WLVT
We Lead Volleyball Together

International Young Leaders Platform

Co-funded by the European Union

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1. Purpose

As part of Work Package 3 in the *We Lead Volley Together* project, a digital platform was established with the purpose of creating an international community for the young leaders participating in the project.
The platform was created on Instagram under the name **Young Leaders Volleyball** and consisted of:

- A public Instagram profile featuring inspirational content.
- A private community chat ("Young Leaders Lounge") for direct dialogue among the young leaders.

2. Overall Objectives

The platform was designed to:

- Create an international network among young leaders from the participating countries.
- Inspire participants through the sharing of photos, videos, and stories from local activities.
- Support exchange of experiences and peer learning across borders.
- Strengthen participants' motivation and connection to the project.
- Provide a digital space where young people could communicate directly with one another without extensive adult facilitation.

3. Action plan

At the beginning of the project, a plan was developed for how the platform would be implemented and used.

Establishment

- Creation of the Instagram profile **@youngleadersvolleyball**.
- Creation of the private community chat **Young Leaders Lounge**.
- Development of guidelines for content and responsibilities.

Roles and responsibilities

- Volleyball Denmark had overall responsibility for coordination and publishing.
- Each partner country was responsible for contributing photos, videos, and stories.
- National facilitators were responsible for introducing the platform to participants and adding them to the chat.

Implementation

- The platform was presented during kick-off meetings and international gatherings.
- Partner countries were continuously encouraged to submit content.
- Posts featuring inspiration, role models, and project activities were published.

4. Content Planning

The planned content structure included the following elements:

Role model videos

Videos featuring primarily female leaders and other inspiring profiles sharing their experiences and motivation.

Activity updates

Photos and short descriptions from local and international activities.

Event documentation

Content from workshops, meetings, and events in the participating countries.

Community content

Questions, reflections, and discussions in the private chat.

International spotlights

Presentations of activities and experiences from the different countries.

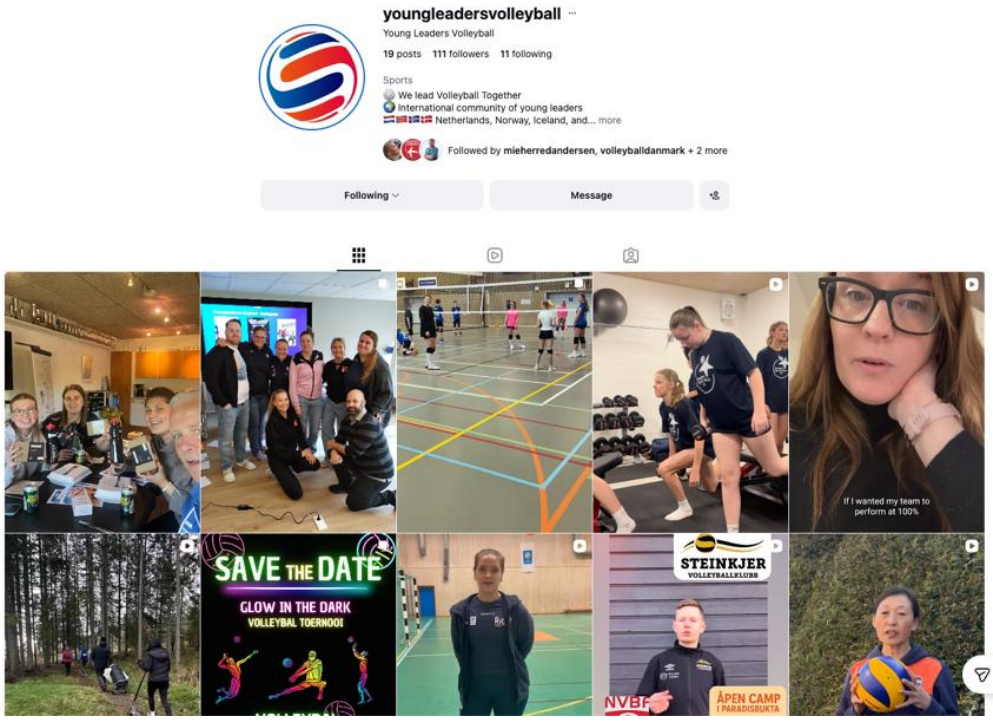
5. The platform

Screenshots and performance considerations

We have selected different types of screenshots to illustrate which kinds of posts performed well and which did not. Link to the platform: [Young Leaders Volleyball on Instagram]

