Final Report – CAAWS Same Game Project:
A Reflection of the Utility and Effectiveness of the Model, Tools, and Resources

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Executive Summary: Overall, the Same Game Model was met with enthusiasm from the participants. Each club representative discussed their appreciation of a model that included tools and resources that would support their push for more equitable and data informed practices in their club. Although a strong platform, each participant noted difficulties in obtaining support (capacity) to move through the Model and each made suggestions on specific steps and/or tools within the Model that could help enhance generalized uptake of the resource within the Canadian sport system. The following pages outline the data that were collected, and recommendations being put forth based on the conclusions from the data. Next steps include attending to the recommended changes to the Same Game Model and writing a manuscript for academic publication.

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Purpose and Rationale of Evaluation: Within Canada, women make up approximately 26.3% of board member positions in National Sport Organizations (CAAWS, 2016). Furthermore, across sport Burton (2015) highlights that women are under-represented in leading positions. This trend in the board room is also represented on the field of play in that there has been a documented decline in female sport participation in Canada from 26% in 1998 to 21% in 2005 to 16% in 2010 (CAAWS, 2016). The purpose of the current project is two-fold; first, to assess the utility of the Same Game Model's steps, tools, and resources in sport clubs. Second, to provide recommendations on how to best implement the Same Game Model with the general sport public.

Contribution to Literature: There is evidence that a focus on gender equity from a holistic organizational perspective can reduce problems associated with gender equity among volunteers, coaches, and key stakeholder groups (Wicker & Breuer, 2013); however, relatively little is known about the policies and programs that take place which may enhance sport organization buy-in, uptake, and implementation of effective female sport programs. Therefore, this study supports an investigation of a current program and applicability of the program in shifting club culture to one that is more accepting of gender diverse programming to increase female sport participation within community sport. This project has the potential to contribute to theoretical knowledge regarding human resource management (HRM) and change, as well as industry knowledge around best practices for achieving gender diversity in sport programming for females.

Specifically, two main bodies of literature influence and are influenced by this evaluation. First, the change literature suggests that multiple steps must be in place to create sustainable change (e.g., Knoster, Villa, & Thousand, 2000). The primary outcome of this literature is that a vision must be defined, a skill set for change among human resources must be in place, incentives have to be emphasized, resources must be attained, and an action plan must be set up to ensure longitudinal change. Without each of these "pieces to the puzzle" there will be confusion, anxiety, resistance, frustration and false starts.

Second, literature regarding management by values (e.g., Bell-Laroche, MacLean, Thibault, & Wolfe, 2014; Kerwin, MacLean, Bell-Laroche, 2014) outlines the role that leadership plays in ensuring collective buy-in to organizational strategy, values, and mission. This research details the need to strategically manage values (e.g., ethical-social values) in order to advance organizational performance. This requires a focus on transformational leadership, rather than transactional leadership, in key stakeholder positions.

Using these two theoretical lenses (strategic change and Management by Values (MBV)), the Same Game Model was evaluated for applicability and effectiveness in the sport club context.

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Project and Background: There were a total of 17 clubs who agreed to work through the Same Game Model for the Canadian Association of Advancement of Women in Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS); ten (10) soccer clubs and seven (7) basketball clubs. Through this project CAAWS worked with two Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs), the Ontario Basketball Association (OBA) and the Ontario Soccer Association (OSA). OBA and OSA member clubs were invited to submit applications through an open application process. OBA and OSA both have a gender equity policy and had at least one staff member connected to the pilot project who were involved in selection of the pilots as well as providing support along with CAAWS. The applications provided club representatives the opportunity to detail a specific gender equity initiative they wished to pursue in their club. The application also outlined the Same Game Model and that successful applicants would need to utilize the Model and provide feedback on its utility through a formal evaluation process led by Brock University. The final 17 clubs were selected based on: the clear statement of their gender equity problem and how the proposed solution would address this problem; and, their understanding that they would be committing to using the Same Game Model/tools and resources to better understand the problem and deliver the solution. When applications were ranked, geography was also taken into consideration to ensure pilots were spread out across the different regions of Ontario. Each club that was selected was given a $500 honorarium to participate as a pilot. It is important to note that three selected club participants (OSA) did not complete the Same Game Model pilot process and/or the research evaluation; two of which did not even cash their cheques.

