

# THE JOURNEY TO DIVERSITY AS A STRATEGIC ACTION AREA IN THE SPORTS CONFEDERATION OF DENMARK

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THE SPORTS CONFEDERATION OF DENMARK WORKS TOGETHER WITH LIVING INSTITUTE TO ACHIEVE CRITICAL BUSINESS OBJECTIVES THROUGH INCREASED DIVERSITY



"LIVING INSTITUTE has given us some tools that make it just as natural to discuss lack of diversity as it is to discuss our financial bottom line."

Frans Hjorth Hammer, Member of the Executive Board of DIF

# THE JOURNEY TO DIVERSITY AS A STRATEGIC ACTION AREA IN THE SPORTS CONFEDERATION OF DENMARK

## SITUATION

### Ambition

At least 30% of the board members in the national sports federations must be comprised of persons whose gender is underrepresented.

The Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) is the unifying organisation of elite and non-elite sports, as well as sports at a business level in Denmark. DIF is an umbrella organisation for 62 national sports federations and has nearly two million members, distributed among 9,000 local sports clubs and associations.

It is DIF's objective that at least 30% of the board members in the national sports federations must be comprised of persons whose gender is underrepresented so that the boards better reflect the gender composition of society.

## SOLUTION

DIF has chosen LIVING INSTITUTE as a strategic cooperation partner in the cultural change process that is needed to increase gender diversity in the boards of the national federations and thus reap the benefits of the related advantages – a better reflection of the population, more innovation and new ways of thinking in what is offered and – most importantly – more active Danish sports enthusiasts in the local sports clubs and associations.

LIVING INSTITUTE consults the Executive Board and the workgroup on the business advantages of increased diversity, how diversity can be turned into a strategic action area and what needs to be done to succeed in practice – from strategic development and ongoing sparring to final implementation.

The strategic cooperation between LIVING INSTITUTE and DIF is divided into four phases. Phase 1 started at the beginning of 2016, while phase 4 will continue in 2018.

### Phase 1: Diversity as a strategic action area



DIF's Executive Board and workgroup must be prepared to make a qualified decision about the extent to which diversity is to become a strategic action area. LIVING INSTITUTE advises the Executive Board and the workgroup on how diversity can help DIF with developing itself as an organisation.

### Phase 2: LIVING INSTITUTE as a strategic sparring partner



On the basis of the introductory phase, the Executive Board decides to make diversity be a strategic action area. Then, the development work is up to the workgroup. During this phase, LIVING INSTITUTE functions as a strategic consultant for the workgroup in creating concrete initiatives that can promote diversity and LIVING INSTITUTE supports the workgroup in preparing a presentation for the Executive Board.

### Phase 3: Implementation workshops across the organisation



The workgroup's initiatives must be approved by the Executive Board and be implemented through a number of workshops, the purpose of which is to provide relevant players from both DIF and the national sports federations with a deep understanding of the action area, including what can be done concretely to promote diversity and how work with diversity can create value for the boards of the national federations.

These implementation workshops will be facilitated by LIVING INSTITUTE for three players in DIF:

- **The internal organisation**, which consists of key DIF employees.
- **Thirteen national sports federation boards**, which also have decided to make diversity be a strategic action area in their strategy agreements with DIF.
- **DIF's Executive Board**, which is to be further trained and updated about the progress of the project.

### Phase 4: Evaluation and involvement of more national sports federations



Right now, LIVING INSTITUTE is working together with the workgroup on implementing exit interviews, which are to clarify reasons for resignations from the boards of the national sports federations, including whether there are special reasons why female board members choose to resign.

In 2018, LIVING INSTITUTE is continuing to provide strategic advice and implementation workshops to DIF's Executive Board and the boards of the national sports federations that are working on diversity.

LIVING INSTITUTE's delivered key insights on UN's Sustainable Goal #5 in DIF's development conference in May 2018.

