

Gender  
Equality  
in Coaching



# D2.2 National Report Cyprus

Work Package 2

Task 2.1, Task 2.2  
Lead partner: Symplexis

Partner responsible  
for the national report:



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# Document Information

**Work Package** 2: Recommendations for coach education and qualifications providers on mainstreaming gender issues in coaching courses and curricula

**Tasks** 2.1: Assessment of the level of knowledge of providers of (basketball) coaching education and qualifications  
2.2 Elaboration of Report with recommendations on addressing gaps in knowledge on gender mainstreaming

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**Abstract** This report (D2.2) presents the results of the SheCOACH research in Cyprus, conducted within the project's WP2, Task 2.1: Assessment of the level of knowledge of providers of (basketball) coaching education and qualifications & Task 2.2: Elaboration of Report with recommendations on addressing gaps in knowledge on gender mainstreaming. The SheCOACH primary research was conducted in Cyprus between 23 April and 23 June 2024, including an online survey and structured interviews targeting: a) professionals from national or regional basketball and/or other sports federations, associations, and sports clubs; b) staff, educators, and professionals from coaching education providers (universities, vocational training, private colleges, etc.). The online questionnaire was distributed by email to all members of the Cypriot Basketball Coaches Association, resulting in 50 responses. Additionally, CBF conducted interviews with five relevant stakeholders and experts in the field. The conclusions of the national report on gender equality in coaching in Cyprus will contribute to the development of SheCOACH D.2.3: Report with recommendations on measures to address the gaps in knowledge on gender mainstreaming.

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# 1. Brief overview of the SheCOACH project

## 1.1 Implementation period and consortium

**SheCOACH: Gender Equality in Coaching** is an **Erasmus Sport project**, under the agreement number **101133095 - SheCOACH - ERASMUS-SPORT-2023**, which will be implemented in **Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain** from **02/01/2024** to **30/10/2026** (34 months duration).

SheCOACH is a multi-stakeholder initiative, involving Basketball Federations, Coaches' Associations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), a Higher Education Institution, and expert organizations in the field of sports coaching, sports education and technology. Specifically, the SheCOACH consortium consists of the following 9 members from 7 countries:

Project coordinator:

- 1) CYPRUS BASKETBALL FEDERATION (CBF), Cyprus ([basketball.org.cy](http://basketball.org.cy))

Partners:

- 2) SYMPLEXIS, Greece ([symplexis.eu](http://symplexis.eu))
- 3) GREEK BASKETBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION (GBCA or SEPK), Greece ([sepk.gr](http://sepk.gr))
- 4) UNIVERSIDAD DE MURCIA (UMU), Spain ([um.es](http://um.es))
- 5) FEDERACION DE BALONCESTO DE CASTILLA LA MANCHA (FBCLM), Spain ([fbclm.net](http://fbclm.net))
- 6) L'ORMA SSD ARL, Italy ([ormainternational.eu](http://ormainternational.eu))
- 7) SPORT COACHING EUROPE (SCE), Malta ([sportcoachingeurope.org](http://sportcoachingeurope.org))
- 8) EUROPEAN NETWORK OF SPORT EDUCATION (ENSE), Austria ([sporteducation.eu](http://sporteducation.eu))
- 9) HIP - HUB FOR INNOVATION POLICY S.R.L, Romania ([hubinno.eu](http://hubinno.eu)).

## 1.2 Project aim and objectives

SheCOACH is a multi-stakeholder initiative, which aims to **contribute to gender equality in sports coaching**, by **promoting the participation of women in (basketball) coaching education** in Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and Spain.

The SheCOACH objectives are the following:

- To improve the mainstreaming of gender-specific topics/gender issues in sports coaching curricula/ education
  - "Mainstreaming" refers to the process of incorporating gender or gender issues into the core elements of sports coaching curricula or education;
  - The project seeks to make gender considerations an integral and essential part of the overall education and training of sport coaches, rather than treating them as separate or marginalized components;
  - SheCOACH wants to ensure that gender perspectives, concerns and issues are consistently addressed and integrated throughout the curriculum or related educational programs.

- To develop the awareness and skills of providers of coach education and qualifications on including gender-related elements in their curricula and systems
- To enhance the awareness of national/regional/local education and/or sports authorities on developing/ implementing policies for mainstreaming gender in the coaching education systems
- To raise the awareness of sports clubs, academies, and schools on the benefits of including women coaches and promoting women participation, esp. in traditionally “masculine sports”
- To increase the participation of women in basketball coaching education/training.

### 1.3 Clusters of activities, target groups and main results with KPIs

The SheCOACH objectives will be achieved through the implementation of the following clusters of activities:

- Recommendations for coach education and qualifications providers on mainstreaming gender issues in coaching courses and curricula
- Online capacity building programme for coaching education and qualifications providers on gender mainstreaming
- Framework for gender mainstreaming in coaching education
- Dissemination and awareness raising.

The primary target groups of the SheCOACH project are:

- National/regional basketball (and other sports) federations
- Associations/federations of coaches
- Other coach education providers (HEIs, VET, private etc.)
- Local, regional and national sports (and education) policy-makers.

Additionally, the project targets: other sports governing bodies at all levels; international basketball (and other sports) federations; sports clubs/academies/schools; networks of sports associations, actors, education providers at EU/international level; and the general public.

The main results expected from the implementation of the SheCOACH project are the following, which also reflect the project’s main Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- About **80-100 staff of coach education providers** with new skills on gender mainstreaming;
- At least **15 sports coaching curricula/programmes**, having mainstreamed gender issues/new gender equality modules;
- At least **50 national/regional/local education & sports authorities** with awareness on implementing policies for mainstreaming gender in coach education;
- At least **130 sports clubs/academies staff/executives/members** with new awareness on the benefits of including women coaches and promoting women participation;
- At least **30.000 persons** reached through dissemination & awareness raising actions.

## 2. Overview of the SheCOACH primary research in Cyprus

### 2.1 Basketball Coaching in Cyprus

The role of the coach is pivotal in the physical and mental development of athletes, aiming to enhance their overall well-being, and performance, and instil values such as teamwork, discipline, and fair play.

In Cyprus, basketball coaching is regulated by the Cyprus Basketball Federation (CBF). Coaches must obtain a professional license from the CBF. To qualify for a license, individuals typically need a degree in physical education and sports science, or equivalent experience in the sport, along with completion of specific coaching seminars and certification programs.

#### 2.1.1 Statistics and Gender in Coaching

As of the 2023-2024 season, the Cyprus Basketball Coaches' Association reported having 140 active coaches (\*active: Licenced coaches by CBF for participating in CBF's official Championships). Of these, 25 (18%) are women coaches. This indicates a gender disparity in coaching roles, but is a significant number to work with and increase it through the years.

#### 2.1.2 Women Coaches in National Leagues

In the 2023-2024 season, female coaches led 2 out of 5 teams in the women's first division (25%). In men's Basket league (1<sup>st</sup> Division), we had 1 female Head coach, (last year she was assistant coach and by the end of the year she was the head coach as well), Mrs Kalia Papadopoulou. CBF Men Basket League has also 2 women Team Manager, one of them is also leading the club's Basketball department.

#### 2.1.3 Coaching Schools of the Cyprus Basketball Federation

The CBF offers a structured training program that leads to three levels of coaching certification: C, B, and A. Recent statistics for 2022 - 2023 and 2023 – 2024 are as follows:

2022-2023: C-level school: 12 graduates, with 5 (42%) being woman / B-level school: 8 graduates, with 2 (25%) being a woman.

2023-2024: C-level school: 10 graduates, with 1 (10%) being woman / A-level school: 7 graduates, with 1 (14%) being a woman.

Significant participation of women in Coaching School clinics, organised by CBF, with the aim of increasing women participation.

#### 2.1.4 Prospects and Development Championships

From 2020, FIBA requires at least one female coach on the benches of national teams in development leagues. In the summer of 2024, head coach for the U16 women NT is male but

assistant coach is a female, and for U18 women NT, head coach and assistant coach both are women (also Team Manager and Physiotherapist).

### **2.1.5 Female Coaches from Cyprus Working Abroad**

A few Cypriot female coaches have sought professional opportunities in more competitive leagues abroad. For instance, Maria Ioannou has achieved recognition by leading a team in the women's Eurocup and securing a national championship in Italy.

## **2.2 The SheCOACH Research in Cyprus**

The SheCOACH research in Cyprus was carried out under the project's Work Package 2 (WP2), specifically Task 2.1: Assessing the level of knowledge among providers of (basketball) coaching education and qualifications, and Task 2.2: Developing a report with recommendations to address knowledge gaps in gender mainstreaming.

WP2: Recommendations for coach education and qualification providers on integrating gender issues into coaching courses and curricula, focused on primary research through an online survey and structured interviews conducted in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Spain. The target groups included:

- At least 200 staff/professionals (minimum 50 per country) from national/regional basketball and/or other sports federations and coaching education providers (universities, vocational training, private) [online survey].
- At least 20 executives (minimum 5 per country) from national/regional basketball and/or other sports federations and coaching education providers (higher education, vocational, private) [structured interviews].

The objective of Task 2.1 was to evaluate the extent of knowledge and deficiencies among coaching education and qualifications providers regarding gender equality in coaching and the integration of gender issues into coaching courses and curricula in all mentioned countries.

The objective of Task 2.2 is to develop a report (e-publication) summarizing the main findings of the research in the four countries and providing recommendations on policies and measures for providers of (basketball) coaching education and qualifications to address gaps in awareness and knowledge for mainstreaming gender in coaching courses/programs and curricula.

As the WP2 leader, Symplexis developed research guidelines (D2.1) in collaboration with all project partners. These guidelines included instructions for implementing the SheCOACH online survey and interview questions for one-to-one interview sessions. The SheCOACH primary research received approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Murcia (Spain).

The SheCOACH primary online research was conducted in Cyprus between 23 April and 27 May 2024. The questionnaire, titled "Gender Equality in Coaching and Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Coaching Courses & Curricula," was translated and adapted into Greek and published via Google Forms. The survey targeted:

- Staff/professionals from national/regional basketball and/or other sports federations & sports clubs.
- Staff/educators/professionals from coaching education providers (universities, vocational training, private colleges, etc.).

The online survey consisted of eight sections, with 21 questions (mainly multiple choice, with some optional), and took approximately 7 to 9 minutes to complete. Respondents could complete the questionnaire anonymously or provide their email addresses to receive project updates. In all cases, responses were kept confidential.

