of being a rowing coach are some of the many issues women face.

Coaches are key in developing and promoting the culture and environment in our rowing clubs and teams. Coaches are usually the first people to introduce participants to the sport and to help rowers to progress, if they want to do this. Most clubs would like more coaches and combined with the current underrepresentation of women it makes sense to enable them to coach. We need diversity in our rowing workforce. This guide should give you helpful ideas about how you might go about this.

If you have schemes and ideas that have worked for you and have led to an increase in number of women coaches, we would love to hear how you achieved this. Then we can add it to our case studies and share it within the rowing community.



Rosie Mayglothling, OLY

World Rowing Executive Member
Chair of the Competitive Commission

Introduction

Welcome to the World Rowing Women in Coaching Toolkit. This toolkit aims to support member federations with the recruitment, development and retention of female coaches in rowing.

Since the establishment of the World Rowing's Gender Equality Strategy in 2014, improving the gender balance of rowing coaches has been a key objective. Fundamental to this work is supporting our member federations in building their own national pathways for female coaches, embracing a culture that really wants to see women and men succeed.

Yet, we still see a stark gender imbalance among our rowing coaches, in particular at the high performance level. A series of surveys conducted by World Rowing showcases the gender breakdown of coaches within the rowing membership. Less than a quarter of registered club coaches are female and this proportion falls even lower at a national team level. The survey has also demonstrated that there has been little improvement in the number of female coaches since the first survey in 2013. For a sport reaching gender parity at a participation level, it is necessary that the same gender representation is achieved among its coaches.

There are still many barriers faced by female coaches from grassroots to elite levels. This toolkit aims to equip organisations and federations to take action to remove those barriers, put effective initiatives in place, and support female coaches along their coaching pathway.

The World Rowing Toolkit is an adaptation of the SCORE ('Strengthening Coaching with the Objective to Raise Equality') toolkit (ENGSO, 2014), World Rugby's Women Coaching Rugby Toolkit (World Rugby, 2020) and Sport Ireland's, Women in Coaching Toolkit (Sport Ireland Coaching, 2021).

The original SCORE Toolkit was developed as a European project, supported by the Erasmus+ Programme. The main partner in writing

the SCORE toolkit was UK Coaching. World Rowing acknowledges and welcomes the support given by them in allowing us to use their work and adapt it to make it more relevant for a rowing audience and therefore supporting World Rowing in meeting its objectives for women in coaching.





World Rowing Member Federation Survey

World Rowing conducted a survey of member federations in 2013, 2015, 2018 and 2021 to understand the gender breakdown of rowing coaches globally. The survey collected data of coaches at club level and national team level. The results from 2021 show there are still remarkable gaps between the number of men and women coaching.

	Female Club Coaches	Female National Team Coaches
2013	26%	13%
2015	28%	15%
2018	23%	18%
2021	29%*	19%*

*provisional statistics

Whilst the National Team Coaches saw marginal increases between 2013 and 2018, these figures don't represent the highest levels of coaching - Senior World Championship or Olympic level. **At the Senior World Championships in 2018, 9% of coaches were women.**

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is one initiative by World Rowing to tackle the underrepresentation of female coaches. It supports member federations with recommendations and suggestions to develop and encourage female coaches along the coaching pathway and create an environment which is more gender diverse and inclusive. The toolkit identifies good practices within rowing and other sports to successfully develop female coaches.

In order to effect change, commitment is needed from the leadership of our sport organisations. This toolkit and the key messages are aimed at coach educators, coach developers and coaching managers, as well as performance directors, CEOs and board members.

CEOs and board members should – drive change in their organisation to get more women into coaching and support the growth and effectiveness of the coaching workforce; to assist in raising awareness and understanding of the current landscape and issues; set targets and aspirations; allocate resources and support achievement in these areas.

High performance directors and heads of coaching should – support development of strategies, succession planning and take proactive steps to identify, develop, deploy and employ women at HP levels; to develop and sustain a pipeline of female coaches to support enjoyment, progression and wellbeing of all participants.

Coach Educators and Mentors should – identify, recruit and develop female coaches through specific interventions which enable access to qualifications, experience and deployment/employment into coaching roles for women at all levels; to allow women to thrive within the sport and to develop a diverse, effective and sustainable workforce.



Why do we need more female coaches?



World Rowing is committed to increasing women's involvement in all aspects of rowing, including coaching, as set out in the guiding principles:

Equality of Opportunity & Fairness: World Rowing seeks to ensure quality and fairness of opportunity, both in competition and across all levels of the organisation.

Inclusion & Non-discrimination: World Rowing is committed to inclusion and accessibility, strives for gender equality, and does not tolerate any form of discrimination.

Over the last decade, female participation in rowing has made big strides. For the first time, rowing at the Tokyo Olympic Games had an equal number of seats for male and female rowers. The Junior, Under 23 and Senior World Championships offer gender equal boat classes. The participation of female athletes at championship events is progressing towards parity. This gender parity should also be reflected in coaching.

There are many benefits to increasing female coaches, here are just a few:

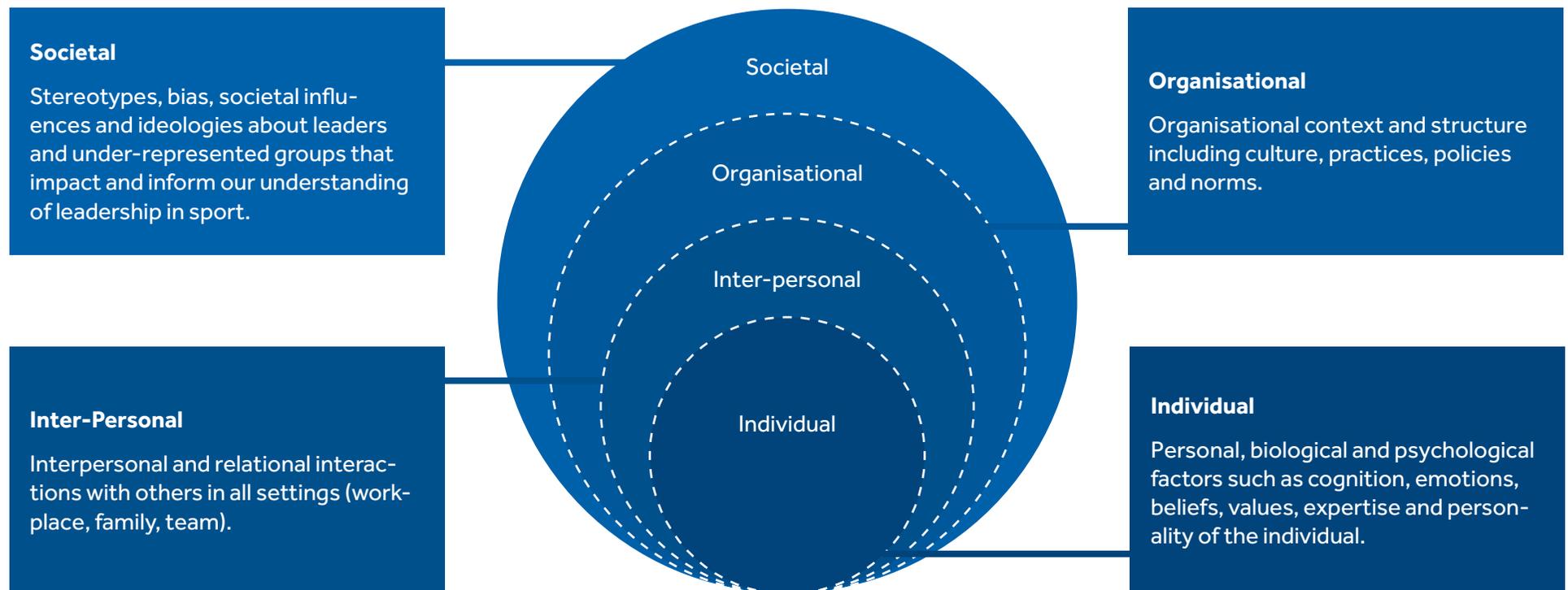
- Increased female coaching role models will encourage young female rowers to move into coaching or sport administration roles beyond their time as an athlete.
- A diverse coaching team will relate to a broader reach of athletes and help with retention. Whilst some athletes may work better with male coaches, others with female, or just with those with a similar background. The more diverse the coaching team, the more athletes will be accommodated.
- More women coaches equates to more coaches.
- Diversity of minds coming together can bring more solutions, as every individual brings their own way of thinking, operating and problem solving.
- Diversity brings different talents and different skills to a team that others can learn from.
- More female coaches can help to create a more inclusive training environment for female athletes, leading to higher retention.

Why are so few women coaching?

Barriers and Challenges

There are a range of inter-linking challenges which women face in coaching; these are exacerbated at the higher levels of rowing. These challenges need a holistic proactive approach in order to increase the numbers of women coaching.

LaVoi & Dutove (2012) examined the extensive literature on the barriers and supports for female coaches and identified a set of complex, multidimensional barriers and supports which occur at different proximities to a coach.



Societal Issues

- Cultural issues in some countries around the role of women make it difficult to be appointed into coaching or leadership roles.
- Women can be "...over-mentored and under-sponsored..." They need access to power networks in order to be credible and visible.
- Sport reflects wider society: socialisation of both genders contributes to the gendered roles; just as in business, where there is still a lack of females in leadership roles, sport is no different.
- Gender stereotypes still exist around what is acceptable for women who work in high performance roles. In some cultures, women are still more likely to have their ability to commit to high performance coaching questioned by others if they have a family. Linked to this is that often there are different expectations of women, allied with their own choice in valuing their time with children and partners.
- The default position in sport is one of hegemonic masculinity.

