



Equability in and through Handball
Leveraging Women's Inclusion Towards Better Sports for
Everyone

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ORGANIZING A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR FEMALE HANDBALL MANAGERS



Univerza v Ljubljani



BOMOVU
Sosyal Güçlendirme için Spor ve Beden Hareketi



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

FOREWORD

In recent years, the importance of increasing women's representation in sports management has gained well-deserved attention. While progress has been made, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles within the sports industry. Addressing this imbalance requires **structured training programs, mentorship opportunities, and strategic efforts** to equip women with the skills and confidence needed to take on managerial roles.

With this goal in mind, we launched the **EquaWHand Project “–Equability in and through Handball: Leveraging Women’s Inclusion Towards Better Sports for Everyone.”** This initiative was designed to **empower aspiring female handball managers** by providing them with a comprehensive training program that combined theoretical knowledge with practical experience. The project supported around **20 female participants** from diverse backgrounds, giving them the tools to step into leadership positions within handball clubs and the wider sports sector.

The **European Union and Erasmus+ Sport Program** played a crucial role in making this project a reality. Their generous support allowed us to design and implement a well-structured, impactful initiative that addressed the specific challenges women face in sports management. We express our deepest gratitude to the European Union for recognizing the importance of gender equality in sports leadership and for funding this initiative.

The success of the project was made possible by the **collaborative efforts of our international consortium**, which brought together expertise from different sectors of sports and education:

- **The Turkish Handball Federation**, which provided area knowledge, access to professional networks, and practical training opportunities within handball clubs.
- **The University of Ljubljana Faculty of Sports**, which contributed its academic expertise in sports management, ensuring a research-driven, well-structured curriculum.
- **BoMoVu – The Network of Sport and Body Movement for Vulnerable Groups**, a Turkish NGO dedicated to using sports as a tool for social inclusion, ensuring that diversity and accessibility remained central to our approach.

Through **specialized workshops, digital training, internships, and hands-on learning opportunities**, we developed a program that not only **educated but actively prepared** women for leadership roles in sports management. One of the highlights of the project was the **practical implementation of skills**, as participants were tasked with organizing a high-level handball match—an experience that helped them apply their knowledge in a real-world setting.

Why This Guide?

As we conclude this project, we recognize the need to **share our experiences and lessons learned** with other institutions, organizations, and sports federations that may wish to launch similar programs. This booklet serves as a **practical guide** for those looking to develop and implement **a structured training program for female sports managers**.

Inside, we provide **step-by-step recommendations, best practices, and insights** drawn from our experience, covering key aspects such as:

- Selecting and supporting participants from diverse backgrounds
- Developing an effective and future-oriented curriculum
- Ensuring smooth collaboration between project partners
- Securing funding from multiple sources for sustainability
- Combining theoretical learning with hands-on experiences
- Using digital tools to facilitate training and coordination
- Assessing impact and refining the program based on participant feedback.

We believe that creating opportunities for women in sports leadership requires **collective action, knowledge-sharing, and commitment**. By offering this guide, we aim to contribute to a broader movement toward **gender equality in sports management**, ensuring that more women can step into leadership roles and shape the future of handball and sports in general.

We hope that this guide **inspires and supports** organizations, federations, and institutions in their efforts to develop similar programs. By working together, we can make sports leadership more **inclusive, diverse, and representative** of the communities it serves.

The EquaWHand Project Consortium

(Turkish Handball Federation, University of Ljubljana Faculty of Sports, and BoMoVu)

January 2025



Univerza v Ljubljani



PART 1: PLANNING THE PROGRAM

The design of a successful training program is pivotal to its long-term success, especially when developing female leadership within a specific sports domain such as handball. Based on the experiences of the EquaWHand project, we offer a detailed approach to planning a program for training future female handball managers.

1.1. Defining Objectives

Before diving into the specifics of the curriculum, it's important to define the overarching objectives of the program. These objectives should guide the development of the training content, the selection of participants, and the evaluation of the program's impact.

Key Objectives:

- **Empower women for leadership roles:** The program aims to prepare women for managerial positions in handball clubs, ensuring they are equipped with leadership, strategic management, and governance skills necessary to succeed in the sports industry.
- **Promote inclusion and diversity in sports management:** Address the gender gap in handball and sports in general by fostering diversity and inclusion at all levels of sports management.
- **Provide a holistic training experience:** Offer a comprehensive curriculum that balances theoretical knowledge with practical application, using a combination of academic learning, hands-on experiences, internships, and project-based learning.
- **Prepare participants for global opportunities:** Equip women with the necessary skills to work in international contexts, particularly in managing handball clubs, by offering internationally recognized best practices and tools.

1.2. Identifying Target Participants

Effective program planning also involves selecting the right candidates for the training. The ideal participants for this program should be women who demonstrate leadership potential and a genuine interest in pursuing careers in handball management.

Key considerations:

- **Diverse backgrounds:** The program should be inclusive of women from different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and age groups. Ensuring a diverse group helps promote a rich learning environment and reflects the broader context of handball management.
- **Experience and ambition:** While participants with a background in sports (such as players, coaches, or volunteers) are ideal, women from non-sporting backgrounds with leadership potential should also be encouraged to apply. They should demonstrate ambition and the desire to develop a career in sports management.
- **English proficiency:** As global networking and access to international resources are crucial, a minimum level of English proficiency should be required to ensure participants can engage with global best practices.

1.3. Curriculum Development

A comprehensive curriculum is the foundation of any successful training program for female handball managers, providing participants with the knowledge, skills, and practical experience required to excel in leadership roles within sports organizations. The curriculum must evolve to meet the demands of a rapidly changing sports landscape, integrating both traditional and contemporary areas of expertise. Specifically, it should reflect advancements in technology, new regulatory frameworks, and evolving global trends, while also addressing the unique challenges women face in sports leadership.

Key components for curriculum development:

Incorporating core sports management concepts: While the foundational areas of sports management remain essential, the curriculum must be adapted to reflect modern challenges and opportunities. The core topics such as governance, strategic decision-making, leadership, and financial management must be coupled with contemporary subjects, ensuring that participants are well-prepared for managing sports organizations in today's competitive environment.

- **Strategic management:** A solid understanding of strategic management principles is key for any sports leader. The curriculum should focus on how to formulate, implement, and evaluate strategies within the unique context of sports organizations. This includes analyzing competitive landscapes, identifying growth opportunities, and managing resources effectively in a fast-paced, result-driven sector.
- **Sports governance and compliance:** Participants should have an in-depth understanding of the structures and regulatory frameworks that govern sports organizations at local, national, and international levels. This includes not only the governance systems but also how sports organizations must comply with various legal requirements and adhere to ethical standards. A focus on understanding the rights and responsibilities of sports organizations, teams, and athletes is crucial for future leaders.
- **Leadership in sports:** In addition to theoretical leadership models, the curriculum should focus on practical leadership in sports, addressing how to lead diverse teams, foster inclusivity, and drive performance. Female participants should be equipped with the skills to navigate the challenges they may face as women in leadership positions and empowered to adopt inclusive leadership practices.

