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Bringing in more #GameChangeHer in sport on step at a time -

SWinG partners sharing their journey to advance women into leadership positions in Sport

Paris, France: The SWinG project partners¹, including PWN, gathered this Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th of June 2019. This was the second official gathering of this 3 years' project co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

Together they are aiming at addressing one of the sport pressing challenge: bringing in more diversity in the boardroom. Their focus will be through the project on developing, testing and providing a concept to help close the gender gap.

Why is it an issue? The first two productions of the SWinG project are meant to provide a State of Play -both in sport and business organisations worldwide- of:

1. the reality of women in decision making roles (IO1) and
2. the existing mechanisms and initiatives to support and promote women leadership (IO2)



Though they are still to be finalized and sign off, the work carried on so far as clearly demonstrate under-representation of women at all levels and in all sports organisations. For example, women's representation in sports governance remains low. While the IOC is leading the way with 30% of women on its board, various studies have demonstrated a global average of just 19 to 20% of women in sports organizational boards. The SWinG Desk Research survey conducted between March and May 2019 on a sample of sport organisations tends to picture a similar situation: 26% of Women in the Board but only 19% of women in Executive Position on these boards.

What to expect from the SWinG project?

The SWinG project is an ambitious undertaking, led by the French Federation for Company Sport, to create data points on leadership, election, board membership, and promotion procedures within the often-veiled world of sport governance. The aim of the unique partnership gearing the project is to act as a CATALYST FOR CHANGE in gender mainstreaming.

What was discussed at the Kick-Off?

¹ Project partners include: Athletes for Hope (US), the European Federation for Company Sport (FR), the European Hockey Federation (BE), ENGSO Youth (HU), Les Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales (FR), the French Federation for Company Sport (FR), the Professional Women's Network (FR), the Società Sportiva Lazio (IT), the Sport Club Partizan Skofja Loka (SL) and the University of Copenhagen (DK).



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In bringing in all partners together, the project coordinator will have had been two-fold: strengthened the foundation for this 3 years' project AND getting ready for the first phase of the programme's induction. Therefore, the focus during this two-days intense and crucial meeting had been to focus on the concrete definition of the SWinG concept and planned for its implementation.

On day 1, partners were introduced to the story of the European Hockey Federation and got challenged through a "do you know hockey well?" game. Straight after this warm up session then entered into the serious game of signing off the first two IOs. These desk research documents will inform new solutions, one of which includes the SWinG newly developed and co-designed mentorship programme to be launched in the fall of 2019. Women who participate in the mentorship program will be given an inside look at Executive Board membership and primed with skills, knowledge, and motivation to assume an executive seat within sport organizations.

On day 2, partners worked together to develop avenues for the SWinG concept implementation. They in particular examine, confirm and design few proposals for the selection criteria. They also generated ideas to develop a meaningful and impactful experience for both mentors and mentees. Last but not least, they planned for future actions and in particular explored pathways to improve the project communication plan.

What are the next steps?

The first two IOs will be finalized over summer time. Meanwhile a tremendous work will be done to pair the selected mentors and mentees. Indeed, this fall, mentors and mentees will get their own specific training sessions.

Final words

"The SWinG project is already fueling a lot of excitement and engagement from our team and membership. Obviously we are very engaged in opening doors for women in decision making roles. Yet we believe this project is bringing in even more opportunities for women to shine as game changers. We see it as a real chance – not only to get more experience in EU funded projects - but most importantly to create synergies with our own "Equally Amazing" strategy." Tom Pedersen-Smith, Development & Education Manager, European Hockey Federation

"Being part of the SWinG project is a great opportunity to understand the differences between the US and European sport system. It is both a privilege and a responsibility to bring to the table our experience and knowledge on empowerment and mentoring scheme. I believe in the SWinG project because sport is too important for the next generation to leave half the world's brainpower out of the conversation." Ashleigh Huffman, Global Director of Gender Equality at Athlete for Hope

"This project, whose prelude has been a co-writing experience with Carole Ponchon, is now taking an exceptional move... that of words turning into collaborative actions! Lyrics might not be there yet, but the beats are here. We can now hear and feel the music that will make us all swing! And I'm so very grateful for this." Carole Bretteville. Director of Human Resources at Ecogreen and SWinG expert for EFCS

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About FFSE: The French Federation for Company Sport (FFSE) was formed on March 29th 2003, transforming an already existing organisation that had been created in 1952. It groups together more than 2,000 structures which work on the development of sport for all within a community of work. The FFSE promotes the physical exercise and grassroots sport practice as a user-friendly way to improve health and well-being, as well as to strengthen social links and productivity within a company.



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