Organisational Barriers

- Recruitment processes: An unconscious hiring bias can exist in rowing clubs and organisations. Often the appointment of lead coaching roles can be an informal process, in particular when the coaching roles are voluntary. This leads to a continuation of 'appointing who you know' rather than casting the net wider and seeking diversity.
- Opportunities to gain experience: There can be a lack of development opportunities for coaches to develop the required experience to apply for high performance roles. The lack of a coaching pathway, discourages female coaches from following their coaching ambitions.
- Perceptions of female high performance coaches. There can be a perception among rowers that male coaches are better than female coaches. This can be down to the current lack of visible female HP coaches and that successful coaches are often portrayed as a male coaches. This can lead athletes to consider male coaches being better, rather than recognising the wider competencies required in the role.
- Lack of female networks: Women coaches do not have as well established formal or informal networks and peer support as male coaches.

Individual and Interpersonal Issues

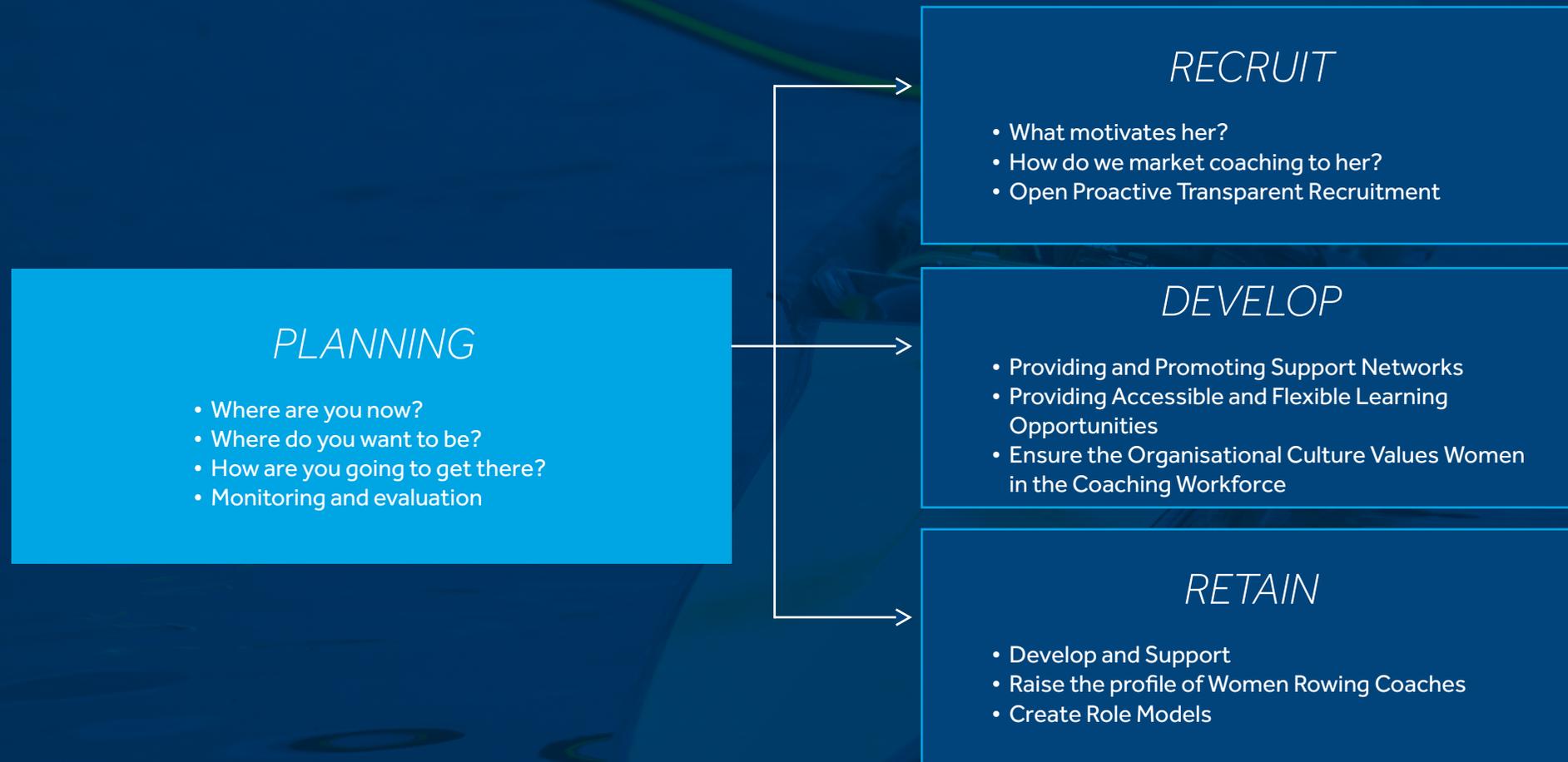
- The confidence gap: Women can sometimes lack confidence in certain situations. This lack of confidence impacts on whether or not they put themselves forward for roles, whether they attend coaching courses which are dominated by men, and whether they recognise that their own skills and competencies make them a suitable candidate for a role.
- Lack of exposure to HP environments to gain knowledge and experience.
- Actuality and perceptions of coaching roles: time, commitment, the environment.
- Women are still expected to balance work and family demands.
- Female coaching values and philosophies are not always respected in a HP environment, meaning female coaches cannot be their true selves and therefore underperform in their role.
- Pressure on those in the system: they represent all women, have to be better than anyone else, can feel isolated and are sometimes expected to do everything. They can also be marginalised when they are deployed in coaching roles. Research shows that those who do get through the system to the highest level have to be amazingly resilient and many suffer burn-out after a number of years and are lost to sport.



How to use your Women in Coaching Toolkit

The following chapters will guide you through the planning, recruitment, development and retention phases of your project to increase and support women in coaching.

You will be able to dip in and out and review the sections that best address your needs. You will find useful case studies from within the sport of rowing and from other sports, to inspire your future initiatives.



Planning

To increase the quantity and quality of female coaches in your organisation, you first should understand where you are now, where you want to be and how you are going to get there.

Planning and research are essential to ensure that time and resources are used in the most effective way. Before you start your planning, consider who within your organisation needs to be involved in the process. Any plan will work best when it is owned by the key internal stakeholders of the organisation and not just driven by one individual.



Where are you now?

Before you develop your plan, you must understand the starting point for your organisation. The exploration of your organisation's coaching environment should be quantitative and qualitative. Describe the reality, the current situation in terms of female coaches participation and the level they currently coach in.

Audit

Chart the current status of coaching based on gender within your organisation. What is the number and percentage of the following?

- Registered coaches
- Qualified coaches - Introduction, Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3
- Employed Coaches
- National Team Coaches
- Attendance at Coaching Courses, seminars and conferences

If you don't currently track gender for coaches, add it to the information your organisation collects. Start a rowing coaches database.

Consult

Speak to your women coaches. You should understand your coaches to understand what they need.

- Why do they coach?
- What do they enjoy about coaching?
- What challenges do they face as coaches?
- What would they change in their rowing federation?
- What current support mechanisms work well for them?
- What strategies would they propose to their club, school, association, federation to address the under-representation of women in coaching in their particular context?

For more details on how to conduct your own focus group see [How to conduct a focus group](#).

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Investigate

It is equally important to consult with women who have stopped coaching and understand why they stopped coaching and what would encourage them to start coaching again.

This can be completed through surveys or focus groups. Make sure to get a fair representation in your analysis, from across your federation - include coaches of varied age groups and from different regions.



Where do you want to be?

Following the audit and consultation with women coaches in your federation, you should be able to understand the current coaching landscape and the challenges and barriers women coaches face. You now should establish, as a federation, where do you want to be and why?

Targets

As a federation or organisation, targets should be set as a team. It is important to get consensus on what the goal is, and that any target is realistic and achievable with the measures put in place. At the same time, targets should be meaningful to your organisation and show your commitment to achieving gender equality in coaching.

For example, the guidance from the European Union, derived from the European Commission (2014) identifies the following targets for female 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.

Choose a goal that works with your existing coaching system. For example, look at the gender breakdown of athletes participating and use that as a benchmark for coaches achieving their Level 1 coaching accreditation. Once achieved, set a more ambitious target.

The targets can relate to the overall coaching workforce or set different targets at the different levels of accreditation or at a national level. The targets can be set for the short and long term. The most important thing is that they can be achieved and there is buy in from the whole federation/organisation to achieve them.

Barriers and Challenges

Understand the barriers and challenges to achieving your targets. Review the Barriers and Challenges section and your own investigation with women coaches within your organisation.

How are you going to get there?

You should try to identify the gaps between where you are now and where you want to be; this is known as a gap analysis.

One of the most important parts of planning is setting goals. It is a way of focusing the implementation of the plan and 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 women rowing coaches, consider the following to include in your plan.

What insight can be gained from your own organisation or others?

- Review past or existing projects run by your organisation with gender equality as a focus. What can you learn from their outcomes?
- Review what other sports in your country are doing to improve gender equality, in coaching or other aspects of sport. What can you learn from their programmes?
- Review other national rowing federations programmes to increase women in coaching. Are similar programmes going to help achieve your targets?

See [Appendix](#) for National Rowing Federations coaching programmes.

Understanding the culture of your own organisation and sport?

