ATHLETILEARN

Unlocking the Path to Entrepreneurial Success Through Sport-Based Skill Development

DESK RESEARCH

WP2.3 – Best Practices Compendium for Teaching Entrepreneurship through Sports

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Introduction to Best Practices Compendium
Teaching Entrepreneurship through Sports

This desk research report forms a core component of Work Package 2 -Design Curriculum within the Erasmus+ project *titled AthletiLearn: Unlocking the Path to Entrepreneurial Success Through Sport-Based Skill Development*.

The overarching objective of WP2 is to design and develop an innovative entrepreneurial curriculum for Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, emphasizing the integration of sport-based learning methodologies as a means of cultivating entrepreneurial hard and soft skills among students aged 16 to 25.

The Desk Research on Best Practices (WP2/A1–A2) serves as the foundation for the curriculum design process, by identifying and analysing successful initiatives, teaching methodologies, and educational programs that effectively merge sports and entrepreneurship education. This research phase draws on case studies, institutional frameworks, and pedagogical practices from partner countries—Spain, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Cyprus—to pinpoint common success factors and innovative approaches adaptable to different VET contexts.

Under WP2, CEBANC, as the lead institution, coordinated the data collection and synthesis of findings from all partners. Each organization conducted national-level desk research to identify at least six best practices per country, supported by interviews with educators and stakeholders. These findings are consolidated in this report to provide evidence-based recommendations for the subsequent curriculum design stages (WP2/A3–A5). The outcomes of this research directly inform the development of the AthletiLearn Curriculum, which will later be piloted and tested with teachers and students before finalization.

The present document therefore has a dual purpose:

1. To map existing best practices that successfully bridge sports and entrepreneurship education, showcasing how physical activity and competitive learning environments can foster essential entrepreneurial competencies such as leadership, resilience, collaboration, and strategic thinking.

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2. To generate actionable insights and pedagogical recommendations that guide the creation of a flexible, user-friendly curriculum adaptable to the needs of VET schools, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

By systematically linking this desk research to the objectives of WP2, the AthletiLearn consortium ensures that curriculum development is data-driven, contextually relevant, and inclusive, providing teachers with innovative tools and methodologies to engage students through sport-based entrepreneurship education. The report's findings will ultimately contribute to the creation of a European framework for integrating sports into entrepreneurial learning, aligning with the Erasmus+ priorities of innovation, inclusion, and adaptability in vocational education.

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BEST PRACTICES examples of this Compendium

As mentioned in the introduction, all partner organizations conducted comprehensive desk research to identify and analyse best practices that connect sports and entrepreneurship education within vocational training contexts. Each partner—CEBANC (Spain), Stichting Incubator (Netherlands), Sportskola (Slovakia), Asen Zlatarov Vocational School (Bulgaria), and HPO Media (Cyprus)—gathered data on national initiatives, educational models, and training programs that effectively integrate physical activity with entrepreneurial skill development.

The research focused on collecting at least six best practices per country, along with insights from educators and stakeholders received through one to one interviews. These findings highlight diverse and innovative approaches—ranging from sport-based business simulations to movement-driven learning frameworks—that demonstrate how sports can enhance entrepreneurial competencies such as leadership, teamwork, resilience, and problem-solving.

This collective desk research provides the evidence base for the development of the AthletiLearn curriculum, ensuring that it is grounded in proven practices, adaptable to different educational systems, and relevant to VET students aged 16–25 across Europe. The following sections present:

- Background on the sport educational system in the country
- Summary of the interviews from teachers and stakeholders
- Six examples gathered from each partner country on teaching entrepreneurship through sports

All of the above illustrate the variety of approaches and lessons that contribute to shaping the project's curriculum design.

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Netherlands

1.1

Background on the Sports School System in the Netherlands

The Dutch education system is structured to guide students from early childhood through to higher education or the labor market. Children begin primary school at the age of four, which lasts for eight years. At around twelve, they transition into secondary education, where they are placed into one of three tracks: vmbo, havo, or vwo. These tracks are determined by academic performance and are designed to match students with the type of education that best suits their abilities and future ambitions.

Students who complete vmbo often continue into MBO, or secondary vocational education. MBO is a key part of the Dutch system, offering practical, career-oriented training that prepares students for specific professions or for further study at the HBO level. MBO is divided into four qualification levels, ranging from entry-level assistant training to middle management and specialist programs. Students can follow either a school-based route, which includes internships, or a work-based route, where they are employed and attend school part-time.

Unlike in some other countries where schools often serve as the central hub for extracurricular activities, including sports and hobbies, the Netherlands typically separates these domains. Most Dutch children and young adults participate in sports or creative activities through independent clubs and associations rather than through their school. These clubs are often community-based and operate outside of school hours. This means that while physical education is a standard part of primary and lower secondary education, it is not a core component of MBO programs.

That said, some MBO institutions do offer specialized programs in sport and movement, such as training to become a fitness instructor or sports coach. In these cases, sport is integrated into the curriculum as part of professional

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training. Additionally, some schools may organize annual events or sports days, but these are exceptions rather than the rule. Overall, the Dutch model emphasizes a clear distinction between formal education and extracurricular development, with sport playing a more peripheral role in MBO unless it is the focus of the vocational training itself.

1.2 Summary of interviews

The interviews were part of the AthletiLearn initiative, which focuses on integrating sport-based learning into the development of entrepreneurial hard skills for students aged 16–25. The conversations were held with Anniek Ouendag and Marloes van den Oever, both of whom are experienced educators with a strong connection to vocational training and youth development.

Anniek Ouendag is a vocational education teacher with a keen interest in curriculum innovation. In the interview, she discussed the challenges of teaching entrepreneurial hard skills such as financial literacy, marketing, and project planning within the current educational framework. She noted that many students lack the foundational knowledge needed to grasp these concepts and that teachers often feel underprepared to teach them. Anniek emphasized the value of using sport-based scenarios to make these skills more relatable and engaging. She advocated for a curriculum that is adaptable and supported by practical tools, allowing educators to tailor content to their specific classroom contexts.

Marloes van den Oever, who has a background in both education and sport, offered a complementary perspective. She highlighted the motivational power of sport in engaging students who may not thrive in traditional academic settings. Marloes explained how sports naturally foster skills like leadership, teamwork, and resilience, which are directly applicable to entrepreneurship. She suggested incorporating real-life examples and storytelling, especially from former athletes, to inspire students. Marloes also recommended connecting students with local business networks and organizing experiential learning activities such as sports events, business meetups, and guest speaker sessions. She mentioned tools like the DISK and PIT tests to help students understand their behavior under pressure and develop greater self-awareness.

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Together, these interviews provide valuable insights into how sport can serve as a powerful framework for teaching entrepreneurial hard skills. Both interviewees stressed the importance of a flexible, practice-oriented curriculum that supports both students and educators in meaningful, real-world learning experiences.

1.3 BEST PRACTICES examples

Desk research 1

Centre Court 2020-01 – Athletic Skills Model (ASM)

Contact person

René Wormhoudt – Physiotherapist and conditioning coach at the Dutch National Football Team (KNVB)

Prof. Dr. Geert Savelsbergh – Professor of Human Movement Sciences at VU Amsterdam and special lecturer at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

Description

The Athletic Skills Model (ASM) is a scientifically grounded and practically applied philosophy of movement and learning, developed in the Netherlands by René Wormhoudt and Prof. Dr. Geert Savelsbergh. Originally designed to support the development of elite sports talent, ASM has grown into a comprehensive framework that is now applied across education, health, and community sectors.

At its core, ASM promotes versatile movement, enjoyment, and lifelong physical literacy. It encourages learners to develop a broad base of motor skills before specializing, which not only enhances performance but also reduces injury risk and supports long-term engagement in physical activity. This approach is deeply aligned with values such as discipline, fairness, persistence, and sportsmanship, which are embedded in every aspect of the model's implementation.

ASM is not just about physical development—it is a vehicle for cultivating essential soft skills and entrepreneurial mindsets. Through dynamic group-based activities, learners build leadership, strategic thinking, and decision-making under pressure. They learn to communicate effectively, negotiate, and resolve conflicts, all while developing emotional intelligence and resilience. The model's emphasis on goal-setting, planning, and risk management prepares learners for challenges both on and off the field.

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The model also has a strong community and sustainability impact. It supports schools in meeting national movement standards and contributes to healthier, more connected communities. ASM offers training for youth and senior coaches, masterclasses, and policy education, and it is increasingly used in rehabilitation and inclusive sports programs.

ASM's success lies in its ability to integrate sports values, learning objectives, and soft skills into a single, coherent framework that is adaptable to various contexts—from elite sports to primary education. It is a model that not only builds better athletes but also more capable, confident, and socially responsible individuals.

Website https://www.athleticskillsmodel.nl

Desk research 2

Sportondernemer Academy – Entrepreneurial Learning Through Sport

Description

The Sportondernemer Academy is a Dutch initiative that empowers young people to develop entrepreneurial skills through sport-based learning. It is designed for students in vocational education and training (VET) who are passionate about sports and interested in turning that passion into a career. The program blends physical activity with business education, offering a dynamic and practical learning environment.

Participants engage in real-world projects such as organizing sports events, managing budgets, and promoting activities through social media. These experiences cultivate essential entrepreneurial competencies like strategic thinking, goal-setting, and decision-making under pressure. Students learn to lead teams, communicate effectively, and adapt to changing circumstances—skills that are vital in both business and sport.

The program is deeply rooted in sports values such as discipline, fairness, and team spirit. Students are encouraged to act with integrity, show persistence, and collaborate with peers to achieve shared goals. These values are not taught in isolation but are embedded in every activity, from planning a tournament to resolving conflicts during team tasks.

In addition to hard business skills, the Academy emphasizes soft skills like emotional intelligence, negotiation, and adaptability. Students reflect on their

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personal growth and learn to manage stress, build resilience, and support others—qualities that are essential for sustainable leadership.

The program also has a strong community impact. By organizing inclusive sports events and promoting healthy lifestyles, students contribute to local well-being. The Academy partners with schools, municipalities, and sports clubs to ensure that its activities are socially relevant and accessible to all.

Website: https://www.sportondernemeracademy.nl

Instagram: @sportondernemeracademy

Desk research 3

Zomerondernemer

Regional youth entrepreneurship networks / Stichting The New Entrepreneur

Description

ZomerOndernemer (Summer Entrepreneur) is a national Dutch program that has been running for over 14 years, offering young people aged 15 to 22 the opportunity to start their own business during the summer holidays. The program has received multiple awards, including the Dutch and European finals of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards in 2015, and second place in the Regio Stars Award in 2014.

The program is designed to foster entrepreneurial thinking and action through hands-on experience. Participants receive training in business planning, marketing, networking, and financial management. They are guided by coaches and professionals and are encouraged to take initiative, make decisions under pressure, and reflect on their progress. These experiences help develop strategic thinking, goal-setting, resilience, and risk management.

ZomerOndernemer also emphasizes sports values such as discipline, fairness, and persistence, which are embedded in the program's structure. Participants are expected to show integrity, collaborate with peers, and demonstrate determination in building their business ideas.

