

# Leading diversity: Bolstering participation of ethnic minority women in coaching

Final report  
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31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2024

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## Executive summary

This final research report provides an overview of the research project titled "Leading Diversity: Bolstering Participation of Ethnic Minority Women in Coaching". The focus of this project is addressing the underrepresentation of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC) in European football. While research consistently highlights the lack of diversity in football coaching, the specific mechanisms and challenges surrounding this underrepresentation remain less well-explored. Therefore, this research project aimed to shed light on this issue, focusing on coaching education and the recruitment process for coaching positions in the Netherlands and England.

The report begins by outlining the research questions that inform this project, followed by an exploration of the theoretical foundations and existing academic literature related to the underrepresentation of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds. Subsequently, the report provides an overview of the research design, detailing the methodological approach, which involves interviews with female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds and key stakeholders in English and Dutch football. This methodological approach is complemented by participant observations at coaching education sessions. The report then explains the value of these methodological approaches before delving into the specific qualitative methods that have been employed for data analysis.

The report then moves on to a presentation of the key findings. This section is organised by first providing answers to the four sub-questions, before moving to a discussion and reflection on the findings pertaining to the overarching research question. The findings show that female coaches of ethnic minority background (FEMC) experience various barriers in their coaching careers. These barriers are multidimensional and layered, taking place on the individual, interpersonal, organisational, and socio-cultural level.

Based on these findings, several key recommendations are formulated for UEFA and national associations to increase the representation of FEMC. These are:

1. Continuing investment in tailored mentorship programmes at all levels
2. Strategic investments in recruiting prospective FEMC
3. Addressing of stereotypes pertaining to gender and ethnicity
4. Increasing the visibility of coaching education and tailored schemes
5. Offering of female-only coaching education *alongside* mixed groups
6. Critical reflection on hiring practices within the organisation.

The subsequent section addresses limitations in the research project, such as issues related to data access and participant observation at coaching education sessions.

## 1. Introduction

Women's football has been growing steadily in popularity in the last few years. This has given rise to a new generation of high-profile female football stars and celebrated female coaches who have made their mark in the women's game (and in some exceptional cases also in the men's game). It remains nonetheless clear that the field of football coaching on the elite European level remains a predominantly male affair. A recent study shows that around 94% of senior coaching positions in European male and female football are taken up by men (Van Sterkenburg et al., 2023). UEFA, and many national football associations, have recognized tackling this underrepresentation as a strategic priority. For that reason, various policies and initiatives have been put forward to interest and accredit more women for coaching positions. Since 2016, the UEFA Coach Development Programme for Women has provided – among other things – financial and mentor support for female coaches that want to obtain coaching licenses. Since the launch of the program, the number of certified female coaches has increased with 45%.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, UEFA has also worked on a qualitative level in adapting the framework of coaching competences to reflect the sometimes-specific elements and requirements of the female game.<sup>2</sup>

While the number of certified female coaches is on the rise, it's evident that this trend does not equally pertain to women from ethnic minority backgrounds. Just 1.1% of senior coaching positions in European top-league (men's and women's) football are held by women of ethnic minority backgrounds (Van Sterkenburg et al., 2023). In essence, this highlights the challenging position of women from ethnic minority backgrounds within the predominantly White<sup>3</sup> and male-oriented world of football. In this report, I consider ethnic minority as a broad descriptive marker for people that are considered to not belong to the majority ethnic or cultural group in a given society. Often, this concerns so-called 'visible' ethnic minority groups (Bradbury et al., 2014). These groups, such as South Asians in the UK or Moroccans in The Netherlands, are often classified as visibly not belonging to the majority White ethnic groups. Other times, ethnic minority groups might be less visible, and not be classified according to skin color. Both visible and invisible ethnic minority groups are taken into account in this report.

Given UEFA's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and diversity in football, exemplified by the recent launch of the FootbALL program<sup>4</sup>, and the widespread popularity of football across all layers of many European societies, the underrepresentation of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC) demands further understanding. To address this, this research project has employed interviews to explore the experiences of women of ethnic minority backgrounds who aspire to become or are actively engaged as football coaches in England and The Netherlands—two ethnically diverse societies in which football is hugely popular.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/news/027c-16dccc4859d0-26229c2fde51-1000--uefa-coach-development-programme-for-women-opening-doors-acr/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/news/0285-190a74a189d2-4819662e4e35-1000--new-direction-for-women-s-football-coaching/>

<sup>3</sup> In this report, racial/ethnic categorizations such as White and Black are capitalized to do justice to how these categories do not pertain to any biological essence (such as skin-color) but instead are socially constructed categories.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/news/0282-18347853d50c-a7dc7e9a6e33-1000--uefa-launches-football-programme-to-highlight-importance-of-/>



Additionally, interviews have been conducted with key stakeholders within the national football associations (KNVB and FA) and other relevant organisations to elucidate the prevailing perceptions surrounding the underrepresentation of female coaches from minority backgrounds within the footballing landscape. Furthermore, observations have taken place at coaching education sessions in The Netherlands that helped elucidate the everyday dynamic and practices within these environments.

The results indicate that FEMC encounter and experience various barriers in their coaching trajectories. The findings show that often these barriers are similar to those experienced by White female coaches that were the central focus of previous studies. However, their ethnic minority status often works to compound and emphasize further these barriers, which take place on the individual level, the interpersonal level, the organizational level and the wider socio-cultural level (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012).

Based on these interlocking and multi-dimensional barriers, the report proposes six key recommendations for UEFA and national associations that are interested in bolstering the representation of FEMC. These are the following:

1. Continuing investment in tailored mentorship programmes at all levels
2. Strategic investments in recruiting prospective FEMC
3. Addressing of stereotypes pertaining to gender and ethnicity
4. Increasing the visibility of coaching education and tailored schemes
5. Offering of female-only coaching education *alongside* mixed groups
6. Critical reflection on hiring practices within the organisation

These recommendations will also be condensed into easily accessible brochures, providing practical guidance for increasing the representation of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds. These brochures will be distributed to the Dutch Royal FA and the English FA. Furthermore, efforts will be made to schedule a presentation on the basis of the findings that will be given at the Dutch Royal FA.

This final report commences with a brief discussion of the research questions guiding this project, followed by a review of relevant literature and theoretical concepts. Subsequently, the document outlines the research design and the methodology employed in the study. The report will then highlight the key findings in the project. Finally, the report concludes with reflections on the limitations of this report.

## 2. Research questions and objectives of the research project

The objective of this research project is to identify what initiatives and measures could contribute to creating a more equitable footballing landscape regarding female football coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC). In that light, the following research questions have been formulated:

### 2.1. Research question

What are effective measures at the strategic level of European football governance that can bolster the presence of ethnic minority women in elite football coaching and coaching education?

### 2.2. Sub questions

Sub question 1: What are barriers that women from ethnic minority backgrounds encounter and confront in their lived experiences with pursuing and following coaching education?

Sub question 2: How do the structural organisation, and the daily routines and practices in coaching education relate to the underrepresentation of women from ethnic minority backgrounds?

Sub question 3: What are barriers that women from ethnic minority backgrounds encounter and confront in their experiences of finding coaching jobs in professional football?

Sub question 4: How do football stakeholder representatives and coaching educators perceive the underrepresentation of ethnic minority women in elite football coaching and coaching education?

### 3. Literature review

Viewing coaching as a cultural practice, Knoppers and De Haan (2021) assert that it (re)produces dominant conceptions of leadership and quality coaching. This shows that the role of coaching extends beyond the mere transference of football skills and knowledge from coach to player. Instead, through coaching broader societal ideas surrounding who is fit to be a leader and what leadership looks like are reproduced. Notably, studies indicate that these conceptions often are associated with masculine traits (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). For example, Schlesinger and Weigelt-Schlesinger (2013) found that attributes traditionally considered feminine were negatively perceived by German football officials. Furthermore, female coaches embodying highly valued supposedly masculine qualities, such as self-confidence, ambition, and leadership skills, faced stigmatization, often being labeled as arrogant. A recent study by Martinez et al. (2023) uncovered that British female coaches frequently encountered unwelcoming and sexist environments during coaching education. In these settings, they felt undervalued by both fellow learners and instructors. In essence, a substantial body of academic literature reveals that football coaching remains predominantly male-dominated. Female coaches not only grapple with quantitative underrepresentation (Van Sterkenburg et al., 2023) but also encounter qualitative undervaluation in environments that prioritize supposedly masculine traits. These dynamics contribute to the perpetuation of the prevailing notion that women are ill-suited for football coaching.

Previous studies have highlighted that prevailing perceptions of quality coaching and leadership skills are frequently associated with Whiteness (Olushola-Ogunrinde & Carter-Francique, 2021). In other words, desirable coaching traits like leadership skills, intelligence, and determination are disproportionately associated with individuals identified who belong to majority White racial/ethnic groups in European and North American societies. Moreover, Bradbury et al. (2018) identified specific stereotypes that male coaches from minority ethnic backgrounds often confront, which tend to undervalue their cognitive and leadership qualities. In the same study, respondents frequently pointed to the prevalent over-reliance on networks in football coaching recruiting practices. It was argued that these networks predominantly comprise individuals from a similar White background, thereby serving as a barrier to access for ethnic minority men seeking coaching positions in European football.

