

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY IN COACHING PROGRAM

EVALUATION REPORT



**MARCH
2026**

Prepared by
SoLID LAB

Prepared for
CAC

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thanks to a grant from the Government of Canada’s Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) department, the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), in collaboration with a University of Ottawa research team, launched the WAGE Mentorship Program in January 2025 to support the federal government’s goal of achieving gender equity in sport by 2035. This multi-year initiative, funded through March 2026, aims to advance women’s representation in coaching by building a national mentorship program for women coaches across 16 sport organizations. The program has engaged 32 mentees, 32 mentors, and 16 sport leaders through mentorship pairings (mentee-mentor) and two Communities of Practice (CoPs; sport leaders and mentors). Together, participants were building a truly inclusive, relational, and sustainable mentorship environment that encourages women’s participation and advancement in coaching.

In line with the program goals, the pre-program report indicated that mentors aimed to build trust, share knowledge, and treat mentorship as leadership development, while mentees hoped to strengthen their confidence, gain exposure to new opportunities, and form meaningful mentor relationships. Sport leaders entered the program focused on creating enabling environments, fostering a mentorship culture, and developing sustainable structures. Midway through, the report showed a shift from intention to lived experience: mentors described their own growth alongside their support for mentees, including increased systemic awareness, which had already been present but received more attention; mentees reported transformative gains in confidence and leadership while also acknowledging the challenge of slow organizational change; and sport leaders highlighted a learning by doing approach, relying on peer learning and beginning to turn practical lessons into policy and longer-term structures.

In parallel, and as part of the WAGE program evaluation, the research team undertook four reviews to ensure program resources remained current and responsive. This included a literature review on mentorship for women coaches to identify evidence-informed practices, a review of the NCCP Mentorship Module required for the WAGE program mentors to assess alignment with both the evidence and program goals, and a review of the three WAGE role-based guides for mentees, mentors, and sport administrators using participant experiences alongside the research.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Additionally, based on the mentee guide review, updates were made to the Training for Effective Mentees workshop. Together, this process helped ensure that WAGE resources are current, practical, and aligned with participants' needs, with emphasis on mentorship as a safe, inclusive social learning space supported by clear roles, reflective practice, and collaborative goal-setting.

End-of-program findings indicate that the WAGE program operated as more than a mentoring match; it functioned as a capacity-building process that shaped participants' development, relationships, and the conditions that support mentorship in sport. The mentees described sustained gains in confidence, leadership, and professional identity, supported by a mentee-driven structure that helped them set goals, reflect on progress, and define success in ways that could be personalized to diverse needs. The mentors described parallel growth, strengthening mentoring skills and leadership capacity, while emphasizing relational outcomes such as growing together, building rapport for long-term relationships, and the meaningful experience of witnessing mentee growth. The sport leaders described the CoP as a key mechanism for program impact, using it to reflect, learn from peers, and translate day-to-day mentoring practice into clearer strategies and more sustainable structures within their organizations. Across roles, the participants consistently emphasized that outcomes depended on the broader environment: sport leaders were positioned as the backbone of the program because their coordination, responsiveness, and resourcing shaped opportunities and support for mentor-mentee pairs. The participants also noted that using program resources consistently could be challenging, highlighting an opportunity to provide interactive tools, and follow-up support. Finally, they highlighted future-facing priorities, including an in-person wrap-up event (which has been incorporated into the program in response to this feedback) and longer-term planning, to sustain connections beyond the program and strengthen lasting impact.

This final report explains how the project began and concluded, and it describes how, throughout the project, mentoring resources were strengthened and tailored to participants' needs.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As part of working towards the federal government’s objective of achieving gender equity in sports by 2035, the CAC has undertaken a funded project to advance gender equity in sport and women’s representation as coaches. This was accomplished through two Communities of Practice (CoP) and a mentorship initiative through to the end of March 2026. The objectives were:

- Advance gender equity in sports and women’s representation as coaches;
- Lead a Women in Coaching (WiC) mentorship program
- Lead a CoP for 16 sport organizations each running their own unique Women in Coaching Program
- Revise and create new Women in Coaching (WiC) assets
- Connect the sport community by creating consistency in the application of WiC mentorship program
- Build leadership, expertise and capacity for the sport system to advance gender equity in coaching

On January 14-15, 2025, 16 sport organizations gathered in Ottawa, Ontario to launch the CAC’s WAGE Mentorship Program through an in-person event designed to build relationships and set the foundation for the 14-month initiative. The launch included a plenary presentation highlighting key findings from the 2024 Rally Report, offering insight into how to better support girls and women and emphasizing the role of mentorship in advancing gender equity in Canada. Across the two days, participants took part in role-based breakout sessions to clarify expectations and connect with peers, dedicated time for pre-selected mentor-mentee pairs to begin building rapport, and sport-organization meetings that brought mentors, mentees, and sport leaders together to review mentorship plans and confirm next steps for implementation.

Over the 14 months, mentors and sport leaders continued to participate in their respective Community of Practice by attending monthly sessions, while each mentor-mentee pair followed the mentorship plan they developed during the two-day launch event.

PARTICIPANT'S OVERVIEW

16 **SPORT ORGANIZATIONS**
2 Mentee-Mentor pairings each



32

MENTORS

32

MENTEES

16

SPORT LEADERS

GENERAL EVALUATION OVERVIEW

The **University of Ottawa SoLID Lab** research team evaluated the **WAGE Mentorship Program**. The evaluation process was designed to be ongoing throughout the program, with data collected at three points (pre-, mid-, and end-program) through observations, interviews, focus groups, and online surveys.

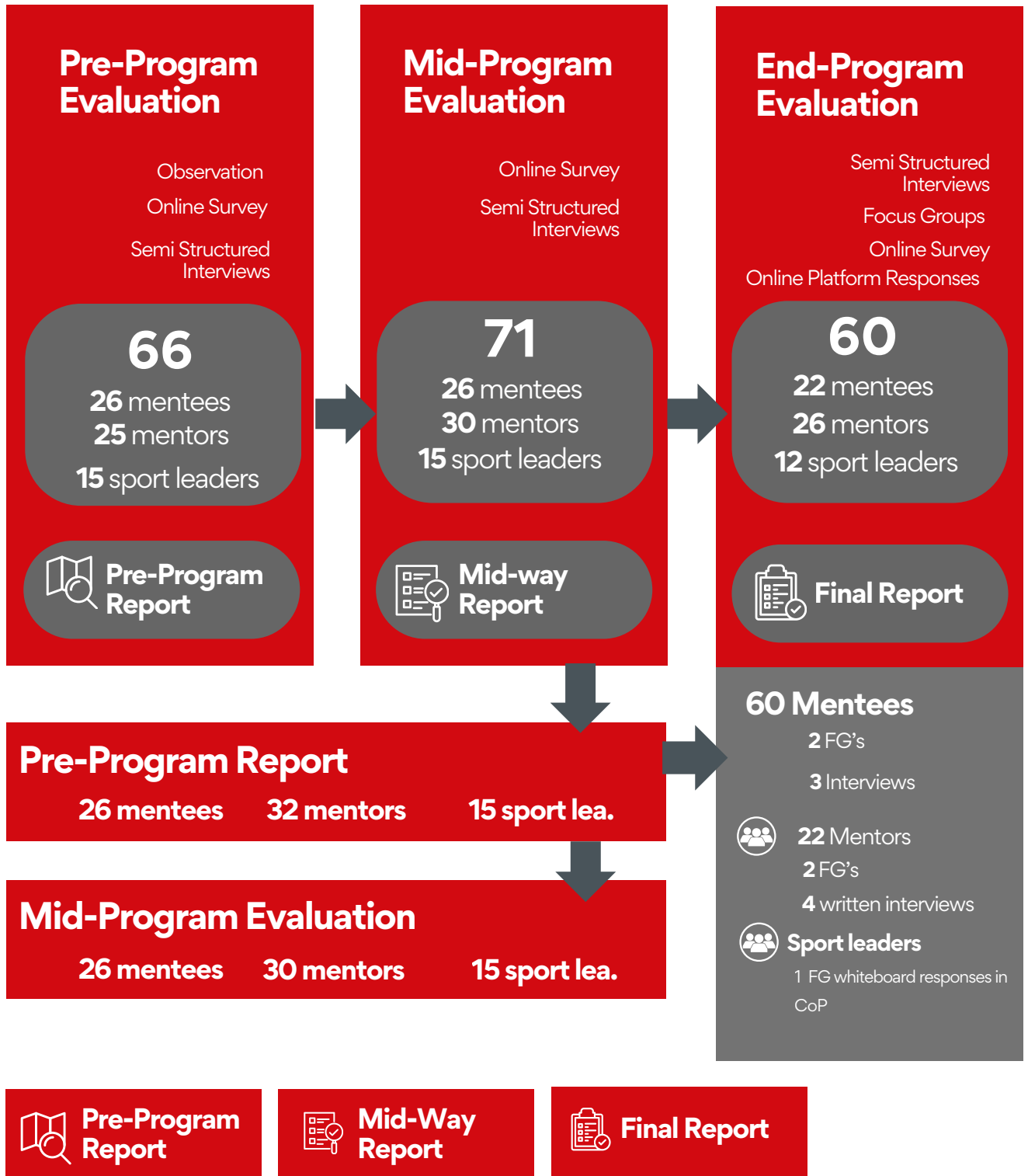
The data were analysed using thematic analysis, informed by value creation framework; a tool specific to social learning.

Time-specific reports were then produced to capture and illustrate how participants' experiences evolved throughout the program.



GENERAL EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Evaluation Methods & Data Collection Overview



Having outlined the **general evaluation process**, we will now take a closer look at the **final evaluation results**

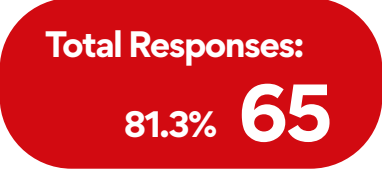
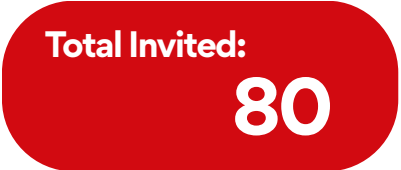
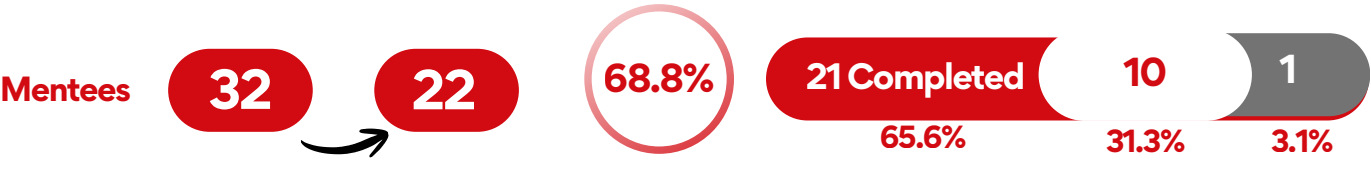
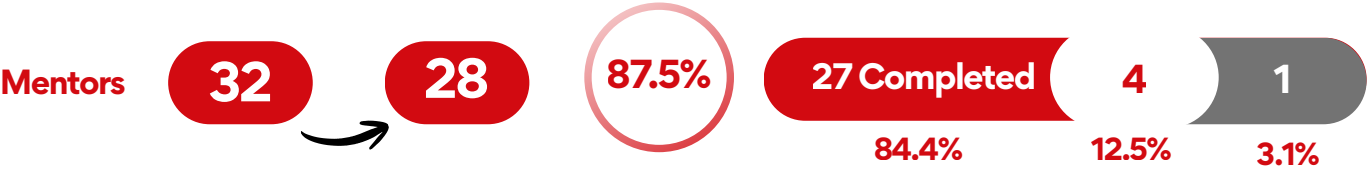
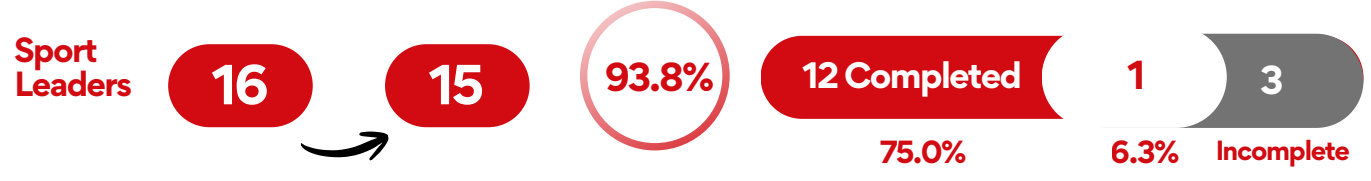
RESULTS






SURVEY STATISTICS



Group	Invited	Responses	Response Rate	Completed	Missing	Incomplete
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Meeting Frequency bi-weekly, monthly

Methods   

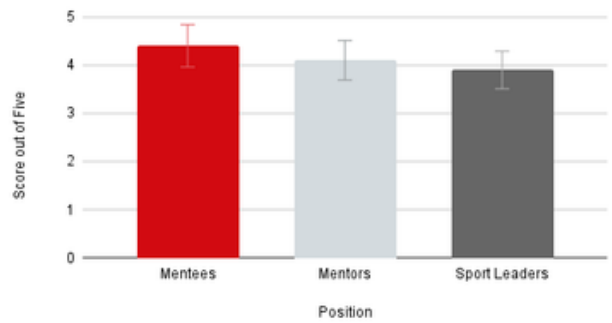
Sport Leader, Mentor & Mentee Meeting



UNDERSTANDING MENTORSHIP & GENDER EQUITY

How much did your participation in this program affect your understanding of the role mentorship can play in promoting gender equity in sport?

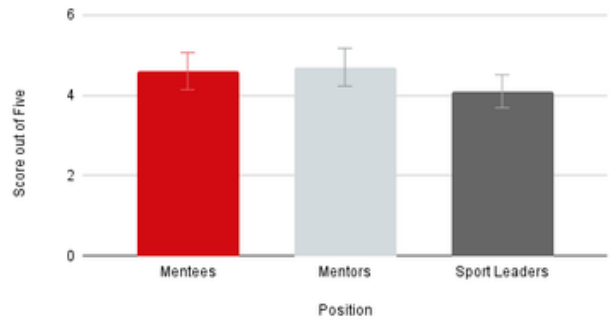
Understanding mentorship & gender equity



CONFIDENCE APPLYING LEARNING

How confident do you feel applying what you've learned in this program to your role or career?

