



**Women – new leader’s empowerment in sport and physical
education industry / *NewMiracle***

LESSONS LEARNT REPORT

Grant Agreement No.: 622391-EPP-1-2020-1-LT-SPO-SCP

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2023

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	3
OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES.....	4
IMPACT OF THE PROJECT	5
DIFFICULTIES	6
NEWMIRACLE PROJECT AS GOOD PROJECT PRACTICE	7
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	8
CONCLUSION.....	9

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the NewMiracle project is to develop a unique hands-on sport management training program for new sport leaders complimented with exclusive mentoring package and networking platform for women who just starting sport administration career and to empower them strategically use their strengths and abilities while mastering their collaborative mind set.

Target group of the NewMiracle project is women, young professionals, volunteers and decision makers which are working in sport clubs, sport federations and other organisations in sport sector.

Therefore, our overall objectives of NewMiracle project are:

- to promote gender equality;
- to promote and support women participation in decision making;
- to improve women's self-confidence skills;
- to promote voluntary activities in sport;
- to raise awareness of good practices and success stories to society, in order to enhance more

women in becoming leaders.

The Specific objectives of NewMiracle project are:

- to train and enhance the competences of new leaders in the areas of leadership and middle-management within the sport industry;
- to provide insight and intelligence from mentors in top leadership position to their younger peers;
- to offer free training program for empowerment of women's as new leaders in sport and physical education industry;
- to set an exclusive mentoring platform to support and counsel women as young professionals - sport managers.

OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

The primary goal of the NewMiracle project was to create a distinctive hands-on sports management training program for emerging female leaders, complemented by an exclusive mentoring package and networking platform. This initiative aimed to empower women entering sports administration careers, strategically leveraging their strengths and collaborative mindset to promote gender equality in the sports sector. The project also sought to raise awareness of best practices and success stories, encouraging more women to pursue leadership roles and enhancing their confidence in sports organizations.

Specifically, the NewMiracle project aimed to train and enhance the competencies of new female leaders in leadership and middle-management within the sports industry through a comprehensive training program. Additionally, the project aimed to provide insights and guidance from experienced mentors in leadership positions to their younger counterparts.

The project's innovation lay in the creation of a training program for women as new leaders and middle managers in sports organizations, coupled with mentoring and networking opportunities with established women leaders in the field. The development of the training program involved a desk analysis to understand the essential needs of the target group. Before creating the training materials, it was crucial to identify the key skills required for future leaders. A strategy design report and skill cards were prepared, followed by the establishment of a curriculum with six modules. The modules were named using the keyword "GENDER," with each letter representing an initial of the module title, resulting in a total of six learning pillars and 27 online sub-modules.

Mentoring options were also introduced, with each participant having a designated mentor from different sports organizations. To ensure effective mentorship, all mentors underwent a two-day online training session to acquire necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Subsequently, mentors worked with their mentees on current leadership challenges, providing opportunities for skill development in management, business, networking, and leadership within the sports environment.

Equally, networking platform for women was created where women from the sport industry had an opportunity to pursue their specialized career and connect with peers each and other people from the sector. This was done through the "BECOME A PART" initiative, a tool in on the NewMiracle webpage (<https://newmiracle.eu/>). Additionally, platform offered learning content from the Training program and other sources with practical hands on training materials. The registered community during the project grew up until 98 women sport leaders and 26 mentors from the four partner countries.

The European added value in the project was shown on various levels:

1. Project followed the Commission's approach which is - to provide added value to work at national level by collecting and sharing good practices and providing practical training approaches for women-sport leaders.
2. Mutual learning from each other of the basic principles addressed in the project. Organizations from different EU countries collaborated and explored differences and also identified similarities, promoting best practices in Europe;
3. The different aspects provided by partners from different cultural and institutional backgrounds helped to provide input and to collect information;
4. Organizations from different Baltic countries and middle of Europe collaborated and explored differences and also identified similarities, promoting best practices for women who just starting sport administration career and tried to empower them strategically use their strengths and abilities while mastering their collaborative mindset.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Evaluating the success of the NewMiracle project is crucial for ensuring a lasting impact on its target groups. The project's influence on participants and participating organizations, both during its implementation and in the post-project period, is significant.

