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BASKETBALL FOR LIFE SKILLS

# BASKI

## BASKETBALL FOR LIFE SKILLS

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# TRANSNATIONAL REPORT

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## **The project**

The BASKI project envisions developing a training programme for basketball coaches, sports educators, sports and education decision makers on how to promote basketball among primary school students as a medium of life skills development, with emphasis on civic participation and social contribution.

The training package will provide pedagogical methods and tools as well as out-door lesson plans to be used by the relevant stakeholder.

Organised sport has many psychological and social benefits for children – even more than physical activity during play. Researchers think this is because children benefit from the social side of being in a team, and from the involvement of other children and adults.

Basketball isn't just good for children's bodies; it's good for their minds too. Studies have shown that sport has psychological benefits for children and adolescents and teaches them important life skills. It is a significant factor in the development of adolescents' self esteem, identity, and feelings of competence.

Moreover, BASKI will provide Training Modules which will guide decision makers in Sports and Education to multiply the project's outcomes in different settings and be integrated in future programmes and directives, where basketball will be promoted as a life skills capacity building pedagogical tool.

The actions proposed in BASKI addresses the issue by providing common methodologies and formats of interventions that do not only have impactful outcomes at local level in terms of facilitating the capacity building and awareness raising of coaches, educators, parents and the local community, but also contains the added value of mainstreaming common and successful actions throughout the EU.

The BASKI Coach the Coach Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox encompasses the overall training materials', activities' and tools' designs and contents, which are developed in a thematic modular format, based on the overall pedagogical approach of developing life skills through basketball for youth.

## Objectives

The BASKI Coach the Coach Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox, will follow the principles of training the trainers learning format. Some of the guiding principles include the following:

- Use of inquiry-based and problem-based learning approaches
- Accommodate multiple learning styles (work and project based learning, collaborative learning)
- Contextualize learning to meet the needs of managers in different work contexts, including national, business sector, and organizational differences.
- Provide authentic learning opportunities
- Present the content in modular small chunks that will be able to provide just in time learning
- Promote self-reflection through the provision of tutor support and guidance, as well as keeping online journals
- Preparation of learning activities to be carried out either synchronously or asynchronously
- Provision of stories and case studies
- Peer to Peer support and communication

## Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox Outline

The present deliverable is developed through the study of all national reports in order to inform the learning curriculum, and its learning objectives. The aims of the National Reports within the context of the Intellectual Output 1 were to create the present transnational report on the development of the theoretical framework and context of the tools content. Each partner mapped the context of already existing national initiatives aimed to promote basketball as skills building among primary school students taking into consideration parameters of gender, students with special needs, marginalized students (e.g. through universities, local clubs, basketball teams, coaches associations). They provided a list of the target groups and stakeholders that are involved in coach the coach training (schools, academies, universities, physical education associations, teams, national agencies etc) and a list of the existing structures for basketball training in their country. Each partner also reported on the regulation of VET training in each partner country. The Intellectual Output leader collected the data and wrote the document on the theoretical framework and context of the tools content based on the national reports. Due to the COVID-19 situation the consortium moved on with **semi-structured interviews instead of focus groups**. Partners of the BASKI project conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews (via skype/online) with 10 stakeholders (at least 3 basketball coaches for each country and other stakeholders), with an **emphasis on those who work with young children** and a focus on **dual career athletes** with relevant experience.

There are many stakeholders intervening in basketball for life skills among young children in the partner countries. It was crucial to identify them precisely to define which will be the ways to engage them with the different activities to be developed during the BASKI project.

The main stakeholders who are common in all countries are:

- Basketball National Federations
- Sports and Education Policy-makers (i.e. Ministries of Education)
- Basketball Coaches

- Physical Education instructors (elementary schools)
- Sports clubs
- Athletes- Role models

Other stakeholders include:

- Students of Physical Education departments in Universities
- Coaches in municipal government basketball programmes
- Basketball Academies
- Basketball camps
- Vocational Training stakeholders
- Elementary school Parents Association

## ECVET Regulations in Europe

It is important to note that the Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox and our training modules shall be developed based on the ECVET regulations and framework<sup>1</sup> with specific units, descriptions of learning outcomes and information about the level of qualifications, and ECVET points with input from all the partners of the project and country reports. This approach turns the BASKI outputs transferable and adaptable in sports and training institutions, educational settings like schools, communal environments and relevant governmental service around EU, securing its multiplication and sustainability.

ECVET is a European system for the buildup and transfer of credits in the area of vocational education and training. The system assesses and certifies not only knowledge but also skills and competences as they reflect in the associated learning outcomes of the modules. All these are transferable amongst European countries. The key concepts and processes associated with ECVET formulate a transparent way of transferring credits and assess learning outcomes in Vocational Education and Training across Europe<sup>2</sup>.

ECVET has developed under the auspices of the EC and according to the Council of Education of 12 November 2002 and the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002.

### The key targets of the Declaration are:

- ❖ the development of common educational and training system focused on the recognition and quality assurance of degrees and certificates
- ❖ the transfer of credit on the basis of learning outcomes in the framework of vocational education and training.

ECVET is grounded on the description of professional qualifications focused on learning units based on knowledge, skills and abilities. ECVET is not a system but a package of tools aiming to improve the quality of mobility, transparency and recognition. Its impact is intensive communication, transparency, trust, quality, awareness concerning competence, teaching.

## ECVET regulations in the partner countries

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<sup>1</sup>This report is based on the Cedefop (2016a) and the Cedefop (2018) sources.

<sup>2</sup>See more at: <https://www.iky.gr/en/ecvet-network>

## Cyprus

Vocational Education and Training (VET) includes all types of education and training that offer to people the qualifications needed to enter the labour market and to work in certain occupations. In Cyprus, since 2007, validation mainly took place through the System of Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) ran by the Human Resource Development Authority<sup>3</sup> (HRDA). Until 2008, no formal or legal definition of VET in Cyprus existed (HRDA, 2008). Also, the boundaries between Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) and Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) in Cyprus were not legally defined. Existing validation arrangements were fragmented, and practices mostly concerned assessment and certification of prior work experience. A focus on vocational/occupational qualifications, which correspond to pre-set occupational profiles, was prominent, which can be attributed to the high rates of individuals employed without any certification in certain occupations. The need for the development of a comprehensive system or framework of validation of non-formal and informal learning had been identified a decade ago. Specifically, some steps have been taken in Cyprus since 2010, in relation to the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop, 2016b). An interdepartmental Committee, coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, was set up with the aim to establish a mechanism for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, in line with the corresponding Council Recommendation of 2012. According to Cedefop (2016b) this initial effort would lead to the development of a National Action Plan by 2018 and a pilot project that was planned to take place in 2018-2020. As reported by the CYPRUS European inventory on National Qualifications Framework (NQF), 2018 (Cedefop, 2019), participation in vocational education and training (VET) has reached only 15.6% in 2015; however, the employability of recent VET graduates has increased more compared to general and tertiary education, pointing to a valuable VET sector for economic recovery.

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<sup>3</sup>The Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) is an organization governed by public law, the Human Resource Development Law [Law 125(I)/1999-2007]. The HRDA relates to the Government through the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. The mission of the HRDA is to create the necessary prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of Cyprus's human resources, at all occupational levels and in all economic sectors, for meeting the economy's needs, within the overall national socio-economic policies. Additionally, according to the Human Resources Development Law of 1999, the HRDA has the right to: (i) Define Standards of Vocational Qualifications for any category or categories of employed individuals; (ii) Provide for the assessment of candidates; (iii) Award and issue the relevant certificates of vocational qualifications.

## Greece

In the Greek case, the **National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance** (EOPPEP) is the major institutional body whose primary goal is the application of a National Framework of Qualifications that would correspond to the European Framework of Qualifications.

In this line, EOPPEP is working along with various stakeholders in national and local level for the application of ECVET. Specifically, it focuses on the establishment of processes and resources for the recognition and certification of qualifications irrespective of the learning path followed as well as the introduction of the relevant regulatory framework for their application and the creation of a unified system of certification of learning outcomes on the basis of knowledge, skills and abilities<sup>4</sup>.

One of the challenges the ECVET system is facing in Greece is to ensure quality assurance for substantive learning outcomes in order to safeguard trust among European countries and the transfer of credit for all types of learning units including informal education and vocational training which will allow for a wide consideration of learning and will eventually enhance cooperation between learning and the market.

The outcome of the cooperation between learning and the market will bring changes in educational governance and vocational training with the participation of all stakeholders at all levels and learning modules that would adopt to the needs of citizens and the market<sup>5</sup>.

## Bulgaria

The **Act on education and vocational training (1999, last amendments and supplements 2018)** clarifies the goals, the tasks and the structure of the system of education and vocational training in Bulgaria and how to validate already acquired professional qualification and knowledge. It also includes the **List of professions for vocational education and training (LPVET)**.

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<sup>4</sup>Zarifis et al., nd.

<sup>5</sup>Zaheilas, 2013.

The **Bulgarian state educational standards (SES)** for acquiring professional qualifications from the LPVET under Art. 6 of the Vocational Education and Training Act (VETA) are documents that are pursuant to Art. 42, paragraph 3 (b) of VETA. They are created by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and are approved by orders of the Minister of Education and Science. The SES include the obligatory professional competencies required for practicing the profession, they are mandatory for all training institutions authorised to organize training courses and to grant the corresponding Certificates of vocational qualification or training upon their completion.

Other important normative document is the **Pre-school and School Education Act (2015 last amendments and supplements 2017)**, which has some important objectives like intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, moral and physical development and support to every child and every pupil in accordance with their age, needs, abilities, and interests ,acquisition of competences which are needed for a successful personality development and professional career and active civic life in modern communities, acquisition of competences for applying the sustainable development principles, shaping of lasting attitudes and motivation for lifelong learning , shaping of tolerance to and respect for the ethnic, national, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of every citizen etc.

The document, clarifying in details the qualification and education needed to become a basketball coach in Bulgaria is the **Order 1/04.02.2019 of the Minister of Youth and Sport for the coaches (2019)**. Unfortunately the requirements for the education of the Bulgarian coaches in that particular document are very high. In fact you could be a coach only if you have a University Bachelor's degree, course "Basketball coach" or course "Sport" plus postgraduate study for basketball coach. If you get qualification just through vocational education and training according to the Act on education and vocational training, you could only be "instructor" or "assistant coach", but this does not allow you to lead practices without a head coach present or to be registered as a head coach for the official games. Another problem is that any instructor or assistant coach cannot become a "coach" trough some years of experience. The minimum Bachelor's degree, mentioned above is absolute requirement to become a coach in Bulgaria.

## Italy

Law no. 92/2012 on labor market reform has provided for the first time a formal definition of the concept of lifelong learning: "lifelong learning means any activity undertaken by people in a formal, non-formal and informal way, in the various stages of life, in order to improve knowledge, skills and competences, in a personal, civic, social and employment perspective". By informal learning is meant what, even regardless of an intentional choice, is achieved in the performance, by each person, of activities in situations of daily life and in the interactions that take place in it, within the context of the work context, family and leisure.

In addition, the law provided for the establishment of a national public system of certification of skills, based on homogeneous minimum service standards throughout the territory.

By certifiable competence we mean a structured set of knowledge and skills also recognizable as training credits, subject to a specific validation procedure in the case of non-formal and informal learning. The certification of skills is defined as a public act aimed at guaranteeing transparency and recognition of learning, in line with the guidelines set by the European Union. Certification leads to the issue of a certificate, diploma or title that formally documents the assessment and validation carried out by a public body or by an accredited or authorized subject.

In implementation of the aforementioned law, Legislative Decree no. 13/2013 defines the general rules on the national system of certification of skills. The legislative decree makes the new National System of Certification of Competences operational and aims to bring out and grow the professional skills acquired not only at work but also in leisure time, in order to promote geographical and professional mobility, to encourage the meeting between supply and demand in the labor market, increase the transparency of learning and the dependability of certifications at national and European level.

Based on the aforementioned decree, on June 30, 2015, an inter-ministerial decree (Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Education) defined the National Framework for Regional Qualifications. It established:

1. a mechanism for mutual recognition between regional qualifications,
2. process, certification and system standard procedures for the identification / validation services of non-formal and informal learning and certification of skills.