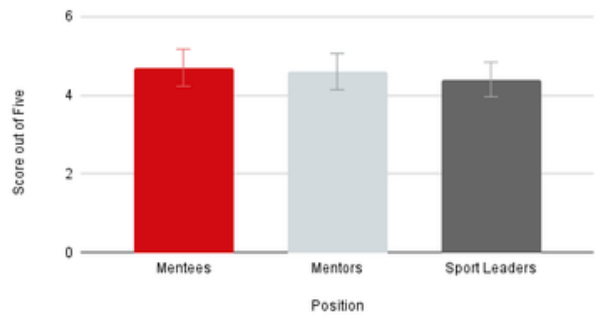
Confidence Applying Learning



OVERALL SATISFACTION

How satisfied are you with the WAGE mentorship program overall?

Overall program satisfaction



Sport Leaders

3.9/5 ★

How effective was the CoP in supporting your role ?



The CoP's effectiveness was rated 3.9 out of 5, reflecting generally positive feedback, with most participants giving scores of 4 or 5, while a smaller number rated it 3 or 2.

The CoP's contribution to developing participants' organizational mentorship programs was rated 3.2 out of 5, suggesting a moderate impact overall, with stronger ratings from some participants (4 or 5) and lower ratings from others (1 or 2).

3.2/5 ★

How much did the CoP contribute to developing your organization's mentorship program ?



MENTORSHIP SUPPORT PERCEPTION



96%

MENTEES

Felt supported by
mentor

90%

MENTORS

Felt equipped to support
mentee

CoP IMPACT (SPORT LEADERS)



78%

Effective for
supporting role

64%

Helped develop
mentorship programs

MENTOR SUPPORT (MENTEES)



76%

MID-
PROGRAM

96%

FINAL
EVALUATION

PROGRAM SATISFACTION

PROGRAM SATISFACTION OVER TIME



Mid-Program

Final evaluation

OVERALL PROGRAM SATISFACTION



QUALITATIVE RESULTS



This section presents the qualitative findings from the final evaluation of the **WAGE mentorship program**. Brief overviews of the pre-program and midway findings are included to help readers see continuity and connections across the program timeline. However, the primary focus is on participants' end-of-program reflections data from online survey, interviews, and focus groups.

Results are presented by participant group (mentee-mentor-sport leader) and follow the **Value Creation Framework** from each group's perspective. It is important to note that "value" depends on perspective and context, and for each group, values and example quotes are presented in relation to their roles.

Before each value-creation cycle, a brief explanation is provided to clarify the relevant perspective and context. For example, an enabling value for a mentee may represent potential value for a mentor or applied value for a sport leader.



MENTEE JOURNEY: FROM START TO FINISH



PRE-PROGRAM

The mentees expect to develop confidence, gain exposure to new opportunities, and build meaningful mentor relationships.

The mentees describe transformative growth in confidence, leadership, and systemic awareness, while also grappling with the realities of slow organizational change.



MID-PROGRAM



END OF PROGRAM

The mentees describe the program as a relationship-centred and validating mentorship experience that fostered lasting confidence, professional advancement, and community, while highlighting the importance of stronger peer connection and continued program structure.

The mentees described the WAGE as a relationship-centred, flexible mentorship experience that supported both professional development (certification, career opportunities, coaching skills) and personal growth (confidence, validation, reduced stress). The mentee end-program qualitative data analysis resulted in these themes: psychological and personal outcomes, professional development, mentoring relationship quality, representation and gendered validation, peer connection and community, and program delivery and resources.

MENTEE
MENTEES
MENTEES MENTEL

THE MENTEE END-PROGRAM QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS RESULTED IN THESE THEMES:

Psychological and personal outcomes

Professional development

Mentoring relationship quality

Representation and gendered validation

Peer connection and community

Program delivery and resources



Psychological and personal outcomes

For some, mentorship helped them speak up and advocate for themselves: “This program helped grow a voice I kept small for a very long time” and develop clearer boundaries: “This program has helped me say no when what I'm being asked to do something that doesn't serve my longer term goals.” Psychological benefits were central to the experiences shared by the mentees. They described reduced isolation and stress, stated that mentorship helped them feel “less alone, less overwhelmed.” The mentees linked mentoring to improved self-compassion and persistence during the season. Confidence emerged as the most pervasive outcome. The mentees described gaining the belief that they were capable and deserving of leadership: “I am capable!” and “Believe in yourself... you are valued.”

Professional development

The mentees identified concrete professional outcomes, including completed certifications (e.g., NCCP pathways), improved leadership and communication skills, and new roles or selection opportunities. The program supported both skill-building and action. The mentees described mentorship as providing structure and accountability: regular meetings helped them “plan out and just develop a plan of what I was going to do next.”

The mentees stated career advancement linked to program support and funding, including coaching at major championships, travelling internationally, or obtaining assistant and leadership roles: “...due to the WAGE program, I was able to coach on the national team.” They credited mentorship with opening opportunities by increasing visibility and credibility within their sport system, including networking with senior representatives.

Skill development was described in terms of communication strategies (tailoring “different voices” for athletes vs. parents), conflict management, team culture building, and decision-making. Importantly, one participant noted that mentorship sometimes supported interpersonal growth more than sport-specific knowledge, particularly when the mentee’s technical expertise exceeded the mentor’s. This reinforces that the mentorship value was often in leadership, reflection, and the navigation of coaching contexts, rather than technical instruction alone.

Mentoring relationship quality

The mentees linked their satisfaction to the quality of the mentor relationship, particularly availability, responsiveness, and a strong sense of having someone in their corner. They valued simple, dependable access (e.g., knowing a mentor was “one text away”). The mentee-mentor relationship evolved from formal to personal and enduring, with mentees explicitly stating they intended to continue informally: “we will continue the mentorship informally moving forward.”

A distinct strength was when the mentors created a bi-directional learning environment. One mentee described being surprised that mentoring became “a two-way street,” where their ideas were also valued and adopted, an experience that strengthened confidence and professional identity. One of the mentees also emphasized the benefit of mentors who were outside the mentee’s sport. An “outside voice” offered impartial feedback and helped mentees reframe problems without being embedded in sport-specific conflicts: having someone “completely removed from my sport” supported unbiased problem solving and healthier perspective-taking.

A prominent theme was the unique value of mentorship among women coaches. Many participants described the experience as validating in ways they had not previously accessed in male-dominated environments: “For the first time, I had another woman to talk about my coaching experience”.

This representation reduced self-doubt, strengthened confidence, and reinforced professional identity, especially for younger women who felt they were not always taken seriously.

Representation and gendered validation

A prominent theme was the unique value of mentorship among women coaches. Many participants described the experience as validating in ways they had not previously accessed in male-dominated environments: “For the first time, I had another woman to talk about my coaching experience”. This representation reduced self-doubt, strengthened confidence, and reinforced professional identity, especially for younger women who felt they were not always taken seriously.

The mentees also expressed broader ripple effects: increased support for women by senior leaders, women coach additions to high-performance environments, and an emerging desire to “give back” by mentoring others. They suggested creating pathways for mentees to become mentors (formally or informally), extending the program’s impact into coaching communities.

Peer connection and community

Beyond mentor–mentee relationships, the mentees repeatedly requested stronger peer-to-peer connections. Many wanted regular mentee meetups (virtual or in-person), especially with others at similar experience levels: “I wish we had meetings with the other mentees throughout the year.” The mentees described the initial group gathering as energizing and empowering, and they felt the program lost momentum without continued cohort connection. Where peer connection did occur (e.g., informal bonding moments while travelling or studying together) the mentees highlighted it as deeply meaningful and professionally useful, strengthening long-term networks and shared learning.

Program delivery and resources

Overall, the mentees appreciated that the program was not overly rigid and could be adapted to different sports and circumstances. The in-person launch was repeatedly described as a high-impact moment for connection and motivation, they noted the power of being in a room “full of women in coaching,” which normalized shared challenges across regions and sports.

At the same time, the mentees expressed a desire for more program-wide structure and continuity after the kick-off. The mentees suggested periodic check-ins, reminders, and clearer guidance about what to do at different stages (e.g., mid-program reflection, revisiting goals, using the guide). A common recommendation was a wrap-up event (in-person or virtual) to celebrate outcomes, share progress, and provide closure: “it’d be really cool if we could get everyone together again... like a cherry on the top.” They also suggested webinars or structured monthly updates for a next phase.

The mentorship guide and materials were widely described as helpful at the beginning, especially for structuring first conversations, aligning values, and creating an initial plan. However, the mentees stopped using the guide after the first months, often because they developed their own tracking systems (e.g., spreadsheets) or simply forgot the resource existed: “After the first couple of months, I didn’t really look at the guide.”

They recommended making resources more usable over time: shorter summaries, “cheat sheets,” and prompts to revisit the guide at set points (e.g., month 9 reflection). Some proposed making the guide a “living document” that could be updated rather than feeling static. The challenges were logistical and organizational. The mentees mentioned scheduling difficulties, time zone differences, travel realities, and busy coaching workloads (e.g., “everyone wears 16 different hats”). Some wished they lived closer to their mentor or had more opportunities for in-person observation (e.g., being on the bench during a tournament).

A second major challenge was uneven support from sport leadership. Most mentees praised highly organized sport admins who prompted meetings and kept everyone on track; others reported minimal communication, few check-ins, or disruptive leadership turnover (e.g., “change of sport lead was quite disruptive”). These differences shaped how supported the mentees felt and how connected they remained to the broader program.



1

Increased confidence and reduced isolation (feeling more supported; stronger voice)

2

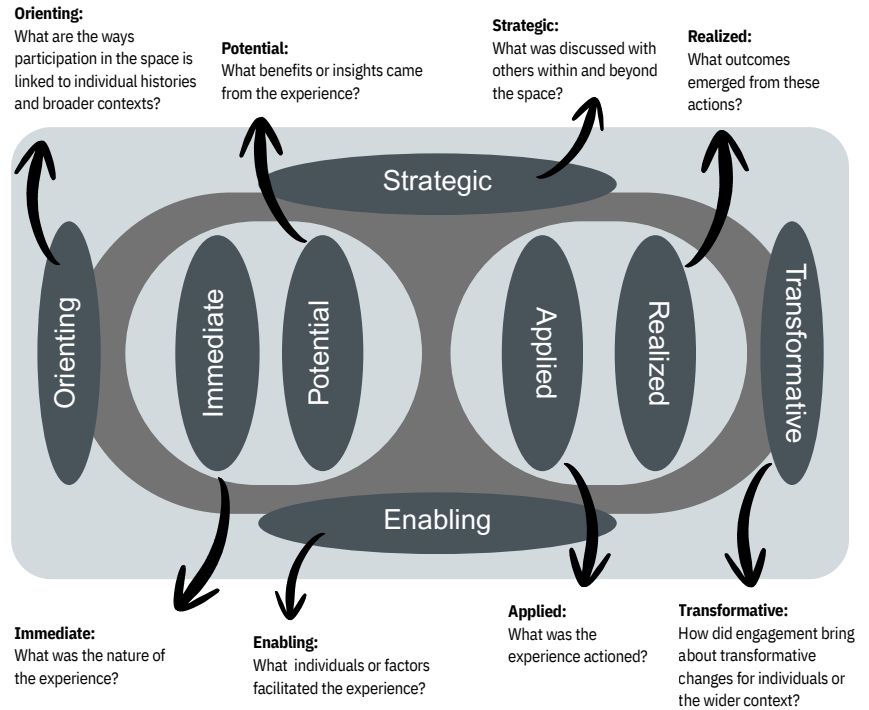
Clearer professional identity (coaching philosophy clarified; leadership readiness)

3

Skill and career development (communication, conflict navigation; certifications; new opportunities)

VALUE CREATION FRAMEWORK

- “Value” is **perspective-** and **context-dependent**.
- Each group’s (mentee, mentor, and sport leader) values and example quotes are interpreted in relation to its specific role.
- The same experience may represent different types of value across groups.
 - For example, enabling value for a mentee may be potential value for a mentor or applied value for a sport leader.

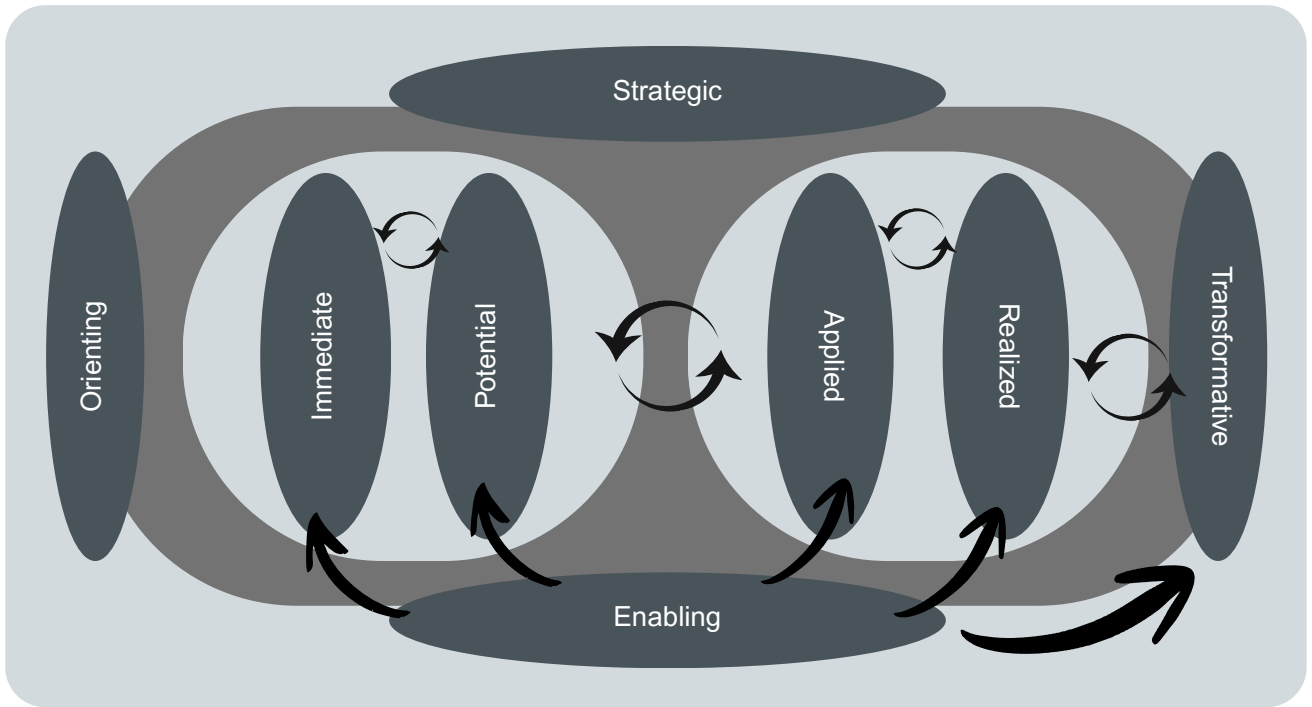


MENTEES' VALUE CREATION CYCLE

This value-creation cycle illustrates how some mentees experienced the WAGE mentorship program as a social learning space and how different forms of value emerged through their participation. Using Wenger-Trayner’s Value Creation Framework (Wegner-Trayner & Wegner-Trayner, 2020) the evidence is presented as a progression of value (e.g., immediate, potential, applied, realized, and enabling) that is shaped by the specific context of the WAGE mentorship program and the mentees’ roles within it. The purpose is to show how and which values were created for mentees through social learning processes (relationships, shared practice, and community) and how mentees made meaning of and attributed value to these experiences over the course of the program. For clarity, the visual presents one example quote for each value, while additional quote examples are available in Appendix C.

