



FINAL REPORT

A large group of young women, likely participants and organizers of the festival, are posing for a group photo on a green rugby field. They are wearing various colored jerseys and some are holding flags. The background shows tall trees under a blue sky.

QUEENS RUGBY 7 FESTIVAL



Background

We identified that there is a lack of international amateur rugby 7s tournaments for women in Europe. This is even more surprising since rugby 7s became in 2016 a sport discipline of the Olympic Games. Rugby is a predominantly male sport, in which professionalism does not (or barely) exist for women, most of whom are amateurs, but play at a very high level. But rugby goes beyond gender barriers: team spirit, solidarity and respect are universal values. It seemed relevant to use rugby as a pivot to build alternative discourses on gender.

Objectives

The goal of the project was to create the 1st European festival dedicated to women playing rugby 7s at an amateur level. The overarching objective is to inspire and promote women's sports at all levels, encouraging equal opportunities for women. This includes their access to management and leadership positions in sports organisations, such as team manager, coach or referee. In addition, the festival was a charity tournament to spread awareness about endometriosis.

Implementation

The festival took place from 13 to 15 May 2022 and was the result of three years of work, started at the submission of the project to the Erasmus+ programme. Teams were welcomed in Vincennes as part of the town's European Week, and invited to a documentary screening as the opening ceremony. The festival divided the players into 3 categories (school, university and federal), which was combined with conferences, 2 exhibitions, the discovery of a connected picture, awareness-raising workshops about endometriosis, activities on how to become a coach, and how to fight obstacles that women face pursuing this career path.

Results

The event enabled to raise awareness on endometriosis and gender equality in sports among the 16 teams present as well as the external audience. It contributed to empower women playing rugby 7s and creating a community by gathering players of 19 nationalities including 11 European ones (United Kingdom, Spain, France, Sweden, Estonia, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Italy, Netherlands). The festival made possible exchanges between the players through both the tournaments and the activities.

Due to the conferences, workshops and awareness-raising activities – organised by Play International, ENGSO and EndoFrance – the event raised awareness on endometriosis and gender equality in sport among the 16 teams present, as well as all the external participants and volunteers. Furthermore, the festival helped raise funds for EndoFrance and the fight against endometriosis as a result of the mobilization of the French Sports Ministry. The event saw participation of women from 19 nationalities including 11 European ones (United Kingdom, Spain, France, Sweden, Estonia, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Italy, Netherlands)



1) OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

Our project consisted of organizing the 1st international women's rugby 7s festival for European women and girls. The festival took place in Vincennes, where 100 years ago Alice Milliat organized the first women's world games, the first step to women's participation in Olympic Games in the following years.

The project was led by the Alice Milliat Association (France), working for the promotion and development of women's sports practices. Furthermore, this was done in collaboration with the 16 rugby teams coming from 11 European partner countries and 8 other countries, and 10 other organizations with expertise on rugby, gender equality in sports, education through sports, endometriosis, etc.

The primary objective was to promote equal opportunities in sports and for women in sports practice. We chose to organise an event explicitly for women, especially those aged 13-35, to ensure their participation and to raise awareness about equal opportunities and gender equality.

In addition, this festival was seen as an efficient way to promote social inclusion of women through sport practice. Some clubs invited to the Queens Rugby7 Festival were located in peripheral areas of large cities, which are typically more problematic in terms of social and economic integration of young people.

The festival was also a way to inspire women to access managerial and leadership positions in sport organizations, as well as positions of authority such as coach or referee. The conferences regarding leadership have been particularly relevant for the young girls participating to develop their leadership skills in sports, and to apply these in the future.