Finally, with the interministerial decree (Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Education) of January 8, 2018, the National Qualifications Framework (QNF) was established <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/01/25/18A00411/sg> as a tool for the description and classification of qualifications issued within the national system of certification of skills.

The **NQF** represents the national device for referencing Italian qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework, with the function of connecting the Italian qualifications system with the systems of other European countries. The NQF also aims to coordinate and strengthen the various systems that contribute to the public offer of lifelong learning and the services for identifying and validating and certifying skills.

An innovative aspect of the new adult education system, which contributes to promoting national lifelong learning policies, is the enhancement of the person's cultural and professional heritage starting from the reconstruction of his individual history. The introduction of the individual training agreement allows, in fact, the recognition of formal, informal and non-formal knowledge and skills possessed by adults.

The Pact is a contract shared and signed by the adult, by the Commission (whose main task is the definition of the same) and by the director of the CPIA and - for those enrolled in II level courses - also by the head teacher of the upper secondary school. With the individual training agreement, the personalized study path (PSP) is formalized relating to the didactic period of the path requested by the adult at the time of enrollment. The Certificate of credit recognition is attached to the Agreement for the personalization of the course.

For more information, consult the relevant report at the following link:

[https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016\\_validate\\_IT.pdf](https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_validate_IT.pdf)

In **Italy** another example of the ECVET system is used by the Italian Basketball Federation (FIP) within the National Coaches Committee ([CNA](#)) which has the task of organizing the training of Italian coaches according to a system of training credits; this system recognizes the annual training course of the coach authorized to be registered for the sporting season according to the regulations of the Italian Basketball Federation.

The training steps of a coach are:

1 Step - Trainee Coach

2 Step - Basic Trainer

3 Step - Youth Instructor

4 Step - Coach

5 Step - National Coach

#### MANDATORY UPDATE PROGRAM

The PAO Project has as its priority objective to give continuity to the training course, offering a stimulus for personal improvement and, consequently, for the movement as a whole. Therefore the aim is to entice coaches to improve their skills through constant participation in updating activities.

The system training credits, which allows the comparison and recognition of training experiences on a national and international level, as well as other training courses carried out by different training agencies like FIBA etc..

Each category of CNA members must accumulate a number of credits, according to the following table:

student coach: 6

base coach: 6

youth instructor: 6

coach: 6

national coach: 3

basic physical trainer: 6

physical trainer: 3

In the event that a physical trainer is also a coach, the number of credits to accumulate will depend on the qualification of coach (6 if Trainee Coach, Base Coach or Coach, 3 if National Coach).

## North Macedonia

The European dimension in vocational education and training in the Republic of North Macedonia is translated through development of key competencies, the application of quality criteria, enhanced transparency of the system, networks for cooperation and high-quality teachers and trainers. Reforms in vocational education and training intend to strengthen lifelong learning, to make mobility a reality, to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of education and training. Moreover, VET shall promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship in a multi ethnic and multi religious country thru the Vocational and educational center who is established in accordance with the Government of Republic of North Macedonia (Official newsletter of Republic of North Macedonia issue 87/06), as a public institution for accordance and integration of public interests and the interests of the social partners in the vocational education and training (article 31 from the Law for Vocational education and Training, from Official newsletter issue 71/06 and 117/08). In accordance to article 32 from the above-mentioned Law, the Center performs specialized supervisions, evaluation, studying, promotion, and research and development of the vocational training and education, and other tasks in accordance with the Law. The need for the development of a system or a framework of validation of non-formal and informal learning had been identified in 2006 and the actions were made in 2008 when in the Law of education some bigger changes were made. Some bigger steps have been taken in 2013 when a dedicated law was implemented on which a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning started.

Among the goals of the NQF, the Law stipulates: “To indicate the transfer and progression (horizontally and vertically) through and within all types of education and training (formal, non formal and informal)”. The main roadmap for implementing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning in North Macedonia is planned to finish in late 2020 and Strategy for vocational education and training in a lifelong learning context will be implemented thru 2013-2020 action plan by European training center and 2018-2025 education strategy by the Ministry of education and science and cooperation with European union.

### Relevant Links:

Ministry of education and science <http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Strategija-za-obrazovanie-ENG-WEB-1.pdf>

Ministry of education and science [http://csoo.edu.mk/images/vet%20strategy\\_en%20-%20final.pdf](http://csoo.edu.mk/images/vet%20strategy_en%20-%20final.pdf)

Center for adult education [http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/VNFIL-Roadmap\\_angl-1.pdf](http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/VNFIL-Roadmap_angl-1.pdf)

Youth cultural

center [http://www.youseefor.me/images/manuals/macedonia/MKC\\_NFO\\_EN.pdf](http://www.youseefor.me/images/manuals/macedonia/MKC_NFO_EN.pdf)

## Romania

In Romania the *National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training* (ANPCDEFP) manages the Erasmus+ programme - for mobility in the fields of education, vocational training and youth. It is also the designated body for the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps and the operator for the Education, Scholarship, Apprenticeship and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme 2014-2021 which is funded through the EEA mechanism<sup>6</sup>.

VET in Romania, on the one hand, promotes socio-economic development in the country while, at the same time, aims at addressing challenges related to low participation in lifelong learning and training. In 2016, training standards were reviewed and the relevance of qualifications to the labour market was increased. Since 2017/18, a twofold structure of initial VET became available. The initial VET is characterized by its inclusiveness, offering paths among various learning levels and between vocational and more academic tracks while it is focused on facilitating the learners' personal and professional development, equal opportunities to access VET and high quality of provision and organization.

Social partners from different sectors of the economy are systematically involved in the design and assessment of vocational qualifications and they equally participate in relevant regional and local partnerships.

In the last decade, Romania has developed a system for validating skills and competences that were acquired non-formally or informally. The assessment/validation providers are organized as a network shaped along the guidelines adopted by the National Authority for Qualifications, procedural arrangements. Initial VET qualifications are based on standards of training that depict the training process in units of specific learning outcomes while for each

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<sup>6</sup> <https://en.anpcdefp.ro/bucurosi-de-cunostinta>

unit, there is an assessment standard. The standards were adjusted in 2016 so as to further the VET labour market relevance and to enhance correspondence of qualifications with the realities of working life<sup>7</sup>.

## Demographics of the research

### Cyprus

There are 1 female and 9 male interviewees with the age categories concentrating on 36-40 (8), 41-45 (1), 46-50 (1). Two of the interviewees are working in national sports organisations, 1 is a policy maker and former basketball coach, 1 is working as a university professor and the rest are physical education teachers, coaches and trainers in primary schools, basketball academies and professional basketball teams.

### Greece

There are 2 female and 10 male interviewees while the selection of the interviewees has been rather balanced in terms of age: age 18-20 (1), 31-35 (1), 36-40 (4), 41-45 (2), 46-50 (2), 51-55 (1), 56 and over (1). More than half of the interviewees (seven) are basketball coaches and they mostly work with diverse age groups including the age group that is of particular interest to the BASKI project. Three of the stakeholders are physical education teachers. Finally, two of them are basketball athletes. One is also a coach for young children and the other is a well-known national team professional basketball player who is now an athlete in dual career as he continues his professional life in basketball education for young children with a basketball academy. They have all been involved in sports activity related to skills building for young children in the past and the vast majority of them in the particular field of basketball education. One of them has been involved in a basketball team for Roma children and his perspective is useful since there are not many related programmes that our interviewees are aware of.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/romania>

## Bulgaria

The selection of the interviewees has been careful and balanced. There are 4 female and 7 male interviewees from different age categories as follows: age 25-30 (2), 31-35(1), 35-40 (3), 41-45(2), 45-50(1), 50-55(1), over age 55 (1).

With the exception of 3, the other 8 are former professional basketball players who have continued their realization in the basketball field as coaches, one of them is now professor in National Sports Academy, section "Basketball", another is the head coach of the Senior Men's National team, but also responsible for the policy for the development of the national team players of all age categories in Bulgarian Basketball Federation (BBF). 5 of them have been top national team players with very successful professional career. Two are experienced private organizers of big basketball camps for kids. One of the interviewees is former basketball coach, now sports media professional and member of the Board of BBF. There is one physical education teacher who is also a coach. The only interviewee who is not connected to basketball coaching is the president of a football club for homeless kids, however he, as a sports management professional, is also the creator of the 4 years strategic plan for the development of BBF, officially approved by the Congress of the federation. As we have not launched any programme for basketball for marginalized kids yet, his output from that perspective is important for us. All interviewees have University Degree, two have achieved PhD.

## Italy

The subjects interviewed are aged between 18 and 55. Many of these are young men from 18 to 25 who in addition to playing basketball are also coaches; on the other hand, the subjects interviewed from 35 to 55 are both coaches and PE teacher in schools.

## North Macedonia

The subjects interviewed are aged between 20 and 50. All of the subjects have a university degree and some have Master's degree education. 80% of the subjects are male and 20% female. Many of them are directly connected with basketball, as coaches or managers in the clubs. Others are involved indirectly in basketball.

## Romania

The subjects interviewed are aged between 21 and 50 years, they belong to both genders and some of them have large experience in working with small kids. Some of them are physical education teachers in schools and others are basketball coaches.

## Research findings

### Overall basketball philosophy and the value of its training as relates to life skills and educational prospects for young children

According to the interviewees in Cyprus, basketball philosophy can be an excellent tool in providing through its training a variety of life skills for young children. A common theme emerging from the stakeholders' interviews is that through basketball, being a team sport, children can learn through training how to **communicate in both verbal and non-verbal cues**. Communication is a vital catalyst that is essential for basketball players. Players need to develop communication skills both with their teammates and coach. This skill is developed through continuous implementation especially from the coach. Teams need to communicate inside and outside the court in order to achieve a top level outcome and reach a high standard. Therefore, players will use and enhance this skill outside the court continuously and unintentionally. This is very important since people **socialize and have daily interaction** with other human beings. It is essential for them to be able to communicate and understand each other.

**Empathy** is an accomplishment that is also gained through basketball. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. A basketball team is like the 5 fingers of your hand. If you can get them all together, then you have a fist. You have to get the 5 players to work together and push each other. If one of them is not feeling well one day, the teammates must show empathy and fill his/her gaps in order for the team to move forward. The importance of this skill is undeniable since it's a very important life skill. Learning to understand and accept how people around you feel will make your life easier and simpler.

**Creativity and adaptability are interconnected vital skills** developed through the game of basketball. You always have to adapt to the situation you are facing in front of you without pre-planning it. This means that what you prepare in your mind is not always what you will perform. This highlights that you need to be creative to the fullest of your capacity in order to achieve something great without being predictable to the opponents. In your everyday routine being creative helps you become a better problem solver in all areas of life and work. Creativity helps you see things differently and better deal with uncertainty.

Another common theme between the stakeholders is the development of **cooperation skills**, through game play they adopt **leadership skills** and by being part of the team, in general, they can develop **problem solving skills, conflict resolution and self-awareness**.

Basketball is an excellent tool for the cultivation of psychological and social skills. The very nature of the sport makes ideal in the provision of educational moments to pass on messages that go beyond basketball and relate to life and life skills. Sports and basketball should serve the bigger picture; life itself. Hence, basketball is very valuable in providing a toolkit for life.

In Greece, stakeholders believe that basketball as a **collective sport** promotes all the skills necessary for a child. The **key skills that can be promoted are cooperation, coordination, communication and creativity**. Such skills are basic pillars and priority for the teams. However, **discipline is also an important skill** because without it, the above are not secured. The rules of the game can turn children to mature and responsible individuals. Children learn to **apply rules, act in athletic spirit, develop their motion skills**, but also **define their personal and collective goals. Intercultural sensitivity and empathy, respect for equal opportunities** are among the skills that can also be developed as well as teaching children to **handle their emotions**.

Through basketball **a child learns to structure its daily routine**. This happens because s/he understands that to participate in training s/he must be on time, must have been careful about what s/he has eaten, or always carry a bottle of water. This procedure and preparation before training can easily be reflected in everyday activities outside of sports.