The mentees described the program primarily through the lens of personal and professional growth. Their reflections emphasize what it felt like to be part of a wider community of women coaches, the confidence and motivation gained through supportive mentoring relationships, and the practical insights and connections they developed along the way. The mentees also pointed to how these experiences translated into concrete steps, such as goal-setting, navigating pathways, and pursuing higher-level opportunities highlighting how mentorship supported both their development and their sense of what is possible in their coaching careers.

MENTEES' VALUE CREATION CYCLE



- Mentees experienced the program as a catalyst for both personal and professional growth.
- Being part of a broader community of women coaches fostered a strong sense of connection and belonging.
- Supportive mentoring relationships strengthened confidence, motivation, and self-belief.
- The program also provided practical insights, meaningful connections, and clearer direction for development.
- These experiences translated into concrete action, including goal-setting, pathway navigation, and the pursuit of higher-level opportunities.
- Overall, mentorship expanded not only mentees' development, but also their sense of what was possible in their coaching careers.

Potential:

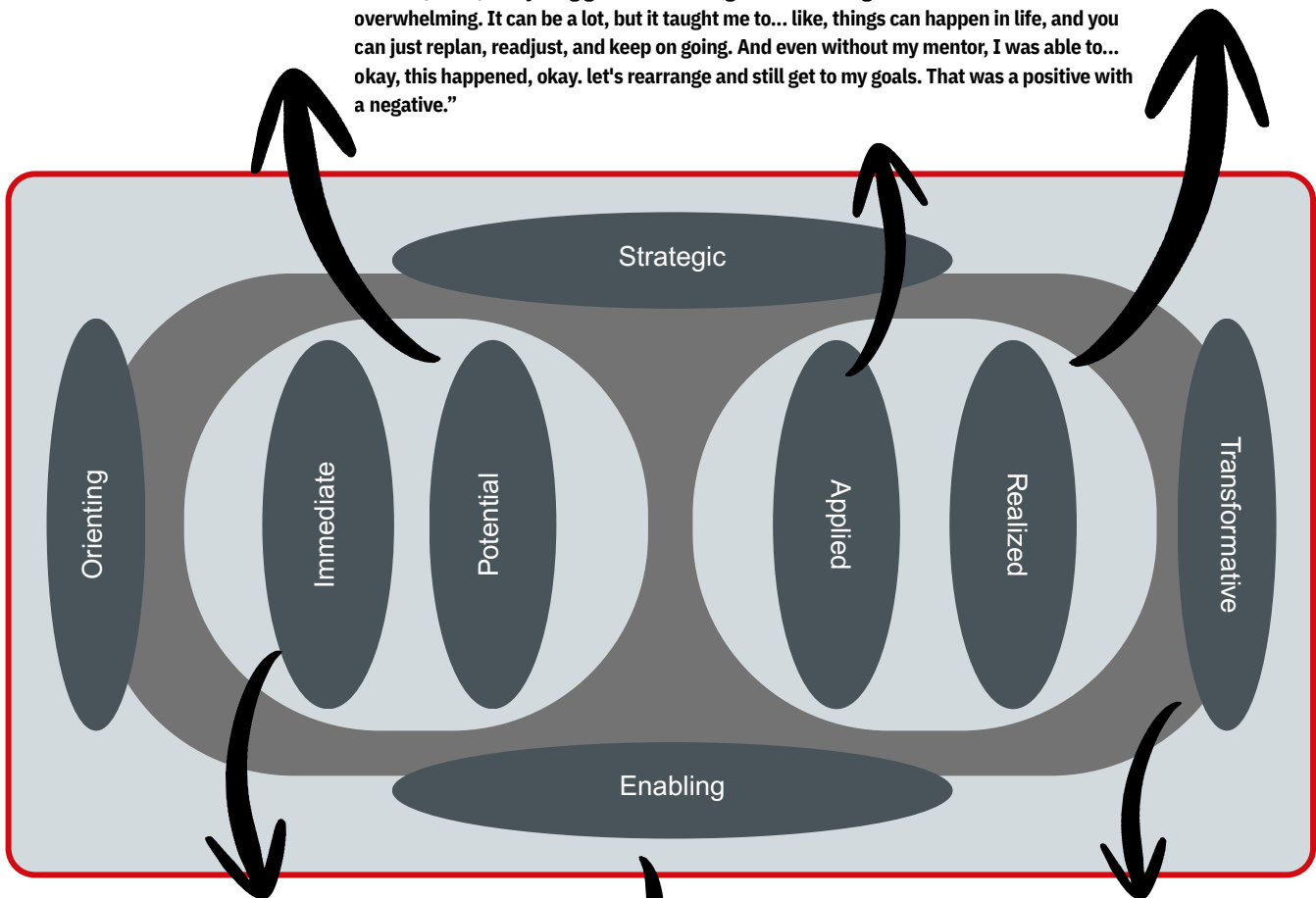
“...what it [WAGE] showed me, it's that there's a lot more women, well, there's a lot of women coaching and there's a lot of them that do have, that are able to go and are able to reach a certain level. So, it just showed me that it is possible and I'm not the only one. There's more people and there's a good community too of people and everybody tries to help each other out. So that's, uh, that's pretty cool.”

Realized:

“... For me, obviously, my highlight was definitely being able to travel with the national team and coach at a higher level alongside of individuals who have a mountain of experience... beyond that.... So yeah, I had a really great and positive experience overall...”

Applied:

“ I would say it's positive, but like the whole experience was positive. I think sometimes with life, work, everything gets into that. It gets a lot of things. So that can be overwhelming. It can be a lot, but it taught me to... like, things can happen in life, and you can just replan, readjust, and keep on going. And even without my mentor, I was able to... okay, this happened, okay. let's rearrange and still get to my goals. That was a positive with a negative.”



Immediate:

“I think just having the chance to sit in that room with people who have so much experience and knowledge and also people who were just like me, just coming into this role and just seeing this giant room full of women and coaching, I think, was very powerful...”

Transformative:

“...from a gender perspective, I mean, naturally martial arts are pretty consistently male dominated in general, I would say. And then just to have the opportunity to coach, as a female representing my region of the country, representing my gender above and beyond kind of what has been represented to date as far as female coaching from my region is, nothing shy of an accomplishment! But also, something that I will take with pride coming out of this program.”

Enabling:

“I'm forever grateful for that. And then in the beginning, they were very communicative and very in it and were super supportive of the program ...she always brings a lot to the table like scheduling those meetings.”

MENTOR



MENTOR JOURNEY: FROM START TO FINISH



PRE-PROGRAM

The mentors expect to establish trust, share knowledge, and position mentorship as leadership development.

The mentors describe not only supporting mentees, but also experiencing their own growth, solidarity, and systemic awareness through the process.



MID-PROGRAM

The mentors describe mentorship as a relationship-driven and mutually developmental experience that strengthened mentee confidence and career progression, while deepening mentors' leadership, gender equity awareness, and commitment to ongoing change.



END OF PROGRAM

The mentors described the WAGE program as relationship-driven, yielding meaningful outcomes for mentees, while fostering the mentors' growth. Beyond individual mentoring, the CoP connections deepened the mentors' skills, professional identity, and commitment to gender-equitable coaching. The mentor end-program qualitative data analysis resulted in these themes: mentorship as a developmental process for mentors, building rapport with mentee, witnessing mentee growth, gender equity and change agency, and program delivery and resources.

MENTORS MENTORS MENTORS MENTORS MENTORS

THE MENTOR END-PROGRAM QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS RESULTED IN THESE THEMES:

Mentorship as a developmental process for mentors

Building rapport with mentee

Witnessing mentee growth

Gender equity and change agency

Program delivery and resources



Mentorship as a developmental process for mentors

The mentors did not present themselves as static experts; instead, they described mentorship as a developmental process that reshaped how they lead. They recognized personal learning and reflection as a central benefit: “I have a lot of experience to share... but I am also learning things about myself.” The mentors emphasized growing skills in active listening, asking better questions, and guiding rather than telling [Those skills included in WAGE Mentor guide, NCCP mentorship module, and introduced in-person event]. One mentor described developing questioning skills that helped coaches “arrive at their own conclusions,” and another noted they had to resist the urge to “fix things,” learning to leave space for the mentee to try, risk, and learn.

The mentor’s identity development also included addressing self-doubt. Some mentors described moments of questioning whether they had “accomplished enough” to mentor, yet the experience helped them redefine credibility as grounded in lived experience, empathy, and self-awareness rather than a being perfect. The mentors framed this growth as extending beyond the WAGE relationship into other leadership roles: improved supervision practices, better communication with staff, and more confidence as coach evaluators or facilitators. A related finding was that mentorship helped the mentors recognize mentoring as an existing part of their practice, “I’ve actually been mentoring a lot before, I just didn’t realize it”, which increased their motivation to continue

mentoring in the future, including speaking engagements and informal coach development roles.

Building rapport with the mentee

The mentors positioned the relationship as the engine of change. They described the mentorship as becoming personal, consistent, and sustaining, often evolving into friendship and continuing beyond the formal end date. One mentor captured this shift through the ritual of “Sunday Stroopwaffles,” a weekly check-in to share “glimmers of goodness,” which helped both mentor and mentee practice noticing progress and resilience in a demanding sport context. The mentors emphasized that supporting the “life journey” mattered as much as the sport journey, particularly when mentees faced difficult seasons, health issues, or overwhelm. The mentors described practicing patience and flexibility, helping mentees “see the bright side” and reinforcing the importance of coaches having space to care for their health and identities outside the gym. Relational strength was also reflected in the mentors’ accounts of psychological safety and permanence: Near the program’s end, one mentor responded to a question about their evolving relationship, “it will never end,” signalling that the connection had shifted into an ongoing support relationship rather than a time-limited program requirement.

Witnessing mentee growth

A dominant outcome for the mentors was observing their mentees become more confident, independent, and professionally mobile. The mentors repeatedly named confidence gains as the most valuable change, often framed as more important than any technical outcome because it enabled future leadership and persistence.

The mentors described “seeing her confidence... growth throughout the past year,” noticing stronger interactions with athletes, and witnessing mentees take initiative in difficult coaching moments. The mentors reported that during the program, they supported their mentee’s career advancement, including opportunities to join national team staffs, travel with high-performance programs, and step into higher-level coaching roles. The mentors described pivotal “stretch moments” where their mentees moved from hesitation to leadership (e.g., being invited into new responsibilities at camps). These moments were described not only as competence-building but also as identity-shifting, as reflected in this mentor’s noting, “[she is] no longer a mentee... a real coach now,” and in some contexts, athletes began turning to the mentee first for support and direction, an important marker of legitimacy and authority.

The mentors also highlighted “full circle” dynamics, where, for example, a mentor reported that her mentee later supported her through an unfamiliar situation, reinforcing reciprocal growth and suggesting readiness for future mentoring roles.

Gender equity and change agency

The mentors described a strengthened belief that “women helping other women feels like a superpower,” and that when women work together, “incredible things happen.” Gender-focused structure (e.g., gender lens training, equity content) prompted the mentors to identify systemic barriers (or reflect on their experiences) and to view themselves as part of the solution through advocacy, education, and policy influence within NSOs/PSOs.

The mentors described a strengthened belief that “women helping other women feels like a superpower,” and that when women work together, “incredible things happen.” Gender-focused structure (e.g., gender lens training, equity content) prompted the mentors to identify systemic barriers (or reflect on their experiences) and to view themselves as part of the solution through advocacy, education, and policy influence within NSOs/PSOs.

One of the mentors mentioned bringing observed inequities forward to governing bodies, such as differential treatment of women coaches during competition (“shushed” sooner than men), resulting in the issue being formally discussed, tracked, and addressed. Overall, the mentors framed the WAGE mentorship program as both a personal mentorship experience and a catalyst for organizational practice, creating momentum to formalize mentorship structures and expand opportunities for women in high-performance coaching.

Program delivery and resources

The mentors generally described the program as meeting or exceeding expectations, often contrasting it positively against prior mentorship experiences. They highlighted the professionalism of financial support (travel, compensation, learning opportunities) and the value of the in-person kickoff for motivation and relationship building. Some mentors noted that the CoP sessions and the WAGE guides felt more useful than standard courses, describing the program as similar to “coach developer” preparation, training mentors to listen, support decision-making, and avoid prescriptive advising.

The mentors also recommended mechanisms to ensure that the resources stayed in use (e.g., prompting pairs to revisit the guides mid-program). Moreover, for the CoP and the WAGE resources, they suggested a shared platform (website, centralized hub, checklists, digital worksheets, fillable templates) to make materials easy to find and revisit.

Although most mentors appreciated the mentee-led design, one mentor shared that, while she and her mentee were developing their goals and mentorship plan, they were uncertain whether the goals they had created aligned with the broader purpose of the WAGE program. In terms of organizational support, most mentors described their sport organizations as supportive. However, a few reported minimal communication from their NSOs/PSOs and expressed frustration with the lack of organizational follow-through. When reflecting on how their sport organization contributed to their success, one mentor suggested that outcomes were achieved largely through the mentor–mentee relationship rather than through organizational involvement: “The sport organization had absolutely nothing to do with our success.”