To empower young women professionals in sports management skills and foster valuable connections, a training course and networking platform were created. All scheduled national training sessions and international workshops outlined in the project were successfully conducted. Despite the initial projection of 72 women as new leaders in the project proposal, a total of 328 women participated in national training sessions across four different topics. Moreover, approximately 100 of the projected 72 women attended international working sessions in Bratislava, Riga, and Vilnius. Throughout the project implementation phase, 28 mentors actively took part in the program. An unplanned but beneficial addition to the project involved organizing a two-day mentorship workshop to enhance mentors' confidence and provide practical tools for guiding their mentees.

The NewMiracle project brought benefits to local and regional sports governing bodies and clubs. Women emerging as new leaders in the pilot program represented various sports organizations, ranging from clubs and federations to municipal sports departments. Consequently, these women can apply their newly acquired knowledge and strategically leverage their strengths and abilities, enhancing their competitive mindset in the

workplace. Additionally, the networking contacts established through the project will not only advance the individual career paths of these women but also contribute to the overall development of the organizations they represent, where women are actively involved.

The NewMiracle project also brought advantages to consortium partners. Through the collaborative implementation of the project and the collective expertise contributed by all partners, there was a notable expansion of knowledge in educating women who hold managerial positions in the sports sector. This expanded knowledge is anticipated to permeate across all Olympic Committees, with the created materials and training concepts being utilized in the future.

In terms of the project's sustainability, following positive responses from women participants and partner organizations, particularly Olympic Committees, the University of Rome Foro Italico and the NGO organization Inovaciju Akademija express their intent to collaborate further. They aim to develop the created documents and organize training sessions, overseen by specific individuals from each partner organization: LTNOC - Agne Vanagiene, LVNOC - Maruta Taima, SKNOC - Petra Gantnerova, ITNOC – Paolo Pizzo, ENOC - Merle Kaljurand, ITUNI – Laura Capranica, and IA – Tomas Petronis. The ultimate goal is to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities in sports, with plans to attract and disseminate information about the project and its outcomes to other Olympic Committees in Europe.

DIFFICULTIES

From the managerial stand point NewMiracle project had couple difficulties. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent rescheduling of the Olympic summer and winter events project implementation had corrections/difficulties, after the consultations among partners and project coordinator from the EU were decided to extend the NewMiracle project by 6 month. What is more project had some challenges due to some distribution of the work load among project partners and relocation of the foreseen meeting from Rome to Bratislava. From the content creation and execution of the pilot phase all things were going as it was planned with some adjustments on the way, but no major changes or difficulties NewMiracle project consortium engineered.

In general it is important to nationally and at the EU level advocate for policies that promote gender equality in sports leadership. Also, if the training initiative is already in place it is important to provide ongoing support systems, such as mentorship programs and forums for sharing experiences and challenges.

Moreover, from the feedback of the women participants from the training sessions would be beneficial to involve men in women's management training programs as peers. This can bring several benefits. First man perspective brings diverse viewpoints and experiences to the training sessions, enriching discussions and

providing a broader understanding of leadership challenges. Likewise, having men as peers in women's leadership training challenges traditional gender stereotypes and fosters a more inclusive workplace culture, which would promote the idea that organization and leadership skills are not gender-specific. Similarly, men from the same sport sector participating in women's leadership training should gain a better understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities women face in leadership roles, fostering empathy and allyship.

NEWMIRACLE PROJECT AS GOOD PROJECT PRACTICE

NewMiracle project not only serves as a catalyst for change within its partner countries but also positions itself as a beacon of good practices and sustainable efforts in addressing the issue of women's representation in sports management. By adopting a forward-looking approach, emphasizing adaptability, and actively engaging with stakeholders beyond the immediate consortium, the project seeks to leave a lasting imprint on the landscape of gender equality in the sports industry.

By focusing on good practices and sustainability, provides a solid foundation for raising awareness and promoting the critical issue of equal opportunities in the sports industry, particularly concerning women's roles as managers in sports organizations. The project not only serves as a catalyst for change within the partner countries but also offers a valuable starting point for addressing this sensitive issue at a broader level. The sustainability of the NewMiracle project is not confined to the duration of its implementation but extends to a long-term commitment to promoting gender equality in sports leadership. The outcomes of the project are envisioned to transcend the immediate partners and stakeholders. Instead, there is a strategic intent to ensure that the knowledge, best practices, and success stories generated by the project are disseminated widely.