Incorporating emerging trends and technologies: The sports industry is increasingly influenced by technological advances and global issues such as sustainability and climate change. As part of their training, aspiring female handball managers need to understand how these developments impact sports organizations and their operations. The curriculum should be structured to integrate cutting-edge topics such as digitalization, artificial intelligence (AI), sustainability, and climate adaptation, alongside traditional sports management concepts.

- **Artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics:** AI is becoming integral to many aspects of sports management. From performance tracking and injury prevention to fan engagement and game strategies, AI is reshaping the industry. The curriculum should include hands-on training in AI tools and data analytics, teaching participants how to use data to make informed decisions and improve both player performance and organizational outcomes.
- **Digitalization and sports technology:** As digital platforms become central to sports marketing, fan engagement, and operational management, the curriculum must cover the various aspects of digitalization in sports. This includes an understanding of digital platforms for broadcasting, fan interaction, and data management, as well as how to use social media, websites, and mobile apps to promote events, teams, and sponsors.
- **Sustainability in sports:** Given the global push for sustainability, it is critical to incorporate environmental responsibility into sports management education. The curriculum should cover sustainable practices for event management, facility operations, and even team operations. This includes reducing the carbon footprint of sports events, implementing eco-friendly practices, and understanding the impact of climate change on sports logistics and athlete performance.
- **Climate change adaptation:** Sports organizations need to prepare for the unpredictable effects of climate change, such as extreme weather events, heat stress on athletes, and shifting seasons. A module on climate change and its impact on sports should equip managers with the knowledge to adapt facilities, schedules, and player safety measures accordingly. This may include contingency planning for climate-related disruptions and implementing climate-resilient sports infrastructure.
- **Emerging media and digital content:** Understanding the influence of digital media on sports is becoming increasingly important. The curriculum should include training on the role of social media in sports marketing and fan engagement, content creation, and how digital platforms can be leveraged for better visibility and audience interaction.

Integrating rules and regulations into the curriculum: A comprehensive understanding of rules and regulations is paramount for sports managers, as these laws govern both the gameplay and the operation of sports organizations. The curriculum must include detailed instruction on both the general principles of sports governance and the specific legal frameworks that apply to handball.

- **Handball regulations:** As handball is the primary focus of the training program, participants must gain a thorough understanding of the rules and regulations specific to handball. This includes the international handball federation's rules, safety regulations, and local governing body standards. Understanding how to implement and uphold these regulations in local and international competitions is key for ensuring fair play, player safety, and the integrity of the sport.
- **Legal frameworks and compliance:** Participants should also be trained in the broader legal landscape surrounding sports organizations, including intellectual property laws, sponsorship agreements, contract negotiation, labor laws, and anti-doping regulations. Understanding these legal frameworks is essential for ensuring that sports organizations operate within the bounds of the law and maintain high ethical standards.

- **Conflict resolution and ethics in sports:** The curriculum should address ethical dilemmas and conflict resolution strategies that arise in sports management. This includes handling disputes between athletes, sponsors, or teams, as well as addressing issues such as corruption, match-fixing, and gender discrimination.
Sports governance and institutional structures: Understanding the governance models of sports federations and organizations is crucial. The curriculum should cover the roles of governing bodies, the relationship between national and international federations, and how rules are enforced at different levels. This will help participants navigate the complex regulatory environment of sports and understand their role within it.

Customization to local contexts: While it's important to include global trends and technologies, the curriculum must also be tailored to the local context. Each country has different sports structures, cultural attitudes, and regulatory environments, and the curriculum should be flexible enough to address these variations.

- **Local governance and regulations:** The curriculum should be adapted to reflect the specific governance structures and legal frameworks of the country in which the training takes place. For example, understanding the national handball federation's role, the legal context of sports sponsorship, and the unique challenges facing local women in sports leadership is crucial for ensuring that the curriculum resonates with the participants' real-world challenges.
- **Cultural sensitivity and gender issues:** The program should address the cultural norms, gender issues, and societal expectations that influence the role of women in sports leadership. Topics on overcoming gender biases, fostering inclusivity, and advocating for gender equality within sports institutions are essential components.

By integrating these elements—emerging trends, technological advances, legal frameworks, and gender-specific content—into the curriculum, the training program will not only prepare female handball managers for leadership roles but also equip them with the tools to drive innovation and sustainability within the sports industry. This holistic approach ensures that the curriculum remains dynamic, adaptable, and aligned with the evolving needs of the sports world.

1.4. Hands-on Practice and Experiential Learning

Theory alone is insufficient for preparing effective sports managers; practical application is essential. The curriculum should emphasize real-world learning experiences, where participants can apply the concepts they've learned in actual sports management scenarios.

- **Internships at handball clubs:** As part of the program, participants should complete internships at local handball clubs to gain hands-on experience in managing teams, organizing events, and running day-to-day operations. Internships provide invaluable exposure to the challenges of running a sports organization and help develop practical leadership skills.

- **Organizing a high-level handball match or tournament:** Participants should be involved in organizing an international handball match or tournament. This provides them with a chance to implement their strategic, event management, and leadership skills in a live setting, while also building their professional networks and portfolios.

In addition to the already mentioned internships and organizing high-level matches, there are several more suggestions to further enrich the practical experience of the participants, ensuring they gain hands-on knowledge and experience relevant to their future managerial roles in handball. Additional suggestions for practical application:

- **Job shadowing experienced managers:** One of the most effective ways for participants to learn is by directly observing experienced managers at work. Job shadowing allows them to see firsthand how seasoned professionals handle day-to-day operations, manage teams, and navigate decision-making processes. Each participant could be paired with a mentor from within the handball or sports management industry.
- **Simulated scenarios and role-playing:** While real-world experience is invaluable, simulations also provide a safe environment for learning. Organizing simulated crisis management scenarios, team management exercises, or leadership challenges allows participants to make decisions and see the consequences in a controlled setting. This is particularly useful for building leadership and problem-solving skills.
- **Guest speakers and industry panels:** Inviting prominent figures in the handball and sports management world to speak at workshops or participate in panels offers participants insights from successful role models. This also provides opportunities for networking and allows participants to ask questions about the challenges and opportunities in the industry. Guest speakers can include high-level managers, former players, and legal or sustainability experts in sports.
- **Practical application projects:** Assign participants to lead specific components of ongoing projects, such as developing marketing plans, organizing community outreach programs, or implementing digital transformation strategies for handball clubs. These tasks will allow participants to apply their learning in practical settings and give them ownership over deliverables.
- **Organizing community outreach programs:** Participants should also be involved in initiatives that promote handball within local communities, schools, or universities. Organizing youth tournaments, training camps, or awareness campaigns about the benefits of handball could empower them with project management skills and the ability to work with diverse groups. It also builds relationships with the broader community, which is essential for a successful career in sports management.
- **Building a portfolio of best practices:** As part of the training program, participants could be tasked with building a portfolio of best practices in handball management. This could include case studies, research on global trends, and innovative strategies used in other countries. The portfolio could serve as a personal tool for participants to reflect on their learning journey and be a valuable resource for their future careers.