The questionnaire was distributed via e-mail to all members of the CBF and their wide network. In total, 50 responses were collected. In addition, CBF conducted interviews with 5 relevant stakeholders between 15 June and 23 June 2024. The SheCOACH structured interview questions followed the themes used for the questionnaires, to enable participants to reflect on their actual experiences, to provide insight into the phenomenon of gender equality in coaching, and to discuss ideas and effective ways of mainstreaming gender equality in coaching programmes and educational frameworks.

The presentation of the primary research results (online survey & interviews) will be provided in the pages to follow.



## 3. Online Survey Results in Cyprus

### Gender Equality in Coaching and Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Coaching Courses & Curricula

#### 3.1 Demographic Information

In the SheCOACH online survey distributed in Cyprus, we had a total of **50** participants (which was the threshold for the key indicator), where 26 participants were males and 24 were females.

Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents

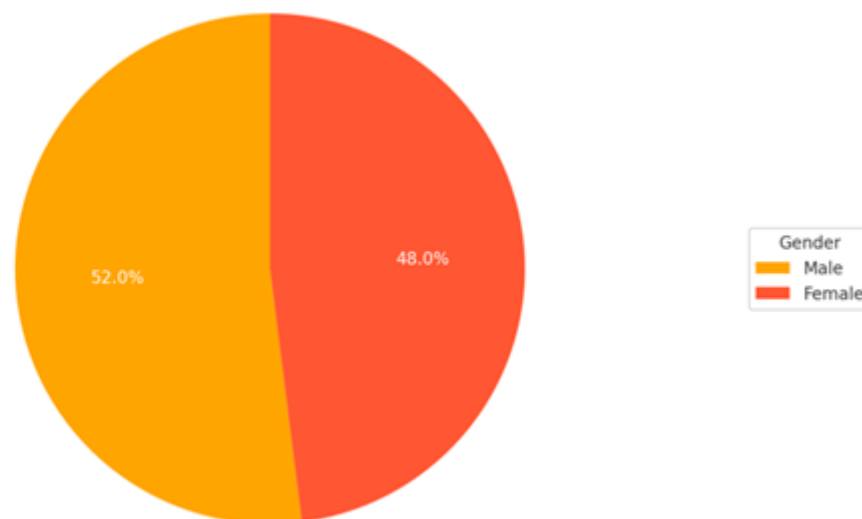


Figure 1: Gender Distribution

Figure 1 shows the gender distribution of survey participants, with 52.0% males (orange) and 48.0% females (red). This nearly equal representation ensures balanced participation from both genders in the survey. The substantial participation from both males and females indicates widespread interest and engagement in gender equality issues in coaching, providing a robust foundation for inclusive policy formulation and awareness programs. From another perspective, the ages of the 50 participants spanned from 23-84.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the respective range for several age groups.

## Age Distribution of Survey Respondents

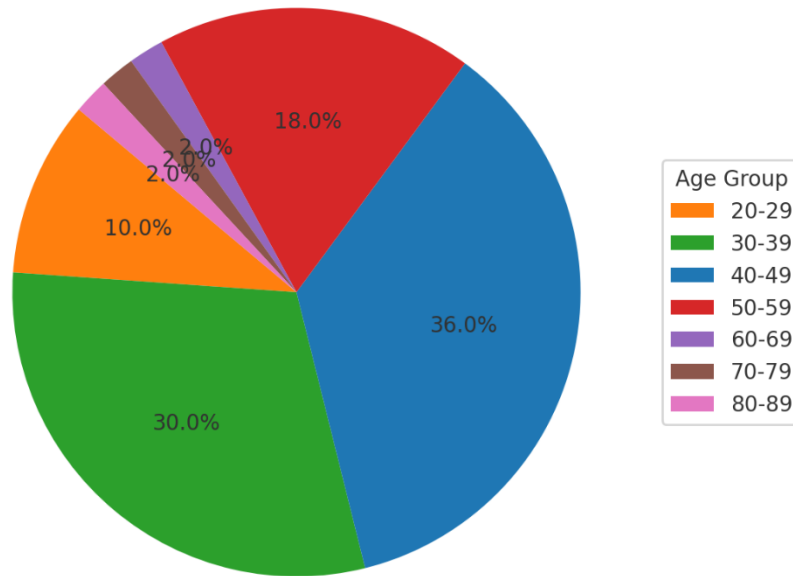


Figure2: Age Distribution

The pie chart displays the age distribution of survey respondents. The largest age group is 40-49, making up 36% of participants. This is followed by the 30-39 age group at 30%. The 50-59 and 20-29 age groups account for 18% and 10%, respectively, while the 60-69 and 70-79 age groups are smaller, at 2.0% each. This distribution shows a predominance of mid-career professionals among the respondents.

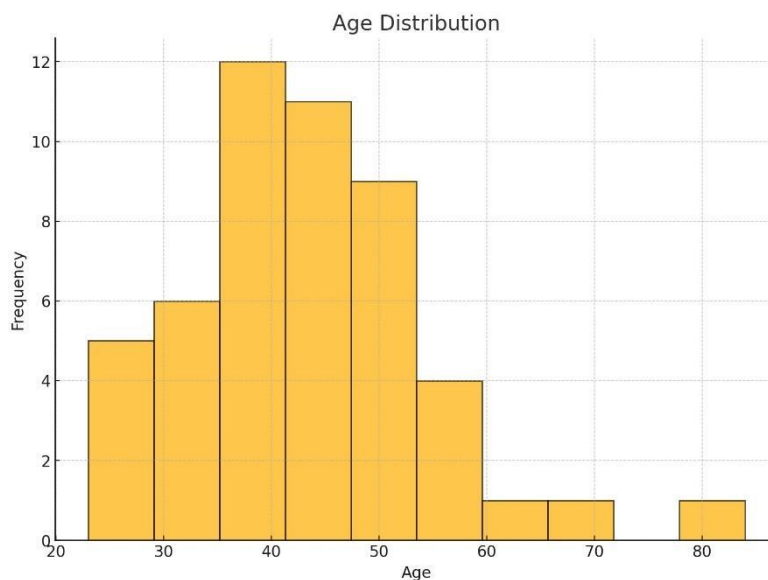


Figure 3: Age Frequency

Figure 4 and Figure 5 illustrate the professional status or role of survey respondents. The largest group, at 32.0%, are professionals in national/regional basketball associations/federations. This is followed by 'Other cases' at 24.0%, and professionals in basketball clubs at 20.0%. Those in educational providers offering coaching courses account for 12.0%, while staff in other sports federations/associations/clubs make up 10.0%. A small percentage, 2.0%, are categorised as professionals without further specification. This distribution shows a strong representation from organised sports entities, especially basketball-focused organisations.

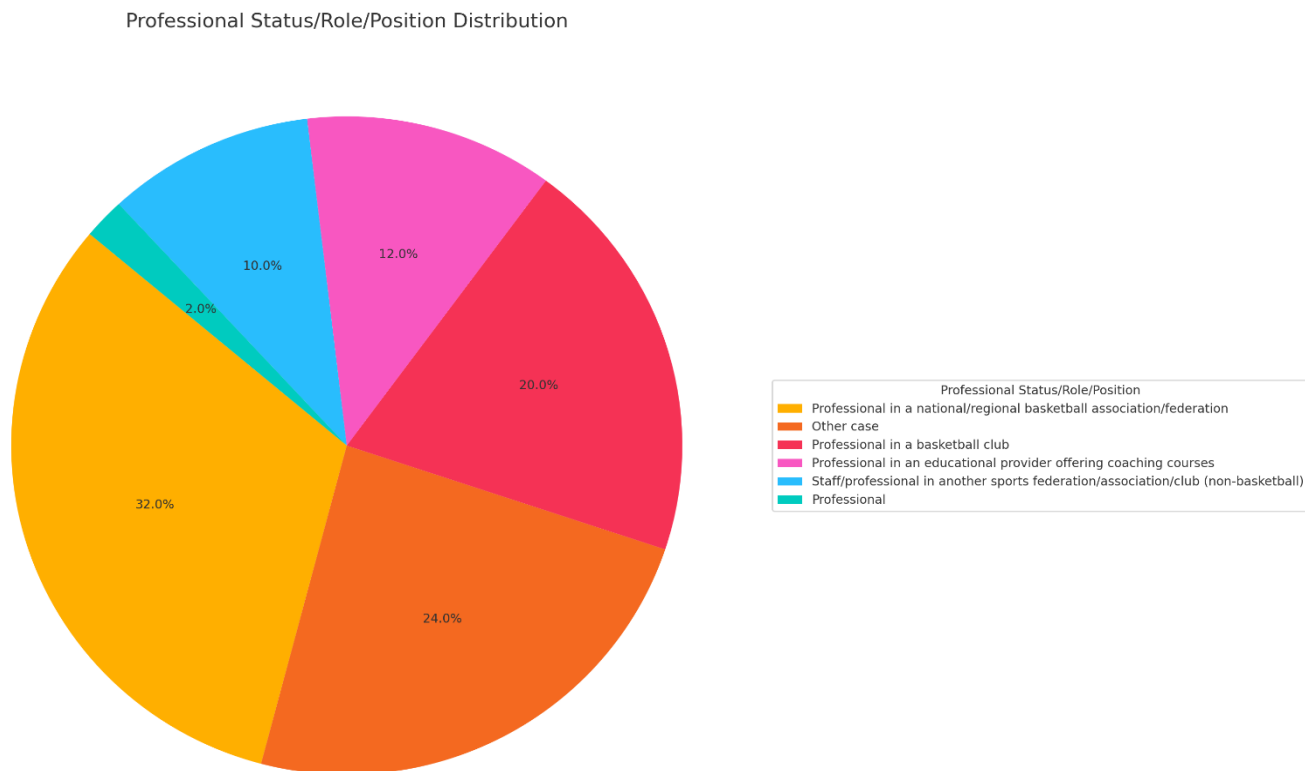


Figure 4: Professional Roles Distribution

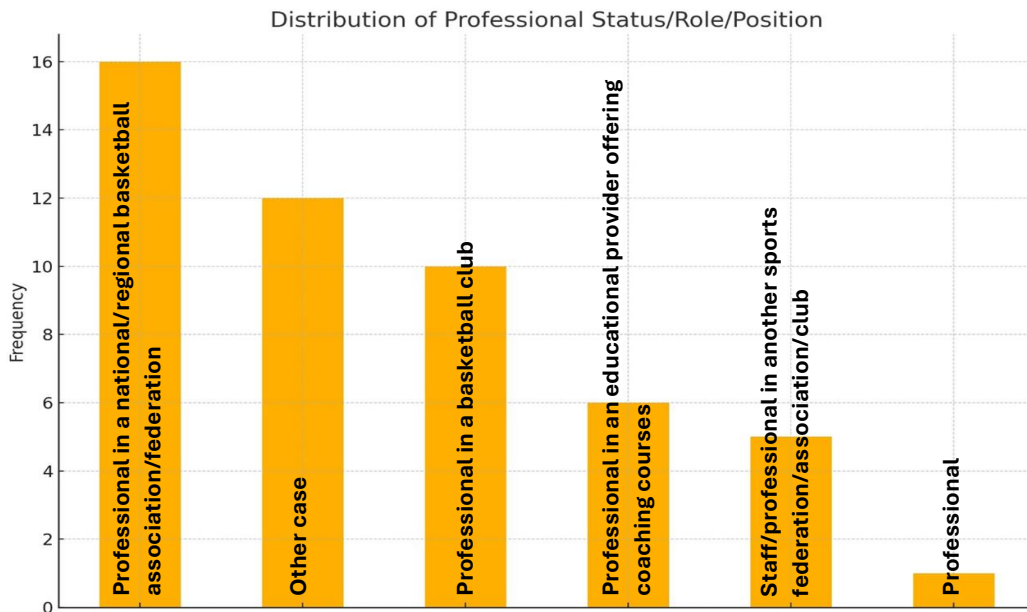


Figure 5: Profession Frequency

## 3.2 Knowledge and Awareness

### 3.2.1 Familiarity with the concept of gender equality in coaching

The individuals participating in the surveys were asked “How familiar are you with the concept of gender equality in coaching?”.

