



Commission for Women's Chess Report

Q4 of 2025

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Over the years, the WOM Commission has launched various initiatives and events that have highlighted the position of women's chess and women in chess. The projects and research conducted by the Commission has not only helped provide a better understanding and improvements for women's chess but, also, helped vocalize the broader issues of women's rights and place in society.

This year holds special significance as FIDE has officially declared 2025 the "Year of Social Chess." The WOM Commission is thrilled to align with this theme by focusing on projects that emphasize inclusion, community engagement, and the transformative power of chess in society. We are ready to expand our previous initiatives even further and start new ones. The meeting also featured insightful presentations by team leaders, who provided updates and shared their visions for these key projects.

During preparing this report WOM has been actively engaged on the following projects:

Chess4All - the project's geography expanded this year at Abu Dhabi, UAE, Wrocław, Poland, Prague, Czech Republic, Saint-Tropez, France, Nairobi, Kenya, Kampala, Uganda, Almaty, Kazakhstan, The Americas, Stavanger, Norway, Italy and many other locations worldwide. Across the world, remarkable initiatives were held this March to **celebrate Women's Day through chess**. WOM was proud to support and collaborate with events that highlight the strength, resilience, and talent of women in chess. Our key partnerships this year included: **Confederation of Chess for the Americas (CCA)** and national chess federations for the special event, Queens of the Board: Celebrating Women in Chess (hybrid format); **Kazakhstan Chess Federation** for The Qazaq Queens Chess Fest 2025, Almaty; **KSz "Politechnika" Wrocław** – organizers of The IV Memoriał Apolonii Litwińskiej, part of a big Women's Chess Festival in Wrocław, Poland, which was a key event celebrating Women's Chess. The Festival had an honor of being attended by **Łukasz Turlej**, FIDE Secretary General, who opened the closing ceremony of the event and presented awards to the winners. The event allowed young talents to compete alongside women grandmasters like Alina Kashlinskaya, Teodora Injac, and Aleksandra Malcewska. Beyond competition, organizers and WOM provided an enriching experience with a special workshop led by mental coach Hanna Rychlik, who works with top athletes, including Poland's No. 2 female chess player, Klaudia Kulon. The interactive session focused on confidence, handling pressure, and overcoming challenges in professional sports. Additionally, all participating girls took part in a chess-themed photo shoot, making them feel like stars both on and off the board, **Saint-Tropez chess club**, France for a simultaneous exhibition against 24 opponents, led by the Ukrainian quad sisters, the Prochaievs (Alina, Tina, Yelyzaveta and Olha, all aged 15); **Chess Kenya** at the 3rd Queens Rapid Chess Tournament; **Prague Chess Festival** for Futures Tournament.

This 1st edition of celebrations has gathered over 40 events in 30 countries celebrating women and girls in chess. It is a truly promising step and we hope it will grow each year, showing how chess is a powerful force for connection, confidence, and change.

Queens' Online Chess Festival 2025 - The 5th edition of the Queens' Online Chess Festival, a series of continental women's online blitz tournaments started from March 01-28, 2025, on Tornelo online platform. The festival is comprised of two competitions: Queens' Women Open Tournament (open to all female participants with FIDE ID). Continental qualifying events were running from the 1st till 9th of March and Semi-Final and Final held on March 16th and 28th, respectively; Unrated Princesses' tournaments (female players with no FIDE rating) Qualifiers