- **Real-time feedback from coaches and managers:** Providing continuous feedback from mentors and experienced professionals during practical activities is essential for participants' growth. This feedback should be constructive, focused on both strengths and areas for improvement, and aimed at enhancing their decision-making and leadership capabilities in real-world settings.
- **Handling sponsorship and partnership negotiations:** Practical experience in securing sponsorships or managing partnerships can be a key skill for sports managers. Organizing mock negotiation sessions or assisting in securing sponsors for handball events gives participants real insights into the business side of sports management.
- **International study tours or exchanges:** Offering study tours or exchange programs to experience how other countries or regions manage handball at the professional level is another beneficial practical activity. Observing international tournaments, attending global conferences, or visiting renowned handball clubs can expose participants to different perspectives and strategies that they can adapt to their own practices.

1.5. Continuous Evaluation and Feedback

A key aspect of an effective training program is the ability to continuously assess and adjust based on participant needs, progress, and feedback. This ensures that the program stays relevant, effective, and capable of meeting the objectives set out at the beginning.

Here's a more detailed, structured approach to evaluation and feedback:

Ongoing formative assessment: Formative assessments are critical throughout the program to monitor the participants' progress and learning, ensuring they are on track to meet the program's objectives. These assessments are often informal and integrated into the program's daily activities. They could include:

- **Regular self-assessments:** Encourage participants to reflect on their learning journey by completing self-assessments after each module. These could focus on specific skills such as leadership, communication, digital literacy, or financial management. Participants should rate their comfort level with each skill and identify areas for improvement.
- **Peer assessments:** Peer feedback can be a powerful tool for learning. Encourage participants to provide constructive feedback to one another during group exercises, project work, or role-playing activities. This fosters a collaborative learning environment and allows them to practice giving and receiving feedback.
- **Observation and mentoring reports:** Program mentors or experienced managers who are overseeing internships or job shadowing can provide regular reports on participants' performance. This will allow mentors to highlight strengths, areas for improvement, and any ongoing challenges faced by the participants.

Formal assessments and tests: While continuous feedback is important, formal assessments can help measure the participants' mastery of specific topics. These assessments could include:

- **Quizzes and exams:** Short quizzes or exams after each module to test the participants' understanding of core concepts. For example, after the course on "Understanding Handball Regulations," participants could take a short exam on the legal framework of handball to assess their grasp of the material.
- **Project submissions:** Have participants submit detailed projects (such as strategic management plans or sponsorship proposals) at different points during the program. These projects can serve as both an assessment of their learning and a valuable addition to their portfolio.
- **Practical evaluations:** In cases of internships, job shadowing, or event management tasks, formal evaluations should be conducted by the hosting organization or event supervisor. These evaluations should focus on how well participants apply their theoretical knowledge to real-world situations.

Structured feedback sessions: Feedback sessions are a crucial part of the learning process. These sessions should be scheduled regularly throughout the program, offering a structured opportunity for participants to receive input on their progress.

- **Mid-program evaluation:** A formal feedback session should be conducted midway through the program. This session can focus on the curriculum, participants' progress, and any adjustments that may be necessary. Feedback from both participants and instructors should be solicited.
- **Final feedback and reflection:** At the conclusion of the program, participants should engage in a final feedback session. This can include both self-reflection and feedback from instructors or mentors. Participants should be asked to evaluate their growth throughout the program, what skills they've acquired, and what they still need to work on.
- **Exit Interviews:** Conducting one-on-one exit interviews with participants at the end of the program helps gather deeper insights into their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. These interviews should focus on their perceptions of the program's effectiveness, the real-world applicability of what they've learned, and how the program could be refined for future cohorts.

Post-program follow-up and long-term impact assessment: The evaluation process does not stop once the program ends. A critical component of evaluating the program's success is tracking the long-term impact on participants and their careers.

- **Follow-up surveys:** A few months after the program, send participants follow-up surveys to assess how they've applied the skills they learned. This could include tracking their career progression, their involvement in sports management roles, and their application of skills in real-world settings.
- **Networking and alumni engagement:** Maintaining communication with program alumni can provide valuable insights into how the program impacted their careers over time.

PART 2: COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

The importance of strong partnerships in projects like EquaWHand cannot be overstated. A well-structured and coordinated partnership is the backbone of any successful training program. The EquaWHand project demonstrated that bringing together organizations with complementary expertise not only ensures a well-rounded curriculum but also enhances the credibility, efficiency, and sustainability of the program.

A successful collaboration enables:

- **Holistic program development:** Different partners bring specialized knowledge—academic institutions contribute research-based training, sports federations provide real-world applications, and NGOs focus on inclusion and accessibility.
- **Increased funding and resource mobilization:** Strong networks improve access to funding from multiple sources, including EU grants, private donors, and governmental support.
- **Better outreach and recruitment:** Diverse partnerships help reach a wider range of participants, ensuring inclusivity and diversity in selection.
- **Smoother implementation:** Sharing responsibilities leads to better project execution, reducing the burden on any single organization.
- **Sustainability beyond the project's lifespan:** Effective partnerships lay the foundation for long-term impact, ensuring that the initiative continues beyond initial funding cycles.

2.1. Selecting the Right Partners

Choosing the right partners is critical to achieving the project's objectives. Partners should have aligned goals while offering **distinct yet complementary expertise**. A good partnership should be **mutually beneficial** and ensure that each organization adds **unique value**. Below are key criteria when selecting partners:

Criteria	Why It Matters	Examples from EquaWHand
Expertise in Sports Management and Training	Provides credibility and academic rigor in curriculum development.	The University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Sports ensured an evidence-based approach to training.
Direct Connection to Handball and Sports Organizations	Grants access to clubs, mentors, and practical opportunities.	The Turkish Handball Federation provided participants with internships and match organization experience.
Commitment to Women's Inclusion and Gender Equality	Ensures that gender-related challenges are addressed.	The BoMoVu NGO played a crucial role in designing inclusion-focused strategies.
International and Local Reach	Expands participant diversity and cross-border collaboration.	The Slovenian handball community brought an international perspective.
Experience in Managing EU or Internationally Funded Projects	Streamlines financial and administrative processes, ensuring compliance.	Having an experienced EU project manager was instrumental in handling Erasmus+ funding.

