More diversity in the workforce and among management reduces conflict and staff turnover, enhances innovation and increases organisational effectiveness. An inclusive work atmosphere boosts job satisfaction and performance. In short: diverse and inclusive organisations work better and starting with a mixed leadership group sets a good example.1

ON YOUR MARKS

Understand the issue

Recruitment
- What are the recruitment channels?
- Any proactive search for candidates?
- Inclusive job description and job profile?
- Specific actions to attract women?
- Who are the volunteers? Who is on the payroll?

Career development
- Available posts widely publicised?
- What are usual career paths? Internal job mobility?
- What are the skills and competences required to be promoted to management level?

Staff retention and protection of rights
- What are the working conditions? Type of contract, pay, etc.
- Organisational culture: work-life balance, flexible working time.
- Rights and ethics: are procedures in place to combat sexual harassment and to fight sexism and stereotypes?

Who gets the decision-making positions?
- What are the rules for proposing candidates? For example, are candidates nominated by current members?
- Are there any rules regarding a minimum number of people from the same sex?
- Is there specific training for women in leadership?
- Is there a specific committee on women and sport or on gender equality?

Leadership style
- Who is involved in setting the agenda for board or other decision-making bodies’ meetings?
- Frequency of meetings, time and place?
- What are the rules for decision making? Formal vote or consensus?

Notes

Leadership and decision-making positions

- Adopt a regulation/charter that recognises the principle of gender parity within all decision-making bodies and processes. For example, set quotas or targets with an aim of reaching equal representation of women and men.
- Avoid systems where candidates should be nominated by current members of the board to counter the tendency of recruiting to the same profile as incumbent members.
- Systematically promote female candidates (or the under-represented sex). One way of ensuring this is by advertising on the organisation’s website.
- Support and/or organise specific training for women to take on leadership positions.
- Actively search for candidates of the under-represented sex within the organisation, whether they are volunteers, coaches, referees, officials, employees, members or parents.
- Set a limited number of renewable mandates to achieve more diversity in decision making.

Leadership style

- Ensure that all voices and opinions are expressed and heard in meetings.
- Regularly place on the agenda the topic of gender equality within your organisation and monitor it.
- Set up a specific committee on gender equality to act as a resource body for collecting the views of women and girls and ensuring that decisions that are adopted take gender equality issues seriously.
- Ensure that roles and tasks are distributed equally between members of a decision-making body. For instance, avoid situations where executive roles (such as president) are taken by men and more administrative positions by women (such as secretary).
- Ensure a balanced participation of men and women in all decision-making and preparatory bodies (like specific commissions). For example, aim at mixed representation (male and female) within each different body.
- Ensure that decisions are taken within a democratic and transparent process. For instance, publish accounts in an understandable way and provide all relevant information ahead of the decision process.

The ministry in charge of sport or international/national sports organisations can make the respect of gender equality principles a prerequisite for funding or for official recognition.

Coaches

- Is there any female coach in your organisation?
- Are they in charge of female teams only? Or of children’s teams?
- Do they get the same position and pay as men (voluntary/employed)?
- Are there proactive measures to recruit, retain and promote female coaches?

Take Action

Recruitment

- Ensure a transparent recruitment process. For example, for an internal procedure, the open vacancy should be widely advertised through internal media channels and displayed in common areas (cafeteria, club house). For external recruitment, there should be wide publicity of the post through different channels (social networks, visitors, newspapers, etc).
- Pay attention to using inclusive language and not only masculine forms. Use images that show diversity in sport.
- Set up mixed review and interview panels (balanced proportion of men/women; representatives from human resources, manager, external expert with gender equality knowledge/sensitivity, etc.).
- Proactively contact candidates of the under-represented sex and contact female coaches directly when a post is vacant instead of waiting for applications. Make use of female networks/NGOs/federations and look further afield for the skills required (consider perhaps physical education teachers, club members, etc.).
- Organise specific programmes for former female athletes to train to become coaches.

Career development

- Be clear about the skills needed and avoid gender stereotypes, such as leadership qualities being associated positively with men and negatively with women. A good leader is someone with a vision, who is humble and capable of planning, etc.
- Reflect on technical ability (such as sporting performance) and the soft skills required (like empathy).
- Avoid preconceived ideas about what the team/group will desire. For example, “The team of boys/male athletes will never accept a female coach.”
- Support women to take on new positions through training or other specific actions such as mentoring.