In terms of soft skills, the program strengthens communication, negotiation, and emotional intelligence. Young entrepreneurs learn to adapt to challenges, resolve conflicts, and empathize with customers and partners.

The program has a strong community impact, as many of the businesses started by participants address local needs or promote social inclusion. It also

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contributes to the sustainability of youth entrepreneurship by building networks and offering long-term support through alumni communities and regional partnerships.

Website https://www.zomerondernemer.nl/

Desk research 4

Springlab

Description

Springlab is a Dutch innovator in the field of movement-based learning. The platform provides interactive tools and lesson materials that integrate physical activity into the learning process, aiming to enhance students' cognitive development, motivation, and overall well-being. Springlab is designed for both primary and vocational education (VET) and offers solutions that are easy to implement in classrooms or gym settings.

At the heart of Springlab's approach is the combination of movement and academic content, such as language, math, and social-emotional skills. Through interactive games and physical challenges, students are actively engaged in learning. The methodology aligns with the Athletic Skills Model (ASM), which emphasizes versatile movement and enjoyment as key components of development.

Springlab fosters skills such as collaboration, perseverance, self-regulation, and decision-making under pressure. Group activities encourage communication, goal-setting, and resilience. The approach is inclusive and adaptable to various learning styles and levels.

From a sustainability perspective, Springlab offers reusable materials that align with national movement and education standards. The initiative is supported by several Dutch educational institutions and is eligible for funding programs focused on physical activity and basic skills.

Website https://www.springlab.nl/bewegend-leren/

Desk research 5

Bewegend leren

Various primary and secondairy schools

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Description

Bewegend Leren (Active Learning Through Movement) is an educational approach that integrates physical activity into academic instruction. The aim is to improve students' learning outcomes, motivation, and social-emotional development by embedding movement into lessons on subjects like language and mathematics. Students engage in meaningful, collaborative tasks that require them to solve problems both physically and cognitively.

This method supports the development of key learning objectives such as strategic thinking, goal-setting, and decision-making under pressure, as students must plan and execute movements that align with academic content. It also fosters leadership and teamwork, as students collaborate in pairs or groups to complete challenges. These activities naturally enhance communication, negotiation, and empathy, as learners must listen, adapt, and support one another.

Bewegend Leren is grounded in sports values like discipline, fairness, persistence, and team spirit. Students learn to follow rules, accept feedback, and persevere through challenges—skills that are essential both in and outside the classroom. They also build resilience by learning from mistakes and adjusting their strategies.

In terms of soft skills, the approach strengthens emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and adaptability. Students become more aware of their own emotions and those of others, and they learn to manage stress and collaborate effectively.

From a sustainability and community impact perspective, Bewegend Leren contributes to healthier school environments and promotes lifelong physical activity. It also strengthens school communities by making learning more inclusive, engaging, and joyful for all students.

Website https://kvlo.nl

Desk research 6

X-WALL

Description

X-WALL is an interactive digital wall that transforms physical education and classroom learning into an engaging, movement-based experience. It offers a wide range of educational games that combine physical activity with

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cognitive challenges, making learning fun and promoting a healthy lifestyle with minimal preparation for teachers.

The platform supports personalized learning by allowing educators to upload custom word lists, making it ideal for teaching foreign languages such as English, French, or German. This adaptability ensures that the content aligns with students' needs and enhances lesson effectiveness. In collaboration with a partner, X-WALL also offers programming education, making it suitable for secondary education as well.

X-WALL promotes strategic thinking, decision-making under pressure, and goal-setting, as students must respond quickly and accurately to visual prompts. It fosters teamwork, communication, and resilience, especially in cooperative or competitive game formats. The system encourages discipline, fair play, and persistence, while also supporting emotional intelligence and adaptability through dynamic, interactive tasks.

From a sustainability and community impact perspective, X-WALL is eligible for various Dutch educational subsidies, including those for physical education, basic skills, and school transitions. This makes it an accessible and scalable solution for schools aiming to innovate their learning environments.

Website https://interactivexwall.nl/onderwijs/

Desk research 7

Stanislas

Secondary school

Description

Stanislas Beweeg-vmbo/mavo is a secondary school that places sport and movement at the heart of its educational philosophy. Named the most active school in the Netherlands in 2023, it begins each day with an hour of physical activity. Students are grouped by skill level rather than class, and every 10 weeks a new sports schedule is introduced, including activities like mountain biking, fitness, self-defense, swimming, and boxing.

This structure encourages resilience, goal-setting, and strategic thinking, as students are constantly challenged to push their limits. The school emphasizes teamwork, communication, and leadership, supported by dedicated coaches who focus on holistic development rather than grades.

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The school integrates sports values such as discipline, fairness, persistence, and integrity into its daily routine. In the E-zone classroom, students explore gamification, virtual reality, AI, and augmented reality, using games to develop both social and technical skills while staying physically active.

The program has a strong community impact, offering a model for how movement and technology can be combined to support student well-being and personal growth.

Website https://stanislasbeweegvmbomavo.nl

Cyprus

2.1 Background on the Sports School System Cyprus

The Cypriot school system is structured to ensure that all children receive a well-rounded and inclusive education, with the goal of preparing them to become active and responsible citizens in a democratic society. It emphasizes academic achievement, social inclusion, and European values. The system promotes both intellectual and emotional development through a national curriculum that is implemented across both public and private institutions.

Education in Cyprus is compulsory from ages 4 years and 8 months to 15 years, covering pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary levels. After this period, students may choose to continue with upper secondary general or technical education, followed by optional tertiary education at universities or higher education institutions.

Structure and Organisation Pre-primary education is provided from the age of 3 and becomes compulsory from 4 years and 8 months. It is offered in public, community, and private kindergartens.

Primary education starts at the age of 6 and lasts for six years (Grades 1–6).

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Lower secondary education follows for another three years (Grades 7–9), known as Gymnasium, and is also compulsory.

Afterward, students can opt for one of the following paths:

- Upper Secondary General Education (Lyceum) – Three years (Grades 10–12), with a broad academic curriculum.
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) – Offers technical or vocational specializations combined with general education.

Tertiary education in Cyprus is offered by public and private universities and higher education institutions. The country is also home to several internationally recognized institutions and attracts many students from across Europe and beyond. Bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees are available, and public university tuition is free for Cypriot and EU nationals.

Comparison with Other Systems A distinctive element of the Cypriot school system is its early integration of multilingual and multicultural education, in response to its increasingly diverse population. Unlike some systems that separate academic and vocational tracks early, the Cypriot model provides flexibility in upper secondary education, allowing students to explore both academic and technical interests before specialization. The country also maintains close alignment with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) to ensure smooth academic and career mobility within Europe.

The Role of Sports and Education Cyprus places significant emphasis on the integration of physical education and sports in schools as a means to promote health, discipline, teamwork, and well-being. Physical education is compulsory in both primary and secondary education.

Many schools collaborate with local sports clubs, federations, and municipalities to deliver extracurricular sports activities, often including football, volleyball, athletics, swimming, and martial arts. Schools also compete in island-wide and international tournaments.

Elite student-athletes often attend specialized sports schools or flexible learning programs designed to balance training schedules with academic responsibilities. Sports are also linked to citizenship education, encouraging social inclusion, especially among migrant and refugee students.

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Extracurricular Activities Extracurricular engagement is highly encouraged across all levels of education in Cyprus. Students may participate in a wide array of clubs and societies including:

- Music, drama, environmental clubs, robotics, and STEM competitions
- Foreign language and cultural clubs
- Student councils and volunteer programmes promoting democratic participation and social responsibility

Competitions in science, literature, mathematics, and debating are organized annually, fostering excellence and creativity.

Additionally, initiatives like Erasmus+ School Education and eTwinning projects are widely implemented in Cypriot schools, offering pupils the opportunity to collaborate with European peers and develop digital, intercultural, and project management skills.

2.2 Summary of interviews

At HPO in Cyprus, teachers shared their perspectives on the role of entrepreneurship in education and the potential of sport as a tool for developing entrepreneurial skills. While they all agreed that entrepreneurship is important for young people, their individual comments reflected both shared challenges and diverse teaching experiences.

One teacher emphasised that entrepreneurial skills are essential because they help students become more independent and confident, especially when solving problems or working in teams. Another teacher added that these skills are useful beyond starting a business — they help students become more adaptable and better prepared for future employment. Several mentioned specific competencies such as creativity, communication, planning, and leadership as core elements of entrepreneurial thinking.

However, teachers widely agreed that the current curriculum in Cyprus does not give enough space to entrepreneurship. One teacher noted that while there are occasional projects that touch on related topics, there is no systematic structure or dedicated time to develop these skills properly. Another pointed out that academic subjects take up most of the timetable, leaving little opportunity to explore entrepreneurship in depth. A third teacher mentioned that while they try to introduce entrepreneurship through small

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group tasks or problem-solving activities, they often lack the resources or time to go further.

When asked about the most difficult topics to teach, one teacher said that financial literacy — especially budgeting and understanding profit — is particularly challenging. Another found legal topics, like business regulations, too complex for their students. Innovation and marketing were also highlighted as tricky areas, especially when students are not familiar with real-world business settings.

Despite these challenges, most teachers expressed a strong interest in improving how they teach entrepreneurship. One teacher shared that they would feel much more confident with a ready-made guide or short training course. Another mentioned that collaboration with other teachers and access to practical tools would make a big difference in bringing entrepreneurial education to life.

The AthletiLearn approach — using sport to teach entrepreneurship — received very positive feedback. One teacher called it "a smart and fun idea" because students are already engaged with sports and can learn many transferable skills in that context. Another teacher said that sport naturally teaches teamwork, leadership, and responsibility — all of which are important for entrepreneurship. Teachers suggested activities such as planning a school sports day, running a mini tournament, or simulating the management of a sports club as effective ways to connect sport and enterprise. These ideas, they agreed, would not only be practical but also enjoyable and relatable for students.

Looking ahead, the teachers said they would welcome support in the form of lesson plans, step-by-step activity guides, and digital tools like videos or online exercises. One teacher mentioned the importance of having resources that are flexible and easy to adapt to different school contexts. Another pointed out that support from school leadership and access to peer networks would help sustain and scale such initiatives.

In conclusion, the interviews with teachers from HPO in Cyprus show strong support for integrating entrepreneurship into education, especially through sport. While there are clear challenges — particularly around time, resources, and training — the teachers are open, motivated, and eager to try new approaches. With the right tools and guidance, they believe sport can be a powerful platform for developing the entrepreneurial mindset in their students.

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2.3 Best Practices examples

Desk research 1

PeacePlayers Cyprus: Basketball for Peace and Leadership

PeacePlayers Cyprus is the island's leading bicommunal sports initiative, using basketball as a tool for peacebuilding, leadership development and youth empowerment. Since 2006, the project has brought together thousands of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth, ages 8–18, to break down barriers through the simple act of playing together.

How it works:

Mixed teams from both communities meet weekly in "Twinnings", playing side-by-side in training and tournaments.