We also wish to build a European Community of Rugby7, ensuring the sustainability of this innovative European initiative. It brought together players from of 19 nationalities. It was a real moment of cultural exchange, with the participants sharing moments of Basque and Polish dances and chants, as well as, French music and more. All the participants and their staff have told us in their feedback questionnaire that they would like to participate in a second edition. The teams that could not participate for health or logistical reasons have also let us know that they would like to participate in the next edition. If the project continues over time, we are sure that through this festival we will create a real European women's rugby community. The city of Vincennes has informed us that they will do everything in their power with the resident club to organize the 2nd edition in 2023.

Finally, this event was supposed to promote health via sports practice: the festival has helped to mobilise and captivate young people to participate in a physical activity. We also chose to make this festival a festival committed to the fight against endometriosis. Workshops have been set up to raise awareness and share information about this disease affecting 1 in 10 women.



2.) DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

1. Project management

List of actions:

- General monitoring and reporting of the project to the EACEA
- Coordination between the actors involved and organization of meetings
- Management of the organisational team (employees, interns, volunteers...etc)
- Communication with participating teams and subcontractors
- Creation of a communication- and media plan
- Preparation of the logistics
- Purchase of equipment
- Perpetual adaptation: staying aware of the changes (travel restrictions due to Covid-19, local situations...)

2. Organizing and monitoring of the Queens Rugby Festival

- Recruitment and follow-up with the participating teams
- Call for tenders: comparing the best subcontractors services
- Ensure the safety of the participants (security, medical staff, referees)
- Creation of special animations (opening and closing ceremony, exhibitions, connected painting)
- Planning and adapting of the tournament schedule (coordination between the matches and the cultural activities, the referees' schedules and the volunteers). Preparation of cultural activities

a) Workshops

Play International gave 2 workshops to school teams, one on gender discriminations and stereotypes, and one on gender prejudices that can limit access to certain professions. Two teams of 12 players under 15 years old participated to each workshop. ENGSO offered an interactive workshop about access to coaching for women. 5 sessions of 45 minutes were given to two teams of 12 players each time.

b) Roundtables

Two roundtables were prepared in cooperation with partner organizations

Feminization of the sport professions, where do we stand? was facilitated by Tess Harmand, and invited Eva Jacomet from Sport & Citoyenneté, Sara Massini from ENGSO and Lovely Babel, rugby coach; on Saturday 14th at 11am.

Diversity girls/boys, from theory to practice was facilitated by Eva Jacomet, and invited Germain Peyraud from Play International and the director of Vincennes' rugby school Antoine Trechot, on Saturday 14th at 14:30.

The conference Increasing awareness about endometriosis was led by Yasmine Candau president of EndoFrance, on Sunday 15th at 12pm.



c) Documentary screenings and exhibitions

Through collaboration with the producers Dans l'Intervalle, Little Miss Soccer and Alexandra Favard, we selected documentaries about different thematic.

- Friday 13th at 20h30, opening ceremony in Vincennes with the screening of Les Incorrectes, a biographical documentary about Alice Milliat
- Eight documentaries were screened throughout the festival about gender equality, origins and history of women rugby, sport and covid crisis, maternity, and women soccer.
- 2 exhibitions:
- Alice Milliat: 15 panels to discover the extraordinary destiny of this sportswoman, leader and activist for the place of women in sport
- Rugbywomen by Camilo LeonQuijanoa who followed the daily life of a group of young female rugby players, with 12 panels.
- 1 connected painting representing all the women gold medallists in the history of Olympic and Paralympic Games

d) Solidarity raffle

In order to contribute to raising awareness of the fight against endometriosis, we organized a solidarity raffle, the proceeds of which were donated to the Endofrance association.