As noted above, through the application process, participants were asked to identify their willingness to run through the Same Game Model and outline a potential initiative that was of interest to their club to address a gender equity problem. Specifically, each club was asked to work through the Six Steps of the Same Game Model; 1) Collect and Analyze Data, 2) Incorporate Gender Equity in Planning, 3) Communicate Gender Equity Targets, 4) Create Capacity by Train and Educating Leaders and Partners, 5) Engage Women and Girls, and 6) Evaluate. Interestingly, during the focus groups, many individuals identified having an initiative in mind before engaging in the Model, which is somewhat counterintuitive to the first steps of the Model (Collecting Data and Planning); therefore, it is recommended that future users engaging in the Model be given an introduction to Equity and Visioning, but no specific reference to an initiative until the "Engage Women and Girls" step.

During the pilot test, the clubs were given access to the entire Model and were given an overview of the six steps and all resources in an initial online orientation session. Access to the Model was password protected with pilot leads provided with the password making each step and resource available for viewing/completion. The purpose of the pilot project was to have each club run through the entire Model from approximately April 2019 to December 2019.

Research Methodology: Online, emailed survey links were sent to individuals who consented to participate at two time points; 1) pre-application of gender equity program tools (n = 14) and 2)

mid-application of gender equity program tools (n = 9). An attempt was made at sending a third post-application of gender equity program tools survey; however, the response rate was quite low (n =2). Therefore, a quantitative hand-written survey was given to all those who participated in the end point focus groups; of which, six (n = 6) were completed. The purpose of the survey was to explore the characteristics of the pilot club project coordinators, their perceptions of current gender equity practices, their perceptions of the Same Game Model tools, and the outcomes that each participant would like to see (or did see) from the project, at multiple time points. Administering the survey at two time points allowed an analysis to determine if perceptions changed as the program tools and resources were implemented and used.

Participants were also invited to participate in a phone or in-person interview (n = 10 participants) pre-application of the Same Game Model tools and a focus group (n = 8 participants) following the application of the Model program tools and resources. The purpose of the qualitative data collection was is to provide detailed descriptions regarding perceptions of what gender diversity means to participants and their club, and if and how the club already incorporated diversity management strategies to increase gender equitable programs (pre). Further, the post-program focus groups allowed for an exploration of if and how the Same Game Model tools and resources contributed to the creation of a culture of diversity in these clubs and greater uptake of female leadership and sport programs.

Data and Analysis: The following sections are broken down into the data from different data collection strategies.

Surveys

The survey data that were collected asked participants to rate the importance (T1) and effectiveness (T2) of the steps and resources/tools within the Model. Table 1 provides a summary of these results. Further, it is important to note that multiple t-tests were run to determine if there were statistical differences between T1 and T2 scores; none of the scores were statistically different in that the change between T1 to T2 was negligible.

Table 1. The means and standard deviation scores for T1 (perception of importance) and T2 (perception of effectiveness) of each Step in the Same Game Model.

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
[1]T1 M	**5.71**	**6.07**	**6.14**	**6.43**	**6.29**	**5.50**
[2]T1 SD	1.48	1.03	0.83	0.73	0.70	1.50
[3]T2 M	**5.43**	**5.68**	**5.36**	**6.10**	**5.69**	**5.91**
[4]T2 SD	0.16	0.35	0.51	0.13	0.28	0.18
[5]Δ M	**-0.28**	**-0.39**	**-0.79**	**-0.33**	**-0.59**	**0.41**

Notes. [1]T1 mean of perceived importance of each step; [2]T1 standard deviation; [3]T2 mean of perceived effectiveness of each step; [4]T2 standard deviation; [5]Change in mean from T1 to T2.