The partnership's commitment to long-term impact is evident in its plan to distribute existing content, continually update materials, and integrate new and state-of-the-art educational practices into training sessions. This forward-looking approach aims to keep the project's resources relevant and responsive to evolving challenges and opportunities in the sports industry. The recognition of the need for adaptability reflects a commitment to sustained effectiveness.

Assigning individuals from each partner organization to further develop the created documents and tailor them to national needs demonstrates a proactive stance toward ensuring that the project's outcomes remain applicable and meaningful in diverse contexts. By engaging with interested stakeholders, including national Olympic Committees, the partnership seeks to amplify the reach of the project's impact, extending its influence beyond the immediate consortium.

The collaborative effort to attract and disseminate information about the NewMiracle project and its outcomes to other Olympic Committees in Europe underscores a commitment to sharing knowledge and

fostering a broader movement towards gender equality in sports leadership. This dissemination strategy aligns with the project's overarching goal of creating a positive ripple effect, inspiring change and promoting equal opportunities across borders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the future training session creation for women sport leaders the recommendations are suggested according the practical experience during NewMiracle project and could be segmented as follow:

- Practical knowledge emphasis: prioritize hands-on, practical training over theoretical content, and include real-life scenarios and case studies relevant to women in sports leadership;
- Balanced mix of theory and practice: while practical knowledge is crucial, maintaining a balanced mix of theory and practice ensures a comprehensive understanding, and connect theoretical concepts to practical applications in the sports leadership context;
- Enrolment women as role models for attendees: showcase successful women leaders in sports as role models and invite them as guest speakers, also share success stories and experiences to inspire and motivate participants;
- Ongoing professional development: provide continuous learning opportunities through webinars, online courses, and workshops to keep women leaders updated on sport industry trends and innovations;
- Feedback mechanisms: establishment of feedback mechanisms to understand the needs and preferences of participants is important. Also, adaptation and refitment of training programs based on the feedback received to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness is essential.

CONCLUSION

The NewMiracle project has successfully achieved its primary objective of developing a unique hands-on sport management training program for new women leaders in the sports industry. The innovative approach, including a mentoring package and networking platform, has empowered women to strategically leverage their strengths and abilities while promoting gender equality in sports administration.

The project's success is evident in the creation of a comprehensive training curriculum with six modules and 27 online sub-modules underpinning the pillars of the program, all centered around the keyword "GENDER." The mentoring option further enhanced the learning experience by providing one-on-one guidance from experienced leaders in the sports sector. The networking platform, with the "BECOME A PART" initiative, facilitated connections among women leaders in sports, fostering a supportive community that grew to include 98 women sport leaders and 26 mentors from partner countries.

The European added value of the project is highlighted through mutual learning, collaboration, and information exchange among organizations from different EU countries. This diversity contributed to the success of the project, as partners explored differences and identified similarities, promoting best practices for women entering sports administration careers.

The project's impact is not only confined to training sessions but extends to the local, regional, national, and European levels. The NewMiracle project has played a vital role in raising awareness about women leaders in the sports industry, contributing to societal change and promoting equal opportunities in sports leadership.

The project's sustainability is emphasized through ongoing commitments from partners to distribute existing content, update materials, and integrate new educational practices. The dissemination strategy, including a brand identity kit, media coverage, and participation in conferences, ensures the project's visibility and long-term impact. Despite challenges, such as adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic and organizational changes, the NewMiracle project has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. The extension of the project duration, relocation of an international workshop, and collaboration among partners have not compromised the quality or objectives of the initiative. Looking forward, the recommendations for future training sessions for women sport leaders include a practical knowledge emphasis, a balanced mix of theory and practice, enrolment of women as role models, ongoing professional development, and feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement.

In summary, the NewMiracle project stands as a beacon of good practices and sustainable efforts in promoting gender equality in sports leadership. Its success lies not only in the achievements during the project period but also in its potential to leave a lasting impact on the landscape of women's representation in the sports industry.