



Sports and the labour market: a promising and useful relationship

**Data collection report developed within the
framework of an ERASMUS + Sport project:**

*'Sport as a vehicle for developing skills for the
labor market and promoting employability and
entrepreneurship'*



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results of Work-package 1 (Research Gap Analysis) of the project *Skills by Sport for Med: Sport as a vehicle for developing skills for the labor market and promoting employability and entrepreneurship* (SbS4Med) (Ref. 613666-EPP-1-2019-1-PT-SPO-SCP).

The project aims to promote the development of skills in and through sport, by creating open educational resources dedicated to identifying and promoting implementation of skills that from sport can be applied to professional level. It intends to foster social transformation through sport in the Mediterranean region, using sport as a vehicle for developing skills with valuable for the labour market, promoting higher employability and entrepreneurship.

The target groups of this project are sports' coaches and instructors, young people and unemployed people who can be supported by sport in (re)integrating the labour market.

In order to identify possible gaps between existing and desirable skills, the first phase of the project compared the opinions of coaches and sports instructors about the essential skills that they believe are developed and transmitted to athletes, to those identified as valuable for labour-market stakeholders and decision-makers (mainly Human Resources (HR) experts).

A qualitative methodology was chosen, which consisted of conducting semi-structured interviews with sports instructors and HR experts through focus groups. The results of an in-depth analysis and comparison of these interviews, allowed to highlight commonalities and differences between them. All participants agreed that sport can be a fundamental tool for the development of employability skills, endorsing the existence of a strong link between the skills developed through sports and those helpful in entering the job market. The higher valued skills were communication skills; inter-personal (collaboration) and intra-personal (adaptation) skills; contextualization skills (management of complexity); and cognitive skills (decision-making and creativity). They further underlined the importance of professional practices and awareness raising in the promotion of such skills and their transferability. Both sport coaches and HR experts recognise thus the importance of leadership in the development of behavioural skills and the need for its consolidation through educational programs.

All participants consider that subjectivity can play a role in acquiring and transferring specific skills depending on each person's internal dispositions, but while coaches mentioned the importance of personality-related skills, the HR experts did not explicitly considered those.

As far as difficulties are concerned, three dimensions have been underlined. First, the concrete mechanisms and processes of skills transferability seem to remain unclear for most participants, namely the ways and degree to which that transfer can be accomplished. Second, the participants struggle to explain the methods and practical actions to be implemented on the playing field to promote this awareness among athletes. Third, participants in the sport world and the business world recognise a lack of familiarity regarding the other context, which suggests that a more direct and active communication exchange between sports and business contexts would be desirable in promoting employability and entrepreneurship through sport.

At a more societal level, all participants expressed significant concern regarding the effects of COVID-19's pandemic over their professional activity and the likeliness of skill development during the present time; they recognised the need for hard skills, such as technology to be integrated/developed, even at an elementary level, but never at the expense of behavioral skills. Finally, in some cases, coaches expressed a concern over the political lack of attention and visibility accorded to sports and to life-long sports' promotion and the inequality of financial and material resources between different modalities and clubs, all of which are considered aspects to improve.

PROJECT FRAMEWORK

The project addresses the objective of promoting education and skills development in and through sport by implementing activities focused on the creation of effective, attractive and immediate open educational resources dedicated to the development and implementation of labour skills that from sport can be applied to work. The main target groups of the project are two:

- ❖ Coaches and sport instructors;
- ❖ Youths and unemployed (including cluster of migrants, also in qualified repatriation perspective) that can be supported by sport in (re)integration into the labour market.

Specifically, the project aims at strategic social transformation through sport in the Mediterranean region, by focusing on sport as a vehicle for promoting work capacities and employment/entrepreneurship. This objective goes in line with the main priorities of EU policies, not only in the frame of sport, but also in the field of integration, immigration, development, security and international cooperation. In this sense, Sport in this project is not an end but a “mean” (a tool) for addressing the social and economic problem of low employment, and hence massive migration processes, insecurity and terrorism threats.