3. Develop a European Community of Rugby 7s for women

- Gathering and sharing good practices: dissemination of the book "Rugby and gender - A look at grassroots initiatives worldwide" created with Sport and Citizenship
- Through another European Erasmus+ Sport project called EWSE, we will continue to promote the event and its next editions. One of the objectives of the project is to map different women sports events around Europe and make them more visible
- ENGSO: perspectives of new training dedicated to girls and women as part of other projects of the association. Additionally, several school teams were interested in organizing new interventions as part of their school curriculum with ENGSO.
- EUSA: will to address further the topic of women participation in sport and in sports governing bodies with the Alice Milliat Association following the festival.
- LIFR: Ile-de-France Rugby League is interested in submitting a ERASMUS+ project around the development of rugby for girls in priority areas of the city

4. Communication, dissemination and exploitation of results

- Publicizing the realization of the European Festival and disseminating the project results. Includes: Communication and awareness raising activities (cf: part 8 of the report)



3) QUALITY CONTROL DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A document was created to track all actions, while preparing the submission of the project in order to recap the different tasks to be achieved and check their advancement according to the deadlines established. To follow each step with more details, a Gantt was created on one of the shared servers the organizing team used. Indeed, the main platform used was Google Drive but we also used Dropbox, internal mailing lists and Whatsapp-groups. It enabled everyone to share information and documents about the festival in real time.

The pandemic of Covid-19 had obviously tremendous consequences on the sport sector, and the events that were supposed to take place in spring 2020. As a result of the restrictions and lockdowns that were implemented in the whole of Europe, many adjustments had to be made.

Therefore, there are actually 3 different versions of retro-planning. The event was initially planned for 2020 and to last for 1 week. Due to the Covid-19 situation, we had to postpone the event twice. This postponement led to additional costs and forced us to review the duration of the event. Thus, the initial schedule was for 1 week, whereas the executed one was condensed into a 3-days weekend (13-14-15 May 2022).

Working groups had been set up internally with specific tasks that are elaborated in the answers to the following question. Meetings were organised on a regular basis with the whole group but also in sub-groups, which allowed coordination and optimal progress of the organisation. One group was dedicated to the organization of competitions, another to the cultural pole, one to communication and finally, the administrative pole supervised all these groups. The volunteers participating to the event received detailed missions were adapted to their experience and preferences

Some specific indicators were monitored to ensure the quality of the project, its optimal organisation, and its cost-effectiveness:

- Participation of the partners in the meetings: regular thematic meetings were organized during the preparation of the project between the Alice Milliat Association and the relevant partners.
- Number of registrations, follow-up of the teams on WhatsApp, Facebook or through emails to communicate with the teams and reduce the potential number of withdrawals;
- Post-event questionnaire sent to all the teams and team managers and coaches with maximum feedback, of which the outcome was very positive;
- Call for tenders from different subcontractors and collaboration with reliable Partner of the association



Some of the risks listed in the application substantiated but more importantly, none of us had anticipated the pandemic of Covid-19 which had actually direct and indirect impacts on the risks we had mentioned :

- Insufficient number of teams / participants: many other rugby 7s tournaments were held that weekend or after the weeks around it. In the “post-Covid” situation, all the tournaments tried to get back on track as well as the final phases of the official competitions of our partner federations. Therefore, many teams who could participate on the initial dates were not able to come. Several teams lost a lot of players between 2020 and 2022 because of the Covid-19 crisis. For the school teams, another major event organized by our partner, UNSS took place on the same weekend than the QR7F which prevented teams and volunteers to come. The event was modified and combined therefore the 3 categories on the same weekend and the format of the tournament was adapted.
- Terrorist attacks in France: problem not encountered
- Delays from external partners / subcontracting: because of the war in Ukraine more time than usual was needed to provide some materials, therefore we had to order equipment earlier than planned
- Departure of team member or volunteer: the postponement of the event had heavy economic consequences, therefore our initial project manager had to leave. To compensate his departure, the project was managed by other permanent member of the association and interns were recruited.
- Low audience: problem not encountered
- Bad weather: problem not encountered

4) TEAM INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT AND THEIR ROLE

The association appointed a project team which was in charge of the preparation of and the organisation of the event itself. This team was composed of:

- **The administrative pole:** 1 staff-member (Eric) was in charge of the administrative management of the project, relations with external partners. On the financial part of the fundraising and crowdfunding, he brings his expertise and his support to the project manager regarding sponsoring and donations, and on the budgetary management activities of the whole project.



