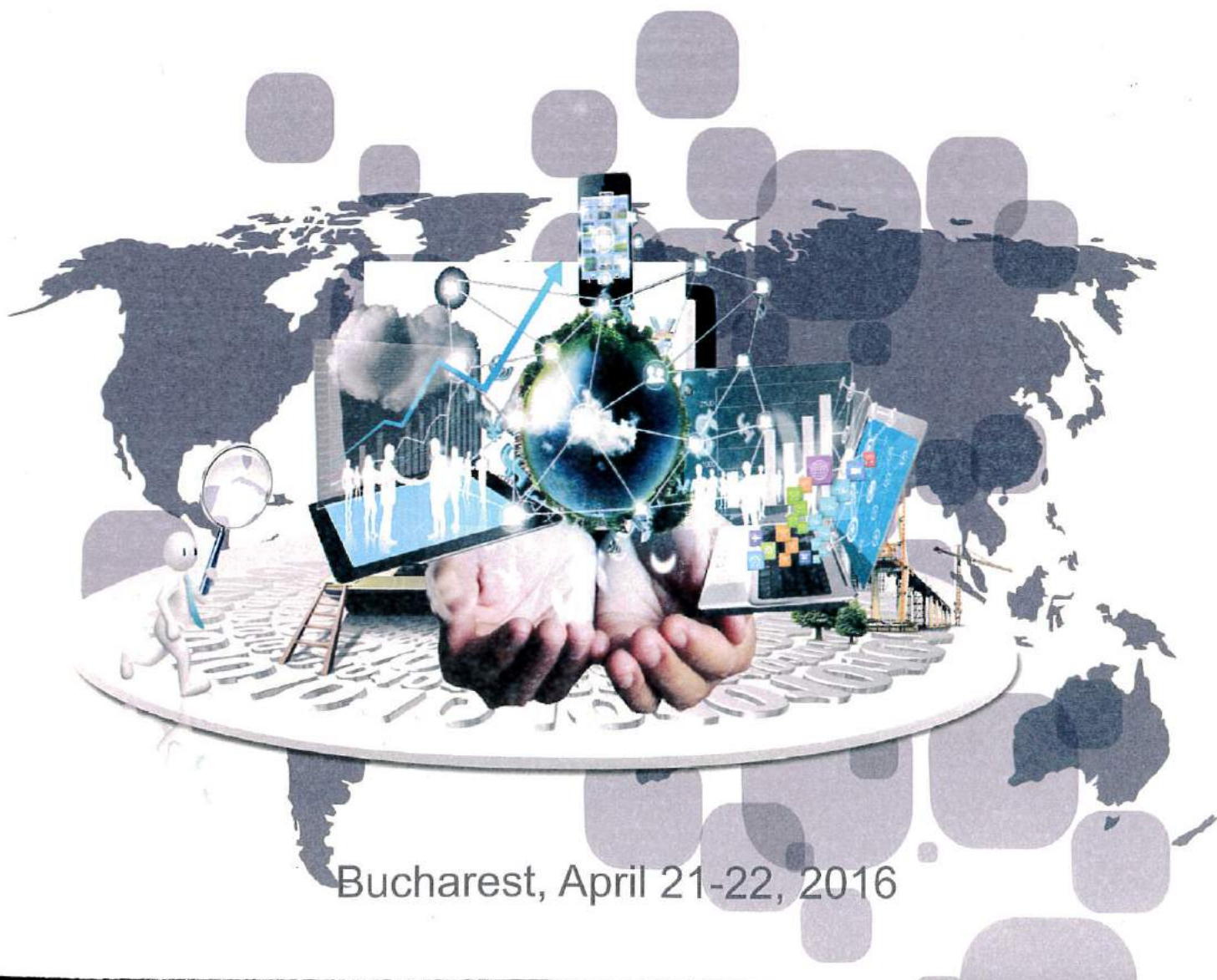**Ion ROCEANU**
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Taking into account the answers given by the respondents and our analysis, social networks have the potential to improve the quality of education through the impact it has on people, through the fact that social networks grant ease of access to contact people with common interests and gain skills and competences through non-formal or informal means.

E-learning platforms, as we mentioned in this paper, in our view, are currently too static in comparison with other means of gaining non-formal or informal education through the use of internet driven applications. Thus, e-learning platform developers should further their use of Web 2.0 technologies, of social media, or even, as augmented reality or virtual workspaces can become accessible through the use of virtual reality perspectives, in order for students to have a more interactive approach on how the information reaches them. Another aspect that developers can do is to implement learning features through social networks.