In contrast with the academic work on experiences of female coaches and male coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds in coaching education and in the coaching job recruitment process, the experiences faced by female coaches of ethnic minority background have generally “fallen through the legislative and academic discourse cracks” (Rankin-Wright and Hylton, 2021: 135). In recent years this gap has been increasingly identified. For example, Rankin-Wright et al. (2019) conducted interviews with Black British female coaches, who revealed that they felt singled out due to their racial/ethnic and gender ‘Otherness’ during coaching education sessions. This notion of ‘hypervisibility’ and the constraining effect it might have on coaching careers was also noted by Olushola-Ogunrinde & Carter-Francique (2021: 148), who argued that in the American context this hypervisibility is emphasized by how “Black women are characterized as having undesirable coaching traits ranging from angry to aggressive to sexually permissive to nurturing”. These persistent stereotypes act as barriers, impeding the access of Black women to coaching positions.

These studies point to the need of conceptualizing the experiences of female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds as inherently shaped by an intersection of ideas about gender *and* race/ethnicity, rather than isolating their experiences to be either about gender *or* race/ethnicity. The acknowledgment of this intersection remains scarce in both academic and organisational discourses (Rankin-Wright & Hylton, 2021). As a result, Ratna & Samie (2019) argue that women of ethnic minority backgrounds in sporting environments often find themselves 'split' between agendas addressing gender diversity on the one hand and those addressing ethnic diversity on the other. These agendas do not consistently align to effectively improve the inclusion of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds. To address this gap, the present research project adopts intersectionality theory as a central theoretical foundation. This approach aims to capture how identities are configured through the intersection of various social identity dimensions, including gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, social class, and others. The lived realities of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds thus entail a specific set of challenges and barriers within sporting (coaching) environments where Whiteness and masculinity typically set the norm.

A second key theoretical underpinning of this research project is the insights derived from critical (sport) management and organisational studies. The broad collection of work that has appeared under the banner of critical management studies takes as its central object of study the taken-for-granted assumptions about work, leadership and management that exist within organisations, and applies a critical sociological lens to analyze how these assumptions can work to (re)produce social inequalities. In the specific realm of sport, Knoppers (2015) argues, there has been generally little research on how power relations are constructed in sport organisations and how ideas surrounding race/ethnicity and gender feature in notions of quality leadership. As will be elaborated upon below, this research takes on a critical sociological perspective in its analysis of dominant practices and processes surrounding leadership and coaching that exist within football organisations and analyze how supposedly taken-for-granted ideas surrounding leadership and coaching could potentially work to (re)produce the underrepresentation of female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds in coaching positions.

## 4. Review of research design

This research project adopted a multi-level qualitative methodological approach with the primary focus on centering the experiences of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC). The aim was to identify potential barriers and challenges encountered by this specific group in their coaching trajectories. Figure 1 visually depicts the three interconnected methodological approaches that formed the foundation of this research project and that collectively aimed to provide a more holistic insight into the underrepresentation of female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds. The approach is grounded in the understanding of qualitative methods being the most suitable for capturing and unpacking the multi-layered and contextual nature of the lived experiences and challenges of female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds (Boeije, 2009).



Figure 1. The methodological approach.

### 4.1. Interviews with female coaches of ethnic minority background (n=13)

The primary data collection for this research involves interviews with female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds, with a total of 13 participants. Initial recruitment was facilitated through contacts at the national football associations of England and The Netherlands, and further interviewees were found by employing a snowballing technique where interviewees suggest additional participants from their personal or professional networks. In order to be included for an interview in the research project, interviewees had to adhere to the following criteria:

- Participants identify as female.
- Participants identify as belonging to a racial/ethnic or national group that is not the majority group within English or Dutch society. This could mean that participants identify as minoritized in racial terms (for instance: Black or mixed-race), ethnic (for instance Asian) or religion (for instance Muslim) or according to a combination of these social identities.
- Participants are active in football coaching on professional or grassroots levels and/or in the process of obtaining (further) coaching qualifications.

In total, 13 women participated in the interviews, with eight residing in the Netherlands and five in England. These women all identified with non-majority ethnic groups, although for some, their minority ethnic identity was not their primary self-identification. Specifically, in the Dutch cohort, the majority were women of Surinamese background (n=4), who predominantly self-identified as Black and/or Surinamese. Additionally, two participants identified as Indonesian Dutch, one participant identified as White American Dutch, and one as Aruban. Within the English group, three interviewees identified as South Asian British, and two as Black British. These participants were active at various levels of football coaching, ranging from being active at professional football clubs to lower-level grassroots clubs. Most of the interviewees coached female players, primarily young athletes. Five interviewees coached men or boys teams. All participants except one had experiences with professional coaching education at football associations.

The interviews with female coaches lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and took place in public places or through (video) phone calls between November 2023 and March 2024. All interviewees either signed a consent form or agreed through verbal consent with the terms and conditions of the research interviews. The interviews followed a semi-structured format in which emphasis was placed on narrativizing personal career trajectories, with interviewees positioned as protagonists in their narratives. Subsequently, a more dialogical interview ensued, wherein the primary research delved into specific elements and episodes of the narrativization. Interviews started with a question to talk about the respondents' own career trajectories. The interview then turned toward a reflection on broader issues surrounding gender and ethnic diversity in football coaching. Example questions were: "Could you discuss any strategies or support systems you've used to navigate the complexities of coaching within the football industry?" and "How do you see the representation and opportunities for ethnic minority women in football coaching evolving in the coming years?". The interviews concluded with questions about their own ambitions and their ideas how football associations could help them in fulfilling these ambitions in football coaching. These thematic focus areas were derived from the literature review as laid out earlier in this report.

#### 4.2. Interviews with key stakeholders in the football environment (n=20)

Data was also collected through interviews with key stakeholders in the English and Dutch football environments. A total of 15 people (10 in The Netherlands, and 5 in England) were interviewed. Interviewees were invited to participate in the research project based on the following criteria:

- Professionally active in football associations, football organisations, and/or football club management
- They preferably had experience in their professional endeavors dealing with diversity-related issues within coaching and coaching education.

The 15 interviewees held various functions in the wider footballing environment. The majority held management functions related to coaching recruitment, education and/or diversity initiatives within national football associations or professional football leagues. Three interviewees were coaching educators that provided coaching education at various levels. 10 interviewees were male, 5 were female. A majority of the interviewees identified as belonging to a ethnic minority group in English or Dutch society. As the interviewees mentioned, this relative high number of interviewees of minority backgrounds was not

representative of the wider footballing environment which they argued remained primarily White and male oriented. I reflect on this further in the section on Limitations.

These interviews, lasting between 45 to 90 minutes, followed a semi-structured format. All interviewees either signed a consent form or agreed through verbal consent with the terms and conditions of the research interviews. The interviews explored key concepts related to coaching and leadership within football organisations and associations, as well as issues pertaining to initiatives and programs that were in place that could assist female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds.

Initially, interviewees were asked to reflect on their own positionality concerning race/ethnicity, nationality, and gender. Subsequently, attention shifted to the interviewees' roles within their respective organisations. The exploration then delved into the prevailing ideas regarding coaching, with questions such as, "Is it straightforward to recognize a talented coach?" and "What are the key characteristics of a good football coach?" guiding the discussion. As the interview progresses, emphasis was placed on addressing the underrepresentation of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds. This included an exploration of potential barriers and exclusionary mechanisms within the broader footballing environment. Finally, the discussion turned to the interviewees' perspectives on potential best practices and initiatives that could improve diversity within football coaching and coaching education.

#### 4.3. Participant observation at football coaching education (n=3)

The findings derived from interviews was be complemented by data collected through three participant observations of coaching education sessions in The Netherlands. While existing studies have highlighted coaching education as a crucial context for understanding inequalities in football coaching, there remains limited insight into the daily structure and organisation of these courses and their implications for the inclusion or exclusion of women from ethnic minority backgrounds.

In order to fill this research gap, three coaching education sessions were visited in the Netherlands between October 2023 and February 2024. These sessions were all organized by the Dutch Royal FA (KNVB) and ranged from the absolute starting program in the coaching pyramid (*Welkomstprogramma*) to more advanced courses. One of these sessions was attended exclusively by males, from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Two sessions were equally diverse in terms of ethnicity, and also attended by one White Dutch female. Initially, the participation observation sessions were intended to include female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds. However, organizing this proved to be challenging. For instance, in one session, a female coach from an ethnic minority background was registered, but upon attendance, it was discovered that this individual had deregistered for the course. This difficulty in recruiting participants from ethnic minority backgrounds for these observation sessions not only highlights the limited number of registrations for such candidates. It was further complicated by the prohibition on registration based on ethnicity, as per Dutch law. In other words, the Dutch Royal Football Association lacked insights into the ethnic backgrounds of its participants, making it challenging to pre-select courses. I will delve deeper into this issue in the limitations section.

Notwithstanding the absence of female coaches of ethnic minority background, these observations produced insights into to daily routines and processes, coaching materials, and group dynamics within the coaching education environment. In essence, the



overarching goal of participant observations was to explore the everyday practices that may contribute to explaining the underrepresentation of female and ethnic minority coaches, as suggested in prior academic literature.

The role of the researcher during these observations was as a passive observer, with little interaction with subjects. Even though the presence of a researcher inevitably alters the social setting, the goal of these observations is to create as much as possible an authentic situation in which the dominant dynamics of coaching education sessions are little disturbed. Through this approach, the everyday behaviors and interactions during coaching education sessions between educator and students and among students can be best captured.