The communication pole: 1 communication staff-member was in charge of the whole communication part of the event, i.e. before, during and after. Before the event she was in charge with creating all the visuals for the communication on the social networks and provide materials to the partners (City of Vincennes for posters and programs, RATP for posters), coordinating the creation of the roadbook for teams as well as writing the newsletters sent to the teams in the association's database . During the event she was in charge of broadcasting all the highlights social networks. Finally, after the event, her role was to thank all the teams and all our partners for the organisation of this event; to send the photos of the event to the teams; and to post the video which retrace this festival

- **The cultural pole :** 1 cultural coordinator who developed the different activities for the teams by getting in touch with our partners before the festival. She worked with the team scheduling the tournament, to adapt the sport schedules and the cultural schedules on one another. On site, she was coordinating the different activities and workshops.

- **The logistic pole** (staff in charge of the organisation of the tournament and the management of the teams) (1 staff and 3 interns): they took care of the gameplay dimension i.e. the creation of the format of each of the 3 tournaments according to the number of teams, the creation of the planning of the matches, the coordination with the referees and volunteers on site. Afterwards, this department worked with the cultural department to coordinate the educational activities for the teams.

In parallel, this they also drew up the site plan, chose the cups and medals, identified and assigned volunteers to a position, and recruited university and federal referees.

- **Staff in charge of the running of the event on site** (3 Service Civiques interns): This team was involved in preparation meetings beforehand. They were in charge of welcoming the different teams and orientating them in the stadium and managing schedule to stay on track for the matches and activities. They helped setting up the necessary equipment for the event (tents, stand, photo exhibitions). This team also set up the goodies stand and the cash desk.

- **Volunteers** (Ligue Ile-de-France de rugby, Club de Vincennes): volunteers were part of partners organizations with which the event had been prepared, in total 34 volunteers participated to the event and contributed in making it a success.

The project team had complementary skills and experience that met different needs and guaranteed the success of the event (project management, events management, logistics, administrative and financial management, communication and marketing, intercultural communication, outdoor sports expertise, coaching, first aid training, knowledge of terrain, etc.



5) PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

Despite the 2 postponements of the QR7F, partners involved in the preparation and organization of the project remained globally the same, however the covid crisis and the new timeline for the festival had an impact on the level of commitment of several associated structures and the teams who had initially showed interest in the festival at the moment of the submission.

As leader of the project, the Alice Milliat Association worked on the whole coordination of the event and the activities carried out before, during and after the event itself. Regular one on one meetings were organized between the partners and the association in order to keep track of the progress of each action initiated in collaboration with them.

Most of the women's rugby teams who said they would be present at the time of the project submission were not available for the event for several reasons.

- multiple postponement of the event due to COVID-19
- unavailability of the players on this weekend
- dissolution of the teams
- participation in national competitions on that weekend
- last minute cancellation because of Covid cases

Communication with these teams was mainly through social media or via emails.

The other structures involved in the organizations will be presented in the following paragraphs:

The UNSS, French National Union of School Sport was our main contact for the school tournament. They had the mission to help us finding and selecting the teams to participate in the tournament and organize several training sessions on being a referee or volunteer. Unfortunately, because of the postponement, UNSS was not able to be as committed as planned since on the weekend of the event, the Gymnasiades, that is the biggest annual event for UNSS with the International Sport School Federation, were taking place simultaneously in Normandy.

FFSU, French Federation of University Sports and EUSA were our main interlocutors for the university tournament. FFSU assisted us in establishing the rules of the tournament for the university level, as well as in providing certified referees for the games during the event.

Rugby Club Vincennes The rugby tournament took place on the RCV's sports ground, they were thus very involved in terms of logistics but also in promoting the event among their players in order to boost the women's team and in providing many volunteers.