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PROMOTING LESS POPULAR SPORTS IN SCHOOLS THROUGH THE NOT ONLY FAIR PLAY ONLINE TOOLKIT

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Abstract: The article is a study of the online toolkit addressing teachers of physical education which was developed within the project Not only fair play (557089 EPP1-2014-IT-SPO-SCP) co-financed by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme, Sport - Collaborative Partnership. The project aims to promote the enhancement of sport and physical activities offer of European schools both within the curricular activities and through extracurricular initiatives in order to help students confute the need to choose between studying and doing sport. Sport activities can become a fundamental educational tool, developing students' self-confidence, creating socialization opportunities and encouraging mutual understanding among different cultures. The project valorizes the role that the universal language of sport can play in order to achieve social inclusion, equal opportunities and tolerance. The online toolkit benefits from the outcomes, knowledge and experience gained from previous European projects related to the topic. It is based on research on physical education activities, less popular sports and games and sports preferences of the students from the partners' countries. The online toolkit addresses teachers from mainstream, special needs and inclusive schools. The main chapters develop topics such as: the role of sports in education and life, the balance between sports and study, methods of motivating students only interested in sport to improve their school performances. The toolkit also provides teachers with online materials on how to integrate sport and healthy lifestyle approaches into the students' educational pathways, promote an ethical approach to sport, and use sports as a means to acquire transversal skills and support social inclusion. The toolkit provides teachers with online counselling and training on how to use sports in school and extracurricular contexts.

Keywords: Sport; education; online; toolkit; students.

I. CHAPTER I

1.1 European context

Physical activity, health and quality of life are closely interconnected. "The human body was designed to move and therefore needs regular physical activity in order to function optimally and avoid illness [1]." Apart from the individual health benefits, there is evidence on the positive direct and indirect

economic effects of participation in sport and physical activity. The unprecedented development of technology has brought about new changes, which have simplified our lives but made us sedentary, especially children and young people. Research shows that too many people across Europe are not physically active enough. This has a serious impact on general health, the frequency of preventable diseases, and the number of premature deaths. It has been proved that a sedentary lifestyle is a risk factor for the development of many chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular diseases, a main cause of death in the world.

Sport is not always perceived as a positive activity, which often makes students give up sport under the pressure of their families, teachers and peers. The project aims to find a solution and balance sport and school by promoting a more fruitful cooperation between schools and sports organizations and encouraging a more ethical-based perception of the importance that sport and physical activity can and should have for young people [1].

1.2   The project objectives

The project aims at:
- promoting curricular and extracurricular sport and physical activities throughout European schools as part of a healthy life style
- promoting a different and ethical based approach to sport and physical activities by encouraging a positive perception of sport and physical activities as "prerequisite educational means to develop and stimulate students' self-confidence, socialization opportunities and mutual understanding among different cultures." The project states that the universal language of sport can play an important role in fostering social inclusion, equal opportunities and tolerance.
- promoting less popular sports which are more accessible than famous sports such as football or tennis but can have a similar contribution to personal grow [2].

The project provides teachers and school staff with a set of information, teaching and learning tools and best practices which promote a more fruitful and mutual beneficial relationship between school and sports.

1.3   The project outputs and activities

The project has produced a collection of best practice for sport promotion which encourages curricular and extracurricular school initiatives (e.g. sport competitions among schools, school sports days etc.), experiences and projects supporting mutual understanding among cultures, socialization among students, values and ethics etc. (e.g. use of sport as universal language to stimulate interaction between students from different ethnic/cultural groups), experiences which promote sport as an incentive to increase students' motivation to learn and stay at school, success stories of students that have managed to balance their school duties with their passion for sport and succeeded in organizing their time and their life (Fig. 1).

Figure 1 Section of the project website

II.   CHAPTER II

An online toolkit available to teachers and sport activities leaders has been developed in order to stimulate the participation of young people in sport and physical activities.

The Toolkit contains:
- innovative methodological approaches and teaching tools and practices for teaching school subjects through sport related initiatives and/or physical activities (e.g. sport events to teach history or culture etc.);
- innovative approaches and teaching tools used in sport, which can enable teachers to develop students' transversal skills as communication, learning to learn, entrepreneurial spirit etc;
- sport based activities used for motivating students to learn, to stay at school and continue their studies, to socialize and overcome cultural, social, economic or racial issues;
- new approaches to sport promoting ethical based activities, which can be used as effective tools in the prevention of racism, violence, doping and match fixing;
- online material on strategies as to how to turn schools into multiplier actors advertising less popular sports that can have a strong and effective role in motivating young people to be involved in everyday physical activities [2].