Familiarity with the Concept of Gender Equality in Coaching

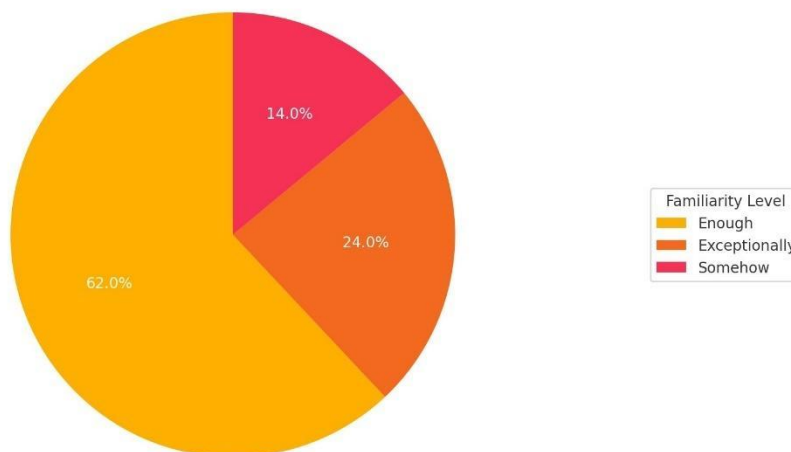


Figure 6: Familiarity with the Concept of Gender Equality in Coaching

Figure 6 shows respondents' familiarity with the concept of gender equality in coaching. The majority, 62.0%, are "Enough" familiar with the concept. 24.0% of respondents consider themselves "Exceptionally" familiar, while 14.0% are "Somehow" familiar. This indicates a high overall awareness and understanding of the gender equality concept among the survey participants.

### 3.2.2 Formal training or education on gender equality in coaching

However, when asked, "How familiar are you with the concept of gender equality in coaching?", most of the people are simply no aware of courses/seminars/training related to gender equality.

Attendance of Courses/Seminars/Training on Gender Equality in Coaching

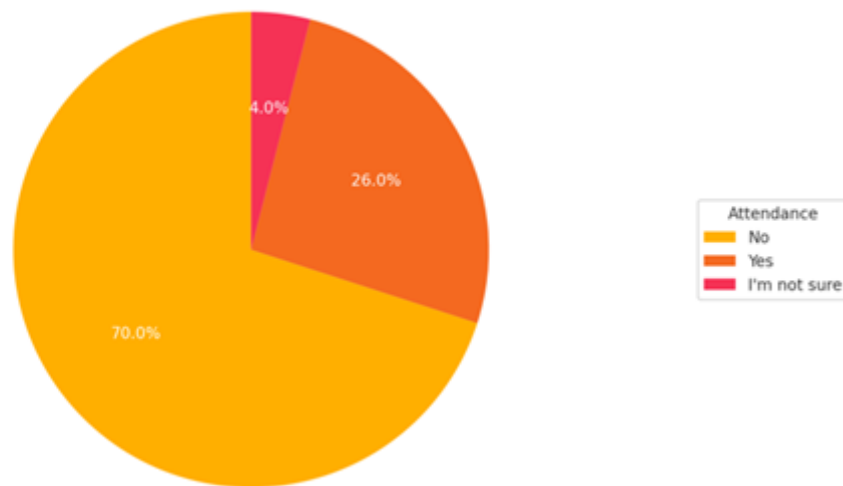


Figure 7: Training/Education in Coaching

Figure 7 illustrates the attendance of respondents in courses, seminars, or training on gender equality in coaching. The majority, 70.0%, have not attended such events. 26.0% of respondents have participated in these training programs, while 4.0% are unsure about their attendance. This indicates a significant gap in training attendance, suggesting the need for increased outreach, awareness training, and availability of gender equality education in coaching.

### 3.3 Current situation

#### 3.3.1 The importance of promoting gender equality in basketball coaching

Importance of Promoting Gender Equality in Coaching

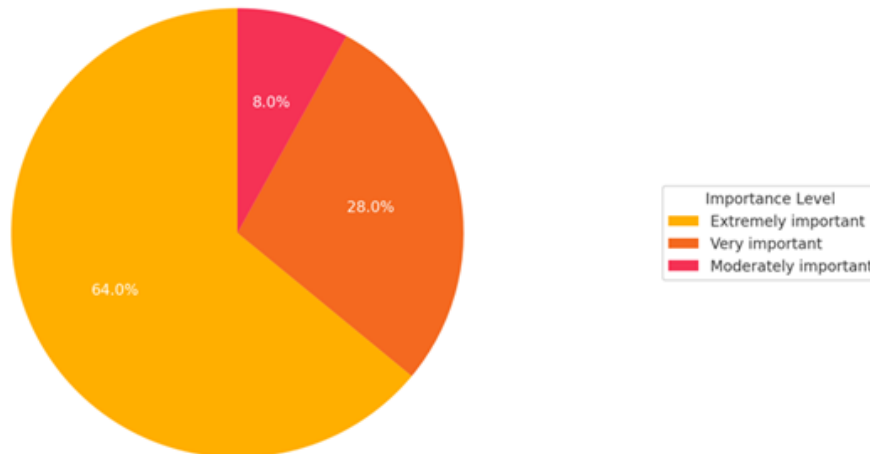


Figure 8: Importance of Promoting Gender Equality in Coaching

Participants were then asked, “How important do you think it is to promote gender equality in coaching?” Figure 8 demonstrates the perceived importance of promoting gender equality in coaching. The majority, 64.0%, consider it "Extremely important". 28.0% find it "Very important", and 8.0% believe it is "Moderately important", results that indicate strong support for gender equality initiatives in coaching among respondents, with most recognizing it as a critical issue and the existing gap in the current state of things.

#### 3.3.2 The importance of integrating gender issues in coaching courses & curricula

Importance of Integrating Gender Issues into Seminars and Coaching Curricula

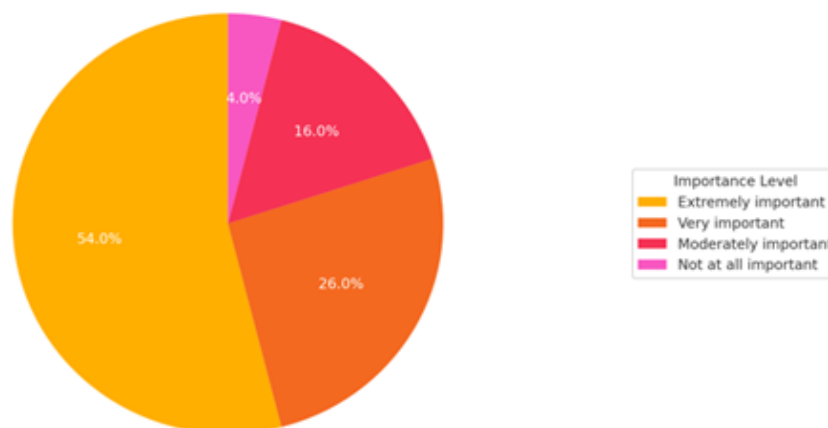


Figure 9: Importance of Integrating Gender Issues in Coaching

Based on the question “How important do you think it is to integrate gender issues in coaching courses & curricula?”, Figure 9 highlights the importance of integrating gender issues into seminars and coaching curricula. A majority, 54.0%, find it "Extremely important", while 26.0% view it as "Very important". 16.0% of respondents believe it is "Moderately important", and a small percentage, 4.0%, think it is "Not at all important". This demonstrates a strong consensus on the significance of including gender-related topics in educational programs for coaching, spreading awareness, and educating the public about gender equality.

### 3.3.3 Assessing the promotion of gender equality in coaching in Cyprus by sports associations/ federations/clubs etc.

Promotion of Gender Equality in Coaching by Sports Associations/Federations/Clubs in Cyprus

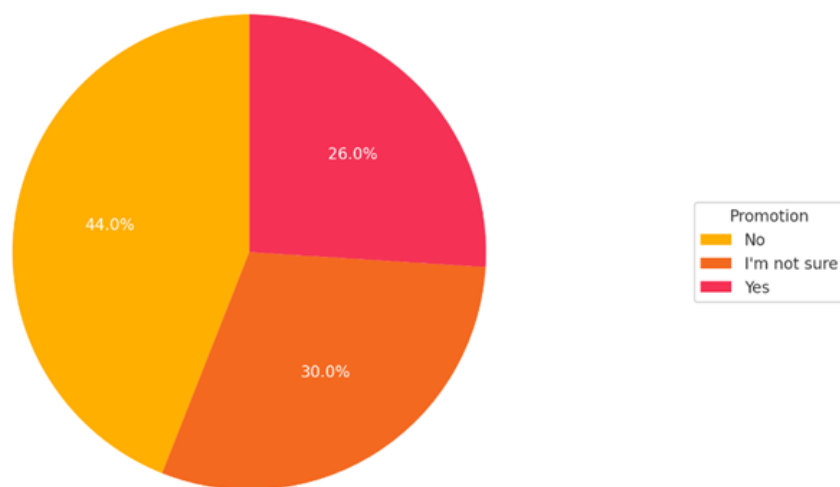


Figure 10: Opinion on the Promotion of Gender Equality by Sports Associations/Federations/Clubs in Coaching

Figure 10 depicts the opinion of the respondents regarding the promotion of gender equality in coaching by sports associations, federations, and clubs in Cyprus. 44.0% of respondents believe that these organizations do not promote gender equality. 30.0% are unsure about the promotion efforts, while 26.0% think that these organizations do promote gender equality. This distribution indicates a need for clearer and more visible initiatives to comply with and promote gender equality within these institutions.