ENGSO The organization managed a European project named SCORE©. They gave workshops and participated in a roundtables in order to talk about this project and their experience on the topic to encourage more women into pursuing a career as a coach.

Sport and Citizenship is a renowned European think-tank which worked on the publication of a book called « Rugby and Gender a look at grassroots initiatives worldwide » which is a collection good practices about gender equality using rugby as a tool. They also participated into our roundtables during the event.



EndoFrance and Info-endométriose worked closely with us on raising awareness about endometriosis through our event among participating teams and the general public. Because of a tight schedule for Info-Endométriose, only EndoFrance was able to collaborate in the end. EndoFrance organized workshops for players during the whole festival. The event also helped to mobilize the Sports Ministry as the fight against endometriosis was recognized as one of the « national causes » of 2022.

Play International gave two workshops on gender discrimination and stereotypes. They also participated to the roundtables organized during the festival.

Monthly meetings were organized with each partner since late 2019 and frequent emails were exchanged. When the dates of the tournament approached, meetings became more frequent in order to prepare the event as best as possible.

6) IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

At the end of the Queens Rugby 7s Festival, all participants and staff members present in Vincennes were surveyed via a satisfaction and impact measurement questionnaire. On the basis of their answers, an analysis of the results and impacts was drawn up, showing a record level of satisfaction: all the respondents said they were completely satisfied with the festival as a whole, and all wished to participate in a future edition.

The study also shows that the event achieved several objectives

- the creation of a unique event in Europe: all the participants mentioned that they had never participated in an international women's rugby 7s festival
- the creation of a European women's rugby 7s community: all participants expressed their wish to participate in another edition of this festival, and the questionnaire reveals that participants particularly enjoyed meeting athletes from all over the world. This event allowed an incredible intercultural exchange and a rich sharing of emotions and experiences.
- making the festival a committed festival around the theme of endometriosis: the participants mention having been particularly impacted by the awareness-raising activities organised by EndoFrance on endometriosis. 81.5% percent of respondents (team managers and players) said they felt more informed about endometriosis.
- inspire and promote women's sport at all levels, encouraging equal opportunities for women: 81.5 % of participants felt more informed about gender equality in sport and 79% respondents felt more informed about female leadership. Participants in the ENGSO workshops particularly appreciated the awareness raising around women coaches and became aware of the barriers for women who wanted to take up this position.

It is interesting to point out that when asked what was their best memory from the event and leaving the choice to answer anything, many players mentioned « *dancing with other players between the games* », « *the players vibes and meeting teams from all around Europe* ». One player said that her best memory was « *Celebrating with other women ! It was so empowering* ».



Among the teams' representatives response, only positive feedbacks were sent. To quote several :
« *It was such a great experience and we were all very happy to be there and take part in it! The event itself helped us a lot to grow and become conscious about women's issues that we weren't even aware.*»

« *All of the themes made it possible to raise awareness among the girls* »

From oral interviews made on site during the event, several players explained that they liked the fact that it was an event 100% dedicated to women because often, when they have competitions, it is mixed with the men's games. And as a result, the "real finale" ends up being the men's last match and the audience do not even pay attention to the women's final games, which was very frustrating. During the festival all the women's teams were in the spotlight and seeing other categories was very exciting for them

In order to ensure the follow-up of the project with the teams and participating organizations, we will keep in touch and explore the possibility of organizing a 2nd edition of the festival or support any organization who would wish to organize one. Our objective is to make this festival sustainable but also to make it adaptable and not particularly tied to a specific location, country and dates. All the documents have been posted on the Erasmus+ Results web platform, which will enable anyone interested in the initiative to contact us and learn from our experience. Our dissemination plan has been successful and proved that there was an interest on the topic. All the pictures and the aftermovie of the festival have been shared with the participating team.