Consider how women, and in particular, female coaches are perceived throughout your organisation and the sport?

- What is the perception of rowing in your country? Is it a predominantly male sport?
- How many women work in development?
- How many women are on your senior management team and board?
- How do you publicise rowing externally? Do you predominantly use images of men rowing and coaching?

- Are there any high-profile male coaches who promote and support female coaching?
- What policies do you have in place that support and protect your coaching workforce (e.g. employment, health, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment/bullying, maternity policies)

Changing the culture and profile of an organisation takes time, yet understanding how women are perceived and where they are under-represented is a starting point for making those changes.

Utilise the Allies in your sport

Male advocates are vital to support and drive changes in process, policy and awareness, to ensure that women have real access to roles at the highest level to benefit the sport as a whole.

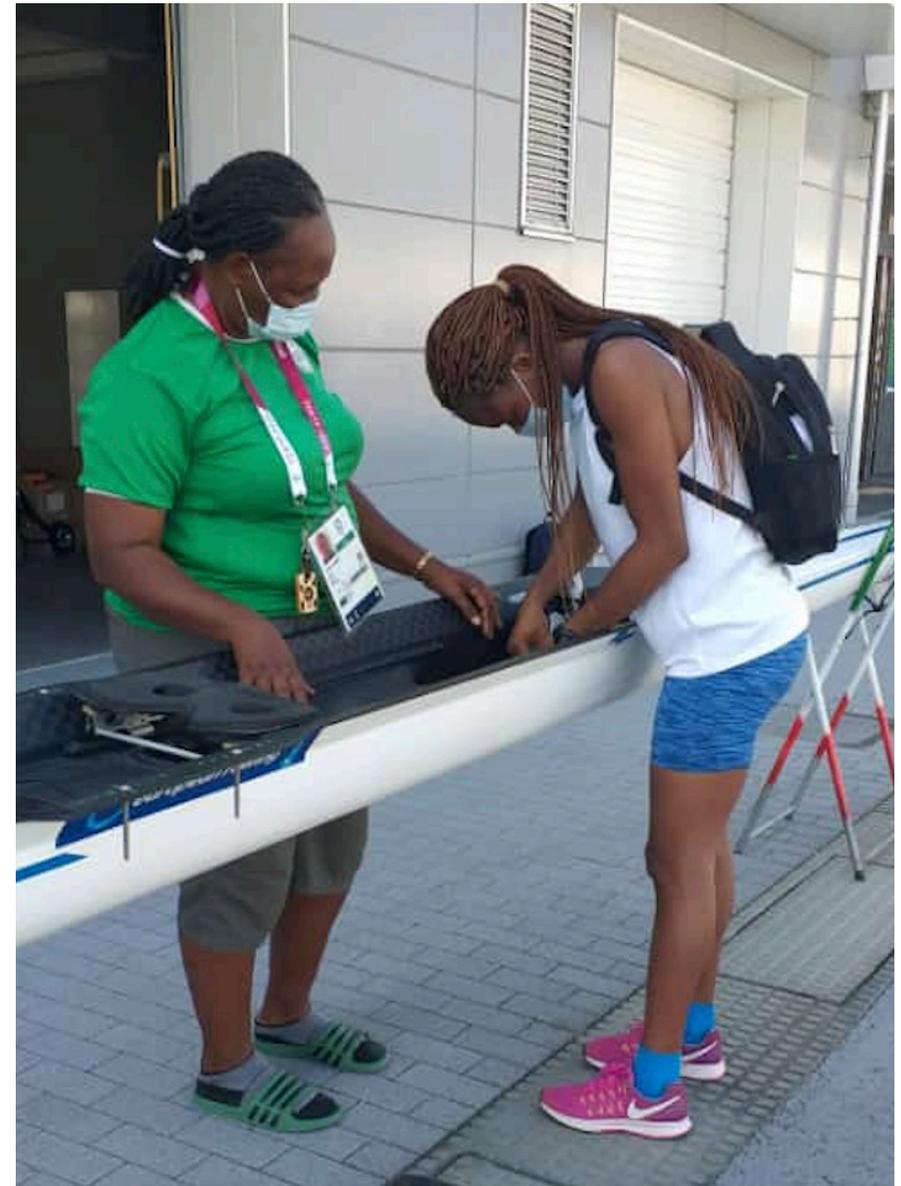
The IOC second gender equality webinar series introduced the concept and benefits of male allyship, and how such allies play a key role in achieving greater gender equality in sport. World Rowing President Jean-Christophe Rolland reiterated the value of diversity within teams:

“Having women and diverse profiles [as] part of the team will help the organisation reach better decisions with different approaches. I see it as a fantastic opportunity.” (IOC Media, 2021)

You should ensure your male coaches are sufficiently aware and confident to support their female peers developing as coaches within rowing. They should have awareness of the gender gap, understand the barriers faced and be part of the changes implemented. There needs to be male and female voices advocating for change.

The United Nations (UN) launched an international campaign #HeFor-She which resolves to promote gender equality by raising awareness among men so that they can play a role in supporting women. This campaign and its sentiments could easily translate into coaching.

The Tucker Centre in the USA has also developed a similar campaign – [“Be an Ally”](#) (Tucker Center, 2019) asking people to ‘Be Vocal’, ‘Educate Yourself and Others’ and ‘Promote Female Leadership’.



Monitoring and Evaluation

Even in the planning phase, it is important to consider how you will monitor and evaluate your plan over time. You must ensure that your organisation is capturing the data you need to be able to show progress annually on any actions implemented. The audit carried out in the planning phase will act as your baseline, against which you can measure progress.

You will need to capture qualitative data e.g. questionnaires for feedback after a course and quantitative e.g. number of females attending coaching courses. This will help build the whole picture and continue to inform the areas that need focus. Can your organisation capture the number of women coaches actively coaching annually? Consider a registration system for coaches, or including coach reporting in club affiliation to try capture this information.

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 numerical target but also changes you would like to achieve in your programmes or systems - 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?

Achieving across-the-board gender equality in sport also requires clear timelines for action, with identified responsibilities, and follow up monitoring and evaluation.
(International Olympic Committee, 2018)



Planning Action List

- If your organisation does not collect gender in its coaching data, edit any admin processes to ensure going forward all data can be sorted by gender. This will direct your efforts on the areas of coaching that need focus. E.g. Level 1 or High Performance.
- Consult with stakeholders via surveys and focus groups; women coaches (active and inactive), coach developers, male coaches, administrators. Identify the barriers and what supports are needed for women coaches in your organisation.
- Consult and research other sports or rowing organisations in other countries for resources and programme ideas.
- Issue an annual survey to coaches asking some of the questions outlined in this toolkit. Discover their motivations, barriers and challenges to coaching.
- Establish a Women in Coaching Working Group in your organisation to guide, support your coaching plan and help define the goals and targets.
- Work with others in the organisation, including those responsible for coach development where applicable, to set goals and targets.
- Establish a Women in Coaching Action Plan for your organisation
- Ensure other staff and development officers are aware of the information in this toolkit. Host a team webinar to outline your Action Plan for Women in Coaching, include them in the development of it.
- Periodically review and evaluate how your Coaching Action Plan is going and your progress against your set targets.

Recruit

Coaching is a vitally important aspect of sport. Coaches have a big impact on people starting rowing and staying in the sport. It is important that you have a diverse coaching workforce that can meet the needs of each one of your participants and that reflects your current and potential rowers.

RECRUIT



What motivates her?

- Belonging
- Purpose and Achievement
- Mastery
- Autonomy



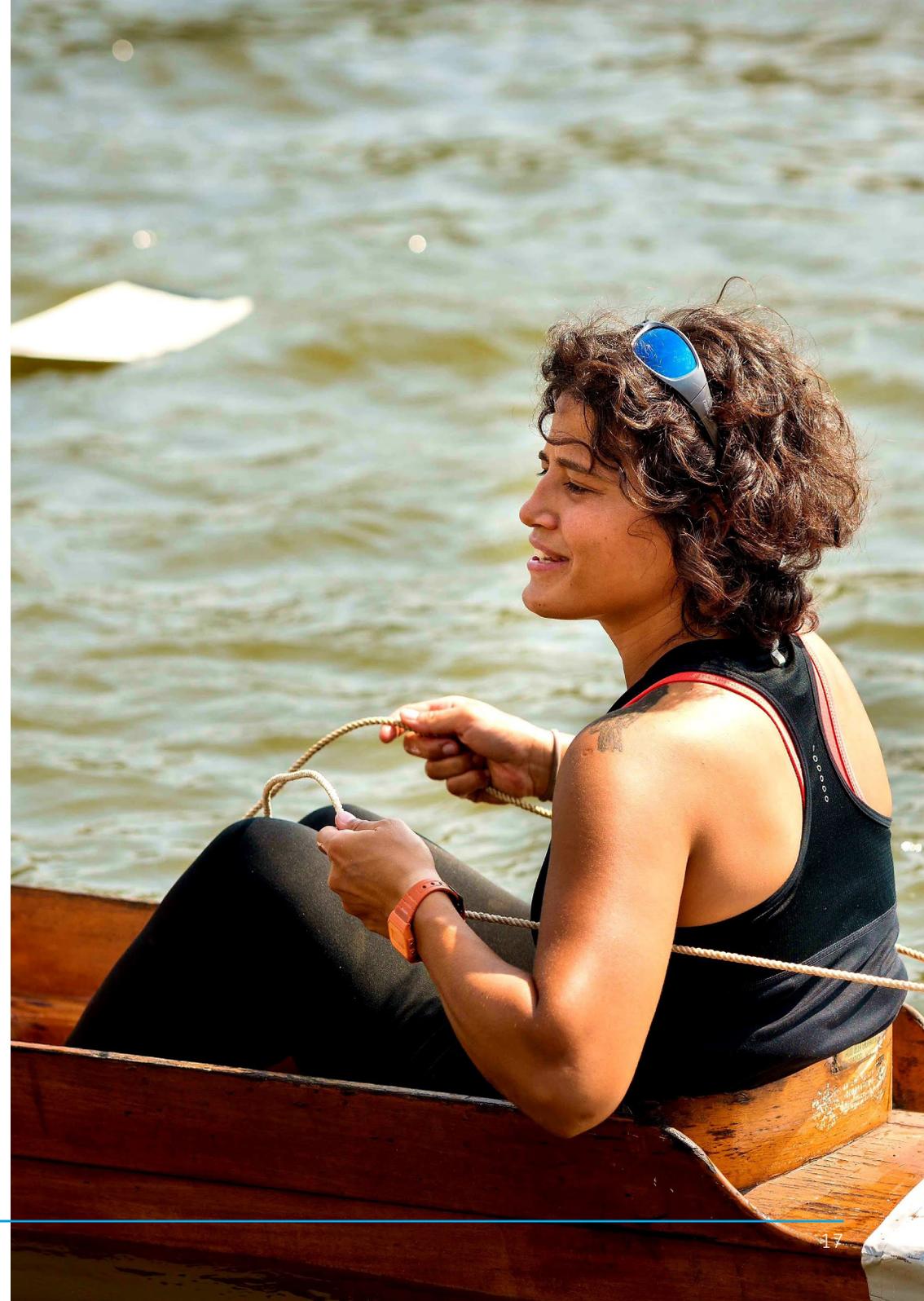
How do we market coaching to her?