for “East” and “West” with Finals in groups U9, U11, U13, U15 & U17 (for U17 – born on 1.1.2008 or later). The qualification stage held for March 15th with more than 1000 girls registered from 121 countries worldwide, and Finals held on March 28th. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the winners of the Queen’s Festival 2025: 1st place – Aliona Garmash (FIDE), 2nd place – Zoey Tang (USA), 3rd place – Nataliya Buksa (Ukraine). The winner of The Queen Festival Chess Tournament will be invited to the 46th World Chess Olympiad 2026 in Uzbekistan. The Queen Festival Chess Tournament offers a prize fund of 1000 euros. Training with Champions was a unique reward for Queens’ Festival Top Finishers: the Top 10 players from each of the 6 qualification tournaments were invited to attend two exclusive 45-minute online training sessions with some of the strongest female players in the world: GM Vaishali Rameshbabu and IM Alina Kashlinskaya. FIDE WOM expresses sincerest gratitude for amazing contribution to the working group of the Queens’ Chess Festival project: Ozgur Solakoglu, **Ulkar Umudova**, WOM Commission member, and Yilmaz Kartal. Special thanks to **Gulmira Dauletova**, WOM Commission members and our Asian Ambassador of QF 2025 and **Kazakhstan Chess federation** for the great promotion of the event. On behalf of WOM I also want to thank Continental Ambassadors of the QF 2025 Aga Milewska (Europe), Thepiso Lopang (Africa) and Martha Fierro (America) and the Arbiters team ruling by CA Tania Karali.

This August, the FIDE Commission for Women’s Chess led **the Women’s Chess Marathon** – a worldwide celebration held within FIDE Women’s Month and the 2025 Social Chess Year. Each week, a different continent became the stage for tournaments, workshops, and conversations, always in close cooperation with local organizers. Over 1,000 participants joined the Marathon worldwide, showing just how needed these initiatives are. With the support of local organizers and our Commission members, events took place in:

America: Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and Venezuela

Africa: South Africa and Zambia

Asia & Oceania: Nepal and Australia

Europe: Portugal and Italy.

The Marathon began in the America, where events highlighted how chess can build safe, supportive spaces for women and girls while celebrating the continent’s diversity. An online Arbiter’s Seminar opened the week, giving participants tools to strengthen their involvement in chess beyond the board. In the Dominican Republic, the Women’s Tournament of Santiago formed part of the Chess for Girls in a Safe Environment initiative, emphasizing the importance of protection and opportunity for young players. In Venezuela, a Women’s Chess Festival combined a rapid tournament with engaging talks and discussions. And in Puerto Rico, the regional closing event was hosted at the Casa del Ajedrez in Caguas. Its highlight was a simultaneous exhibition with the Women’s Olympic Team – WIM Danitza Vázquez Maccarini, WCM Yanira Rivera Negrón, WCM Coralys M. Alvarado Pérez, WCM Gabriela Vera, joined by guest master WFM Rinelly Comas Colón – inspiring the next generation. Big appreciation goes to the Chess Confederation for the Americas and to **Sarai Sánchez and Francisco Cruz**, our Commission members, whose support was invaluable.

The second week highlighted Africa, where chess became a platform for confidence, growth, and record-breaking participation in South Africa and Zambia. A special highlight of this week was the presence of WGM Dana Reizniece, Deputy Chair of the FIDE Management Board, who attended both events. Her encouragement left a strong impression on participants, many of whom were meeting a chess leader of her stature for the first time. In South Africa, the Queen’s Chess Training Workshop gathered girls for skills development, with sessions by FT Eric Takawira, FI Reuben Salimu, and Nadzeya Krauchuk. Dana Reizniece opened the event with her



lecture Making it in Chess and later led a simultaneous exhibition at Louwville High School. The week concluded with a Women's Month Blitz Tournament. Just days later in Zambia, history was made: the Rapid Women's Chess Championship brought together 88 female players, the largest number ever for a women's championship in the country. Here too, participants benefited from presence of Dana Reizniece, as she delivered a motivational talk that encouraged them to pursue their ambitions in chess and beyond. Special thank you to **the Chess Federations of South Africa and Zambia** for making these groundbreaking events possible. The third week of the Marathon showed how women's chess flourishes when communities rally behind it. In Nepal, the Himalayan Chess Academy staged one of the largest women's and girls' tournaments in the country's history, drawing 142 players aged between 5 and 67. The tournament also received extraordinary backing from across sports, culture, and education. Distinguished guests such as Palesha Goverdhan, bronze medalist at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, lent their support, underscoring how much potential girls and women in chess hold — and how vital it is to surround them with encouragement and recognition. Meanwhile in Australia, celebrations stretched across schools and generations. From the Korowa Anglican Girls School Zonal Tournament with 120 participants, to motivational talks by Angelica Zivanovic, and a lecture with simultaneous exhibition by WGM Julia Ryjanova, girls experienced both high-level chess and inspiring stories. The events also honoured Leonid Sandler, whose 25 years of coaching at Lauriston Girls School have left a remarkable legacy. Altogether, the Australian program blended large-scale participation with the impact of dedicated role models, creating a true celebration of women's chess. Special thanks go to **Monalisha Khamboo**, our Commission member, and Leonid Sandler, whose dedication and long-term support continue to strengthen women's chess across the region.