1

Mentor skill development (facilitation; stronger questioning/listening/reflection)

2

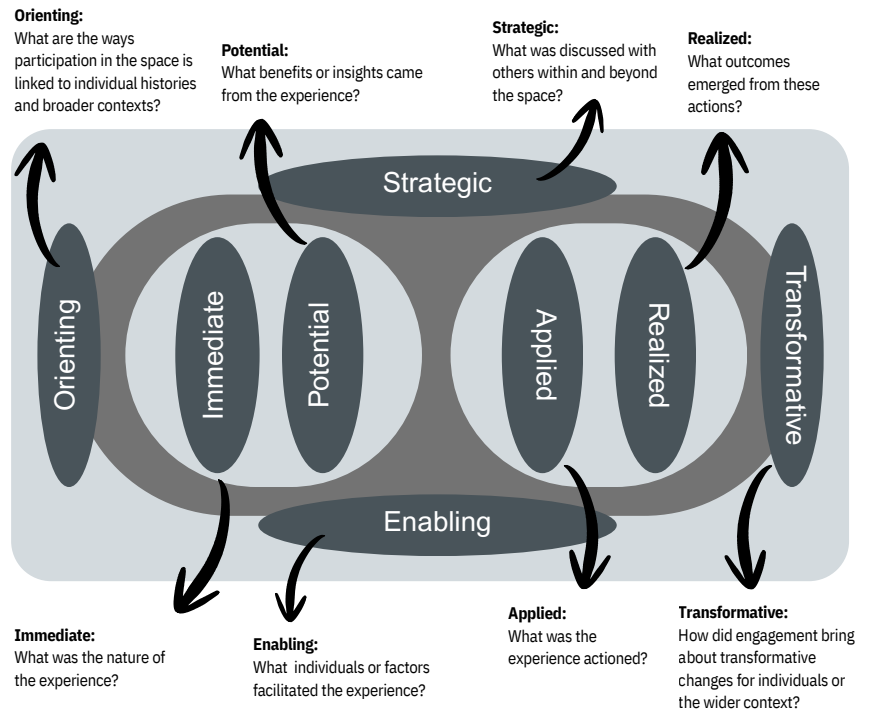
Role identity shift (seeing self as mentor/coach developer; increased confidence as a leader)

3

Equity awareness and motivation (encourage commitment to support women coaches and advocate for change)

VALUE CREATION FRAMEWORK

- “Value” is **perspective-** and **context-dependent**.
- Each group’s (mentee, mentor, and sport leader) values and example quotes are interpreted in relation to its specific role.
- The same experience may represent different types of value across groups.
- For example, enabling value for a mentee may be potential value for a mentor or applied value for a sport leader.

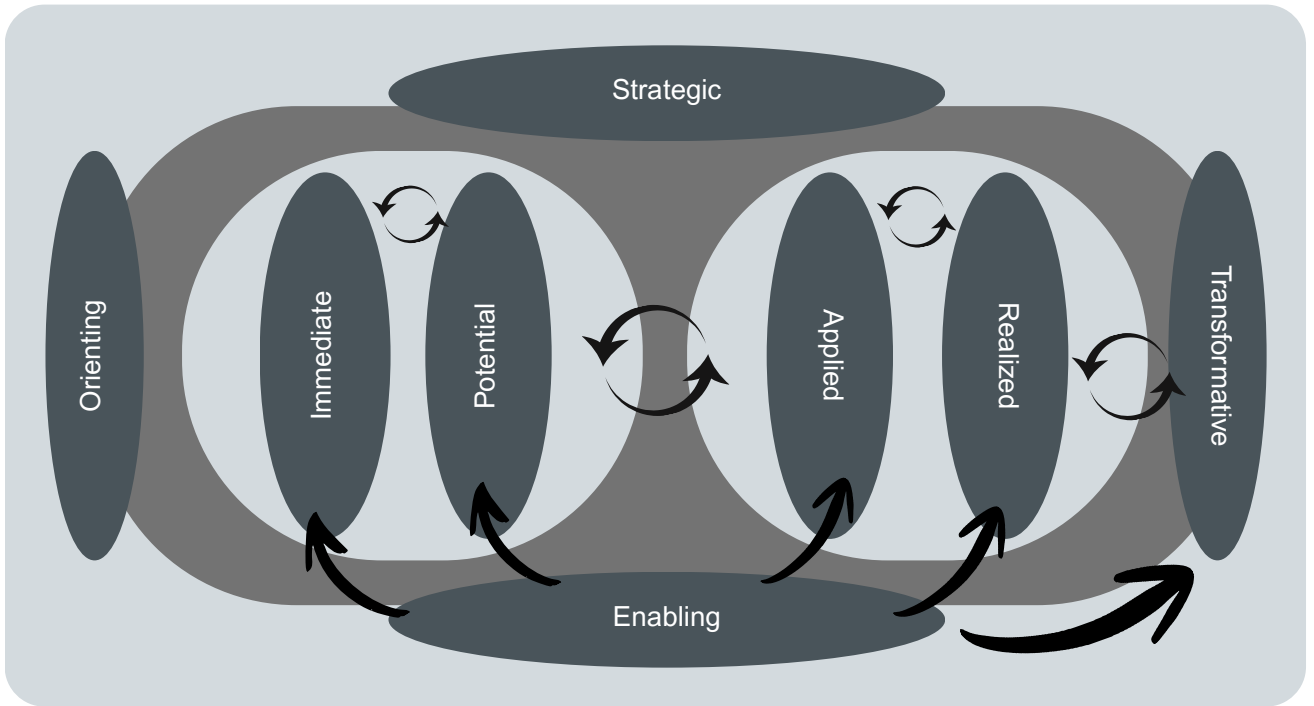


MENTORS' VALUE CREATION CYCLE

The mentors experienced the WAGE as a social learning space shaped by two interconnected contexts: mentorship component and their participation in the CoP. This value-creation cycle illustrates how different forms of value emerged through these experiences over the course of the program. Using Wenger-Trayner’s Value Creation Framework (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020), the evidence is presented as a progression of value (e.g., immediate, potential, applied, realized, and enabling) that is shaped by the specific context of the WAGE program and mentors’ roles within it. The purpose is to show how and which values were created for mentors through social learning processes (relationships, shared practice, and community) and how the mentors made meaning of and attributed value to these experiences over the course of the program. For clarity, the visual presents one example quote for each value, while additional quote examples are available in Appendix C.

The mentors highlighted both the relational and developmental aspects of mentoring. They frequently described the experience as rewarding and energizing, noting the enjoyment of meeting regularly with mentees and the meaning derived from supporting someone else’s growth. The mentors also reflected on how the process strengthened their own leadership skills, particularly in communication, reflective questioning, and empowering others rather than fixing things for them, while recognizing tangible outcomes in the mentees’ confidence, credibility, and progression within their sport environments.

MENTORS' VALUE CREATION CYCLE



- Mentors emphasized both the relational and developmental value of mentoring.
- They described the experience as rewarding, energizing, and meaningful, particularly through regular engagement with mentees.
- Supporting mentees' growth was also a source of personal and professional fulfillment.
- At the same time, the process strengthened mentors' own leadership practice, especially in communication, reflective questioning, and empowering others.
- Rather than solving problems for mentees, mentors learned to create space for growth, reflection, and independence.
- These experiences were reflected in tangible mentee outcomes, including increased confidence, credibility, and progression within their sport environments.

Potential:

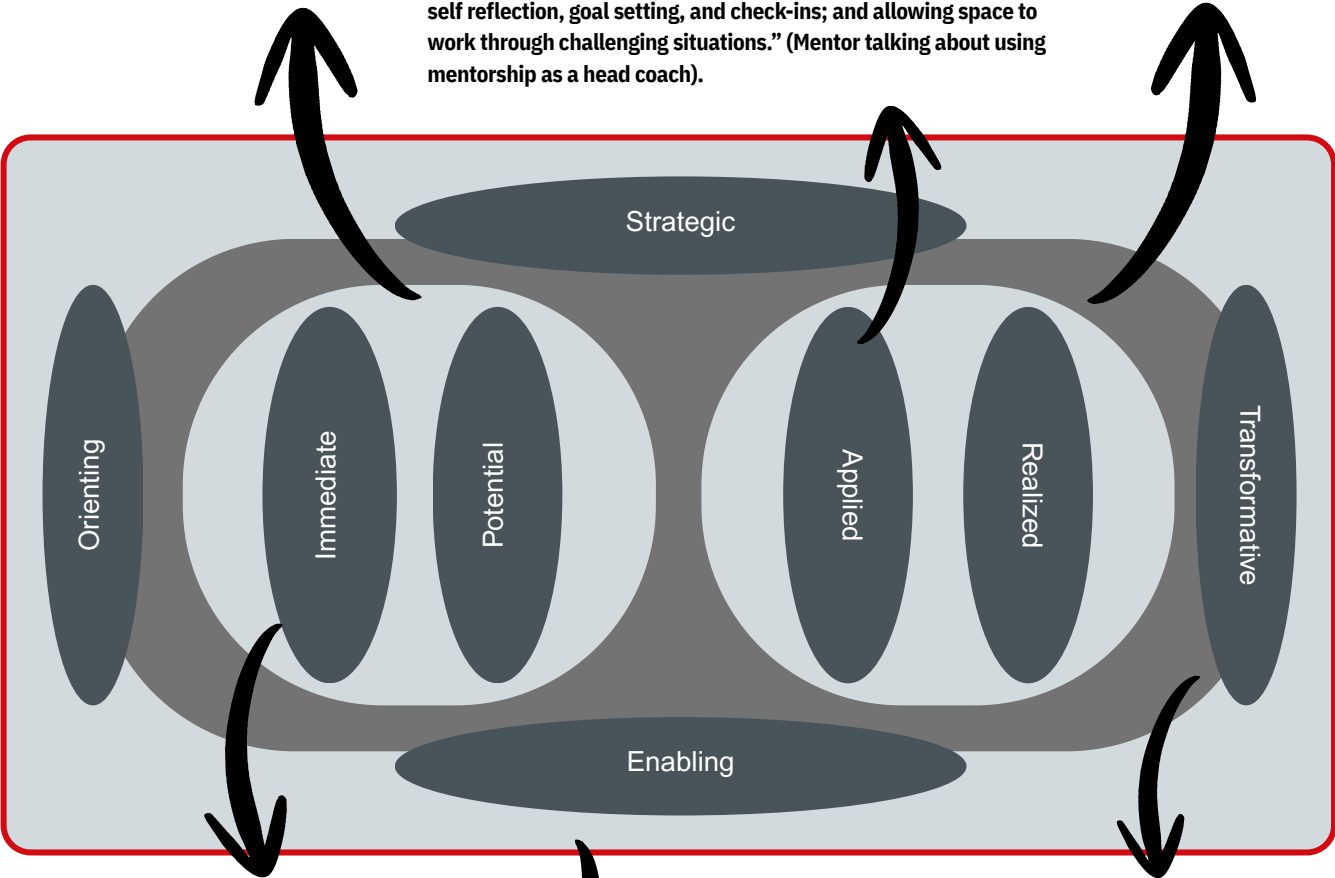
“WAGE has motivated me to be there for others and continue to create opportunities. WAGE has given me hope that change can happen.”

Applied:

“Not to the same extent of biweekly meetings, but in encouraging self reflection, goal setting, and check-ins; and allowing space to work through challenging situations.” (Mentor talking about using mentorship as a head coach).

Realized:

“Accompanying my mentee to achieve their goals, but lastly she thanked me, because beyond the goals, she told me that my healthy and active lifestyle was a source of inspiration for her. She made changes in her daily life and she felt much more engaged and available after making those changes.”



Immediate:

“I was surprised by how much I enjoyed meeting with my mentee. It didn't feel like work.”

Enabling:

“[I] Really thought how financially supported this program was, is a huge highlight. From compensation to flying everyone in for training and offering support locally - really sets this program apart from others due to the professionalism.”

Transformative:

“I recognized that at times I experienced moments of imposter syndrome, questioning whether I had accomplished enough to offer meaningful mentorship. Through this process, I came to understand that my credibility is not defined solely by outcomes, or my record as a Head Coach, but by the depth of my experiences, the challenges I have navigated, and the perspective I have gained. My journey has equipped me with the ability to relate to others, ask thoughtful questions, and support my mentee in a way that is authentic, empathetic, and grounded in real understanding. I now see that effective mentorship comes not from perfection, but from lived experience, self-awareness, and a genuine commitment to the growth of others.”

SPORT LEADER



SPORT LEADER JOURNEY: FROM START TO FINISH



PRE-PROGRAM

The sport leaders expect to create enabling environments, foster a mentorship culture, and build sustainable structures.

The sport leaders are learning by doing — building programs as they go, valuing peer learning, and starting to translate practice into policy.



MID-PROGRAM

The sport leaders described the WAGE as both a mentorship program and a systems catalyst that strengthened participant experiences, deepened leadership learning, and advanced more sustainable and equity-focused organizational practices.



END OF PROGRAM

The sport leaders described the WAGE program as both a mentorship program and a systems intervention; one that strengthened mentor-mentee experiences while simultaneously having the potential to prompt changes to organizational practice, coach development pathways, and gender-equity leadership. The CoP for the sport leaders was positioned as a critical infrastructure that supported accountability, reflection, and cross-sport learning; while the WAGE mentorship program's funding and program legitimacy created momentum to formalize mentorship as an ongoing organizational priority. The sport leaders' end-of-program qualitative data analysis resulted in these themes: the CoP as an enriching tool for sport leaders, the WAGE program as a catalyst for organizational practice, and sport leaders as an enabler.

SPORT LEADER
SPORT LEADER
SPORT LEADER

THE SPORT LEADER END-PROGRAM QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS RESULTED IN THESE THEMES:

The CoP as an enriching tool for sport leaders

The WAGE program as a catalyst for
organizational practice

Sport leaders as an enabler



The CoP as an enriching tool for sport leaders

The sport leaders framed the CoP as an enriching tool that created consistency and accountability throughout program delivery. They noted that simply being in the community of sport leads “going through the same experiences” reduced isolation and made the work more fulfilling. The CoP was described as especially useful for reflection, a space that helped sport leaders evaluate what was working, identify gaps, and chance to implement adaptations.

The sport leaders described learning from other leaders and using other sports as reference points for what could be formalized or integrated into their organization or program. While some entered with scepticism (“it’s just a meeting”), they reported that strong facilitation and guest speakers made the sessions effective, purposeful, and action-oriented.

The sport leaders described learning from other leaders and using other sports as reference points for what could be formalized or integrated into their organization or program. While some entered with scepticism (“it’s just a meeting”), they reported that strong facilitation and guest speakers made the sessions effective, purposeful, and action-oriented.