Staff retention

Ensure zero tolerance towards discrimination, (sexual) harassment, violence and sexism.

For example, calling a boy a “wimp”; implying that a sport is not for girls; remarks on body features; (sexual) harassment by peers or by persons in charge, etc.

- Define what constitutes violence, harassment, sexism and any other inappropriate behaviour in your organisation. Adopt and implement protocols, guidelines and codes of conduct. And make them public!
- Organise an internal complaints procedure for any issues related to discrimination, violence, harassment, sexism and any other inappropriate behaviours. And monitor it!

An absence of complaints is not necessarily a positive sign!

- Grant equal pay for work of equal value to men and women in your organisation.
- Organise gender equality training for all involved in the organisation including decision makers, volunteers, coaches, referees, judges and officials. Include the topics of harassment, sexual violence and sexism.

Work-life balance

- Allow and value maternity, paternity and parental leave in your organisation. This includes recognising any competences acquired during a parental break. Ensure that care leave does not have any adverse effect on an individual’s future prospects within the organisation.
- Develop work-life-balance schemes for everyone. For example, ensure that coaching responsibilities can be handled alongside family responsibilities or organise co-coaching schemes. For referees, officials and judges, see if their presence is required during the entire competition or not; and envisage providing for short rest periods to allow them to attend to family responsibilities.

Examples

The Women’s Sport Leadership Academy (WSLA)

Organisations responsible: Anita White Foundation (AWF), Females Achieving Brilliance (FAB) and the University of Chichester (UoC)

The WSLA is dedicated to developing tomorrow’s leaders of sport and provides unique development opportunities for women leaders from around the world to step up, take the lead and make an impact. Since 2014, 228 women from 41 countries have become graduates of the academy. They come from a range of sports organisations, including National Olympic and Paralympic Committees, International and National Sport Federations, sport-for-development charities and organisations, sports departments in universities, sports clubs and media consultancy businesses.

Gender quotas in leadership 50-50 in Force in 2021

Organisation responsible: Swedish Sport Confederation

In conjunction with the 2017 annual meeting of the Swedish Sports Confederation, a change in the statute which meant that boards in (national) specialist sports federations should have a gender balance in which no gender is represented by less than 40 per cent. In the nomination committees, the gender balance must be 50-50. The charter will enter into force in 2021. If the specialist sports federations (SSFs) do not reach the targets established by the statute in 2021, it will be considered a contravention of the statute’s regulations. The maximum penalty for a contravention is exclusion from the Swedish Sports Confederation.

Throughout 2018 and 2019, SSFs have been able to apply for extra financial support for gender equality. This support is designed to encourage SSFs to intensify their work in order to reach the gender equality goals and the regulation that comes into force in 2021.

For more information on these examples and to find out about other practices and resources, take a look at the ALL IN online library.

See Factsheet 7 – Communication


Toolkit | How to Make an Impact on Gender Equality in Sport > 5 - Human resource and leadership
Toolkit  |  How to Make an Impact on Gender Equality in Sport

3  Career development

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Staff retention

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4  Leadership and decision-making positions

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See Factsheet 7 – Communication

Human resources and leadership

Policies, programmes and structures of sport organisations regarding human resources and decision-making bodies.

 Ensuring fair and transparent recruitment and promotion systems and the equal participation of men and women in sports organisations, whether as workers, decision makers, volunteers, coaches, judges, referees, officials or others.

 Ensuring the equal participation of women and men in executive positions and decision-making processes in sport organisations.

More diversity in the workforce and among management reduces conflict and staff turnover, enhances innovation and increases organisational effectiveness. An inclusive work atmosphere boosts job satisfaction and performance. In short: diverse and inclusive organisations work better and starting with a mixed leadership group sets a good example. 1

ON YOUR MARKS

Understand the issue

- Look at the respective recruitment and positions of women and men in the organisation

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- What are the recruitment channels?
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- Is there specific training on gender equality for leaders?
- Is there a specific committee on women and sport or on gender equality?

Leadership style
- Who is involved in setting the agenda for board or other decision-making bodies’ meetings?
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Notes