Games, activities and the participation of children in basketball training help their **personal development, the improvement of their physical condition, perception skills, and promotion of their social skills along with the sense of belonging to a team**. Basketball

training leads to cooperation even outside the courts and affects aspects such as **decision making, critical analysis and fast evaluation of a situation, adaptability in different conditions** both in training and during a game. Furthermore, they **learn how to handle victory and defeat, leadership skills as well as acceptance, understanding and respect for children from diverse social backgrounds and cultures**. Children through practice and games learn that the desired goal should not be accomplished using teamwork and moving from more simple methods to elaborate ones. Teaching a young athlete to trust his teammates is of the utmost importance. Basketball is a game that teaches you to always try your hardest to accomplish your goals.

Finally, values such as **honesty, justice and respect for all** are important in basketball philosophy. Soft skills and values are indispensable to the children for their life in general in and out of the sports fields. A coach's main concern should be to provide the athletes with the vision s/he has for basketball and sports in general.

The Bulgarian partners conducted their interviews and reported that the overall philosophy of basketball is related to the **integration** of people from different races, ethnicity, culture, religion etc. and **sharing values** throughout the game. Basketball provides the opportunity to **work with others as a team to achieve a common goal**. There are five different positions on the court in which they all do different things. The players have to learn to use each other's skills and position to compete. Basketball also requires **motivation, dedication, discipline and a routine**. An important part of your basketball team is your coach. The coach provides the rules and strategies on what you need to do to compete with other teams. This helps to **understand and learn authority**. The main characteristics of the sport (dynamic, collective, competitive) precisely recreate real life experiences. The dynamic of the basketball game, constantly changing pace and the pressure forces and stimulates establishment of **problem solving and decision making skills**. The collective character of basketball requires great **verbal and non-verbal communication and team work**, also the adoption of **leadership skills and empathy**. Learning how to communicate, interact and cooperate with other kids in a group, taking decisions in game situation, respect the teammates and the opponents, respect their culture, respect the referees and the coaches, respect the rules, fair play, winning spirit are important components to **create self-confidence in kids**. The competitiveness of the game requires qualities related to

**acceptance of failure and disappointment and the ability of overcoming it, readiness for change and adaptation and capacity for maintaining focus on certain tasks.** Training process inevitably affects and tests kids' mindset and their ability to take criticism and **deal with mistakes and fears**, all of which are unaltered parts of every human's life. These all tie together and go into life where you can apply the same skills dealing with siblings, parents, friends, work associates, etc. That's the reason why a systematic and well organized training process is a very effective tool for more enjoyable and easily available ways of developing life skills.

For all those interviewed in Italy, basketball philosophy **helps athletes in socializing and forms your character.** Basketball is one of the most beautiful team sports and as **a team sport teaches life skills**, crucial skills in future life.

In a comparable mode, in North Macedonia, according to the answers obtained from the interviews, the general picture of the basketball philosophy and the value of its training related to life skills for young children is that playing sports is crucial for the development of children. Participation in team sports helps young athletes to develop their **communication skills, team work skills, cooperation, decision making, society establishment, multicultural tolerance, empathy, creativity, mutual trust and support for each other, develop discipline and focus on conducting tasks as well as conflict resolution.**

Finally, the Romanian partners reported that for all the interviewees, basketball became, for many years, a way of life. All of them realized that through basketball, they **become better persons in terms of communication, socializing, decision making, creativity**, as basketball is one of the most complex team sports.

### Particular strengths and weaknesses related to basketball for life skills education in the partner countries

#### Strengths

In Cyprus, **basketball is a popular sport for young children** and it is encouraged, along with sports in general, among elementary school students by coaches and sports federations so

that children can enter the circle of sports from a young age. It's important for young people to become part of a team from a young age since they can develop the life skills referred above faster. **The conditions are great (weather, number of facilities, equipment)** and the coaches can easily create a plan that is easy for children to follow.

In Greece, a strong point for teaching life skills is that **most of the training hours are on weekends**, which means that the children will not be tired from their school obligations. Also **teams are formed, most of the time, according to the age of the child** and not according to its skill in basketball (usually due to the size of the clubs). Furthermore **if one promotes basketball education as training in life skills, young children will be excited to participate** in something that even though is still basketball is new to them and will arouse curiosity. Such training can prepare future citizens in the EU equipped with all the necessary social life skills in terms of physical skills, strength, flexibility and speed. Motivation and coordinating skills are equally trained and help the child develop its personality.

In Bulgaria, their strength is their way of thinking. The **positive attitude** and belief in themselves are the key in developing life skills in the kids and there are coaches which are aware of this. Another strength is the **hard working mentality**.

Quite important is the **pride** in the cities and relevant clubs. There is a lot of basketball history, **basketball is a popular sport and the fans are very supportive**. This gives stakeholders a motivation to be a part of something that is important for the local community. Principally, **basketball is not expensive for the parents** as the monthly taxes are low and the needed equipment is not so expensive, as well. It is quite positive that **many top international basketball competitions are broadcasted live** in Bulgaria which is something that **attracts kids and gives them a great example**.

For most of the interviewees in Italy the strengths of basketball are **coordination, anticipation**, training is more on the mental than physical aspect and **socialization** is more important because being a team sport team work, the aggregation and commitment are the basis of social life.

According to the stakeholders, strengths in North Macedonia include **physical activity and learning about healthy life, good mental and physical health, communication and socialization**. Learning about your teammate and generally about other people, learning about **discipline** and making healthy habits, **sharing** and not being selfish, **interacting** with a huge number of people from different profiles during your playing career.

When talking about strengths in **Romania** one of the biggest assets is **the social aspect of the game**, especially in the earlier stages of development of the player when s/he is still young (under 13-14). Romania has a **very well organized tournament at the end of the season** by the seaside where most, if not all, of the kids who are playing basketball until the age of 12 are present, with more than 5,000 kids involved in three weeks of competition.

### **Weaknesses**

In Cyprus, there seems to be a **one-sided approach in basketball teaching and training**. The main emphasis is on **teaching the actual sport and performing**. The training is mostly result driven and not educational. Sometimes even the **parents' pressure and intervention** influence the level and the quality of the game. There is **no targeted intention to use sport for life skills** (social and psychological). **There are not that many coaches specifically qualified for youth sports and physical education in primary schools in poor areas**. There is **not enough money spent to promote basketball or even take basketball to another level through scientific support** or improvement of basketball facilities and there is a **contrast between recreation and performance**.

Skills building can be the result of individual coaches' efforts, knowledge, experience and hard work. A lot of academies in Greece have remarkable coaches (which is a strength) but the **lack of structured training organized by the state and its institutions** is identified as a weakness although optional annual seminars are available since they are available to a small number of coaches and at a quite high cost.

Training in life skills can be further weakened by **competition and the concept of pursuit of victory by all means** because one might think that the time spent in life skills training could be somehow 'waisted' if it does not serve the goal of winning and may alienate children

from basketball. Sometimes parents insist on this concept of victory neglecting the fact that basketball can also build life skills and be entertaining at the same time.

Furthermore, **the concept of life skills in education in general has not been adequately promoted so far in training** and both educators and parents should be further informed about it. In younger categories, i.e. U-10, official competitions do not lead to a champion team.

Plus, often the **lack of time in training** does not allow for extra space in life skills building and sometimes the places where training takes place is not adequately equipped.

Another weakness in basketball education in relation to the training in life skills is that **teams usually consist of either only boys or only girls**, which according to the stakeholders is due to the difference of age growth between boys and girls. As a coach suggested, life skills, should be taught amongst mixed teams of boys and girls.

Greece has a lot of potential in this area due to a number of seminars and promotion of basketball through the media and because in every neighborhood one can find an outdoor basketball court. However, the **indoor courts are not enough** and this lack is more acute outside the big cities.

A major weakness in Bulgaria is the **lack of qualified coaches with pedagogical approach**. Coaches can often become rude, shout to the kids and have unnecessary aggressive behaviour with the youth. The kids nowadays cannot accept such an approach from the coaches and they often decide to quit basketball. The coaches and physical education teachers graduating from National Sports Academy are not well prepared in that area.

The hard working ethic (which was marked as strength) is sometimes channeled in the wrong direction pertaining to basketball. **The youth here is taught to work hard to win, but not necessarily taught the fundamental skills.**

**Sometimes** the pride line is crossed by fanatic supporters, often parents, who bring **violence in sports which should never be done and accepted.**

Other weaknesses are the **lack of basketball gyms** in the country while many schools have no sports' gyms at all, and also the **lack of financial governmental support for the youths' sports**. Following that, even playing in a basketball club, the Bulgarian **kids are not practicing enough hours per week and the coaches are not well paid**, respectively not well motivated. This is also valid for the physical education teachers.

Too often the coaches and the club presidents are focused on what they do not have, instead of focusing on what they have and what they could achieve. This **negative attitude sends wrong signals to kids** who are more insecure and less motivated.

Another problem for the motivation of the kids is the **lack of real perspective to become a basketball professional** in Bulgaria due to the very small number of professional clubs.

In Italy, weaknesses are **lack of indoor and outdoor sports facilities** and the **lack of a solid connection between sports and schools**.

Weaknesses reported in North Macedonia include **issues with financing as most of the clubs are self-sufficient** and **don't get help** to even do basketball-related stuff in proper conditions. **Absence of a support system**, not having aid for parents to integrate children in sports, **not having a national strategy of licensing coaches to work with children** and young athletes. Often children are **forced to choose between basketball and school, being pressured to compete**, forced to comprehend the opponent as a “must defeat target”. Another weakness is **limited availability to new and updated educational materials and technology**.

In terms of weaknesses in Romania, one of the biggest problems is the **almost non-existent transition between junior to senior level**. A lot of young players (close to 18) are lost every year because of this.

### **Specific training programmes currently running in basketball education for young children in the consortium countries**

In Cyprus, most of the stakeholders referred to the **tournaments run by the Cyprus Basketball Federation, the school programmes and private basketball academies**.

Reference was also made to a basketball programme called **Peace Players International**, a bi-community programme geared towards reconciliation between the Greek-speaking and Turkish-speaking communities in the country, aiming to develop the understanding between youth at conflicting communities.

In Greece, the responses received by stakeholders for this question were rather limited as some of them were not aware of specific programmes. Some others referred to **school athletic programmes** and some others to **basketball education as extracurricular activity** outside the school setting. When it comes to the first case at schools, it was stated that many of the training programmes that materialize in Greece focus on the **search for talents**. High achievements both at the amateur players level is a necessary process for the choice of talented youth that can be incorporated in teams. During the school year there are specific dates for **school games** that facilitate such programmes. School coaches work based on the aims and the standards set by the Ministry of Education. Coaches bring into these programmes their knowledge, skills and basketball philosophy as shaped from past experiences to be communicated to the future generations.

When it comes to the second case, outside the school environment, our stakeholders suggested that during the last 4 to 5 years, **personal training** has become popular in Greece. It is purely focused on the improvement of basketball skills and on physical conditioning. Small groups may consist of 2-3 athletes, but training can be mostly individual. It is very common and is becoming even more common for such personal workout programmes to start at a very young age. Examples of such specific training programmes are footwork, training in shooting, passing and dribbling but also games for the teaching of basic skills.

There are various **summer camps for young children** in Bulgaria with the participation of good coaches, including experienced foreign coaches. Those camps do not focus on basketball fundamentals only, but also organize various social activities for the participating kids.

There is also a **private basketball programme in Plovdiv city “The Little Team”** for kids 3-8 years old.

**The Bulgarian Basketball Federation is preparing and planning to implement a unified programme for training the youth according to their age.** For the youngest kids, the planned training activities are predominantly fun and enjoyable.

In Italy there are **no specific programmes of basketball education**, because in schools it is a sport that is ignored, while in basketball schools, there are few coaches who clearly and effectively organize the basketball path for the kids and this is demonstrated by the small number of Italian kids playing at high levels.