7) POLICY IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

What this project highlighted was that there was a lack of 100% women's sports events even though there was a high demand. We are convinced that this first edition will give rise to others. Beyond that, we hope to inspire European partners to set up events dedicated to women's sports like this one.

This project, in line with the recommendations of the European Commission, has encouraged various policy initiatives in the field of education and training through sport and physical activities. The teachers of the schools present were sensitive to the ENGSO and ENDOFRANCE workshops and expressed their wish to set up such workshops in their schools. The festival also inspired the girls about their future, telling them that it is possible for them to build their career in sport.

The festival also showed that it was possible to combine a sport competition with cultural and pedagogical activities even though there could be some improvement on that matter. Nevertheless, the participants attending the workshops and the roundtables were very interested and did not hesitate to ask questions and continue the debates. One of the questions we asked to evaluate the satisfaction of the participants was about the 3 most interesting activities of the event apart from the tournament, the most mentioned activities were the awareness sessions about endometriosis, the photo exhibition called « Rugbywomen », the stand from an association which recycles rugby balls in order to make new objects (pencil case, key ring, backpack...etc) and a stand from a reporter who focused on women's rugby in France and made several videos.



Sport is becoming progressively recognised as a significant tool for enhancing social inclusion, as EU policies and initiatives have been showing. By being 100% female, this festival has allowed the social inclusion of women and girls who had never before participated in a 100% female rugby tournament and who had never been abroad. It also allowed 3 young girls from Ukraine to participate to the tournament with the Polish team, despite the political crisis ongoing.

8) DISSEMINATION

First of all, as one of our goals is to make the QR7F sustainable, a logo and a graphic charter were created. We worked with graphic designers with the objective of giving a unique identity to the event and make it recognizable just like a brand.

The dissemination of the QR7F was made through online social networks, media and in the public space. We had identified that most of the women's rugby teams in Europe were using facebook as a means of communicating either through facebook pages or groups ; hence our decision to only create and mostly use a Facebook page dedicated to the event. For the sake of simplicity, we analyzed only the results of the dissemination from September 2021 until June 2022, excluding the content that was communicated in the preparation of the event before the postponements.

In total from February to the end of May the content posted on the Facebook page dedicated to the event made about 13 000 impressions, and counts now 961 followers. In addition, we used the social network of our organization to communicate about the event :

- Facebook : 32 359 impressions
- Instagram : 2540 impressions
- Twitter : 13 880 impressions
- Linkedin : 4087 impressions
- 10 newsletters were created between November 2021 and May 2022.

A special communication operation was created on Instagram in the week before the event, involving a the French rugbyman and team France player, Thomas Ramos, who is also ambassador of EndoFrance, and other sports personalities. This operation reached about 700 000 persons based on the number of followers of each Instagram account.

In terms of media coverage, we worked with a specialized agency, Sport Market, who is partner of the Alice Milliat Association. 3 press releases were sent to the media in 2022 about the event, and one to one mails were sent to journalists of the regional media of the different teams involved upstream and downstream with the results.



A total of 20 media mentioned the event and/or were present to cover it on site. All in all, Sport Market concluded that there were :

- Good coverage for women's rugby, and more amateur, despite a very dense sporting context over the weekend (European Cup) which did not allow the sponsor Jessie Tremoulière to come and which strongly mobilized the news and sports media.
- A link between sport and endometriosis that worked well with journalists and increased the editorial surface on the various media subjects
- An organization, a site, an atmosphere on the event which allowed a very positive treatment on behalf of the audiovisual media (France TV had planned to make only one subject and on site the journalist doubled the number of subjects and air time).

We also advertised the event through posters in partnership with the RAPT (company of public transportations in Paris). 100 were hung in metro stations in Paris to promote the event. The City of Vincennes also created specific posters for the event, sharing the program of the festival as well.