#### 4.4. Data analysis and ethical approval

The number of interviews (28) and participant observations (3) were sufficient to reach data saturation. Previous studies have found that a cross-cultural study such as the present one usually needed between 20 and 40 interviews to establish key themes (Guest et al., 2020). In qualitative research, saturation referred to "the point in data collection and analysis when new incoming data produced little or no new information to address the research question" (Guest et al., 2020: 2).

The transcripts of the interviews and the field notes that were produced during the participant observations were collected and analyzed through a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis involved a systematic process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Transcripts and field notes were coded using analysis software and grouped into various higher-level codes, and ultimately, through a reiterative coding process, themes were established. The coding process was partially informed by inductive and deductive practices. Some codes were deductively derived from the key concepts in the literature review, yet, drawing on insights of grounded theory, throughout the coding process, the researcher was open to new codes emerging. This was done through a three-way process. In the first stage of open coding, numerous broad topics and codes were collected, the next steps of axial coding and selective coding worked to draw connections and patterns between these broad topics and codes to ultimately arrive at selected key themes.

The research project obtained ethical approval from the ESHCC Research Ethics Review Committee at the Erasmus University (case number: ETH2324-0113).

#### 4.5. Country selection

The research project centers on the distinct national contexts of England and The Netherlands, both countries characterized by ethnic diversity and a widespread enthusiasm for football. The respective national football associations—the Football Association (FA) in England and the Dutch Royal Football Association (KNVB)—actively champion diversity in coaching through various initiatives.

Upon an initial examination of these initiatives, a difference in focus can be identified. For instance, in 2021, the FA unveiled its *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)* strategy, emphasizing the promotion of ethnic diversity in women's coaching as a key aspect. The English FA also recently released its third annual report on the *Football Leadership Diversity Code*, a voluntary code in which a select number of professional football clubs pledge to improve diversity in various layers of the football club, including coaching. In contrast, the KNVB's initiatives are more diversified, addressing on the one hand the discrimination of



ethnic minorities, and the advancement of women in coaching on the other. The commitment to combating racial/ethnic discrimination is particularly articulated in the 2023 *Aanvalsplan*, outlining measures to address these issues in football. However, there are no specific mentions of promoting ethnic diversity in coaching. However the KNVB has explicitly championed gender diversity in coaching, as reflected in the *Visie Vrouwenvoetbal 2018-2022*, outlining initiatives to enhance women's participation in football coaching.

This research project delved into the similarities and differences between these approaches, specifically exploring their relevance to female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds. By concentrating on England and The Netherlands—where women's football is experiencing growth at varying levels of professionalization—the study has generated insights and recommendations which will be elaborated upon in the sections below.

## 5. Main research findings

In this section, the main research findings will be presented. This section is structured along three key themes, each corresponding to one or more sub questions outlined in section 2.2. The first theme (5.1) delves into how FEMC interviewees interpreted their experiences regarding job opportunities in football coaching, directly addressing sub question 1. The second theme (5.2) focuses on coaching education, combining insights from interviews with FEMC and participant observations to address sub questions 2 and 3. Lastly, the third theme (5.3) explores the perspectives of key stakeholders in English and Dutch football regarding the underrepresentation of female ethnic minority coaches (FEMC), aligning with sub question 4. Following this presentation of findings, the discussion section will engage in a broader discussion addressing the implications of the study and formulating answers to the overarching research question. Quotes are from the interviews and in the case of Dutch interviews translated to English by the researcher. Only the nationality of coaches is provided in order to protect the anonymity of participants to the utmost extent.

### 5.1. Reflections on finding jobs and opportunities in coaching

In the interviews with FEMC all participants reflected on the wider footballing environment being an environment that is primarily dominated by (White) males. This broader homogeneity was often seen as a hurdle for FEMC that needed to be overcome to make a career in football coaching.

It is not an easy journey. It is tough. Being a female in a male dominated is not easy.

I8 – English

I talked to all these women and asked why are you not going into coaching? Because it's a male field

I9 – English

The researcher asked the respondents to first narrate their own start in coaching and their own experiences with attaining positions within football coaching. Subsequently the interviewees were asked to reflect on broader ideas about diversity programmes, as well as what they considered to be the added value of increasing the number of ethnically diverse coaches. In this section, five key themes will be addressed that became prevalent during the interviews: 1) reflections on the coaching careers and first steps into the coaching environment, 2) reflections on support programmes and initiatives of football associations and organisations, 3) discriminatory encounters on the football pitch, 4) the added value of having diverse coaches for diverse players, and lastly 5) possible initiatives for football associations and organisations.

#### 5.1.1. Reflections on coaching careers and first steps into the coaching environment

Most interviewees transitioned to football coaching following the conclusion of their occasionally professional, but mostly amateur, playing careers. Most interviewees explained they had a deep passion for football, and that also during their playing career they had often been captains or generally interested in the tactical and coaching elements of the game. Many of them explained that their entry into coaching only started when someone directly approached them about a possible interest in coaching. Several interviewees conveyed that it was only after this invitation was extended that they began to consider coaching as a viable career path, after first having doubts about their suitability as a coach.

It was only after a neighbour approached me and said that the local club was looking for a coach. If I wanted to do it. Well, after thinking long and hard I said yes and noticed that I liked it.

I2 - Dutch

My coach at the time, she wanted all of us to go into coaching ... I didn't want to do it, pushed against it ... and then soon it changed. And I am so glad she pushed me into coaching.

I9 - English

Nearly all the women interviewed shared a strong drive and enthusiasm for succeeding in football coaching. They believed that this passion was essential for persisting in a coaching career, especially when faced with financial constraints and limited opportunities for advancement.

So you invest so much time, but you do it because it's your passion. But at some point you also have like okay, I would also like to get that reward, that appreciation that I deserve. So in that respect the compensation is lacking for a female trainer, and then especially a female coach of colour.

I2 - Dutch

At times, this strong drive was also associated with a specific resilience required for non-white women to navigate a field predominantly dominated by white males. The interviewees consistently emphasized that they had to produce twice the effort of others to overcome stereotypes associated with coaching and their gender and ethnic backgrounds.

And we always get told, you know, we have to work twice as hard or three times as hard, depending on how many other, you know, oppressions are built on to your identity. So I think this kind of trying really hard, it can take a lot of emotional labour

I10 - English

The interviewees highlighted the notion that FEMC are commonly perceived as outsiders in the football coaching realm, and that this could only be overcome through exceptional drive, adaptation and dedication to football coaching.

In everyday life you have to work very hard to take your position [as a black woman]. And if you want to do something in your spare time that is your passion and that gives you so much energy, but that you also have to work so hard to take your position... that costs you too much energy, while it should give you energy.

I2 - Dutch

Interestingly, this need for exceptional drive was also seen as a mechanism to overcome barriers within their own ethnic communities, in which their coaching career was often met with scepticism as it counteracted dominant ideas about femininity.

You got to understand I am not fighting only the external racism, also the internal racism. South Asian men don't like a South Asian female like me ... because their narrative is that I should be doing something not football related ... I mean, I don't look like their wives.

I7 - English

### 5.1.2. Reflections on support programs and initiatives

The interview also inquired whether the interviewees had participated in or benefited from targeted support programs or initiatives aimed at increasing the presence of FEMC in football. Here, an interesting cross-national variation emerged. Most English respondents had either directly participated in such programs that subsidized part of their coaching education costs or that aimed to offer support at finding employment in football, or at least were aware of the existence of these programs. Generally, the English participants found these initiatives to be beneficial for advancing their coaching careers. For instance, one respondent reflected on the mentorship program, which she found particularly valuable. The respondent also points to how these programmes can help to build a network and to also penetrate networks in the footballing environment, something that is often deemed difficult for FEMC.

And that [program] really, really helped. Got me some experience, got my name out there as well to help me to build a network. Offered me a mentor. She's been great and kind of opened up lots of doors for me. If it hadn't been for the mentee program, I probably wouldn't be where I am now.

I9 - English

Another participant was involved in a different scheme that offered work placements at professional football clubs, which had also played a significant role in advancing her career. She especially highlighted the benefits of financial support through these programmes.

This particular program I was on, it was full time. So often ... I've done it as a part timer or I've done it off my own back. So you're doing three jobs at once, you're changing the tracksuits in the car, et cetera. Whereas this one was full time, sustainability, you're in a set place. Don't get me wrong, the road, the road changes a lot, but you've got a bit of continuity, sustainability.

I8 - English

This doesn't imply that all English participants were equally supportive of these programs. Despite interviewees generally voicing some level of support for such initiatives, there was nevertheless a degree of scepticism regarding the promised benefits and outcomes, along with criticism about the supposed FA's belated and insufficient attention to the importance of such programmes, especially considering the prevalent white male homogeneity within the organisation.

Well. It didn't do it for me because they, they said it would provide me a job after the programme. I mean I'm still left unemployed. So even though it had like good intentions in a way like it didn't really make a difference for me.

I7 - English

Dutch interviewees typically utilized or were targeted less frequently by specific initiatives or programs, which may be indicative of the previously mentioned scarcity of such programs in the Dutch context. However, one interviewee mentioned that she had been approached multiple times by the KNVB with invitations to continue her coaching education and that information on the website about increasing the number of female coaches and people from diverse backgrounds had helped her.

It's being promoted so much now of: Okay, we want to have female coaches, we want female coaches from an ethnic background, I think it's silly if I'm going to hide at this point.

