

# Female Sports Students as Future Leaders: a co-created and collaborative leadership programme

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Gender inequity remains a significant issue, particularly within decision making positions in sports organisations (Evans and Pfister, 2021).

Despite increasing opportunities to participate in sport in the UK and Malaysia, in both countries women remain underrepresented at senior leadership levels.



## Project co-creation:

Co-creation took place at Universiti Malaya in September 2022. The project team came together face-to-face to discuss leadership challenges within their local contexts, and worked collaboratively to develop a leadership programme suitable for aspiring female leaders.

## 5 Workshop Themes:

1. Exploring Values of Self and Others
2. Developing Confidence to Step Outside Your Comfort Zone
3. Building Relationships and Growing a Network
4. Taking Opportunities, Building Experience & Selling Yourself
5. Diverse Thinking & Understanding Unconscious Bias

## Methods:

Online panels were comprised of female leaders from the UK and Malaysia working within a range of sports organisations at varying levels. Panel sessions were transcribed and analysed to identify the key messages and advice shared by female leaders. Shared here is advice for students as aspiring leaders.

### Networks are key

- Tap into support, advice and guidance from teachers, lecturers and industry partners.
- Let people in your network know where you want to get you. This will enable them to tailor their support more effectively.

### Challenges and failures are just part of the ride

- Use challenges and failure as learning experiences. Remember that challenges are important for personal and professional growth.
- Personal resilience is essential to help you overcome setbacks and challenges.
- Recognise your transferrable skill set from the values and skills you've developed through sport.

## Face-to-face & online delivery



## Discussion:

### Development of skills and experience

- Complete CPD and training courses to set yourself apart from the crowd.
- Volunteer to boost industry experience and develop industry contacts.
- Get involved with boards and committees to develop transferrable skills and experiences

### Broaden your perspectives

- Be open to alternative suggestions and new possibilities.
- Respect different perspectives and aim to find common ground.
- Embrace working with people who are different from you.

- Self-worth and confidence are built from stepping outside your comfort zone. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.
- Don't be afraid to reach out for help from your network.