Seeing that the festival could not be organized in 2021, we decided to hold a webinar with Sport & Citizenship in order to present the book « Rugby and gender - A look at grassroots initiatives worldwide » created with the think tank. This material is freely accessible on our website and was also distributed during the event to all the participating teams and people involved in the organization of the event as well as the public. It is also distributed freely during the other association's events.

9) CHANGES IN RELATION TO THE APPLICATION

The smooth running and organization of the festival was constrained by the Covid-19 situation. The event was due to take place in 2020 was finally organized over 3 days rather than a week in May 2022. Successive postponements reduced the available budget (as each year costs were incurred to organise the festival before it was postponed). We were also only able to send out invitations at the end of January, when the restrictions on the reception of the public in sports facilities were lifted in France. These late invitations clearly limited public participation in our festival and explain the limited attendance compared to the basic estimates. As a result, there were a difference in the partner countries represented. However, we managed to mobilize teams with a great diversity of nationalities and had the chance to give the opportunity to 2 players from Ukraine to participate.

We also had to condense all the tournament into one weekend because of the space that was allocated to us over that period. But, as most of the teams had never participated in tournaments with other categories (age and level combined) this change was very much appreciated. This allowed the students to see players in higher categories and to project themselves into their future as players. The festival was a great moment of exchange between all the players.



The number of teams was lower than expected, mainly due to the health situation and the difficulties to travel. But also because of the dates which were chosen by the City of Vincennes, in order to synchronise with Europe week in 2022. The festival took place during exams for students, rugby matches for the teams in the final phases, older and better-known tournaments and other sporting events (such as the Gymnasiades). In addition, there were difficulties in getting teams to commit and keeping their commitments. Some teams that had been registered for two years withdrew at the last minute.

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We added an activity that was not included in the bid: the organisation of a film-debate around the screening of the documentary "Les Incorrectes - Alice Milliat and the beginnings of women's sport" directed by Anne-Cécile Genre and supported by the Alice Milliat Foundation. The players learned a lot from Alice Milliat, the history of sportswomen through time and were able to exchange with the director.

The age categories for the school tournament was also eventually different as we took into account the recommendations of the UNSS. The UNSS trainings on how to become a referee and the involvement of young volunteers part of their program was not possible because of the Gymnasiades.

Instead of using papers questionnaires we decided to create Google Form version for ecological reasons and to also facilitate the processing of responses.

There were changes regarding the conferences planned on site and with the EU Parliament. Since it was not possible to organize a meeting in person in Brussels with the EPRUI group, a webinar was held in June 2021 and Sport and Citizenship supported us in organizing the roundtables on site during the event. The topics of these roundtables slightly changed as well : one focused on gender diversity in sports and the other on the feminization of sports sector as a whole.



The involvement of Play International had to be modified as well since the territory of Vincennes was not one of the areas they were intervening in as part of their actions. Therefore the organization gave two workshops to school teams, participated in 1 roundtable. There were also other associations on site such as Recycling Rugby and Dans l'Intervalle. Their presence was appreciated by the players according to the satisfaction survey.

Instead of Gala Match as planned in the application, we created a "Drop Challenge" which was very successful and enabled all the players and volunteers to participate. The reward was a jersey from the French National rugby XV team with the signature of all the players thanks to the quick and enthusiast response of their manager who kindly answered us and sent the jersey right away !

CONCLUSION

Difficulties

Most of the challenges encountered were directly related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Changes in regulations at the European level and in each country hampered invitations and the ability for teams to travel freely. This also affected registration, many teams registered at the very late moment because of the unstable situation. The pandemic also impacted the development of some teams that we had been in contact with since 2019: some of them did not exist anymore. The pandemic also created apprehension among some people about traveling and participating in sporting events.

The war in Ukraine also created difficulties. On the one hand, some teams were anxious about traveling. On the other hand, the war affected the fabrication and the delivery of some materials.