The Marathon concluded in Europe with events that emphasized the importance of women's voices in shaping the future of chess. In Italy, the conference Power Moves: Women Shaping Chess was hosted at Campus San Francesco in Conegliano. Speakers included Anastasia Sorokina, Chair of the FIDE Commission for Women's Chess, WGM Aleksandra Dimitrijević, IA Franca Dapiran, and Veronika Goi, moderated by Deborah Pavei. Their reflections touched on leadership, education, and inclusion in chess communities. Part of the celebration in Italy was a Girls & Boys Blitz Team Tournament, encouraging teamwork and friendly competition and teaching about inclusion in a fun way. In Portugal, the Women's Talks in Matosinhos followed the National Women's Semi-Rapid Championship, won by Marta Almeida. The panel featured Susana Gonçalves (WOM member and President of Chess2All), WIM Jussara Chaves, Ana Inês Silva, Isabel Nunes, Luísa Salgueiro (Mayor of Matosinhos), and André Vögtlin, Chair of the FIDE Social Commission. His presence added particular significance to the closing event of the Marathon, linking it to the wider celebration of FIDE Women's Month within the 2025 Year of Social Chess. Special thanks to the **Italian Chess Federation, the Veneto Chess Committee, and Marco Biagioli, the Queen Club Mitropa FIDE Chess Academy and Portuguese Chess Federations** and all local partners for making these meaningful events possible. While each week focused on a different continent, the Marathon reached far beyond its official program. Independent organizers joined the global celebrations and hosted their own tournaments, talks, and online activities to stand with the initiative – from Kenya to Canada. These efforts proved that when given a platform, communities are eager to create spaces where women and girls feel welcome in chess. We extend our gratitude to all federations, partners, speakers, and local organizers, and especially to the members of the FIDE Commission for Women's Chess, who made this initiative possible. Together, we are shaping a future where every girl and woman can find her place in chess.



The 11th Judit Polgar's Global Chess Festival was held with extraordinary interest this year at the Hungarian National Gallery. Each year, this international event seeks to present the diversity of chess, its cultural values, and its community-building power in a unique format and setting. One of this year's novelties was the RubikChess competition, where fifty young mixed pairs tested their skills. The unusual combination of the two games sparked great interest, and registrations quickly filled up. Seeing the success of the event, it is not unlikely that RubikChess will become a permanent program of the festival in the future. The FIDE Commission for Women's Chess was proud to support the launch of the RubikChess competition, recognizing its unique emphasis on teamwork, creativity, and gender equality. With each team composed of one girl and one boy, the format reflects the Commission's mission to create opportunities where talent knows no gender and collaboration strengthens performance. The festival also featured a special performance of Queen's Trap by Juga, an audiovisual project developed in cooperation with the Commission, celebrating the power and creativity of women in chess.