The project aims at using skills and competencies acquired by coaches and sport instructors during their professional career to train different target groups in developing a set of professional skills (with solid attention to soft ones) useful to integrate them into the labour market. This, in fact, will allow to create work opportunities.

Coaches and sport instructors should hold a set of skills that go over the mere technical ones and that refer to soft and life skills. Furthermore, they should train and use those skills in their current work as coaches and, most of all, transmit them to athletes and sport participants. It is less clear, indeed, whether they are aware of such skills or not and whether they use them or not during their athletes’ training actions.

Starting from the necessity to train and educate people to develop or change new work skills and competencies and using experimentation within a set of Mediterranean basin countries, the project aims at creating awareness of that possibility among coaches/sport instructors and at constructing a set of open and educational resources to support soft and professional skill development through sport. Thus, sport becomes a sort of incubator of skills and competencies

development, particularly useful and at hand for people to understand and experience. In this framework people can test new skills and learn how to transfer them into work.

A final scope of the project is to narrow the gap identified by relevant EU-funded projects such, as Training Athletes for Sports Events Management (TASEM) in the field of sport management and education between the Northern and the Southern sides of the Mediterranean basin, promoting both inter-cultural dialogue and a common understanding of the values at stake.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The Research (Gap Analysis) is aimed to explore coaches and sport instructors' capacity to use sport as a vehicle for development of skills and competencies functional to the labour market.

In particular it is articulated in three related parts and objectives:

1. Analyse the skills of coaches and sport instructors to identify the ones they hold and the ones they implicitly transmit to athletes (mainly desk research based on already existing studies). Specifically, this objective aims to understand how coaches and sport instructors use sport as a tool for the development and enhancement of functional skills for the labour market.
 2. Explore the opinion of the main stakeholders and decision makers in the field of labour (i.e., HR manager, HR agencies) about the skills and competencies particularly useful to access the current labour market (i.e., team working, flexibility, diversity management, time management and so on...).
- Exploring the opinion of the main stakeholders, entrepreneurs and people who deal with hiring and personnel management allows to identify the skills that are particularly relevant and useful for entering the current and future labor market. The generated profiles would represent the types of skills that HR personnel perceive and consider fundamental, not only for job placement but also for professional success.
3. Compare the first two points to identify the gap between the skills that coaches, and sport instructors hold, and transmit the skills requested by the labour market, to understand which are already owned and which need to be developed.

The following table describes the relationship between objectives, actions and expected outputs:

<p>Objective</p> 	<p>1. Analyse the skills of coaches and sport instructors to identify the ones they hold and the ones they implicitly transmit athletes</p>	<p>2. Explore the opinion of the main stakeholders and decision makers in the field of labour about the skills and competencies particularly useful to enter in the current labour market</p>	<p>3. Compare the first two points to identify the gap among the skills that coaches, and sport instructors hold, and the skills requested by labour market, to understand which are yet owned and which need to be developed by them</p>
<p>Action</p> 	<p><u>Methodology:</u> -Desk analysis by UCSC and ISCTE-IUL -Focus groups with coaches for each partner with a common track/draft</p>	<p><u>Methodology:</u> semi-structured interviews and Focus Groups -Common track drawn up by UCSC_ASAG -Collection of interviews with HR managers, HR consultants by the partners</p>	<p>-Compare Output 1 and Output 2 -Build training (with open teaching materials) for coaches and sports instructors that prepares them to be trainers of young people, unemployed or migrants in order to support them in developing a set of skills necessary to the (re) - integration into the labor market</p>
<p>Output</p>	<p>-Intermediate report by each partner involved in the Focus Groups -Narrative report "<i>Skills of coaches and sport instructors: the ones they hold and the ones they transmit</i>"</p>	<p>-Intermediate report by each partner involved in the interviews and Focus Groups -Narrative report "<i>Skills and competences useful for the job market</i>"</p>	<p>SbS4Med FIRST INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT "<i>Gap analysis on coaches capacity of promoting sport as a vehicle for professional skills for labor market</i>"</p>

DESK ANALYSIS

The literature reviewed in the framework of this project includes recent research on the conditions for transferring skills from sports practice to work. These studies focus on different areas: academic programs and pedagogies (related to training programs); athletes' identity; behavioural development, skills acquisition and coaches' behaviour; career; training models and professional practices; the articulation between sport and work; skills transfer; and labour market policies and employability skills.