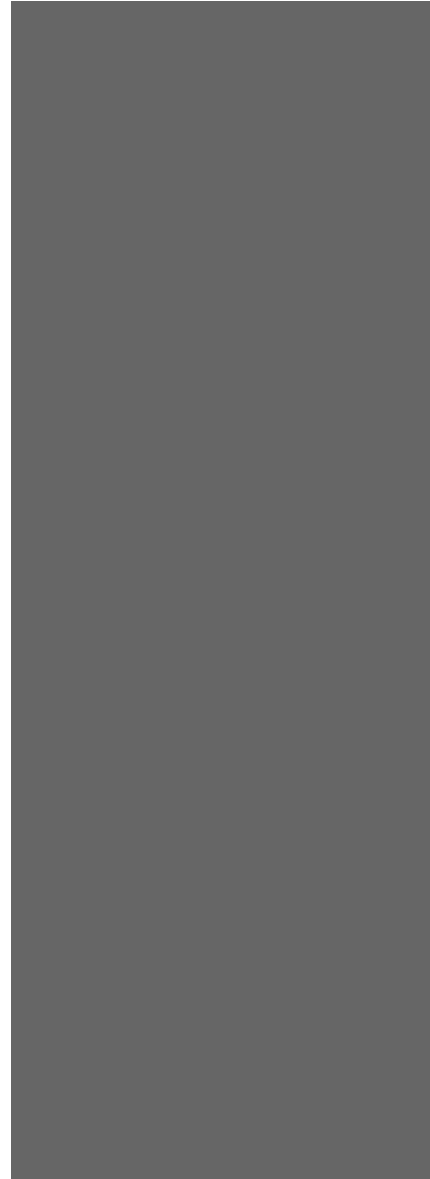
The sport leaders also noted that the mentorship effects were not limited to the pairings: The process “encouraged me in my role” and clarified that the sport leader's role is “larger than I often realize.” They described how the WAGE encouraged more regular contact with the mentors and the mentees and provided a clearer view of the participants’ experiences. Overall, the CoP functioned as a form of leadership development for the sport leaders, “like having my own little mentor to keep me on track,” supporting reflection on values, equity practices, and communication approaches.

The WAGE as a catalyst for organizational practice

Some leaders described the WAGE as a catalyst for revising mentorship models, strengthening coach development infrastructure, and embedding mentorship into existing systems. A prominent example was the development and planned integration of tools and processes, such as redesigned check-in meetings, intended to create more open dialogue between sport leaders and the mentorship pairs. Some leaders stated that adapting WAGE-developed resources into existing NCCP programming (e.g., integrating mentorship into competition-level pathways) and using WAGE as a model or example for new grant applications.

Sport leaders as an enabler

Sport leaders described the participant outcomes in both personal and professional terms, frequently referencing increased confidence, motivation, and improved communication, especially in difficult conversations. They also reported concrete professional advancement enabled by the program's funding and legitimacy: mentees attending major events as coaches, travelling internationally with national teams, and moving into expanded responsibilities within high-performance environments (e.g., video analysis, evaluation roles, more integral coaching staff positions). These outcomes were described as both personally rewarding for sport leaders and strategically important for organizations seeking to strengthen women's representation in leadership. Sport leaders argued for expanded attention to sport leaders as critical enablers of sport systems. Some described "expansion beyond mentorship for coaches" recognizing their role in sustaining equitable pathways and resourcing mentorship pathways.



1

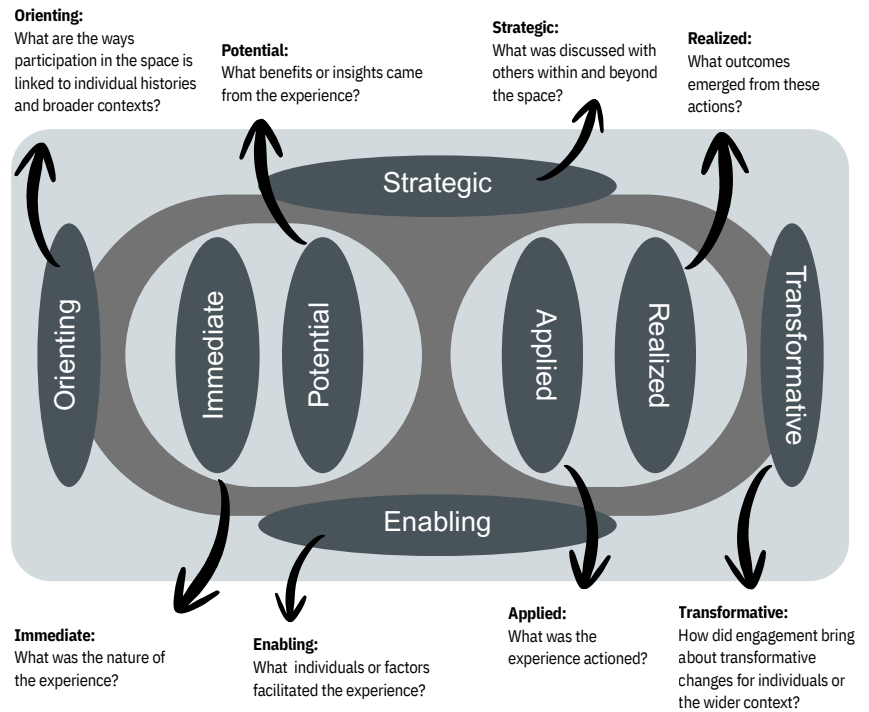
Leadership capacity growth (communication practices, supporting pairs).

2

Sense of purpose and role expansion (recognizing their influence beyond logistics)

VALUE CREATION FRAMEWORK

- “Value” is **perspective-** and **context-dependent**.
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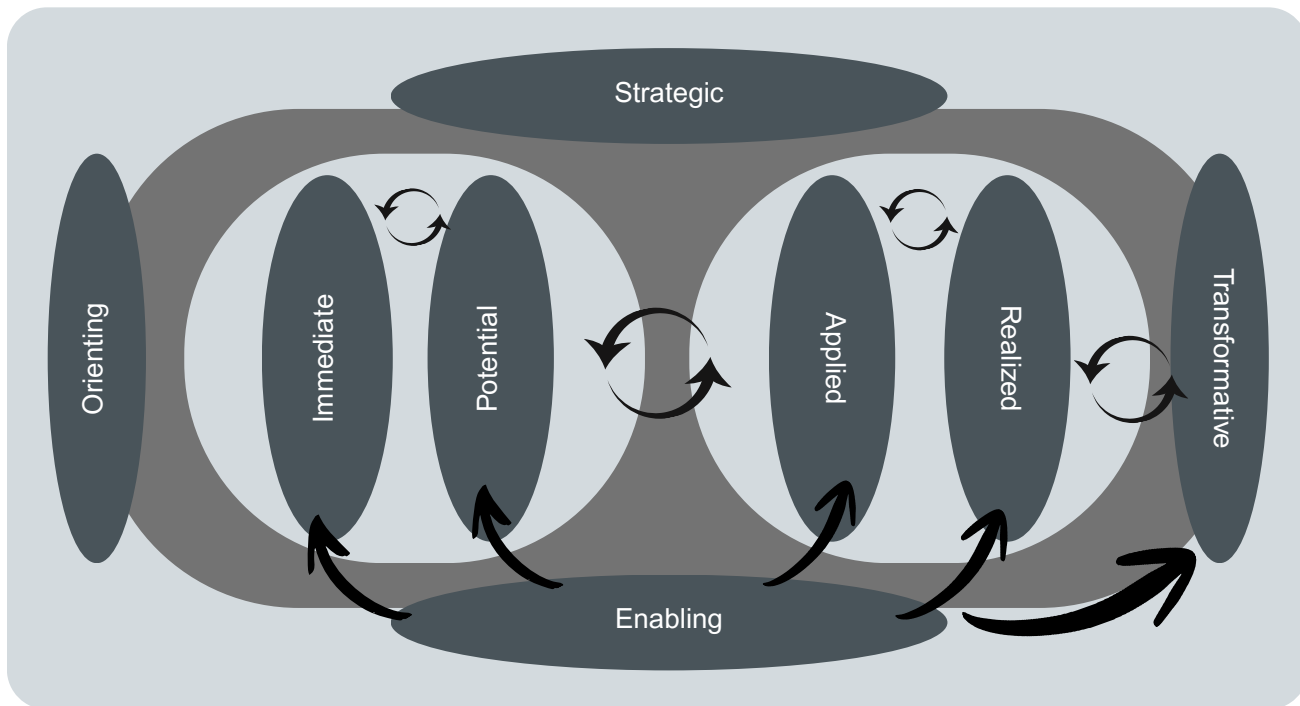


SPORT LEADERS' VALUE CREATION CYCLE

The sport leaders experienced the WAGE as a social learning space shaped by two interconnected contexts: their relationship with the mentee-mentor pairs and their participation in a CoP. This value-creation cycle illustrates how different forms of value emerged through these experiences over the course of the program. Using Wenger-Trayner’s Value Creation Framework (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020), the evidence is presented as a progression of value (e.g., immediate, potential, applied, realized, and enabling) that is shaped by the specific context of the WAGE program and sport leaders’ roles within it. The purpose is to show how and which values were created for the sport leaders through social learning processes (relationships, shared practice, and community) and how the sport leaders made meaning of and attributed value to these experiences over the course of the program. For clarity, the visual presents one example quote for each value, while additional quote examples are available in Appendix D.

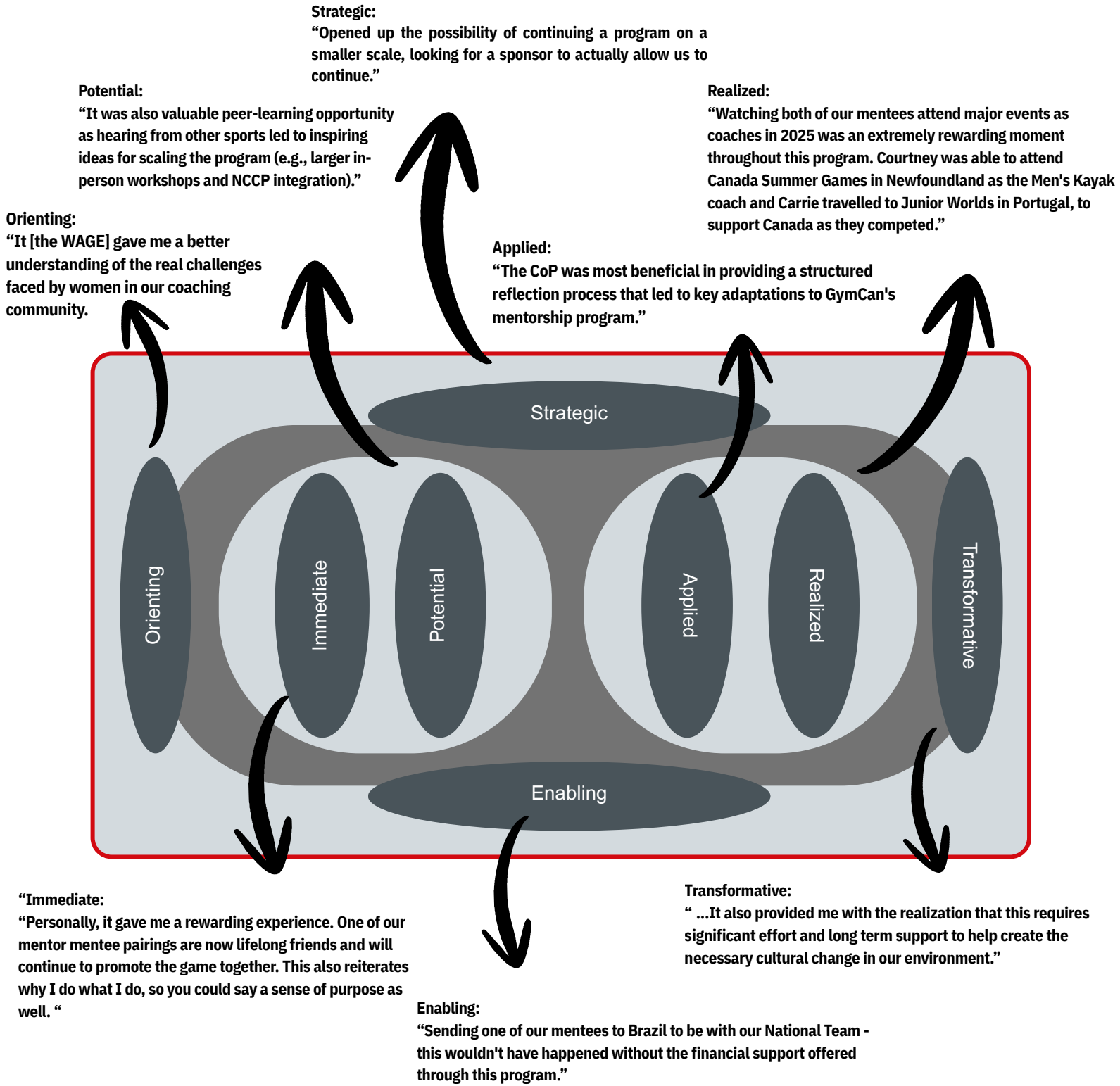
The sport leaders focused on organizational learning and system-building. Their comments emphasized what they learned about effective mentorship program design, the supports needed to sustain engagement, and how insights from the CoP and the WAGE activities informed improvements to training resources, check-in processes, and future cohort planning. They also identified broader impacts, such as stronger pathways for women leaders, increased participation in high-performance roles, and the need for long-term cultural change, positioning mentorship as both a development tool and a strategic lever for strengthening sport systems.

SPORT LEADERS' VALUE CREATION CYCLE



- Sport leaders approached the program through a lens of organizational learning and system development.
- Their reflections centred on what they learned about effective mentorship design and the conditions needed to sustain engagement.
- Insights from the CoP and WAGE activities informed improvements to training resources, check-in processes, and planning for future cohorts.
- They also identified broader system-level impacts, including stronger pathways for women leaders and greater participation in high-performance roles.
- Overall, mentorship was positioned not only as a development tool, but also as a strategic lever for strengthening sport systems.