- Appealing to Women
- Where to Find Coaches?



Open, Proactive, Transparent recruitment

- Advertising roles
- Application and interview process
- Unconscious Bias
- Monitor Applications.



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. In order to establish how women will be attracted and recruited to coaching you have to understand what motivates them to coach?

This can either be found in existing research or through your own focus groups to establish why rowing coaches, coach.

Key motivations as to why people get involved:

1. Belonging - to feel part of something and a valued member of the team
2. Purpose and Achievement - to have a sense of impact and something to work towards
3. Mastery - to have opportunities to learn, improve and be the best they can
4. Autonomy - to have the space to make decisions and take ownership.



How do we market coaching to women?

When you know what motivates women coaches, what could you put in place to attract more women to get involved in coaching?

Change the offer to suit the women you are targeting

Promote it based on the key motivating factors for women

Make Coaching the 'norm' for women

Promote female coaching role models in the sport, not only the top coaches but those who have taken different journeys into coaching and coach at different levels and capacities. It can reinforce the message that coaching could also 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 coach. Overcoming practical barriers, eg. convenient child minding facilities, may only support those who are already confident in the sport and environment. Emotional barriers can't be overlooked.

Appealing to Women

World Rowing Coaching Surveys have demonstrated that for many rowing federations, the coaching workforce is predominantly male. The likelihood of coaching courses and workshops will be attended mainly by men. There should be an awareness that this may be overwhelming or uncomfortable for some female coaches and a barrier to them attending. The following are some considerations that may address this:

Women-only courses.

These can be useful as a first step onto the ladder to “get them in”, removing the fear some women have which prevents them joining existing courses. Then you can further build women’s confidence during the course.

Women-only courses may be needed in some countries to deal with cultural issues. This is where you need to develop your research and understanding of the barriers in your own organisation and assess where such approaches are relevant for you and your potential female coaches.

It is best to assess the need for women-only courses, by speaking with your coaches, or potential coaches. Identify whether they would be more likely to attend a women-only course.

Mixed Gender Courses & Learning Events

However, at some point it is important that women are encouraged into gender neutral environments. This transition can be managed and supported if you focus on the needs of the individual. Monitor your attendees at these learning events and take the time to proactively invite female coaches to the session.

There are great benefits from mixed courses and events:

- Sharing different approaches to coaching
- Learning from each other’s personal experiences
- Reducing the instance of gender-based negative attitudes as relationships can be developed in a neutral environment where everyone is learning together
- Building the visibility and credibility of female coaches
- Developing the networks for female coaches.

Women should coach in both male and female rowing teams, as men do, so at some point it is important to open female coaches up to wider environments and experiences. If this is managed correctly for the individual, then the confidence and self-efficacy of the women will also be enhanced.

Provide a Coaching Journey with Support

Another way to support the recruitment and development of female coaches would be to provide pre-course evenings (and ongoing mentoring support before, during and after the course) for potential female coaches. You can then provide information on what the course will involve, build confidence for the women to step into the actual course and reduce any anxiety by ensuring there are other women on the course with them.

After the course, look to signpost and support female coaches into active coaching roles and continue the support through mentoring, peer support and ongoing, continuous professional development opportunities.

WHERE TO FIND COACHES

Re-engagement of inactive coaches

Female coaches can stop coaching for a number of reasons over their lifetime. For example, they may have stopped for time related reasons of trying to balance work, family and coaching; for personal reasons such as moving house or pregnancy or for club related reasons such as management issues.

Many coaches would return if an organisation or club were to reach out and personally invite them.

Consider the following to encourage them to return to coaching:

- Organisation and club support like co-coaching, mentoring, peer support.
- Ensure there is acknowledgement and appreciation of coaches.
- Flexibility with coaching commitment, coaching qualifications and upskilling.

Community around the Athlete

If you want more women coaching at a community level, then looking at parents, grandparents, relations, athletes, organisers and teachers within your clubs, universities, colleges and schools is very important. All those involved in rowing, or who have a family member rowing, are potential coaches.

Many women will not put themselves forward but a “tap on the shoulder” may help them believe they can do it. Speak to these women and girls. They may not only wish to get involved themselves but also know their community and can act as influencers in getting more people active and motivated.

Retired rowers

Not all athletes want to coach when they finish rowing or competing but many will give it a go. Do not just expect individuals to nominate themselves. Relevant club members should approach them to get involved.

Not all rowers will step into coaching immediately. Some will want a break from the sport but then would love to get back involved. Those looking for new coaches should reach out to retired athletes each year to encourage them back into the sport.

Current Athletes

Rowers of any age can make great coaches. Don't forget about the underage athletes who can coach younger age groups.

It is beneficial for any level of athlete to do a coaching course and to get coaching experience. Most athletes find it can help their own performance by coaching others. Athletes can support /assist with junior or other teams/athletes in their clubs. Many current athletes have more confidence in their ability to coach while still involved in the sport themselves.

Elite athletes can sometimes find it hard to make time for coaching, however, as an elite athlete, they are at their most confident in terms of their knowledge of the sport and what they are doing in training to make them better. Getting involved in coaching at this time can be hugely beneficial in preparing them to move into a coaching role when they retire from competing.

Injured athletes are worthwhile coaching options while they try to return to their sport. It keeps them involved whilst they recover, and the new purpose can support them psychologically through the injury.

CASE STUDY 1

*Student Sport
Ireland
Women Student
Coaching
Academy*

Co-Coaching and Assistant Coaches

Co-coaching is a way of recruiting women into coaching. Working with another coach may have greater appeal, especially for coaches with time constraints, feeling nervous, or that they are not suitable for the role. Co-coaching, or being an assistant coach, 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 first step into coaching is useful in allowing women to build up their confidence slowly and recognise that they do have the necessary skills.

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. Being invited to try something provides women with a sense of belonging and support which promotes a sense of self-confidence to give it a go.

Encourage clubs to proactively seek out women to start coaching. Ensure clubs understand that a tap on the shoulder, a phone call, an email, are all more beneficial than a generic club message looking for coaches.

Proactive, Open and Transparent Recruitment

Paid coaching roles should have a transparent application, shortlisting, interview and feedback process in place to ensure all candidates are given a fair chance of being successful. All-male, closed coaching networks and recruiting from within at this level are no longer acceptable when considering the merits of a gender equal coaching workforce. 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 applicants. It is worth considering your recruitment process for volunteer roles also. Where an opportunity is available for a new coaching position which supports a coach's progression in the pathway – the same transparent and open recruitment process should apply.

A proactive, open and transparent process of recruitment will not only ensure that sports are getting the right person for the job, but it will demonstrate fairness and good practice to your participants and stakeholders. Some of the major barriers to women gaining roles at a high-performance level are linked to recruitment processes – these can apply to club coaching as well.

It is important that key decision makers within your organisation or club are aware of the following guidance and apply best practices when making coaching appointments, if we are to address the lack of women coaching at higher levels of the sport.

Provide Information about the Role

Women want details prior to applying for a coaching role or taking their first step into coaching. This can be done by:

- Posting information on your website
- Promoting information through various social media channels (add a hashtag # so you can monitor interest and field questions)
- Linking with women's groups and coaching networks to advertise the post
- Word of mouth: inform your existing coaches and athletes and get them to talk to their own social circle.

Job Description (or Role Profile) and Application Process.

Research has shown that women look at a job description and won't apply unless they can do 100% of the role, whilst men will apply if they feel they can do 60%. This is known as the confidence gap.

Rather than long application forms, welcome letters of application, which allow women to highlight their achievements and experience, and phone calls where prospective applicants can talk through the role and have a person-to-person discussion about their suitability for the role.

