



Report of the Women in FAI Working Group to the 2014 FAI General Conference

Strategies for Increasing the Participation of Women in Air Sports

The context

The under-representation of women in many air sports and recreational flying in many FAI member countries means that the FAI is missing a significant portion of the population base from which to draw support. It is a basic tenet of business that an organization's long term survival is based on its ability to adapt continuously to a changing environment. If we want the FAI to thrive, it is time to adapt.

Seven years ago the Olympic Charter was amended to explicitly include encouraging and supporting the participation of women in sport, and the IOC subsequently decided that all sports seeking inclusion in the Olympic programme must include women's events. So if we want the FAI to become more closely aligned with the IOC there is some work to be done. We have a new Vision of "A world where safe participation in air sports and recreational flying is available to everyone at reasonable cost." With that as our vision, the need for a strategy to increase the participation of women becomes even more conspicuous.

How could this be done?

This paper suggests five categories of activities and a variety of possible steps in each category. The categories are not comprehensive or exclusive, nor are the lists of activities, however this breakdown reflects potential steps to move the FAI forward from its current position.

1. Obtain data and assess the environment

- Collect the data (participation rates, dropout rates)
- Analyze the data (compare to population data)
- Issue a questionnaire and collect data from women who participate in air sports
- Issue a questionnaire to FAI members and ask for best practice examples (national, local or individual level)
- Put findings into context (e.g. international perspective; how do we compare with other sports organizations?) and outline strategy

2. Raise awareness internally of the need for change

- provide members with results and context
- explain the benefit everyone derives from making the effort
 - *"If you want to win the game, you need your whole team behind you, not just half of it."* – IndraNooyi, Chair and CEO, Pepsico; 'Sports: By Women and For Women'
- Emphasize opportunities and additional member potential for NAC's

3. Remove barriers (which may affect men, as well as women)

- Identify any barriers to participation
- Determine how to reduce or remove them. Possibilities include:

- Offer training or activity at more flexible times or in shorter time commitments
- Ensure welcoming facilities
- Consider meetings or events aimed at target groups.
- Consider ways to address issues of self-confidence

4. Raise awareness externally

- Highlight participation of current female members
 - Media coverage with specific references to female participation and success
 - Female members as speakers to all types of audiences
- Target audiences (students, women's groups, community groups)
 - Advertise at women's activities
 - Locally, offer a flying experience at low or no cost
- Enlist support (ask a group of women to come to a meeting and provide their feedback)

5. Encourage participation at various levels

- Offer non-members a time-limited free or no cost membership to try
- Offer members an incentive to bring in new female members, or events for current members to bring female guests (bring your daughter/sister/wife/niece to an event)
- Offer training or equipment at no or low cost for beginners
 - Offer ground school through a class on weekends or evenings
- Offer events targeted to female members
- Ask current female members to mentor new members (and support them in that effort)
- Grow structures to support women in air sports (for example extend scholarships to regions where they are not available yet, offer aircraft at low cost for training),

Who can do it?

Many of these activities can be undertaken at any level. National Aero Clubs, Air Sports Commissions and national organizations for single airsports can collect data on participation for their country or airsport. Local clubs can consider the participation rates for their clubs. Any of these groups can put the issue on the agenda of their meeting on a regular basis, and any group can develop an action plan specific to their area.

Every individual can make an effort to become informed on this issue and then can assist others to become informed. Informed individuals can work together to create opportunities.

Every NAC, ASC, club, group and individual is encouraged to get involved and get started. Each organization is encouraged to define or appoint a contact person at board level that is in charge of promoting the participation of women in air sports. Starting small is better than staying where we are. The activities listed in this paper are suggestions which can be replaced by other activities which are better suited to your organization.

Recommendations for an FAI Strategy

While none of the activities described here are revolutionary, they all take some effort. Attempting to do it all, or to do too much too fast is not likely to lead to sustainable change. There is a logical progression to the

activities described here. For example, there is no point in trying to convince current members to offer reduced training or membership fees for women until the work on raising awareness internally has been done. And there is no point in raising awareness externally and encouraging additional participation by women until the barriers to that participation have been identified and, to the greatest extent possible, reduced and removed.

The recommended strategy is to begin at the beginning and ease into it. Getting this issue on the agenda of the many bodies represented here is the first step. Once the issue is on the agenda it becomes possible to discuss what data is needed in order to determine the scope of the issue for each organization and how to get that data. Once good data is available then the possibilities are endless, allowing for comparisons between airports or between countries, leading to sharing of good practices and learning from successful strategies. If your sport or your country is doing well on this issue, or doing something in a different way than others, then you have an opportunity to showcase your success and a chance to share ideas with others.

What the Working Group can do:

- Compile the international data and comparative analysis
- Compile a list of available speakers and journalists
- Compile research
- Make information available on the FAI website
- Work with Commissions, NACs, organizations or clubs to develop a plan, increase awareness, identify opportunities and evaluate barriers.

When should this be done?

The sooner we get started, the sooner we will see the benefits.

FAI can begin right now with a clear indication of support for this initiative from the General Conference, including making the Working Group a Permanent Body under Statute 5.1.2.4 (wording as provided in Annex A to this paper), including allocating a budget and an area on the FAI web site devoted to this issue.

The Executive Board can commit to putting this issue on the agenda of at least two of their meetings this year. The NACs and the ASCs can commit to putting this issue on the agenda of their next AGM, to collecting the relevant data from their members and to developing an action plan. To support these efforts, the Working Group will commit to providing assistance to any NAC or ASC in this action.

Conclusion

There is no simple, fast solution. The first step is to make a commitment as an organization and then work together to meet that commitment. This is an opportunity to help the FAI to thrive and to adapt to the modern environment.

Mary Anne Stevens, Chair

Women in FAI Working Group

August 13, 2014

Annex A Motion to Establish a Permanent Body under 5.1.2.4

It is hereby moved to establish the **Advisory Group on Women in Airsports**, as described herein, with adequate funding to support collaboration with related groups and one in-person meeting per year, to be agreed between the Chair of the Advisory Group and the Secretary General.

Proposed addition to the FAI Statutes

5.4.3 Advisory Group on Women in Airsports

5.4.3.1 The Advisory Group on Women in Airsports is a Permanent body of the FAI General Conference established by the 108th FAI General Conference under the provisions of Statute 5.1.2.4.

5.4.3.2 The mission of the Advisory Group on Women in Airsports is:

5.4.3.2.1 - to consider the participation of women in airsports and airsport organizations under the purview of the FAI and make recommendations to the Executive Board and the General Conference concerning promoting the participation of women.

5.4.3.2.2 - to provide advice and support to Members of FAI and to Air Sport Commissions on issues related to the participation of women in airsports when requested. Such advice and support will be on a cost-recovery basis when required.

5.4.3.2.3 - to report to each General Conference on the activities of the Advisory Group in the previous year.

5.4.3.3 Each Active Member of FAI and each Air Sport Commission is entitled to appoint one delegate to the Advisory Group on Women in Airsports upon undertaking a commitment to provide such financial and operational support as may be agreed with the delegate.

5.4.3.4 The Advisory Group on Women in Airsports shall elect the following officials from among its members: a Chair, one or more Vice-Chairs and one or more Secretaries.

5.4.3.5 Expenses for activities of the Advisory Group on Women in Airsports, including travel expenses, will be covered by the FAI as long as the travel is authorized in advance by the Secretary General. Expenses for activities undertaken in support of a specific Member or Air Sport Commission will be covered by the Member or Air Sport Commission.