### 3.3.4 The promotion of gender equality in coaching by association/federation/clubs etc.

The question regarding the presence of an action plan or official policy on gender equality within organizations was: “Does your sports association/federation/club or body (e.g. Ministry, General Secretariat, etc.) promote gender equality in coaching?”



Figure 11: Promotion of Gender Equality in Coaching by Sports Associations/Federation/Clubs or Bodies

Figure 11 depicts the opinions of respondents regarding the promotion of gender equality in coaching by sports associations, federations, and clubs. 52.0% of respondents believe that these organizations promote gender equality. 20.0% think that these organizations do not promote gender equality. 18.0% are unsure about the promotion efforts, and 10.0% did not answer as they do not work for a sports organization. This distribution suggests a majority see efforts toward gender equality, but a significant portion are either unaware or do not perceive such efforts.

Respondents who answered “yes” or even “not sure” were asked -optionally- to give more details. A summary of their responses follows:

- *“A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the Commissioner for Gender Equality/ there are conditions for the women's national teams (at least 1 coach Female)”*
- *“Update programs”*
- *“Increasingly, both genders have a role in developmental national teams, developmental local club groups as well as in refereeing little by little”*
- *“I believe that no organization promotes coaching to either men or women in a targeted way. Coaching is something that everyone sees from their own point of view, either as a hobby or as a profession or something that fills and completes them as a person or not. Now in Cyprus more specifically (without knowing what happens in other countries) this seems not to be the first choice for female coaches, an issue that may be multifactorial and not that it is not promoted by some organization specifically the coaching of women.”*
- *“1. According to the Cyprus Sports Organisation (Amendment) Law of 2023 - The Cyprus Sports Organisation (Amendment) Law of 2023, the CSO ensures, provides for and promotes gender equality in sports, the fight against gender discrimination and the offer by the Federations of equal opportunities and equal benefits between men and women in national teams. “Benefit” means daily expenses, travel/travel expenses, participation in competitions, clothing/footwear, and food/boarding expenses.*  
*2. Organization of training programs/seminars.”*
  - *“I believe that in rare cases and only in very isolated cases of female coaches this happens.”*



- *“The promotion of gender equality in all programs and projects is a horizontal goal and priority of our organization. a) We have developed and adopted a Gender Equality Policy, b) we apply specific practices in all our programs, such as providing equal opportunities to all, all and everything - following the principle of intersectionality, regardless of sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, class, etc., we strive in each program / project to have equal participation from each gender, c) we design and implement specific projects to promote gender equality such as: Equality4Inclusion, which includes sports activities with people with intellectual disabilities (we have 1 coach and 1 coach for the training sessions and in the team). In #BeActive actions that we organize every year, we support and invite female coaches as well as male coaches to participate. d) We support all initiatives that promote gender equality in coaching.”*

Following, the individuals were asked, *“Does your federation/association/sport club or educational institution have a gender equality plan or gender equality policy?”*.

Action Plan or Official Policy on Gender Equality

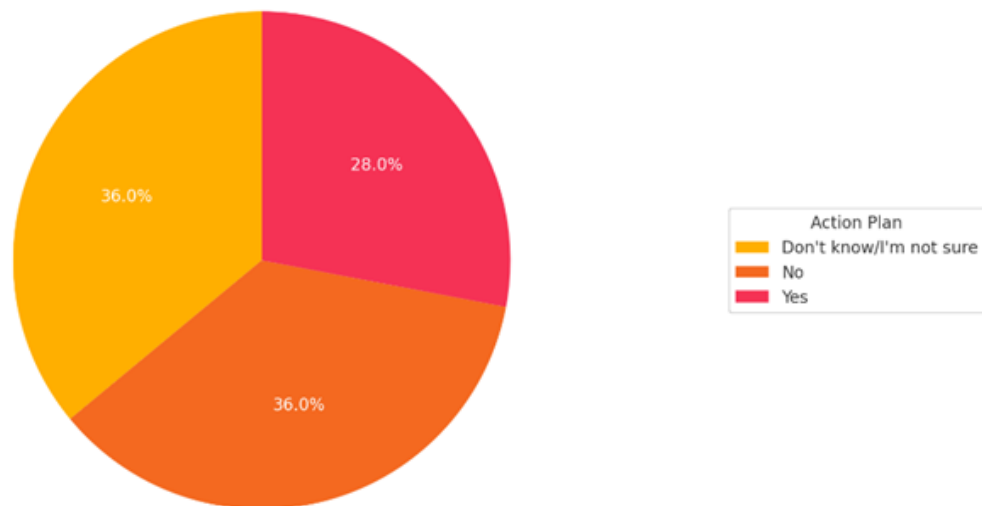


Figure 12: Gender Equality Plan or Gender Equality Policy by Associations/Federations/Clubs in Coaching

Figure 12 questions the presence of an action plan or official policy on gender equality within organizations. 36.0% of respondents indicate that their organization does not have such a plan. Another 36.0% are unsure or don't know if their organization has an action plan. Only 28.0% confirm that their organization has an official policy on gender equality. This highlights a significant gap in formal policies and the need for clearer communication and implementation of gender equality strategies within organizations. In many cases, gender equality-related policies might exist but they are not followed.

### 3.3.5 Assessing the integration of gender related issues in current coaching courses & curricula in Cyprus

The following question was “Do you think that current coaching courses & curricula in Cyprus adequately address gender issues in general?”

Existing Coaching Curricula or Training Seminars in Cyprus Adequately Address Gender Issues

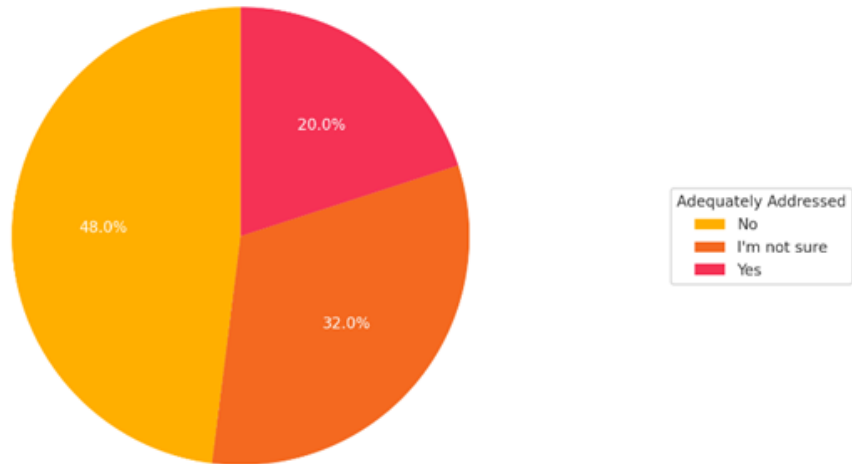


Figure 13: Gender Issues Addressed by Existing Coaching Curricula or Training Seminars

Figure 13 illustrates whether existing coaching curricula or training seminars in Cyprus adequately address gender issues. 48.0% of respondents believe that these programs do not adequately address gender issues. 32.0% are unsure, while 20.0% think that these curricula and seminars do adequately cover gender-related topics. This suggests a significant need for improvement and greater emphasis on gender issues within coaching education programs in Cyprus.

### 3.3.6 The integration of gender-related issues into existing coaching courses & curricula

Educational Institution Incorporates Gender Issues into Coaching Seminars and Curricula



Figure 14: Gender Issues Incorporation into Coaching by Educational Institutions

Figure 14 illustrates whether educational institutions incorporate gender issues into coaching seminars and curricula. 36.0% of respondents indicate that their institutions do not incorporate these issues, while 26.0% are unsure. 24.0% confirm that their institutions do incorporate gender issues, and 14.0% did not answer because they do not work for an educational institution, or their institution does not organize relevant seminars. This shows a varied approach to gender issue integration in educational programs, with a significant portion indicating a lack of integration.

Individuals who answered “yes” or even “not sure” were asked -optionally- to give more details, with the following responses:

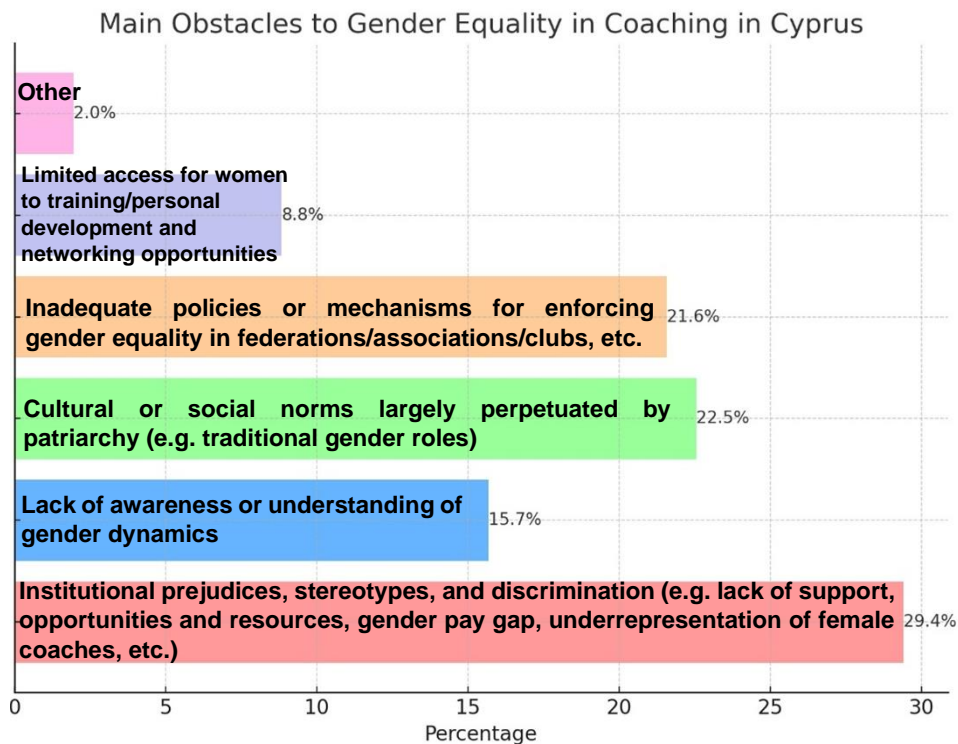
- *“The School of Coaches has included information on equality and from the beginning of the season there will be information to all the associations of Referees / Judges / Statistical Service. It is planned to hold a seminar / online for information for both parents and athletes”*
- *“In the curriculum of the School of Basketball Coaches, there are relevant modules in the Theoretical and Practical courses and especially in the course of Special Basketball Coaching.”*
- *“Regular organization of training programs/seminars.”*
- *“Our Institution does not organize coaching study programs. However, sport and related activities are among the most important methodologies for promoting objectives of various programs and projects. In this context, we take part in projects funded by Erasmus+ Sports, which include educational and training activities for coaches. Examples are RISE Empowered Above Sexual Violence in Sports, Curricular Pathways for Migrants' Empowerment through Sport, Sports Tolerance, #BeActive Actions.”*

### 3.4 Barriers and Challenges

#### 3.4.1 The main barriers to gender equality in the coaching profession in Cyprus

The main barriers to gender equality in the coaching profession in Cyprus include institutional prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination, as well as cultural and social norms that largely perpetuate gender roles. These factors contribute to a lack of representation and opportunities for women in coaching positions, limiting their advancement and participation. Additionally, there is often a lack of institutional support and policies that promote gender equality in coaching. Women may also face challenges in balancing professional and personal responsibilities, which can hinder their ability to pursue coaching careers. The lack of female role models and mentors in the coaching profession further exacerbates the issue, making it difficult for aspiring female coaches to find guidance and support.

