

Contacts Name: Carole Ponchon
Organisation: French Federation for Company Sport
Email: carole.ponchon@beinnovactiv.com

SWinG mentors are known and ready to rock!

What is the limit when mentors from Europe join to create a wave for women decision makers in sport?

Paris, France: The SWinG partners are aiming at addressing one of the sport pressing challenge: bringing in more diversity in the boardroom. To do so they have been working hard since January this year to develop a concept meant to help close the gender gap. The time is now for this concept to be tested!

With the SWinG Mentors Orienteering Session that took place in Paris, on October 4, we are starting the pilot testing of our concept idea.

When did this all started?

Everything started a year ago when we received the great news that our application for the SWinG project had been accepted for funding by the Erasmus+ programme.

Since then the team and the whole partnership (10 partners¹ from 7 different countries) have been working tirelessly to bring the idea to life and in particular DEVELOP & PILOT a new TRANSFERABLE APPROACH including a mentoring programme

And **we could not have dreamt of such a success and warm welcome for the initiative**. Just as an example the SWinG call for participants had been opened for only 3 weeks late July-Beginning of August and we received 49 applications as mentees and 47 as mentors!

Following an intense and hard selection and matching exercise, 20 couples of mentors and mentees had been forged, gathering 21 nationalities across the European continent. They were informed and publicly announced late September.

What was the purpose of this meeting?

This is **an exciting time for the SWinG partnership as we are starting to roll out our concept**.

Gathering 17 -out of the 20- selected mentors at the MEDEF headquarters had been a first step towards the successful implementation of the SWinG mentoring scheme. The day was intentionally built to facilitate the creation of a community of SWinG mentors; to ensure a common understating of the SWinG

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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mentoring approach and expectations and to learn from and capitalize on the various mentoring experience of the mentors. From our perspective it went well beyond expectations!

What was discussed?

The first and main lesson is that **there is no mountain high enough to break the will of women wanting to bring in change in whatever field.**

The selected mentors are from 8 different countries and from very different backgrounds and experience both in terms of mentoring and relationship to sport.

And yet the bonds were created naturally! For they do have one thing in common: their success in the business world and their wish to open the door for other women to succeed.

It was thus extremely powerful and inspiring to hear all of them in Paris -during the SWinG Mentors Orienteering Session- committing themselves to act as a CATALYST FOR CHANGE in boosting access of women to elected leadership positions in sport. What is even more promising being certainly the wave that was created and the expressed willingness to work together as a pack.

For half a day, we exchanged about the SWinG project, introduced the mentors to the specificities of the sport governance and election and discussed the details of the SWinG mentoring scheme. The main aim was indeed to build solid foundation for this 18 months' individualized support system that is being developed.

What is next?

In the coming weeks, each mentor will be officially introduced to their mentee. In addition, a 3 days SWinG Mentee Empowering Session will be organized in Copenhagen from 8 till 10 of November.

From then on, the SWinG Mentoring scheme will roll out, providing one of the pillar of the support system designed through the SWinG project to **help the selected mentees in their journey towards election.**

Final words

"It is one thing to have an idea and to dream of its implementation. It is something else to see it coming alive -despite all the hard work it requires. I believe that a mentoring scheme can be a tremendous accelerator for all. It allows the mentee to go through some shortcut with the help of the mentor. And I feel not only grateful but blessed to have seen and experienced the energy that was to be felt last Friday in the MEDEF room. Not only have the 17 mentors who joined the SWinG Orienteering Session took a day off to join us, they all came to share their tips and willingness to pass on knowledge. They are a gift to the project and obviously to their mentee. I cannot thank them enough for their time and trust. I must add, I cannot wait to see the relationships that will be created through the SWinG Mentoring scheme."
Carole Ponchon, SWinG Project Leader

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Attachement: ["Meet the Matches" – Introduction to SWinG couple of mentors and mentees](#)

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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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