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.

Research showed how changing the wording in the job description can reduce the unconscious bias towards male recruitment. Importantly, the research showed that the changing of words did not lead to a reduction in males applying (Norman, 2015).

The following links provide further information in how to review and change your job descriptions and adverts to reduce gender bias and widen your talent pool:

- [How to take gender bias out of your job ads](#) (Nobel, 2016)
- [10 Ways to Remove Gender Bias from Job Descriptions](#) (Glassdoor, 2021)

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 on their senior management team, the Board and committees. These are the key decision-makers in the sport and should be role models for the rest of the organisation. Greater representation by women at decision making level should allow for greater representation throughout the workforce, including coaching.

Unconscious Bias

It is crucial for decision-makers to recognise the possible impact of "unconscious bias", which affects us all in recruiting new staff. People tend to recruit people who look and think like them. Awareness and positive action to limit unconscious bias in recruitment is therefore important in ensuring access to roles for women. A diverse interview panel can also help limit issues of unconscious bias.

Be proactive about ensuring the panel understand the broad range of coaching behaviours and values which can bring success in coaching.

For more detail on unconscious bias please see the useful infographic [here](#) (UK Coaching, 2019).

Monitor Applications

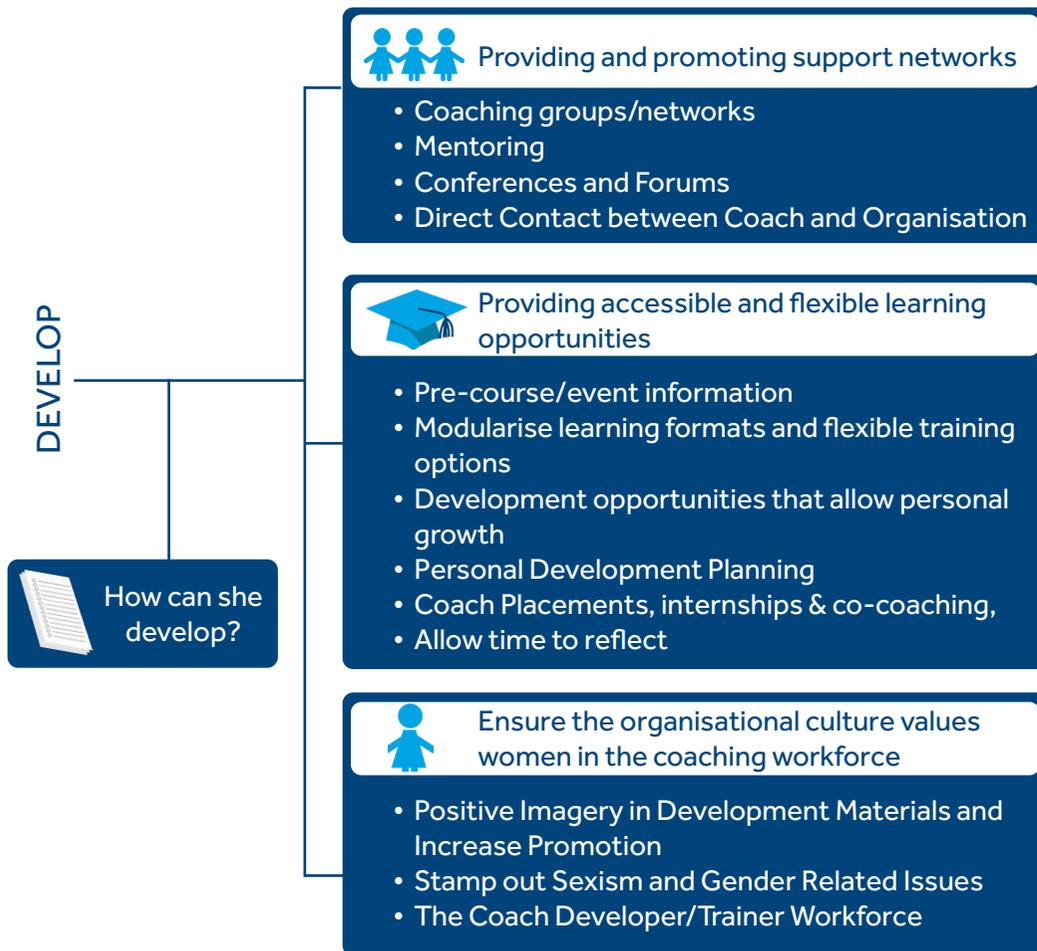
Irrespective of the level of coach you are recruiting, make sure you record details of all applications submitted, including monitoring data relating to the person applying for the job. This will help you understand what interest you are receiving from different demographic groups, and therefore what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



Recruitment Action List

- Discover the values and motivations of women coaches in your organisation. One on one conversations, focus groups and questionnaires can support this.
- Promote women coaches in your organisation or from across rowing to create role models and inspire others to coach. E.g., short interviews, articles and videos.
- Add images of women coaches to all coaching resources and all promotional material.
- Develop club guidelines for recruiting women coaches using information in this toolkit to guide and advise clubs.
- Trial a women-only workshop/course and gather feedback from participants to support future courses.
- Look at how you advertise coaching courses, have you included enough information that ensures the coach knows exactly what to expect if attending?
- Commit to contacting all female attendees post-coaching course to follow up on their coaching journey.
- Create a specific coaching programme for elite athletes in your sport to prepare them for transitioning into a coaching role post-retirement.
- Ensure your organisation has a transparent recruitment process in place whereby all application shortlisting, interviews and feedback stages have both women and men on the panel.
- With all job descriptions, provide contact details of someone whom applicants can contact to discuss the job and seek more information before applying.
- Review and change your job descriptions and adverts to reduce gender bias.
- Introduce a gender policy that helps ensure women make the list of shortlisted candidates for interview. E.g., If five interviews are taking place, at least two females must be included.

Develop

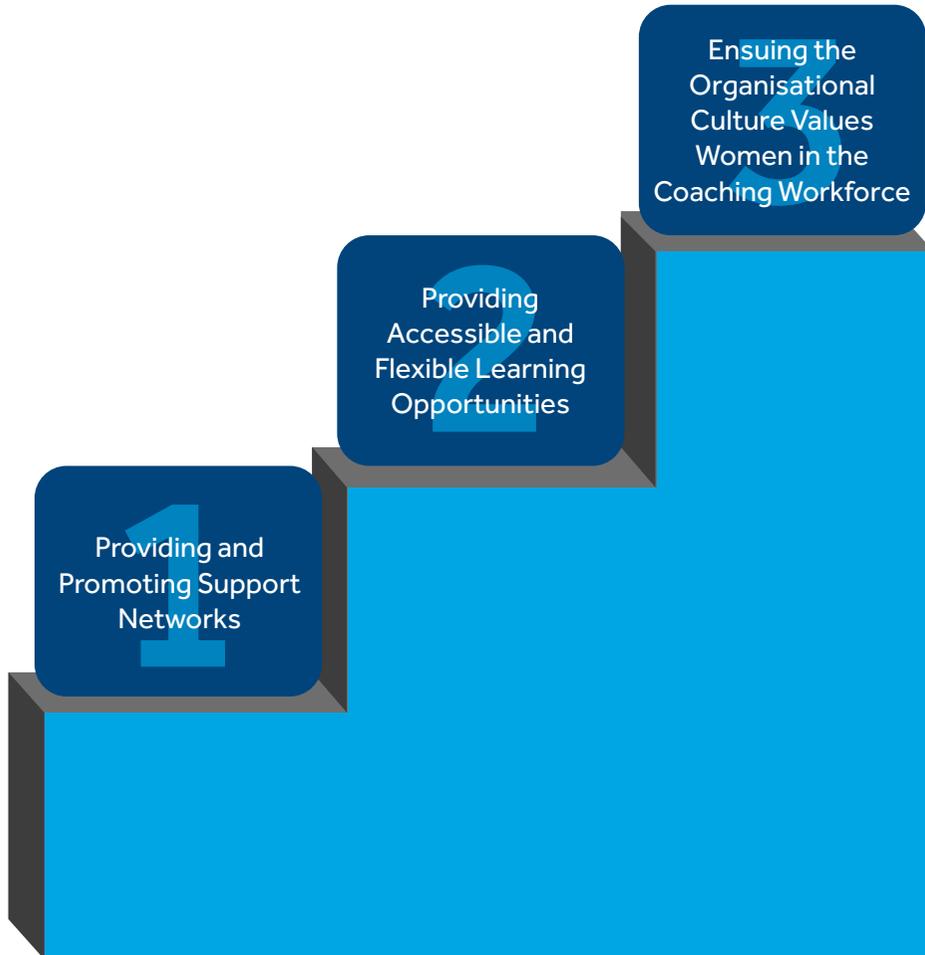


How can she develop?

How a coach learns depends very much on their own personal approach to learning. Women face barriers both to becoming a coach but also when developing as a coach. By considering different learning styles and thinking carefully about your coach education, development programmes and resources, you will likely create an improved set of education tools not only to meet the needs of women coaches but for all coaches and your wider workforce.



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



1 Providing and Promoting Support Networks

Access to Coaching Groups/Networks

Coaches benefit greatly from having support networks around them. Women value having access to support; this can either be one to one or in a group environment, within their own sport, or with other sports. Ways to develop women could be through access to online (or in-person) coaching groups or networks, conferences, forums, mentoring, shadowing, co-coaching and direct contact by their federation or club. These can be mixed gender but the feedback suggests that female only networks yield a greater sense of support without judgement. Female coaches believe they can open up more, discuss coaching challenges and provide information to one another more comfortably when it is a female only group. However, that doesn't mean they should be restricted from mixed gender networks or events. A combination seems to be the best approach.