The question *“What do you think are the main barriers to gender equality in the coaching profession in Cyprus?”* was next, where the individuals were able to choose more than one answer. A total of 102 choices were recorded.



*Figure 15: Main Obstacles to Gender Equality in Coaching*

Figure 15 illustrates the main obstacles to gender equality in coaching in Cyprus. 29.4% of the total responses of choice were attributed to “Institutional prejudices, stereotypes, and discrimination” as the primary obstacle. 22.5% cited “Cultural or social norms perpetuated by the patriarchy”. 21.6% pointed to “Inadequate policies or mechanisms for enforcing gender equality”. 15.7% mentioned a “Lack of awareness or understanding of gender dynamics”. 8.8% highlighted “Limited access for women to training and networking opportunities”, while 2.0% identified “Other” factors. This indicates that institutional and cultural issues are seen as the major barriers to achieving gender equality in coaching.

For the three cases who chose “Other”, the following answers were recorded:

- *“The degradation of women's basketball in Cyprus in general is something that may prevent women from getting involved in coaching. However, this should not prevent women from getting involved in developmental coaching and academies, which is not the case. That's why I think this is not a matter of any organization promoting coaching exclusively to women. It is taught freely and openly to both sexes whether or not they stay in the sport. Now if there are to be separate guidelines/guidelines for coaching in women's basketball we agree because it is something very different from coaching in men, but again it cannot be done in a gender-specific way. A man or a female can also be taught to choose which "fills" him the most, to make the coach.”*
- *“I do not see any obstacles.”*
- *“Legislation, policies, and measures that promote and support gender equality and breaking down inequalities”.*

### 3.4.2. The main challenges and barriers to integrating gender issues into existing coaching courses/curricula in Cyprus

The primary challenges to integrating gender issues into coaching courses and curricula in Cyprus are the reluctance of management and members of the sports community and a lack of awareness or understanding of the importance of gender equality. There is also a shortage of relevant initiatives and institutional support to promote gender-inclusive training programs. Educators may face resistance when attempting to introduce gender-related topics into existing courses, and there may be a lack of resources and materials available to support these efforts. Additionally, traditional gender roles and stereotypes can influence the content and delivery of coaching education, making it challenging to address gender issues effectively.

The multiple selection question “What do you think are the main barriers to integrating gender issues into existing coaching courses/curricula in Cyprus?”, resulted in 174 choices in total.

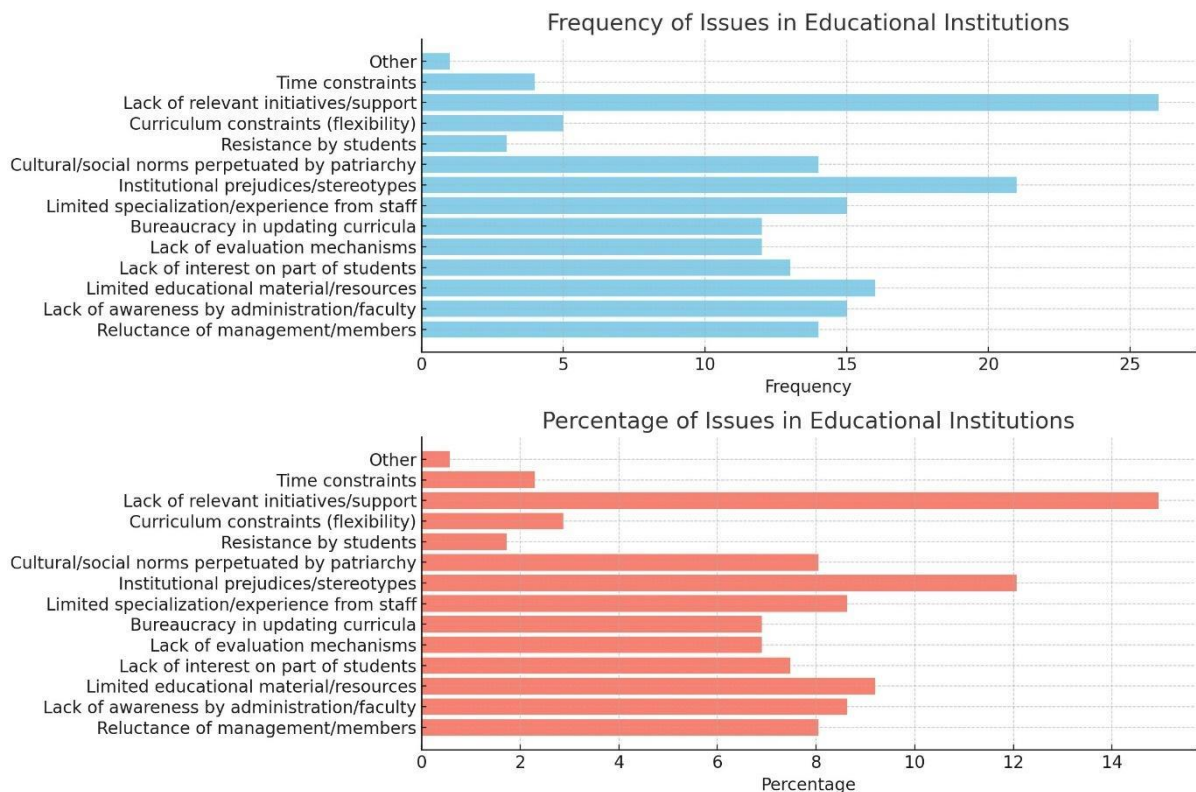


Figure 16: Main Challenges and Barriers to Integrating Gender Issues into Existing Coaching Courses

Figure 16 illustrates the various challenges faced by educational institutions, with particular emphasis on gender-related issues. Lack of relevant initiatives and support at the institutional level is the most frequently cited issue, with 26 responses accounting for 14.9% of the total. This suggests that institutions may lack structured programs or policies to address the identified challenges. Institutional prejudices and stereotypes about gender roles and competencies is another significant obstacle, receiving 21 responses and constituting 12.1% of the total. This indicates a prevalent issue of entrenched biases within educational settings. Limited educational material/resources on related topics and a Limited degree of specialization/experience from teaching staff each had 15 responses, representing 8.6% of the

total responses. This shows a gap in available resources and expertise necessary to address gender issues effectively. The reluctance of management and/or members of the educational institution to make changes and Cultural or social norms perpetuated primarily by patriarchy each received 14 responses, accounting for 8.0% of the total. This highlights resistance to change and the influence of broader societal norms on educational environments. Lack of awareness or understanding of the issue by the administration and/or faculty members also had 15 responses (8.6%). This points to a need for greater education and awareness among those in positions of authority. Bureaucracy/difficulties associated with updating curricula and Lack of mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of any efforts each received 12 responses (6.9%), indicating procedural and evaluative challenges in implementing and assessing changes. Lack of interest on the part of students was cited by 13 responses (7.5%), suggesting that student engagement with these issues may also be a barrier. Time constraints (limited ability to include additional content on gender issues) and Resistance on the part of students (or fear of reacting) had relatively low response rates, with 4 and 3 responses respectively, each representing around 2.3% of the total. Other factors were the least cited, with just 1 response (0.6%).

For the one case that chose “Other”, the following was received: *“I do not see any obstacles.”*

### **3.4.3 Specific challenges or barriers in promoting gender equality in coaching within -mainly basketball- associations/federations/sport clubs**

Specific challenges in promoting gender equality within basketball associations, federations, and sports clubs include overcoming entrenched cultural norms and biases. There is often resistance from the leadership and a lack of commitment to implementing gender equality policies. The absence of female role models and mentors in coaching roles further exacerbates the issue. Additionally, women in coaching may face discrimination and a lack of respect from colleagues and athletes, which can undermine their authority and effectiveness. The competitive nature of sports can also create a hostile environment for women, discouraging them from pursuing coaching positions. Furthermore, there may be limited opportunities for women to gain the necessary experience and qualifications to advance in their coaching careers.

The following question was *“Have you encountered any specific challenges or barriers in promoting gender equality in coaching within your association/federation/sport club?”*.