It is important to recognize that the changes are not statistically significant ($p > .05$), although all but one – the Step 6 scores – do go down in terms of perception of importance to perception of effectiveness of each step. All mean scores remain quite high where the range of scores is 1 to 7, and the variation (SD) is very low for all (.13 to .51). This means that the scores at both time points were consistently high; supporting the (a) steps and (b) resources/tools within the steps were routinely seen as important and effective. Furthermore, **Step 6 went up from T1 to T2** (relatively speaking) in terms of the rating of its relevance to participants; therefore, the participants understand the relevance of evaluation, which highlights the need to make the tools and resources simple and digestible to ensure uptake at this crucial step.

The online surveys also yielded interesting qualitative data regarding the readiness to be involved in a gender equity initiative and the effectiveness of the tools/resources in the Model. Table 2 provides an overview of some of the key themes participants qualitatively added to the surveys.

Table 2. Online Survey Qualitative Comments

Question	Theme	Sample Quotations
Would you have considered your club diverse prior to engaging with the Model?	Diverse players, but no diverse stakeholders	"I say this with a grain of salt, as yes, I do believe we are diverse in terms of our players, no I do not believe we are diverse within our coaching staff, volunteers, or board."
How effective was the gender equity assessment tool?	Very effective	"The self-assessment tool allowed us to recognize how well we currently rank as club in terms of inclusivity and gender equality and start brainstorming what areas need improvement and what areas have been very successful."
	Simplicity is needed	"We are a small staff that works very closely so our perceptions tend to be similar and majority of our membership doesn't have enough information to answer the questions that were asked. They were a little too high level for parents, players, volunteers and part-time staff."
How effective was the data collection tool?	Consider link between tools and steps.	"While I feel this was helpful in identifying gaps, I am not sure it

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		provides you with the appropriate information…"
	Very helpful.	"Identified key areas that we should be aware of - what we are doing well and demographic sections we could focus on."
How effective was the focus group template?	Useful and applicable.	"We ran a focus group and I am a novice and have never ran a focus group before, so the template was extremely useful to help direct my thoughts and shape the questions I asked to participants."
How effective were the tips for organizing and presenting the gender equity information?	Useful.	"Useful - I haven't really formatted everything the way I want yet - but it helped me work through my data findings."
How effective was the keeping the girls in sport e-module?	Needs to be applicable for a variety of stakeholders.	"I am not a coach - so I had a bit of difficulty with the program. I didn't have great context for some of the questions and the dashboards. But I am going to recommend that our staff coaches take the course because it had a lot of great content that I think our coaching staff could leverage."
How effective were the Fact Sheets for communicating Gender Equity Goals and Targets?	Helpful.	"Assisting me on how to release our information and program - I can see the end goal - just need to fill in some of the gaps about how to get there - so this is helping."
	Need to focus on push back.	"More focus on push back would be helpful, this was unexpectedly difficult."
Additional Resources.	Some limited and confusing.	"Photo bank is extremely limited - I use a different resource for photos because I don't find this one helpful - I would have expected more imaging to be available."

"Personally I was confused by the engaging men as allies tool - it didn't really provide any tangible tips or direction." |

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Overall, the qualitative data from the surveys indicated that the steps and resources/tools were rated as important and effective, and the above information provided feedback on which were most effective, and where some suggestions for improvement could be made (i.e., simple resources, and more applicable resources (i.e., e-modules) for a greater number of stakeholder groups).