2.1   Toolkit on how to promote less popular sports

The main objectives of the toolkit on how to promote less popular sport are to raise teachers' awareness about a wide range of sports and games, which are played in Europe [3] and also raise Physical Education (PE) teachers' awareness about the role that physical education plays in our life. The toolkit has 10 subchapters or steps (Fig 2).
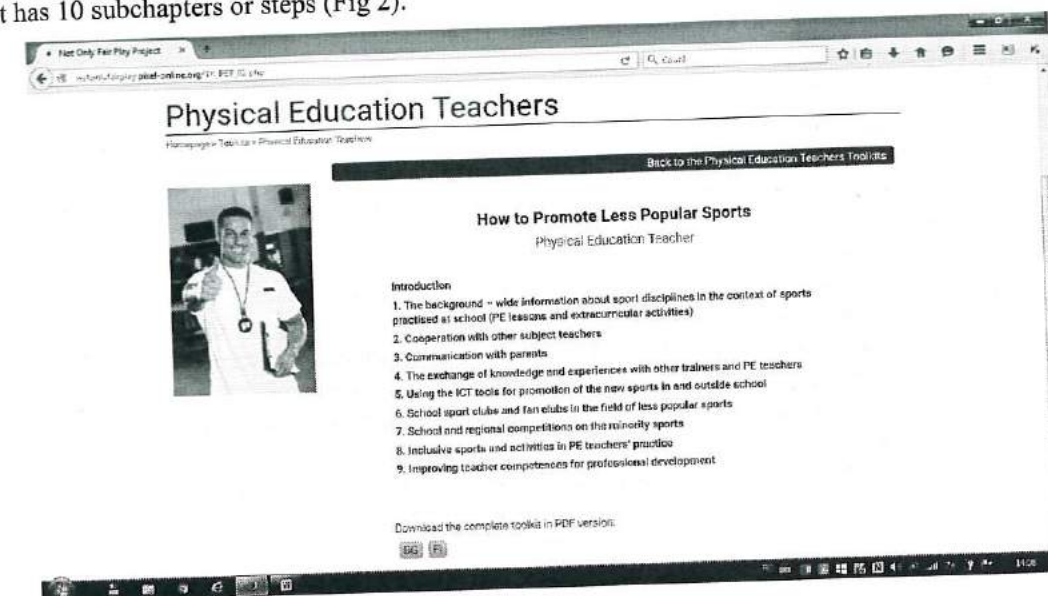

Figure 2 Section of the project website

The first step gives useful examples of sports activities and provides general tips on planning and organizing sports activities as well as ways of making the best use of physical activity facilities. It provides useful information collected through discussions and interviews with teachers, parents and students from a range of schools: mainstream schools, special schools or inclusive schools. Investigations also take into consideration students' preferences in terms of sports as opposed to school reality that is what schools have on offer. PE teachers can also find interesting information from web search or European project findings.

The second step, cooperation with other subject teachers, supports the cross-curricular integration of lessons. It encourages teachers to work together by providing useful tips and links as to how to integrate physical movement into various subject areas: languages, arts, geography, history, math, science and social studies. The second step highlights the role that sport plays in our lives. Physical activity is vital to the holistic development of young people, fostering their physical, intellectual, social

and emotional health. The benefits of sport go beyond the duration of a class at school. Sports play a great role in advancing education and in enhancing knowledge. PE teachers get familiar with ways they can cooperate with other colleagues for the benefit of their students. For example, PE teachers can collaborate with their colleagues, teachers of Geography, when organizing and managing orientation games (establishing the itinerary and tasks). PE teachers can work with teachers of Biology in order to organize themed outings (guided tours: observing plants that grow in the woods, bird watching etc.). They can organize trips on history or literary topics with teachers of Literature and History. They can also collaborate with IT, Music and Art teachers to promote and advertise sport events and their results or advertise best practice examples and create networks.

The third step, communication with parents, shows the role that good communication between parents and teachers has in pupils' development and offers guidelines on how to involve parents in PE activities. This step supports the idea that students do better in school when parents become involved in school activities and when there is good communication between teachers and parents. PE teachers learn about a wide range of ways in which parents and teachers can communicate with each other. Establishing close communication with parents helps PE teachers better understand their students, and, as a result, better support them.

Parents can contribute to teachers' efforts to promote youth physical activity. Parents' involvement varies from giving their consent to their offspring's participation in competitions, to attending school sports events or participating in sports activities organized by schools. Parents play a vital role in the health of their children and can strongly influence the choices they make at school. Making good choices regarding physical activity leads to improved student health — and healthier students are better learners [4]. These strategies allow PE teachers to promote physical education during school and outside of school with the adults who are most influential in the lives of young people.