Girls Chess Club in Kakuma (Chess for Protection Project) – One of FIDE's and FIDE WOM's flagship efforts is the Chess for Protection project, launched in collaboration with UNHCR to support refugee communities through structured chess education and opportunity. I am honored to become a leader of the whole Chess for Protection project since this year. WOM is proud to contribute through its ongoing support for the Girls Club in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. Thanks to a dedicated team of international coaches, the Girls Club continues to grow. WGM Anastasia Karlovich and IM/WGM Salome Melia lead regular online workshops and training sessions for the girls, while FM Sergey Klimakovs has provided in-person coaching in Kakuma and have already conducted one offline training for the teams and now is preparing for the second one in November to conduct chess trainings to the Olympiad. The club operates in three girls' boarding schools and has seen significant participation, with 250 schoolgirls attending chess classes twice a week. The fourth school Big Heart Foundations Girls School started chess lessons from September as well. The program not only teaches chess but also incorporates lessons on the social benefits of the game, helping the students to build skills which are useful both on and off the chess board. Celebrating the World Refugee Day FIDE WOM organized series of offline events in Kakuma Camp: motivational talks and a friendly match for the girls from Girls Club with Phylis Ngigi, Gift of Chess director on 28 June and mass chess tournament for the Kakuma community on 29 June with support of Chess Kenya. Special gratitude to the partners of the project **Gift of Chess** who donated 100 chess sets **DGT company** who donated 100 chess clocks for the camp to be used in future chess tournaments. With support of FIDE, UNCHR and Chess Kenya team of 3 girls and 3 boys were sent to 2025 Kenya National Youths & Cadets Chess Championship.

The Queen's Gambit Challenge - the Queen's Gambit Challenge is an online initiative designed to empower female players and help national federations build competitive women's chess teams, led by FIDE WOM. Running from April 2025 to April 2026, this program will support federations with limited female participation in chess by providing a structured curriculum for players at beginner to intermediate levels. This program is a continuation of the National Female Team Initiative, which successfully introduced eight new teams to the Chess Olympiad. Participating helps strengthen the national federation's female chess presence, receive expert coaching, and join a community of women who are transforming the chess landscape. The program is structured in three progressive stages: stage One (April–May 2025) targets beginner players and focuses on building foundational skills, stage Two will guide intermediate players as they strengthen their understanding of the game, stage Three is dedicated to helping national



women's teams prepare for their first Olympiad appearance. Each participant has been grouped by skill level and assigned to one of nine expert coaches: IM Jomo Pitterson, WIM Denise Bouah, WIM Khadidja Laterche Steel, IM Leonid Sandler, WIM Natalija Popova, FT Russel Porter, FT Ryan Blackwood, FT Sadiqah Razark, and WIM Deborah Richards-Porter. Over seven weeks, players will follow a structured training program, concluding with a tournament to assess and celebrate their progress. We are confident this marks the beginning of an exciting chess journey for these 480 women. With the support of such passionate and experienced coaches, they will not only learn to play, but grow to love, the game. On September 20, 2025 the Women's Commission proudly hosted the Opening Ceremony of the Intermediate Stage of the Queen's Gambit Challenge. The ceremony brought together women of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds, with players represented from over 80 countries worldwide, showcasing the global reach and inclusivity of the program. The Intermediate Stage run from September 20 to November 2, 2025, with a clear structure designed to balance flexibility with rigor. Sessions were held in English, French, and Spanish and specifically tailored to each age group and time zone. The program will culminate in a Closing Ceremony on November 2, 2025. The next phase of the Queen's Gambit Challenge will support National Female Teams preparing for their first Olympiad and commence in March 2026.

Seminars for women -

- 18th online IA Seminar held in August 30th – September 7th 2025 by the FIDE Commission for Women's Chess and FIDE Arbiters' Commission, under the auspices of FIDE. The Lecturers were IA Munoz Solis, Carolina (CRC), and IA Nikolopoulos, Panagiotis (GRE). The language of the Seminar was English. The Seminar provided norms and titles of International Arbiter, according to the Regulations for the titles of Arbiters. Each continent (America, Africa, Asia, Europe) had a right to nominate 2 participants per continent (4 continents = 8 participants). WOM and ARB co-organizers had a right to nominate 2 participants. No fee for the participants. 25 participants, women only participated in the seminar, although we've received 48 applications already and will organize one more seminar like this in the end of this or beginning of the next year.
- On October 11-12, 2025 FIDE IO seminar has been organized as part of the World Youth Chess Championship 2025 in Durrës, Albania, the Albanian Chess Federation, in cooperation with FIDE WOM and under the auspices of the FIDE Events Commission (EVE). This seminar was designed to train and certify organizers of international chess events in compliance with FIDE regulations. As part of the FIDE WOM event, the first 10 registered female participants received free participation. Additionally, the Albanian Chess Federation had the right to nominate 2 participants free of charge. FIDE lecturer was Ozgur Solakoglu (TUR) – IO, IA, FT, FM, assistant lecturer was Anastasia Sorokina (AUS) – IO, IA, FPE, FT, WIM. 23 participants including 13 women from 15 countries took part in the seminar.



