

Interview with ICSSPE's Executive Board Member

Prof. Dr. Karen Petry

- 1. Your academic work extensively spans European and international sport policy, sport for development, and social integration. How do you see ICSSPE's role in shaping sport policy that truly responds to the challenges of globalization, inequality, and sustainable development?**

I see ICSSPE's role threefold: First, as a multidisciplinary international body linking researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, the organisation plays a strategic role in shaping sport policy. Second, the long tradition of the organisation in framing sport as a tool for social justice, ICSSPE advances policies that treat access to physical activity and sport as a public good rather than a privilege. Third, one of ICSSPE's most important functions is translating academic research into policy recommendations.

- 2. Earlier in 2024 you were appointed Co-Chair of the UNESCO Chair on Sport for Development, Peace and Environment. How does this work influence your vision for ICSSPE's engagement with public policy, cross-sector partnerships, and sport as a tool for social and environmental change?**

The UNESCO Research Chair "Sport for Development, Peace and the Environment in a Multidisciplinary and Global Perspective" focuses on sport, physical activity and physical education initiatives and projects that are implemented to respond to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targeted by the United Nations. The Chair brings together experts from all continents, in many languages, on several themes to offer a global, multidisciplinary and collaborative vision of research work between the countries of the so-called "North" and the "South". We think this chair will create a snowball effect to attract other organizations – such as ICSSPE. Therefore, my vision for ICSSPE's engagement is to focus in future not only on the creation of cross-sector partnerships, but as well to place particular importance on disadvantaged and marginalized populations (e.g., refugees, Indigenous people, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, girls and women). And finally, to integrate more organizations and researchers from the "Global South" in order to propose a more systemic and integrative vision.

- 3. Your research includes sport and gender, social work, and inclusion. In your view, what are the most pressing issues around gender equity and social inclusion in sport today, and how can ICSSPE support evidence-based practice and policy in these areas?**

Actually, gender equity as well as social inclusion debates in sport mainly focus girl and women or the so-called "disadvantaged groups" in our societies (e.g. refugees, persons with a low socio-economic background etc.). Programmes, which are designed to improve gender equity often target women and girls only, but gender equity, gender-based violence prevention and improved sexual and reproductive health also require behavior change from men and boys. Same occurs for programmes concerning social inclusion, whereas a change in attitudes and behavior from the so-called "privileged" or host community is required. ICSSPE could support the practice and policy in regards to this shift of perspective and foster allyship among their members.



- 4. Much of your work focuses on monitoring and evaluation, policy advocacy, and international cooperation. Based on this expertise, where do you see opportunities for ICSSPE to strengthen links between research, practice and policymaking, particularly across diverse contexts such as Europe, the Global South, and transnational sport governance?**

ICSSPE could strengthen links between research, practice and policymaking through engaging in policy advocacy. Policy Advocacy is a civil society-led contribution to the formation of relevant policies and helps make vital, relevant information available to key stakeholders who may influence public policy. Actually, there is limited understanding of or support for policy advocacy connecting sport and social transformations in societies around the globe. In order to seek this gap, ICSSPE could - through its wide network of members - contribute to support building relationships with stakeholders from the public sector (such as national governments, UN agencies etc.) and to strengthen the networking between the policy sector, the academic sector and the sport movement.