Developing skills through sports: the role of programs, coaches and athletes

A widely underlined notion is that in a globalized world, where the labour market is becoming increasingly demanding and competitive, the technical knowledge required for each function (hard skills) is no longer sufficient to ensure job development. The transversal behavioural skills (soft skills) seem to become the most critical factor for recruiters to choose their professionals and for professional enhancement. Furthermore, different authors have identified sport as the most popular extracurricular activity for youth, promoting the psychosocial development, commonly referred to as life skills development. Based on some of these studies (Danish et al., 1993; Gould & Carson, 2008; Gould, Carson, & Blanton, 2013) Bean and Forneris (2017) define this concept as "internal personal assets, characteristics, and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in sport and are transferred for use in non-sport settings" specifying that "for a skill to be classified as a 'life skill', youth must be able to transfer the skill from the sport context to other contexts (e.g., school, home, work, or community)" (Bean and Forneris, 2017). That is also the idea conveyed by Laura Bortoli et al. (2015), who defines life skills as personal characteristics (such as goal setting, emotional control, decision-making, time management) that can be learned through sport and are relevant for performance and potentially transferable to non-sport settings (Bortoli et al. 2015). Another piece of evidence, alongside the idea that sport facilitates learning and promotes the development of social skills is recognized: the period of primary and secondary school might be the most productive years of human achieving and training social skills which influences significantly physical and mental health (Lv and Takami, 2015). Other authors indicate that motor education and the practice of physical and sports activities represent a privileged instrument to explore, process and channel emotions and that are an asset in the process of building personal identity (Maglie and Antonio, 2020).

The idea that the practice of sports allows to acquire and cement the necessary soft skills for personal development and transfer them to other areas of life, such as work, becomes more and more pressing (Andrews, 210). However, the literature also highlights the fact that there are still several challenges regarding the way the transfer process is carried out or could be carried out: from situations of academic training, in which ideas do not materialize in practical terms, to ineffective ways of dealing with athletes/students/youth in order to promote skills acquisition. Therefore, a great number of studies underline the role of education and training in order to overcome difficulties.

There is a growing number of programs and training aimed to filling this gap. Several examples are found in the literature: programs directed at young people, coaches, sports agents, teachers and trainers, or focusing on the relationship between young people and coaches, and also on the identification of the needs of the labour market in terms of skills.

In the book *Applied Sport Management Skills* are presented four leadership roles: planning, organizing, leading and controlling - which constitute an approach to sports' management tools that can be applied to teach young students to be successful future leaders, and motivate them to reflect on the challenges of a future sporting career (Andrews, 2010). According to the author, this work, together with the OSR (online student resource), allows students' dynamic and interactive learning, also constituting a guide for instructors, while others provide immediate "correct" or "incorrect" feedback to students. Leadership models, planning and problem solving and decision-making skills are thus seen as important in this process.

The appropriate design of sport programs has been particularly highlighted, as having the potential to contribute to children development at several levels, such as improving physical health (by being physical active), psychosocial development (providing opportunities to learn important life skills such as cooperation, discipline, leadership and self-control) and developing motor skills (Côté, Strachan, and Jessica-Fraiser-Thomas 2008). However, according to Côté and colleagues, youth sport programs are frequently not producing the expected results in those three objective areas. So, based on youth sport research - namely the PPCT model components of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, and principles of positive youth development, combined with the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP) - the authors propose a framework to increase our understanding of healthy youth development through sport participation. The model points to some principles: suggesting a progression from deliberate play activities during childhood to adolescence and that children may have the opportunity to sample

various sports activities. This would allow “individuals to establish different relationships with coaches, teammates, and other adults that have the potential to positively shape the course of development of youth”; to focus on the person, drawing attention to the variation of characteristics like self-perceptions and motivation of individuals involved in sport, considering internal and external broad categories. External assets include support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, as well as constructive use of time. Internal assets reflect an individual’s values and beliefs and include commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity (Côté, Strachan, and Jessica-Fraiser-Thomas, 2008). It is also important to consider the context as the individuals within that environment, which refers to the physical and psychological safety, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support of efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building and Integration of family, school, and community efforts, and inclusion of time as an important dimension to understand the environmental interactions. The authors argue that these multiple features “should be combined to design and deliver youth sport programs that promote physical health, motor skill development, and psychosocial development” and that “three objectives are not mutually exclusive and that effectively designed sport programs can contribute to healthy youth development”.

