



CAPTAINS OF CHANGE



Women's involvement programme

Description of project

The Estonian Football Association (EJL) ran a project focusing on women in football or connected to football. In Estonian society there are still strong perceptions about women in football. There is an enormous gap between the number of women and the number of men playing football. Similarly, there are fewer articles published about women's football and a lack of role models and a weak support system for female referees compared with male referees. There are still schools with no football equipment or knowledge of how to encourage girls to play.

With the assistance of UEFA, different departments of the EJL, schools, clubs and newly built connections with the press, the women's involvement programme's aim is to improve all major aspects of women's football and start changing society's perceptions.



Anne Rei, EJL general secretary, addressing participants at the women's football seminar for clubs

Objectives

- Raise awareness of women's involvement in football
- Increase the number of media articles on women and football
- Decrease the dropout rate among female referees by 20%
- Educate women about football management and include more women in football management
- Raise the number of female participants in courses for new coaches by 20%
- Introduce football to young girls through school visits
- Educate clubs about recruiting girls and assist them with recruitment
- Increase the number of girls at club training sessions by 2% by May 2015 and 5% by 2016

Results

- More than 1,000 girls got their first fun football lesson
- Increased the number of girls at club training sessions by the desired amount
- The dropout rate for new female referees decreased by more than 30%
- There are three new female mentor-referees and one female observer
- Media coverage for women's football is now better than ever
- Created a visual identity for women's football
- Clubs now involve mothers and sisters

Tips for replication

- It is important to put effort into networking: most of the results achieved came from great communication – with media, schools, local clubs, players or referees
- It is also important to see what added value each department of the organisation could give to the project individually

Contact information

Should you have any questions with regard to this project, please contact Anni Rahula (annirahula@gmail.com)