A major problem we had to face was to combine the awareness workshops and the organization of the matches. We did not take into account enough the need for rest and warm-up time for the different teams, especially since the heat was intense during the weekend. This was also because less teams were present than initially planned, therefore the schedule was tighter. There was also lack of motivation of some people to participate in the workshops, but in the end, players were actually happy to attend the roundtables and workshops.

We had to deal with broader problem: the respect of commitments. We had to face the unexpected and late withdrawals of some teams who had committed themselves from the beginning but also the non-arrival of some partners.

Unfortunately, because of the postponements of the festival the new dates were not the best for many womens' teams who had national championships and other tournament planed at the same time they prioritized over the QR7F. It was the case both at the national and the European level and this why some nationalities could not be present at all.



The Covid crisis affected the project financially. Indeed, every year, costs were incurred to prepare the festival and a few weeks before, everything had to be cancelled and postponed. This forced us to start again every time the registration process, the coordination between all the associated structures involved and redistribute the tasks between the staff. It also wearied the partners with whom we were in discussion and disrupted the follow up of grant applications we had made. For example, we received the validation of a request from the Ile de France region which will be submitted to the commission on 23/09/22, that is to say more than 4 months after the event and more than one year after its submission. It was difficult to find funds to complete the budget of ERASMUS+. It shows a real lack in potential investments in women's sport and especially for events at the amateur level.

Good practices

We consider our project to be successful because of several elements:

- Despite the health context, the Ukraine war and their direct or indirect consequences, we managed to adapt the project as a whole and make it happen with the same philosophy we had from the beginning. This event was also a first of its kind one as no other festival dedicated to women's rugby 7s amateur teams existed in Europe.
- The players and team managers who responded to our questionnaire were completely satisfied and were very enthusiastic about the idea of a second edition of the festival
- The results of the questionnaire showed that all the participants had learnt more information in at least one of these topics: endometriosis, gender equality in sports, women's leadership
- The fact of mixing several categories in a women only tournament and the presence of teams with players of different nationalities was very much appreciated as it was the first time an event combined all these factors. We can consider that our goal of creating a sense of community has been fulfilled both at the level of rugby teams but also with a sorority dimension.
- Even though we were limited by time constraints, having both a sport tournament and interactive cultural and awareness activities has worked well. We think it is a system that is worth implementing more on sports events to convey more messages to the participants and enrich their experience.
- Instead of organizing a Gala Match as planned in the application, we created a « Golden Drop Challenge » which was very successful and enabled all the players and volunteers to participate. The reward was a jersey from the French National rugby XV team with the signature of all the players thanks to the quick and enthusiastic response of their manager who kindly answered us and sent the jersey right away ! We believe that mobilizing athletes and personalities from the sports world as it was also done through the dissemination operation helped create an interest and build legitimacy to such an event.
- As we wanted to adopt eco-responsible practices we worked with an association who recovered the extra-meals to avoid any waste of food. We also gave water bottles and eco-cups to the players so they did not use new plastic cups or plastic water bottles during the whole time of the event. In addition we paid attention to the carbon footprint of the event by listing the means of transportations of the teams and participants.



Recommendations

In terms of media coverage, we struggled to mobilize beyond the Ile-de-France media, such as magazine media (women's, health, society) and international media, due to a plateau that was confirmed late. But there is a real potential in media around this type of event which requires:

- To make it a long-term event in order to create an appointment and reinforce the storytelling
- To work upstream to diversify the media angles and broaden the targeting of journalists
- Increase awareness of the Erasmus + Sport program in France to reinforce its attractiveness
- To multiply the spokespersons to benefit from their media exposure
- To reinforce the production of content (audiovisual)

Our other recommendations are:

- Centralize more the contacts with the teams before the event
- Under-evaluate the participation of teams to the event and to the workshop to prepare adapted format / better promote the cultural activities
- Prepare several tournament formats taking into account potential withdrawals
- Contact media more in advance

IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION

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Thank you!