Older participants enter the Leadership Development Programme (LDP), training as young coaches, community ambassadors and peer mentors.

Youth learn practical leadership skills: event planning, conflict resolution, communication, and teamwork.

The project is run by local coaches and PeacePlayers alumni, creating a sustainable cycle of youth-led training.

Entrepreneurial impact:

Through PeacePlayers, young people gain the confidence to design and run community sports events, manage small budgets, and pitch new ideas for local youth engagement. Many alumni continue as coaches, community organisers or move on to launch their own sports-based social initiatives. The programme has won international recognition as a best practice in using sport for social entrepreneurship and intercultural dialogue.

Sport as a neutral space for developing trust, resilience, and grassroots leadership — all vital to social entrepreneurship.

Website https://peaceplayers.org/cyprus/

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Desk research 2

JA Cyprus – Junior Achievement Company Programme

JA Cyprus runs the island's largest youth entrepreneurship scheme, blending education with teamwork and business skills. Its flagship Company Programme engages secondary school students (15–18 years old) to create their own mini-companies from scratch — often including sports-related start-ups like fitness clubs, sports equipment brands, or wellness tech solutions.

How it works: Teams of students develop a business idea, produce a product or service, and market it within their school or local community.

They pitch to real investors and compete for local and European awards.

Participants learn teamwork, financial planning, marketing, and public speaking — all within a safe, mentored, and competitive sports-like environment.

Entrepreneurial impact: Hundreds of Cypriot teenagers each year gain hands-on experience of turning an idea into reality, collaborating just as a sports team does: with clear roles, targets and mutual accountability. Many alumni have gone on to launch real businesses or join community initiatives, carrying forward teamwork and leadership skills nurtured through the programme. Entrepreneurship as a "team sport" — developing business ideas through trust, cooperation and healthy competition.

Website jacyprus.org

Desk research 3

Youth Board of Cyprus – Sports-Inspired Start-Ups

The Youth Board of Cyprus (Onek) funds young entrepreneurs aged 18–35 to create their own businesses — many in the fitness, sport tourism and wellness industries.

How it works:

Young people apply for grants that cover up to 70% of their start-up costs. They receive mentoring and practical training in how to run a business, manage finances and reach customers — all using skills familiar to sports: discipline, goal-setting, teamwork and resilience.

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Small fitness studios, personal training businesses, wellness pop-ups and outdoor adventure sports start-ups have all benefited from Onek's funding, showing how passion for sport becomes a real entrepreneurial opportunity in Cyprus.

Entrepreneurial Impact: By turning sport-based skills into viable businesses, young Cypriots gain financial independence and create new local jobs — while promoting health and well-being in their communities.

Website https://onek.org.cy/en/programmata-ypiresies/efkairies-chrimatodotisis/neaniki-epicheirimatikotita/

Desk research 4

Elevate Bootcamp – Sports & Tourism Business Accelerator

The Elevate Bootcamp is a 12-week Cypriot accelerator aimed at young entrepreneurs looking to launch businesses in sports, tourism, and wellness.

How it works: Participants (often small sports clubs, fitness entrepreneurs or event runners) enter with an initial idea.

Through intensive weekly workshops they map business plans, validate market assumptions, refine pitching skills and build a proof-of-concept.

Trainers often use techniques borrowed from athletic coaching: goal-setting, performance review, peer accountability.

Entrepreneurial impact: Graduates leave with a polished "elevator pitch," early traction, and access to a network of local mentors and potential funders—empowering them to take their community-based sports/tourism ventures to the next level.

Website https://elevatebootcamp.co/

Desk research 5

Erasmus+ Training Course: Sports & Tourism Start-Up Incubator

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A Cyprus-hosted Erasmus+ training course focused on start-up incubation within the sports & tourism sector.

How it works:

Young participants undergo hands-on workshops covering ideation, business modelling, market strategy and sustainable growth.

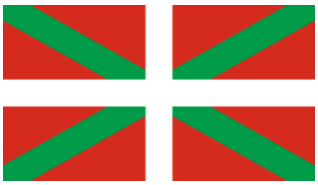
Mentors guide them in adapting age-old sports event skills—like logistics planning and teamwork coordination—to entrepreneurial project design.

They create a mini-business model for sports tourism or event management during the course.

Entrepreneurial impact:

Participants leave with concrete business frameworks and actionable next steps to launch ventures in the growing intersection of sports, travel and local economic development, powered by peer support and European guidance.

Website https://abroadship.org/training-course-start-up-incubator-cyprus/



Basque Country, Spain

3.1Background on the Sports School System in the Basque Country, Spain: *Sport as an educational and entrepreneurial tool*

Multikirola (Multi-sport)

The Multikirola program in the Basque Country is a school-based, multi-sport initiative aimed at children aged 9 to 12 (typically corresponding to 3rd to 6th grade in primary education). It is designed to promote physical activity and sports participation among all students in Gipuzkoa, regardless of their athletic ability, socioeconomic status, or place of residence. The program emphasizes educational values, focusing on introducing students to various physical

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activities and sports disciplines over four academic years. It operates through primary schools in Gipuzkoa and is part of the annual school sports activities approved by the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa.
Multikirola aims to prevent early specialization in a single sport by encouraging children to experience a range of sports. This approach supports the development of motor skills, coordination, and social values such as teamwork and inclusion. The program is aligned with the Basque Sport Law, which advocates for a diverse and inclusive sports ecosystem, promoting life skills through play and enjoyment rather than competition and talent selection.

This programme, promotes the practice of multiple sports disciplines to avoid early specialisation. It promotes values such as equality, teamwork and diversity, which are essential for entrepreneurship.
It is the backbone of the Gipuzkoa sports model which avoids early specialisation and the early exploitation of talent; which is respectful of the maturity development of children, and which lays solid foundations for long-term physical and sporting habits; as well as favouring coordination, the prevention of overload injuries and the discovery of new interests and skills".

It is a shared community project, built in constant evolution over the last 35 years by clubs, federations, schools, parents' associations and town councils. In other words, it is the result of "the collective effort and accumulated experience of different agents, such as clubs, federations and regional governments that have worked collaboratively in the implementation of the sports initiation model. They are all necessary. At different moments in life, everyone participates with a different intensity and it is important that the clubs also maintain this pedagogical role. Multikirolak is necessary to educate boys and girls".
The Gipuzkoa model "is a model aligned with the principles of the Basque Sports Law of 2023, which promotes the practice of minority sports, guaranteeing a diverse ecosystem and expanding the options for each child, who is taught life skills through play and fun, and not through results, competition or talent. A model of solidarity, integration and that has schools at the centre, as spaces accessible to all, and free of pressure and competitive stress".
Multisport is key to healthy development, a fundamental system for the comprehensive development of children in terms of the development of physical skills, but also values such as teamwork, resilience and equality. "Multisport is not a barrier to excellence; on the contrary, it is a guarantee that

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all children can explore, learn and enjoy sport without the success of a few being built at the expense of the sacrifice of many. Start slower to go further".

https://cadenaser.com/euskadi/2025/02/06/el-programa-multikirolak-es-necesario-para-educar-a-los-ninos-y-ninas-goizane-alvarez-diputada-de-deportes-radio-san-sebastian/?utm

3.2 Summary of interviews

The insights gathered from the interviews with CEBANC teachers reflect a growing recognition of **the transformative power of sports as a pedagogical tool in business education.**

Across the board, the educators unanimously acknowledge that while traditional classroom instruction is effective for transmitting technical knowledge, the development of cross-disciplinary or "soft" business skills—such as leadership, resilience, planning, communication, and adaptability—requires more experiential and immersive methods. Sport, with its dynamic, goal-oriented, and often team-based nature, emerges as a rich, underutilized medium to address this need.

Each educator brings a unique yet complementary perspective. They emphasize adaptability and the emotional investment students bring to physical activities they enjoy. **This passion-driven engagement can be harnessed to deepen learning outcomes.**

Emphasis is given on meticulous planning and execution, drawn from their own experience with endurance sports, underscores the pedagogical **potential of**

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sport event design—teaching students logistical, marketing, and leadership competencies in real-time, high-stakes scenarios.

A deep appreciation for discipline and self-motivation cultivated through their personal fitness routines, **highlights the natural link between personal routines in sport and sustained professional performance**. The experience with organizing San Sivestre sport event for CEBANC, not only demonstrates the feasibility of sports-based business simulations but also showcases how students internalize core **concepts like teamwork, equity, strategic role distribution, and collective success through participation**.

Another teacher brings a poetic yet compelling metaphor **of rowing a boat back to port, equating the exercise to starting and managing a company in an uncertain market**. His scenario eloquently captures the **necessity of trust, communication, distributed leadership, and awareness of external forces—skills which are foundational to any successful enterprise.** His reflection reinforces the notion that education must move beyond didactic delivery to environments where students *feel* the consequences of their decisions and *experience* collaboration as a non-negotiable part of success.

Taken together, these reflections illustrate that integrating sports into the business curriculum at CEBANC offers not just a novel educational methodology, but a deeply human-centered approach to teaching. It meets students where they are—active, curious, competitive—and channels those energies into structured learning. Furthermore, sports-based activities tend to naturally incorporate feedback loops, motivation systems, and emotional highs and lows, all of which mirror real-world business environments and offer fertile ground for cultivating resilience and self-regulation.

To maximize the value of such initiatives, **CEBANC could consider embedding sport-based business simulations into course modules, fostering interdepartmental collaborations, and leveraging local sports events or clubs as living labs.** These experiences would allow students not just to study business theory, but to live it, embody it, and evolve through it—making learning not only more effective but also more memorable and transformative.

In an era where adaptability, emotional intelligence, and real-time problem-solving are becoming as important as technical proficiency, the alignment between sport and business education represents a future-forward strategy. CEBANC stands well-positioned to lead in this area, innovating educational practices that prepare students not only for the job market, but for lifelong personal and professional growth.

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3.3 Best Practices examples

Desk research 1

Basketball in youth Leadership Programs

Aderes Burjassot basketball team

These are community programs that use basketball to develop leadership in teenagers. They work on technical skills specific to the sport, such as sports techniques (shooting, dribbling, game tactics), as well as knowledge of the rules and strategy of basketball.

At the same time, soft skills such as teamwork and effective communication are developed. Decisions are made under pressure, and leadership and conflict resolution are promoted.

In this block, some activities aimed at promoting inclusion can be added, depending on the population sector targeted. The clearest example is the film "Campeones" (2018), in which a group of young people with disabilities form a basketball team.

The film is inspired by real events, though it is not a direct adaptation of a specific true story. It draws loose inspiration from the experiences of the Aderes Burjassot basketball team, a group of athletes with intellectual disabilities based in Burjassot, a town in the province of Valencia, Spain. It is best known for its team composed of players with intellectual disabilities. The team is part of a sports association that supports inclusive and adaptive sports for people with disabilities. It has participated in various Special Olympics and disability sports competitions across Spain, achieving significant success and recognition. Its players are known not just for their performance but also for their positive spirit, teamwork, and perseverance.