Step 4, The exchange of knowledge and experiences with other trainers and PE teachers gives PE teachers valuable information on how to interact and share ideas about education, classroom management and teaching strategies. Step 4 highlights the role played by the exchange of knowledge and experiences with other trainers and PE teachers in a PE teacher's personal and professional development. PE teachers learn about several ways they can exchange knowledge and experiences with other trainers and PE teachers locally, nationally and even internationally such as European projects, mass media (local and national TV stations), newspapers, on-line blogs, PE teachers forums or school websites.

Step 5, Using the ICT tools for promotion of the new sports in and outside school, features lots of tips and information on how to integrate technology into PE programme. It is common belief nowadays that ICT has a good effect on the teaching and learning of PE. This step aims at familiarizing PE teachers with common applications, such as email, Word, and Excel and Power Point presentations. There are also tips on the use of videos during physical education classes due to the fact that they are getting more and more popular as tools for teaching [5].

Step 6, School sport clubs and fan clubs in the field of less popular sports provides teachers and parents with information about students' participation in school sport and fan clubs, analyzing its pros and cons and giving useful guidelines and tips to coaches. Students' clubs organized after school activities provide alternative ways of spending time which can influence students' education positively by contributing to students' personal development and leading to their adopting an active healthy lifestyle. Sport clubs can also help students develop important social skills through their interaction with peers, coaches, authorities, fans etc. A student's participation in a sport club usually makes parents get involved in school sport events which enhance family cohesion.

Step 7, School and regional competitions in less popular sports are excellent lessons in fair play. Sport contests are important experiences for young people for two reasons. Firstly, they are given the opportunity to experience a challenging sport event and secondly they can improve their sport skills. However, there are also risks as students may focus too intensively on winning, and as a consequence their stress caused by peer-pressure and anxiety may increase. Therefore, it is important for parents and coaches to help teenagers handle stress. The step gives valuable tips on how to help students manage frustrations that may occur in case of defeat.

Step 8, Inclusive sports and activities in PE teachers' practice, gives PE teachers valuable information and provides them with a variety of teaching resources concerning inclusion issues through sport and physical activities. The main aim of this step is to raise awareness of the opportunities provided by inclusive sports and to increase participation of disadvantaged groups of students (e.g. disabled and special needs students, teenage girls, who do not want to wear PE outfits because they make them look "ugly," obese children and students experiencing bullying in changing rooms because of their nationality or religion). PE teachers are given a wide range of tools which help students integrate into the school community: from open group activities (everyone doing the same activity without adaptation), modified/adapted activities (changing rules, space and equipment), parallel activities (division of groups according to ability) to individually performed activity. Cooperation with other subject teachers (ICT, Art, History, Geography, Science) helps PE teachers increase awareness of Paralympic sports, provides inspiration for cross curricula initiatives, develops students' creativity and imagination, as well as make them more sensitive, tolerant and open-minded.

Step 9, Improving teacher competences for professional development, adds an essential element to the toolkit: invaluable online materials on the continuous professional development which enable teachers to extend knowledge and acquire new innovative methods and teaching skills. Every PE teacher's initial education at university can be considered as an introduction to the knowledge and skills acquired and developed throughout the whole professional carrier. Continuous professional development is connected to acquiring and using the latest and most efficient methods, tools and ideas in one's field. Nowadays teachers can complete their education not only through training courses and post-graduate studies but also through e-learning.

The last step, Sports and physical activities in a medical context, gives information on how to prevent diseases through sports and therapy activities; a wide range of activities aimed at specific groups of students are also available on the site. The step provides teachers with an overwhelming amount of scientific evidence on the positive effects of sport on people's life and well thought out activities meant to enhance the role of sport and physical activity in our society.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The online toolkit gives useful information on curricular and extracurricular sport activities. It also aims at raising awareness about the benefits that sport and, especially, less popular physical activities have in our life. The toolkit encourages a very positive perception of sport as an essential ingredient in everybody's healthy lifestyle. It can become an essential resource for health physical education teachers. Based on the latest findings, it provides guidance on how students can improve their health through physical activity. It provides physical education teachers with strategies and methods meant to enhance students' motivation to do sports. It supports the idea that the collaboration among all teachers, coaches and parents is the best solution to integrate sport and healthy lifestyle approaches into students' educational pathways. Physical activity channels students' natural energy while teaching them valuable life skills such as determination, perseverance, self-confidence, courage and teamwork. Sports should be associated with education and a youth sporting culture is likely to lead to a healthy, active lifestyle.

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