I5 - Dutch

She argued that there is currently a relatively promising environment and attention for increasing female ethnic minority coaches. She did however note that awareness about these programs and subsidies can be improved.

I was lucky to be approached by [name] from the KNVB who said: very good you're doing the course, we as KNVB stimulate this and we will pay half your course tuitions ... but it is also about awareness that this is possible, because I found out only after I already registered and paid.

I5 - Dutch

However, other Dutch interviewees had not participated in such targeted programs and schemes and were generally unaware of their existence.

### 5.1.3. Racialized and gendered encounters on the football field

During the interviews, many respondents also discussed instances of discrimination that had marked their experiences with coaching. They emphasized the gendered dynamics present in the football world, which often led to experiences in which female coaches did not feel taken seriously. A notable recurring example mentioned in interviews from both countries that exemplified this masculine focus was that prior to matches, coaches from opposing teams would often fail to acknowledge them as coaches or express surprise upon encountering a female coach.

I had a male assistant and they know that I am the coach. But they walk pass me and go to that assistant. And then I think: okay, just let it go.

I2 - Dutch

Well, my experience at least for the past few years wasn't great with the male comments. The behaviour. Um. Yeah. It was... It was horrible.

I9 - English

Many respondents, particularly in the Dutch context, felt hesitant or found it challenging to attribute these experiences to racism. They appeared to generally be more comfortable identifying such practices as sexist.

There are still always some men who look differently to female coaches, female football players. I still experience that in my club and that is a shame ... it is a very sad thing.

I12- Dutch

Occasionally, the role of ethnicity was downplayed. This will be further explored in the discussion section of this report.

Q: Have you ever felt your ethnic background has been perceived as a barrier in your coaching career?

No, not even in my everyday life. But yeah, that's my approach in life. No in football ... I have never experienced it as such ... more so because I am a woman.

I12 - Dutch

In simpler terms, most Dutch interviewees emphasized their gender identity over their ethnic identity when interpreting their experiences in football coaching. However, they also frequently mentioned encountering specific ethnic stereotypes in their work, albeit

sometimes in more subtle or implicit ways. Some interviewees pointed out the stereotype that ethnic minorities, particularly black women, are perceived as loud and intimidating. Several of them highlighted feeling that referees were overly strict with them, while opponents often portrayed them as loud and threatening. One respondent noted that these stereotypes about black femininity can reinforce the notion that they are unfit for coaching.

And usually there were stereotypes, because we were all coloured, so it had to be that it would be fighting. Yeah, those things I all experienced quite a lot.

I3 - Dutch

When I am in front of the group, as a coach of colour, I am noticed. People are looking at me. So I have to give the right example, because if I do anything wrong, it will have big repercussions. If a white trainer would do it, they would not notice.

I2 - Dutch

#### 5.1.4. Value of diverse coaching

The interviews also delved into the interviewees' perspectives on the potential benefits of increasing the number of female coaches of ethnic minority background (FEMCs), a goal all interviewees agreed upon. When discussing these benefits, the interviewees frequently highlighted they believed female coaches possessed a heightened emotional sensitivity often perceived as lacking in their male counterparts. They emphasized the value of this trait, especially in the context of working with female players.

But I think that it is really good for women if there would be more female coaches, because especially in the younger years, with girls .. there's all kinds of things going on when they grow up. I have seen a lot of male coaches really struggle with that.

I3 - Dutch

Emotional intelligence is higher in girls than in boys. So you have to really think about your language and how you approach boys and girls is different.

I11 - Dutch

Several interviewees emphasized the advantage of their own ethnic minority background, particularly in coaching teams characterized by hyper-diversity. They contended that their personal experiences as individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds positioned them as coaches who were more receptive and trustworthy to players with similar backgrounds.

Yeah, I think it helps [being of an ethnic minority background]. When I am talking and joking with the guys and use a bit of slang. It is a lot more natural that I say it than someone with blond hair and blue eyes.

I3 - Dutch

At the same time, they argued that it was equally important that white male players encountered FEMC, in order to challenge certain preconceptions that are often circulating within these groups about female leadership, particularly concerning female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds.

I think it is good for boys to see women doing this. And that helps them also in developing respect for girls that play football.

I1 - Dutch

#### 5.1.5. The role of football associations and organisations

When questioned about how football associations or organisations could better support the inclusion of FEMC, respondents stressed the necessity of their inclusion in decision-making bodies within football associations. One English respondent argued that previous programs often helped either ethnic minority men or with women, yet overlooked the specific situation of FEMC:

And they say we've put a lot of investment into the women's game. Now, which aspects of the women's game is what we need to be asking and for which women, you know. And I think if it's white women, then then they need to say we've really supported white women. And, you know, you've done that. You've done a great job increasing participation, following the Euros you've got more white women into coaching, and they are very well represented. However, if it's racialised minority women, we need to be talking about that.

I10 - English

They argued that the underrepresentation of female coaches persists due to the limited communication channels between FEMCs and decision-makers within football associations or organisations. Interviewees commonly advocated for football associations and organisations to actively engage role models and enhance communication efforts regarding coaching (education) opportunities.

Visibility was the key for me. Only once you've seen it, you know what the possibilities are.

I4 - Dutch

If you really want us, yes, that we should also be in the picture with the KNVB, then I would say: take us seriously, engage with us.

I2 - Dutch

## 5.2. Reflections on the coaching education experience

In addition to examining the broader landscape of job opportunities for coaches, the research focused on experiences within the specific environment of coaching education. This inquiry paired narratives from interviewees with insights from participant observations conducted during three coaching education sessions in the Netherlands. This revealed two overarching themes concerning the coaching education experience: 1) homogeneity among teachers and students, and 2) the intersection of time, money and family responsibilities.

### 5.2.1. Homogeneity among teachers and students

All interviewees with coaching education experience noted that through their trajectory they were frequently the sole female participant and consistently the only non-white female participant in these courses. Moreover, most of them recounted having exclusively male coaching educators. During participant observations, one instructor remarked that they had never previously encountered a female participant from a minority background, others could count on one hand the times FEMC took part in their classes. Some interviewees downplayed the significance of this factor on their coaching education trajectory. Interestingly, most of these women noted that they also often operated in male-dominated environments in their daily professions.

Yeah, I don't mind it too much. I think personally I find it nicer, to work with men instead of women.

Q: Do you see other parallels between coaching and [profession]?

Well, also there it is white men that decide everything.

I5 - Dutch

So my experience has been good. I can say it's very difficult for some females who have been largely in male, big male groups, but that's part of the coaching. So I've just kind of got used to it. And there's no there's no comments. I never felt inferior to any of the men. Yeah, it was good. It's a good experience.

I9 - English

Other interviewees offered a more critical perspective on the coaching education environment, expressing instances where they felt hyper-visible.

They're based in these institutions that are predominantly white anyway. So it's almost like telling someone to come to this another place to be amongst other people who ... and they may be the only minority in the room, then you not feel visible but hypervisible at the same time. And I think that's something for people organising these courses to be aware of.

I10 - English

One respondent highlighted how it was a non-white male participant in the coaching education group who had extended support and made her feel more included. In contrast, she often felt overlooked by other instructors and peers.

They never really talked to me. They are not even conscious of it. It was sad ... but there was one man from Curacao, we spoke the same language, but otherwise I was just on my own ... the teachers could do more to look at the group process.

I11 - Dutch



During the participant observations at Dutch coaching education sessions, it became evident that the sessions were generally ethnically diverse among males. However, when groups needed to be formed for smaller assignments, individuals appeared to self-select along ethnic lines. This resulted, for instance, in Turkish Dutch participants forming groups together or aligning with other ethnically minoritized individuals, whereas White Dutch males would also group together. While this underscores the significance of diverse groups in coaching education which can provide a certain comfort for participants, it also presents a challenge when there is only one female participant.

When we did assignments in groups, they would exclude me. I had to ask all the time 'can I go with you?' ... the respect was different. I could sometimes go with [the other non-white male participant] but then they still did not really talk to me.

I11 - Dutch

Overall, both the interviews and participant observations shed light on the predominantly masculine atmosphere within football coaching education environments. During the observations, it was noted that sexualized jokes were relatively accepted, indicating a culture that can be unwelcoming to female participants. Simultaneously, instances were observed where jokes targeting non-White individuals occurred. For instance, in two sessions, a Turkish Dutch participant was humorously asked if he knew how to write, while another participant was teased for their seemingly aggressive demeanour when addressing the instructor. These instances contribute to reinforcing wider stereotypes about certain groups, portraying them as intellectually inferior or overly assertive, which can create barriers to inclusion within coaching education.

One final point that was raised concerns the concept of female-only courses, an experience reported by some respondents in England and the Netherlands, although the vast majority had participated in mixed-gender courses. When queried about their stance on female-only coaching education, responses were varied. Some argued against it, citing concerns about gender segregation, which they believed would not promote inclusivity or be beneficial.

I prefer mixed ... if you're good enough to coach, you're good to coach in front of a male and female audience ... Only for a single sex or gender, then that's not real football for me.

I7 - English

Other interviewees noted the added value of offering such courses, highlighting that they provide a sense of comfort for female participants, allowing them to navigate spaces where they don't constantly feel the pressure to conform.

it's important to create those safe spaces, to create opportunities for women to feel like they can learn in an environment where they don't have to compromise their own identity. And we often get told to leave your identity at the door, you know and it's important that actually... People need to be accepting of us.