In North Macedonia there are **specific training programmes** related to young children such as **Special Olympics for the kids with special needs**, the project in **cooperation with the Federation of School Sport and primary and secondary schools for mass involvement of young people in sports** – both individual and collective sports, which is continuously implemented for several years throughout the country, **private projects** financed by the embassies for youth enhancing **“basketball – a medium for building multiethnic tolerance and coexistence among young people”**. There are some **programmes on private club level** (for a monthly fee), each club has its own strategy and generally refers to the initiative and the will of the coaches individually to contribute to the education of young players, and starting last year there is a **National programme for a mini basketball league that educates coaches through mini basketball seminars and tournaments**.

Finally, in Romania, one can consider that the **Baby and Mini Basketball Festival**, held every year in a resort at the seaside, is the main programme run by the Romanian Basketball Federation for kids under 12 years old. Furthermore, with the **help of FIBA Europe and in partnership with other four National Federations**, they continue the development of these kids also in the age range from 13 to 15 years old.

### **Basketball training programmes for marginalized children or gender-specific targeted in the partner countries, their value and approaches**

Stakeholders in Cyprus reported that they are **not aware of training programmes for marginalized children**, although they have mentioned that **the government subsidizes the training fees of minority or refugee children** to play at local clubs.

They have mentioned that the **basketball academies are open to all children irrespective of gender, social or ethnic background or religion**.

With respect to gender, **the teams up to 12 years old are mixed.** That is the U8, U10 and U12 championships. **Teams over the age of 12 are split into boys and girls only.**

The majority of the stakeholders in Greece reported that they are **not aware of such training programmes for marginalized children.** A few of them have heard of **specific initiatives such as one by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation called 'Field of Life',** a new **nonprofit organization** recently established in Greece and **led by Greek basketball coach and player Panagiotis Giannakis aiming to youth empowerment**<sup>8</sup>. Another area where such special programmes are applied is **NGOs that apply sports training programmes for refugees of all ages.** Such programmes are **not necessarily specific to basketball education,** though. It was noted that **in basketball academies for children, all children are welcome irrespective of their social or ethnic background and are all treated equally** and that academies do include children from institutions such as orphanages.

In terms of gender, **at the level of academies, training is applied on mixed groups (boys and girls) but at the game level, teams are composed either by boys or girls.**

Despite the lack of such initiatives, the vast majority of respondents believe that **it would be of great value to provide marginalized children with the opportunity to play basketball and, in addition, be trained in life skills through it.** This is considered a very good way to make them feel better integrated in their communities. It can also give the chance for non-marginalized children to interact with their peers and eventually eliminate stereotypes that exist even amongst young children.

Basketball training for marginalized children has multiple advantages for all trainees; a major one is **socialization via teamwork, facilitation of social integration and overcoming prejudice.** The choice of coaches that can promote such programmes and related skills building shall be a priority by the academies and the teams. **Athletes who belong to minority groups or are refugees can be role models** for those children. Stakeholders noted that **municipalities or state institutions can play an essential role in funding such programmes and providing municipal courts** for the training of marginalized children.

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<sup>8</sup>More information at: <https://www.snf.org/en/newsroom/news/2019/12/field-of-life-embarks-on-a-journey-toward-youth-empowerment/>

There are **no such programmes in Bulgaria** which are **especially related to basketball**, but some basketball clubs have used **general funding programmes from the Ministry of youth and sports like the programme “Sport for children in their leisure time”** and have applied with projects for **joint basketball practices for kids of Romani, Turkish and Bulgarian origin**.

There are initiatives to provide sports training programmes in refugee camps in Bulgaria covering around 350 kids from the Arab countries but this is focused on football and not basketball.

**Stakeholders see the need for such programmes in Bulgaria, especially regarding Romani kids** although some of the interviewees believe that Romani kids are not quite interested in playing basketball and such initiatives should be considered as a basis mainly for social activity. However, **such basketball programmes could help integrate Romani kids and change** the public attitude of Bulgarian society which is often based on **negative stereotypes and prejudices** towards this minority. Sport could be a life changing experience for many of those kids and a way for them to achieve something better.

In terms of gender, **in principle, the programmes should not be very different for boys and girls or for kids from different ethnicities**, but of course the coaches should take into consideration some factors related to the children’s background.

In Italy there are training programmes for marginalized children such as **the Tam Tam of Castel Volturno (Campania)** that allows marginalized children of that area to play basketball and is working to have these children acknowledged also at the national and federal level. Other programmes are related to the creation of **BASKIN (BASKetINclusive) teams** for disabled children. In Southern Italy (e.g. Trani, Foggia) there are many, but they are growing all over the country.

In some cases, the **municipalities stipulate special agreements through which disadvantaged or disabled children can participate in various projects and initiatives concerning basketball**, for example in the city of Francavilla the **"Crush the differences" programme** materialized, an integration project aimed at disabled children.

In **North Macedonia**, the interviewees are **not aware of the existence of such type of programmes** in their country.

In contrast to other countries, **basketball in Romania is seen as a sport for the middle to upper class**, in terms of financial commitment of the parents. Therefore, **adding a programme for less favored children could be more than beneficial**, so that they will be able to have access to a different way of training – through basketball – as well as giving them a chance for a special career.

### **The need for coordination with other administration divisions and agents and their nature**

Cypriot stakeholders consider cooperation with other administration divisions and agencies as very important in order to run the various programmes in joint collaboration and thus be able to spread the message across a larger audience. They have mentioned the **Cyprus Ministry of Education, culture, sports and Youth, the Cyprus Sport Organisation, the Cyprus Olympic Committee, the Ministry of Interior and various Media**. The importance of **coordination of activities among basketball academies, especially at a grassroots level, elementary schools and universities** were also noted by one stakeholder.

As a Greek coach noted, ‘more minds can think better than one’ and he suggests that a **psychologist or a psychiatrist** could be of help especially when it comes to training in life skills. Plus, **basketball athletes in dual careers** could also assist greatly the process of motivation of young children. Cooperation with other agents could also have practical effects such as the administration and coordination of games, local school competitions and championships, the development of school actions. For the achievement of the later, the contribution of **elementary educational institutions, or parents associations** are invaluable along with the **Greek Basketball Federation, Coaches Association, the General Secretariat for Sports**; coordinated work by all these agents can provide the best possible result for children and basketball itself. The processes for inclusion in academies and training programmes should be streamlined and simple and facilitate children that want to join (e.g. online applications, easy access to information etc).

Many of the basketball academies for children operate as sports association under **local government** and therefore cooperation with different municipalities is necessary.

The **Ministry of education** could extend the hours of sports at schools and help physical education teachers to further elaborate on the concepts of life skills through sports.

**Sponsors** can be of assistance while one Greek interviewee noted that the **Church** could help since some of its religious charitable organizations have sports programmes for children. What is also viewed as very important is **collaboration with institutions and NGOs that work with marginalized populations** such as ARSIS and even with professional teams that could boost the efforts.

According to Bulgarian stakeholders, coordination is very valuable. There are **many other fields that can contribute** to the performance in basketball and therefore many different specialists, such as **nutritionists, sports psychologists, conditioning coaches, recovery experts**. Most of the coaches do not know how to approach kids with difficulties in communication and integration. In this case a help from a specialist is essential.

But also communication between all stakeholders in a basketball organization must be strictly coordinated and is crucial for reaching the basketball programme's goals. All parties involved in the process of education must be on the same page, so that long term and short term goals are fulfilled. Every issue or potential threat, that might harm a club's image and distract work from its main focus, should be communicated within the club's management, coaching staff, parents and players. Besides the **need for internal channels of communication**, every basketball organization must clearly state its social and sports purpose in front of all government sports institutions and control bodies. Through the **enforcement of marketing and promotional tools**, the main purpose and aim of a programme must be clearly stated out in public. This would guarantee the **presence of a comprehensible idea and image in front of all external agents**: federation, sports ministry, referees, fans, media etc. Without all this present, all stakeholders will daily find themselves in unpleasant situations, provoked by misunderstanding and conflicts, something that will inevitably bring the whole process to a failure.

For sure, the **Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Education** should be involved and integrated as well as **Universities, municipalities and schools** (to help with facilities and infrastructure). Basketball clubs should have bigger access to the primary schools. Partnership with **non-profit organisations** targeting the development of kids could be also beneficial.

For this particular part of the research, the Italian stakeholders had only a few responses, a fact that reflects the low presence of collaborations with other administrative divisions, in the contexts in which the interviewees are operating.

From the few responses received, the **need of coordination with other administrative divisions** can be concluded since it is through this combined work that it becomes possible to improve the quality and type of training. Therefore, it is essential to encourage the **systemic development of the discipline** throughout the Italian territory and the integration of all parties involved in the same direction could generate benefits for the trainees.

Respondents in **North Macedonia** mentioned **collaboration between clubs, federations as well as local and central government** as key to the successful accomplishment of the goal of making better basketball players and better people. Coordination should involve state institutions, **the Ministry of Health, Agency of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and Science, Federation for School Sport, and NGOs** working on specific topics.

In Romania coordination is seen as highly necessary. Working together with **FIBA Europe** for the last 3 years, the Romanian partners had to coordinate with the **Local Department of Education** and also with different **schools**. In order for the project to be successful, the collaboration with both the Ministry of Education and **Ministry of Health** are mandatory. Meanwhile, the educational curriculum could end up with decreased numbers of PE classes taught in schools. Some PE teachers for grade 5 in different schools noted that the main problem is the fact that most of the kids didn't have physical activity and related classes beforehand. So the lack of physical activity turns into a real problem in Romania along with the increase in junk food and playing computer games that drive children to serious health and communication problems which, most of the time, end in bullying and psychological concerns.

### Activities that can be incorporated in the BASKI toolbox

Cypriot stakeholders would like to see a **mixture of basketball training with fun educational games** which can **improve cooperation and communication**. They also

suggested **activities that promote leadership, communication and cooperation**. Those could be achieved through **modified games and tasks in the basketball court**, for instance, a **scavenger hunt** with basketball elements. Activities that would help players enjoy the game but at the same time learn discipline/respect and develop co-operation with their team-mates, partners and coaches. Also, help them understand that winning is not the only reason they play basketball. However, it is a part of the game that will challenge them but at the same time they have to control their feelings so as to achieve that.

Other suggestions included **exhibition games and tournaments, 2-3 days training camps with the specific objective of cultivating life skills, mother – father – kid day, fun weekend camps, excursions and online exchange of best practices**.

Greek stakeholders suggest that basketball is a versatile game and you adjust its elements so as to successfully achieve the goals you have set. An activity that could be incorporated in this toolbox is the organisation of **weekly camps for athletes or 3 on 3 tournaments** but also **activities in the format of a 5v5 game** but instead of giving points to the team that scored a basket you would award points in a point system that would reward teamwork, fair play, initiative, etc. Also one could **divide a team into smaller groups of 3 or 4 children and using a drill that consists of them passing the ball, explain to them that each time they pass the ball they have to use a word that has a positive meaning**. I believe that giving children the opportunity to **play with children their own age from different countries** is also something that will enrich their life skills because it is an opportunity that very few children can experience.

Some of the activities could include aims and targets that the children can set both for them personally and for the team. This would enhance the value of cooperation and the right of free choice. In training, **exercise in stations is a practical way of active training time and a way to develop personal technique and physical condition**. **Training in stations can be divided into shooting, ball-handling, lay-ups, passing**. Each station can have **two coaches and 10 athletes**. This type of training works really well at the beginner's level (basketball camps). Most children miss the game experience so what would be useful is the **organization of motivational tournaments or friendly games**.

Another stakeholder suggested that **practices such as the ones called 'knock out 'and '21' (for speed and shooting improvement) and '8' (for the promotion of cooperation skills)**

could be included in the toolbox. Furthermore, the lived experience element can be critical here. For instance, **watching athletes from different countries** (or even artists or entrepreneurs) who have the life skills we want to teach to the children (e.g. leadership skills) or teams that are based on teamwork and cooperation would **help children get in touch with successful role models**. Bringing the children in contact with such role models can help life skills development for these children.

**Seminars or recreational activities** should be included in the training of life skills and the organization of **local or state actions free of charge for pilot training programmes in outdoor courts during the summer months** can additionally help.

