VOICEs for truth and dignity –
combatting sexual violence in European sport
through the voices of those affected

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Play the Game 2017, Eindhoven
Structure

1. Introduction

2. Aims and methodology

3. First insights
Introduction

• sexual violence as a long-standing taboo

• few cases public

• lack of empirical studies
Sexual violence – definition

A wide range of harassing and abusive behaviours that are based on the execution of power, subjection and humiliation by means of sexuality
Sexual violence - definition

**Sexual violence without physical contact**
* e.g. sexist jokes, harassing text messages/ images with sexual content, …

**Sexual transgressive behaviour**
* e.g. unwanted touching / massage, Exhibitionism, …

**Sexual violence with physical contact**
* e.g. unnecessary or forced physical contact of a sexual nature, penetration and rape, …
Experiences of sexual violence among squad athletes in Germany (N = 1.799)

37% of athletes have experienced a form of sexual violence in sport

- 16% sexual violence without physical contact
- 18% sexual transgressive behaviour
- 3% sexual violence with physical contact
- 63% no experience of sexual violence

Source: Ohlert, Rau, Rulofs & Allroggen (2016)
Experiences of sexual violence among squad athletes in Germany (N = 1.799)

• 11% of responding athletes have experienced severe and/or continuous sexual violence

• 70% of the affected athletes under the age of 18

• female athletes are significantly more often affected than male athletes

Source: Ohlert, Rau, Rulofs & Allroggen (2016)
Background of VOICE

- only few studies with deep insights into cases
- studies tend to urge the voices of victims/survivors into passivity
- reconstruction of cases is an important resource for knowledge
- stop silencing the victims, give them a voice!

(Fasting & Sand, 2015; Owton & Sparkes, 2015; Hartill, 2014; Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005).
Your voice.
Your life.
Your truth.
(Karen Leach)
Main Aims

1. generate crucial research data on sexual violence in European sport

2. produce a powerful knowledge-exchange and educational resources
**VOICE – Consortium**

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EGLSF – A. Wachter
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EPC – S. Kanfer

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100% Sport
Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft

**Germany**
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Dr. Bettina Rulofs

German Sport Youth
German Child Protection Association
Project design (January 2016 – June 2018)

WP1: Steering, Management & Coordination

WP2: Researching the voices of those affected

WP3: Hearing the voices of those affected

WP4: Exchange of good practice

WP5: Producing educational material

WP6: Knowledge transfer to promote sustainable change
WP 2: Methodology of interview study

• round about 70 interviews with survivors so far
• in-depth informed consent process
• psychological support available
• Intense training and strict guidelines for interviewers
• narrative approach
• the interviewees decide on what and how they recount
First insights from interview study

- long periods of silence
- huge problems of finding support
- family-like structure in sport organizations with close relations
- disciplining regimes (chilly climate, no pain – no gain)
- selection processes in sport - being the “chosen one”
- interrelations of different forms of violence, abuse of power
- massive impact on the life of survivors
WP 3: First insights from national Hearings

- strong wish of survivors to tell their story and to be acknowledged
- the act of sharing the experience relieves from a burden
- listening to the survivors’ reports fosters understanding and promotes concrete action in the field
- starting point for more systematic investigations
- in-depth process of reconciliation is still to come
Thank you for your attention!

http://voicesfortruthanddignity.eu
@voicessport
#voicesfortruthanddignity

Final conference:
3.-5. May 2018 in Bergisch Gladbach (close to Cologne)
References


Statements on the prevention of sexual violence at the level of sport clubs \((N=13.058)\)

- The prevention of sexual violence is a relevant topic for sport clubs. 49%
- Our club has solid knowledge on the prevention of sexual violence. 36%
- Our club takes active measures against sexual violence. 38%

### Prevention activities concerning sexual violence at the level of sport clubs (selection)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Existent</th>
<th>Not Yet Exist.</th>
<th>Not Exist.</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code of good conduct</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police record checks</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention plan to deal with cases</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer for child protection / violence prevention</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular qualification concerning the topic</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Well, the prevention of sexual violence is simply not a primary focus in our organisation. The lead of our organisation does not think it to be important. It sounds sad, when I say, that they don’t take it seriously, but it has no priority for them. This will only change, if a concrete case occurs.

[child protection officer in sport governing body]