SPORT LEADERS' QUOTES

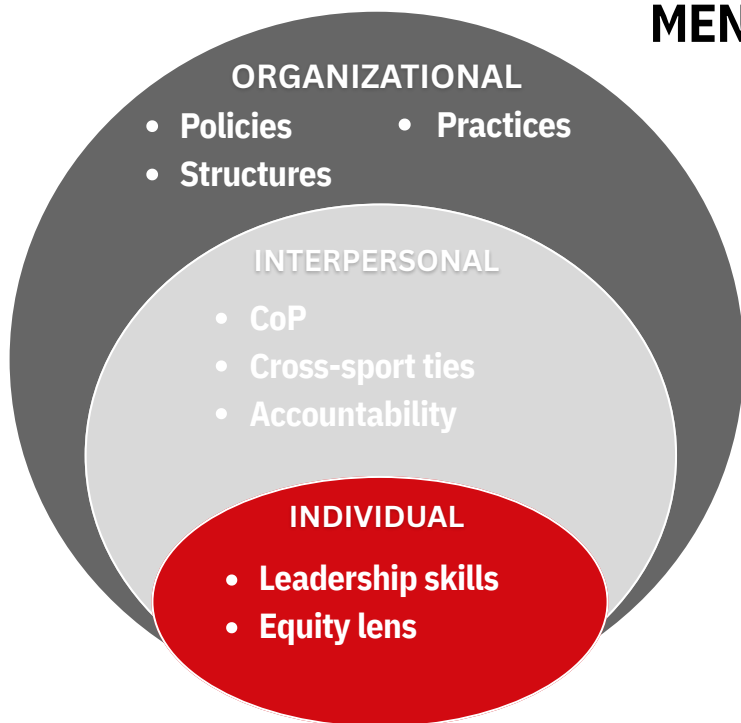


IMPACT BY LEVEL

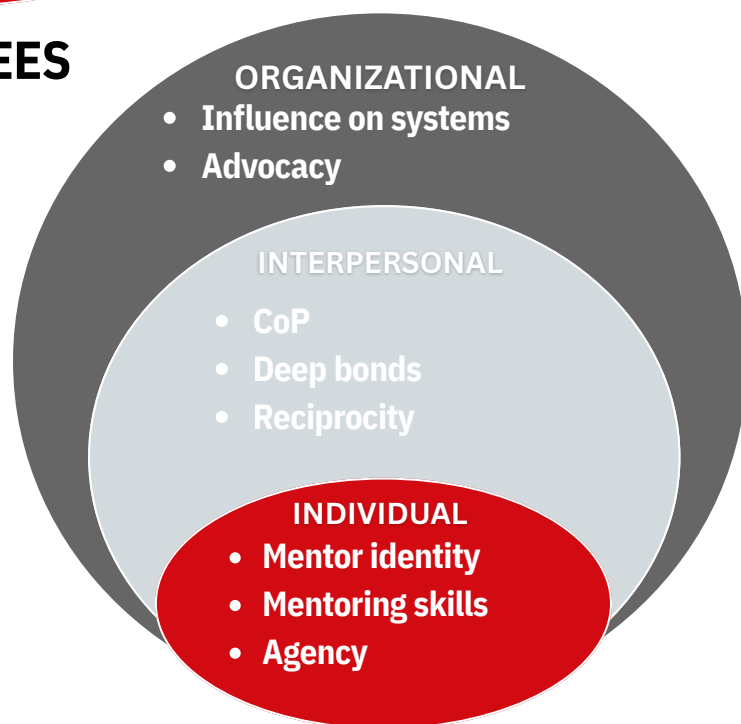
Mentee-Mentor-Sport Leader



MENTEES



SPORT LEADERS



MENTORS

Overall, the results suggest that the WAGE program produced impact at three levels—individual, relational, and organizational—so the program functioned as a capacity-building system, not just a mentoring match. Individual outcome: Mentees showed sustained growth in confidence, leadership, and professional identity, and mentors also experienced parallel development in mentoring skill and leadership capacity. Relational outcome: The program strengthened trust, solidarity, and long-term mentoring relationships, with “growing together” emerging as a central feature of impact. Organizational outcome: The sport leaders began translating learning into strategies through their CoP, policies, and more sustainable structures (e.g., they integrated mentorship into their coach training, updated their hiring practices with gender equity lenses, created their own little organizational CoPs), reinforcing that outcomes depend heavily on the environment and resourcing around mentor–mentee pairs.

Bottom line: The WAGE program helped build people and relationships and began shaping the conditions that make mentorship possible and sustainable, while also showing that lasting change requires continued organizational commitment, facilitated CoPs, better tool support, and longer-term planning to sustain momentum beyond the program.

EVIDENCE BASED REVIEWS



LITERATURE REVIEW

To build a sustainable program, it is important to rely on evidence-based practices. For this reason, as part of the WAGE mentorship initiative, the research team completed a literature review to understand what is known about mentorship in sport coaching and, more specifically, what makes mentorship programs effective for supporting women coaches. The review followed Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-step scoping framework and used an adapted version of the PRISMA-ScR checklist for rapid reviews (Tricco et al., 2018). A systematic search across six databases produced 1,520 records, which were screened to identify relevant studies on mentorship and women-focused coaching initiatives. Overall, the literature confirmed that mentorship is a valuable strategy for coach development, but its effectiveness depends heavily on context and program design and implementation. Programs aimed at women coaches reflect increasing recognition that mentorship must be gender-responsive, identity-aware, and grounded in the lived realities of women working in male-dominated environments.

Effective mentorship supports women's development and advancement by providing technical and career guidance alongside psychosocial support, leadership development, and reflective spaces to strengthen professional identity. The strongest approaches are typically built on trust, mutual respect, and tailored development strategies, E such as scaffolded learning, multiple-mentor models, and mentor preparation that includes awareness of gender dynamics, which have been linked to increased confidence and retention. At the same time, the review emphasized that mentorship alone cannot address systemic inequities; if mentorship is poorly designed or implemented, it can reinforce dominant coaching norms, marginalize women further, or encourage conformity rather than empowerment. For mentorship to be authentic and impactful, it requires intentional design, organizational commitment, and ongoing evaluation. When approached critically and inclusively, mentorship can support women's progression in coaching while also contributing to broader system change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In summary, the literature review highlighted some key considerations for effective mentoring programs. Creating a safe and inclusive environment for all participants, clearly defining roles, and aligning values are essential to cultivating engagement. Program objectives should be developed with a holistic perspective, supported by a thorough needs assessment conducted before the initiative begins. Equally important are efforts to build a sense of community and maintain continuity through ongoing guidance. To put these principles into practice, the design thinking approach offers practical tools and the potential to create meaningful, lasting impact on individuals and communities throughout the entire process. One of the criteria for a mentor in the WAGE program is completing the NCCP Mentorship Module. To ensure this training aligned with WAGE's mentorship approach and reflected evidence-informed practice, the research team reviewed the module using findings from the literature, key references across multiple fields and the experience of coach developers who had delivered the module previously.

The previous version emphasized cognitive coaching, which is highly beneficial for supporting mentee growth. However, the review highlighted that effective mentors need more than coaching tools, they also need a clear understanding of what it means to be a mentor. For this reason, the recommended updates placed greater emphasis on helping mentors develop a reflective and grounded mentoring identity. The review also recognized that learning is shaped by context and environment, so the module should remain flexible and adaptable to changing needs across sports and settings. Overall, the review aimed to strengthen the module by clarifying the mentoring process, supporting mentors to engage confidently in their role, and building in self-reflection so mentors can identify strengths and areas for growth. It also emphasized that equipping mentors to collaborate with mentees to create objectives/goals tailored to their development. Guided by these recommendations, the NCCP Mentorship Module was then updated by a task force that included experienced coaches and mentors, along with members of the research team.

NCCP Mentorship

Module Review

One of the criteria for a mentor in the WAGE program is completing the NCCP Mentorship Module. To ensure this training aligned with WAGE's mentorship approach and reflected evidence-informed practice, the research team reviewed the module using findings from the literature, key references across multiple fields and the experience of coach developers who had delivered the module previously. The previous version emphasized cognitive coaching, which is highly beneficial for supporting mentee growth. However, the review highlighted that effective mentors need more than coaching tools, they also need a clear understanding of what it means to be a mentor.

For this reason, the recommended updates placed greater emphasis on helping mentors develop a reflective and grounded mentoring identity. The review also recognized that learning is shaped by context and environment, so the module should remain flexible and adaptable to changing needs across sports and settings.

Overall, the review aimed to strengthen the module by clarifying the mentoring process, supporting mentors to engage confidently in their role, and building in self-reflection so mentors can identify strengths and areas for growth. It also emphasized that equipping mentors to collaborate with mentees to create objectives/goals tailored to their development.

Guided by these recommendations, the NCCP Mentorship Module was then updated by a task force that included experienced coaches and mentors, along with members of the research team.

The WAGE Guides and Training for Effective Mentee Workshop Review

In the WAGE program, three role-specific guides (one for mentees, one for mentors, and one for sport administrators) support participants throughout the initiative. This review of the guides was conducted as part of the program's ongoing evaluation and refinement. Because coaching is a rapidly evolving field, it is important that program resources remain aligned with current evidence and emerging practice; therefore, the purpose of this review was to update the guides so they better reflect contemporary approaches to mentorship and respond to participants' current needs. The review was grounded in participants' experiences within the WAGE program. We conducted one focus group and three interviews with mentees, as well as one focus group and four online written interviews with mentors.

We also gathered input from sport administrators through written responses and whiteboard activities. All data were analysed using content analysis. In addition, the research team drew on a review of recent literature on mentoring in sport coaching and a review of the NCCP Mentorship Module to ensure the recommendations were evidence-informed. Building on the strong foundation already in place, we recommended updating selected references and making targeted refinements to how mentorship is defined and framed to best support women coaches.

The WAGE Guides and Training for Effective Mentee Workshop Review

In particular, we proposed strengthening the emphasis on mentorship as a social learning space, where mentors facilitate learning and mentees, mentors, and sport administrators work together to support coach development. We also recommended adding activities that more intentionally promote learning and help create a safe, inclusive environment for all participants. Finally, in collaboration with the CAC, we recommended adopting more gender-neutral language and worked closely with the CAC throughout the process to ensure alignment in content and design. As part of this process, the Training for Effective Mentee workshop was also reviewed. The workshop is structured around the mentee guide, so in parallel with updates to the guide, the workshop resources were also updated.



RECOMMENDATIONS



The results highlighted that the WAGE program was widely seen as a valuable opportunity for all participants. Although the program is mentee-needs-driven and represents a key milestone in their careers, it is almost equally important for the development of mentors and sport leaders. As we often say, coaches are lifelong learners, and this program helps to cultivate that mindset. To further strengthen its long-term impact and sustainability, we offer the following recommendations.

These recommendations focus on improving connection and continuity (through in-person touchpoints and structured check-ins), expanding peer learning and mentoring formats (mentee CoP, cross-cohort support, and optional multi-mentor models), and strengthening organizational readiness (especially for sport leaders). They also emphasized the importance of targeted funding that enables real career exposure and opportunity, improving the usability of guides so participants can apply them consistently, and adding longitudinal follow-up to better understand participant pathways and sustained impact over time.

Strengthening connections and mentorship networks

- Include in-person kick-off and wrap-up events to build relationships, strengthen networks, and ensure continuity at the program's conclusion [as already planned].
- Include a brief, structured mid-program group check-in, either online or in person, to support accountability, networking, and continued momentum. This is particularly important for mentees, as mentors and sport leaders already have their own CoP and can stay connected, while mentees' opportunities for connection are generally limited to their mentor and sport leader. They do not have direct access to the wider group.
- Consider a dedicated CoP for mentees, as mentees consistently expressed interest in connecting with other mentees.
- Consider increasing the number of mentor-mentee peers and strengthening connections within each sport organization, while encouraging more opportunities for group mentoring.
- Consider offering more than one mentor where feasible (e.g., one within the sport and one outside the sport).
- Add opportunities for peer mentoring across cohorts by involving past participants to support new cohorts, creating a "mentee to future mentor" pathway.



Better prepare sport leaders and organizations to support women in coaching



- Provide more support for sport leaders and their organizations to understand and strengthen their role in advancing women in coaching. For example, include storytelling from mentors and mentees to help sport leaders better understand lived experiences and the organizational conditions that support success.
- Continue and strengthen the provision of direct financial support to sport organizations for mentor-mentee projects and coach development. Emphasize that such exposure enables women to better understand high-performance sport environments, build professional networks, and envision coaching as a viable career pathway.
- Consider allocating funding to: (a) Bring mentees to competitions for exposure and networking, and (b) Create short-term (even long-term) paid roles for mentees within organizations.

Add optional, low-barrier development touchpoints



- Offer a few optional workshops during the year (professional and personal development), potentially featuring guest past mentors and mentees (Keep workshops short, online, easy to join, and optional to reduce time burden).

Improve the WAGE guides usability and adoption



- Explore ways to help the sport leaders, mentors, and mentees make better use of the guides (e.g., review during their CoP sections). The “Training for Effective Mentees” workshop is a valuable resource for helping mentees become familiar with the WAGE guide activities and encouraging them to engage with the guides more closely.
- Consider making guides more user-friendly and interactive (e.g., fillable formats) so participants can track evolving goals over time and document growth.

Build longitudinal follow-up into program design



- Include a longitudinal look at women coaches who participated in mentorship programs or social learning activities (e.g., Alberta project, Canada Games) to understand where they are now and what influenced their pathway after the program.
- Add a light follow-up process for the current cohort to track progress over time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS



The WAGE mentorship program demonstrated that mentorship can be an effective strategy for advancing women in coaching and strengthening gender-equity efforts across the sport system. Over the course of the program, mentees, mentors, and sport leaders reported meaningful individual, relational, and organizational outcomes. The mentees described increased confidence, clearer professional identity, and new development opportunities. The mentors reported growth in their mentoring practice, leadership, and awareness of gender-related barriers in coaching. Sport leaders identified the program and CoP as important mechanisms for reflection, learning, and organizational development.

The findings suggest that the WAGE program functioned not only as a mentoring initiative, but also as a broader capacity-building process. Its impact was shaped by the quality of relationships, the support of sport leaders, and the structures surrounding the mentor-mentee experience. The program also contributed to the refinement of evidence-informed resources and training, helping ensure that mentorship supports women coaches in ways that are practical, inclusive, and responsive to context.

Overall, the WAGE mentorship program established a strong foundation for future women in coaching initiatives. At the same time, the results highlight that sustained progress requires continued investment in mentorship, peer connection, organizational support, and long-term planning to maintain momentum and contribute to the goal of gender equity in sport by 2035.