Federations should create a network of women rowing coaches and a larger one with women coaches from other sports. A network of female coaches would make it possible to share coaching tips, or unexpected and complex situations. This network would not be public in order to express oneself freely without fear of being judged. Members could be co-opted by someone from the network. Be confident to dare to ask questions between us.

(Christine Gossé, National Coach for France 2001-21, Head Coach of the French Women's National Team 2013-21)

Mentoring

Mentoring is widely acknowledged as an increasingly more powerful and important aspect of developing people in sport, including leaders, officials and coaches.

There are a variety of definitions about what mentoring is. Across all the different definitions, mentoring is characterised by an intense 'caring' and 'guiding' quality. A key principle of mentoring coaches is that the coach remains at the centre of their own development and the mentor supports as required. A mentor doesn't claim to have all the answers, but seeks to work with the coach to help them find the answers themselves.

Key barriers for many women to starting something new or progressing include confidence, gaining experience in the field (especially at a high-performance level), and access to informal and political/power networks. Having a mentor who can help check, challenge, advise and support a female coach can be a really powerful tool in addressing the issues and often opening doors to people and opportunities.

While the benefits of mentoring are widely acknowledged, it is important to note that not everyone can be a good mentor, especially if they haven't received any training. For example, the Head Coach in a club might be a fantastic coach, but it doesn't mean that they are a suitable mentor. Successful mentoring programmes include an element of mentor training whereby individuals understand how to build the relationship with their mentees and support them rather than tell them. Mentors can also come from other sports, rather than within rowing all the time.

CASE STUDY 2

Rowing Ireland Women in Coaching Networks



The Coaching Association of Canada have created mentorship resources to support the development of your own mentoring programme:

[Mentorship Guides for Advancing Women in Coaching](#) (Coaching Association of Canada and Canadian Women & Sport, 2017)

- i. Mentee Guide
- ii. Mentor Guide
- iii. Sport Administrator Guide

World Rowing's WSLA HPC Programme effectively used mentoring to develop five ambitious women coaches.

CASE STUDY 3

*World Rowing
WSLA HPC
Case Study*

Conferences and Forums

Face to face networking events are important. Though technology increasingly saves us time, social gatherings foster quality relationships and meaningful exchanges. Building relationships and a sense of belonging are both important values to women. Providing access to an event where women can meet other women who they have something in common with can help develop their self-confidence and build networks of ongoing support.

As we increasingly recognise the importance of diversity in a coaching workforce, it is also important to recognise that female coaches should not just engage with other female rowing coaches in an exclusive network. Female coaches want to learn from other coaches (of both genders), in other sports and other countries.

Direct contact between coaches and the organisation

Having direct contact in place between your organisation and your coaches will help you identify more readily what development your coaches need. It will also help you identify which of your coaches are still actively coaching, which will help your ongoing evaluation and monitoring.

Keep in touch through regular emails and newsletters to update the coach on developments within your organisation and opportunities

available to them. Conducting surveys can provide direct feedback, 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 female coaches.



2 Providing Accessible and Flexible Learning Opportunities

Pre-course/event information and flexible learning opportunities

A further barrier for women accessing learning events is not knowing what to expect when they attend the event /workshop. By providing sufficient information about the event /workshop/programme, you are more likely to have more female coaches register for it. This information can be made available through your normal promotion channels, i.e., on the website, Eventbrite page, social media, etc. but think also about sending out personalised emails with information inviting them to attend. A direct email also provides a contact for any questions they may have. Provide the following information:

- Date, time, cost and location of the event.
- The schedule of events including a breakdown of classroom-based learning, practical exercises and assessments taking place.
- Who is the event suitable for, i.e., what level coach? (State beginners or no knowledge of the sport if applicable).
- What the learning outcomes will be.
- Information about when the 'downtime' and on-course breaks are.
- Who is leading each session (with contact details and bio of the person 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?
- Ensure female images are included on all promotional/marketing material.

Another point to note is to ensure all communication regarding coach development reaches the female coaches. Ensure your organisation and clubs have appropriate communication and promotional channels in place so that information filters down through all your members.

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. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of different formats in which learning can be delivered is growing all the time, as well as people becoming more comfortable with online learning. 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 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.

Consider setting up an online group where a cohort of coaches can support each other by discussing topics and asking questions through a course. This is a good way for female coaches in particular to engage and the support can continue post course.

CASE STUDY 4

New Zealand Rowing Career Coach Programme

Development opportunities that allow personal growth, not just focusing on the technical skill.

Rowing coaching is wider than just knowing, and being confident in, the technical aspects of rowing. A coach engages regularly with people and is often seen as a leader requiring exceptional leadership skills and qualities.

As such they need to be confident in their own interpersonal and relationship-building skills.

Look at providing learning opportunities, particularly for women coaches, which:

- Develop self-confidence
- Build networks
- Develop self-reflection skills
- Promote the coach's wellbeing (physical and mental/emotional).

However, achieving 'traditional' coaching qualifications and accessing training is important for female coaches for a number of reasons:

- They have a sense of achievement which develops their self-confidence.
- It helps them build essential skills that can lead to leadership and/or employment opportunities.
- It provides evidence that they are qualified and safe to coach.
- They can then evidence their coaching achievements to other coaches and athletes. Many female coaches feel they need to be able to prove their level of coaching to gain the respect of their peers and participants.

Personal Development Planning

Spending time with coaches individually is important to identify what development they need. This is very much sport dependent and resources available. Developing a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) and Personal Development Plan (PDP) with them will help them feel valued and supported, as well as providing a log of what development opportunities are needed and being accessed.

Although the TNA and PDP will be completed by individual coaches, it can also be done in groups, with either a leader facilitating the group or peer-to-peer support.

View UK Coaching - [A Guide to Using Training Needs Analysis and Personal Development Plans](#) (Sports Coach UK, 2011)

Coach Placements, Internships and Co-Coaching

By linking coaches together with other coaches, or clubs, you can provide hands-on experience of what coaching entails at any level.

Likewise, placements or internships at the higher level will not only build knowledge and experience in the female coach, but it will also expose them to the often-closed networks of high performance and elite coaches, whilst building the credibility of women coaches among other coaches, management and athletes. This exposure and experience will prove invaluable in building a woman's confidence, to push her to apply for higher-level coaching jobs when they arise. It is also what clubs/employers are looking for (equal to or more than qualifications). So experiential learning is key and providing opportunities to accrue experience is vital for coaches to progress.

CASE STUDY 5
Canada Games
Apprenticeship Programme

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.

CASE STUDY 6
World Rugby
Internship Programme

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

Rowing New Zealand combined a number of development tools into one programme to develop women coaches toward High Performance coaching.

3 Ensuing the Organisational Culture Values Women in the Coaching Workforce.

Positive Imagery in Development Materials and Increase Promotion

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

If you used more images of women than men, would men stop wanting to be coaches? The answer is very likely no, but it could have a significant impact on how women perceive coaching (and rowing) and would encourage them to get involved.

Promoting your coaches will make them visible to your members. This can be done by 'Coach of the Month' acknowledgements. Regular coaching profile pieces on your website interviewing the coach.

Stamp out Sexism and Gender Related Issues

Across sport, often female coaches face challenges and have more negative experiences because of their gender or age in coaching related roles, particularly when dealing with male parents, male coaching colleagues and males in positions of management or administration.

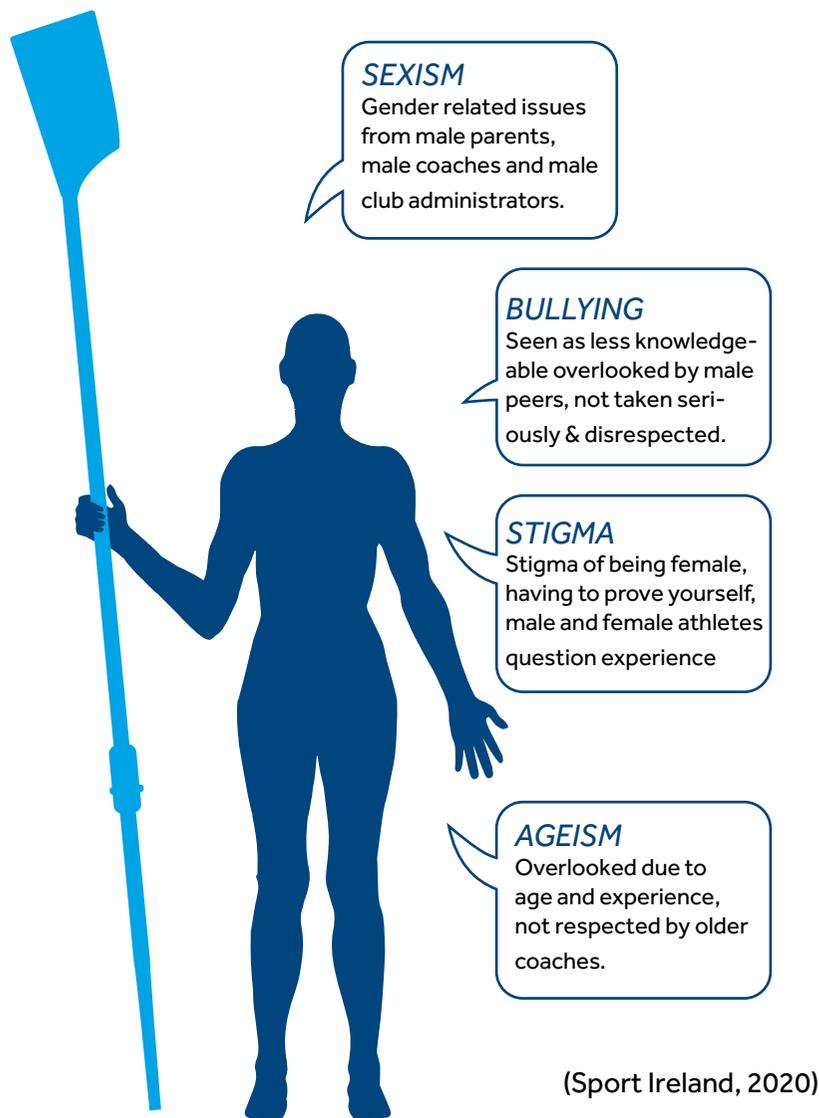
Whilst we must respect the importance a woman places on attaining qualifications and attending training courses as a way of developing their own self-confidence, it is the work of the organisation, clubs and other areas in sport to not tolerate a culture of sexism which often exists within coaching, 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 others.