Best practices for partner selection:

- Conduct a **needs assessment** before finalizing partnerships to identify specific expertise required.
- Organize **preliminary meetings** with potential partners to ensure compatibility in values and work ethic.
- Prioritize organizations that have a **track record of delivering successful projects** in sports management or gender inclusion.
- Ensure each partner understands the project's vision and is **committed to long-term impact** beyond the funding period.

2.2. Establishing Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Once partners are selected, clearly defining their roles prevents **miscommunication, duplication of efforts, and delays**.

A successful structure involves each partner taking responsibility for specific aspects of the project:

Partner	Key Responsibilities	Why It's Important
University / Research Institution	Curriculum development, academic oversight, training methodology, impact assessment.	Ensures the educational quality and credibility of the program.
Handball Federation / Sports Association	Providing club access, organizing internships, facilitating match organization.	Links theory with practice and opens career pathways for participants.
NGO Focused on Women's Inclusion in Sports	Recruitment of participants, inclusion strategies, advocacy, and mentorship.	Ensures the program supports gender empowerment and reaches a diverse audience.
International Organizations or Funders	Funding, compliance monitoring, visibility, and dissemination.	Ensures financial sustainability and maximizes the project's outreach.

Practical steps to define roles:

- Draft a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** outlining each partner's contributions, rights, and obligations.
- Develop **task allocation charts** to clearly distribute responsibilities and avoid overlaps.
- Conduct **kick-off workshops** to clarify expectations and establish a collaborative work culture.

2.3. Communication and Coordination Mechanisms

Effective communication is **the key to smooth project execution**. Miscommunication can lead to **delays, resource wastage, and conflicts** among partners.

Recommended communication strategies:

- Regular virtual and in-person meetings
 - Weekly updates within internal teams.
 - Monthly coordination calls among partners.
 - Quarterly in-person meetings for milestone evaluations.
- Digital project management tools
 - Slack / Microsoft Teams → Real-time discussions and file sharing.
 - Trello / Asana → Task tracking and workflow management.
 - Google Drive / Notion → Centralized document storage.
- Transparent reporting structures
 - Progress reports every 3-6 months to track deliverables.
 - Mid-term evaluation meetings to assess challenges and adjust plans.
 - Final impact assessment to measure success and document learnings.
- Conflict resolution mechanisms
 - Establish a protocol for resolving disagreements (e.g., escalation to a neutral third party).
 - Conduct regular check-ins to address potential concerns before they escalate.

2.4. Ensuring Continuous Collaboration and Adaptability

Maintaining Long-Term Collaboration:

- **Encourage joint decision-making** to build trust and accountability.
- **Conduct periodic partner assessments** to refine collaboration strategies.
- **Share successes and failures** openly to improve future projects.

Adapting to Changing Circumstances: The sports industry is **constantly evolving** due to technological advancements, policy changes, and societal trends. A project should remain flexible and adapt to:

- **New management trends** (e.g., AI-driven decision-making in sports).
- **Sustainability concerns** (e.g., reducing the carbon footprint of sporting events).
- **Gender policy shifts** (e.g., changing global standards for women's leadership in sports).

2.5. Lessons Learned from the EquaWProject

- **Balanced contributions are essential:** Every partner should bring something unique; one organization should not dominate the project.
- **Clear communication prevents delays:** Structured updates and quick responses keep everything on track.
- **International collaboration requires cultural sensitivity:** Be mindful of different work styles, legal frameworks, and social expectations across countries.
- **A contingency plan is crucial:** Unforeseen challenges (e.g., funding delays, participant dropouts) require flexible solutions to keep the project moving.

PART 3: FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Funding is one of the most crucial elements in successfully organizing a training program for female handball managers. A well-planned and well-financed program allows organizers to:

- Deliver high-quality training with expert instructors.
- Cover operational costs such as venue rentals, digital tools, and travel expenses.
- Provide financial support to participants from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Ensure sustainability and continuity of the program beyond its initial phase.

Diversifying funding sources is essential to mitigate financial risks. Relying on a single donor or funding mechanism can create instability, especially if there are delays in fund disbursement or unexpected budget constraints.

3.1. Potential Funding Sources

A mix of institutional, corporate, and alternative funding sources ensures financial stability. The following table outlines potential funding sources along with their advantages and challenges:

Funding Source	Description	Advantages	Challenges
Erasmus+ Sport Programme (EU Funding)	Provides grants for sports-related projects, especially those promoting inclusion, gender equality, and grassroots sports development.	High credibility, large-scale funding, access to EU networks.	Highly competitive application process, complex reporting requirements.
National Government Grants and Sports Federations	Ministries of sports, education, or gender equality, along with national sports federations, often provide financial support for initiatives that align with national policies.	Stable funding, recognition from national institutions.	Bureaucratic application and approval process, risk of political influence.
Municipal and Regional Government Support	Local governments may offer grants for community-oriented sports programs.	Easier access compared to national-level funding, potential for long-term local support.	Limited funding amounts, may require local partnership commitments.
Corporate Sponsorships	Businesses in sectors such as sportswear, nutrition, and media often fund sports-related initiatives for brand visibility.	Potential for large financial backing, branding opportunities for sponsors.	Requires strong networking and convincing pitch, sponsors may demand commercial returns.
Foundations and NGOs	Organizations supporting gender inclusion and sports development may offer financial and in-kind support.	Aligned objectives, expertise in gender-related projects.	Competitive selection process, may require co-funding.
Crowdfunding and Public Donations	Online fundraising platforms such as GoFundMe or Kickstarter can mobilize public support.	Engages the community, flexible funding model.	Requires a strong digital marketing strategy, unpredictable financial returns.

3.2. Developing a Funding Strategy

A well-defined funding strategy ensures that financial needs are met throughout the program. The following steps outline an effective approach:

Step 1: Identifying suitable funding sources

- Research different funding sources that align with the program's objectives.
- Assess their eligibility criteria, application deadlines, and reporting requirements.
- Establish connections with grant officers, potential sponsors, and funding organizations.