APPENDIX A

FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONS



GENERAL INFORMATION

Full Name:

Email Address:

Sport Organization:

Role (Mentor, Mentee, Sport Admin):

OVERALL PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

- How would you describe your overall experience participating in the WAGE mentorship program?
- On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied are you with the WAGE mentorship program overall? (1 = Not satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied)
- To what extent did the program meet your expectations? (Exceeded expectations/ Met expectations/ Somewhat met expectations/ Did not meet expectations) Please elaborate:
- What surprised you (positively or negatively) during the program?
- What aspects of the program were most valuable or impactful for you?
- What challenges or barriers did you experience during the program, if any?
- Do you feel the goals of your sport organization's mentorship program were achieved? Yes /No/ Somewhat. Please elaborate:
- What was your time commitment per month for participating in the mentorship program (meetings, preparation, communication, etc.)? Please estimate hours/month.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

- What have you learned about yourself through this mentorship journey?
- How much did your participation in this program affect your understanding of the role mentorship can play in promoting gender equity in sport? (1 = Not at all, 5 = Very significantly)
- How confident do you feel applying what you learned in this program to your role or career? (1 = Not confident, 5 = Very confident)
- In what ways has your participation influenced your leadership pathway?
- What changes, if any, have occurred in your sport organization as a result of this program?

APPENDIX A

FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONS



PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

- If you could design the next phase of this initiative, what would it include?
- Thinking about the resources you had access to, how can these be further developed (or what could be added) to improve the mentorship experience? Please be specific about which resource(s) you are referring to.
- 2.1. Which resources did you use? (Select all that apply):
 - NCCP Mentorship module
 - Mentorship guide(s)
 - Templates / tools (e.g., meeting agendas, goal-setting worksheets)
 - Community of Practice (CoP) materials / sessions
 - Other (please specify):
- 2.2. For each resource you used, what should be improved or added?
- What aspects of the program should definitely be continued?
- Any additional comments or suggestions

APPENDIX A

FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONS



ROLE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MENTORS

- How often did you meet with your mentee over the course of the program? Weekly/ Biweekly/Monthly/Less than once a month
- What forms of communication did your mentorship take? (Select all that apply) In-person meetings/ Phone calls/Email/WhatsApp/Text messages/Video calls/ Other (please specify):
- What was your most common method of communication?
- What format did you prefer and why?
- How well equipped did you feel to support your mentee? (1 = Not at all, 5 = Very well)
- What were your biggest successes as a mentor?
- What challenges did you experience in your role as a mentor? (e.g., scheduling, communication, clarity of expectations)
- How effective was the NCCP Mentorship module in preparing you for your role? (1–5 scale)
- What improvements/additions would you recommend for mentor training and/or resources?
- Was financial compensation an incentive or motivator for your participation as a mentor? Yes/No/Somewhat. Please explain your answer:
- Reflecting on the length of the program (14-months), do you feel this duration was appropriate to support a full season of the mentee’s activities? Why or why not?
- Do you think this program could realistically be added to someone’s existing job responsibilities (i.e., “other duties as assigned”)? Why or why not?
- Can you share one story or moment that best captures the impact of this program for you?

APPENDIX A

FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONS



ROLE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

MENTEES

- How often did you meet with your mentor over the course of the program? Weekly/ Biweekly/Monthly/Less than once a month
- What forms of communication did your mentorship take? (Select all that apply) In-person meetings/ Phone calls/Email/WhatsApp/Text messages/Video calls/ Other (please specify):
- What was the most common method of communication?
- What format did you prefer and why?
- How supported did you feel by your mentor? (1 = Not supported, 5 = Very supported)
- What were the most valuable things you learned or experienced through this mentorship?
- Are there specific topics or areas where you wish you had received more support?
- Did this mentorship help you feel more confident in your career/coaching? Yes /Somewhat/ No. Please elaborate:
- Reflecting on the length of the program (14-months), was this duration appropriate to support your growth through an entire season? Why or why not?
- What support from your mentor and/or sport administrator was most valuable? What more did you need from them (mentor and/or SL)?

APPENDIX A

FINAL SURVEY QUESTIONS



ROLE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

SPORT LEADERS

- How effective was the Community of Practice in supporting your role? (1 = Not effective, 5 = Very effective)
- What aspects of the Community of Practice were most beneficial to you?
- On a scale of 1–10, how much did the Community of Practice contribute to developing your organization’s mentorship program?
- Has your participation in the CoP led to any changes in your sport organization? If yes, please describe.
- Has your participation in the WAGE mentorship program led to any changes in your sport organization? If yes, please describe.
- Based on your observation, did the timing and length of the program support meaningful development (e.g., full-season mentorship, manageable workload)?
- Do you think this program could realistically be added to someone’s existing job responsibilities (i.e., “other duties as assigned”)? Why or why not?
- What topics or types of support would be helpful for continuing mentorship development beyond this program?
- What additional support or resources would help you sustain mentorship development and/or gender equity initiatives within your organization?
- What personal impact did participating in this initiative have on you? (e.g., confidence, motivation, leadership identity, sense of purpose) Please elaborate:
- Has your perspective on mentorship and its role in promoting gender equity in sport changed through this experience? Yes / No / Somewhat. Please explain:
- Has participating affected your mindset or motivation to advocate for mentorship programming moving forward? (1 = Not at all, 5 = Very significantly) Please elaborate:
- What supports would help you continue in your role as a mentorship advocate? (e.g., tools, leadership buy-in, time, training, community, funding)
- What is one example (story, moment, or realization) that best captures the impact of this experience for you?

APPENDIX B

FINAL INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP GUIDES



MENTEE

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE IN THE PROGRAM?

- What aspects of the program were most meaningful or impactful for you?
- Did the program meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- Which outcomes from the program feel most significant to you?

WHAT SURPRISED YOU (POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY) DURING THE PROGRAM?

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOURSELF THROUGH THIS MENTORSHIP JOURNEY?

- What are you taking away from this experience that will stay with you in the long term?

DID THIS PROGRAM CHANGE ANY ASSUMPTIONS OR BELIEFS YOU PREVIOUSLY HAD? (FOR EXAMPLE, GENDER EQUITY, WOMEN AND COACHING CONTEXT)

HOW DID YOUR MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIP EVOLVE OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAM?

- How do you describe effective mentorship? What barriers do you think still exist for effective mentorship in your organization (or sport in general)?
- What types of changes (big or small) did you notice in yourself (or in your organization/sport environment) as a result of your participation in the WAGE program?

APPENDIX B

FINAL INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP GUIDES



MENTEE

WHAT SUPPORT FROM YOUR MENTOR AND/OR SPORT ADMINISTRATOR WAS MOST VALUABLE? WHAT MORE DID YOU NEED FROM THEM (MENTOR AND/OR SL)?

WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU ENCOUNTER DURING THE PROGRAM?

IF YOU COULD DESIGN THE NEXT PHASE OF THIS INITIATIVE, WHAT WOULD IT INCLUDE?

CAN YOU SHARE ONE STORY OR MOMENT THAT BEST CAPTURES THE IMPACT OF THIS PROGRAM FOR YOU?

WHAT SHOULD BE CONTINUED, IMPROVED, OR ADDED IF THE PROGRAM RUNS AGAIN?

- What supports, tools, or structures would strengthen mentorship for women coaches going forward?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD BEFORE WE CLOSE?

APPENDIX B

FINAL INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP GUIDES



MENTEE GUIDE SPECIFIC

WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THE MENTEE GUIDE OVERALL? WAS IT HELPFUL FOR PREPARING YOU FOR YOUR ROLE?

WHICH SELF-ASSESSMENT OR AWARENESS-BUILDING ACTIVITIES WERE MOST VALUABLE?

WHAT ADDITIONAL CONTENT OR TOOLS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ADDED FOR FUTURE MENTEES?

WHICH ACTIVITIES OR WORKSHEETS DID YOU FIND LESS HELPFUL OR UNNECESSARY?

- Did the guide make your responsibilities and expectations as a mentee clear? If it is not, can you explain please?

DID THE GUIDE HELP YOU FEEL MORE CONFIDENT IN RECEIVING FEEDBACK, NETWORKING, OR STEPPING OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE? IF SO, HOW?

- Did the guide help you understand how to communicate effectively with your mentor? If so, how?
- Which strategies for being an effective mentee were most useful in practice?

APPENDIX B

FINAL INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP GUIDES



SPORT LEADERS

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL EXPERIENCE IN THE PROGRAM?

- What aspects of the program were most meaningful or impactful for you?
- Did the program meet your expectations? Why or why not?
- Which outcomes from the program feel most significant to you?

WHAT SURPRISED YOU (POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY) DURING THE PROGRAM?

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT YOURSELF THROUGH THIS MENTORSHIP JOURNEY?

- What are you taking away from this experience that will stay with you in the long term?

DID THIS PROGRAM CHANGE ANY ASSUMPTIONS OR BELIEFS YOU PREVIOUSLY HAD? (FOR EXAMPLE, GENDER EQUITY, WOMEN AND COACHING CONTEXT)

HOW DID YOUR MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIP EVOLVE OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAM?

- How do you describe effective mentorship? What barriers do you think still exist for effective mentorship in your organization (or sport in general)?
- What types of changes (big or small) did you notice in yourself (or in your organization/sport environment) as a result of your participation in the WAGE program?

APPENDIX B

FINAL INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP GUIDES



SPORT LEADERS

HOW DID YOU SUPPORT THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION, AND WHAT CHANGES DID YOU NOTICE?

- What challenges did you encounter during the program?
- What should be continued, improved, or added if the program runs again?
- What supports, tools, or structures would strengthen mentorship for women coaches going forward?
- If you could design the next phase of this initiative, what would it include?
- Can you share one story or moment that best captures the impact of this program for you?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD BEFORE WE CLOSE?

APPENDIX B

FINAL INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP GUIDES



SPORT ADMINISTRATOR GUIDE SPECIFIC

WHICH SECTIONS OR TOOLS (E.G., RECRUITING & MATCHING STRATEGIES, FUNDING ALLOCATION, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE) WERE MOST USEFUL TO YOU?

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, TEMPLATES, OR EXAMPLES WOULD STRENGTHEN THE GUIDE?

WAS ANYTHING MISSING THAT WOULD BETTER SUPPORT ADMINISTRATORS WORKING TO ADVANCE WOMEN IN COACHING?

- What are your overall thoughts on the Sport Administrator Guide?
- Did the guide clearly explain your role in designing, supporting, and evaluating a mentorship program?
- Were there any tools or recommendations that felt unnecessary or unclear?
- Did the guide give you practical steps for implementing or improving a mentorship program?
- Did the evaluation model provided seem feasible for your organization?
- How could the guide be improved to better support the long-term sustainability of mentorship programs?

APPENDIX C

MENTEES' VALUES



Immediate Value (What was the nature of the experience?)

And I think just having the chance to sit in that room with people who have so much experience and knowledge and also people who were just like me, just coming into this role and just seeing this giant room full of women and coaching, I think, was very powerful...

I think just when we actually got in person up in Ottawa last January, I didn't really have any expectations or wasn't really sure what to expect... seeing everyone that was there and then learning about each of the people and kind of what their roles are and what their stories have been and kind of where they're at. I just didn't think it was on such a large scale. And it was really comforting to just kind of see that, you know, the issues that I have out east aren't just my own issues. They're very common issues that everyone was experiencing. So that to me, that was a pretty cool point.

....And it's something I super appreciate, even outside of the perspective of my growth and my journey from my mentees. Like, it's just been really nice to have that kind of connection.

APPENDIX C

MENTEES' VALUES



Potential Value (What benefits or insights came from the experience?)

Yeah, for me it's been great also. Since cycling has many disciplines, my mentor is from a completely different discipline, but brings a nice perspective to my discipline in what I do. So, it just challenges me, gives me new ideas, and always a new perspective, a new way of seeing things. So, I find that's great, just having someone to challenge your ideas and to help you grow.

For me, the perspective hasn't really changed. From the beginning, I knew that there was equity in cycling. You just have to take your place and be confident with it.

For me, it's been fantastic. My mentor has made it an unforgettable experience. We get to talk every other week. And, when we do, it's like nonstop talking for an hour. And every time I leave the conversation, I either get new knowledge or new perspective.

And the others also in my sport are people that I can talk to, I can e-mail or I can see if I have a question, I know they'll be there to help me. And with our, with the Cycling Federation, it helped me get in contact with different people, different coaches. So, it helped me just to get to know people and keep good in contact with them.

... So she made it feel like I had something to offer her as well. And that I think really helped my confidence grow as a coach. I'm like, "oh, you know what? I might be a newer coach, but there's still something that I have to offer." So that was surprising and really helpful.

APPENDIX C

MENTEES' VALUES



Applied Value (How was the experience actioned?)

...in general, the program met my expectations. I mean, my mentor was great. I think all along the line, all four of us that have been involved in this program have been very supportive of one another... So yeah, I had a really great and positive experience overall...

I had a great experience. And it is true what you put in, you do get back. So, the more I worked for it, the more it would come back for me. But it's not something-- I think it's something that you could implement too afterwards, setting goals, setting little achievable goals, and going for what you'd want. So, I think that's what I think-- well, for my expectations, I did not think that would happen. And that's really cool that I get a tool for myself afterwards.

The other support now is happening is just when I'm applying for new positions and when I'm taking on something new, she's been a really fantastic sounding board of like, um, this, this aligns with where you're looking to go. So this is something you should put forth. This doesn't super align with, so why are we adding energy to this area? Right? And so having that has been super valuable.

APPENDIX C

MENTEES' VALUES



Realized Value (What outcomes emerged from this actions?)

...when we were in January together, it was very much built as a like you will get what you put into this program. And then so it was really interesting to have to like create those expectations on your own. So as long as like the system was in place for those expectations to be to be met, I think that it's kind of like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I would say it's positive, but like the whole experience was positive. I think sometimes with life, work, everything gets into that. It gets a lot of things. So that can be overwhelming. It can be a lot, but it taught me to like, things can happen in life, and you can just replan, readjust, and keep on going. And even without my mentor, I was able to, okay, this happened, okay, let's rearrange and still get to my goals. That was a positive with a negative.

For us, there's been structural development that was really, like, I had no predictions of this whatsoever going in, but, three out of our four pair people, both mentors and mentees, had completed the advanced coaching diploma. We have on paper, a CompDev Advanced Gradation [training] level of NCCP, but so far it hadn't... nobody had really completed it [certification], and... Now, two of four have been evaluated, and then there's going to be a third who is on her way to evaluation for this as well.

...one of the biggest pieces of a successful mentor from at least my experience is the duality of learning and willingness to learn. I think as a mentor, at least from my perspective, you know, you have the knowledge, you have the experience, you have these things to provide to a mentee, but I think mentees also bring quite a bit to the table. And as long as a mentor is willing to kind of have this bi-directional learning, I think that to me, from my experience, has been really quite a large element of success.