I10 - English

Additionally, they emphasized that such courses create opportunities to prioritize women's football more frequently. One respondent pointed out the disparity, noting that in their experience, they were often the sole participant working within the realm of women's football.

You have to give these coaching sessions, and I had to suddenly coach boys ... there was no focus on girls' football. I think it would be a challenge for them [male participants] to challenge a girls' team, just like it was a challenge for me to coach a boys team.

I11 - Dutch

### 5.2.2. Family responsibilities and coaching education

In addition to the barrier identified concerning coaching education predominantly catering to White men, interviewees highlighted several other factors that could explain the limited representation of FEMC in coaching education. One significant factor mentioned was the high financial cost associated with coaching education, which was deemed excessive by many.

The KNVB is one of the most expensive training organisations, if you go to Belgium, it is many times cheaper. But then again, will the diploma be accepted here in the Netherlands? No.

I12 - Dutch

However, for quite a few interviewees these costs were mitigated through specific programs and subsidies, especially in England.

Another crucial factor mentioned was the time investment required for coaching education, particularly when advancing towards more advanced courses within the coaching pyramid. Interviewees emphasized that balancing familial responsibilities made it challenging to allocate the necessary time, particularly during evenings during the week, to pursue coaching education.

It's really time intensive, 260 hours next to a 40 hour a week job. It's tough.

I15 - Dutch

One interviewee mentioned that she would like to see education being offered in the form of modules that can be followed across a longer period rather than the time intensive course. This could be seen as a possible solution to accommodate women who are often tasked with primary caregiving roles within families.

I hope that maybe one time then they will offered in a more phased-out way, so that you can collect say modules, instead of having nine months in a row.

I16 - Dutch

### 5.3. Perceptions of stakeholders on the underrepresentation of FEMC

The study found that stakeholders and coaching educators employ various discourses to give meaning to the underrepresentation of female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as to the role football associations can play in creating a more equal playing field. Generally, two predominant discourses emerged among the interviewees:

- 1) A perspective that acknowledges the underrepresentation of FEMC but either considers it to derive from specific gendered or cultural qualities and questions the necessity of football associations targeting specific underrepresented groups.
- 2) A more critical perspective that emphasizes how structural barriers and mechanisms within football and coaching contribute to the underrepresentation of female coaches from certain minoritized groups.

Notably, interviewees occasionally drew upon both perspectives simultaneously, indicating that they were not mutually exclusive. These perspectives served as the primary means through which stakeholders interpreted the widely acknowledged underrepresentation of female football coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Interestingly, the first appeared dominant mainly among White male football stakeholders, who according to interviewees continue to form the absolute majority in both Dutch and English football governance. The second – and more critical – perspective was mainly articulated by football governance stakeholders that themselves were of minoritized backgrounds in the White, male dominated world of football. This perspective was voiced by interviewees who were either from minority ethnic backgrounds, female, or both. This seems to suggest that stakeholders that have experiences with being a minority in the football world possess a greater awareness of barriers on the basis of gender and ethnicity that are in place for FEMC. Furthermore, a notable cross-national variation was identified here, where English football stakeholders appeared more likely to support targeted programs that worked to alleviate underrepresentation, whereas this was a much more contentious concept among the Dutch interviewees.

These findings will be elaborated upon in the following sections, in which the tension between the two dominant discourses as well as the cross-national variation between the Netherlands and England will be highlighted in the following themes 1) Broader societal explanations for underrepresentation 2) Wider organisational culture and barriers 3) Organisational responsibility for creating opportunities for FEMC.

#### 5.3.1. Broader societal explanations for underrepresentation

Among all interviewees there was a general acknowledgement that within professional and amateur football there was an underrepresentation of female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC).

I think it is no higher math to say: yes, we seen an underrepresentation there.

I4 - Dutch

So there's a huge challenge to... You know, make the game more attractive to ethnic minority women. And I just think we're a long way from making any significant impact. I mean, we're talking 1 or 2 people and that and that would probably improve the numbers by 100%.

I11 - English

Most respondents argued that this underrepresentation posed a problem, or as an example of the wider footballing environment not using the full potential of talented coaches. At times, however, interviewees questioned whether the underrepresentation of FEMC was due to structural mechanisms or could be attributed to supposed cultural or gendered traits.

This line of reasoning often attributed the underrepresentation of FEMC the limited number of ethnic minority athletes that are active in the professional female game, and a supposed lack of interest in the game and physical activity in these groups.

I also think that if you focus on girls, young girls with a migration background, yes, as long as they do not play football or it is less common that group will play football, I think, this will also be visible in the numbers of coaching.

I7 - Dutch

Just as an example, ethnic minority women are less likely to be physically active than the majority white group. So I think if you've not been involved in sports since you've left school, as an example, let's say you leave school at 16. It's very unlikely that ten years later, you're now going to enter coaching.

I11 - English

Those that invoked this idea, primarily saw the development of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds as something that will be resolved in due time. They often cited the anticipated increase in female players from ethnic minority backgrounds as the women's game progresses towards greater professionalism. At times, this discourse seemed to serve as a means to sidestep the inquiry into the responsibilities of football associations and organisations in tackling this underrepresentation.

Yes, but I think because they have not yet studied football that much, because I think if you had more ... because if you now look at the Dutch national team, because you have, there are a few [non-White players] there, if they retire and they say: we want to go into football, then they will also set an example, in order to continue to grow in coaching.

I3 - Dutch

Moreover, some interviewees contended that the underrepresentation stemmed from cultural norms within certain ethnic minority groups. Specifically, Moroccan and Turkish minorities in the Netherlands, as well as South Asian minorities in England, were singled out in this regard. The quotes below exemplify how these communities were portrayed as imposing restrictions on women's participation in physical activities and leadership roles. Notably, this notion was frequently employed by White males, but also by stakeholders from *other* ethnically minoritized backgrounds.

I think we've got to think about which ethnicity first ...like when, when we speak to females, especially from, from certain communities, sometimes the barriers are that it's not the norm for them to coach. It's not the norm for them to essentially do the job of a man.

I12 - English

But I think that really has to do with background. The role of the parents, culture, religion, yes, those are things that determine whether a girl ends up playing football or not, you know.

I5 - Dutch

When asked for other reasons for the underrepresentation of ethnic minority female coaches, interviewees who took a more critical approach often highlighted a lack of role models that young coaches can aspire to.

And I also think that they are of course even less represented and there are even fewer role models for them, look, for me it is only a woman so to say, but for them it would have to be a woman of color, so to speak.

I5 - Dutch

### 5.3.2. Culture of football associations and organisations

Beyond wider reasons for the underrepresentation, respondents were also asked to reflect on the wider organisational culture within football associations and football organisations and the relation between these cultures and structures and the underrepresentation of FEMC. Some respondents argued that this connection was not very relevant and argued that dominant practices within these organisations were primarily concerned with *quality*. According to this perspective, football associations and organisations prioritize concepts of quality coaching without deeply considering how these notions might intersect with broader concepts of gender or ethnicity.

We then just select on the basis of quality. And say we have a place for or a lady with a migration background, or a guy of 26 years old that consciously wants to make a career and she has done nothing, and he done so very thoughtfully, in this case he would be the better candidate.

I10 - Dutch

We can't tell someone to employ someone that, you know, for me ... it's got to be the best person that gets the job. And that's whether you're male or female. Um, whether you're a white male, you're a [ethnic background of respondent] like me, so I wouldn't ... For me, it's the best person gets the job.

I12 - English

Interviewees also frequently adopted a more critical stance, highlighting systemic barriers within their respective organisations that could impede the advancement of FEMC. This often centered on the supposedly exorbitant costs associated with coaching education and the challenges in securing stable, adequately paid positions within women's football. Moreover, interviewees occasionally underscored their organisation's homogeneity, which they argued might dissuade many women from considering coaching roles, along with insufficient advertising of coaching opportunities to minority communities.

Then I still see some room for improvement, when I look at our own organisation, things are going a bit better now, but in recent years the average age was, I think, well 55 plus, if it is not older, yes, and a certain type of man who is not yet used to women in football.

I5 - Dutch

We are not very good at advertising ... if you really want to make things accessible, really get people to know that you advertise and advertise it properly. Same way as a big corporation to advertise ... they'd have TV adverts and that sort of stuff. Um, you know, you know, you need like real accessibility.

I13 - English

Sometimes interviewees referred to the closed network-based hiring practices within the world of football where new recruits were selected by predominantly White men.

It's homogenous. It's who you know, and there is a lot of 'mini-me hiring'. We have a very homogeneous group of directors in [organisation] and they had the freedom to fill in for themselves who they will hire.

I1 - Dutch

In the Dutch context, it was particularly striking that numerous female stakeholders expressed critical assessments regarding coaching education, highlighting from their own or second-hand experiences instances of gendered exclusions within the education process. Interviewees argued that such practices could contribute to the overall scarcity of female coaches. Similarly, in both countries, it was observed that coaching education was predominantly delivered by White male coaching educators. This homogeneity was viewed as a potential obstacle to the increased participation of FEMC as it often resulted in a limited understanding of diverse cultures and women's football in general.

So for example, if you ask about the influence of the menstrual cycle on resilience, for example, or on injury prevention. Yes, and when a [male] teacher then starts laughing very loudly ...