Step 2: Crafting a strong funding proposal: A well-prepared proposal increases the chances of securing financial support. A compelling proposal should include:

- Introduction and justification – Explain the need for training female handball managers and its impact on gender inclusion in sports.
- Program objectives – Clearly define what the project aims to achieve.
- Activities and Implementation Plan – Detail how the training will be conducted, including workshops, digital training, internships, and practical experiences.
- Expected outcomes – Describe the short- and long-term benefits, such as increased female leadership in handball management.
- Budget breakdown – Provide a transparent budget estimate. An accurate and realistic budget is essential for program success. It should account for all necessary expenses while ensuring cost-effectiveness.
- Sustainability plan – Explain how the program will continue beyond the initial funding phase.
- Monitoring and evaluation Plan – Outline methods for measuring impact and ensuring financial accountability.

Step 3: Diversifying funding sources

- Secure multiple funding streams to avoid reliance on a single source.
- Combine institutional grants with corporate sponsorships.
- Leverage small-scale contributions from local businesses and community-based organizations.

3.3. Managing Funds Effectively

Proper financial management is essential to ensure the smooth implementation of the training program while maintaining donor confidence. Transparency and accountability in fund allocation help prevent mismanagement and build credibility with funding organizations.

To maintain financial transparency, organizers should keep detailed records of all expenses and receipts. A dedicated bank account for project funds is recommended to separate project finances from other financial activities. Using standardized accounting practices ensures that all income and expenditures are properly documented and categorized.

Various financial management tools can be employed depending on the scale of the project. For small projects, Excel spreadsheets may suffice, while medium to large projects with multiple funding sources may require special software. Large-scale grants with complex reporting requirements can benefit from specialized grants management software too.

Regular financial reporting is another key aspect of fund management. Project organizers should submit periodic financial reports to donors and stakeholders, outlining how the funds have been used. Conducting internal financial audits ensures compliance with donor guidelines and prevents financial irregularities. Additionally, allocating budget reviews at key project milestones allows for the tracking of actual expenditures against planned costs, helping project teams identify and address any financial discrepancies early on.

When handling funding disbursements, it is important to plan the release of funds in alignment with project activities. Rather than receiving the entire grant in a single lump sum, funds should be allocated in tranches based on project phases to prevent overspending. This approach ensures that money is available when needed while also enforcing financial discipline. Adhering strictly to donor guidelines regarding fund usage is critical to avoid issues with funding agencies and to maintain eligibility for future grants.

3.4. Sustainability and Long-Term Funding

Ensuring the sustainability of the program beyond its initial funding phase requires careful long-term financial planning. Building strong, long-term partnerships with donors, sponsors, and institutions is an effective strategy. By demonstrating measurable impact through detailed reports, organizers can justify continued support and attract new funding sources. Maintaining ongoing relationships with funding organizations also increases the likelihood of securing multi-year funding commitments.

Generating revenue streams is another way to sustain the program financially. One approach is to offer paid training modules for advanced learners who wish to develop specialized skills beyond the basic program. Additionally, project organizers could develop consulting services for sports federations and clubs looking to implement gender-inclusive management training. These alternative income sources can help reduce reliance on external grants.

Recurring grant applications should be an integral part of sustainability efforts. Organizers should maintain a funding calendar to track application deadlines and continuously search for new funding opportunities. By proactively applying for grants from various sources, the program can secure a steady flow of financial support.

Another important strategy for long-term sustainability is engaging alumni networks in the case of repeated programs. Participants who have successfully completed the program before can contribute to its continuity in multiple ways. Some may offer financial support, while others can serve as mentors or ambassadors, helping attract new donors and sponsors. Additionally, alumni can leverage their professional networks to create new funding opportunities for the program.

By integrating these financial sustainability strategies, the training program can continue to support female handball managers well into the future, ensuring long-term impact on gender inclusion in sports management.

PART 4: DIGITAL TOOLS AND METHODS

The integration of digital tools in training programs offers numerous benefits, including:

- **Environmental sustainability:** Reducing the need for printed materials and physical travel lowers the project's carbon footprint.
- **Cost efficiency:** Online training sessions save money on logistics, accommodation, and venue costs.
- **Accessibility and inclusivity:** Digital platforms allow participants from remote areas to engage in training programs without geographical limitations.
- **Flexibility:** Digital tools offer asynchronous learning options, enabling participants to study at their own pace.
- **Data tracking and evaluation:** Digital platforms provide real-time tracking of participant engagement and performance, making it easier to assess the program's impact.

4.1. Recommended Digital Platforms and Tools

To ensure an efficient and engaging digital training experience, it is crucial to select the right tools for communication, training, collaboration, and evaluation. The table below provides an overview of recommended tools based on their functions.

Category	Recommended Tools	Purpose
Video Conferencing	Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet	Conduct live online workshops, meetings, and discussions.
Learning Management Systems (LMS)	Moodle, Google Classroom, TalentLMS	Organize training modules, assignments, and track progress.
Collaboration and Communication	Slack, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp	Facilitate real-time communication and teamwork.
Digital Content Creation	Canva, Prezi, Microsoft Sway	Design engaging training materials, presentations, and reports.
Project Management	Trello, Asana, Monday.com	Plan activities, track progress, and manage team tasks.
Survey and Feedback Collection	Google Forms, Typeform, SurveyMonkey	Gather feedback, conduct evaluations, and assess impact.
File Sharing and Cloud Storage	Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive	Store and share documents, presentations, and training materials.

4.2. Setting Up a Digital Infrastructure

Before launching a training program, organizers should establish a strong digital infrastructure to support smooth operations. Here's a step-by-step guide:

Assess technological readiness:

- Ensure that all participants have access to necessary devices (laptop, tablet, smartphone).

- Provide basic digital literacy training if needed.
- Check internet connectivity and provide support for those with limited access.

Choose the right platforms:

- Select a Learning Management System (LMS) to centralize course materials.
- Use a combination of video conferencing tools and messaging platforms to facilitate discussions.

Develop a digital training plan:

- Schedule live and recorded sessions to accommodate different time zones and availability.
- Offer both synchronous (live) and asynchronous (self-paced) learning options.

Ensure data security and privacy:

- Use password-protected meetings and document-sharing settings.
- Ensure compliance with GDPR or other relevant data protection laws.

Train facilitators and participants:

- Provide guidelines on using digital tools effectively.
- Conduct orientation sessions to familiarize participants with the platforms.

4.3. Best Practices for Conducting Digital Training

To enhance engagement and learning outcomes in an online setting, the following best practices should be adopted:

Use interactive learning methods: Instead of one-way lectures, incorporate interactive elements such as:

- Breakout rooms for small group discussions.
- Live polls and QandA sessions to encourage participation.
- Gamification techniques (quizzes, leaderboards, certificates) to boost motivation.