Bulgarian stakeholders insist on theoretical and practical programmes for basketball training with accent on the pedagogical aspect, communication skills, self-improvement and the perception of basketball as a useful tool for the development of life skills. Too often basketball coaches rather stress on winning a basketball competition than to develop the more important life skills especially among young kids. They suggest the **promotion of seminars for coaches and physical education teachers** on the above. Psychologists should be included in these activities.

**Regular meetings and workshops with parents** for explaining the importance of their attitude and behavior toward the basketball activities of their kids with regards to the development of not only the sports career, but also important life skills. Asking for feedback from the parents is deemed very useful.

Introduction of **former or current top players as role models** since kids love to be in touch with successful and famous players.

**Basketball activities for kids in kindergartens** can also be introduced as well as **more basketball activities in primary schools** for kids 7-10 years old.

The method of teaching the kids is very important and one of the interviewees shares his successful experience using the method "**Suggestopedia**" which has been created as a language teaching method, based on 'suggestology' created in the 1960s and 1970s by the Bulgarian psychologist Georgi Lozanov with the main idea being that **accelerated learning can take place when accompanied by de-suggestion of psychological barriers and positive suggestion**.

Another interviewee suggested the method **“Playdagogy”** which she is using in her work with young kids with special needs. It is an active pedagogical method, created in the early 2000s for kids 6-15 years old **that uses sporting games as an educational tool.**

Italian stakeholders believe that the **“Baskin” initiative** mentioned above is an activity that could improve the project toolbox. In Baskin you can be given the opportunity to have integrated **teams of kids with and without disabilities** so that they can get to know each other and then **empathize and better understand each other** aiming at making disability of these kids not perceived as a weakness. In fact, the words BASKetINclusive, gives us one of the objectives of the BASKI project.

Stakeholders in North Macedonia suggest activities such as **interaction with former players, coaches, transferring positive and negative experiences**, basketball and life experiences. This does not mean holding training sessions but **giving speeches on various topics**. In the same light, holding a **seminar or educational activity with marginalized young athletes** is viewed as useful. The development of love for sports at a young age through **frequent visits of sport events and games and free of charge practice for vulnerable children** (in an inclusive manner in mixed groups) are along similar lines. **Professional development activities for coaches** in order to expand their skills for working with young **children are suggested, as well as additional training for physical education teachers** on the benefits of basketball education. A **workshop that would aim to limit conflicts in basketball matches of an interethnic nature** could be proved constructive. **Info sheets for parents** on the importance of participating in sports, especially team sport and basketball, could help in the same direction.

For the Romanian stakeholders, basketball is a team sport, so **any group activity will be highly valuable** to implement the main focus of the project – to create awareness about the game of basketball. All team/group activities need to emphasize on **communication, fair-play, cooperation and flexibility**, which are also big parts of basketball education.

## Educational/learning goals envisioned for life skills education through basketball

As one of the Cypriot stakeholders mentioned, his educational and learning goals envisioned concentrating around **making everybody a better person, student, athlete, basketball player, teammate and society member**. Most of the Cypriot stakeholders envision the **development of leadership skills** in children that would be developed by taking the responsibility to push their team forward. Besides, **self-awareness** since the players will need to face and study their selves in order to **identify their strengths and weaknesses** and work hard in order to improve them. The **ability to present and communicate with a team**, learn to **set goals, plan to achieve an objective and learn how to communicate these goals and objectives** to the rest of the team and **cooperate with the team** to achieve these collective goals. Furthermore, the stakeholders envision the educational goals that have to do with **acceptance, tolerance and important social values**. Another goal is to **educate physical education teachers and coaches** in order to create training programmes which support the development of life skills in children through basketball and to **support primary school physical education teachers** by providing them **with the necessary tools** for that.

Greek stakeholders believe that sports education in every country can promote social **values and skills that are related to compassion, respect, end of racism** and such aims **should be incorporated in elementary school sports curricula**. Basketball is very popular among girls and boys and is one of those areas that can promote such values and skills. A key goal should be that irrespective of the children's level of every skill, **all the participants should eventually improve** and the activities planned should benefit all the children participating in the training.

The goals that Greek stakeholders envision are for the **young children to realize the importance of these life skills and to learn to trust each other and work well in teams** but also **believe in their personal strengths. Taking initiatives, developing creativity, self-expression and thinking outside the box, respecting others** irrespective of their race or gender, **helping others to achieve their goals** along with **discipline** not as a form of obedience but **as a form of learning** (listen and learn) are also key. **Respect** for each other's

differences, for the opponent, the rules and the referees, **fair play** can be added to the list of learning goals.

Another goal noted by the interviewees in Greece is for participants **to learn how to handle both victory and defeat, keep a good physical condition and develop a love for sporting activities** in general. They should enjoy participation in these actions irrespective of the final outcome or result. This can be done in and out of the school environment and the children should realize that through basketball education they will gain necessary skills to face real life situations later in their lives with strength and confidence.

**Participation free of charge (or with a small monthly fee) and the entertaining nature of activities are deemed very important** to convey a message of positive experience with the sport and life skills training through games. However, **critical thinking after the game should be also exercised** and the academies can make sure that the participants make the right choices of practice on every occasion.

Stakeholders in Bulgaria noted that every real change is based on the conviction that you are the creator of your own destiny. The kids should have a clear idea of the causal links in life. There is no sustainability if somebody else changes your life. We have to create the prerequisite for the kids to have the confidence to decide for themselves. The main goal should be **to form a strong, but good person with stable morality and values through basketball.**

Basketball is undoubtedly a powerful tool for educating life skills in kids, but just playing basketball doesn't guarantee that one should benefit the most from sports. The way a basketball programme is designed, defines what it teaches, and what impact it has on youngsters. As easy as it may seem, creating a positive and enriching environment is a hard and long process which needs a lot of support and efforts from everybody involved. For example, any **differences in the educational approaches between coaches and parents will result in** nothing else than **confusion and devastation in a kid's mind.** In order to build strong values and positive habits for life, **all stakeholders should work in the same direction.** The style of play has a crucial importance for building long term understanding of the game and its correlation with life. If the basketball programme's management has chosen a coaching system for youth ages, that should stimulate **sharing the ball, tolerating and supporting teammates, respecting differences, playing by giving one's best, but not**

**just for winning.** Such scenarios would allow building life skills such as **communication, tolerance, support, dealings with failure, respect the teammates, rivals, coaches and referees, work ethics etc.** But also very important are **discipline, persistence, routine, endurance, coordination, creativity, agility, leadership skills, teamwork, ability to be humble and fast decision making.** All those mentioned above could be developed during practicing basketball and are skills that would guarantee the establishment of positive values.

To get the most out of kids you have to respect them, you have to explain what the result would be once performing what you are showing/teaching them. **The more fun kids have, the more they are willing to do it** and most of the time they don't even realize the hard work they are putting in. The goal is to organize things in a way where the proper skills are being taught while the kids are enjoying it.

From the numerous responses received in Italy it emerged that there are several points that lead to the achievement of the educational/learning objectives for the education of life skills through basketball, such as **respect for teammates/opponents (fair play), for roles (coach, manager, referee) and for the place where you train,** usually shared with other athletes. In addition, **knowledge of one's body, management of emotions, stress, effective communication and effective relationships, empathy, creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving.**

One of the interviewees noted the importance of **teaching children respect** for the rules, respect for their instructor and for their companions and how important it is to **teach them civil coexistence** before playing basketball.

Another one, through a simple example, spoke of the importance of **a game fundamental such as passage which is seen as an ideal tool for involvement and sharing** with each other.

An athlete interviewee in Italy pointed at the great strength that basketball has especially in **teaching how to make decisions, right or wrong, learning how to think about what happens** during training and during a game **and act accordingly** and how you **start understanding human behaviour and respect both yourself and everyone else** in the sport.

Finally, an important thought came from an Italian coach who talked about the game of basketball **as a means of socializing and communicating effectively and adequately** both with peers and with adults and **teaching children the basic cognitive functions such as space and time and familiarize them with their bodies and the ball**. Playing basketball encourages players to **integrate everyone**, without any distinction, **introducing the concept of team/group** that helps to overcome individual differences.

From the answers received in North Macedonia there are several points that lead to the achievement of the goals of educational/learning objectives for the education of life skills through basketball, such as **hard work, perseverance, self-discipline, team work, communication to achieve a goal, patience, leadership, self-awareness, honour for your teammate but also honour for your opponent. Sharing knowledge, be there for the community, respect the game, respect the rules, respect the opponent, respect the coach, respect the staff and the place where you train, knowledge of moral and ethical behaviour in decision making and organizational skills** are also among the desired goals.

Stakeholders in Romania suggest that the main goal of any kind of education/training in all fields including sports should be that **the student/trainee reaches its highest potential**, being able to pass its comfort zone and get to its peak. The main educational/learning goal is for a child to **become a good citizen**. When we leave the basketball court, we should all be **examples and role models** for the ones around us. Basketball helps us **become very well organized** with our time, scheduling practice times, school hours and social activities, so being able to make a realistic timetable is another learning goal for life skills through basketball. **Exploring new activities** is another educational/learning goal. A lot of professionals can't stress enough the advantage of **playing or trying multiple sports along with basketball**. That gives you a broader perspective and understanding of sports and of life.

### Role models/case studies

Most of the Cypriot and Greek stakeholders mentioned the case of **Giannis Antetokoumpo** as a unique case of training in basketball and life skills for an individual from a marginalized (migrant) background while the Cypriot stakeholders also referred to the case of **Dimitris Diamantidis**. They could both serve as **role models** that children could look up to. Others mentioned the **“Midnight Basketball” initiative** created to keep the youth off the streets, **“Peace Players International”** and even **“Coach Carter (2005)” as an inspirational movie**.

A Greek stakeholder mentioned **Chicago Bulls** as an example of a team that had a **remarkable history of teamwork, leadership and acceptance of diversity**.

Bulgarian stakeholders suggested that **the LaVar Ball family story in the US** could be used. His approach with the kids he was training turned out successfully for their careers.

In addition, they mentioned the story of the **Serbian coach Vinko Bakic who is one of the best coaches for youth**. He teaches specific moves and multiple repetitions until the movement of the players becomes automatic.

Bulgarian media often report successful stories of Romani kids that started to play sports (football in some cases) in the **“Team of hope”** and this has changed their life.

Many Italian interviewees have used **Michael Jordan** as a model, since his basketball story told through a series has shown how it can be considered a realistic example of best practice for Basketball Life Trainer, to understand how a player must be heard. Many coaches have also reported the film dedicated to **Coach Carter**, because it explained the personal growth of children as people and not only as athletes.

The same film was also mentioned by North Macedonian stakeholders along with successful basketball training by **Morgan Wootten** (a highly respected high school coach). They also refer to his book on coaching that inspires coaches and changes their approach, especially in the way in which he tries to teach and prepare his players for upcoming challenges, not just basketball, but life in general.

## Best practices

A Cypriot coach reminded that you should never underestimate any child, be always positive and encourage them and that coaches should try to give children goals that they can achieve and if they get disappointed always be there for them. Also, it is important for a coach to be creative and always try to help children gain confidence through the chosen drills. Another coach reiterated the importance of helping children to love basketball by playing for the love of the game, for pleasure and not for victory, that training time should be the happiest time for the children and that they should leave the court happy.

Although the majority of Greek stakeholders were not aware of relevant case studies as it comes to the combination of life skills and basketball education (which is reported as very novel and new unexplored territory in Greece), a few of the respondents referred to examples from their past experience. What is considered crucial is the selection of coaches/trainers for the training in life skills efforts. They have to be individuals with love for sports and devotion to basketball which are key elements. The coach dedicates many hours (sometimes without adequate compensation) to the children's training and s/he needs to be someone who always yearns for knowledge.

A **basketball coach for elementary school students** in Ptolemaida, Northwestern Greece, before each training gathered the athletes and explained to them in a very thorough way the goals for that day of training as well as the outcomes of those goals on their personal development and on the development of the game. This coach always rewarded the students when they avoided conflicts and tensions among their peers. As a result the team that was created was strongly based on good techniques and celebrated victories in the local school championship. In the context of best practices a Greek coach shared with us her experiences and solutions to some problems. For instance, if a child is new to a team and intimidated, the coach adjusted the training in pairs and paired the newcomer with a child s/he already knew so that the new child will be better adjusted to the group.

