E-LEARNING TRAINING FOR SPORT MANAGERS: THE E-OLYMPIA CASE.

Jordi Cavero & others, Provincial Council of Barcelona and others under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme

Context
The main objective of the Olympia Project was to design and implement tools and methodologies (telematic support through internet and real-time learning by satellite) for continuous distance learning in the management of sports facilities and in the organization of sport events, testing all the products created in a pilot.

Other specific **objectives** envisaged were:
- Identifying new professional profiles that have emerged from managing sports facilities
- Identifying new professional profiles that have emerged from organising large sport events and their impacts
- Experimenting with the application of new distance training technology such as training via satellite
- Fostering the creation of new jobs as a result of co-operation between public and private organisations involved in sports
- Fostering a European co-operation network for sports managers with Internet support, and
- Reinforcing stable co-operation ties between European territories holding large sporting events (Barcelona 1992; Manchester 2002; Athens 2004; Turin 2006).

The Olympia Project was finished in January, 2005 and the goal of this presentation is to show somee final findings of the project.

The **target** groups were:
- Trainers in the sports sector
- Young workers in their first trade, sports sector volunteers, and currently employed managers, as well as sports company executives and technicians with responsibilities in the implementation of programs, sports events and management of sport facilities.

The duration of the Project was 39 months, from the beginning of November 2001 till January 2005. The budget for the project was 660,586 Euros, 75% of which was funded by the European Commission, through the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Partners
The partners of the Project were:
- Spain: Provincial Council of Barcelona (leader of the Project) and Olympic Studies Centre
- The Netherlands: Unitman Sports Consulting
- Italy: Province of Turin and Polytechnic of Turin
- Rumania: Rumanian University Association for the Integration in the European Structure
- Greece: General Secretariat of Sports, Democritus University of Thrace and Allweb Solutions.

Results
Five main products were created during the Olympia Project:

1. Demand analysis
A supply analysis was undertaken in terms of gathering examples of best practises in the field of e-learning. Then, a demand analysis with standardized quantitative and qualitative research was implemented in the five participating countries. This analysis concluded that sports managers need to be trained in order to be up-to-date about new trends in the sector, minimising the trips and increasing the interaction among the involved persons in training activities.

2. Training modules

leading from the conclusions of the demand analysis, a full structure of courses for the management of sport facilities and events was created, organized in three complexity levels. Then 7 training modules were fully devised and tested during the pilot.

3. Methodology

A specific methodology was created, incorporating the following tools were designed to facilitate training:
- Telematic portal composed of:
- Video-conference system
- * Training platform: http://62.1.205.77/olympia_training/
    * Web site: www.e-olympia.org
    * Intranet
- Offline SMIL processor, that is a software solution aimed at realizing multimedia contents in a versatile way.

Finally, the course access requirements and knowledge accreditation were defined.

4. Pilot test results

55 students from five countries undertook the pilot test during 14 weeks. Modifications were made in accordance with the feedback students gave in questionnaires

5. European Network of Sport Management

With the data provided by the Olympia partners as a base, a European Network of Sport Management was created in order to continue developing the relationships between the management experts.
This network is open to all sport management professionals, and it can be found at
http://olympicstudies.uab.es/n_oly_web/version/eng/news.html

Discussion/implications

Olympia is very innovative, based on applying new technologies in training in the sport sector, done by experts, while trying to be mainly practical. With this tool, managers of sport facilities and events will find solutions for their daily problems, and will learn from innovations that are constantly appearing in the sector. Furthermore, a network has been created that will help the managers share their knowledge and experiences, learning from other colleagues across Europe. The Olympia Project has created versatile tools ready to be used in the sport management sector, but also in other knowledge areas. #

Even though there was general satisfaction among tutors and learners about the course, some aspects have to be changed to prepare the final version, such improving the interaction capacities of the tools and standardising the structure of contents. A key element that has to be taken into consideration by the sport management sector is the need to standardize internationally the definition of the concepts related to sport, to help mutual understanding of professionals across Europe.
We truly believe that E-learning and transnational networks will be powerful tools in the 21st century.

We are open to collaborate and participate in proposals to develop a final version using the knowledge and the experience acquired during the implementation of this international Project.

References
www.olympia.org
http://olympicstudies.uab.es/n_oly_web/

Author Contact: caverobj@diba.es