

IF Sustainability Case Study
**GENDER EQUALITY
AMONG REFEREES**



IF SUSTAINABILITY CASE STUDIES

The world faces significant challenges across a wide spectrum of economic, social and environmental matters. The Olympic Movement has both an opportunity and a duty to actively contribute to the global sustainability debate in line with its vision of “Building a better world through sport”.

With this in mind, and in response to recommendation 5 of Olympic Agenda 2020 (“Include sustainability within the Olympic Movement’s daily operations”), the IOC

conducted the International Federations (IF) Sustainability Project in 2016. This allowed the IOC to obtain an overview of IFs’ sustainability initiatives; identify

common topics, good practices and mutual challenges; and share information. One of the Project’s outcomes was a series of case studies, illustrating how IFs are actively contributing towards a more sustainable world.

As part of the IOC’s objective to profile the role of the Olympic Movement in sustainability through the aggregation of information and collective reporting, it was agreed that the identification and

sharing of IF sustainability case studies should be continued. These case studies form part of the enhanced support system provided to the Olympic Movement through the [IOC Sustainability Strategy](#).

Each case study is aligned with one or more of the IOC’s five sustainability focus areas: infrastructure & natural sites; sourcing & resource management; mobility; workforce; and climate. The studies are also aligned with one or more of the United Nations’

(UN) framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This framework is pivotal for the Olympic Movement since in September 2015, the UN General Assembly confirmed the important role that

sport can play in supporting the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

The UN’s 17 SDGs provide a common framework for organisations to explain how they plan to contribute to sustainable development and tackle the key global sustainability challenges. The IF case studies attest to the fact that the Olympic Movement contributes to the achievement of many of these.



“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognise the growing contribution of sport to the realisation of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”

Paragraph 37, UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Each IF sustainability project contributes to one or more of the IOC's sustainability focus areas and one or more of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

IOC FOCUS AREA



WORKFORCE

UN SDGs



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

WORLD TAEKWONDO HAS DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED A STRATEGY TO ENSURE HALF OF ITS REFEREES ARE WOMEN

In the words of the United Nations: “While the world has achieved progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment, women and girls continue to suffer discrimination in every part of the world.” Building on its ongoing efforts to promote and respect gender equality, World Taekwondo (WT) has developed and implemented a strategy designed to guarantee that half of all referees officiating at WT-sanctioned events are women – representing a substantial step towards gender equality.

WT has dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort to identifying and training female referees, increasing their technical knowledge and ensuring they qualify to international standards. WT’s work with National Federations to develop the skills of female referees and promote female athletes has created a snowball effect, encouraging greater participation from members of the female taekwondo community.

The Olympic Games held in Rio in 2016 was the first time that a tournament team of taekwondo referees had a 50-50



“FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN TAEKWONDO IS NOTICEABLY INCREASING DAY BY DAY, IN ALL AREAS OF THE SPORT. WOMEN’S EFFORTS AND SKILLS ARE ALSO GETTING INCREASING RECOGNITION AS THEY ARE REACHING THE HIGHEST POSITIONS AND AWARDS.”

JULIE DIB, OLYMPIC AND INTERNATIONAL TAEKWONDO REFEREE

OBJECTIVES

World Taekwondo has introduced the principle of gender equality for taekwondo referees in order to:

- Promote World Taekwondo's values and principles.
- Encourage more female participation in the sport.
- Raise awareness about gender inequality.



gender split. Since then, WT is striving for the gender equality policy to be implemented at all of its major events, and for the Continental Unions and National Federations to follow its lead. The policy has created awareness among the taekwondo community about the issue while also encouraging more women and girls to take part in the sport at all levels.

EVALUATION

The initiative has led to an increase in the number of WT referees, which previously had an unequal gender split (roughly two-thirds male, one-third female). The gender gap gave WT an opportunity to be a role

model and actively demonstrate the fair play principles it has promoted for many years: openly stating that WT can be an agent for change in removing any potential barriers to women's participation in taekwondo, and ensuring that women have a strong presence in various roles across the sport.

The policy has helped to create a more inclusive organisation that recognises the organisational and international value of providing equal opportunities for women involved in taekwondo. The increased number of female referees has also sent a clear message to female taekwondo athletes that refereeing opportunities may be available to them after they finish their competing career.



LESSONS LEARNED

- Top-down decisions from management are vital for the success of such initiatives.
- Creating an ambassador programme for athletes and referees may help encourage greater female participation in the sport.
- Education programmes and seminars can help develop skills that allow women to become referees.
- Embedding clear directives into IF regulations can help facilitate gender equality at all levels of the sport.