For the following months WOM planning to continue implementation of the following initiatives:

ChessMom pilot project for the 2026 Olympiad – It aims to provide support for professional chess players who are mothers of infants under one year old. The WOM working group Francisco Cruz Arce (Puerto Rico), Sanchez Castillo, Sarai Carolina (Venezuela) and Chen, Mei Fang Dina (Chinese Taipei) did an excellent job last year elaborating for nominations worldwide and chosen participants to travel to Olympiad. The Confederation of Chess for America replicated the FIDE ChessMom Pilot Program to the American continent. I thank FIDE management for their support and for approving the proposal to raise the age of the infants to 2 years. I hope this initiative will continue to evolve into consistent support for chess-playing mothers. We are excited to see this initiative growing and making a difference worldwide. The expanded support in 2026 offers renewed hope and opportunities for these remarkable chess players and we are looking forward seeing how many participants will join us for the Olympiad in Uzbekistan.

Queen's Gambit Challenge - Start of period 3 for intermediates and potential team players. The next phase of the Queen's Gambit Challenge will support National Female Teams preparing for their first Olympiad and commence in March 2026.

The Gender Equality in Chess Index (GECI) – WOM member David Smerdon will continue his work on GECI research - an innovative measure developed to evaluate and compare gender equality within the international chess community. It utilises three essential indicators: Gender Participation, Gender Performance, and Gender Progress. The FIDE Women's Commission, as the creators of the GECI, intend to update these rankings biennially.

We will continue our main project **Chess4All** at last event for this year we are planning in **Riga, Latvia in December** . This is one of our main projects which already attracted thousands of women to chess worldwide and we hope we will see even more ladies of all ladies and nationalities joining us.

Seminars for women - A DGT Seminar is planned to be organized in cooperation with Stockholm chess federation during the Rilton Cup. Another seminar in cooperation with TRG commission is planned to be organized this year. Participation in all seminars is free for women.

Detailed information about all WOM activities is published at official web-sources:

Official web-site: wom.fide.com

Official Twitter account: twitter.com/fidewomen

Official Facebook account: facebook.com/FIDEwomen

Official Instagram account: instagram.com/fidewomen

The abovementioned initiatives collectively reflect WOM's commitment to empowering women across the globe and improving the prospects for women's chess. The achievements of the WOM are a testament to the dedication, collaboration, and hard work of every individual involved. I extend my deepest gratitude to the **WOM Councilors - Judy Karigu Kiragu, Ken Koort, Tris-Ann Richards, and Paris Klerides**, for their invaluable guidance and commitment. Special thanks go to our project leaders, **David Smerdon** for important research work implemented for



women chess community, **Ulkar Umudova and Francisco J. Cruz Arce**, as well as all commission members, whose tireless efforts have been instrumental in driving our initiatives forward. I am also immensely grateful to **Yilmaz Kartal** for his exceptional technical support, ensuring the seamless execution of our events, **Anna Kantane** for every day support and managing WOM website and social media, **Yana Sidorchuk** for her immense support and assistance during the FIDE Women's month events. Sincerest gratitude to FIDE Arbiters' Commission, Trainers' Commission, Social Commission and Events Commission for cooperation and support of women's chess. A heartfelt appreciation goes to our **FIDE WOM supervisor, Deputy Chair of FIDE Management Board – WGM Dana Reizniece**, whose mentorship, unwavering support, and daily engagement have been pivotal to the commission's success.

WOM contributions ensure to continue to make meaningful strides in promoting women's chess – truly making a difference for girls and women around the world through chess. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the **FIDE President** and **FIDE Council** and **FIDE Management Board** for the extensive support of women's chess, for allocating resources on our initiatives.

Anastasia Sorokina
FIDE WOM Chairperson