Finally, a post-survey was sent with little uptake. Therefore, a second attempt to obtain quantitative feedback was made with a pencil and paper questionnaire during the focus groups. Specifically, six (6) participants provided feedback on the quantitative post-survey. When asked if their club had a strategic plan or gender equity policy, five (5) indicated that yes they had an up to date strategic plan, but only two (2) indicated any reference to a gender equity policy. Further, when asked if their club was capable of moving gender equity forward 50.00% indicated "somewhat capable" and 50.00% indicated "absolutely" following engagement with the Same Game Model. Finally, when asked how many paid staff, board members, coaches, and/or referees/officials helped work through the Same Game Model within their clubs. The following results were outlined:
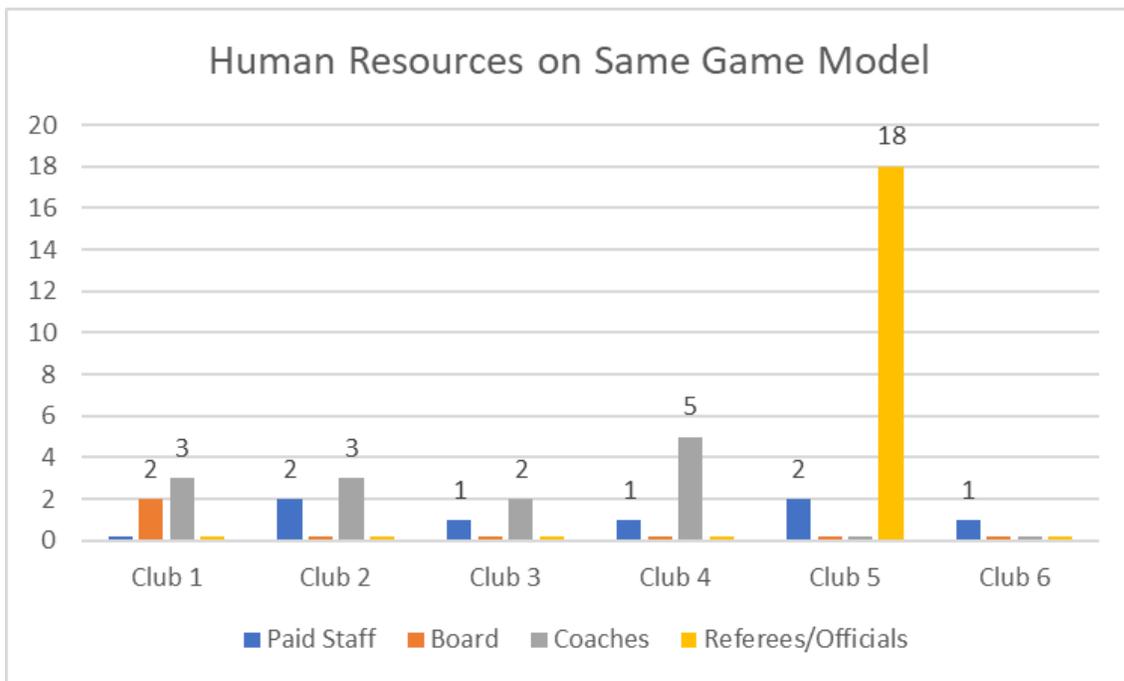

Figure 1. Summary of human resource management support for the Same Game Model participation.

Figure 1 demonstrates the lack of human resource management support within these clubs with regard to working through the Same Game Model. Although support for the Model and its tools was outlined, it is clear that tools and resources need to be more explicitly outlined at the onset
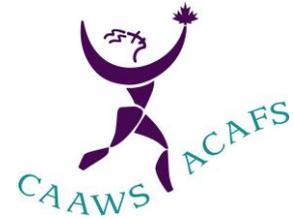
(and throughout) <u>to ensure more buy-in from a variety of stakeholder groups</u>. Here, although some numbers are high (e.g., Club 5 and their connection to referees/officials), there is a clear gap in connecting with all stakeholder groups. The essential piece here is making sure at least one stakeholder from each group is involved in the Model. Further, it is important to note that athletes and parents are absent from the Figure. The implications of this omission on behalf of the participants is outlined in the Conclusions and Recommendations section on page 11.

Interviews

The qualitative data was broken into interview data pre-engagement with the Model and focus group data post-engagement with the Model. The following outlines the key themes from both data sets.