I5 - Dutch

I spoke to another [female coach] and she also said, you're just being shouted at. And then I knew, it's not just me but it is a known story ... maybe it's the macho culture in football ... but they need to realise if you shout at someone in front of a group it leaves emotional damage.

I2 - Dutch

### 5.3.3. How can football associations and organisations make impact?

The interviews subsequently shifted focus to the role of football organisations and associations in addressing the underrepresentation of FEMC. Particularly in the UK, attention was drawn to a wide number of dedicated programs and initiatives aimed at this issue. This included collaborations and partnerships established between football leagues, associations, and various other societal stakeholders. These programmes pertained to subsidising certain costs in the coaching trajectories, mentorship programmes and dedicated work experience places at professional football clubs.

In the Dutch context the interviewees pointed out that there were no specific programs or initiatives that aimed at increasing the number of FEMC. Rather, subsidies and mentorship programs are in place – in partnership with UEFA and FIFA – but they are in place for female coaches in general and not necessarily targeted towards female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds.

In the interviews with the British stakeholders there was widespread support for these programmes and recognition of their importance. This proved an interesting contrast with the Dutch interviewees where this issue was a lot more contentious. There was a particularly notable discourse that stated that football should be for everyone and that programmes that were aiming to include specific social groups would make football too politicised. For instance, regarding the option of offering coaching education in women-only settings:

Specific male and female policies are basically not diverse. That basically is that as if at a football club you would have different entrances for women, and different entrances for men.

I4 - Dutch

This discourse also frequently drew on the assertion that implementing such policies would be impractical due to the KNVB's inability, by national decree, to register individuals based on ethnicity. This legal constraint was said to pose significant challenges to the execution of such programs within the Dutch context. As I will elaborate on in subsequent discussion, it appeared at times that this mandated blindness towards ethnic registration served as a deterrent to any proposals for targeted programs aimed at enhancing the representation of FEMC.

Yes, actually the biggest distinction we can make is male-female at the moment, so we can count that very well and we can make that, let's say, diverse. And we can do it on the basis of age. Only backgrounds you just can't get from the system, because that's not asked either, which is very logical, but which also makes you.... It's very difficult to measure, so to say.

I6 - Dutch

When the conversation shifted towards exploring other approaches, the Dutch respondents primarily emphasized the importance of using inclusive language and communication. They frequently cited the need for using role models in their communication and highlighting the necessity of ensuring that advertisements for coaching education and coaching rules effectively reached the intended groups. However, this was at the same time frequently complicated by the acknowledgment that coaching education programs did not require advertising, as they typically reached full capacity very quickly.

Take a look at the training program, so continuously evaluate what it offers, make role models visible, so football coaches that are girls or women, and also use them in football coaching education.

I7 - Dutch

Coaching education can be found very quickly by a homogeneous group ... it always fills up very quickly, at least you open it and the number of registrations just pours in. Only if you look at the population, then that is not the composition you might want. So again it's not that you don't have enough registrations, you always have enough registrations, but the question is really: who signs up?

I1 - Dutch

Despite widespread recognition and acceptance of specific targeted inclusivity programs in the UK, respondents generally acknowledged that these programs had limited impact on addressing the representation of FEMC, whose numbers remain low. One respondent argued that this discrepancy could partially be attributed to pragmatic and political considerations, suggesting that programs tended to cater more towards minoritized men, thus leaving women underrepresented. I will address these points in the discussion.

Where can we make where can we make significant change in the short term, which is what people want, as I said, it is quite political ... That that's what we always have to wrestle with. And I'm a bit more pragmatic in the sense of that I'm looking at: where's the captive audience? People might say it's lazy, but I'm being pragmatic. Whereas the captive audience,

the captive audience, in my opinion, is not ethnic minority women. The captive audience is ethnic minority men and in particular black men.

l11 - English



## 6. Discussion of findings and impact of project

Through its innovative and multi-methodological approach, the findings of this research project shine a light on the underrepresentation of female coaches of ethnic minority background (FEMC) in England and The Netherlands. This gap in the academic literature has been identified in previous works (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; Bradbury et al., 2022). In this discussion section, the findings will be analysed with the use of LaVoi & Dutove (2012) ecological model on supports and barriers for female coaches. This model is useful to analyse how the underrepresentation of female coaches is multi-layered and constituted in the interaction between the *individual level*, the *interpersonal level*, the *organisational level* and lastly the *broader sociocultural level*. In this discussion, we will examine each of these levels to elucidate both the specific mechanisms of support and the structural barriers identified in the results section above. Furthermore, this study marks the first application of this model to address the underrepresentation of FEMC, leveraging a multi-methodological approach that synthesizes perspectives from both FEMC and football stakeholders. This comprehensive methodology provides insights into the multifaceted challenges encountered by FEMC.

As the findings in this research project show, at each of these levels the underrepresentation of FEMC is (re)produced. These various levels are also interconnected, meaning that, for instance, only focusing on improving the individual level would not lead to a sustainable bolstering of participation of FEMC. At all these various levels transformative changes and initiatives are required to create a sustainable increase of female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds. Yet, for the purpose of this research project, in section 6.2. there will be particular focus on recommendations for bolstering the presence of FEMC through initiatives on the *interpersonal* and *organisational* level, which are deemed the most relevant considering the research project's purpose to help finding best practices for UEFA and national football associations to address this underrepresentation.

### 6.1. Individual level

On the individual level, which includes personal, emotional, and cognitive elements, it becomes clear in the results that a facilitating factor for FEMC is their passion and drive they express for football coaching. Across all participants, a common thread emerged regarding their love for football and their desire to contribute to the development of often young people. Many expressed how their coaching journeys were fuelled by this passion, often stemming from successful playing careers where they developed their leadership skills, frequently serving as team captains. This inherent passion for football, coupled with the leadership skills cultivated during their playing days, served as empowering catalysts for FEMC considering coaching careers.

On the individual level it also became clear that there were specific barriers that could explain the underrepresentation of FEMC. The findings revealed a recurring theme of self-confidence issues among FEMC, often manifesting as doubts about their own coaching abilities and a general lack of envisioning themselves in coaching roles. This observation resonates with previous research on female coaches, which has demonstrated that female coaches, more than their male counterparts, tend to harbour doubts about their qualifications and experience to take on coaching positions (Messner, 2009). The present study's results echo these findings, indicating that similar concerns influence FEMC. Moreover, these doubts might be compounded by the phenomenon of 'double

marginalization' experienced by FEMC within football's predominantly white and male-dominated environment (Ratna & Samie, 2019).

Secondly, the concept of emotional labour emerged as a significant factor on the individual level. Coaching roles and participation in coaching education were frequently linked to a specific emotional investment, requiring FEMC to exert effort in assimilating and suppressing their ethnic and gender identities. While previous research (Porter & Spence, 2023) has recognized this emotional burden among female coaches, the added layer of ethnic 'Otherness' added an additional burden for FEMC in this study. This combined emotional investment was paired with the perception of limited career prospects and substantial time and financial commitments required for coaching and coaching education.

## 6.2. Interpersonal level

The interpersonal level is comprised of social and professional relations, such as interactions with colleagues, friends, and family. The findings show here that there are a few interpersonal settings that work to promote the inclusion of FEMC. The first concerns the specific targeting of club or football association representatives of potential FEMC. Respondents often mentioned that they only considered coaching after being approached by a familiar person from a club or organisation. This indicates that policies that specifically aim to identify and approach prospective FEMC can be beneficial in bolstering this underrepresentation and help to counteract some of the individual barriers identified in the preceding section.

Secondly, the results emphasize the importance of mentoring relationships, whether informal or through formal mentoring programs, in supporting FEMC. This finding aligns with previous studies on female coaches, which have underscored the significance of mentorship (Martinez et al., 2023). Such mentorship connections not only provide support but also aid in developing and accessing networks where coaching opportunities are shared—a crucial aspect, given the importance placed by both FEMC and stakeholders on personal networking within the coaching environment (Bradbury et al., 2016).

Lastly, many respondents highlighted the importance of visibility of FEMC role models, both within and beyond the coaching realm. The presence of such role models has been instrumental in boosting respondents' confidence in their own abilities, offering a potential solution to individual barriers.

Besides interpersonal structures that served to enable FEMC, the study also identified structures that served as a possible constraining element. Particularly notable were the negative interactions with predominantly white male colleagues, coaches, and coaching instructors. These encounters in which stereotypes surrounding gender and ethnicity were often voiced reinforced the perception of football and coaching as masculine-dominated environments, and consequently work to portray FEMC as intruders (Messner, 2009). The compounded gender and ethnic 'otherness' of FEMC exacerbate this dynamic, especially when compared to previous studies focusing primarily on white female coaches (Rankin-Wright et al., 2019). Also, family and child-caring responsibilities – which in both countries tend to overwhelmingly fall on women – were mentioned as constraining forces in this respect.

### 6.3. Organisational level

The third level, in declining level of proximity to the individual coach, is the organisational level, which includes organisational programs, practices and opportunities. This pertains to the football clubs, football associations and other relevant football organisations. The findings of this study underscore the significance of organisational policies and initiatives specifically designed to enhance the representation of FEMC. Particularly in the context of England, where these policies were predominantly implemented, they were perceived as instrumental in facilitating greater inclusion.