Combine synchronous and asynchronous learning:

- Live (synchronous) sessions should focus on interaction, discussion, and Q&A.
- Recorded (asynchronous) sessions should be available for those who cannot attend live.
- Use discussion forums (e.g., Google Classroom or Slack) to facilitate continued learning.

Monitor engagement and progress:

- Regularly track attendance and participation in live sessions.
- Assign short quizzes or reflective exercises after each module.
- Conduct periodic one-on-one check-ins with participants to address challenges.

Provide technical support:

- Have a dedicated IT support contact for troubleshooting digital issues.
- Offer a FAQ section or short tutorial videos for common tech problems.

4.4 Challenges and Solutions in Digital Training

Challenge	Possible Solution
Low digital literacy among some participants	Offer pre-training workshops on digital tools before starting the main program.
Internet connectivity issues	Provide downloadable materials and recorded sessions for offline access.
Limited engagement in online settings	Use interactive activities, case studies, and practical exercises to maintain interest.
Difficulty in tracking progress	Utilize LMS analytics and periodic assessments to monitor learning outcomes.
Privacy and security concerns	Implement secure login systems and train participants on online safety.

4.5. Summary Checklist for Implementing Digital Training

- ☒ Ensure all participants have access to necessary digital tools and internet connectivity.
- ☒ Choose the right combination of platforms for video conferencing, content delivery, and communication.
- ☒ Provide an initial orientation session on using digital tools.
- ☒ Structure the program to include interactive and engaging elements.
- ☒ Regularly assess participant engagement and provide personalized feedback.
- ☒ Have contingency plans for technical issues.
- ☒ Document best practices and lessons learned for future improvements.

PART 5: RULES OF CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS

Establishing clear rules of conduct and expectations is crucial for the success of a training program for female handball managers. These guidelines ensure that participants maintain professional behavior, engage actively in learning activities, and contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment. This section outlines the key principles and policies that govern participant conduct, rights, responsibilities, and disciplinary measures.

5.1. Setting Clear Expectations

From the outset, participants should be fully informed about the structure of the program, expected behavior, learning objectives, and their rights and responsibilities. A well-defined framework helps prevent misunderstandings and fosters a supportive learning environment.

Program structure and learning outcomes: Each participant should be provided with a comprehensive **participant handbook/manual** or orientation document detailing:

- The overall structure of the program, including workshops, online and in-person sessions, and practical experiences.
- The objectives of the training, such as developing strategic management skills, understanding handball governance, and gaining hands-on experience.
- The expected learning outcomes, ensuring that participants know what skills and knowledge they will acquire by the end of the program.
- The mode of delivery for different components (e.g., digital training, face-to-face workshops, internships).
- Assessment methods, including participation in discussions, completion of projects, and evaluation of practical assignments.

Code of participation: To foster a productive learning environment, all participants must:

- Attend all scheduled training sessions and activities. Absences should be communicated in advance with valid reasons.
- Be punctual for workshops, digital training, and meetings. Late arrivals disrupt learning.
- Engage in discussions and activities with professionalism and respect for peers and trainers.
- Actively contribute to group tasks, case studies, and practical exercises.
- Demonstrate open-mindedness and inclusivity, respecting diverse perspectives and experiences.

5.2. Code of Conduct for Participants

The program promotes a **positive, inclusive, and professional** environment. All participants must adhere to the following behavioral guidelines:

Professional behavior:

- Participants should conduct themselves with integrity, honesty, and accountability in all program-related activities.
- Foster a supportive and respectful environment where everyone feels valued.
- Avoid behaviors that may disrupt learning or create discomfort for others.
- Dress appropriately for all events, including online sessions, maintaining a professional appearance.
- Maintain a positive attitude towards learning, collaboration, and feedback.

Academic and ethical integrity: Ethical behavior in academic and practical training is essential. Participants must:

- Complete assignments, projects, and practical activities with authentic effort and originality.
- Refrain from plagiarism, cheating, or misrepresenting information in any form.
- Acknowledge sources when using external data, reports, or references in their work.
- Report any unethical behavior observed within the program to the appropriate authority.

Confidentiality and data protection: Given the professional and managerial focus of the program, participants may access sensitive information. It is essential to:

- Respect confidentiality when discussing internal matters of sports organizations.
- Keep personal information of fellow participants and trainers private and secure.
- Obtain explicit permission before sharing photos, recordings, or notes from program sessions.

Digital etiquette for online training: As digital training is an integral part of the program, participants must adhere to proper digital etiquette:

- Join virtual sessions on time and ensure a quiet, professional setting.
- Turn on cameras when required to encourage active engagement.
- Use a neutral background and maintain professional posture.
- Mute microphones when not speaking to avoid background noise.
- Avoid side conversations, multitasking, or distractions during online sessions.
- Communicate professionally in emails, online discussions, and chats.

5.3 Participants' Rights and Responsibilities

Each participant is entitled to:

- A high-quality educational experience with well-structured training.
- Access to qualified trainers, mentors, and sports experts for guidance.
- An inclusive and supportive learning environment free from discrimination.

- The ability to voice concerns, provide feedback, and ask questions without fear of criticism.
- One-on-one mentorship to discuss career aspirations and challenges.
- Networking opportunities with professionals and organizations in the sports industry.

To benefit fully from the program, participants are expected to:

- Commit time and effort to complete the program successfully.
- Approach learning with curiosity, dedication, and enthusiasm.
- Maintain regular communication with program coordinators regarding any challenges.
- Participate in program evaluations and feedback sessions to improve future initiatives.
- Uphold the program's values and represent it positively in professional and public settings.

5.4. Disciplinary Actions and Conflict Resolution

A structured approach to handling misconduct or disputes ensures that all issues are addressed fairly and consistently.

Misconduct can include disruptive behavior, unprofessionalism, plagiarism, harassment, or repeated absences. If a participant violates the code of conduct, the following steps will be taken:

- First Warning – A verbal or written warning will be issued for minor infractions.
- Second Warning – A formal meeting with program coordinators will be conducted to discuss the issue.
- Final Action – Depending on the severity of the issue, the participant may be placed on probation, suspended from activities, or dismissed from the program.

Any form of harassment or discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or background is strictly prohibited. Participants experiencing or witnessing such behavior should:

- Report concerns to the program coordinators or designated ombudsperson.
- Expect confidentiality and impartiality in handling the case.
- Be assured that appropriate action will be taken against offenders.

Conflicts between participants, trainers, or program staff should be resolved through a structured mediation process:

- Step 1: Encourage direct open communication between the parties involved.
- Step 2: If unresolved, escalate the issue to a designated program mediator.
- Step 3: If necessary, involve external arbitrators for final resolution.

