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(Editor)



*Inspirational women in Europe:
making a difference in physical education,
sport and dance*

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**INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN EUROPE:
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN PHYSICAL
EDUCATION, SPORT AND DANCE**

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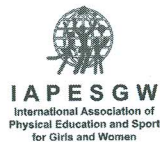
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The Greek Experience: Outstanding Women in the Social Space of Sport

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Abstract

Many inspirational and outstanding women have made a difference in the lives of girls and women in sport, physical education (PE) and physical activity in Greece, despite their *invisibility* in the mainstream media, the life stories of which would need volumes. They succeeded in making a difference while respecting and celebrating diversity with regard to gender, ethnicity, culture, disability, age and sexual orientation. Beginning with a brief discussion on the underrepresentation of women's sports and the female athlete in the Greek media, this chapter shares the contributions of some inspiring and motivating Greek women in sport whose achievements have been excluded from the country's mainstream media. It is through six in-depth interviews and follow-up meetings that we learn how these pioneers influenced the lives of sporting girls and women by daring to disregard social barriers and spread awareness. We conclude the chapter with tips from these *successful*, namely inspirational women, who all agree that success requires ethos and *taking that leap*.

Introduction: The Road is No Longer Full of Thorns

Female presence in Greek sports is low not only with regard to positions of power, alike in other countries, but also with regard to the fundamental level of participation. According to data from the Hellenic General Secretariat of Sports collected for the 2003-2006 three-year period, among the 211.473 athlete identification cards (required to enter a formal competition) issued by 40 Olympic and non-Olympic sports federations only 27%

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