These initiatives targeted various aspects, including increasing the participation of FEMC in coaching education programs, offering financial support to cover educational expenses, providing opportunities for professional work experience within professional football clubs, and establishing formalized mentoring schemes. These findings align with previous research which has found that targeted organisational schemes and programs are most effective at improving the number of female coaches (Martinez et al., 2023; LaVoi, 2012). Furthermore, the adoption of specific hiring practices aimed at enhancing diversity within football associations and organisations was viewed as a crucial facilitator, as it was noted in this study that staff from minoritized backgrounds, whether ethnically or in terms of gender, often displayed a heightened awareness of the barriers faced by FEMC.

Consequently, in the Dutch context, in which these schemes and programs were less formalized and less directed specifically at FEMC, organisational practices in football associations and coaching education run the risk of what is called homologous reproduction. This is a process in which benefits in hiring and promotion are systematically reserved for those that belong to the same (White, male) majority groups (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). Although stakeholders generally acknowledged the homogeneity within football associations, among coaching educators, and participants, organisational accountability was frequently sidestepped by invoking notions of only looking at an individual's *quality* that the interviewee or the wider organisation were not influenced by someone's ethnic background. Furthermore, stakeholders often expressed optimism that time alone would address the underrepresentation of FEMC, particularly given the professionalization of women's football. However, there was limited consideration given to the existing structures and mechanisms outlined in the results that could continue to hinder the inclusion of FEMC in football coaching, also as the number of female football players from ethnic minority backgrounds purportedly grows.

Additional barriers on the organisational level revolved around the limited visibility of programs and subsidies. This appeared connected to the rapid filling of coaching education courses that stakeholders noted, primarily with homogeneous male groups. Consequently, there appears to be less emphasis on advertising coaching education, leading to limited awareness among FEMC about these opportunities. Moreover, stakeholders in England cited financial constraints within Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives as a reason for focusing primarily on ethnic minority males, assuming they had a greater interest in training. However, this 'pragmatic' approach may inadvertently perpetuate the limited awareness of FEMC regarding targeted programs and initiatives since they are already assumed to not be interested in coaching.

Furthermore, Dutch stakeholders highlighted the challenges of registering ethnicity due to privacy laws. This obstacle purportedly hindered the implementation of targeted policies to increase the representation of FEMC. However, at the same time this also appeared to

constrain discussions on progressive strategies at all. Potential solutions, such as implementing a voluntary system for respondents to disclose their cultural or ethnic backgrounds, thereby circumventing privacy laws, or initiating programs and allowing participants to self-identify as FEMC, were therefore not brought up. Failing to actively measure ethnic diversity in football perpetuates the current state of predominantly homogeneous coaching landscapes.

#### 6.4. Sociocultural level

The fourth level identified by LaVoi & Dutove (2012) is the socio-cultural level, which deals with cultural norms, values and systems that in a more indirect manner work to enable or constrain FEMC. This pertains, for instance, to stereotypes surrounding gender and ethnicity that circulate in wider English and Dutch society.

The findings suggested that broader ideologies regarding gender and ethnicity could sometimes serve as factors promoting the inclusion of FEMC. For instance, both FEMC and stakeholders expressed the belief that female coaches might possess greater emotional intelligence and nurturing qualities, which could be beneficial, especially in coaching young (female) footballers. While these notions perpetuate stereotypes about women being inherently emotionally sensitive and nurturing, they might nonetheless create opportunities for female coaches (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012).

Similarly, ethnic ideologies played a role, notably in the perception that coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC) might have an easier time connecting with players from marginalized backgrounds. This aspect was deemed significant by both FEMC and stakeholders, particularly considering the growing diversity of the player pool.

Simultaneously, it became evident that rather than facilitating, broader stereotypes could serve to impede the inclusion of FEMC. While stereotypes about women being nurturing and emotionally sensitive sometimes aided their inclusion in coaching, as discussed earlier, they can also foster the perception that more elite coaching roles or coaching predominantly white male teams were less suitable for them (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012). For FEMC, these gendered stereotypes were compounded with ideas surrounding ethnicity. For example, prevalent notions about black women being loud and intimidating contributed to the idea that they were unsuitable for coaching, a trend consistent with findings from previous studies (Olushola-Ogunrinde & Carter-Francique, 2021). Additionally, stakeholders frequently perpetuated the stereotype of the 'passive Muslim woman' (Van den Bogert, 2022) who is presumed to be restricted from engaging in physical activity or assuming leadership roles, despite evidence to the contrary—for instance, the active participation of young Muslim girls in street football in The Netherlands (Van den Bogert, 2022). Meanwhile, respondents also argued that simultaneously they often had to deal with stereotypes from *within* their ethnic communities as well.

#### 6.5. Recommendations for bolstering the representation of FEMC

In this final section of the Discussion, six key recommendations are listed that are based on the preceding sections and also serve as an answer to the overarching research question posed in section 2.1 of this report. The insights generated through this research project align with key strategic priorities established by UEFA for women's football. The recent surge in the popularity of women's football and the emergence of prominent female coaches underscore the need to strengthen structures that support the development of young female coaches. To address this, UEFA has implemented the Coach Development

Programme for Women and the Women's Football Competence Framework. These initiatives are tailored to meet the specific demands and opportunities within the female game. As the results show, often FEMC respondents would prioritize their gender identity over their ethnic identity in giving meaning to their experiences. This shows that many of the current initiatives of UEFA and national associations that specifically focus on female coaches also aligns with the needs of FEMC. Yet, as the study shows, their way to finding these initiatives is often impaired by the 'double marginalization' they encounter due to their intersecting gender and ethnic position.

The following six recommendations therefore serve as a valuable addition to these existing frameworks, contributing to the potential creation of more tailored programs aimed at attracting more female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC). This aligns with UEFA's goal of fostering diversity in football and football management to better reflect the rich diversity of Europe. The research project not only impacts UEFA at a broader level but also play a crucial role in shaping the strategies of specific national football associations of The Netherlands and England.

#### 6.5.1. Added investment in formalized and tailored mentorship programmes at all levels

Mentorship programs, such as those currently offered by UEFA and national associations, should be further expanded and advertised to incorporate a specific focus on supporting FEMC. Given the unique challenges faced by FEMC, who often navigate a dual barrier within the predominantly White and male-dominated football landscape, establishing mentorship relationships tailored to their needs appeared crucial. These mentors could ideally serve as both guides and role models. Exposure to successful FEMC through mentorship programs can impact aspiring coaches by improving their self-confidence and challenging stereotypes.

Moreover, national associations must expand mentorship programs to include coaches operating at lower tiers of the coaching hierarchy, with a particular focus on supporting coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC) at the outset of their careers. As highlighted in this study, addressing the barriers encountered by FEMC early on is essential to prevent premature career interruptions. Thus, introducing tailored mentorship initiatives at lower levels of the coaching structure can offer vital assistance and direction to aspiring FEMC.

#### 6.5.2. Strategic investment in recruiting prospective FEMC

National associations should make a deliberate effort to prioritize the early recruitment of FEMC who may have an interest in coaching, ideally during their playing careers. This initiative can be facilitated through close collaboration with football clubs to identify individuals who show potential interest in pursuing coaching education. Early identification of potential coaches allows for timely outreach and guidance regarding available opportunities and support initiatives.

As evidenced by the study, interpersonal contacts play a crucial role in motivating FEMC to start their coaching journey. By actively engaging with FEMC and providing them with information and resources, organisations can create pathways for individuals who may not have otherwise considered coaching.



### 6.5.3. Address negative interactions and the intersection of stereotypes

The research indicates that FEMC frequently encounter intersecting stereotypes related to both their gender and ethnic background throughout their coaching journey. These stereotypes have the potential to hinder their involvement in football coaching. It is crucial for UEFA and national associations to recognize and address the negative impact of these stereotypes.

Efforts to challenge these stereotypes should include prioritizing diversity and inclusion in communication strategies, featuring more FEMC as role models in communications. Additionally, by highlighting diverse role models in the communication of UEFA and national associations regarding coaching, these programs can contribute to normalizing the presence of FEMC in coaching positions.

Furthermore, UEFA and national associations should consider implementing diversity and inclusion programs for coaching education staff, and if they are already in place, extending these to explicitly incorporate the aforementioned barriers faced by FEMC. Extending these initiatives to football clubs is also important, as many female coaches face stereotypes through interactions with their male coaching counterparts, as highlighted in the study.

### 6.5.4. Increase visibility of coaching education and target programs/initiatives

UEFA and national associations must address the issue of limited visibility surrounding programs and subsidies intended to support FEMC. It is imperative to enhance advertising and communication endeavors to ensure that FEMC are well-informed about the opportunities for coaching education and professional development, also in relation to financial subsidies that are offered to help FEMC in their coaching education trajectories. Efforts must be made to ensure that advertising reaches its intended audience of FEMC effectively, as it is currently evident that many individuals – particularly in the Dutch context – are unaware of these opportunities.

### 6.5.5. Offer female-only courses coaching education *alongside* mixed courses

National football associations should work to the development of either female-only coaching education courses and/or a specialized curriculum centering around the women's game. Many interviewees in this study argued for the need of a secure learning environment for female coaches, which was sometimes felt to be lacking. Furthermore, many participants expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of attention given to women's football, an area where most participants operated. Therefore, creating tailored programs could address this issue and provide the necessary support and recognition for female coaches within the women's game. It is crucial that this initiative is conducted *concurrently* with mixed-gender courses, which remains favoured by many respondents.