### Facing Specific Challenges or Obstacles in Promoting Gender Equality in Coaching

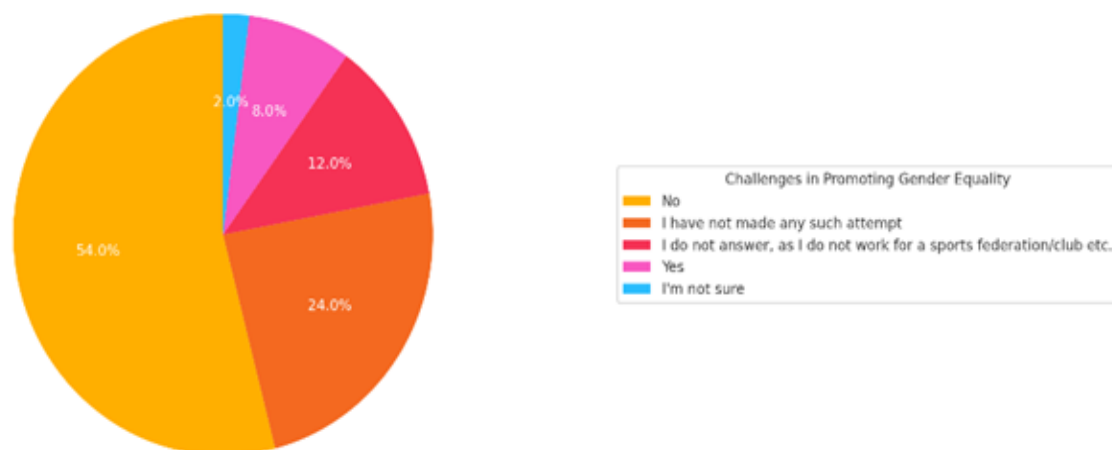


Figure 17: Specific Challenges or Obstacles in Promoting Gender Equality in Coaching

Figure 17 illustrates the respondents' experiences with facing challenges or obstacles in promoting gender equality in coaching. A majority, 54.0%, report not facing any challenges. 24.0% have not made any such attempt, and 12.0% did not answer because they do not work for a sports federation/club. 8.0% of respondents have faced challenges, while 2.0% are unsure. This indicates that while most respondents have not encountered obstacles, there is a notable portion that has, highlighting the need for support in promoting gender equality.

#### 3.4.4 Specific challenges or barriers to integrating gender-related issues to promote gender equality in coaching within educational institutions

3.4.4 Within educational institutions, the challenges include insufficient training and resources dedicated to gender equality, and a general lack of emphasis on gender issues within coaching curricula. Educators may also face obstacles such as limited support from administration and colleagues, making it difficult to prioritize and integrate gender-related topics effectively. There may be a lack of awareness and understanding of gender issues among educators and students, which can hinder efforts to promote gender equality. Additionally, traditional gender roles and stereotypes can influence the content and delivery of coaching education, making it challenging to address gender issues effectively. The absence of clear policies and guidelines on gender equality within educational institutions can also create barriers to integrating these topics into coaching curricula.

The next question was *“Have you encountered any specific challenges or barriers in your attempt to integrate gender-related issues to promote gender equality in coaching within your institution?”*

### Encountering Specific Challenges or Obstacles in Integrating Gender-related Issues in Courses



Figure 18: Specific Challenges or Obstacles in Integration Gender-related issues in Courses

Figure 18 illustrates the respondents' experiences with facing challenges or obstacles in integrating gender-related issues into courses. 44.0% of respondents report not encountering any challenges. 26.0% have not made any such attempt, and 16.0% did not answer because they do not teach coaching or do not work in an educational institution. 10.0% have faced challenges, and 4.0% are unsure. This indicates that while many have not faced obstacles, a significant portion has encountered challenges, highlighting the need for better support and resources for integrating gender issues into educational programs.

## 3.5 Suggestions and Recommendations

### 3.5.1 Strategies or methods that could use sports associations/federations/clubs etc. to promote gender equality in coaching in Cyprus

The next question was “Which of the following strategies or methods could sports associations/federations/clubs etc. use to promote gender equality in coaching in Cyprus?” and multiple selections were allowed.

Figure 19 illustrates the frequency and percentage of various categories related to gender equality initiatives and challenges as experienced by the respondents. Providing more/equal opportunities for education and training: 3.7% (8 selections) of the total 217 indicated this as a significant area of focus. Promoting inclusive language/use of non-sexist language: 7.8% (17 selections) identified this as an important initiative. Tackling gender bias and gender stereotypes: This was the most frequently mentioned category, with 12.4% (27 selections) highlighting it as a key issue. Developing gender equality policy: 4.6% (10 selections) considered this crucial. Setting clear objectives to promote diversity and inclusion in coaching: 4.6% (10 selections) focused on this area. Updating recruitment practices to prioritize diversity and inclusion and ensure fair and transparent selection processes: 5.1% (11 selections) pointed this out. Providing (more) opportunities for women to take up leadership positions: 3.2% (7 selections) identified this as important. Providing specialized training: Another 3.2% (7 selections) saw this as necessary. Providing more resources, funding, and financial support: 2.8% (6 selections) saw this as a significant need. Work-life balance actions & related support: 9.7% (21 selections) found this to be an essential area of focus. Conducting relevant research to identify the current situation and guide further action: 3.2% (7 selections) highlighted this need. Cooperation with



other federations/associations/sports clubs on joint actions and exchange of best practices: 3.7% (8 selections) indicated this as beneficial. Promoting an inclusive and supportive environment (e.g., through mentoring programs, networking opportunities, etc.): 5.5% (12 respondents) saw this as crucial. Promoting visibility and recognition for female coaches: 2.8% (6 selections) considered this important. Gender discrimination and harassment: 6.5% (14 selections) reported this as an issue. Systemic barriers, challenges, and inequalities: Another 6.5% (14 selections) faced these issues. Gender identities and gender expression: 1.8% (4 selections) focused on this area. Gender diversity in leadership: 2.8% (6 selections) considered this important. Gender-specific coaching approaches: 5.1% (11 selections) saw this as necessary. Inclusive cultures/mindsets in coaching: 4.6% (10 selections) focused on this. Other: 0.5% (1 selection) identified other areas not specifically listed. This plot indicates that while a variety of gender equality initiatives are being undertaken, tackling gender bias and stereotypes, promoting inclusive language, and supporting work-life balance are among the top priorities. This highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to address these issues effectively in the context of coaching and leadership.

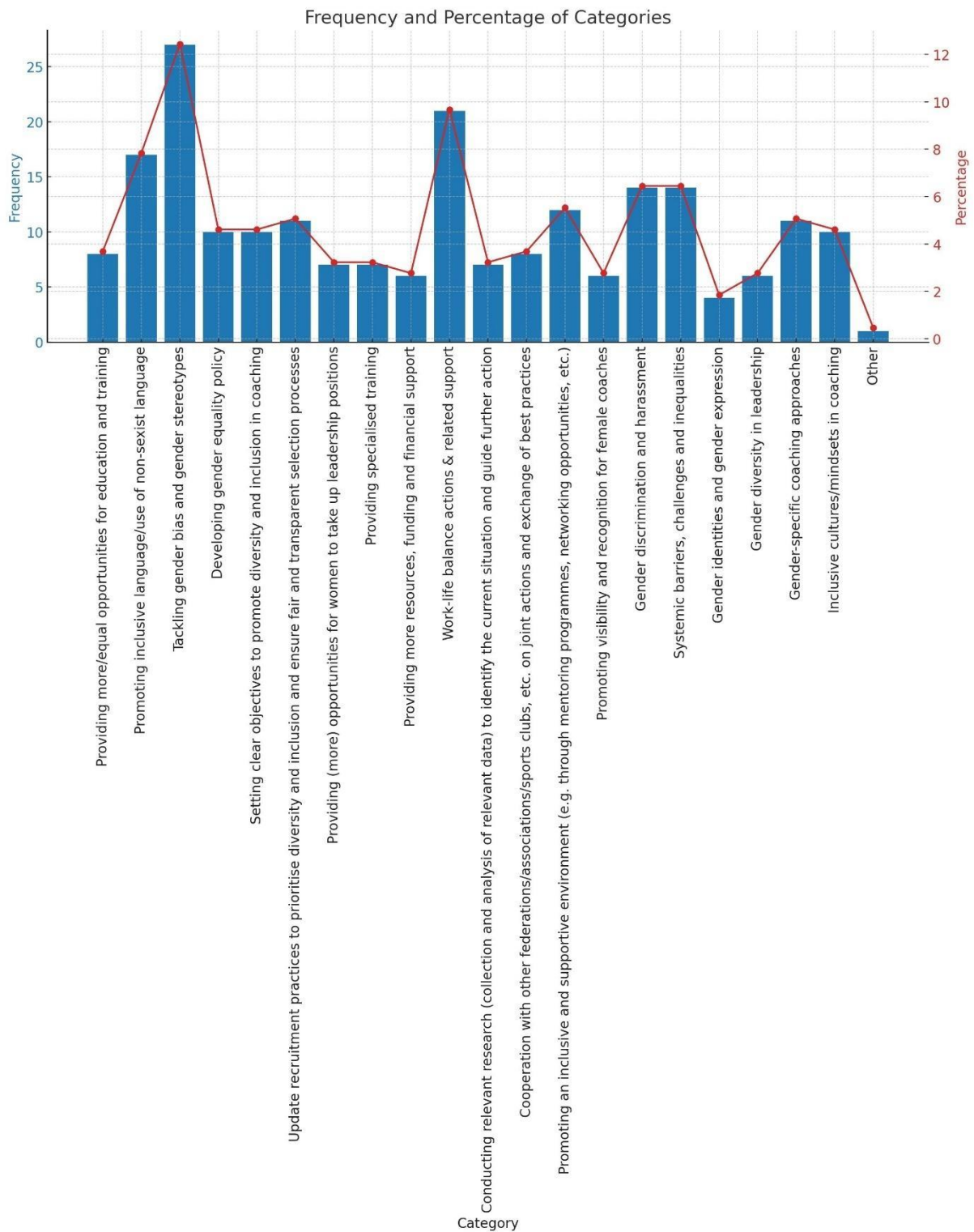


Figure 19: Strategies or Methods for Sports Associations/Federations/Clubs to Promote Gender Equality in Coaching

### 3.5.2 Specific gender-related topics that should be included in coaching courses & curricula

The topics discussed in the previous question can easily be adapted to be included in coaching courses and curricula. In this way, the sports associations/federations/clubs can focus on raising awareness regarding gender equality and at the same time fostering the adoption of this concept by the EU public (coaches, athletes, etc).