UK Sport published the following infographics to highlight the stereotypes and gender biases faced by females in the coaching profession. They encourage organisations and individuals with a role

in sport to consider their own stereotypes and bias and support strategies and opportunities for women in coaching. (Gosai, Jowett & Rhind, 2022)

[Women and Coaching 1](#)
[Women and Coaching 2](#)
[Women and Coaching 3](#)

[Practical examples for dismantling biases](#)
[Strategies for individuals](#)
[Strategies for organisations](#)



It is not the way we say we get things done, such as strategies, policies or procedures. We need to examine how we really get things done: the values, rituals, shared assumptions, the traditions, the perceptions, the unwritten rules, the stories that circulate within our organisation. These create our organisational cultures... The pace of change in the make-up of the coaching profession is slow because it is an issue of cultural change, of deeply embedded ideas and behaviours within sport that have been so long in the making, they have become normalised...
(Norman, 2017)

The Coach Developer/Trainer Workforce

As with coaching, Coach Developers and training workforces can be predominantly male. Developing, deploying and promoting female Coach Developers or trainers at learning events may help encourage female attendance.

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.

Consider auditing the gender breakdown of your current coach developers, educators, mentors and tutors. As well as gender, consider the breakdown of various differences; age, ethnicity, disability, beginner, intermediate and advanced, length of coaching experience, etc. If there are significantly less females, explore the possibility of hosting a workshop to upskill female only Coach Developers.

This will also go some way towards changing the culture and perception of females in rowing coaching, as the female coach developers will be in positions to share their knowledge and expertise in coaching. For male coach developer in particular, ensure they include content which helps everyone on the course understand their role in supporting and promoting female coaches.

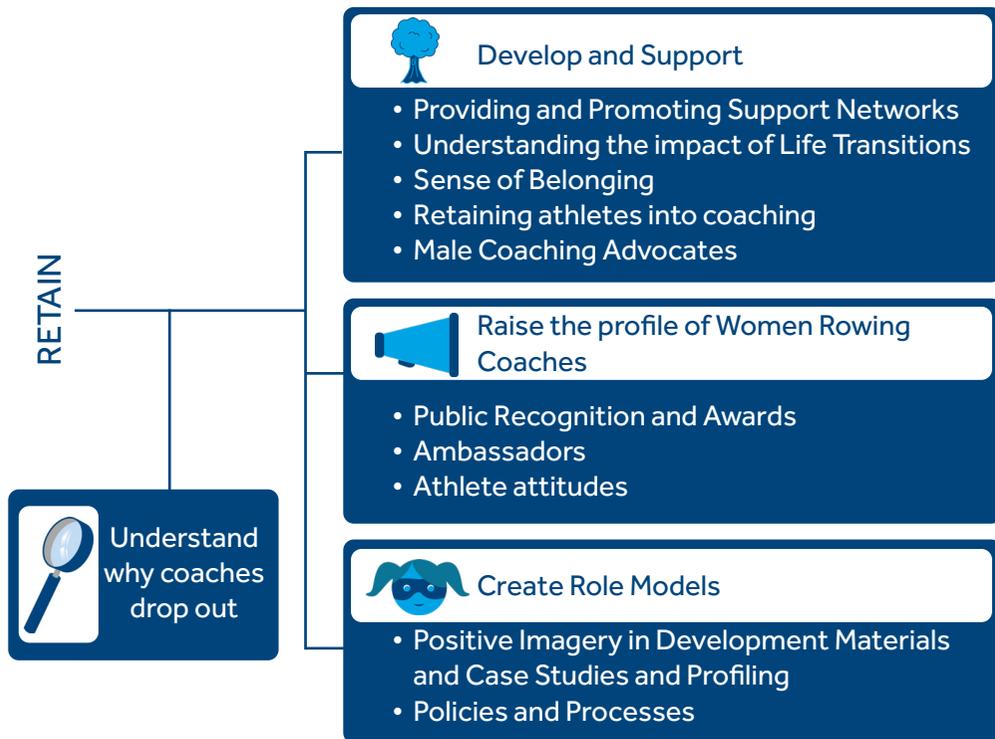
Development Action List

- ❑ Establish a coaching network for female rowing coaches. This may involve online forums where they hear from a guest speaker. This also creates a contact group between the organisation and female coaches to share the latest information on coach development and other news.
- ❑ Link up with another sport and establish a joint coaching network. This can provide an opportunity for coaches to be exposed to different ideas and concepts when it comes to coaching.
- ❑ Establish a Women in Coaching mentoring programme.
- ❑ Write a set of guidelines for clubs encouraging them to try and establish mentoring between their experienced coaches and others.
- ❑ Review all conferences and events to ensure a diverse range of speakers and deliverers thus resulting in a more inclusive and welcoming environment.
- ❑ Ensure all promotion and communication for conferences and events is welcoming and appealing to women, i.e. females are visible and pre-event information is sufficient.
- ❑ Host a regular Women in Coaching Conference.
- ❑ Offer a 'shadowing/co-coaching' programme to coaches with potential to coach at higher levels. They could be paired up with the representative (National, Provincial, Regional) teams/athletes.

- ❑ Put together a 'Co-coaching Plan' to share with clubs. This plan can be very simple and outline to clubs the concept of co-coaching, and encourage them to use it with their coaches.
- ❑ Create an email contact database of all relevant female coaches and send a bespoke email to them promoting the event and including the information provided above.
- ❑ Think about how you currently deliver training to your coaches. Does the format of the delivery of the course suit their lifestyle and timing commitments? How often do you check if your training courses are effective?
- ❑ Set up online groups where coaches participating in a course can support each other by discussing topics and asking questions throughout and after the course.
- ❑ Proactively support female coaches to go onto national cross-sport development programmes.
- ❑ Establish an 'Internship/Placement Initiative' with your high-performance teams/athletes for women coaches.
- ❑ Audit your current Coach Developers, educators, mentors, to discover the gender breakdown within your organisation. If there are significantly less females, explore the possibility of hosting a workshop to upskill female only Coach Developers.
- ❑ Add a segment to coaching courses that highlights the unconscious bias that may be present towards females and female coaches. Highlight the fact that women coaches can feel disrespected and disregarded due to their gender. This may create an awareness and self-consciousness in all those on the course.



Retain



Why do coaches drop out?

It is important to speak to inactive coaches, as outlined in the planning section, and understand why they stopped coaching.

Some research among inactive rowing coaches in Ireland found that the most common reason for dropping out was the time commitments involved - 63%. Other reasons were family commitments, moving house or issues with the club or coaches they worked with. Interestingly, the majority of those inactive coaches said they would reconsider coaching, if invited to restart. (Sport Ireland, 2020)

Keeping women coaches in rowing is built around providing opportunities that engage and excite them in an environment that values them, recognises their contribution and supports them to develop.

Many of the things that help women develop as coaches will also be the things that retain them in coaching – so a number of the principles below will have already been outlined in more detail in the Development section.



Develop and Support

Providing and promoting support networks

As detailed in the Development section, providing coaches with a mentor, helping them develop a small group of peer mentors, and linking them to wider networks of coaches, both male and female, gives them access to support when they need it. This will help women rowing coaches be resilient and assist when they may need advice, support and encouragement to stay in the sport.

Understanding the impact of life transitions.

The life transitions that women go through take many forms and can have an impact on their coaching. Think of those life-changing moments and how women could be supported to stay in coaching, or to take a break and return with confidence. Many of these life transitions affect men as well (although women still carry out the majority of the caring duties) so systematically considering these life events will help both women and men to stay involved in coaching.

Below is a list of life transitions that some coaches may face. An organisation (and club/schools) should be aware of these transitions and plan how coaches can be supported to stay in coaching, or how they can manage time away from coaching responsibilities and then return in a sensitively managed way.

- Moving house/ city/ country
- 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

CASE STUDY 7
British Rowing
Maternity Cover

At the outset, managing transition means identifying what short-term support can be given or offered. The club or organisation should try to stay in contact during time away, ensuring there is support there, when needed. You can also add tips and guidelines to coaching course modules for coach developers/tutors to incorporate into their work. This information can be shared with coaches when on coaching courses so that managing life transitions and their role as a coach becomes normalised and accepted. Having actions like this in place will show you value your female coaches.