Maintaining an **atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation** is essential to ensure the program's success.

PART 6: DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Disseminating the findings and outcomes of a training program is crucial for maximizing its impact. A well-planned dissemination strategy ensures that the knowledge, best practices, and experiences gained throughout the project reach a wider audience, including policymakers, sports federations, handball clubs, academia, and future program organizers. The dissemination process contributes to:

- Raising awareness about the importance of women's inclusion in sports management
- Encouraging other institutions to replicate or adapt the training model
- Securing continued support from stakeholders and potential funders
- Strengthening networks within the sports management and gender equality sectors

To achieve these goals, it is essential to use diverse dissemination methods, ranging from academic research to mainstream media and direct engagement with relevant stakeholders.

6.1. Target Audiences for Dissemination

For effective dissemination, it is important to identify the key audiences who can benefit from and help expand the program's reach. These include:

- Sports federations and clubs: To encourage the adoption of similar training programs for female managers
- Policy makers and government agencies: To advocate for policies promoting gender inclusivity in sports management
- Academic institutions: To integrate the project's findings into sports management and gender studies curricula
- Funding bodies and donors: To secure financial support for future training initiatives
- Media and the general public: To raise awareness about the need for gender-balanced sports leadership
- Past and future participants: To create an alumni network that fosters long-term engagement and mentorship

Each audience requires a tailored approach to effectively communicate the project's impact.

6.2. Strategies for Effective Dissemination

The dissemination strategy should leverage multiple channels to maximize reach and engagement.

Academic and research-based dissemination:

- Publishing reports and articles:
 - Develop a comprehensive final report summarizing key findings, challenges, and recommendations.
 - Publish research papers in sports management and gender studies journals.
 - Collaborate with universities to integrate findings into academic programs.
 -

- Presenting at conferences and workshops:
- Organize panel discussions at international sports and gender equality conferences.
- Submit presentations to events hosted by organizations such as the European Handball Federation (EHF) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- Hosting webinars and roundtable discussions:
 - Invite experts in sports management and gender equality to discuss the project's outcomes.
 - Provide an open-access platform for stakeholders to exchange insights and strategies.

Media and public outreach:

- Press releases and news articles:
 - Issue press releases about the project's achievements to sports news agencies and mainstream media.
 - Publish articles and op-eds in newspapers, sports magazines, and online platforms.
- Social media campaigns:
 - Share success stories of participants on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.
 - Use hashtags such as #WomenInSportsManagement, #WomeninHandball, #EquaWHand, and #BetterSportsForEveryone to increase visibility.
 - Create short video testimonials of participants describing their experiences.
- Engaging influencers and ambassadors:
 - Collaborate with well-known athletes, sports managers, and gender equality advocates to amplify the message.
 - Encourage former participants to act as ambassadors, sharing their career progress after the program.

Direct engagement with sports organizations and policymakers:

- Organizing stakeholder meetings:
 - Set up meetings with national and regional sports federations to discuss the project's impact and encourage them to adopt similar training programs.
 - Present findings to local and international government bodies responsible for sports and gender policies.
- Developing policy briefs:
 - Create concise, actionable policy recommendations based on project findings.
 - Distribute these briefs to ministries of sports, national Olympic committees, and EU institutions.

Creating a knowledge hub:

- Developing an online resource platform:
 - Establish a website or digital repository where all materials (curriculum, best practices, participant testimonials) can be accessed.
 - Include downloadable templates for program organizers.
- Building a community of practice:
 - Form an online discussion forum where past and future participants can connect and share experiences.
 - Organize periodic virtual meet-ups to sustain engagement and mentorship.

6.3. Measuring Dissemination Success

To ensure the effectiveness of dissemination efforts, it is necessary to track key performance indicators (KPIs), such as:

- **Media reach:** Number of articles, social media impressions, and news mentions
- **Engagement levels:** Participation in webinars, downloads of resources, and responses to surveys
- **Policy adoption:** Instances where recommendations are implemented in sports organizations
- **Replication of the program:** Number of institutions expressing interest in running similar training initiatives

Regular assessment of dissemination activities helps refine strategies and sustain long-term impact.

6.4. Sustainability of Dissemination Efforts

Dissemination should not be a one-time effort but an ongoing process. Strategies for sustaining long-term dissemination include:

- Establishing formal partnerships with academic institutions, sports federations, and NGOs for continuous knowledge exchange
- Developing alumni engagement programs to keep past participants involved as mentors and advocates
- Creating a funding strategy to maintain digital platforms and annual networking events

By adopting a structured and multi-channel dissemination approach, the impact of the project can extend far beyond its initial implementation, fostering greater gender diversity and inclusivity in handball/sports leadership worldwide.

PART 7: LONG-TERM IMPACT AND ADAPTATION

To ensure the long-term success and relevance of the project to be organized, it is essential to focus on sustainability and adaptability. This section outlines strategies for maintaining the positive impact of the program after its completion, empowering participants to thrive in their careers, and adapting the program to meet emerging trends and local challenges. By creating ongoing support networks, integrating current and future developments in sports, and tailoring the program to the unique needs of different regions, one can ensure lasting change and continued growth in women's leadership within handball management.

7.1. Sustaining Change

To ensure that the positive impact of the program continues well beyond its completion, a structured approach to sustainability is necessary. Key strategies include creating pathways for continued learning, supporting the professional development of participants, and embedding the program within the larger sports community.

Establishing post-program support networks:

- Alumni network:
 - Create a network of past participants to facilitate knowledge-sharing, mentorship, and ongoing support.
 - Organize regular reunions, webinars, or workshops to keep the alumni engaged.
 - Example: Alumni could be invited to participate in future training sessions as guest speakers or mentors, providing real-world examples of how the training has impacted their careers.
- Mentorship programs:
 - Pair new participants with alumni for ongoing guidance and career advice.
 - Mentorship can continue via digital platforms or regular meet-ups, allowing mentees to stay connected with role models and peers.
- Tracking career progress:
 - Develop a system to track the career progress of past participants, which can be a powerful tool to evaluate the long-term impact of the program and identify areas for improvement.
 - Example: A regular survey or follow-up interviews can be conducted to measure the career advancement of participants (e.g., moving into managerial roles, obtaining leadership positions in handball clubs, etc.).

Encouraging leadership roles:

- Positioning participants in decision-making roles:

- Encourage participants to take on leadership positions within their local handball clubs or sports organizations.
- Identify job openings or opportunities for them within the broader sports management ecosystem.
- Support participants by creating a database of job opportunities where they can contribute the strategic management skills acquired during the program.
- Leadership development programs:
 - Design specialized leadership programs for alumni who wish to continue their professional growth. This will help maintain a steady pipeline of women in managerial roles in handball clubs.