APPENDIX C

MENTEES' VALUES



Enabling Value (What individuals or factors facilitated the experience?)

Our sport admin for karate was really heavily involved in the beginning. And the pre-work that went into this was, sounded like it was pretty intensive. So I'm forever grateful for that. And then in the beginning, they were very communicative and very in it and were super supportive of the program ...she always brings a lot to the to the table like scheduling those meetings.

And of course, like we've put time, we've put energy, we've put our own personal resources into this program. So, you know, having an understanding of what is expected moving forward, like, is it that the mentees become the mentors? Is it that there's an additional year of mentorship between the existing mentors and mentees? So just a bit of direction would be, I think, helpful... So having that at least framework established for the long-term success of this program, I think is pretty essential. (negative enabling)

And what this has done, and also, all of them are learning facilitators, coach evaluators, are moving towards being fully... completing the certification process as coach developers as well, so...Their implication has allowed us to start deepening our coaching education program as well.

APPENDIX C

MENTEES' VALUES



**Transformative Value
(How did engagement
bring about
transformative
changes for
individuals or the
context?)**

...from a gender perspective, I mean, naturally martial arts are pretty consistently male dominated in general, I would say. And then just to have the opportunity to coach, as a female representing my region of the country, representing my gender above and beyond kind of what has been represented to date as far as female coaching from my region is, nothing shy of an accomplishment; but also something that I will take with pride coming out of this program.

So, in karate, there has never been anyone who has ever gotten comp-dev advanced gradation credentials, like just full stop. it's just never happened! Like that pathway, it existed, but no one's ever walked it. one of the driving forces to this happening was the WAGE program.

APPENDIX D

MENTORS' VALUES



Immediate Value
(What was the nature
of the experience?)

I was surprised by how much I enjoyed meeting with my mentee. It didn't feel like work.

The first meeting in Ottawa, very rewarding and motivating to meet coaches of other sports.

**Potential Value (What
benefits or insights
came from the
experience?)**

I've learned that when a group of women work together, incredible things happen. Having a good support system of women and meeting such wonderful role models has been incredible. I've learned to look at problems through different lenses and find solutions, with reflection.

WAGE has motivated me to be there for others and continue to create opportunities. WAGE has given me hope that change can happen.

APPENDIX D

MENTORS' VALUES



Applied Value (How was the experience actioned?)

Yes. I think the results are very apparent in our case. As well, I know that I, personally, am better equipped to mentor my team of coaches. Not to the same extent of biweekly meetings, but in encouraging self reflection, goal setting, and check-ins; and allowing space to work through challenging situations.

Realized Value (What outcomes emerged from this actions?)

Yes—we are expanding our support for female leaders within our sport. Of the six applicants to our 2026–2028 apprentice coach program, four were female, and both of the coaches selected to participate in the program were female (enabling)

Accompanying my mentee to achieve their goals, but lastly she thanked me, because beyond the goals, she told me that my healthy and active lifestyle was a source of inspiration for her. She made changes in her daily life and she felt much more engaged and available after making those changes.

My mentee is now respected as a coach by all the athletes on her team. if I'm present, many athletes turn to her instead of me when they need something. For me, this is a success.

It has definitely made me a better supervisor at my club. I ask better questions to my team and have learned to give time and space for them to answer, without jumping in with my own solution (which took time and lots of practice! but I am so grateful, I have learned so much!).

APPENDIX D

MENTORS' VALUES



Enabling Value (What individuals or factors facilitated the experience?)

We [in their organization] have developed our own mentor/mentee group that share ideas and challenges to solve problems and discuss opportunities on a regular basis.

[I] Really thought how financially supported this program was, is a huge highlight. From compensation to flying everyone in for training and offering support locally - really sets this program apart from others due to the professionalism.

My experience with WAGE was always good. I appreciate their commitment to a program of this capacity, and I think this will change a lot of coaching careers for females. I think it is a great spark to get people thinking about the possibilities of mentorship and what it can do for an organization.

APPENDIX D

MENTORS' VALUES



**Transformative Value
(How did engagement
bring about
transformative
changes for
individuals or the
context?)**

I recognized that at times I experienced moments of imposter syndrome, questioning whether I had accomplished enough to offer meaningful mentorship. Through this process, I came to understand that my credibility is not defined solely by outcomes, or my record as a Head Coach, but by the depth of my experiences, the challenges I have navigated, and the perspective I have gained. My journey has equipped me with the ability to relate to others, ask thoughtful questions, and support my mentee in a way that is authentic, empathetic, and grounded in real understanding. I now see that effective mentorship comes not from perfection, but from lived experience, self-awareness, and a genuine commitment to the growth of others.

I've learned that I have a tendency to want to do things for people and fix things, and I have to fight that urge so I can allow my mentee to learn and grow from their mistakes. It is very challenging to sit back and watch things play out without stepping in, but at the end of the day we are here to empower and guide our mentees, not do things for them.

Recognizing that when a young female in the workplace has the support of a more mature (whether in age or skill) female, they are truly provided the space to become the best versions of themselves. That extra support, guidance and encouragement leads to more confident decision making and assertive action.

APPENDIX E SPORT LEADERS' VALUES



**Immediate Value
(What was the nature
of the experience?)**

Personally, it gave me a rewarding experience. One of our mentor mentee pairings are now lifelong friends and will continue to promote the game together. This also reiterates why I do what I do, so you could say a sense of purpose as well.

**Potential Value (What
benefits or insights
came from the
experience?)**

It was also valuable peer-learning opportunity as hearing from other sports led to inspiring ideas for scaling the program (e.g., larger in-person workshops and NCCP integration)

That mentorship does not only impact the mentor/mentee pairs - it also was great for me to see, it encouraged me in my role. I learnt that my role is larger than I often times realize.

Overall, our meetings with the WAGE mentor-mentee pairs have given GymCan a deeper understanding of how we can foster connection and collaboration within our sport. We've been inspired by the participants' eagerness to engage in meaningful knowledge-sharing, which motivates us to explore additional mentorship cohorts that support the development of technical expertise and coaching strategies in collaborative, community-focused spaces.

One positive surprise was a mentee discovering a new passion for becoming an NCCP Coach Developer, which was inspired by her mentor's experience. This interest emerged organically and opened up an exciting career pathway for the mentee.(potential for organization)

APPENDIX E

SPORT LEADERS' VALUES



Potential Value (What benefits or insights came from the experience?)

It also offered valuable opportunities for the pairs to connect with GymCan, providing a clearer understanding of career pathways such as head coach and coach developer.

...the CoP helped me reflect on how we could improve the mentorship aspect of GymCan's NCCP Competition 4 (C4) Program. For example, we are planning to integrate the SMART goal revision tool that we developed for WAGE into the C4 Program. We have also considered expanding our mentorship program to include more pairings in future cohorts. This could also lead us to organize in-person events similar to the WAGE Ottawa meeting from January 2025.

We will see by the end of the year. But I have trust that we are getting there for sure. Our mentees are amazing and have done a lot of work to get to the point where they're at. Over and beyond.

APPENDIX E SPORT LEADERS' VALUES



Applied Value (How was the experience actioned?)

The CoP was most beneficial in providing a structured reflection process that led to key adaptations to GymCan's mentorship program.

I would say that yes, participating in the CoP has led to changes in CKO Sprint. I was able to take information/resources, and learnings from the CoP back to my organization. (applied)

The WAGE mentorship program helped us to further develop our already existing programs and encourage more female leaders within our sport.

It has helped to guide changes in our coach training resources, most specifically around coaching culture and best practices. We are redeveloping coach training which will be mandatory across all contexts, and will involve topics on inclusion, gender equity. The biggest change is coming through the development of new coach training resources, focused on building a better coaching culture.

APPENDIX E

SPORT LEADERS' VALUES



Realized Value (What outcomes emerged from this actions?)

The development of our mentees has resulted in their increased participation in our high performance program - becoming video analysts and evaluators. The expectation is that they will have even more integral roles in the coaching staff.

Watching both of our mentees attend major events as coaches in 2025 was an extremely rewarding moment throughout this program. Courtney was able to attend Canada Summer Games in Newfoundland as the Men's Kayak coach and Carrie travelled to Junior Worlds in Portugal, to support Canada as they competed.

2 new coaches were accepted into our ACP program (previously established mentorship program) - both are female. I believe they were encouraged to apply after seeing our work with the WAGE program.

just continuing the meetings and conversation. I think that would be a good next step. And maybe building a framework for mentorship programming that can be used for any kind of organization. Make it simplistic. So it can be expanded on, but it's good for any small or a big organization.

Yes, we were able to take what we learned and apply it elsewhere in our sport. The program gave us an excellent foundation to continue to expand. (applied)

Continuing to advance gender equity, showing our community that we care about them, and making our current women in coaching program better than before. (applied)

APPENDIX E

SPORT LEADERS' VALUES



Enabling Value (What individuals or factors facilitated the experience?)

It was so great to give us the extra motivation, of course the funding, to make this mentorship program so very meaningful. Making sure that we meet on a regular basis and support our mentor and mentee pairings.

Sending one of our mentees to Brazil to be with our National Team - this wouldn't have happened without the financial support offered through this program. (realized)

We are supporting some of the PSO's in creating their mentorship programs.

All of it, but the \$\$ really were extremely helpful and the fact that my 2 mentees got a job is cool (realized)

One of the goals we had for the CoP was to explore ways to combat mentorship fatigue and maintain an engaging mentorship process. To help minimize fatigue, we offered additional opportunities outside of mentorship, such as attending safe sport-related workshops organized by GymCan. Unfortunately, there was limited interest from either mentorship pair, likely due to their busy schedules. Moving forward, we would like to explore alternative ways to engage mentors and mentees outside of their scheduled check-ins.(applied)

Yes, I believe the program helped lay the foundation for a sustainable mentorship pipeline...

APPENDIX E

SPORT LEADERS' VALUES



**Transformative Value
(How did engagement
bring about
transformative
changes for
individuals or the
context?)**

We have created some internal CoPs for various things, and we have a new external CoP as well has allowed coworkers to learn more about leadership.

It gave me a better understanding of the real challenges faced by women in our coaching community. It also provided me with the realization that this requires significant effort and long term support to help create the necessary cultural change in our environment.

My (more historic) challenging experiences in coaching are still being faced by women coaches. Looking back, I recognize more the systemic, sexist actions I faced, and I am proud of my resilience.

Understanding mentorship program design. Also, the level of importance afforded to this subject in our community is very underestimated. It deserves more attention.

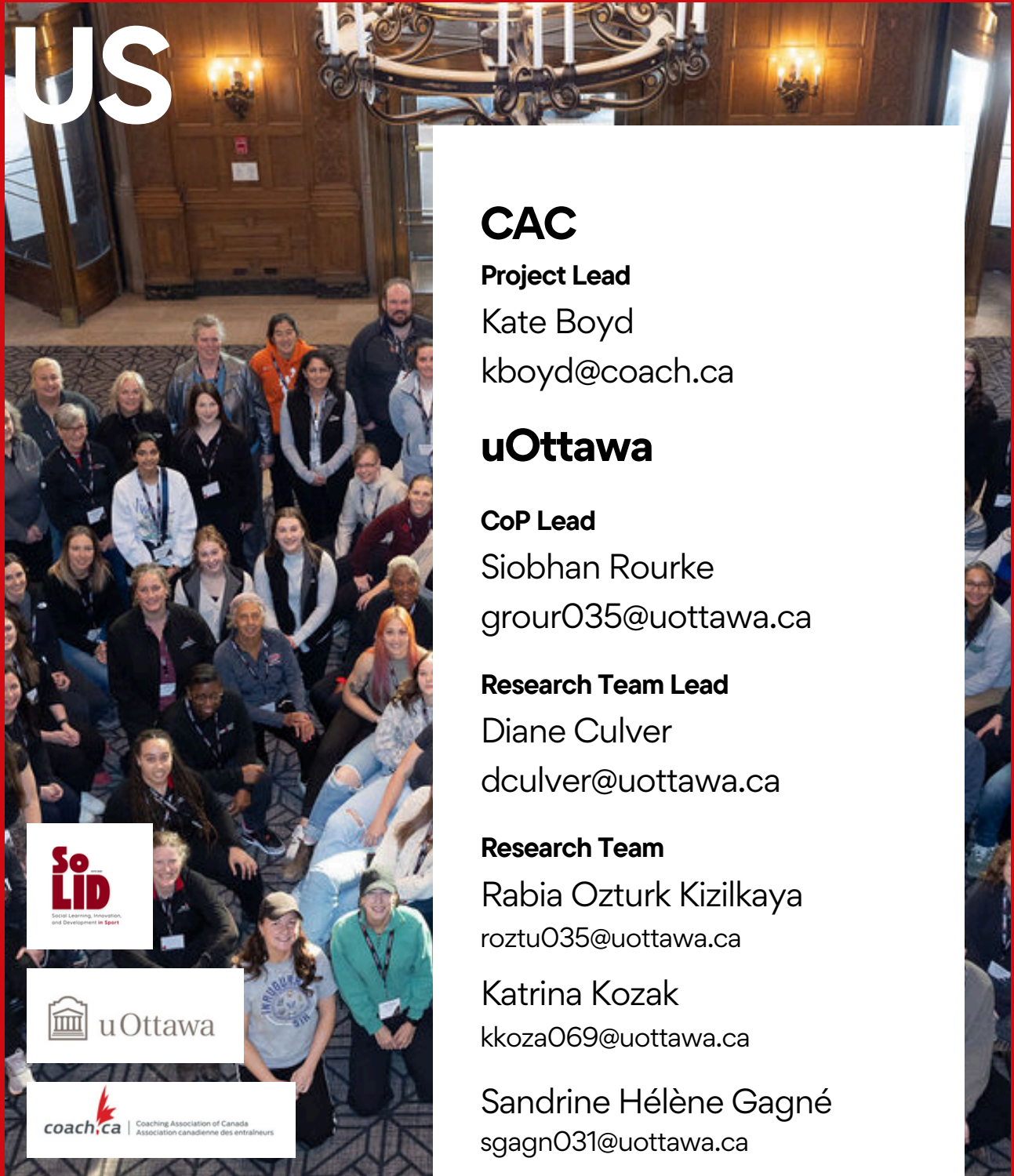
The biggest sticking point for me is expansion beyond mentorship for coaches. Coaches are vital to sport, and progressing women in sport - but it is super important to advance administrators and acknowledge their importance.

**Strategic Value (What
was discussed with
others within and
beyond the space?)**

Opened up the possibility of continuing a program on a smaller scale, looking for a sponsor to actually allow us to continue..

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