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Insight Hub

THE FIAS (FOSTERING INCLUSIVE ACTION SPORTS) TOOLKIT SUPPORTING THRIVING WOMEN+ MOUNTAIN BIKING COMMUNITIES

Active Lives

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**The FIAS (Fostering
Inclusive Action
Sports) Toolkit:
supporting thriving
Women+ Mountain
Biking Communities**

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The FIAS Toolkit builds on the FIAS Framework, and particularly its central focus on community. It is underpinned by rigorous academic research and has been co-created with a wide range of mountain bike-focussed women+ community organisations across the UK. It is full of resources and insight designed to support the initiation and growth of women+ only mountain biking communities, which are a core part of cultural transformation in the sport.

Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration Principles:

- Equity and Equality in Society and Sport
- Developing Participation
- Leadership in Sport
- Education, Training and Development
- Resources

Target audiences:

- Grass-roots communities looking to develop and become more inclusive, or looking to set up a women+ mountain bike community

Background:

Project FIAS is underpinned by rigorous qualitative research conducted at the University of Bristol, exploring how women perceive, experience and interact with mountain biking culture. Research indicates that mountain biking is dominated by men (80:20 split) and can have a masculine and inaccessible image for women+. Women+ mountain bikers can report feeling like imposters, and that their ways of participating lack validity. However, the relaxing, nurturing and supportive experiences of riding with other women+ in dedicated groups help women+ to

develop confidence and progress in the sport and is important for women+ to help shape mountain biking culture, but proactive efforts to foster integration and broadscale cultural shift are needed. Therefore, the toolkit helps to address this.

The toolkit has benefitted from the guidance and insights of an expert steering group of women working in action sports leadership and community development across a range of sports, representing organisations and businesses including: Mòr Diversity, FNY Collective, girls ALIVE, She Flies, Hope Technology, Adventure Queens, Infinite Pathways, The New Forest, Off Road Club, Pro Ride Mountain Bike, Coaching, Adventure Coaching, RideHigh MTB Guiding, Dirt she nomad.

The toolkit has been developed in consultation with a range of women+ cycling group leaders, who have generously shared their learnings, challenges and experiences forming, running and organising their groups. Examples include: The New Forest Offroad Club, Off Root, Colour Collective and School of Rocks.

Important partners of Project FIAS are: British Cycling, Beicio Cymru, Scottish Cycling, forestry England and International Mountain Bike Association.

Summary:

Project FIAS is underpinned by rigorous qualitative research conducted at the University of Bristol, exploring how women perceive, experience and interact with mountain biking culture. Research indicates that mountain biking is dominated by men (80:20 split) and can have a masculine and inaccessible image for women+. Women+ mountain bikers can report feeling like imposters, and that their ways of participating lack validity. However, the relaxing, nurturing and supportive experiences of riding with other women+ in dedicated groups help women+ to develop confidence and progress in the sport and is important for women+ to help shape mountain biking culture, but proactive efforts to foster integration and broadscale cultural shift are needed. Therefore, the toolkit helps to address this.

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1. Planning and initiating: how to get things off the ground.
2. Recruiting and diversifying: how to reach the women+ you'd like to reach.
3. Ensuring a positive experience: how to get the vibe right on every ride.
4. Retaining and sustaining: how to ensure your community thrives and grows.

The toolkit includes case studies, examples and links to further resources. It will be helpful for any women+ MTB community no matter what their vision is. The toolkit can be read 'at a glance' or in full.

[View and download the Project FIAS Toolkit from the University of Bristol](#)

Related Links



[FIAS Toolkit](#)



[FIAS Framework](#)