### 3.6 Brainstorming section (general comments & selected answers)

The final section of the survey was a brainstorming activity, and participants were asked to fill in the following sentences with the first thing that came to mind:

a) Women in coaching/ Female coaches \_\_\_\_\_

b) Men in coaching/Male coaches \_\_\_\_\_

c) Gender equality in coaching \_\_\_\_\_

The responses to the brainstorming activity were as follows:

1. Most responses indicate that there are few women in basketball coaching; however, those who are active are regarded as equally competent as their male counterparts. These women face challenges related to recognition and equal opportunities, yet their contributions to the field are acknowledged as necessary and valuable. Some respondents mentioned that women are already treated equally to men in coaching, while others suggested that women are particularly well-suited to coaching younger people, like children.
  - *“They are worthy of knowledge, know-how and prospects.”*
  - *“They are few in number”*
  - *“There are few”*
  - *“They must assert their legitimate rights.”*
  - *“They are minimal compared to men.”*
  - *“Balance”*
  - *“GROWING”*
  - *“They can be just as capable as male coaches.”*
  - *“About 15”*
  - *“Few in number”*
  - *“They need to be ready to answer the children correctly why they have a female coach”*
  - *“They have fewer opportunities than coaches”*
  - *“They should not be separated according to gender, but according to capacity.”*
  - *“They are equally effective and especially in women's groups of any level”*
  - *“They should be paid the same as men”*
  - *“Minimum”*
  - *“They have the right to equal opportunities”*
  - *“are great”*
  - *“they must claim”*
  - *“Are always criticised”*
  - *“It is a very important part in the integral development of an athlete.”*

- “perform remarkable work”
  - “They are equally dynamic and able to perform to the maximum as expected, trained, with equal abilities and skills with men in the field of coaching”.
2. Most responses highlight the stereotypes and perceptions surrounding men in basketball coaching, detail the challenges and current situation faced by women in this field, and underscore the necessity for change and progress toward equality. Some of the responses were:
- “They are sure to find a job.”
  - “They are much more numerous than women”
  - “They need to give space and consider female coaches equal”
  - “dominate”
  - “THEY ARE NOT CONVINCING”
  - “They should not underestimate female coaches”
  - “They should not be separated according to gender, but according to capacity”
  - “Promote women in coaching”
  - “They can become powerful allies in promoting a fairer future for women in sport. Their influence and leadership can create a multiplier effect by providing opportunities and creating the right conditions to address inequality in sport”
  - “Are always preferred”
  - “They have more opportunities to be recognized if enough doors are opened to them in this space with minimal restrictions”

Gender equality in coaching is widely recognized as both important and necessary throughout the brainstorming activity. Despite the progress made, significant challenges and barriers remain, necessitating a collective effort and commitment from all stakeholders to address these inequalities. The participants' attitude was formed:

- *“It needs immediate activation and measures to support it”*
- *“non-existent”*
- *“It is very important”*
- *“MUST”*
- *“It still needs improvement, but it has made steps forward compared to previous years”*
- *“It must be taken for granted.”*
- *“needs to be pushed further and work towards it”*
- *“It goes without saying that it may apply”*
- *“It should be self-evident.”*
- *“Substantial information must be provided to the unions and promoted for the good of all. It is not just about helping women but about giving them the opportunity and the environment to help clubs/federations/bodies.”*
- *“Gender equality in coaching must be designed, promoted and implemented with an intersectional approach (regardless of sexual identity, sexual orientation, gender, race, nationality, class and other factors that lead to discrimination and segregation), for inclusive, equal, and equal treatment of all”.*

## 3.7 Closing remarks

### 3.7.1 Additional comments/ideas e.g. regarding gender equality in coaching or related topics

Participants had the chance to provide additional comments or share ideas and suggestions related to the survey topics. Here are some representative responses:

- ✓ Women coaches must finally be given opportunities to excel!
- ✓ The practice of coaching is open to every person, regardless of their gender. It depends in my opinion on the personality, cognitive competence and experience of the person concerned. Of course, it is enough to deal with this issue with the appropriate breadth, knowledge and understanding by the bodies that offer the jobs...
- ✓ Women are usually not taken seriously. We have to always be 110% for people to acknowledge us. Social media is always speaking about the men's side of basketball. Everyone is always talking about the boy's or men's teams. Female youth players rarely get acknowledged unless they have done something insane to bring attention to themselves and their team. Women coaches are always judged more than men. We have to be twice as ready, and knowledgeable and decrease mistakes as much as possible, or else we get negative attention and opinions. Referees also treat men and women differently.
- ✓ I believe that there is meritocracy both in the Unions and in the Federation.
- ✓ Congratulations on the survey. Please inform us about the results at (the given email)
- ✓ Yes, I would generally like to be more involved with the project in general.

### 3.7.2 The impact of the SheCOACH online survey to participants

Figure 20: Research Provided "Food for Thought" and Broadened Views on Gender Equality in Coaching

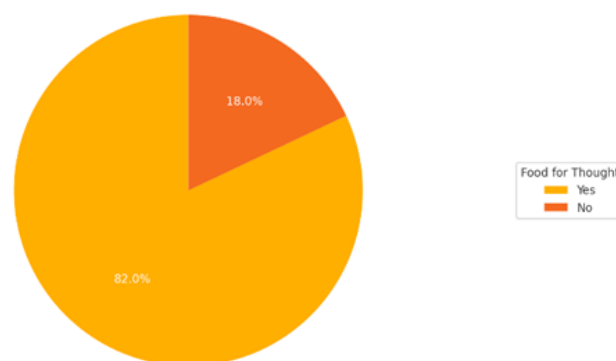


Figure 20 shows the impact of the research on providing "food for thought" and broadening views on gender equality in coaching. A significant majority, 82.0%, reported that the research did provide valuable insights and broadened their views on the topic. Meanwhile, 18.0% felt that the research did not provide such insights. This indicates that the research was effective for most respondents in enhancing their understanding and perspectives on gender equality in coaching.

## 4. Interviews' Results

### 4.1 Participants profile

All individuals who participated in the SheCOACH interviews in Cyprus signed consent forms, which informed them that all findings would be recorded anonymously and that they would not be identifiable in any reports or publications.

The experts interviewed in Cyprus included a diverse group of professionals, consisting of 5 women with varying degrees of experience in sports coaching or/and administration. The participants have backgrounds mainly in basketball, with experience ranging from active coaching to administrative roles within sports and non-sports organizations. Some have also been involved in higher education, teaching at coaching schools. Their professional experience spans from five to twenty years, with several holding significant positions within national or regional sports federations and associations. This diversity provided a broad perspective on the current state of gender equality in coaching within Cyprus.

### 4.2 Awareness and understanding

#### **4.2.1 Familiarity of the interviewees with the concept of gender equality in coaching and their interpretation of the term**

Most participants were familiar with the concept of gender equality in coaching, though their understanding varied. Some defined it as providing equal opportunities and rights for both men and women, while others emphasized the need for an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive regardless of gender. There was a consensus on the importance of promoting respect and equal opportunities in the coaching profession. One interviewee mentioned that while the term was familiar, the practical implementation of gender equality principles in coaching was not as widespread. Another participant noted that true gender equality would mean not just equal opportunities but also equal treatment and pay for male and female coaches.

#### **4.2.2 Assessing the importance for sport organisations/associations/federations to address gender equality in coaching and for coaching education providers to address gender equality in coaching in their courses**

The interviewees agreed that the coaching profession is predominantly male-dominated, both in Cyprus and internationally. They acknowledged the necessity for sports organizations and coaching education providers to address gender equality. While progress has been made, there is still a significant journey towards achieving full gender equality in coaching. Integrating gender equality principles into curricula and fostering an inclusive environment in coaching education were seen as crucial steps forward. Several interviewees highlighted that addressing gender equality in coaching is not just about creating more opportunities for women, but also about changing cultural perceptions and biases that often undermine women's potential in coaching roles.

## 4.3 Current situation and existing practices

### 4.3.1 Existing initiatives or efforts within sport associations/federations to promote gender equality in coaching in Cyprus and beyond

Participants noted that while there are some initiatives to promote gender equality, these efforts are often in their early stages or limited in scope. The Cyprus Basketball Federation, for example, has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Commissioner for Gender Equality to develop programs aimed at increasing women's participation in basketball. Despite these efforts, a significant gap remains in the number of women in coaching roles. One interviewee described a recent initiative where female coaches were specifically encouraged to apply for coaching positions within youth teams, though the long-term impact of such initiatives is yet to be seen.

### 4.3.2 Existing situation and current initiatives in institutions/universities/VET centres in Cyprus regarding the integration of gender issues in coaching training courses/programmes and curricula

Some universities in Cyprus have begun to address gender issues in their curricula, integrating discussions on gender equality into various courses. However, there is no standalone course on gender equality in coaching. The emphasis is on a horizontal approach where gender issues are incorporated into everyday teaching practices. For instance, at the University of Cyprus, gender equality topics are included in sports management and physical education courses, ensuring that all students, regardless of their specialization, are aware of these critical issues. However, interviewees acknowledged that more structured and focused modules on gender equality would be beneficial.

## 4.4 Challenges and barriers

### 4.4.1 Challenges and barriers to promoting gender equality in coaching in Cyprus

Cultural and societal attitudes were identified as significant barriers to promoting gender equality in coaching. The perception that women are less capable than men in coaching roles persists, making it challenging for women to gain equal opportunities and recognition. Additionally, family obligations were noted as a major obstacle for women pursuing coaching careers. One interviewee pointed out that the traditional view of women primarily as caregivers limits their ability to commit to the demanding schedules required in coaching. Another barrier mentioned was the lack of visible female role models in coaching positions, which can deter young women from considering coaching as a viable career path.

#### **4.4.2 Specific examples that concern sport associations/federations and educational institutions**

While no specific examples were provided, interviewees emphasized the need for continued efforts to address gender biases and promote equality within their organizations. Some noted that while policies might exist on paper, their practical implementation often falls short. For example, one sports federation has a policy for gender equality but lacks the necessary resources and commitment to enforce it effectively. Another participant highlighted the need for more robust mentoring and support networks for female coaches within sports associations.

### **4.5 Suggestions and Recommendations**

#### **4.5.1 Suggestions to promote gender equality in coaching within associations/federations and ways to overcome barriers, and integrate gender-related aspects in courses and educational curricula in Cyprus**

Promoting gender equality requires a holistic approach, including awareness campaigns, training programs, and policy changes within sports organizations and educational institutions. Celebrating and promoting the achievements of women coaches can help challenge stereotypes and encourage more women to pursue coaching careers. One interviewee suggested implementing mandatory training sessions on gender equality for all members of sports organizations. Another recommended creating specific scholarships and funding opportunities for women who want to pursue coaching education.

#### **4.5.2 Resources or support mechanisms contributing to promoting gender equality in coaching within organisations/federations in Cyprus**

Access to up-to-date educational materials on gender issues is crucial for coaching education providers. Collaboration among federations, associations, and media to highlight the achievements of female coaches and challenge existing stereotypes is also essential. One participant mentioned the importance of online platforms and resources that can provide continuous learning opportunities about gender equality. Another suggested forming alliances with international bodies that are already successful in promoting gender equality in sports to learn and adapt best practices.

#### **4.5.3 Specific topics that should be included in a gender-sensitive and gender-balanced coaching course that aims to promote gender equality**

Suggested topics include equal rights, best practices from other countries, and gender-specific issues tailored to the needs and challenges of different sports. One interviewee emphasized the importance of including case studies and real-life examples of successful female coaches. Others recommended courses on leadership skills, conflict resolution, and effective communication, which are crucial for all coaches but particularly beneficial in overcoming gender-related challenges.



