

CASE STUDY 3

World Rowing: Women's Sport Leadership Academy for High Performance Coaches (WSLA HPC)

Name of the programme:

World Rowing: Women's Sport Leadership Academy for High Performance Coaches (WSLA HPC)

Briefly describe the programme:

The WSLA HPC programme is a collaboration between World Rowing and five other International Federations: Union Cycliste Internationale, World Rugby, International Tennis Federation, World Triathlon and United World Wrestling, to support the development of coaching skills in a high-performance domain as well as competence in leadership behaviours and confidence to progress their career path.

How did you implement it?

Five coaches were selected for the programme. World Rowing Development liaised with the coaches, WSLA and the national federation to initiate a self-assessment against sport-specific criteria and key leadership behaviours, along with collating 360 feedback from colleagues and peers against strengths and areas from which to build a development plan. The selected coaches then joined an initial residential session alongside the other sport coaches at the University of Hertfordshire focused on personal development planning, networking, leadership, mentorship, learning from high performance environments, conscious career planning, negotiation and communication. Each coach benefited from dual mentoring, through a high calibre mentor with experience of international level rowing coaching and a leadership mentor to help them develop. The programme ran for 14 months and additionally included an online learning programme (including group and individual tasks) and sport specific development opportunities at events.

What were your aims for the programme?

The aim is to prepare coaches to be part of an increased cohort of female coaches at continental and world level regattas and Olympic Games. The programme aimed to build on the coaches existing skills and reinforce strengths of the candidates and to create a network to support these coaches in reaching their full potential. The participants are encouraged to work within their national and regional

settings in cooperation with their National Olympic Committees and National Federations to help others and raise awareness around women planning to become elite coaches.

Did you achieve them?

We have achieved the programme objectives. The five coaches have taken on high performance positions leading crews at World Championships, Olympic Qualification regattas and Continental Championships. Four of the five coaches are progressing to become World Rowing Coach Educators and part of the World Rowing Continental Development teams. One of the coaches has prepared and led the 2021 World Rowing junior beach sprints champion.

The monitor and evaluation project evidenced a positive change to the coaches' sport specific competencies and evidenced the coaches experienced an improvement in multiple areas such as HP coaching vision, leadership competence and confidence, sport specific competence and coaching confidence, improved use of networks and empowerment to navigate challenges part of coaching at HP level.

Beyond the targets and KPIs World Rowing highlights the value of the diverse women coaches working group, a collective with 26 coaches from 23 countries and 6 sports.

In a wider context the M&E WSLA HPC conclusions evidenced "the WSLA HPC pilot programme has met its objectives and contributed to positive changes in the participants' coaching skills, leadership competency and confidence to progress their career path."

What would you change if you ran the programme again?

World Rowing contributed to the M&E report. We believe it is significant to share the main M&E recommendations to improve the programme going forward.

Before the programme

- Ensure there is clarity about what is required from all participants and contributors to the programme

- Introduce stronger accountability across the programme as a whole

During the programme

- Improve the information flow for all parties for the duration of the project
- Encourage and support the coaches to facilitate the connection between the leadership and sport specific mentor so they can work together and support the coach
- Capitalise on the benefits of the programme for the mentors themselves
- Embrace the benefits of both physical and virtual engagement as standard in future course design
- Improve the experience for non-native English speakers

After the programme

- Establish a legacy element as a formal part of the programme with appropriate funding attached to support the coaches ongoing development and facilitate the development of an alumni network
- Build interest in future programmes
- Spread the benefit of the programme beyond the specific course participants

Future

- Funding to maintain the programme should be secured
- Continue to deliver the programme over an extended period of time
- Ensure that each cohort remains a mix of sports/countries/geographies

Any other feedback from the programme:

One of the most exciting aspects was to work with a number of people from different sports to deliver a tailored, relevant, useful programme able to address this diversity. This new coach empowerment model will bring a legacy

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