After the release of Campeones, Aderes Burjassot received public recognition and media attention, shedding light on the importance of inclusive sports programs.

The story helped challenge stereotypes, raise awareness of intellectual disabilities, and celebrate diversity in sports.

In essence, Aderes Burjassot stands as a symbol of inclusion and resilience, showing how sports can empower individuals and foster social change.

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Sustainability /Community Impact The story helped challenge stereotypes, raise awareness of intellectual disabilities, and celebrate diversity in sports.

In essence, Aderes Burjassot stands as a symbol of inclusion and resilience, showing how sports can empower individuals and foster social change.

Desk research 2

Sport as a platform for entrepreneurship

Union FC and Players Hub 360

They are not Hollywood stars, but they shine as bright or brighter than them. Rudy Fernández, José Manuel Calderón and Víctor Claver played under the spotlight of the NBA and now form part of Players Hub 360, a community of elite athletes that was created to help other athletes. They are a light for others. They have become the links in a chain that also includes the triathlon world champion Mario Mola, Spain's number one 3x3 player Carlos Martínez and international and national footballers such as Rasmus Schüller, Denis Suárez, Alfonso Herrero, Miguel Atienza, Nacho Monsalve, Álvaro Rodríguez, Carlos Moros...

Together they became involved in the management of **Atlético Cañada Alcorcón,** a team that played in the Primera Madrileña, and the results have not been long in coming. In just a few months they have certified their promotion to Preferente and have made official a complete rebranding, with a change of name -they will now be called Unión FC- and even their colours, with new kits. This has been the first great sporting success of an ecosystem where every member matters. Alfonso Herrero's company is in charge of communication, Rudy has been involved in the design of the new image and Calderón in the digitalisation of the club. What's more, some of Unión FC's players signed up thanks to calls from some of the investors.

This promotion has coincided with the latest - three in a row - for Wrexham, owned by actors Ryan Reynols and Rob McElhenney. The Welsh team, owned by the Hollywood stars since 2020, has just reached the Championship, the second division, the category prior to the Premier League. A historic achievement, which was unthinkable when they joined forces in National, the fifth division. Wrexham is their mirror. Their inspiration. "Union FC is born with a new identity, designed to face the challenges ahead. A project that grows both on and off the pitch. This change is just the beginning of a new stage,

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with the aim of continuing to promote the values that unite us: effort, respect, teamwork and passion", he has published on his social networks.

"Training is no longer plan B, but plan A...".

Carlos Moros

But Players Hub 360 goes beyond that. It is the network for the leap into the void that retirement represents in the lives of many athletes. This pioneering project does not advise, but offers specific training, through online courses, to optimise the management of the resources generated during their professional career. It provides tools to face the first day of the rest of their lives. The first course - the investment course - started at the end of February and was a great success, as all the places were sold out. The next course will be on career transition. At the moment, this community is made up of five entrepreneurs and twenty sportsmen and women, but it plans to continue growing and open its doors to more colleagues. Those who are no longer in such a hurry to ask themselves, "What next?

"It has become normalised for a player to study. It used to be more of a shock".

Nacho Monsalve

The fact of having concerns is the nexus of union between the footballers Carlos Moros, Nacho Monsalve and Adrián Gómez, part of this great family. "We can all contribute and help others. In addition, we offer an integral perspective", explains centre-back Carlos Moros, who years ago coincided with midfielder Adrián Gómez: "When sport is over, we move on to another life right away and enter the labour market". It is precisely this step that Carlos Moros is studying for his doctorate in the afternoons, while playing for PAC Omonia: "I have played for teams in the United States, Sweden, Finland, Poland and Cyprus. Training is not a plan B, but a plan A for the footballer. It is no longer something strange. Moreover, it allows them to enjoy their last years more because it is not a leap into the abyss. They have alternatives.

This is also how Nacho Monsalve sees it. "It has become normal for a player to study. We have realised how important it is and we want to show it to the younger players. I remember that, when I was in the Atlético's reserve team, I went to university and it was quite a shock," says the Eldense centre-back, who has focused on management: "I want to dedicate myself to sports management and, for years, I have been immersed in the subject of investments and learning how to manage the club's assets. Nor has Adrián Gómez stopped training: "I'm restless. I graduated in Labour Relations and

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Human Resources and I've done two masters in the management of sports entities. It makes it easier for us to combine elite sport with our studies".

What excites them most about this initiative is the take-off of Unión FC. They feel it as their own. "We have that specific knowledge and we all have a voice and a vote. That enriches it," argues Carlos Moros, to which Nacho Monsalve adds: "With good management of skills and economic resources, we help them to perform better. We want to leave a legacy. The team could not have got off to a better start, but caution is the common denominator. Adrián Gómez and Nacho Monsalve agree: "It's a very attractive part of the project. We have to take it slowly". With small but firm steps. From athletes to people. From individuals to community.

Website https://as.com/futbol/mas_futbol/el-union-fc-de-rudy-calderon-y-claver-sigue-la-estela-del-wrexham-de-ryan-reynolds-n/?utm

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Desk research 3

Women's entrepreneurship through basketball

UBB Mamis in Barbastro

The Unión Basket Barbastro Mamis (UBB Mamis) group has promoted the Women's Basketball Circuit and the "360º Basketball" meetings. These initiatives promote women's basketball and encourage the emotional and professional development of the participants, turning sport into a tool for empowerment and entrepreneurship for women of different ages.

It is an inspiring example of how sport can be a platform for female entrepreneurship and community empowerment. What started as an initiative of mothers of Unión Basket Barbastro (UBB) players has transformed into a movement that promotes the active participation of women in basketball and in the social life of the community.

The UBB Mamis team was born from the initiative of a group of mothers who, after cheering on their children from the stands, decided to form their own basketball team. With the support of the club and the dedication of their coach, Ángeles Carrasquer, the group has grown to more than 30 registered players, many of whom had never played the sport before. Their commitment and enthusiasm have been instrumental in consolidating the team and encouraging the inclusion of more women in the sport.

Among the most relevant actions promoted by UBB Mamis are:

- Women's Basketball Circuit: A tournament that brings together women's teams from different localities, promoting competition and fellowship between women of different ages and levels of experience.
- Basketball 360º" Meetings: Conferences that combine sport with talks on health, wellbeing and personal development, with the participation of professionals and outstanding sportswomen.
- Participation in local events: The team has been recognised for its work in the promotion of women's sport and has actively participated in events organised by the City Council of Barbastro, such as the Gala del Deporte Barbastrense.

Sustainability

The UBB Mamis project has had a significant impact on the community of Barbastro, achieving:

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- Encourage female participation in sport: It has inspired more women to take up basketball, regardless of age or previous experience.
- Promoting health and well-being: The regular practice of sport has contributed to the physical and emotional well-being of the participants.
- Strengthening community ties: The team has created a space for meeting and mutual support, strengthening relationships among members and with the rest of the community.

The example of UBB Mamis demonstrates how sport can be a powerful tool for social entrepreneurship and community transformation, empowering women and promoting values of inclusion, health and solidarity.

Cadena SER

https://cadenaser.com/aragon/2025/04/30/barbastro-impulsa-el-baloncesto-femenino-con-el-circuito-baloncesto-mujer-y-los-encuentros-baloncesto-360-ser-aragon-oriental/?utm

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Desk research 4

Innovation in paddle tennis

Richi de las Heras and the Hexagon Cup

Richi de las Heras, a former professional padel player, has launched the Hexagon Cup, a competition that brings together private teams and professional players in an innovative format. This project demonstrates how values learned in sport, such as discipline and resilience, can be successfully applied in the business world.

From padel courts to business: Richi de las Heras shows how to succeed as a sports entrepreneur. Richi De Las Heras, a former professional padel player has decided to conquer the business world.

Richi de las Heras knew from a young age that his life would revolve around sport. Although his initial goal was to succeed in the world of tennis, tough competition led him to rethink his future. It was then that he found in padel a new opportunity to stand out, becoming a professional player and reaching important milestones, such as beating the world number ones in just five years of his career.

The leap into entrepreneurship: the creation of La Vida Pádel

Over time, and after years of success on the courts, Richi decided to embark on his own path in the business world. He founded La Vida Padel, a club that not only focuses on the sport, but also integrates a unique social approach. "Padel is not only what happens on the court, it's also what happens off the court," says Richi. Its model combines event spaces, coworking and gastronomy, offering an integral experience to its users.

Hexagon Cup: innovation in sports competitions

Richi is not satisfied with what he has achieved. In 2023, he launched Hexagon Cup, a competition that brings together private teams and professional players in an innovative format. This project aims to offer a unique competitive experience and strengthen the growth of padel both nationally and internationally.

Richi De Las Heras' career is a reminder that the discipline and values learned in sport can be successfully applied in the business world. In Richi's words: "Life is for the persevering. If you give 100%, you are already closer to achieving your goals".

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From the creation of his club, La Vida Padel, to the launch of competitions, he has the keys to his success and the lessons that have led him to build a sustainable business.

Website https://www.autonomosyemprendedor.es/articulo/tu-historia/pista-negocio-richi-heras-nos-ensena-como-triunfar-deporte-emprendimiento/20250128080132040605.html?utm

Keys to entrepreneurship in the world of sport

Interview on SPOTIFY

During the episode, Richi shares valuable tips for those looking to enter the sector. From the importance of choosing a good location for clubs, to the use of technology to maximise efficiency operational. He also highlights the need to make quick decisions, learn from mistakes and be resilient in the face of adversity.

https://open.spotify.com/episode/2pgtF1HktfiRqkcn4jCFhM?go=1&sp_cid=68c15f9423ed3dc7f9c7db4f506a7d37&utm_source=embed_player_p&utm_medium=desktop&nd=1&dlsi=ba52aa90ce784ac2

Desk research 5

Social transformation through bodyboarding

Budeo Project

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The Budeo Project, founded by Arturo Soto in Antofagasta, Chile, is a leading social entrepreneurship initiative that uses bodyboarding as a tool for personal and community transformation.

Arturo Soto, after a childhood marked by social vulnerability, found in the sea and bodyboarding a way of escape and personal growth. Inspired by his experience, he created Club Budeo, a free bodyboarding school aimed at children and young people at social risk. The aim is to offer them a positive alternative, fostering skills such as communication, leadership and self-control, which will allow them to develop in the world and project a life linked to what makes them happy.

Community impact and international expansion Over almost 20 years, the Budeo Project has had a positive impact on several generations of young people, transforming them into social agents, athletes and professionals committed to improving their community. The initiative has transcended the borders of Chile, taking young people like Gustavo Neira and Constanza Soto to compete in international bodyboarding events in Europe, demonstrating the reach and effectiveness of the Cadena SER project.

Economic diversification and sustainability Beyond sport, Budeo promotes the economic diversification of Antofagasta through sustainable tourism. It organises the Antofagasta Bodyboard Festival (ABF), an international event that not only promotes bodyboarding, but also includes cultural activities, environmental workshops and entrepreneurship fairs, contributing to the economic and social development of the region termometro.cl.