Prior to engaging fully with the Model, ten (10) participants were involved in phone or in-person interviews. The interviews lasted 23 to 74 minutes in length, and asked participants to discuss their readiness to engage in the steps of the Model. Further, participants were asked to comment on various resources and tools within the model; however, it was clear from the onset of the interviews that at the time of the interviews (May and June, 2019) only 3 participants had fully engaged with multiple steps, tools, and resources in the Model. The following themes were derived from the interview data and contributed to the continued discussion of needing a step (or steps) relating to visioning and ***creating readiness and buy-in*** early on in the Model.

Three Key Pre-Interview Themes:
- *<u>Operating on an Island</u>*. Most participants indicated that they were operating alone or with little assistance.
- *<u>No clear vision for Gender Equity</u>*. Many participants noted their club functioned without a policy or values around gender equity. At the time of the interviews, almost all had not gone through the first step of the Model. But those who had, saw incredible value in the ***data collection piece.***
- *<u>Skipping the Beat.</u>* Some participants had skipped ahead to discussing the event/program they wanted to engage in. This emphasized that many participants went forward to Step 5 and then came back to justify their initiative without truly embracing Steps 1-4 to determine the needs of the club and stakeholders. This highlights the need to be able to pull back and make sure users attend to each step/resource.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups took place in November, 2019 and lasted between 2 hours and 13 minutes and 2 hours and 32 minutes in length. The first focus group included 6 individuals and the second included 2 individuals (n = 8). The discussion was geared towards understanding the participants' views of the steps, tools, and resources within the Model as well as their perception of their effectiveness to create a gender equity initiative following the use of the Same Game Model. The following represents the key themes that were derived from the focus group data:

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Key Focus Group Themes:
- *Visioning early and often*. Many of the club representatives outlined the need to establish readiness and gain buy-in from more stakeholders regarding the importance and/or need for the initiatives they were envisioning. In particular, it is important for clubs and organizations to consider a visioning process prior to the first step of data collection.
- *Support from above*. From a local sport club perspective, there needs to be support from the PSO to ensure the visioning process is supported within the Same Game Model. Many club representatives discussed policy statements from their PSO as important to help leverage and understand needs. Clubs should be encouraged to reflect on and adopt gender equity policy statements that directly connect to their PSO. This will create legitimacy and enhance buy-in for the process.
- *The Same Game Model Works, but…*
  - **Step 1 is incredibly useful – when the tools were used.** When Step 1 of the Model was engaged in by participants, the data was shocking and helpful. Specifically, the gender equity assessment was very useful, and the focus group information was extremely helpful and well utilized by many participants.
    - Many noted that it was easy to bypass the steps in the current version of the Model so having it be mandatory to complete each step would have helped participants understand the importance of the step and possibly prevent skipping ahead.
  - **More interaction requested around Step 2 – Planning.** Participants outlined the desire to interact with others during this step to highlight the purpose and goal of planning, prior to engaging with the resources. Of relevance, a number of participants did engage in conference calls periodically through the process. The individuals who were involved in these calls noted them as helpful; however, participants also stated that other ways (e.g., online communication or connections, videos of best practices) of interacting may help as they navigate(d) the Model.
  - **Useful Tables of Resources.** The participants noted the utility and usefulness of the Table of Resources (specifically in reference to the Current Steps 4 and 5). The participants suggested that similar resources be pulled from the non-profit literature to provide more context and examples of Training and Education, as well as Implementation.

Discussion: Through the various stages of data collection (online surveys of the importance of each stage of the model, a preliminary interview, and final focus group and survey), there were routinely three (3) basketball and five (5) soccer representatives who engaged in the evaluation (and by my assumption the steps) of the project. For those who participated, it was clear that they engaged in the Model because they had 1) a champion(s) for change and gender equity within the club, and 2) had a gap or lack of gender equity that needed to be filled in their club. Notably, a

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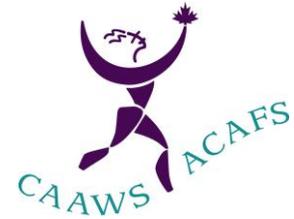
few of the club representatives engaged in gender equity activities who did not readily go through the six steps of the Model; however, these challenges with engaging in the Model were most readily linked to a lack of vision and/or human resources to put towards the Model steps, tools, and resources.