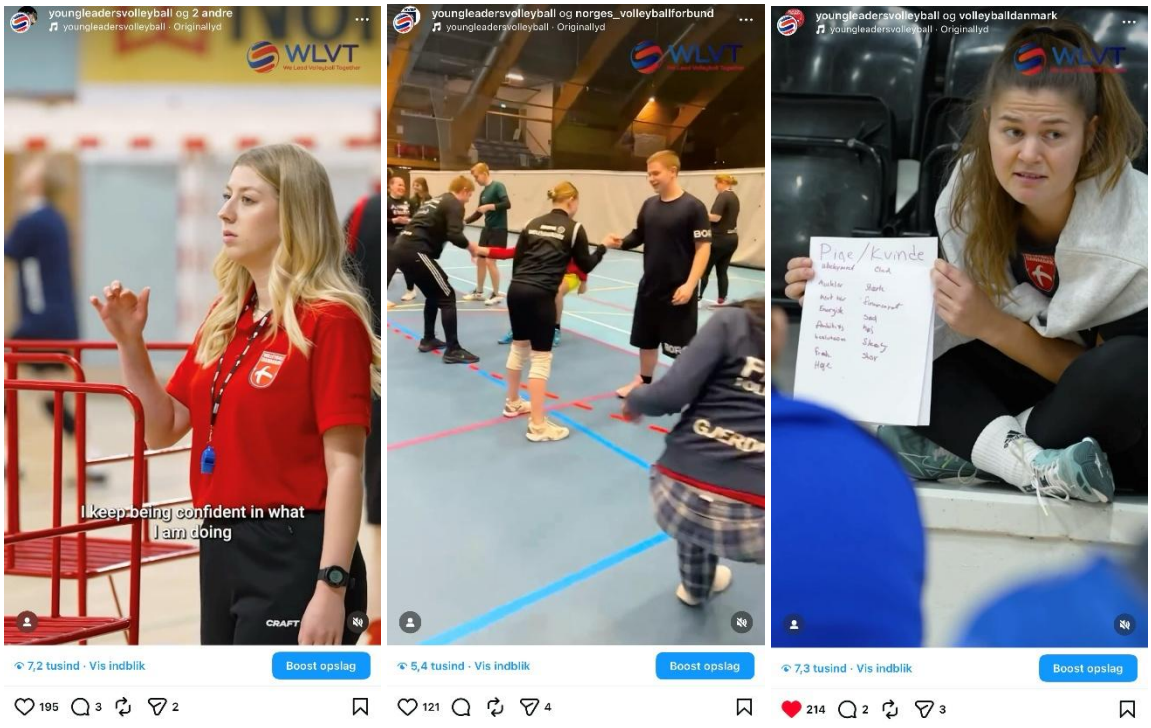
Front page

The front page of the Instagram profile.



Videos

The vast majority of the posts were videos. The videos below perform very well.



Content that performs best is clearly the posts featuring “collaborators” (such as Volleyball Denmark, the Norwegian Volleyball Federation, etc.). This is not surprising, as these profiles have a significantly larger follower base.

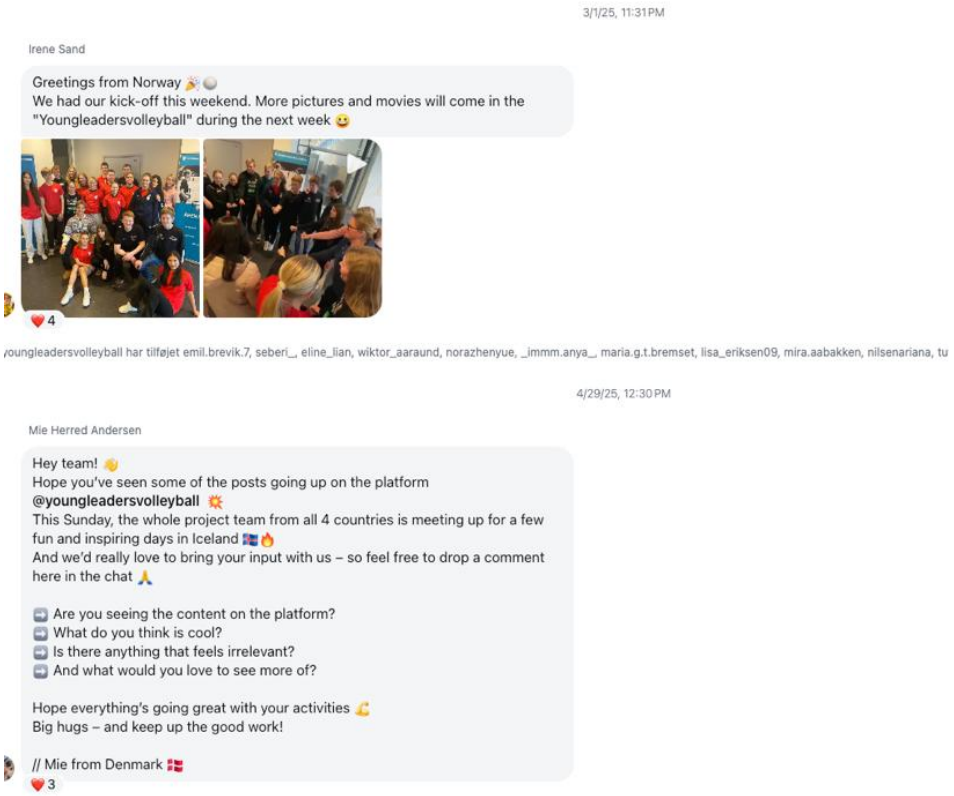
The posts with the young referee also appear to have generated a high level of engagement, likely because they provide a more behind-the-scenes perspective. They include insights into her motivation, challenges, and experiences, which add a personal dimension and enhance the storytelling aspect of the content.