Sustainability The Budeo Project exemplifies how sport can be a powerful tool for social change, offering young people in vulnerable contexts opportunities for personal and professional development, and promoting a more inclusive and sustainable community.

Website https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2024/09/19/proyecto-budeo-de-chile-a-canarias-radio-club-tenerife/?utm

Desk research 6

Entre juegos

Youth exchange Erasmus+ mobility program

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El proyecto Erasmus+ "SPORTS VALUES APPLIED TO YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP" se llevó a cabo en Fuente de Piedra (Málaga) del 10 al 18 de mayo de 2023.

En este proyecto participaron 26 jóvenes de 5 países (España, Francia, Italia, Grecia y Chipre), en el que a través de los valores del deporte desarrollaron su potencial creativo e innovador como una oportunidad para mejorar sus competencias y capacidades de emprendimiento.

Los principales objetivos que se trabajaron en este proyecto fueron los siguientes:
1. Fomentar el espíritu y la cultura emprendedora entre los jóvenes para mejorar sus oportunidades laborales.
2. Desarrollar competencias empresariales en los jóvenes utilizando los valores deportivos como referencia.
3. Utilizar herramientas útiles para que los jóvenes puedan identificar sus competencias empresariales.
4. Experimentar el proceso de crear y presentar un proyecto de emprendimiento.
5. Proporcionar a los participantes información sobre las oportunidades de financiación de proyectos de emprendimiento en Europa.
6. Promover el uso del programa Erasmus+ como herramienta para el desarrollo de competencias empresariales en los jóvenes.

Website chrome extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://asociacion-entrejuegos.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/3/1/133182850/proyec~1_compressed.pd

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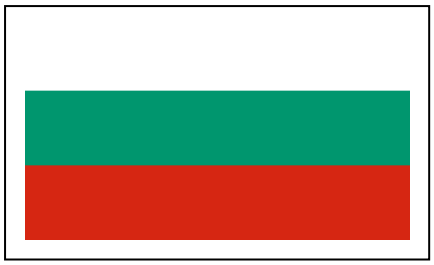

Bulgaria

4.1 Background on the Sports School System in Bulgaria

Physical education and sports are fundamental components of the Bulgarian educational system, regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) through a series of normative documents. These regulations establish the framework for physical education, outlining its objectives, content structure, assessment criteria, and organizational aspects. The aim is to develop students' physical capacity, promote lifelong engagement in physical activity, and instill values such as discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

The cultural-educational field *"Physical Education and Sports"* is an essential element of the national curriculum at all levels of secondary education. It seeks to provide students with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and attitudes that foster a well-rounded physical and sports culture. The overarching goal is to enhance students' motor abilities, improve their health, and encourage them to adopt an active lifestyle that extends beyond their schooling years.

According to the regulatory framework, physical education is not solely intended to improve physical fitness but also to contribute to students' psychological well-being, cognitive development, and social integration. The curriculum integrates interdisciplinary links with other subjects, particularly biology, health education, and ethics, emphasizing the holistic role of sports in personal development.

Objectives of Physical Education in Bulgarian Schools The educational process in physical education and sports is structured around clearly defined objectives, which vary across different educational levels but generally include:

- Enhancing students' motor skills and physical fitness through diverse sports activities.

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- Developing knowledge about the role of physical activity in maintaining overall health and well-being.
- Cultivating teamwork, fair play, and a sense of responsibility through cooperative and competitive sports.
- Encouraging engagement in lifelong physical activity and fostering a positive attitude toward an active lifestyle.
- Introducing students to various sports disciplines, allowing them to explore and specialize in activities that align with their interests and abilities.

These objectives align with international educational and health recommendations, reinforcing the importance of physical education as a means of combating sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and related health risks among young people.

Structure of the Curriculum: Core and Additional Modules

The physical education curriculum is divided into two main categories: **core modules** that includes: **Athletics** – Running, jumping, and throwing events aimed at developing endurance, speed, and coordination, **Gymnastics** – Fundamental exercises that enhance flexibility, strength, and balance, **Sports Games** – Team sports such as football, volleyball, basketball, and handball, which foster teamwork and strategy; **and Additional Modules (Subject to School Resources and Student Preferences) such as Water Sports** – Swimming and water safety training, depending on available facilities, **Tourism and Outdoor Activities** – Hiking, orienteering, and survival skills aimed at promoting outdoor engagement, **Dance and Rhythmic Activities** – Traditional Bulgarian dances, contemporary dance, and aerobic activities, **Martial Arts** – Basic training in judo, karate, or other combat sports to improve discipline and self-defense skills, **Fitness and Bodybuilding** – Strength training, cardio workouts, and fitness education tailored to individual needs. The selection of additional modules is determined by the school's infrastructure, the availability of specialized instructors, and the regional traditions or climatic conditions that may favor specific sports.

Implementation of Sports Activities and Extracurricular Engagement

Physical education is not confined to mandatory school hours; various extracurricular activities and sports clubs offer additional opportunities for students to engage in sports. The regulations stipulate that:

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- The weekly sports activity session scheduled by the school **cannot take place on weekends**, unless those days are officially designated as school days.
- In **sports schools**, training sessions may be conducted as **double or quadruple periods** and may also take place on non-school days to accommodate the demands of competitive sports preparation.

Additionally, national initiatives such as the **"Sports for Every Child" program** encourage participation in school competitions, promote physical activity campaigns, and provide funding for improved sports facilities.

4.2 Summary of interviews

PGAZ carried out two interviews as part of the desk research for the purposes of "Athletilearn" Project which main goal was to outline the specific needs for a structured methodology for teaching entrepreneurial skills through sports at school. In these interviews there participated an Economics teacher- Mrs. Cvetelina Slavcheva who teaches Entrepreneurship and a PE teacher Mrs. Tanya Metodieva who is also involved in the organization of all sorts of sports events and tournaments. For the second interview PGAZ invited Mr. Nikolay Naydenov a former athlete and at present a successful businessman in the fields of sports and finance.

This report summarizes insights from two interviews held with educators from "Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov" Vocational School in Vidin and a former athlete turned entrepreneur. The discussions explored the relationship between sports and entrepreneurship, highlighting how skills developed through athletic activities can enhance entrepreneurial education and practice.

The first interview involved Mrs. Cvetelina Slavcheva, an Economics and Entrepreneurship teacher, and Mrs. Tanya Metodieva, a Physical Education teacher. Both educators emphasized the importance of combining hard and soft skills in entrepreneurship. Mrs. Slavcheva described financial literacy, legal awareness, and negotiation as core technical competencies, while creativity, leadership, time management, and emotional intelligence were identified as essential soft skills. She also noted that students aged 14 to 15 show curiosity about entrepreneurship but find it difficult to grasp abstract concepts through traditional teaching methods. Consequently, she advocated for more

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practical, interactive approaches to foster creativity and innovation in the classroom.

Mrs. Metodieva drew parallels between sports and entrepreneurship, explaining that organizing school sports events involves planning, budgeting, fundraising, and teamwork—all of which mirror real entrepreneurial tasks. She further observed that sports instill discipline, teamwork, responsibility, and organizational skills that are transferable to business contexts. Both teachers agreed that integrating sports activities into entrepreneurship lessons would engage students more deeply and support the development of real-world skills. They suggested using real-life examples, particularly stories of athletes who have become entrepreneurs, alongside videos and experiential projects. Mrs. Slavcheva additionally recommended project-based learning as an effective tool for evaluating the success of these integrated teaching methods.

The second interview was conducted with Mr. Nikolay Naydenov, a former athlete who has successfully transitioned into business in the sports and finance sectors. He credited his athletic background for many of his entrepreneurial strengths, including coordination, teamwork, and the ability to handle pressure. Competitive sports, he explained, trained him to make quick, strategic decisions in high-stress environments—skills that have proven crucial in his business ventures. Mr. Naydenov admitted that his early business efforts were challenging due to inexperience, but he overcame this by seeking mentorship from experienced professionals. He compared athletic training to entrepreneurship, emphasizing the principle of gradual skill development and consistency. His advice to young athletes aspiring to become entrepreneurs was to set clear goals, persist despite obstacles, and commit to continuous learning. For him, determination and consistent effort are the most valuable lessons both in sport and in business.

Together, these interviews reveal strong common ground between sports and entrepreneurship. Both domains require persistence, discipline, teamwork, and adaptability. The educators and the entrepreneur shared the belief that athletic experiences provide an ideal foundation for developing entrepreneurial competencies. They supported the integration of sports-based methods into educational curricula, seeing it as an innovative way to make entrepreneurship learning more dynamic, practical, and inspiring for students.

Overall, the findings underscore that the intersection of sports and entrepreneurship fosters a powerful learning environment. Through initiatives like Athletilearn, which combine athletic principles with entrepreneurial

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education, young people can cultivate not only technical and managerial skills but also resilience, creativity, and emotional intelligence—qualities essential for success in the modern world

4.3 Best Practices examples

Desk research 1

Come & Play 4.0 – Intergenerational Sports Program

Contact person

Sports Club "COMAC SPORT", Ivanyane, Sofia

Description

Learning Objectives:

- Leadership and Teamwork: The program fosters collaboration among diverse age groups, enhancing leadership skills and team dynamics.
- Strategic Thinking: Participants engage in activities that require planning and strategy, promoting cognitive development.
- Decision-Making Under Pressure: Through sports, individuals learn to make quick and effective decisions in dynamic environments.
- Resilience and Overcoming Failure: The program emphasizes perseverance, teaching participants to bounce back from setbacks.
- Goal-Setting and Planning: Structured activities encourage setting personal and group objectives, fostering a sense of purpose.
- Communication and Negotiation Skills: Interactive sessions enhance verbal and non-verbal communication, vital for teamwork.
- Risk Management: Participants learn to assess situations and make informed decisions, balancing risks and rewards.

Sports Values:

- Discipline and Consistency: Regular participation instills a routine, promoting self-discipline.
- Fairness and Ethics: The program upholds principles of fair play, teaching

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respect for rules and opponents.
- Persistence and Determination: Challenges within activities encourage a never-give-up attitude.
- Collaboration and Team Spirit: Group tasks build camaraderie and mutual support among participants.
- Sportsmanship and Integrity: Emphasis on honest play and respect reinforces moral values.

Soft Skills:

- Effective Communication: Activities are designed to improve clarity and articulation in conveying ideas.
- Conflict Resolution and Negotiation: Participants navigate disagreements constructively, finding common ground.
- Emotional Intelligence and Empathy: Intergenerational interactions enhance understanding and sensitivity towards others' feelings.
- Adaptability and Agility: Engaging with varied activities and age groups cultivates flexibility in approach and thought.

Sustainability / Community Impact

The "Come & Play 4.0" initiative bridges generational gaps, promoting social inclusion and community cohesion.
By engaging youth, families, and seniors in collective physical activities, the program enhances mutual understanding and respect across age groups. This inclusive approach not only improves individual well-being but also strengthens community bonds, fostering a supportive environment for all members.