Sometimes parents might question the work of the coaches in academies. In such cases the coaches shall be resilient and show the parents that their methods have value and results

and eventually parents will be convinced about the value of training in life skills through basketball education.

A Bulgarian interviewee shared the following story: In their academy there are 2 kids with special needs. First, an eight years old boy, who has a light form of children's epilepsy and has signs of autism, who didn't speak at all at his first practice and could not make a basket during his first 6 months of practicing. Two years later, he is shooting the ball great, he exchanges small phrases with his teammates and he is the first one to help and encourage others.

Second, another eight years old boy, raised by his father after a hard and painful divorce, had a speech disorder. He was unable to pronounce a full word because he was stuttering. A year later the stakeholder made a video interview with him and he was able to answer all the basic questions. He also started to communicate with other teammates and he even constantly interrupts the team's discipline because he is talking during practice.

Another interviewee/coach shares that his work with talented Romani kids gave him a big satisfaction and a new knowledge. The biggest success was the fact that two of those kids are already part of the Bulgarian youth national teams and this achievement gained a huge respect for them in their closed Romani society.

A positive paradigm according to the Bulgarian stakeholders could be the story of a player from a club who after finishing his/her playing career continues working in the same club as a coach or manager.

Italian stakeholders had to share a number of examples, provided by athletes and coaches, of case studies and stories that can be used as a model example for young coaches and trainers. An athlete spoke of a company present in its territory. **A basketball company was established in 2002** with the main purpose to welcome children and introduce them to new activities. The founders had worked in the youth sector managing to bring many children to play tournaments and finals even outside their own region / nation. It is an example of passion and dedication for basketball and for young people.

Other best practice examples from Italy are two coaches, **Julio Velasco and Gaetano Gebbia**. The first national volleyball coach and former coach of the national volleyball team, through his **motivational speeches**, could be considered as an example by a young coach,

of any type of sport. The second was in the past the **Head of the youth sector Viola Reggio Calabria, manager in League A, Viola Reggio Calabria, National Youth Sector Manager** and is currently **head of youth sector Capo d'Orlando**. Among the players he discovered Manu Ginobili and Hugo Sconocchini. He has several publications including "**The coach on the chair**" and constitutes an excellent model to follow. He trained in Serie A in Avellino and Teramo and was Simone Pianigiani's deputy on the bench of the Italian national team. From September 2015 to 2017, and again from 2019 he is the coach of the women's national basketball team. His way of teaching and his passion are very important examples.

Italian interviewees referred to interesting initiatives such as "**L'ACCADEMY CERIGNOLA**" which provides excellent support of resources both at a technological and practical level in the youth sector and projects such as "**Gold in Education and Elite Sport (GEES)**" which offers value and support to young athletes in dual careers.

In terms of Romanian best practices, the interviewees referred to one of the best players of Romanian National Team, and also it's captain, **Virgil Stanescu**. He organized for 5 years in a row a training camp, lasting one week, free of charge for all the kids who wished to participate. The coaches were only active basketball players, most of them also National Team players. The goal was, on the one hand, to develop basketball fundamentals amongst these kids during that week of the training camp through a lot of interactive activities (not just specific basketball exercises) and on the other, to present the children with role models. A physical and mental preparation coach, the President of the Romanian Martial Arts Federation, MrFlorentin Marinescu, was also invited and talked with the kids about the importance of a healthy and disciplined life through sports and mostly through basketball<sup>9</sup>.

### **Additional comments/suggestions**

The Greek stakeholders suggested that it would be beneficial for BASKI to have **basketball academies to take part in the project** and certainly basketball **athletes in dual career to advice the children**. In addition, engaging **athletes that have overcome difficulties** (either

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<sup>9</sup>More information on the camp at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDugXjbNU54>

when they were growing up or during their sports career) to promote BASKI would be great inspiration for young children.

It is also considered very helpful to **reach out** not only to the coaches but also **to the presidents of different sports clubs** and explain to them what BASKI is because although the coaches could be more than willing to help and promote it, those in charge are the ones who make the final decision to implement the new training practices.

Another interviewee suggested that the project should also **extent to children that live and play basketball outside major metropolitan areas** and the feedback from those could be valuable and diverse.

Bulgarian stakeholders suggest that the BASKI **platform should constantly evolve** and the coaches should be able to share their experience. The focus should be on creating a positive and supportive community. The **activities** for small kids should be **planned on lower baskets with smaller balls**. The individual approach from the coaches towards each young child is very important. More international coaching clinics and international camps for kids should be planned as an important way to interact and exchange ideas between people from different nationalities.

They also suggested a **programme for encouraging or awarding the kids who play basketball and also have high marks in school**, a **programme for encouraging or awarding coaches** who educate the kids with important values as fair play, respect, empathy etc. and **a programme for encouraging or awarding parents** who regularly come to support the team in a positive, civilized way.

Finally, further suggestions from interviewees in North Macedonia include **continuous educational training of young coaches in child psychology and pedagogy**, which in addition to expertise in sports is necessary in the development of a healthy personality. This is considered very important not just for coaches and their players, but also for society in general and its value should be promoted on a broader level. At the moment this is left on the will and the resources of the coaches and the emphasis is more on the athletic part of the sport.

In addition, **the general public should be better informed for the benefits of the life skills** that can be acquired through basketball and educational programmes.

The biggest problem with young coaches and trainers is that they envision themselves as future coaches of senior leagues and their behaviour corresponds to where they want to be and not where they are. This is the biggest problem with the trainers in North Macedonia and any change of attitude should start from there in order to have at least some role models of coaches for the youth. It would be very helpful **to have more information and perhaps a manual or video materials on how to work and act with a specific category of young athletes**, to be able to share positive examples of successful athletes.

An important issue is **to bring senior and junior players closer through basketball** so that they can talk to each other and exchange perspectives and advice. The joint practice can take place in post season period, or winter breaks so that the children can have the motivation to become like their role models.

### **Additional resources related to training for life skills in the partner countries and multimedia content**

[www.peaceplayers.org](http://www.peaceplayers.org)

[Sepk.gr](http://Sepk.gr)

[Summit.coachesclinic.com](http://Summit.coachesclinic.com)

[Motorskilllearning.com](http://Motorskilllearning.com)

<https://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/drills/basketballdrills.html>

<https://www.burgas.bg/en/info/index/1446>

[facebook.com/getbetterevo](https://facebook.com/getbetterevo)

[www.koledz-beograd.edu.rs/sr/naslovna](http://www.koledz-beograd.edu.rs/sr/naslovna)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhOVgx\\_UeLE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhOVgx_UeLE)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LbAoF9hO5g>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10158696169804381&set=pcb.101586961705443>

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<http://fusmak.org.mk/>

<http://www.ams.gov.mk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsMacedonia/>

<https://kfsm.mk/>

## Overall project Learning Outcomes

The purpose of the BASKI Toolbox is to lead to positive child development and teach children important and indispensable life skills that would eventually lead to healthy, happy and useful adult members of a given society<sup>10</sup>. Such a process is not automatically happen when children play sports. Research has shown that sports participation has been associated with both negative and positive behavioural outcomes and the explanation for the different results is that they depend on the ways sports are delivered to children<sup>11</sup>.

Coaches can engage children with appropriate skills – building activities and the process is rather complicated and researchers (Bean, Kramers, Forneris, & Camiré, 2018) suggested a six level scheme to facilitate coaches in the transfer of life skills (Figure 1). These six levels were consequently matched by specific evidence-informed strategies in order to maximize the outcomes of coaching practice<sup>12</sup>.

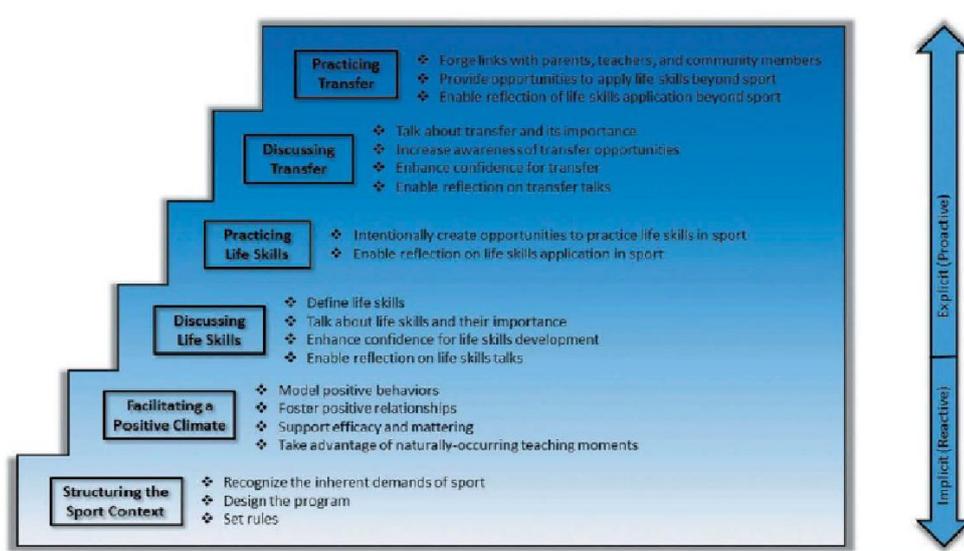


Figure 1. The implicit/explicit continuum of life skills development and transfer.

Figure

1. From the study of Bean, Kramers, Forneris, & Camiré, 2018

Basketball is one of the sports through which life skills can be transmitted to young children. Academic research suggests that they are implicit and explicit ways to teach life

<sup>10</sup>Camiré, Martin & Martin (2019).

<sup>11</sup>Holt, 2013.

<sup>12</sup>Camiré, Martin & Martin (2019).

skills to children through sports- including basketball- and that coaches are a great part of these ways; some of them, can assume a holistic approach in the transfer of such skills<sup>13</sup>. Thus, in a rather recent Canadian study, basketball coaches (among others) reflected on their learning regarding how to teach life skills and most of them noted that they learned it through contemplating on their experiences and through interaction with others. The study recommends the formation of practice communities to enhance the life skills teaching philosophy as well as athlete-centered approaches that could be integrated in coach education and training programmes. Such programmes should promote the importance of teaching life skills to young athletes and through them coaches can have the chance of exchanging experiences with one another on how they teach life skills. Reflection exercises can be part of such training of coaches' programmes<sup>14</sup>.

The BASKI project aims at providing such 'coach the coaches' training programmes that would stress the importance of life skills teaching through basketball and that would allow the coaches to reflect on their experiences and exchange views with one another on the transfer of such skills.

The BASKI Curriculum and Open Resource Toolbox will be developed in a blended format with both face to face and online activities.

General themes to be covered in the related modules are:

1. Basketball based pedagogical approaches
2. Life Skills Development for Youth
3. Basketball and the Community
4. Social Integration through Basketball
5. Physical/Mental/Life Health

The proposed BASKI Toolbox is based both on a group of general learning outcomes and on specific learning outcomes per module. The general learning outcomes correspond to knowledge, skills and values that ensure that the coaches will be able to:

- Evaluate the methods of assessing young children's basketball related life skills
- Explore the relationships between basketball education and skills development benefits in children

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<sup>13</sup>Gould et al, 2017; Camiré, Trudel, Forneris, 2012.

<sup>14</sup>Trottier, Migneron and Robitaille, 2017.

