



Commission for Women's Chess Report

Q4 of 2024

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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.

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

Chess4all & All4Chess – encouraging global participation of girls and women in chess. This year Chess4All project started in Africa. The numerous events for women (like The Princess tournaments and simultaneous exhibitions) and meetings with local officials have been organized in African Continent: Ghana, Botswana, Côte D'Ivoire and South Africa. Next stop was in Armenia, where Armenian Chess Federation in collaboration with the FIDE WOM organized a Women's and Girls' Rapid Chess Championship, Dedicated to Motherhood and Beauty. The tournament took place in Chess Academy of Armenia, Yerevan. This was the unique event as it welcomed chess players from various age categories ranging from U8 up to S50, in all skill levels. At the closing ceremony WFM Polina Kobak was awarded for taking the first place in the European stage of the "Queens Online Chess Festival". FIDE WOM Commission expresses special gratitude for cooperation and support to Vice-President of the Armenian Chess Federation Lputian Smbat and the whole team of the federation. On May 6, 2024 the FIDE World School Chess Championship in the Constitutional Province of Callao in Lima, Peru welcomed the winners of the Online Blitz Qualification tournaments for Asia (WFM Diana Preobrazhenskaya (FIDE) and Americas (WFM Maria Jimenez (Peru). WIM Ingrid Aliaga gave the simul for the participants after which official awarding ceremony was held for the Continental Queens. Special gratitude for support and cooperation to the organizers of the FIDE World School Chess Championship in Peru and personally to Martha Fierro. Another event in frames of Chess4all & All4Chess project is chess lessons with GM Anna Muzychuk for the winners of the girl's tournaments of the Rudaga Kaissa Chess Festival 2024. The winners of them are Tifanija and Bella Jakobsone (winner of the tournament A among girls, only 10 year old!) and Justine Elza Graverre who won their sections as well as this special opportunity to train with one of the best female players in the world. The Festival took place from 14th till 19th August in a famous seaside city Jurmala, in Latvia. **The Queens Chess Fest**, a social event **dedicated to girls and women that promotes gender equality in sports and highlights the connection between women and chess** took place in Portugal on the 19th October. The event was the part of the FIDE 100 celebrations and was organised by FIDE WOM with the partnership of the Portuguese Chess federation, Chess2All in an innovative chess project for cancer patients and LPCC (Portuguese League Against Cancer). **Special guests** of the event like Dr. Luísa Salgueiro, Mayor of Matosinhos; Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Deputy Chair of FIDE Management Board; Paulo Felizes, Vice-President of the Portuguese Chess Federation; Dr. Susana Gonçalves, President of Chess2All and Jussara Chaves, Women's International Master and Portuguese Olympic representative took part in numerous activities within the agenda: friendly chess match between 100 women of all ages and experience levels, simul with Dana Reizniece-Ozola, gift kit giveaway for participants, FIDE-signed certificate of participation, celebration cake.

Queens' Online Chess Festival 2024 - The fourth edition of the Queens' Online Chess Festival, a series of continental women's online blitz tournaments, took place from March 09-30, 2024, on Tornado online platform. Like a year ago, the Queens' Women Open Tournament saw the triumph of IM Deysi Cori from Peru.

Unrated Princesses' tournament (for girls without FIDE ID competing in U9 and U16 categories) was one of the competitions held as part of the festival's program. It was won by Ankita Raj from India in U9 age category and Dariya Aukenova from Kazakhstan in U16 category. In June 2024 top finishers in continental qualifications have received training sessions with top female players. Master classes for girls were conducted by the participants of the FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament 2024 in Toronto, Humpy Koneru (India) and Nurgyul Salimova (Bulgaria). The main prize for the winners of 2023 and 2024 editions are invitations to the 45th World Chess Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary. FIDE WOM expresses sincerest gratitude for amazing contribution to the working group of the Queens' Chess Festival project: Ulkar Umudova (Azerbaijan), Skog, Benedicte Westre (Norway), Rich, Tony (USA), Magne Kouokam, Sylviane (Cameroon), Yilmaz Kartal and Ozgur Solakoglu.

Girls Chess Club in Kakuma (Chess for Protection Project) – A groundbreaking initiative in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Female students attend online lessons by WGM Anastasiya Karlovich (UKR) and IM Salome Melia (GEO), including educational activities and playing chess with a local tutor. The club operates in three girls' boarding schools and has seen significant participation, with 250 schoolgirls attending chess classes twice a week. 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.

ChessMom pilot project for the 2024 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 45th Chess Olympiad were covered by FIDE. The WOM working group Francisco Cruz Arce (Puerto Rico), Sanchez Castillo, Sarai Carolina (Venezuela) and Chen, Mei Fang Dina (Chinese Taipei) elaborated for nominations worldwide and chosen participants to travel to Budapest. I thank FIDE management and all the national federations for their support, and hope this initiative evolves into consistent support for chess-playing mothers from Poland, Georgia, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Namibia, Eswatini. The Confederation of Chess for America announced that they will replicate the FIDE ChessMom Pilot Program to the American continent. CCA will now replicate these rules and financially support 5 female players who are mothers of children under 2 years old for the American Continental Women's Championships in the Dominican Republic this November. 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.