In addition, consider the following:

- 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?

Coaching involves many long hours and often much time away from family. When organizations look after the health and welfare of their employees, they ensure that the coaches feel valued and prevent burn out. An organization can provide initiatives that will help retain coaches and achieve a healthier and more balanced life. We need to look at creative ways to support coaches with young families. This could include organized child-minding at regattas, flexible work hours, or job-sharing. We just need to think outside the traditional box.

(Michelle Darvill, Canadian National Women's Coach (2007-2021) and Coach to the Gold Medal W8+ at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games)

Sense of Belonging

Keep in touch with your female coaches and keep them involved in coaching surveys, local and national networks and ask for feedback on how you, as an organisation, are doing in supporting coaches. All coaches feel valued when they belong to a group, when they feel they contribute to coaching programmes/education and their position is recognised. Organisations should also find ways of encouraging clubs to do the same.

Retaining athletes into coaching

Athletes have lots of experience and knowledge of the sport. Retaining them when they retire is a great opportunity to not only increase coaching numbers, but also possibly find coaches who have potential to excel to elite levels of coaching. Organisations should seek ways to retain athletes in other areas of the sport once they've decided to stop participating.

When targeting athletes coming to the end of their careers to be future coaches, organisations should consider that some might need time away from a big commitment, especially if they have been competing at an elite level. It is useful to speak to athletes before they retire, maintain contact with them, and where feasible, develop a personal plan for their reintegration into the sport as a coach. This may involve a support role first with less commitment.

Many potential coaches have been lost over the years because of a failure to follow up with ex-athletes and encourage those with the motivation and appropriate skills for coaching back into the sport. This is also applicable to other roles within sport such as officiating, support services (e.g., strength and conditioning, medical), management and administration. Other factors to consider regarding elite athletes transitioning into coaching:

- They end up coaching at a level they were not ready for. If they fail, this can damage their confidence and desire to coach.
- They started coaching too soon after retiring from competing and burn out.
- They started coaching their peers and found it hard to differentiate between friend and coach.
- There isn't a pathway or programme in place to fast track them into coaching, i.e., the only option is to start at the bottom and work their way up.

Male Coaching Advocate

In rowing and particularly at an elite level, men make up the majority of the coaching numbers. They therefore have an important role in advocating for more women coaches and to support women coaches. Men involved in sport have an influence on:

- Participants they coach (girls and boys, women and men).
- Mothers and fathers of juniors they coach.
- Women/men within their social circle.
- Women coaches in their clubs or organisations.

Encourage male role models in rowing to advocate for more women coaches, promote the value of coaching to women and the value of women in coaching.

The boss wanted to fire me but the Head Coach of the men's sculling group, who was my trainer in the past, asked me to come and train the men in his group. He knew my determination, my commitment and my mental strength to make it happen. From 2005 to 2012 I coached men, Olympic medalist in 2008 with M4x, then numerous world medals with M2x.

(Christine Gossé, National Coach for France 2001-21, Head Coach of the French Women's National Team 2013-21.)

Raising the Profile of Women Rowing Coaches

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 does not have to be complicated or costly. The simplest is to say thank you. This can be linked to events and/or via social media. Presentation of certificates for training or qualification can be made at local community events, with articles on websites, social media or in newspapers. Receiving nominations and awards for your coaching is a very exciting way for women coaches to be recognised by the sport.

In addition, your organisation could profile female coaches on your website, e.g., interview them and post on your social media channels. Again, this places a value on the female coach and also may inspire others through the coach's story.

Ambassadors

Creating Ambassadors or establishing an Ambassador programme with female coaches can be a very effective way of making that coach feel valued while also contributing to the wider organisational goals and plans. The organisation can also benefit from the group in gaining feedback or direction on how to support female coaches. Ambassador programmes tend to have the following elements:

- An application process to select the Ambassadors.
- Ambassadors understand their expected role and responsibilities when they sign up, e.g., commit to selected training as outlined, commit to attending events, commit to helping to promote the sport, commit to establishing events/initiatives themselves.

Athlete attitudes

Until it becomes normal to see female coaches equally in the coaching space with teams and athletes, there is a need for organisations to continue to promote the value of women in coaching. This promotion is sometimes necessary with the athletes themselves.

Taking proactive measures to educate athletes can be beneficial.

View the Tucker Centre [‘We want a male coach’](#) Resource.
(Tucker Center, 2017)



Create Role Models

A role model can be described as a person who serves as an example of the values, attitudes and behaviours associated with a role. In sport and coaching, women tend to identify most with “someone like me.” It is vital that you not only celebrate and promote your high-performance female athletes and coaches, but also the women who coach rowing at a club level.

Being acknowledged by your sport and promoted as a role model is very powerful. A role model is likely to stay in coaching if they feel their coaching is valued.

Coaches are accessible role models to their rowers. They motivate people to enjoy the sport and keep coming back. So it is also important that you support and promote your coaches if you want to retain your rowers. The latest report from Women’s Sport Foundation, ‘Coaching through a Gender Lens: Maximizing Girls Play and Potential’ found that girls with female coaches were more likely to say their coaches were positive role models, good listeners and people the girls could count on. (Women’s Sport Foundation, 2019)

Case Studies and Profiling

Develop case studies to tell a story and get a message across in a way that people can identify with. Use pictures of the female coach and use her story to help create an emotional link with the reader, with such content as:

- How did she get into coaching?
- Who does she coach/has she coached?
- Why does she coach?
- What is the best part of coaching for her?
- Did she overcome any challenges in 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.

This can also be done when the national team coaches are selected, at any level - showcase the coaches’ story, as well as the athletes. This not only places value on the coach but also demonstrates the journey taken to national team level.

Policies and processes

The occupational wellbeing of your coaches is of paramount importance, whether as employees or volunteers. Not only because it relates to the good health and wellbeing of your coach but it also impacts on the retention of your coaches.

The policies you put in place show that you respect your coaching team and want to protect them. Policies and employment laws will differ from country to country but the focus should be recognising the importance of valuing your workforce and highlighting your organisation as one that promotes that value. Are you an organisation that both men and women want to coach for?

Retain Action List

- Gather data through surveys, focus groups or one to one conversations to understand why female coaches drop out.
- Write a set of guidelines encouraging clubs to establish coaching networks, or opportunities for coaches to connect, network and learn from one another within the club. For example, monthly coaching forums online or in the clubhouse where certain topics are discussed.
- Develop a set of guidelines for clubs on how to support coaches through life transitions. This might include the follow suggestions:
 - Enable the coach to take time to take a break, ensuring they know they are welcome back at any time.
 - Encourage a 'back to coaching' programme/workshop. Host a back to coaching week where you promote recruiting coaches and inviting past coaches to re-engage in clubs.
 - Increase the number of coaches per team so that not all the responsibility falls on the women coach.
 - Make part-time coaching an ok thing, e.g. A new mom may not be able to commit four evenings away from home so it's ok to coach one or two evenings a week.
- Add content to coaching workshops/modules to highlight life-transitions and the impact it can have on coaches, and ways for the coach/club to manage these, and support the coach.
- Develop a 'Player to Coach' Transition programme for elite rowers. This programme might involve steps such as:
 - Running a coaching course for rowers interested in coaching.
 - Setting up coaching opportunities for athletes to assist with underage squads/athletes, regional squads, development teams, schools/3rd level team/athlete training, etc.
 - Help the potential coach to develop a personal development plan for their coaching career.

- Develop a campaign or 'call to action' for men to join in and support female coaches, e.g., 'Male Champions of Female Coaches'. Create a week in the year where this tagline is used and all men are urged to find ways of championing women they know in coaching.
- Analyse your current recognition and award events to ensure a fair gender representation.
- Profile and promote female coaches on your website and social media via case studies and interviews.
- Utilise existing promotional opportunities by ensuring gender balance (i.e. on podcasts, interviews, on social media/website) so that females are highlighted.
- Review your organisational policies related to coaching and ensure that coaches' wellbeing is prioritised. Ask yourself, are you an organisation that both men and women want to coach for?

Resources

1. [How to conduct a focus group.](#)
2. [Be and Ally of Women and Girls in Sport](#) (Tucker Center, 2019)
3. [How to take gender bias out of your job ads](#) (Nobel, 2016)
4. [10 Ways to Remove Gender Bias from Job Descriptions](#) (Glassdoor, 2021)
5. [Unconscious bias infographic here](#) (UK Coaching, 2019).
6. [CAC Advanced Mentorship Guides](#) (Coaching Association of Canada, 2017)
 - i. [Building an Effective Mentorship Program](#)
 - ii. [Mentorship Guide-Mentee](#)
 - iii. [Mentorship Guide-Mentor](#)
 - iv. [Mentorship Guide-Sport Administrator](#)
7. [View UK Coaching - A Guide to Using Training Needs Analysis and Personal Development Plans](#) (Sports Coach UK, 2011)
8. ['We want a male coach' Resource.](#) (Tucker Center, 2017)

Case Studies

1. [Student Sport Ireland - Women's Student Coaching Academy](#)
2. [Rowing Ireland - Women in Coaching Networks](#)
3. [World Rowing - WSLA HPC Programme](#)
4. [New Zealand Rowing - Career Coach](#)
5. [Canada Games - Apprenticeship Programme](#)
6. [World Rugby - Female Apprenticeship Programme](#)
7. [British Rowing - Start Programme Maternity Cover](#)
8. [Rowing Ireland - Women in Coaching Spotlight](#)

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