

FIFA Female Leadership Development Programme

Q & A

What is the FIFA Female Leadership Development Programme?

It is an initiative that identifies, supports and develops strong female leaders in football. FIFA organises the programme in partnership with the *THNK School of Creative Leadership* (www.THNK.org) and, over a nine-month period, including three workshops and extensive fieldwork, the selected participants from across the globe are given the skills they need to help fulfil their leadership potential. They are paired with a mentor to guide them through the development of an individual project that will translate into tangible benefits for women's football.

When was it introduced?

The programme launched in 2015, and what better place to start than in Vancouver during the FIFA Women's World Cup Canada 2015™? From here on in, a new intake of approximately 30 women will be given the opportunity to take part in the programme each year.

Why now?

Today, football is still a sport that is predominantly played, watched and run by men. Unfortunately, female representation at executive and decision-making levels in football is still limited: as the findings of the [FIFA Women's Football Survey 2014](#) show, only 8% of executive committee members at member association level are female. Yet the potential for women to engage in the game both on and off the field is tremendous. That is why FIFA has launched the Female Leadership Development Programme as part of a number of initiatives to provide more opportunities for women and girls in football.

What is the main objective?

The programme is part of FIFA's commitment to its [ten key development principles](#) for women's football and women in football and follows on from the inaugural FIFA Women's Football and Leadership Conference held in [March 2015](#), when experts from football, business and wider society discussed ways to improve the representation of women in leadership. The objective is to increase the number of female leaders and role models in football, and to improve the gender balance in football decision-making. This includes at executive committee level in all governing bodies, which will enhance football governance and improve the game overall.

Who gets to take part?

For the inaugural edition in 2015-16, there are 35 participants from every corner of the globe – from Afghanistan to Rwanda, Aruba to Paraguay, and from Northern Ireland to the Solomon Islands. Participants have all played a role at one of FIFA's 209 member associations and/or at one of the six confederations or at FIFA itself, and come from a wide range of backgrounds and organisations. Candidates can be put forward to FIFA for future editions, with a special panel then assessing and deciding on the final participants based on a number of criteria such as experience, area of expertise and geographical spread. Are you interested in taking part? Then contact your association or e-mail womeninleadership@fifa.org.

What do the participants learn?

Firstly, the workshops cover topics that are of particular relevance to women leaders in the world of football today. Participants are given tools to help develop their own potential, to lead others and to lead

the organisation. Secondly, each participant works on a personal project to improve the state of girls' and women's football in their member association or confederation. The programme will therefore translate into tangible benefits for women's football. Thirdly, all participants pair up with a mentor who is a senior and accomplished leader or personality – either male or female – in the world of football.

Why is THINK involved?

The mission of the *THNK School of Creative Leadership* is twofold: to accelerate the development of leaders at the intersection of the corporate, private and social sectors, and to help create innovative solutions to the world's societal challenges. The series of workshops in the FIFA Female Leadership Development Programme are led by THINK experts. Using THINK's uniquely designed "Creation Flow" methodology, the participants will be able to imagine and define a better future for themselves and their real-world project. FIFA believes that THINK is the right partner for this programme, as they provide a creative and innovative approach to leadership training that is tailor-made to the needs of developing female leaders in football.

What is the amount of funding from FIFA for this programme?

FIFA is investing around USD 1 million in the implementation of each edition of the Female Leadership Development Programme. It is one of nine [development programmes](#) that FIFA is offering to its member associations for the 2015-2019 cycle.

What kind of follow-up will there be after the participants complete the programme?

Each association that the respective participants represent has a responsibility to ensure further development of these women and to support them in the implementation of their personal project. FIFA will keep in touch with the associations to obtain progress reports. In addition, an online platform will help maintain strong networks between the participants and mentors, while further coaching opportunities will be available to the participants even after the programme concludes.

What is FIFA doing to help ensure the world of football is more open to appointing females to leadership positions?

FIFA's ten key development principles for women's football, which were established by the [FIFA Task Force for Women's Football](#), are guiding the work of FIFA in this area. For 2015-2018, FIFA has [doubled its funding](#) for women's football development projects, which include the successful Live Your Goals [campaign](#), the FIFA scholarship [programme](#) for female coaches and many other initiatives. FIFA recently [issued](#) new recommendations to its member associations to ensure that at least one member of the coaching staff, medical staff and ideally 50% of all officials in their U-17 and U-20 women's national teams are female. It also requires at least 60% of participants involved in FIFA's women's football courses to be female. In 2013, FIFA created three positions for women on its Executive Committee. Lydia Nsekera (Burundi), Sonia Bien-Aime (Turks and Caicos Islands) and co-opted member Moya Dodd (Australia) are currently serving on the Executive Committee. FIFA is committed to taking a leading role in promoting gender equality and expects all confederations and member associations to do the same.