



# **Commission for Women's Chess Report**

## *Q2 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.

The FIDE Commission for Women's Chess held its second meeting in June 21, 2025, setting discussing the exciting and impactful year of social chess. With 14 dedicated members including the WOM Supervisor, Deputy Chair of FIDE Management Board Dana Reizniece, present, the Commission summed up a very successful start of the year 2025 and prepared plans for the upcoming month of women's chess. 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:

**Queens' Online Chess Festival 2025** - The 5th edition of the Queens' Online Chess Festival, a series of continental women's online blitz tournaments, announced place from March 01-28, 2025, on Tornado online platform. The festival is comprised of two competitions: Queens' Women Open Tournament (open to all female participants with FIDE ID). Continental qualifying events 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 and Yilmaz Kartal. Special thanks to Gulmira Dauletova, 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.

**Chess4All&All4Chess** - 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 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 include: 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, 14th edition of one of the strongest festivals focused on women's chess – Women's Chess Festival – Radzikowska Memorial, Polish Chess Federation at Memorial of Apolonia Litwinska – rapid event for women & girls, 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 and inspiring lecture and simul by WGM Dana Reizniece, Norway Chess federation for the "Queens Weekend" in Stavanger. 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.

**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 will return later this year to continue preparing the students for over-the-board tournaments. 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 starts chess lessons in June 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. The coaches already started the classes in the 2025 season and will have on-line lessons with the girls weekly on Saturdays. The focus was chess of course, but not only the studying itself, but also learning about the chess world – girls heard about the recent chess events, like the spectacular FIDE World Blitz and Rapid Championships. 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 and DGT company who donated 100 chess clocks for the camp to be used in future chess tournaments.

**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.

**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. Specifically, through this initiative, all expenses related to an accompanying or caregiver person for six female players traveling with their infants to the 46th Chess Olympiad will be covered by FIDE. The WOM working group Francisco Cruz Arce (Puerto Rico), Sanchez Castillo, Sarai Carolina (Venezuela) and Chen, Mei Fang Dina (Chinese Taipei) will elaborate for nominations worldwide and chosen participants to travel to Uzbekistan. I thank FIDE management and all the national federations for their support, and hope this initiative evolves into consistent support for chess-playing mothers. The Confederation of Chess for America announced that they will replicate the FIDE ChessMom Pilot Program to the American continent. We are excited to see this initiative growing and making a difference worldwide. Many talented women have had to step back from their professional careers due to the costs of traveling with their children. The expanded support in 2025 offers renewed hope and opportunities for these remarkable chess players.

**Queen's Gambit Challenge** - Start of period 2 (Sept-Oct 2025) for intermediates and potential team players. Stage 2 will guide intermediate players as they strengthen their understanding of the game.

**Seminars for women** - 18th On-line IA Seminar will be 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 will be IA Munoz Solis, Carolina (CRC), and IA Nikolopoulos, Panagiotis (GRE). The language of the Seminar will be English. The Seminar will give norms and titles of International Arbiter, according to the Regulations for the titles of Arbiters. Each continent (America, Africa, Asia, Europe) has a right to nominate 2 participants per continent (4 continents = 8 participants). WOM and ARB co-organizers has a right to nominate 2 participants. Participation by nomination first. In the case of free spaces organizers will accept individual participation. No fee for the participants. 25 participants, women only will participate 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.

IO Seminar and DGT Seminar are planned to be organized till the end of the year as well as as women-only seminars in cooperation with Stockholm chess federation during the Rilton Cup. Participation in all seminars is free for women.

We will continue our main project **Chess4All** at all continents, same as organizing more seminars for women. In frames of FIDE year of social chess, WOM will organize a marathon during FIDE Women's Chess Month - an inspiring global celebration planned for August. Portugal, Italy, Australia, Nepal, South Africa, Zambia, Puerto Rico, Dominic Republic have already confirmed the participation in this initiative. We'll invite all clubs and federations to join us and repeat the great movement we've made in March. All details will be announced in July. The upcoming partnership in frames of this project is Rubik Chess Festival during Chess Global Festival by Judit Polgar in September.

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

Official web-site: [wom.fide.com](http://wom.fide.com)

Official Twitter account: [twitter.com/fidewomen](https://twitter.com/fidewomen)

Official Facebook account: [facebook.com/FIDEwomen](https://facebook.com/FIDEwomen)

Official Instagram account: [instagram.com/fidewomen](https://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 Councillors—Judy Karigu Kiragu, Ken Koort, TrisAnn Richards, and Paris Klerides—for their invaluable guidance and commitment. Special thanks go to our project leaders, 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, and to Ozgur Solakoglu for his contributions to the Queens' Chess Festival. A heartfelt appreciation goes to our FIDE WOM supervisor, 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