- Implement exercises and training related to basketball education and physical, mental and life health-related outcomes in children
- Work co-operatively and effectively with others to achieve goals
- Organise training sessions in a coherent and cogent effective manner
- Acquire the information and skills necessary to uphold a vigorous lifestyle
- comprehend and apply practices and training based on structured modules and skills-related guidelines
- become comfortable using online educational technology for coaching purposes

Given these general outcomes and chiefly based on the research by the BASKI consortium a number of interviews by relevant stakeholders (coaches, athletes, PE teachers and basketball federations among others) and the National Reports created for each partner country it was clear that in the six countries where BASKI partners are based, the stakeholders consider the development and transfer of the following life skills as the most important for young children:

**Communication**- verbal, non verbal, active listening

**Teamwork** – cooperation, coordination, diversity awareness, fair play, honesty, respect

**Problem solving**– observation, initiative, evaluation, risk management adaptability, resilience

**Creativity** – imagination, inspiration, motivation, critical thinking

**Leadership** – empathy, decision making, conflict resolution

**Interpersonal skills** – discipline, tolerance, respect, diversity awareness, handling victory and defeat

## The Toolbox modules

### MODULE 1 - COMMUNICATION

#### Description

People through their lives are continuously under an active process of learning and social development. It is essential for them to interact with others, be able to communicate and understand each other. Basketball can constitute a tool assisting towards the connection with others, synthesize information and making decisions. Therefore communication in both verbal and non-verbal cues, inside and outside the court is greatly important. Thus this module will provide an inclusive pedagogical approach for developing physical and mental life skills through basketball for youth.

#### Learning Objectives

After the completion of this module, the learner should be able to:

- Discuss the two main concepts of communication and how their implementation in the game impacted upon yourself and your teammates.
- Identify the importance of active listening.
- Demonstrate verbal communication with others.
- Evaluate the effective use of non-verbal ways to communicate with others.

## MODULE 2 - TEAMWORK

### Description

Teamwork encourages trust, support and respect among teammates, encourages players to create synergies, increases communication, generation of new ideas and motivation, assists efforts for conflict resolution, and improves performance and discipline.

### Learning Objectives

After the completion of this module, the learner should:

- be able to work well in teams and groups
- be acquainted with the notions of intercultural awareness and respect
- better cooperate with other members of a group/team
- effectively apply fair play and honest behavior
- be able to coordinate members of a group/team towards a common goal

## MODULE 3—PROBLEM SOLVING

### Description

Problem solving is one of the life skills that is developed through practicing basketball. Important life skills as observation, taking initiative, ability to evaluate a situation, risk management, adaptability and resilience are part of the whole ability to solve situations successfully.

### Learning Objectives

After the completion of this module, the learner should:

- able to focus on target and observe complex situations
- Take initiatives whenever necessary
- Make choices and accept the result of the choices made
- Evaluate different options as they emerge
- Apply effective risk management
- Be teachable, adaptive and creative critical thinker
- Be able to work towards the solution of a problem both individually and collectively

## MODULE 4 - CREATIVITY

### Description

Creativity is one of the most important characteristics of an effective leader and fosters a successful and healthy workplace environment. Creativity opens up opportunities in problem-solving, achieving goals, and inspiring teams to be creative and find unlikely perspectives. Creativity is usually a word connected to the arts rather than sports yet creativity is a necessary tool to become the best basketball player and the person you want to be. Creativity is defined as the ability to transcend traditional ideas, patterns or modes of thinking and create new meaningful ideas or patterns.

### Learning Objectives

After the completion of this module, the learner should have acquire the skills of:

- Problem-solving, defining clear goals and achievable goals
- being inspired to be creative in different situations and find unlikely perspectives and solutions for them
- Being unselfish - as the most important team attribute and understanding how their work contributes to the team goals
- Celebrating small successes - both team and individual
- being disciplined
- Improving communication skills

## MODULE 5 - LEADERSHIP

### Description

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal. Effective leadership is essential in any sports organization, both in the boardroom and on the training pitch.

### Learning Objectives

After the completion of this module, the learner should be able to:

- Explain the value of empathy
- Describe what empathetic body language looks like
- Evaluate options accurately and establish priorities
- Using "collaborating" involves finding a solution that entirely satisfies the concerns of all involved parties.

## MODULE 6 – INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

### Description

Strong interpersonal skills create more satisfying interactions in all environments. Developing good skills for interacting with people requires building strong relationships, demonstrating ethical behavior, clear communication, and effective teamwork. The topics on which we will focus are discipline and respect, handling victory and defeat, diversity awareness and tolerance.

### Learning Objectives

After the completion of this module, the learner should:

- 1) be acquainted with the concepts of discipline and respect
- 2) be able to handle victory as well as defeat
- 3) be aware of intercultural diversity and integration processes
- 4) apply tolerance and understanding as they build relationships with others

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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1. Conclusions

Concluding summary based on the National Evaluation Reports

Cyprus		
Partner	CBF and CSI	
Type of stakeholders	Coaches, trainers, physical education teachers, civil servants, policy makers	
Question	Common theme	Contrasting findings

<p><b>Please provide your inputs on the overall basketball philosophy and the value of its training as relates to life skills (e.g. empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, cooperation, flexibility, conflict resolution, coordination, problem solving, leadership skills, intercultural sensitivity, creativity, self-awareness / reflectivity) and educational prospects for young children in your country.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communication</li> <li>● Empathy</li> <li>● Creativity, Problem solving</li> <li>● Team work, Cooperation,</li> <li>● Leadership</li> <li>● Self-awareness</li> <li>● Cultivation of psychological and social skills</li> <li>● Respect for others and the rules</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Which are the particular strengths and weaknesses related to basketball for life skills education in your country/region?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengths:</li> <li>● Popular sport in Cyprus</li> <li>● Many available training grounds</li> <li>● Qualified coaches</li> <li>● Promoted to primary school</li> <li>● Weaknesses:</li> <li>● Limited budget for improving facilities, scientific support, promotion</li> <li>● Usually result driven and not educational</li> <li>● Focus on games and not on social development</li> <li>● Not targeted intention to use sport for life skills</li> <li>● Poor sports education in primary schools</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Are there any specific training programmes currently running in basketball education for young children in your country/region?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A number of programmes organised by CBF, private academies and school programmes</li> <li>● Peace players International</li> <li>● Sports for all.</li> <li>● U8, U10, U12, U14 championships and tournaments</li> <li>● Most of the clubs in Cyprus teach basketball programmes from the age of 6.</li> </ul>	<p>No specific programmes for children</p>
<p><b>Are you aware of, or do you apply basketball training programmes for marginalized children (e.g. minority – Roma- or refugee children?), some specifically targeted to girls or boys in your country? Explain.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are no basketball programmes currently running, which support minorities or refugees.</li> <li>● Peace players international - bring together Greek Cypriots with Turkish Cypriots. Targeted to both boys and girls</li> <li>● Government subsidizes fees of minority or refugee children to play basketball in local clubs</li> </ul>	
<p><b>If not, do you see the value in adding such specific programmes? In which ways?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Room for improvement to fight bullying and improve social inclusion</li> <li>● Positively influence mutual understanding, acceptance and tolerance</li> <li>● Refugees is becoming a major issue for a number European countries, I believe that through basketball created programmes a smooth inclusion in the local community, could be achieved.</li> </ul>	<p>Specific programmes to marginalised children could further increase stigma against them</p>
<p><b>Which are the activities that can be incorporated in the projected BASKI toolbox?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A mixture of basketball training with fun educational games can improve cooperation and communication</li> <li>● Modified games and tasks in basketball court to promote leadership, communication and cooperation</li> <li>● Exhibition games and tournaments</li> <li>● 2-3 days training camps</li> <li>● Mother – father – kids day</li> <li>● Online exchange of best practices</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Which are the educational/learning goals that you envision for life skills education through basketball?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respect</li> <li>● Leadership</li> <li>● Self awareness</li> <li>● Teamwork</li> <li>● Verbal and non verbal Communication</li> <li>● Cooperation</li> <li>● Problem solving</li> <li>● Empathy</li> <li>● Conflict resolution</li> <li>● Creativity</li> <li>● To educate the teachers and coaches to create training programmes, which support the kids life skills. To support primary education teachers of P.E., by providing them the necessary tools</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>GREECE</b></p>		
<p><b>Partner</b></p>	<p>Educational Association Anatolia</p>	
<p><b>Type of stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Basketball coaches, athletes in dual career, physical education teachers</p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p>	<p><b>Common theme</b></p>	<p><b>Contrasting findings</b></p>

<p><b>Please provide your inputs on the overall basketball philosophy and the value of its training as relates to life skills (e.g. empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, cooperation, flexibility, conflict resolution, coordination, problem solving, leadership skills, intercultural sensitivity, creativity, self-awareness / reflectivity) and educational prospects for young children in your country.</b></p>	<p>Concerning the skills, the interviewees underlined the importance of cooperation, communication, coordination, and creativity that children gain. They also believe that training aiming at discipline is of great importance too because it helps children mature. A very crucial aspect of basketball training mentioned is that children learn how to structure their daily routines and that will help them in the future. Other skills that children gain with basketball training are critical thinking analysis, decision making, fast evaluation and adaptability. Lastly, they learn how to handle a victory and a defeat and to respect children from different backgrounds.</p> <p>As far as the values of the philosophy of basketball are concerned, the most important are respect, honesty and justice according to the interviewees.</p>	<p>No contrasting themes for this one.</p>
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<p><b>Which are the particular strengths and weaknesses related to basketball for life skills education in your country/region?</b></p>	<p><u>Strengths</u> of basketball for life skills in Greece: the training hours are on weekends, the teams are formed according to age and not skills. <u>Weaknesses:</u> a lot of academies have remarkable coaches but there is lack of well-structured trainings by the state and its institutions, people believe that the purpose of basketball is only victory and championships and not life skills development, lack of mixed teams in terms of gender, training time is not enough for life skills building and the training spaces are not adequately equipped, the indoor courts are not enough. The concept of life skills in general is not adequately promoted and both parents and educators should be better informed on this.</p>	<p>Even though almost all interviewees justified the fact there are no mixed teams with both girls and boys, one coach suggested that for life skills training the teams should be mixed.</p>
<p><b>Are there any specific training programmes currently running in basketball education for young children in your country/region?</b></p>	<p>Two types mentioned: a) basketball education as co-curricular activity at schools and b) basketball education as extracurricular activity. In a) coaches bring into these programmes their knowledge, teach skills and basketball philosophy. In b) during the last 4-5 years personal training became very popular. Small groups of 2-3 players and individual trainings. These trainings are mostly focused on physical skills and basketball skills, like footwork, shooting, dribbling.</p>	<p>A contrasting finding in this question is that some of the coaches referred to school training and some others to extracurricular training even though the respondents are in a general agreement in terms of skills training.</p>

<p><b>Are you aware of, or do you apply basketball training programmes for marginalized children (e.g. minority –Roma- or refugee children?), some specifically targeted to girls or boys in your country? Explain.</b></p>	<p>The majority of stakeholders claimed that they aren't aware of basketball training programmes for marginalized children in Greece. However, they reported that Greek basketball programmes are open for all the children and that the trainers treat them equally.</p>	<p>A small number of interviewees noted that they know some NGOs training programmes for refugees.</p>
<p><b>If not, do you see the value in adding such specific programmes? In which ways?</b></p>	<p>Interviewees are in favour of the idea of basketball training programmes for marginalized children and they highlight the role of municipalities or state institutions towards this aim.</p>	<p>No contrasting themes</p>
<p><b>Which are the activities that can be incorporated in the projected BASKI toolbox?</b></p>	<p>Most of the stakeholders suggested practices that improve teamwork. For example, giving points to a team by judging the level of teamwork between the players or techniques to improve the relations between the children (i.e. using a word with positive meaning when passing the ball). Also practices called "knock out", "21" and "8" can, according to an interviewee, improve cooperation. As far as personal skills are concerned practices such as goals setting by children themselves were suggested.</p>	<p>Some stakeholders mentioned that it would be helpful for trainees to get in contact with international basketball players and role models and that participation in training seminars would further boost skills improvement techniques.</p>

<p><b>Which are the educational/learning goals that you envision for life skills education through basketball?</b></p>	<p>The majority of the stakeholders mentioned that basket training programmes can lead to great skills improvement. The most commonly mentioned skill was teamwork and as far as individual skills are concerned many reported critical thinking and creativity. Critical thinking was deemed important not only during the training but also afterwards in order to assess the suitability of life skills training through basketball. Last but not least, an interviewee noted that another important skill that a child can gain through the BASKI project is handling both victory and defeat.</p>	<p>A stakeholder noted that it would be important for the training sessions to be offered for free of with only a small monthly fee.</p>
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<b>BULGARIA</b>		
<b>Partner</b>	Bulgarian Basketball Federation	
<b>Type of stakeholders</b>	Coaches, former top players, academy professor, physical education teacher, policy makers	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Common theme</b>	<b>Contrasting findings</b>

**Please provide your inputs on the overall basketball philosophy and the value of its training as relates to life skills (e.g. empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, cooperation, flexibility, conflict resolution, coordination, problem solving, leadership skills, intercultural sensitivity, creativity, self-awareness / reflectivity) and educational prospects for young children in your country.**

The philosophy of basketball is related to:

- the integration of people from different races, ethnicity, culture, religion etc.
- to work with others as a team to achieve a common goal.
- requires motivation, dedication, discipline and a routine.
- the coach helps kids to understand and learn authority and to respect others.
- stimulates establishment of problem solving, decision making skills, requires verbal and non-verbal communication and team work, also the adoption of leadership skills, empathy, acceptance of failure.