Website:https://comeandplay.eu/
Project Details: https://comeandplay.eu/the-intergenerational-sport-program/

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Desk research 2

InnoSkills through Sport

Contact person

Association "Sport Club Comac Sport"

66 "St. St. Kiril and Metodii" Str., Bulgaria, Sofia Minicipality, 1396, Village of Ivanyane

Description

This Erasmus+ Sport project: "InnoSkills through Sport" №621999-EPP-1-2020-1-BG-SPO-SSCP emphasizes developing entrepreneurial skills through sports, merging physical education with strategic thinking and soft skills training. By adopting the "Education Through Sport" (ETS) methodology, the initiative redefines sport as a multidimensional educational tool, particularly for youth from diverse and often disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop leadership and teamwork through sports-based group tasks.
- Practice strategic thinking and decision-making under pressure via competitive and cooperative games.
- Foster resilience and persistence by engaging in continuous improvement and embracing failure as a learning tool.
- Encourage goal-setting and long-term planning, key elements in both sport and entrepreneurship.
- Enhance communication and negotiation skills during team activities and simulated business tasks.
- Instill basic concepts of risk management through scenario-based learning in sports settings.

Sports Values:

- Cultivate discipline and consistency through regular training routines.
- Promote fairness, ethics, and integrity in competitive scenarios.
- Reinforce persistence and determination, vital for both sports and start-up ventures.
- Build collaboration and team spirit through inclusive sports events.
- Strengthen sportsmanship, character development, and social responsibility.

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Soft Skills:
- Effective communication during team discussions and group exercises.
- Conflict resolution and negotiation via real-time game strategy adjustments.
- Develop emotional intelligence and empathy by working in diverse teams.
- Build adaptability and agility by facing unpredictable game outcomes and challenges.

Sustainability / Community Impact:
- Encourages young athletes to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path post-sports.
- Empowers communities by using existing sports infrastructure for inclusive, profit-generating activities.
- Examples include developing fitness/wellness packages, tourism services, and initiatives for children with special needs.
- Promotes the revitalization of underused public facilities (like mountain lodges) for sports-related tourism and training camps.
- Focus on sustainable education models that combine cognitive and physical development..

Website: www.innoskills.eu

Desk research 3

OSMOSIS – Opening Sport Methodologies to Overcome Social Inequalities and Support Inclusive Sport

Contact person

Association "Partners – Kyustendil", Bulgaria

Description

Learning Objectives:
- Empowerment through Sport: Utilize sports as a medium to foster social inclusion and equal opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Innovative Marketing Strategies: Develop and implement contemporary marketing approaches to promote adapted sports.
- Capacity Building: Enhance the skills of professionals working with people with disabilities through specialized training.
- Transnational Collaboration: Establish a network among NGOs from Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, North Macedonia, Latvia, and Poland to share best practices and methodologies.

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Sports Values:
- Inclusivity: Promote participation of individuals with disabilities in sports activities alongside able-bodied individuals.
- Community Engagement: Foster a sense of belonging and community through joint sports events and initiatives.
- Equity: Ensure equal access to sports facilities and opportunities for all participants.

Soft Skills:
- Communication: Improve interpersonal skills through collaborative sports events and workshops.
- Leadership: Encourage leadership development among participants by involving them in organizing and leading activities.
- Adaptability: Cultivate the ability to adapt to diverse environments and challenges through varied sports and marketing activities.

Sustainability / Community Impact:
The project aims to create a lasting impact by developing a Marketing Toolkit—a set of standardized, adaptable tools based on marketing expertise. This toolkit is designed for easy adaptation and application by partner organizations and other stakeholders across Europe,
ensuring the project's sustainability and broader community impact.

Website

https://partnerskn.weebly.com/osmosis.html
- Implementation Period: January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2021
- Lead Organization: Sports Rehabilitation Association "Start", Poznań, Poland
- Partner Organizations:
  - Croatian Boccia Association for Persons with Disabilities, Zagreb, Croatia
  - Estonian Union for Persons with Disabilities, Tallinn, Estonia
  - Humanitarian Association for Support and Sport for Persons with Special Needs, Delčevo, North Macedonia
  - Latvian Paralympic Committee, Riga, Latvia
  - Association "Partners – Kyustendil", Bulgaria

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Desk research 4

Sport, Health, Education for a Long Life (SHELL)

Contact person

Champions factory

Description

Learning Objectives:

- Improve educational systems by creating a framework for equal employment opportunities for sports instructors.
- Develop new competencies for sports instructors, including entrepreneurship.

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Sports Values:
-Emphasize the importance of sports instructors in preventing diseases and promoting health.
- Encourage the presence of sports instructors in various institutions.

Soft Skills:
- Cultivate entrepreneurial skills among sports instructors.
- Enhance teaching competencies for vocational sports education.

Sustainability / Community Impact:
- Created guidelines for sports instructors and economic operators.
- Implemented an entrepreneurship course for 60 students in Bulgaria.

Website https://championsfactory.bg/sporthealth-education-for-a-long-life/

Desk research 5

Sport for All Project

Contact Person

Bulgarian Sports Federation for Children Deprived of Parental Care

Description

Learning Objectives:
-Investigate innovative approaches to decrease school violence through sports.
- Promote equality in sports, focusing on youth with disabilities and social disadvantages.

Sports Values:
-Foster inclusivity and social acceptance.
- Encourage volunteerism and active citizenship.

Soft Skills:
-Develop communication and leadership skills.
- Enhance adaptability through diverse sporting activities.

Sustainability / Community Impact:
-Conducted transnational seminars and forums.
- Established a handbook for grassroots sports.

e-mail: info@bulgariansportfederation.eu

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Desk research 6

We Invest in Sport for Career Development of Young People

Contact person

Municipality of Botevgrad, Contemporary Society Foundation, Košarkaški klub Actavis Akademija

Description

Learning Objectives:

- Develop a joint training program for acquiring sport and entrepreneurial skills.
- Implement a web-based platform for monitoring educational and training processes.
- Organize training camps and tournaments to foster practical skills. **Sports Values:**
- Promote teamwork and discipline through basketball training.
- Encourage cross-border collaboration and cultural exchange.

Soft Skills:

- Enhance leadership and communication skills.
- Provide psychological support for career development.

Sustainability / Community Impact:

- Reconstructed sports facilities in Botevgrad and Leskovac.
- Engaged 120 young people in entrepreneurship initiatives.

Website/Social Media/Pictures and any other additional info

- Project Details
- Municipality of Botevgrad
- **http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu**

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Slovakia

5.1 Background on the Sports School System in Slovakia

The Slovak school system is designed to provide a comprehensive and structured education to all children, with the aim of preparing them for life in a modern, democratic society. Its core purpose is to equip students with essential knowledge, skills, and values for personal development, civic responsibility, and economic participation. Education in Slovakia is compulsory from ages 6 to 16 and is divided into several levels: pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary, and tertiary (university) education.

Structure and Organisation

Pre-primary education (kindergarten) is available for children from age 3 and becomes compulsory for 5-year-olds. Primary education begins at age 6 and

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lasts four years (grades 1–4), followed by lower secondary education for another five years (grades 5–9). After completing basic school, students can choose from several types of upper secondary schools: general grammar schools (gymnáziá), vocational schools, and specialized secondary schools. Grammar schools prepare students for higher education, while vocational and technical schools focus on practical skills for specific professions.

Tertiary education is provided by universities and colleges, offering bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Education in public schools is free, and the system is regulated by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

Comparison with Other Systems

One of the unique features of the Slovak school system compared to systems in countries like the U.S. or UK is its early tracking of students into academic or vocational paths. While some Western systems emphasize a more general education up to age 18, Slovak students typically choose a specialization around age 15. This allows for a more focused preparation for either university or the labor market but may limit flexibility in later career changes.

The Role of Sports and Education

Slovakia places increasing emphasis on both intellectual and physical development. Physical education is mandatory in schools, and many schools cooperate with local sports clubs. Sport is seen not only as a means of staying healthy but also as a tool for teaching discipline, teamwork, and perseverance. Successful athletes are often supported by special sports schools or programs that balance training and academic responsibilities.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are an important part of student life and contribute to holistic development. Students in Slovakia can participate in a variety of clubs and interest groups, including music, theater, debate, science clubs, environmental initiatives, and foreign language courses. School competitions in subjects like math, literature, and history are common and encourage academic excellence. Additionally, arts and crafts, chess clubs, and volunteer projects help foster creativity, leadership, and social responsibility.

In summary, the Slovak school system aims to provide a balanced education that prepares students for both personal success and civic engagement. While it shares similarities with other European systems, its emphasis on early

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specialization and integration of sports and extracurricular activities makes it uniquely adapted to the needs of Slovak society.

5.2 Summary of interviews

The insights gathered from the interviews with **Slovak educators, entrepreneurs, and former athletes** reflect a strong recognition of the transformative role sport plays in shaping entrepreneurial skills and mindsets. Across the board, the interviewees highlight that while traditional education can transmit technical knowledge, the **development of entrepreneurial hard skills—such as financial literacy, strategic planning, leadership, and risk management—requires experiential, practice-based approaches**. Sport, with its intensity, discipline, and reliance on teamwork, emerges as a powerful bridge between theory and application.

Each contributor brings a unique yet complementary perspective. **Adrian Čakanišin** emphasizes that **sports-based simulations and competitions help students internalize concepts like financial planning, teamwork, and responsibility**, turning abstract business lessons into lived experience. **Matuš Ješko** underscores how **discipline, periodization, and composure under pressure** transfer seamlessly from football into business leadership, showing that consistency and long-term planning are as crucial in entrepreneurship as in training.

For **Ivan Minčič**, the heart of the lesson lies in **discipline, adaptability, and risk-taking**. His reflections demonstrate that mastering entrepreneurship, like sport, requires repeated practice, resilience after setbacks, and the ability to constantly learn. **Roman Beitl** adds emphasis on **fundamentals and preparation**, arguing that just as athletes cannot succeed without technical basics, businesses cannot grow without solid operational processes and attention to detail.

The voices of **Richard Kamenský and Pavlovič** further highlight **leadership, communication, and adaptability**. Kamenský draws from his experience as a captain to stress **trust, clarity, and collective success over individual performance**, while Pavlovič reflects on the necessity of **flexibility and continuous learning**, showing that tactics in both sport and business must evolve with shifting conditions.

Finally, the entrepreneurial journey of the **Vajda brothers**, former world-class wild-water racers, offers a striking example of sport-to-business transfer. Their obsession with **marginal gains, experimentation, and resilience under pressure** became the foundation of VAJDA Group, now a global leader in canoe and kayak manufacturing. Their reflections underline that **perfecting fundamentals,**

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managing risk, and leading by example were as vital in building a business as they were in chasing medals.

Taken together, these interviews illustrate that **entrepreneurship and sport are parallel arenas where resilience, adaptability, leadership, and preparation determine success**. The classroom, the training ground, and the workshop all become laboratories where students and athletes alike learn to manage pressure, make decisions in uncertain conditions, and collaborate toward shared goals.