The recommendations that are put forth in the last section of this report (i.e., Conclusions and Recommendations) highlight the need to first provide more upfront information on gender equity to help users determine what their gender equity problem is (or are) and bring users through a process to create a vision for gender equity. This will help users determine the organizational readiness for change, the pushback they may encounter, and keep this information in the fore as they work through the steps of the Model. In this vein, the recommendations are then consistent with Knoster et al.'s process for sustained change Second, the recommendations are put forth in an attempt to engage more human resources in a management by values practice (Bell-Laroche et al., 2014; Kerwin et al., 2014) where more stakeholder groups are encouraged to be involved in the Model to respond to the questions - "how do we get more people on board to HELP?"

Research/pilot Limitations: The research and pilot project included participants that had a lack of capacity to engage in the Model to some degree (as noted above), and therefore the ability to further engage in a research project around their participation in the Same Game Model may have lead to the lack of response rate to certain sections of data collection (i.e., mid and final online surveys, and focus groups). Despite the lower response rate from the 17 clubs who began with the Same Game Model, those who did participate were candid, thoughtful, and fully supportive of the Same Game Model.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Overall, when the participants engaged with the tools in the Model, they found them helpful and effective. The above dialogue outlines suggestions to improve the Model to (1) make it useful for other club/organization reps, (2) enhance buy-in, and (3) enhance the need for users to work through each step (not jump to the concluding steps).

The following provides a list of 10 core recommendations that will help enhance the effectiveness of the Same Game Model to support gender equity initiatives across other sport clubs:

1. Must be mandatory to complete each step before moving ahead. This will help users understand the importance of each step and possibly prevent users from skipping ahead. A dashboard where the steps and inputted data from each step are connected may also highlight the importance of each step.
2. The Model should come in "bite size" pieces. Those who participate should be oriented to the full Model through an introduction but should experience each step piece by piece (in sequence). This should require a user to work through each step before moving on to the next and use the data from the previous step to populate pieces on the next step. This is in line with the Knoster Model where ALL steps in change are strategically linked.

- o Based on the nature of sport, users may also benefit from "winning" at the end of each stage. Once a stage is complete, a badge and/or congratulations should be given.
- o Further, a tip or reminder to post or celebrate their steps on social media could be provided to participants at the end of every stage; this may help to connect users (as requested by participants) outside of formal webinars that may be provided.

3. As noted, many individuals identified having an initiative in mind before engaging in the Model, which is somewhat counterintuitive to the first steps of the Model (Collecting Data and Planning); therefore, it is recommended that those engaging in the Model be given an introduction to Equity and Visioning, but no specific reference to developing an initiative until the "Engage Women and Girls" step.
   - o Within an introductory step, use an educational piece to highlight the difference between equity versus equality.

4. A visioning process at the first stage of the Model will help participants and their stakeholders unlock their unconscious bias that may impact the use of the tools and resources within the Model.
   - o A visioning process is important as those who use the Same Game Model must be willing and able to accept their pre-conceived bias and/or assumptions of what needs to be done in the club/organization.
   - o An effective visioning process will inevitably link gender equity initiatives to strategic plans, vision, a mission, and their PSO – this removes the focus on one person's "passion project" to an embedded decision to incorporate gender equity into club/organization goals and priorities. This initial step is intended to enhance buy-in from multiple stakeholder groups.
   - o Make sure to reflect on the stakeholder groups that are involved with the club (e.g., athletes, coaches, staff, board members, referees and officials) and ensure *at least one person from each of those groups* is involved in the visioning process to create ally-ship and buy-in.
   - o Clubs should be encouraged to reflect on and adopt gender equity policy statements that directly connect to their PSO. This will create legitimacy and enhance buy-in for the visioning process.
   - o It is extremely important that the visioning step emphasizes that it is not realistic that everyone will get on board with the steps in the Model, BUT that it is important to engage as many people in each stakeholder group (see Figure 1) to create a system of allies through the process.