7.2. Adapting the Program for Future Generations

Adapting the training program to meet emerging trends and challenges in sports management, as well as addressing changes in the socio-economic, technological, and environmental landscape, is essential for the program's long-term relevance and effectiveness.

Emerging trends and areas of focus: As the sports industry evolves, new challenges and trends may require program modifications. Below is a table of emerging factors that should be integrated into the curriculum and training activities.

Emerging Trend	Required Adaptation	Example Application
Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Sports	Incorporate modules on AI applications in sports management (e.g., data analysis, fan engagement, performance tracking).	Participants can learn how AI tools can assist in decision-making processes, enhance team performance analysis, and optimize marketing strategies.
Climate Change and Sustainability	Introduce sustainability practices in sports facility management and event planning.	Train participants on creating eco-friendly handball events or minimizing the environmental impact of their club's operations.
Digitalization and Virtual Events	Expand training on digital marketing, social media engagement, and virtual event organization.	Participants can organize online tournaments or virtual fan interactions, enhancing their digital presence and audience engagement.
Increased Focus on Mental Health	Include modules on athlete well-being and mental health awareness, especially in leadership roles.	Train participants to recognize signs of mental health issues in players and create supportive environments in their clubs.
Globalization of Sports	Address the impact of international partnerships, foreign players, and cross-border collaborations in handball.	Participants will learn about managing culturally diverse teams and the importance of global networking in handball administration.

Tailoring the program for local contexts: The success of the program hinges on adapting it to the specific socio-cultural and economic conditions of each location. Key considerations for local adaptation include:

- Cultural sensitivity: Recognize that gender roles and expectations may differ across regions. Training should reflect local attitudes toward women in leadership positions, providing participants with strategies to navigate these challenges.
- Economic considerations: Tailor the program's content to address the financial realities of the local context. For instance, if operating in a lower-income region, focus on cost-effective management practices or seeking non-traditional funding sources for sports clubs.
- Social norms and expectations: Adapt the training to the prevailing social norms regarding women's participation in sports. In some regions, there may be greater resistance to women taking leadership roles, and thus the curriculum should include empowerment-focused modules to combat such barriers.

Regular program evaluation:

- Feedback mechanisms:
 - Implement ongoing surveys or feedback tools to gather insights from participants, alumni, and project partners. This feedback should inform the continuous improvement of the program.
 - Example: After each session or workshop, participants could rate the usefulness of the content, and their suggestions for additional topics could be incorporated in future iterations.
- Measuring long-term Impact:
 - Develop a system for evaluating the long-term impact on participants' careers. This can be done through annual surveys or tracking participants' achievements (e.g., managerial promotions, involvement in high-level handball events, etc.).
 - Example: Track how many participants secure managerial roles within handball clubs or how many initiate projects aimed at increasing women's participation in sports leadership.

The long-term success a program aimed at training female handball managers depends on continuous adaptation and ensuring that the program not only responds to immediate needs but also grows in response to the dynamic landscape of the sports world. By creating sustainable support systems, adapting the curriculum to emerging trends, and tailoring the program to local contexts, one can ensure that the positive changes initiated by the program ripple out for years to come.

By focusing on these strategies, future cohorts of female handball managers will be better equipped to face new challenges, and the sport will benefit from a stronger, more inclusive leadership structure.

PART 8: CONCLUSION

The journey of organizing a successful training program for female handball managers has been both enriching and transformative, not only for the participants but also for the project partners involved. As we reflect on the outcomes and lessons learned from our Erasmus+ project, "Equability in and through Handball Leveraging Women's Inclusion Towards Better Sports for Everyone," it is clear that empowering women in sports management is crucial for the continued growth and inclusivity of sports worldwide.

The primary goal of the project was to provide aspiring female managers with the tools, knowledge, and hands-on experience necessary to take on leadership roles within handball clubs. Through our detailed curriculum, emphasis on practical training, and commitment to fostering an inclusive environment, we have witnessed firsthand the positive impact that such a program can have. Not only did we succeed in providing valuable skills for career advancement, but we also helped shape a new generation of leaders who can contribute to the transformation of the handball community and the broader sports industry.

As we look forward to the future, it is essential to recognize that the model we've built can and should be adapted to meet the evolving needs of the sports sector. The factors shaping the global sports landscape—such as technological advances, climate change, and societal shifts—demand continuous adaptation. Our curriculum development process, rooted in flexibility and forward-thinking, has ensured that our training remains relevant even as these factors evolve. Future programs must similarly be prepared to address such emerging challenges to maintain their value and effectiveness.

Key takeaways from our experience include:

- **The importance of diversity:** Including female participants from a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and experiences enriches the training and ensures that the program is accessible and relevant to all.
- **The role of English proficiency:** In a globalized world, English proficiency is essential for future managers to navigate beyond their domestic environments and connect with the international sports community.
- **Theory and practice must go hand-in-hand:** While theoretical knowledge is crucial, it must be complemented by hands-on experiences, such as internships and the responsibility of organizing major events. This not only solidifies learning but also builds confidence in real-world settings.
- **Collaboration and coordination are key:** Effective partnerships between diverse project stakeholders are vital for success. By working together and communicating regularly, we created an integrated training environment that leveraged the unique strengths of each partner.
- **Adaptability to local contexts:** While our project worked with Turkish and Slovenian participants, it's essential to adapt such programs to the specific cultural, economic, and social contexts of the participants, ensuring that the training meets local needs.

This booklet aimed to share our experiences and offer practical advice for others interested in organizing similar programs. It's our hope that the insights presented here will serve as a resource to guide future initiatives, helping to create more opportunities for women to lead in sports management and, ultimately, ensuring that sports are accessible and inclusive for all.

In conclusion, while the project has come to an end, the impact of empowering women in sports management will continue to resonate for years to come. The participants are now better equipped to take on leadership roles, and their success will undoubtedly inspire others to follow in their footsteps. We believe that through continuous education, innovation, and collaboration, the sports world will become a more inclusive and dynamic space for women in management and leadership.

The future of handball—and sports more broadly—depends on creating equal opportunities for all, and we are proud to have contributed to this larger vision. Let us continue to celebrate diversity and inclusion, ensuring that women have the platform they deserve to thrive and lead in the sports industry.

* * *

CONTACT US

Project website

<https://equawhand.com>

Contact persons

Şinda Barış

e-mail: sinda.baris@bomovu.org

Tel: +905306851247

Dr. Altay Atlı

e-mail: altay.atli@thf.org.tr

Tel: +905333894117

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.