In moving forward, the integration of **sports-based business education**—through simulations, competitions, mentorship, and real-world projects—emerges as not only an innovative teaching approach but also a deeply human-centered one. It meets learners where they are: **curious, competitive, and eager to prove themselves**, and channels that energy into structured, practical knowledge. Ultimately, these experiences show that **sport is not only a metaphor for business—it is a training ground for entrepreneurship itself**, cultivating the discipline, resilience, and adaptability that define long-term success.

5.3 Best Practices examples

Desk research 1

Sportskola – Sports Management and Sports Entrepreneurship Subjects

Contact person

Ing. Adrian Čakanišin PhD – Engineer in Economics and Business Administration. A teacher and lecturer at the University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia and high school teacher at the Sportskola, Bratislava.

Summary

The interview with Adrian Čakanisin, a teacher of Sports Management, explored the topic of teaching entrepreneurial hard skills through sports. Adrian explained that one of the biggest challenges in this area is making the content relevant for students and finding creative ways to connect sports with business in schools. In Slovakia, this remains particularly difficult, as sports are often treated in isolation from business education. He pointed out that many students aged 16 to 25 struggle with financial literacy, which he sees as a major

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knowledge gap. In his teaching, Adrian integrates sports and physical activities into lessons to help students better understand business concepts. By simulating teamwork, competition, and other elements common to both sport and entrepreneurship, students are encouraged to transfer their sports knowledge into business discussions and projects. He finds this approach highly effective for teaching practical entrepreneurial skills such as financial planning, marketing strategy, and management. For example, in the third grade, students run business simulations in which they design products, develop marketing strategies, calculate financial results, and compete with students from other schools. According to Adrian, the entrepreneurial skills best suited to being taught through sports activities are teamwork, competition, and financial responsibility. These skills help students not only in planning their personal finances but also in understanding the responsibilities involved in running sports companies or other business ventures. He also identified several challenges to implementing this type of teaching, including limited curriculum space, lack of literature and resources in sports management, and few opportunities for advanced education. He emphasized the need for more resources and professional involvement to support this process.

Adrian **envisions teamwork- and competition-based activities** as particularly suitable for teaching budgeting, marketing, and strategic management. To structure sports-based learning effectively, he suggests incorporating project-based modules into business subjects. As for evaluating students' progress, he relies on business simulations such as those provided by JA Slovakia, where students organize events, competitions, or projects and demonstrate their ability to apply business knowledge in a sports context. Feedback is gathered through class discussions, project outcomes, teacher observations, and students' own reflections and experiences.

Overall, Adrian believes that sports offer a powerful and engaging way to teach entrepreneurial skills, helping students gain both financial literacy and real-world experience, though he stresses the need for further development of resources, curriculum support, and professional involvement to make this approach sustainable and effective in Slovakia.

Website https://www.linkedin.com/in/adri%C3%A1n-%C4%8Dakani%C5%A1in-197207231/?originalSubdomain=sk

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Desk research 2

Activo - A civic association that helps children develop general motor skills.

Contact person

PaedDr. Ivan Mincic – Completed his Physical Education studies at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica and holds a UEFA A coaching licence. He has worked as a football coach with the professional team FC Petržalka, bringing valuable expertise to player development. During his playing career, he represented clubs such as Snina, FC Podbrezová, FC Petržalka, and ŠTK Šamorín.

Summary

PaedDr. **Ivan Minčič**, former footballer and coach, reflected on how his **career in sports profoundly shaped his entrepreneurial journey** with Activo. He explained that football taught him not only about performance but also about **human development**, and after retiring, he wanted to use that knowledge to help children build strong foundations for life, leading to the creation of Activo, which focuses on giving kids opportunities to explore **movement, teamwork, and long-term growth**.

Minčič emphasized that the most useful skills from his sports career for managing businesses are **discipline, resilience, and leadership**. Football taught him to **make decisions under pressure** and think strategically, skills he now applies to **leading his team and planning programs**. His experience as a **team player and captain** also shaped his approach to managing people: he strives to **recognize each individual's strengths** and create an environment where coaches and colleagues feel **valued and motivated**.

The constant **pressure management** inherent in football, from last-minute goals to critical matches, has helped him remain calm when facing **business challenges** such as funding, logistics, or staffing issues. Football also taught him **management techniques**, like setting clear goals and breaking them into manageable steps, which he now uses when designing step-by-step programs for children at Activo. He draws clear **parallels between preparing for an important match and preparing business strategies**, noting that both require **discipline, research, strategic planning, and the ability to adapt when reality differs from the plan**.

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Quick decision-making on the field translates directly into his role as a business leader, where hesitation can be costly. Similarly, his experience assessing and taking **risks in football** informs how he evaluates **investment and expansion opportunities**, balancing potential gains with worst-case scenarios. Transitioning from a structured sports career to the uncertainty of entrepreneurship was challenging, but he overcame it by **seeking mentors, continuing to learn, and applying the discipline** he developed as an athlete.

Minčič shared that **financial management** was initially the most difficult entrepreneurial skill to master, and he relied on the **repetition, feedback, and gradual improvement** principles from football to learn business skills effectively. He also offered advice for young athletes considering entrepreneurship: **develop leadership, communication, and teamwork skills early, remain curious beyond sports, build networks, and seek mentorship** to prepare for life after playing.

Reflecting on his journey, he noted that if he could start over, he would **invest earlier in building a strong support team**, recognizing that success in both football and business depends on having the right people around you. The **single most valuable lesson** from football that continues to guide his business decisions is **perseverance**: setbacks will occur, but persistence and belief in your vision carry you forward, whether on the pitch or in entrepreneurship.

- ***What is the single most valuable lesson from your football career that continues to guide your business decisions today?*** Never give up after a setback. In football, you can concede a goal in the first minute, but the game is still long. In business, there will always be challenges, but perseverance and belief in your vision are what carry you forward.

Desk research 3

Health Profile, Football Innovation Network, Slovak Sports Innovation Center

Contact Person:

PharmDr. Ladislav Pavlovič – Former football player, entrepreneur, and founder of multiple sports innovation initiatives in Slovakia. Since 2012, **Pavlovič has built a diverse entrepreneurial portfolio at the intersection of sport, technology, and innovation**. His first venture, **Health Profile**, is a self-funded software system designed for football academies that uses diagnostics and technology to assess players' health and performance, supporting youth athletes in their career development and currently applied in Slovakia's 2nd and 3rd leagues. Building on this foundation, he launched the **Football Innovation Network**, a fully independent platform that connects Slovak football clubs with SportTech

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companies, sharing expertise through podcasts, newsletters, and events to modernize the sport nationally. In 2020, he expanded his vision with the **Slovak Sports Innovation Center**, a non-profit dedicated to driving digital transformation across sport, with a focus on **smart stadiums, fan engagement, health and performance technologies, and the digitalization of sports management**. Together, these initiatives showcase a consistent commitment to leveraging innovation and technology to transform Slovak sport at both grassroots and professional levels.

Summary From the age of six, football gave him structure, feedback, and a constant drive to improve, and later, playing in Slovakia and Austria, he noticed a gap between traditional athlete support and what's possible with modern diagnostics and technology. This inspired him to become an entrepreneur, aiming to codify knowledge from his playing days and build systems to help young players perform better and stay healthy longer.

He highlighted that the most useful skills from football for managing his business are leadership and management, decision-making under pressure, strategic thinking, risk management, overcoming challenges, and adapting and learning. Leadership translates into managing people, priorities, and timelines, while decision-making under pressure mirrors the need to act with incomplete information in product roadmaps and partnerships. Strategic planning in football seasons informs product milestones and pilot phases, and risk management in sports informs **how he weighs financial, operational, and reputational risks** in business. Injuries and match setbacks taught him to **invest early in quality and processes**, and match reviews informed his approach to **iterating Health Profile programs**.

His experience as a **team player and captain** shaped his leadership style: he acts as a **translator between complex ideas and practical routines**, building trust while delivering feedback. Pressure-management skills from football—like coping with late goals—help him **remain focused on long-term outcomes**, avoiding knee-jerk reactions during tight deadlines or funding challenges. Football management techniques, such as **micro-cycles**, translate into business workflows with **clear weekly rhythms for diagnostics, analysis, handovers, and refinements**.

He draws clear parallels between match preparation and business strategy: **scouting equals market research, the game model equals product vision, set-pieces equal critical processes, and Plan B/C equals risk contingencies**. Video analysis translates into **dashboards that provide fast, actionable insights**, while pre-decided triggers enable **quick, confident decisions under pressure**. Risk management in business mirrors sports: **protect core reliability first, then growth initiatives, and finally reputation**, with clear ownership and exit strategies.

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The hardest transition to entrepreneurship was leaving the **certainty of training and match cycles for the ambiguity of product-market fit**, which he overcame by **self-funding, running small pilots, and letting results speak**. Lessons from football, such as **"control the controllables,"** helped him manage crises like COVID scheduling disruptions by focusing on what he could influence—remote reporting, at-home testing, and coach education. He found **B2B sales and navigating procurement** the most challenging entrepreneurial skills initially, requiring learning school and municipal decision-making processes.

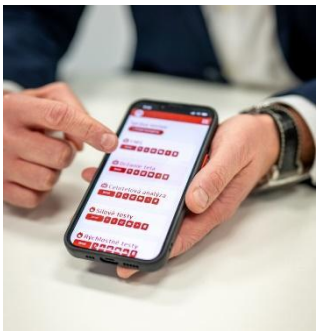
Football training methods like **periodization and deliberate practice** helped him develop new business skills: he used daily, focused practice with immediate feedback and progressive complexity, mirroring technical drills on the pitch. His advice to young footballers considering entrepreneurship is to **document routines, build relationships beyond the club, and cultivate curiosity**, while still playing, they should **protect study time, build financial literacy, practice communication, and prioritize health**.

Reflecting on his journey, he noted he would **invest earlier in distribution and partnerships**, recognizing that aligning with school systems and federations sooner would have multiplied impact. The single most valuable lesson from football that guides his business today is that **availability beats talent**: staying healthy, consistent, and reliable builds trust, and **trust drives success** in both sport and business.

Website www.healthprofile.digital

www.footballinnovation.network. facebook.com/112139493703097

https://digitalnakoalicia.sk/organization/the-slovak-sport-innovation-center/



Desk research 4

Municipal football club Slovan Skalka nad Váhom, n.o.

Contact person

Matúš Ješko - secondary school teacher of history and geography, director of a non-profit organization

Summary The interview with the non-profit leader, a former footballer, explored how his sports career shaped his approach to running OFK, a club

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that connects sport, education, and civic values. He explained that playing for clubs like FKS Nemšová, FK Borčice, and AS Trenčín showed him that a village club can be the social heart of a community and that structured training and strong mentorship can change young lives. This inspired him, as a teacher and council member, to lead OFK as a non-profit, building a bridge between athletics, education, and community engagement.

He emphasized that the most useful skills from football for managing the organization are **leadership and management, decision-making under pressure, strategic thinking, risk management, overcoming challenges, and adapting and learning**. Football taught him to **set clear standards, make quick decisions, and think strategically**, skills he now applies to managing coaches, parents, and players, as well as planning programs and partnerships. His experience as a **team player and captain** shaped his leadership style, helping him **translate long-term goals into actionable routines**, ensuring that children and parents understand what success looks like.