The post on the right filmed in the classroom are not performed as well as the upon posts. One reason it does not perform in the same way may be that there is no close-up of any individuals, which makes the content feel quite impersonal. In addition, the production quality is also relatively low.



Community chat

Unfortunately, the Young Leaders Lounge chat function did not work as intended, as no dialogue was initiated.



6. Evaluation

Although the platform was established with clear ambitions and a structured plan, it did not succeed in generating the desired level of activity and interaction among the young leaders.

Limited engagement

The primary goal was for the young leaders themselves to interact, share experiences, and build relationships across countries. This only happened to a very limited extent.
There were:

- Few comments and shares.
- Minimal activity in the community chat.
- Limited user-generated content.
- Only sporadic interaction between participants from different countries.

The platform felt distant

Instagram was primarily used as an information channel, but it was not perceived as a natural forum for dialogue and knowledge sharing.

Lack of incentives

The young leaders did not experience a clear need or a tangible benefit from engaging actively on the platform.

Competition with other social media

Young people already use many digital platforms, and it proved difficult to make an additional account relevant in their daily lives.

Intensive coordination

Keeping the platform active required ongoing coordination and content production, and it was challenging to secure consistent contributions from all partner countries.

Decision to discontinue the initiative

Based on the limited impact, it was decided not to continue the platform in the second round of the project. This was considered the most appropriate decision, allowing resources to be redirected to activities with greater value for the young leaders.

7. Key Learnings

The work with the platform provided several valuable insights:

- Digital platforms do not automatically create engagement.
- Young people participate actively only when they perceive a clear benefit.
- International relationships are best built through personal meetings.
- Social media works best as an inspiration and information channel.
- The resources invested should be proportional to the expected impact.

8. Recommendations for future initiatives

Based on the experience, the following recommendations are made:

Prioritize physical meetings

International camps, workshops, and networking events create much stronger relationships than digital platforms alone. Online meetings where participants interact directly can also be valuable.

Use social media as a supplement

Social media should primarily be used for inspiration and visibility rather than as the main platform for dialogue.

Create clear value for participants

Digital initiatives should offer something participants perceive as directly relevant and useful.

Involve young people in the design process

Young leaders should be more actively involved in selecting the platform and shaping the content from the outset.
More stories from the young people themselves would strengthen relationships and increase engagement with the content.

Consider alternative digital solutions

Smaller and more targeted communication formats, such as WhatsApp groups or short online meetings, may be more effective.

9. Conclusion

The digital platform was established to strengthen networking, inspiration, and exchange of experiences among young leaders in the *We Lead Volley Together* project.

While the platform did not achieve the intended level of interaction, it has provided valuable insights into what drives engagement in international youth communities.

A key lesson is that digital platforms do not in themselves create engagement. Participation depends on content being perceived as relevant and personal. In particular, formats where young people share their own stories and experiences show greater potential for engagement, as they increase authenticity and identification.

The experience also confirms that strong relationships among young leaders are primarily developed through physical meetings and direct interaction. When used digitally, platforms require a clearer focus on peer-to-peer communication and user-generated content to support meaningful engagement.

Overall, the initiative highlights the importance of aligning digital design with how young people actually interact online, particularly through personal storytelling and active participation.

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