## EFFECT

### Strengthened collective awareness of diversity as a business accelerator



The cooperation between DIF and LIVING INSTITUTE has led to a broader awareness that diversity is crucial for strengthening DIF and national federations organisationally and for attracting as many active Danish sports enthusiasts as possible. A number of members have also been equipped with practical tools to ensure that increased diversity is translated into concrete value for the business:

*"In November 2017, key employees participated in workshops, and now we have a common language for our unconscious bias and the challenges we confront as an organisation. We are very homogeneous and we are not challenged enough in some areas. We know that we can create better results if we are open to other points of view, and it has been an "aha!" experience for a number of our employees."*

Anne Birgitte Madsen, Consultant at DIF Development

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### Diversity strategy launched in 13 national sports federations

So far, 13 national sports federations have accepted the board's recommendation and made diversity a strategic action area in their strategy agreements with DIF. LIVING INSTITUTE has prepared DIF's board to be able to talk about diversity in a way that the decision makers in the boards of the national federations understand and see the concrete business value of prioritising:



***“LIVING INSTITUTE has prepared us to make it clear to the representatives in the Council that diversity is an important business action area.***

***When we choose new members of the Executive Board, we should not just choose those we know or who we have been on the board with through our political careers. Instead, perhaps we should ask the grass roots and those who are not just like us.”***

Frans Hjorth Hammer, Member of the Executive Board of DIF

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### The diversity agenda is now a strategic top priority in DIF

Diversity has evolved from being "nice to have" to "need to have" and is now one of the absolutely most important strategic priorities in DIF.

Even though the national sports federations create their own strategies, more and more of the boards of the national sports federations have adopted the Executive Board's recommendations, and in DIF, diversity is now in line with other strategic priorities:



***“LIVING INSTITUTE has given us some tools that make it just as natural to discuss lack of diversity as it is to discuss our financial bottom line.”***

Frans Hjorth Hammer, Member of the Executive Board of DIF

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### Diversity is a marathon – not a sprint

DIF has acknowledged that the creation and reaping the benefits of increased diversity is a long-term organisational change process – there are no "quick fixes". The organisation must be able to adapt so that the best talents emerge from the individual national federations, and this must take place through continuously articulating and pursuing the diversity agenda. In addition, DIF is working on actions within competence development, culture change and recruitment to make it more attractive for women to be active in the boards of the national federations:



***“Diversity is not just about gender – it is also about ethnicity and age. Diversity is not an isolated project, but a wider strategic agenda that takes time to implement. It is not a sprint, but a marathon, and it is an organisational change that takes time. Diversity must not be something we do, but something we live.”***

Frans Hjorth Hammer, Member of the Executive Board of DIF

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## ABOUT DIF

The Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) is the unifying organisation of elite and non-elite sports, as well as sports at a business level in Denmark. DIF is an umbrella organisation for 62 national sports federations and has nearly two million members, distributed among 9,000 local sports clubs and associations.

### Situation

It is DIF's objective that at least 30% of the board members in the national sports federations must be comprised of persons whose gender is underrepresented so that the boards better reflect the gender composition of society.

**Practical tools** for translating diversity into concrete value for the business.

**Strategic top priority** in the Executive Board – in line with other strategies.

**Thirteen national sports federation boards**, have made diversity a strategic action area.

### Solution

DIF has chosen LIVING INSTITUTE as a strategic cooperation partner in the cultural change process that is needed to create increased gender diversity, more innovation and new ways of thinking about what is offered and – most importantly – attract more active Danish sports enthusiasts. LIVING INSTITUTE advises the Executive Board and its workgroup, as well as a number of boards of national federations throughout the entire process – from strategy development and ongoing sparring to final implementation.

### Effect

Strengthened collective awareness of diversity as an accelerator for there being more active Danish sports enthusiasts in the national federations. The cooperation with LIVING INSTITUTE has contributed practical tools for translating diversity into concrete value for the business. Diversity is now a strategic top priority in DIF's Executive Board in line with other strategies. Thirteen national sports federations have also made diversity a strategic action area in their strategy agreements with DIF, which apply from 2018-2021.

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## SELECTED CUSTOMERS

SIEMENS



Danske Bank



PANDORA  
UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

**LIVING INSTITUTE** helps companies to take advantage of diversity to achieve and exceed business objectives. Since 2014 we have provided more than 2,000 diversity programmes around the world, and are now regarded as being a market leader in "applied diversity intelligence" – the practical use of research-based knowledge to create better business results through increased diversity – at all levels.

Visit us at [www.livinginstitute.com](http://www.livinginstitute.com)