### 6.5.6. Critical reflection on hiring practices in organisation

Lastly, it seems important for national associations to critically reflect on instances of homologous reproduction within their own organisations and within their coaching education staff. This study indicates that staff from minoritized backgrounds often possess a heightened awareness of the barriers faced by FEMC and can contribute to more inclusive hiring practices. Therefore, implementing targeted recruitment strategies to diversify their own organisations can help to indirectly create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for FEMC.

## 7. Limitations of research project

The research project has, like any research endeavour, encountered limitations. In this section four key limitations will be highlighted, pertaining to 1) Coaching education sessions and 2) Data access in the English context, 3) Diversity of interviewee pool, and lastly 4) Short reflection on positionality. For each section there will also be an explanation on how limitations were addressed or mitigated.

### 7.1. Coaching education sessions

One limitation revolves around the coaching education sessions designed for participant observations. Originally, the research proposal aimed to include female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds in these sessions. However, the conducted participant observations in the Netherlands did not feature female participants with ethnic minority backgrounds, with two sessions including a White Dutch female. Consequently, the research project has not been able to explore through participant observations how female coaches of ethnic minority backgrounds navigate these environments and participate in coaching education sessions, although interviews with this group has already highlighted key dynamics which are highlighted in the sections above.

Despite this limitation, the sessions have proven valuable in shedding light on some of the everyday practices and dominant structures inherent in the operation of coaching education in The Netherlands. In other words, the data collected still provides insights into how these sessions may pose limitations or hindrances to the participation of female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds. Furthermore, the broader context suggests that the absence of such individuals in coaching education sessions reflects a larger trend within the Dutch football coaching environment, where instructors, interviewed or observed, stated they rarely encountered female coaches from minority backgrounds during their courses.

### 7.2. Data access in the English context

Another limitation of this research project has been the challenge of gaining access to female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds for interviews, particularly in the English context. The approach of online interviews, as employed in the English context, has proven less effective in attracting participants. In contrast, in the Dutch context, the use of face-to-face interviews and a snowballing technique to attract new participants to the research has yielded greater success in engaging interviewees.

Another limitation concerned gaining access to coaching education sessions in England. In the Dutch context, official support from the KNVB facilitated easy access to these sessions. However, given that the English FA is not an official partner of the project, accessing coaching education sessions in England, which originally was a goal of the research project, proved too difficult to arrange. This shows that official support is paramount for doing research, especially on sensitive subjects such as ethnic and gender inclusion in football.

### 7.3. Diversity of interviewee pool

One limitation of this research project lies in the diversity of the interview pool, encompassing both female coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds (FEMC) and key stakeholders in Dutch and English football. Despite efforts to recruit coaching interviewees from diverse ethnic backgrounds, aiming to represent significant ethnic minority communities in both the Netherlands and England, there are imbalances evident in the

FEMC interviewed. For example, in the Dutch context, interviewing Moroccan and Turkish female coaches proved challenging, despite these groups being prominent within the Dutch ethnic minority landscape. Interviews in the Dutch context primarily featured individuals from Dutch Surinamese and Dutch Indonesian backgrounds. This appears to reflect a broader disparity in the representation of FEMC from former Dutch colonies like Suriname and Indonesia compared to 'newer' migrant groups from Morocco and Turkey. It is therefore important to note that the findings of this study cannot fully capture the experiences of all FEMC in England and The Netherlands. As evidenced in the study, experiences may differ among various ethnic minority groups, leading to different associated stereotypes or barriers. Therefore, for future research, it is crucial to broaden the pool of ethnic communities included in studies on FEMC.

Secondly, in the interviews conducted with key stakeholders in both England and the Netherlands, it can be observed that there was a notable overrepresentation of individuals who identified as belonging to either or both gender and ethnic minority backgrounds. These stakeholders acknowledged in the interviews that they themselves were minorities within their respective organizations and associations. Consequently, the perspectives expressed by these stakeholders may not always align with the predominant viewpoints circulating within these organizations. This study reveals that individuals who have firsthand experience with being a minority within an organization tend to be more cognizant or sympathetic to the barriers faced by female minority coaches (FEMC). However, it also highlights a significant interest among these minority staff in addressing this underrepresentation, as it was primarily key stakeholders from minority backgrounds who responded to interview requests for this research project.

#### 7.4. Positionality

Finally, a short reflection on positionality of the researcher in the research process is necessary. With positionality it is meant that it is important to always reflect on also the identity and role of the researcher in research projects. With the researcher in this project being a White Dutch male, it has undoubtedly had an influence on the way interviewees related to him and what they chose to address during the interviews. For example, like findings by Rankin-Wright et al. (2019), it was evident that respondents primarily emphasized their gender identity over their ethnic identity. While this may reflect the sentiments of female ethnic minority coaches (FEMC), it could also suggest that respondents felt more comfortable discussing gender diversity—a topic that is more established and less sensitive in both the Netherlands and England—than ethnic diversity with a White male researcher. In short, while not necessarily a limitation, it is essential to recognize that the process of meaning-making and the ideas presented in interviews by respondents are a co-construction with the researcher. Consequently, the researcher's presence inevitably influences and shapes the discourse within the interviews.



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## Appendix A: List of interviewees

### Female coaches of ethnic minority background

Interview number	Nationality	Ethnic background (self-identified)
Interview 1	Dutch	Dutch - Indonesian
Interview 2	Dutch	Dutch – Surinamese
Interview 3	Dutch	Dutch – Surinamese
Interview 4	Dutch	Dutch – American
Interview 5	Dutch	Dutch – Surinamese
Interview 6	Dutch	Dutch – Surinamese
Interview 7	British	British – South Asian
Interview 8	British	Black British
Interview 9	British	Black British
Interview 10	British	British – South Asian
Interview 11	Aruban	Aruban
Interview 12	Dutch	Dutch - Indonesian
Interview 13	British	British – South Asian

### Stakeholders

Interview number	Nationality	Gender
Interview 1	Dutch	Female
Interview 2	Dutch	Female
Interview 3	Dutch	Male
Interview 4	Dutch	Male
Interview 5	Dutch	Female
Interview 6	Dutch	Female
Interview 7	Dutch	Female
Interview 8	Dutch	Male
Interview 9	Dutch	Male
Interview 10	Dutch	Male
Interview 11	British	Male
Interview 12	British	Male
Interview 13	British	Male
Interview 14	British	Male
Interview 15	British	Male

## Appendix B: Interview guides

### Interview guide FEMC

#### *Introduction and background*

- What is your name, age, where are you from? How would you describe your racial/ethnic/national background?
- Can you briefly describe your current involvement and/or position in football?
- What motivated you to pursue a career as a football coach?
- Were there any specific role models or experiences that influenced your decision?

#### *Career*

- Can you take me through your career as a coach, perhaps highlighting some key milestones, experiences and turning points?
- Did you use certain strategies, or take advantage of certain support from perhaps your club, the football association, or otherwise to navigate your way through the football landscape?
- How do you look back on coaching education?
- If not followed, would you like to pursue coaching training, why, why not?
- How do you look back on the process of finding a job as a coach?
- Do you think your ethnic background has influenced you in your football coaching career? Can you remember some of these moments?
- Do you think your gender identity has influenced you in your football coaching career? Can you remember some of these moments?

#### *Ideas about diversity in the coaching landscape*

- In your experience, what are some of the unique contributions that female coaches from minority backgrounds can make in the field of football coaching?
- How do you view the oft-heard claim that there is a lack of willingness among ethnic minority women to become football coaches?
- If you could give advice to women from ethnic minority groups considering a career as a coach, what insights or recommendations would you share?
- How do you view current inclusivity and diversity initiatives within the football coaching world?
- How do you see representation and opportunities for ethnic minority women in football coaching evolving in the coming years?
- What steps can football organisations such as UEFA and national football associations take to increase opportunities and representation for women coaches in the coming years?

#### *Impact and ambitions*

- Looking back, what are you most proud of in your coaching career?
- What are your ambitions for the future in the field of football coaching?

## Interview guide stakeholders

### *Introduction*

- What is your name, age, where are you from?

### *Personal career*

- What is your current position?
- Could you briefly describe your trajectory to this position?
- What is your main motivation to work in your field?

### *Description of work*

- What is your main activity at the organization?
- What does a regular workday look like for you?
- What does the course look like?

### *Context and understanding*

- What are the key qualities of a coach in your opinion?
- Do you often have ethnic minority women in your classes?
- In your experience, why do you think ethnic minority women are underrepresented in managerial positions in football?
- Do you think it is important that they are more often involved?
- What specific challenges and barriers do you believe ethnic minority women face in aspiring to managerial roles in the football industry? How do you feel about coaching education? Recruitment practices in football? Any other challenges?
- How do you perceive the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity impacting opportunities for these women in the football management?
- From your perspective, what institutional or systemic factors contribute to the underrepresentation of ethnic minority women in football management?

### *Best practices*

- How can football clubs and organizations better identify and support the development of talented ethnic minority women who show potential for managerial roles?
- Are there any successful initiatives or mentorship programs that have been effective in promoting diversity in football management?
- Can you share examples of football clubs or organizations that have excelled in promoting diversity and inclusion in managerial positions?
- Based on your experience, what support mechanisms or resources can be provided to help ethnic minority women overcome the challenges they face in pursuing managerial positions?

### *Creating change*

- What are your hopes and aspirations for the future in terms of diversity and representation in football management, particularly for ethnic minority women?
- Do you see any emerging trends or opportunities that may positively impact the advancement of diversity in football management?