5. Many of the recommendations fall along the lines of creating a community of practice for those who are engaging and using the Same Game Model. A webinar (or some interactive piece), hosted by CAAWS twice a year, may help connect those who are signed up and using the Model.
   - o All participants noted the need for developed "ally-ship" when engaging in the Model; this may be fostered with a platform or area where success stories are shared, and interaction can happen.

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- o Further, the question was raised, do PSOs have an annual summit (like the Soccer Summit) where these club stories and experiences can be shared? This type of sharing event and connection to PSOs should be explored.

6. To help with capacity and understanding of the process required for sustained change, within an orientation and/or introduction provide an outline of the potential length of the Model processes (e.g., 2 to 3 year process) so that individuals understand that this is a long term change process, and not a one-off initiative. Include suggested timelines, examples, and the variation in breadth of plans (i.e., is the club considering initiatives for one stakeholder group or all; athletes, coaches, officials, board/staff as females?).

7. It is important to reflect on where parents should be engaged as important stakeholders in the Model; strategic planning and implementation may be key steps where parents may help female participant and/or leader uptake.

8. Regarding the platform itself, participants noted the need for more videos and/or interactive pieces (i.e., podcasts from successful pilot participant(s)); one participant noted that the font was too small.

9. A number of participants emphasized that more e-modules (i.e., Keeping Girls in Sport) would be helpful. Some found this particular e-module useful and others wanted other options that were relevant to their goals.

10. Regarding specific tools:
    - o Make sure the gender equity assessment is placed at the fore, and also may be a good attachment to a visioning step where stakeholders determine what is meaningful "growth" for their club/organization.
    - o Many participants noted the importance and relevance of the focus group resources. It would be helpful to add a piece on timing of focus groups (e.g., end of season wrap-up, fun day at the beginning of the season, parent nights, etc.)
    - o Step 2, the planning step should be directly linked to data/input from visioning and data collection (i.e., previous steps).
    - o Step 2, highlight the purpose and goal of planning, prior to engaging with the resources.
    - o Step 2, include a more interactive piece (i.e., webinar or podcast, testimonial from exemplar (i.e., Oshawa Kicks Soccer) to highlight the purpose and goal of planning, prior to engaging with the resources.
        - ▪ For example, using SMART Goals that outline timing and incorporate connection to visioning and data collection inputs from Step 1.
        - ▪ Emphasize need to plan for all stakeholder groups - athletes, parents, staff, coaches, referees/officials, and board.
    - o For Steps 4 and 5, participants suggested that similar resources be pulled from the non-profit literature to provide more context and examples of Training and Education, as well as Implementation. The big take away here is that community sport organizations and PSOs need to consider how they may become more connected with the not-for-profit sector; there may be resources that are being missed.

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o   For Step 6, evaluation is essential to be successful, evaluation is often overlooked. Therefore, it is recommended that evaluation tools be simple. It would also be relevant to track the progress of these pilot groups 6-months to a year from now to see if evaluation and/or long-term change has occurred.

Interestingly, many of the focus group participants discussed higher level issues around gender equity in their clubs. For example, first, they discussed adjusting how stakeholders see leaders that involved shifting from a transactional to a transformational style of leadership. Second, they emphasized the social capital that comes with increasing women's involvement in sport and the need to leverage this point in their clubs and through partnerships (i.e., connection to Universities and/or sport management students). Third, they addressed unconscious bias that people hold individually and exists in sport more generally. These are all issues that sport practitioners will think about and/or encounter as the Same Game Model is released and evolves in the industry.

Finally, in addition to recommendations and adjustments to the Model, the next steps from this report include writing a manuscript for academic publication. The manuscript will focus on the utility of the Same Game Model in relation to Knoster et al.'s change model. This step will include consultation with CAAWS, Shelley, PSO representatives, and other interested "gender in sport management" scholars (e.g., Dr. Sarah Liebermann Massey University, NZ).

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