Chess4Peace: Refugee Women's Training Program – Another project for refugees, focusing on women in early adulthood (18-23 years), and teaching them chess. This is a pilot project for Ukrainian girls, held in Poland, supported by the International Olympic Committee. After successful first stage in 2023, online stage from January to April, final offline part of the project took place in Warsaw in May 10-14, 2024. The participants kept learning from renowned chess leaders, managers, photographers and expanded their potential. They also visited a Grand Chess Tour venue to meet the best players in the world, including Magnus Carlsen. In September 2024, participants of the project joined the volunteer team at the upcoming Chess Olympiad in Budapest.

Supporting the creation of new female national teams – the initiative aims to help recruit, train and finance women’s chess teams for the countries that did not have them in the previous Olympiad. More broadly, the aim is to take a step further in promoting chess among women and girls. The training program, running from March 15, 2024, to June 16, 2024, featured an impressive lineup of coaches, including FM Ricko Depaune, WFM Anu Bayer, FI Ryan Blackwood, WIM Denise Bouah, IM Jomo Pitterson, WIM Natalija Popova, WIM Deborah Richards Porter, WIM Knarik Mouradian, and FI Russel Porter. Their expertise and guidance have been instrumental in preparing these teams for their international debut. The initiative, spearheaded by WOM Chair Anastasia Sorokina and WOM Councilor Tris-Ann Richards, along with team members Paris Klerides, Akua Kosife Esse, and Monalisha Khamboo, and technical support of Yilmaz Kartal, began in August 2023. It has successfully fostered the development of female teams from nine countries: Liechtenstein, Guernsey, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, the US Virgin Islands, St. Lucia, Nauru, and the Cayman Islands. The final stages of the initiative involved collaboration with the FIDE Trainer Commission (TRG) to enroll these countries in the Olympiad Training Support Program (July-August 2024). We are truly happy with the results of this project - 8 new female teams participated in the Chess Olympiad for the very first time. We also want to emphasize outstanding chess performance that the new teams showed (note that some of the participants have only been introduced to chess thanks to the initiative a few months prior to the Olympiad!), which resulted in a silver medal in Group E for the Cayman Islands and 9 international titles for individual players.

Chess Ladies Art Film Milestone – Conceptualized by the chess artist Juga, this project showcases an all-female chess artistic performance from 160 countries, set to become a chess music video for Juga’s upcoming song “Queen Trap.” This event took place in an epic setting, a Budapest landmark, during the Olympiad 2024. The production team was honored to welcome legendary Dana Reizniece-Ozola, Tania Sachdev, Elisabeth Paehtz, Pia Cramling, Natalia Zhukova and Alexandra Kosteniuk in the music video.

FIDE WOM meetings & Women’s Conference – scheduled official online WOM meeting took place on 14 July 2024. The Chair Anastasia Sorokina as well as working group leaders presented their informative reports on the running projects. The meeting participants also discussed the WOM plans for the second half of 2024 including WOM activities during the 45th Chess Olympiad 2024 in Budapest, Hungary: WOM meeting in hybrid format and Women’s Conference took place on 21 September 2024 at the Olympiad venue for around 200 participants (online and offline). Topics discussed at the conference: personal brand development, social media management, mental health, balancing family & professional life, business etiquette, healthy sports diet, stress management. The event gathered over 25 distinguished speakers from diverse fields to address the challenges faced by women in chess and to propose solutions for creating a more inclusive, safe, and supportive environment. This landmark conference provided a platform for inspiring discussions and highlighted key initiatives aimed at uplifting women in the chess world. The conference brought together an impressive array of leaders and experts, starting with legendary female chess player Judit Polgar. Also in attendance were Dr. Melita Moore, Vice President of the Global e-Sports Federation, representatives from the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Daniel Rensch, CCO of Chess.com, and Sagar Shah, CEO of ChessBase India. Their diverse backgrounds ensured a comprehensive conversation about creating a better future for women in chess.

The Conference was also an opportunity to reward the winners of the Queen's Festival, an on-line Festival for female players organized by our Commission, as well as meet with all the members of the Commission, who were able to attend the Olympiad and appreciate their work. Winners of the Queen's and Princess' Festival were invited to the Olympiad as a prize, where they could experience the most prestigious event and get inspired from the best players in the world. During the Conference they were rewarded by the General Director of the Queen's Festival Ozgur Solakoglu and Anastasia Sorokina.

Detailed information about all WOM activities are 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. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the FIDE President and FIDE Council for the extensive support of women's chess, for allocating resources on our initiatives. To continue our meaningful mission, empowering women to play chess (we are very proud of and grateful for support of National teams project – 8 new teams joined the Olympiad 2024 and ChessMom project, which expands worldwide already) we kindly ask the FIDE Council to save the previous WOM budget in the amount of at least 100 000 Eur, because we are planning to organize numerous significant events in 2025 and several educational seminars for women (within the budget).

Anastasia Sorokina
FIDE WOM Chairperson