From the very beginning the kids should participate in competitive exercises in order to be clarified which kid has leadership skills and a mindset of a winner.

<p><b>Which are the particular strengths and weaknesses related to basketball for life skills education in your country/region?</b></p>	<p><u>Strengths</u>  The positive attitude and belief in ourselves  Hard working mentality.  Pride in the cities and relevant clubs and the support of the fans.  Basically, basketball is not expensive for the parents from a financial point of view.</p> <p><u>Weaknesses</u>  Lack of qualified, motivated coaches with pedagogical approach.  Fanatic supporters, often parents, who bring violence in sports.  Lack of basketball gyms in the country, many schools have no sport's gyms at all.  Lack of financial governmental support  Lack of real perspective to become a basketball professional in Bulgaria.</p>	<p>Many top international basketball competitions are broadcasted live in Bulgaria</p>
<p><b>Are there any specific training programmes currently running in basketball education for young children in your country/region?</b></p>	<p>Summer international camps for young children  Private basketball programme in Plovdiv city "The Little Team" for kids 3-8 years old.  BBF is preparing a unified programme for training youth according to their age.</p>	<p>The youth is taught to work hard to win, but not necessarily taught the fundamental skills.</p>

<p><b>Are you aware of, or do you apply basketball training programmes for marginalized children (e.g. minority –Roma- or refugee children?), some specifically targeted to girls or boys in your country? Explain.</b></p>	<p>There are no such programmes in Bulgaria related especially to basketball. There are initiatives to provide football training programmes in refugee camps</p>	<p>Some of the interviewees believe that Romani kids are not quite interested in playing basketball and such initiatives should be considered as social activity only.</p>
<p><b>If not, do you see the value in adding such specific programmes? In which ways?</b></p>	<p>There is a need for such programmes in Bulgaria, especially regarding Romani kids. In principle, the programmes should not be very different for boys and girls or for kids from different ethnicities.</p>	
<p><b>Which are the activities that can be incorporated in the projected BASKI toolbox?</b></p>	<p>Accent on the pedagogical aspect and communication skills of coaches. Seminars for coaches and physical education teachers on the above with the participation of psychologists. Meetings and workshops with parents. Introduction of former or current top players as role models. Basketball activities for kids in kindergartens. More basketball activities in primary schools for kids 7-10 years old.</p>	<p>Teaching method “Suggestopedia”, Teaching method “Playdagogy”</p>

<p><b>Which are the educational/learning goals that you envision for life skills education through basketball?</b></p>	<p>To create the prerequisite for the kids to have the confidence to decide for themselves.</p> <p>To form strong, but good persons with stable moral values through basketball.</p> <p>All stakeholders should work in the same direction.</p> <p>Should stimulate: sharing the ball, tolerating and supporting teammates, respecting differences, playing by giving one's best, but not just for winning.</p> <p>Building life skills such as: communication, tolerance, support, dealings with failure, respect for teammates, rivals, coaches and referees, discipline, persistence, routine, endurance, coordination, creativity, agility, leadership skills, teamwork, ability to be humble and fast decision making. To organize activities in an enjoyable way.</p>	
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<b>ITALY</b>		
<b>Partner</b>	ASD MARGHERITA SPORT E VITA	
<b>Type of stakeholders</b>	Coaches, Managers, Presidents	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Common theme</b>	<b>Contrasting findings</b>

<p><b>Please provide your inputs on the overall basketball philosophy and the value of its training as relates to life skills (e.g. empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, cooperation, flexibility, conflict resolution, coordination, problem solving, leadership skills, intercultural sensitivity, creativity, self-awareness / reflectivity) and educational prospects for young children in your country.</b></p>	<p>For all those interviewed the basketball philosophy is one of the most beautiful team sports, it helps in socializing and forms your character. Basketball as a team sport teaches life skills.</p>	
<p><b>Which are the particular strengths and weaknesses related to basketball for life skills education in your country/region?</b></p>	<p>The interviewees agree that basketball's strengths are coordination, anticipation, mental and physical aspects, which are important for socializing, being part of a team effort. The weak points are the lack of internal and external sports facilities and the lack of relationships between sports and school.</p>	

**Are there any specific training programmes currently running in basketball education for young children in your country/region?**

In all the interviews it is underlined that in Italy there are no specific training programmes for basketball at national or school level, but this task is exclusively delegated to the basketball companies that promote such initiatives.

**Are you aware of, or do you apply basketball training programmes for marginalized children (e.g. minority –Roma- or refugee children?), some specifically targeted to girls or boys in your country? Explain.**

Many explained that they are not familiar with projects or programmes that deal with marginalized children.

Some spoke of the few projects implemented by the various territories to protect marginalized children. But it is clear that at the national level there are no valid projects that deal with these types of users.

**If not, do you see the value in adding such specific programmes? In which ways?**

Those who answered this question do see the value in adding such specific programmes.

<p><b>Which are the activities that can be incorporated in the projected BASKI toolbox?</b></p>	<p>Few activities were reported that should be included in the BASKI project toolbox, one above all BASKIN (BASKetINclusive).</p>	<p>Some respondents did not answer this question.</p>
<p><b>Which are the educational/learning goals that you envision for life skills education through basketball?</b></p>	<p>In the various interviews there are many points in common and practically no conflicting opinions; the importance of basketball as a means of achieving educational and learning objectives is underlined.</p>	<p>No conflicting opinions.</p>

<p><b>NORTH MACEDONIA</b></p>		
<p><b>Partner</b></p>	<p>Basketball Federation of North Macedonia</p>	
<p><b>Type of stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Coaches, managers, presidents</p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p>	<p><b>Common theme</b></p>	<p><b>Contrasting findings</b></p>

**Please provide your inputs on the overall basketball philosophy and the value of its training as relates to life skills (e.g. empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, cooperation, flexibility, conflict resolution, coordination, problem solving, leadership skills, intercultural sensitivity, creativity, self-awareness / reflectivity) and educational prospects for young children in your country.**

According to the answers obtained from the interviews, the general picture of the basketball philosophy and the value of its training related to life skills for the education of young children is that playing sports is crucial for the development of children.

<p><b>Which are the particular strengths and weaknesses related to basketball for life skills education in your country/region?</b></p>	<p><u>Strengths:</u> Physical activity and learning about healthy life, helps young athletes to develop their communication skills, team work skills, cooperation, decision making, social interaction, multicultural tolerance, empathy, creativity, mutual trust, support for each other, develop discipline and focus on conducting tasks, conflict resolution. All being crucial skills in future life.</p> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u> Absence of support system, not having aid for parents to turn children towards sports, not having national strategy of licensing coaches to specifically work with children and young athletes (working as a coach is a secondary obligation). Being forced to choose between basketball and school.</p>	
<p><b>Are there any specific training programmes currently running in basketball education for young children in your country/region?</b></p>	<p>In North Macedonia there are specific training programmes related to young children such as Special Olympics for the kids with special needs; the project in cooperation with the Federation of School Sport and primary and secondary schools for mass involvement of young people in sports – both individual and collective sports, which is continuously implemented for several years throughout the country.</p>	

<p><b>Are you aware of, or do you apply basketball training programmes for marginalized children (e.g. minority –Roma- or refugee children?), some specifically targeted to girls or boys in your country? Explain.</b></p>	<p>From most of the interviews, we can conclude that the interviewees are not aware of the existence of that kind of programmes in the country.</p>	
<p><b>If not, do you see the value in adding such specific programmes? In which ways?</b></p>	<p>Stakeholders do see the value of adding such programmes for marginalized children or for girls.</p>	
<p><b>Which are the activities that can be incorporated in the projected BASKI toolbox?</b></p>	<p>Interaction with former players, coaches, transferring positive and negative experiences, basketball and life experiences. Holding a seminar or educational activity in areas with a marginalized young athlete. Development of love for sports at a young age through frequent visits of sport events and games. Free of charge practice for vulnerable children (in an inclusive manner in mixed groups). Professional development activities for coaches. Interaction with former players, coaches, transferring positive and negative experiences, basketball and life experiences.</p>	

<p><b>Which are the educational/learning goals that you envision for life skills education through basketball?</b></p>	<p>From the received answers we see that there are several points that lead to the achievement of the goals of educational / learning for the training in life skills through basketball, such as: hard work, perseverance, self-discipline, team work, communication to achieve a goal, patience, leadership, self-awareness, honor your teammate – but also honor your opponent, share your knowledge – be there for the community, respect the game, rules, opponent, coach, staff, place where you train, knowledge of moral and ethical behaviour in decision making, organizational skills.</p>	
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<p><b>ROMANIA</b></p>		
<p><b>Partner</b></p>	<p>Romanian Basketball Federation</p>	
<p><b>Type of stakeholders</b></p>	<p>Physical education teachers, basketball coaches and players</p>	
<p><b>Question</b></p>	<p><b>Common theme</b></p>	<p><b>Contrasting findings</b></p>

<p><b>Please provide your inputs on the overall basketball philosophy and the value of its training as relates to life skills (e.g. empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, cooperation, flexibility, conflict resolution, coordination, problem solving, leadership skills, intercultural sensitivity, creativity, self-awareness / reflectivity) and educational prospects for young children in your country.</b></p>	<p>Based on the answers obtained from the interviews, the general picture of the basketball philosophy and the value of its training related to life skills for the education of young children is that basketball is a way of life that makes the players better persons since it is one of the most complex team sports. Communication, socializing, decision making and creativity are very important skills earned through it.</p>	
<p><b>Which are the particular strengths and weaknesses related to basketball for life skills education in your country/region?</b></p>	<p><u>Strengths:</u> One of the biggest assets is considered the social aspect of the game, especially in the earlier stages of the player’s development. A Tournament at the end of the season at the seaside for children.</p> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u> The almost non-existent transition between the junior and the senior level</p>	

<p><b>Are there any specific training programmes currently running in basketball education for young children in your country/region?</b></p>	<p>A major one is the Baby and Mini basketball Festival held every year in a resort at the seaside run by the Romanian Basketball Federation for kids under 12 years old.</p>	
<p><b>Are you aware of, or do you apply basketball training programmes for marginalized children (e.g. minority –Roma- or refugee children?), some specifically targeted to girls or boys in your country? Explain.</b></p>	<p>In general in Romania, basketball is considered as a sport for middle to upper class, in terms of financial commitment of the parents.</p>	
<p><b>If not, do you see the value in adding such specific programmes? In which ways?</b></p>	<p>Adding such a program for marginalized children could be more than beneficial.</p>	
<p><b>Which are the activities that can be incorporated in the projected BASKI toolbox?</b></p>	<p>Group activities will be highly valuable for the implementation of the main focus of the project and to create awareness about basketball. All these team/group activities need to emphasize communication, fair-play, cooperation and flexibility.</p>	

**Which are the educational/learning goals that you envision for life skills education through basketball?**

For a player to reach its highest potential, being able to pass beyond its comfort zone is important. The Romanian respondents believe that the main educational/learning goal is to become a good citizen. In addition, basketball helps players become very organized with their time, so being able to make a realistic timetable is another learning goal for life skills through basketball. Exploring new activities along basketball is another educational/learning goal.