## 4.6 Future plans and further involvement

### 4.6.1 Expression of interest for further involvement in the SheCOACH initiative

All interviewees expressed interest in further involvement with the SheCOACH project. However, some mentioned that official procedures would need to be followed for their associations or federations to participate formally. They recognized the potential benefits of the initiative in promoting gender equality and were keen to support and contribute to its goals. Some participants suggested organizing regular workshops and conferences to keep the momentum going and to continuously engage with the broader coaching community on gender issues.

### 4.6.2 Specific goals or targets related to gender equality in coaching for the near future

Interviewees indicated goals such as increased media coverage of women's sports and efforts to challenge gender stereotypes. Building confidence among women coaches and ensuring equal opportunities were also highlighted. Specific targets included achieving a certain percentage of women in coaching roles within the next five years and developing mentorship programs for young female coaches. Additionally, some participants proposed setting up evaluation metrics to regularly assess progress towards gender equality goals.

## 4.7 Brainstorming section (general comments and selected answers)

Participants shared a range of thoughts on gender equality in coaching, highlighting several important aspects. Women in coaching were described as excellent and indispensable, particularly in their ability to motivate younger athletes and serve as role models. Despite these strengths, the field remains male-dominated, with many respondents stressing the need for men to be more aware of their behavior and its impact on gender dynamics.

Achieving gender equality in coaching was universally recognized as a challenging yet crucial objective. Several steps were identified to promote and support female coaches. These include implementing targeted recruitment strategies, providing mentorship programs, and ensuring equitable access to professional development opportunities.

One interviewee suggested that sports organizations should adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards gender discrimination. This would involve strict enforcement of rules against sexist behavior, harassment, and unequal treatment, creating a safer and more inclusive environment for female coaches.

Another participant emphasized the importance of continuous dialogue and education on gender issues. They argued that regular workshops, seminars, and open discussions are necessary to keep the community engaged and informed about gender equality. These educational initiatives should address both conscious and unconscious biases, fostering a culture of respect and understanding.

Moreover, it was noted that visible leadership commitment is vital. Sports organizations should publicly commit to gender equality goals and allocate resources to support these initiatives. This

could include financial support for female coaches, sponsorship of women's coaching clinics, and recognition programs that highlight the achievements of female coaches.

In conclusion, while there are significant challenges to achieving gender equality in coaching, the collective insights of participants underscore a clear path forward. By promoting the excellence and necessity of women in coaching, implementing strict anti-discrimination policies, fostering ongoing education, and ensuring strong leadership commitment, meaningful progress can be made toward a more equitable coaching landscape.

## 5. Final conclusions and suggestions at national level

The SheCOACH National Report for Cyprus was prepared by CBF. The following set of results was recorded:

a) The SheCOACH online survey for Cyprus (which was active between April – May 2024), had 50 responses from professionals in basketball clubs, mainly coaches (10 individuals/20%), professionals from national or regional basketball associations/federations (16 respondents/32%), faculty members & professionals from educational providers offering coaching courses, such as universities, vocational centres, colleges, etc. (6 respondents/12%), staff/professionals in other sports federations/associations/clubs (5 respondents/10%), and other related stakeholders (12 individuals/24%).

b) the SheCOACH **interviews** (June 2024) with **5 sports experts from Cyprus**, previous teaching experience in higher sports education, and high-level executive positions at national and/or regional sports federations or associations of basketball, handball, and volleyball.

Analyzing the data reveals several conclusions about gender equality in coaching in Cyprus, which will contribute to the development of D2.3: Report with recommendations on addressing knowledge gaps in gender mainstreaming. This report will serve as the foundation for WP3, which includes the development of the SheCOACH Capacity Building Programme for coach education providers on integrating gender issues into curricula (Task 3.1) and the piloting and evaluation of the Capacity Building Programme (Task 3.2). Some key findings from the SheCOACH primary research are summarised below:

### **Current status on gender equality in coaching:**

The state of gender equality in basketball coaching within Cyprus reveals a landscape still predominantly occupied by men, reflecting a broader trend seen across various sports. While some progress has been made in recent years, the representation of women in coaching roles remains considerably low. This discrepancy persists even in the absence of overt gender discrimination, indicating that more subtle and systemic barriers are at play.

The online survey and SheCOACH interviews reveal a general awareness of gender equality issues among coaching professionals. However, this awareness often does not lead to concrete actions. Many respondents from sports associations, federations, and basketball clubs in Cyprus believe that these entities are not doing enough to promote gender equality. Efforts such as the formation of mixed-gender teams and involving female coaches in women's national teams are acknowledged but are often seen as insufficient and lacking a strategic approach.

### **Barriers and challenges:**

1. There is a deeply ingrained perception that women are less capable than men in coaching roles. This cultural bias limits opportunities for women and affects their recognition and advancement in the coaching profession. Traditional gender roles continue to influence the perception and treatment of female coaches.

2. Many women face additional family responsibilities that restrict their ability to commit to the demanding schedules required for coaching careers. This dual burden can deter women from pursuing or advancing in coaching roles.
3. The scarcity of female coaches in visible, high-profile positions serves as a significant deterrent for young women considering a career in coaching. Without role models, aspiring female coaches may feel discouraged from entering or persisting in the profession.
4. Despite some policies promoting gender equality, their practical implementation often falls short. Many sports organizations and educational institutions in Cyprus lack the necessary resources and commitment to effectively enforce these policies. There is a critical need for robust mentoring and support networks specifically designed for female coaches.

### **Suggestions for promoting gender equality in coaching:**

- Addressing gender equality in coaching requires a comprehensive approach that begins with general education and progressively focuses on sports education and coaching-specific issues. Integrating gender issues into sports curricula and specialized training programs can help foster a more inclusive environment.
- Efforts must be intensified to raise awareness of gender issues within sports organizations. Integrating gender topics into coaching education and curricula is essential. Additionally, celebrating and promoting the achievements of women coaches can challenge existing stereotypes and encourage more women to pursue coaching careers.
- Establishing a clear, supportive framework with specific procedures to ensure women's inclusion in coaching roles within federations, associations, and sports clubs is crucial. This includes providing specialized training programs and networking opportunities, as well as high-quality educational materials on gender issues.
- Cooperation among federations, associations, sports clubs, and the media is vital. Joint actions, particularly within the context of EU-funded projects like SheCOACH, can significantly contribute to advancing gender equality in coaching.
- In a significant move towards gender equality, Cyprus amended its sports law in 2023 to eliminate disparities between men's and women's national teams. This legislative change ensures equal benefits such as daily allowances, travel expenses, and remuneration for matches and training facilities for both genders.
- Among the 217 respondents, key strategies for promoting gender equality in coaching include tackling gender bias and stereotypes (12.4%), work-life balance actions and related support (9.7%), promoting inclusive language (7.8%), updating recruitment practices for diversity and inclusion (5.1%), developing gender equality policies (4.6%), setting clear diversity and inclusion objectives (4.6%), providing more/equal opportunities for education and training (3.7%), offering leadership opportunities for women (3.2%), providing specialized training (3.2%), conducting relevant research (3.2%), and increasing resources, funding, and financial support (2.8%).

## The SheCOACH recommendations

The SheCOACH project, funded under the ERASMUS-SPORT-2023-SCP and coordinated by the Cyprus Basketball Federation, aims to bridge the gender gap in sports coaching. The project focuses on mainstreaming gender-specific topics within coaching curricula and raising awareness about the benefits of including women coaches, particularly in traditionally male-dominated sports like basketball.

By addressing these recommendations and leveraging ongoing initiatives, Cyprus can make substantial strides towards achieving gender equality in sports coaching. This multifaceted approach will not only benefit female coaches but also enrich the coaching profession and sports culture as a whole.

### **A Comprehensive Strategy for Gender Equality in Coaching**

Achieving gender equality in coaching requires a thorough and integrated approach that begins with general education, transitions to sports education, and finally addresses coaching-specific issues. A broad-based strategy should be incorporated into sports curricula, complemented by targeted integration of gender issues in specialized seminars, training programs, and coaching courses.

### **Raising Awareness, Promotion, and Recognition**

Efforts to raise awareness about gender issues within sports organizations need to be intensified, with a strong focus on incorporating these issues into coaching education and curricula. Celebrating and promoting the achievements of women coaches by their teams, associations, and federations is crucial for challenging stereotypes and encouraging more women to pursue coaching careers. Additionally, increased media coverage of women's sports and female coaches can provide role models for the next generation of athletes and coaches, inspiring them to enter and persist in the profession.

### **Practical Measures, Educational Resources, and Support**

Establishing a supportive framework with specific procedures to ensure women's inclusion in coaching roles is essential. Federations, associations, and sports clubs should develop and offer specialized training programs and networking opportunities for female coaches. This can raise awareness and foster a productive dialogue on gender equality, leading to positive actions. Providers of coaching education must have access to up-to-date, high-quality educational materials on gender issues, such as textbooks, presentations, and videos. Additionally, sports educators and coaching trainers should reflect on their own prejudices, biases, and stereotypes to support relevant initiatives effectively.

### **Collaboration and Joint Actions**

Promoting gender equality in coaching also requires cooperation among federations, associations, sports clubs, and the media. Joint actions, particularly within the framework of EU-funded projects, can significantly advance gender equality in coaching. Collaborative efforts can make a substantial contribution to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for female coaches, ultimately benefiting the entire sports community.

In brief:

The current status of gender equality in basketball coaching in Cyprus shows a male-dominated field, similar to other sports. Although some progress has been made, women remain underrepresented in coaching roles, with subtle systemic barriers persisting despite the absence of overt discrimination. Surveys by the SheCOACH initiative highlight a general awareness of gender equality issues among professionals, yet this awareness rarely translates into concrete actions. Many believe that sports entities in Cyprus are not sufficiently promoting gender equality. Key barriers include cultural biases doubting women's capabilities, additional family responsibilities, the scarcity of female role models in high-profile positions, and the inadequate implementation of gender equality policies.

Suggestions for promoting gender equality include integrating gender issues into sports education, raising awareness within sports organizations, celebrating women coaches' achievements, and providing supportive frameworks and specialized training. Cooperation among federations, associations, sports clubs, and the media, along with EU-funded projects like SheCOACH, is vital.

Notably, Cyprus amended its sports law in 2023 to ensure equal benefits for men's and women's national teams, marking a significant step towards gender equality. The SheCOACH project, coordinated by the Cyprus Basketball Federation and funded under ERASMUS-SPORT-2023-SCP, aims to mainstream gender-specific topics in coaching curricula and raise awareness about the benefits of including women coaches, particularly in traditionally male-dominated sports like basketball.

