

Empowering women to achieve leadership roles in sport organisations

Becoming more inclusive for sport organizations requires willingness, motivation, and more than anything else: a plan!

We did it. You can do it too. We can't find any women. We don't have female candidates! What matters to us is if someone is qualified for the role not their sex or gender. It's already difficult to find competent candidates.

Stefan Bergh, ENGSO President and Secretary General of the Swedish Sports Confederation: "I have so many experiences where a gender-mixed group makes better decisions than a not-gender mixed group. For me, that's really a quality issue and I am sure you can uphold governance issues better with having this gender mix. It often starts with those who are leaders, that my experience, and that's goes with everything where we want to change something. You must make sure that you have the senior persons, or leaders, or managers, with you and they need to step forward, they need to take responsibility, they need to show the way. If they, or I, in my case, do that, I think we have a better result."

In Sweden, the Golf federation has set their gender equality work at the core of their business. It is not a side project but a fully integrated development program for the organisation.

Annia Lundström, Head of Club and Facilities Development at Swedish Golf Federation: "Three keys, three success factors as I see it, are, firstly, there is an honest will and ownership from the board and the club management to start development work. Two, that you appoint a change leader who is experienced and skilled in managing processes and who is also given a clear mission and mandate to do so. And thirdly, and a very important part, is that there is patience and a respect and understanding that this is long-term work. When you have these pieces in place, then the club or organisation is ready to step into the club development program that we have developed."

Sallie Barker, Chair of ENGSO Equality Within Sport Committee (EWS): "I think organisation should be looking at the make up of their staff and should be making sure that they represent the communities that they serve. When we come to the recruitment, they have to look at skills, knowledge and experiences they want, but when they draft the advert, they should be looking at how they describe the skills and knowledge and experience. It's thinking about the wording and the language that they use. Then, when you get to the interview process, they should make sure that the panel is not all of the same gender or the same type of people, so that people coming into the room for the interviews are comfortable. And finally, when people are appointed, there should be some support and mentoring to help them get in the role, so that they are successful. I love this motto. "If we can do it. You can do it." So take the first step towards gender equality and inclusion in sport."

We did it. You can do it too. For more information, feel free to reach out to ENGSO, the European Sport NGO, its Equality Within Sport (EWS) committee, and the EQUIP partners, and visit the project webpage.