Pressure-management skills from football—like coping with **late goals and hostile away grounds**—help him remain calm in high-stakes situations such as **budget crunches or scheduling conflicts**. Techniques from football, like **micro-cycles and defined roles**, translate into structured weekly operations, clarifying responsibilities and increasing accountability. He draws direct parallels between **preparing for a match and preparing the club's strategy**, including **scouting (community needs), game model (club philosophy), set-pieces (policies), and in-game adjustments (program tweaks)**. Quick decision-making under pressure is supported by **pre-decided triggers** for attendance issues or facility changes, while dashboards for attendance, effort, and school feedback allow fast, data-informed choices.

Risk management is tiered in priority: **safety and welfare first, financial sustainability second, and reputation third**, with clear ownership and contingencies for each. The transition from player to non-profit leader was challenging due to the shift from personal performance to **system building**, which he overcame by learning municipal processes, starting small grants, involving teachers as volunteers, and proving reliability season after season. Lessons from football, such as **"control the controllables"**, helped him navigate difficult situations, keeping children engaged during stalled projects like pitch renovations.

The most challenging entrepreneurial skills to acquire were **fundraising and stakeholder alignment**, which required him to speak in three "languages": coach, teacher, and municipality. Football training methods helped him learn

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these skills through **deliberate practice, repetition, and feedback**, treating policy drafts and planning sessions like drills. His advice to young athletes considering entrepreneurship is to **document what works now, build relationships early, and focus on character and reliability**. While still playing, he recommends protecting study time, learning budgeting and project planning basics, volunteering in small initiatives, and treating **health and sleep as essential investments**.

Overall, the interview highlights how **discipline, strategic thinking, leadership, and resilience from sports directly inform successful non-profit management**, and how football can serve as a **training ground for entrepreneurial and civic skills**.

Website/Social Media/Pictures and any other additional info

https://www.facebook.com/tjslovanskalkanadvahom

Desk research 5

Walty Gym

Contact Person

Mgr. Roman Beitl – Co-founder of Athlete Health and Performance movement studio, former youth league football champion, and football coach at FC Petržalka.

Summary Playing and coaching football, particularly at FC Petržalka, showed him that good coaching and smart training prevent injuries and build confidence. In 2018, he and his wife turned that belief into a studio where everyday clients receive the same standards athletes expect: clear plans, real coaching, and measurable progress. He highlighted that the most useful sports skills for running the studio are leadership and management, decision-making under pressure, strategic thinking, risk management, overcoming challenges, and adapting and learning. Leadership involves setting culture, protecting standards, hiring carefully, and coaching the coaches, while decision-making under pressure mirrors peak-hour operational challenges like class swaps, equipment issues, or last-minute cancellations. Strategic planning follows periodization principles, organizing the calendar into base, build, peak, and deload phases. Risk management is tiered: safety first, financial second, reputation third, and setbacks are handled like losses on the pitch—review,

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adjust, and return to fundamentals. Continuous client feedback and data drive micro-iterations and improvements in programs.

Being a **team player and captain** shaped his leadership: he models **preparation, punctuality, and language**, praises publicly and corrects privately, and assigns **clear roles so everyone knows their responsibilities**. Pressure-management skills from football help him **stay calm under operational stress**, identifying constraints and deploying pre-planned solutions efficiently. Football management techniques like **periodization and micro-cycles** are applied to adult programs, with clear **A/B/C regressions and test–retest benchmarks** to track measurable progress.

He draws parallels between **preparing for a big match and building business strategy**: scouting equals **market research**, the game model equals **coaching philosophy**, set pieces equal **non-negotiables**, and in-game adjustments equal **live class edits**. Quick decisions under pressure are enabled by **predetermined triggers** for attendance, new participants, or RPE spikes. Video review translates to **floor audits**, keeping coaching standards objective. Risk management mirrors sports: **tier 1 safety, tier 2 financial, tier 3 reputation**, with clear procedures and contingencies.

The hardest transition was moving from athlete/coach to **studio owner**, learning **sales, leases, payroll, and compliance**. He overcame this by **building SOPs, hiring trusted experts, and focusing on measurable metrics like CAC and retention**. Lessons from sports helped solve business challenges: during a landlord renovation delay, he implemented an **"away game mode"** with alternative workouts and home programs. Entrepreneurial skills hardest at first included **B2C marketing and pricing**, which he learned through experience, shifting from over-delivering and undercharging to **value-based offers**. Football training methods like **deliberate practice** guided skill acquisition in business—small, consistent blocks with feedback compounded results.

His advice for young footballers considering entrepreneurship is to **document training principles, build a small audience, and seek mentors outside sport**. Active athletes should **protect weekly learning time, run small projects, track simple KPIs, and prioritise recovery**. Reflecting on his journey, he would **invest earlier in systems**, such as a CRM, onboarding, and cash buffer, to **improve**

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quality and reduce stress. The single most important lesson from football that guides his business is that **consistency beats intensity: show up, coach well, recover, repeat**, which sustains results and helps clients achieve long-term progress.

Website https://www.waltygym.sk/

Desk research 6

VAJDA Group

Contact Person
Not specified (Founded by Vajda brothers – former top wild water racers)

Summary The Vajda brothers, former elite wild-water racers, explained how their sporting careers directly shaped their entrepreneurial journey and the creation of **VAJDA Group, a global manufacturing and innovation company**. Their years of competition taught them to focus on **marginal gains**, constantly refining boats and equipment to gain fractions of a second. When they couldn't find what they needed, they built it themselves—this **hands-on curiosity became the foundation of their business**.

The skills they developed in sport translated seamlessly to entrepreneurship. **Leadership and teamwork** were essential, both on the river and in their workshop, where they lead by example and value every team member's contribution. Their ability to **make quick decisions under pressure** now helps them handle tight deadlines and technical setbacks. They apply **strategic planning and periodization**, much like in sport, to balance custom projects for champions with larger-scale production. **Risk management**, too, comes directly from racing—whether choosing a safe line down rapids or balancing R&D, production, and market risks, they tier and prepare contingency plans.

The brothers emphasized that **resilience and adaptability**, learned through crashes and setbacks in competition, remain crucial when machinery fails, prototypes break, or supply chains face disruption. They highlighted **iterative prototyping** as a shared management method between sport and business: testing small, controlled changes, gathering feedback, and refining continuously. Just as every race requires scouting and preparation, their business relies on **market research, careful timing of product launches, and constant performance review**.

The transition from athletes to entrepreneurs was not easy. Their biggest challenge was **scaling craftsmanship into repeatable production** while keeping the quality demanded by elite athletes. They overcame this by

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documenting processes, standardizing tools, and training apprentices, which allowed them to preserve custom quality while expanding production. Another hurdle was learning **commercial scaling and international logistics**—they solved this by partnering with experienced agents and hiring specialists.

From sport, they carried over the discipline of **periodization and deliberate practice**, applying it to R&D cycles, leadership development, and strategic planning. One lesson that proved invaluable was **preparing for worst-case scenarios**: just as they carried spares to regattas, they now rely on contingency planning for equipment failures or urgent client demands.

Their advice to young athletes considering entrepreneurship is to **stay curious, start small, and use their sporting networks as early adopters**, while also developing **formal skills in finance, contracts, and languages**. They recommend that athletes still competing should set aside time for learning, run micro-projects, protect their health, and **build advisory networks beyond sport**.

Looking back, the brothers said they would have **invested earlier in systems and delegation**, instead of trying to control every detail themselves. Finally, the guiding principle from sport that continues to shape their business is simple but powerful: **perfect the fundamentals**. Just as in racing, where a single flawed stroke can ruin a run, in business **excellence in basics like quality, service, and reliability creates the platform for long-term success**.

Website www.vajdagroup.com

Desk research example 7

Ing.Richard Kamensky

Contact Person

Ing. Richard Kamenský – National Womens Basketball Team and BK Karlovka Coach, Teacher at the Sportskola, Bratislava. Studied at University of Economics, Bratislava

Summary His pathway to organisational leadership was never about entrepreneurship for its own sake—it was about building systems that work. Coaching at national and club levels exposed him to gaps in coach education, youth pathways, and operational routines, motivating him to develop programs, curricula, and structures that function like small enterprises, with clear roles, budgets, schedules, and KPIs. In this sense, he acts as an entrepreneur inside sport, creating, testing, and scaling solutions that improve athlete development.

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He emphasized that the most useful skills from basketball for managing organisations are **leadership and management, decision-making under pressure, strategic thinking, risk management, overcoming challenges, and adapting and learning**. Leadership translates into **designing workflows, delegating responsibility, and empowering specialists**, while in-game decision-making teaches **fast, confident administrative calls**. Strategic planning in basketball seasons informs **multi-year organisational strategies**, including recruitment, talent pathways, and resource allocation. Risk management from sport informs **health and safety, contingency planning, and prioritisation**, and setbacks trained him to **analyse objectively and iterate quickly**.

His experience as a **team player and captain** shaped his leadership: he ensures **role clarity and psychological safety**, empowers staff, and models **preparation, punctuality, and respect**. Pressure-management skills from basketball help him **stabilise high-stress situations, focus on the next controllable action, and reduce panic** during operations or crises. Management techniques like **preparation templates and checklists** derived from locker-room routines formalise processes, ensuring **consistent experiences regardless of staff changes**.

He draws clear parallels between match preparation and organisational strategy: **scouting opponents equals stakeholder analysis, training blocks equal project timelines, tactical plans equal organisational priorities, and half-time adjustments equal mid-year strategy tweaks**. Quick decision-making is supported by **pre-decided rules and triggers**, ensuring consistent, fair choices under pressure. Risk management strategies are applied formally, **classifying health/safety, compliance, reputation, and financial risks with assigned owners and contingencies**.

The biggest challenge in transitioning from coaching to organisational leadership was **scaling interpersonal coaching skills into systemic processes**, which he overcame by **studying pedagogy and management, building partnerships, and delegating administrative tasks**. Sports lessons, such as **structured debriefs**, helped him manage organisational crises by creating **accountability and restoring trust**. Entrepreneurial skills hardest to learn initially included **financial planning and sponsorship negotiation**, mastered through courses, mentorship, and practical experience.

Training methods from basketball—**microcycles, deliberate practice, and feedback loops**—helped him develop organisational skills such as **curriculum development and administrative management**, applying the same discipline used for technical skill acquisition. His advice to young athletes is to **invest in**

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education, develop communication skills, lead small projects, and document routines, while still playing, they should **protect learning time, build networks, and keep simple records** for future organisational roles.

Reflecting on his journey, he would have **formalised coach education earlier** to scale quality reliably. The single most valuable lesson from basketball guiding his decisions today is that **systems win over moments**: talent can win a game, but **consistent systems in preparation, recovery, education, and communication sustain organisations over years**.

Website https://www.facebook.com/richard.kamensky

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