

Good Practice Example:

Croatian Judo Federation (CJF) – A Case Study

Background

Two years ago, the Croatian Judo Federation, a member of the Croatian Olympic Committee, initiated a project called 'Judo is my sport: women's perspectives', with the main aim to highlight the small proportion of women that stay active in judo after the competition period. Although judo was recognised as an Olympic sport in 1964, regular women competitions started during the 1970s, therefore it is a relatively new sport for women in Croatia. It should be emphasised that judo is a sport that respects gender equality (joint competitions, use of infrastructure), but in the Croatian Judo Federation we have only about 25% of women in all age ranges, while 70% of all medals won at major international competitions are won by women. After active participation in judo, women rarely stay engaged in sport. A few stay as coaches and referees, but rarely as club presidents or at the level of national federation.

Start of the project

When we identified our problem of low involvement of women in judo, we initiated a project, to be conducted in a few steps. First step was to investigate statistics and to have data on the total number of women judo athletes in all age categories (from young cadets to senior competitors). The results showed that we have, at the most, 24–25% of women athletes. Then we conducted a qualitative research to investigate motives of women to be active and reasons for continuous engagement in judo. Results showed that women are very often engaged in a few functions (trainers, sport officials, referees, athletes), meaning that even statistics are not quite right and that we have even fewer women in sport than we thought. Research results showed us the main reasons for staying in sport (many positive aspects of judo), but a quantitative survey that we also conducted in several judo clubs illustrated a few barriers such as lack of time during period of schooling, and family obligations. Women were also less satisfied with media coverage of judo in Croatia.

Description of the activity

As a next step, we decided to initiate a network of women coordinators, and about 20 clubs responded (out of 80 in Croatia). The network has been established, and a year ago we made a first set of suggestions for activities at club level. The first meeting of women coordinators was dedicated to SWOT analysis, so we could easily go a step further and develop a set of activities. In our network we also identified a positive trend in the number of women coaches and referees, and secondly, a positive trend in the number of articles in regional and national

newspapers and journals. These things were not only results of this project, but an outcome of all the activities and continuous growth of judo in Croatia in the last 10 years.

Main goals

We at the Croatian Judo Federation wanted to establish a pro-active network of (women) coordinators in judo clubs that could establish continuity in communication between themselves (clubs at a local level) and with the CJF, so we would be able to achieve our goals:

- to increase the number of women judo competitors in all age groups
- to increase the number of women coaches, referees and sport administratives
- to increase the number of women in management of judo clubs and associations at local and national level.

Action plan (activities, budget and impact)

In order to achieve our goals, we started initiatives around six main activities:

1. More intensive promotion of judo as a sport towards women (presentations/brochures pointing out important aspects for girls)
2. Promotion of best women athletes through sport media and journals
3. Empowerment through education
4. Networking; constant communication between club and sport associations on a local level
5. Life stories; women in sport as 'role models'
6. Cooperation (research and exchange of information between clubs and the CJF).

As a national federation, we have already raised the awareness about women judo in Croatia with the majority of the above mentioned activities, especially those regarding the media (more articles on results of women in judo, etc), but we still have not established specific indicators that can show the results of this project. Regarding the education, one of our club trainers has been involved as a mentor in the SCORE project (she has developed a set of specific activities regarding her role as a mentor). As the CJF is a federation with a small budget that is not covering even our competitor programmes, we expect the Croatian Olympic Committee will initiate a budget for the Gender Equality Commission. We are also trying to find sponsors for some of the project activities. At the end of 2016, we are going to have more thorough reports with the exact indicators and numbers that would show the results of our efforts in this project.