A variety of research also underlines the existence of a disconnection between the best academic practices related to sport and those who practice it or participate in it - namely coaches, sports managers, athletes, etc. - even if there is awareness and recognition of the value of teaching soft skills (Bean and Forneris 2017; Camiré, Trudel, and Forneris 2012). Campos et. al. has tried to understand this process by analysing and comparing the competencies that physical education teachers say they have acquired in academia and those they say they possess when they are already integrated into the labour market, proposing teaching modules that will serve for the development of the skills considered and for the definition of teaching units for these professionals (Campos, Ries, and Del Castillo 2011). Campos et. al. proposes a module related to disciplinary knowledge of physical and sports education; another related to disciplinary knowledge of leisure and body expression; and a third one related to transversal skills, extending to all areas such as the detection of anatomical-functional, cognitive and social relationship difficulties, guidance and supervision of extracurricular activities and the work of Information and Communication Technologies.

There are several studies that address the role of coaches, namely their perception about life skill development during sports participation, focusing on the role, on the ability and the intentionality of the coach, providing conceptual training models (Cassidy, Jones, and Potrac 2004; Bean and

Forneris 2017; Bortoli et al. 2015; Côté and Gilbert 2009, Kelly et al. 2019) and considering the coaches' role in this process extremely relevant (Camiré, Forneris, Trudel, & Bernard, 2011; Collins, Gould, Lauer, & Chung, 2009, Kelly et al. 2019). As noted by Bean and Forneris, "Whether or not youth develop such skills in sport is heavily influenced by coaches as they have been identified as adults who play a critical role in structuring the youth sport context." (Bean and Forneris, 2017). However, it has been noted that many of the studies that have examined coaches' perceptions of life skill development in sport have been based on self-report perceptions (Forneris, Camiré, & Trudel, 2012; Vella et al., 2011). Moreover, many of those studies have considered model coaches who already intentionally integrate life skill development, and only few studies focus on a greater diversity of coaches. The results indicate that coaches believe that there is value in teaching life skills, recognising the importance of integrating life skills within youth sport.

In a study of learning processes among two groups of English youth soccer coaches using the Coach Analysis and Intervention System (CAIS), it has been concluded that there were differences between those who did have formal coach education and those who did not. Completion of a formal education course influenced changes in the use of knowledge around tactics and engaging with individual players, reflected in an altered proportion of technical to tactically-related questions and a trend towards increased behaviours directed at individuals. However, overall, more change was evident in coaching knowledge than in practice behaviours, suggesting an absence of deep learning that bridged the knowledge-practice gap (Stodter and Cushion, 2019).

Also focusing on change in coaching practices, Cassidy et al. examined the complex interplay between coach, athletes, coaching programmes and social context (Cassidy et al., 2004). The conclusions of their work encourage coaches to develop an open and reflective approach to their own coaching practice. It also highlighted that sports coaches should know that good teaching and social practices are just as important as expertise in sport skills and tactics, they propose a full range of practical exercises and extended case studies designed to encourage coaches to reflect critically upon their own coaching strategies, their interpersonal skills and upon important issues in contemporary sports coaching. According to this research, greater awareness and reflexivity on the part of coaches will foster openness and integrity. They also conclude that in the athlete-coach relationship, coaches should carefully consider the various forms of power inherent within the coaching context, if they want to gain the trust, respect and confidence of athletes and ultimately develop positive learning environments. Finally, they underline the relevance of coaches' methods

and the need to carefully combine orthodox and alternative methods, only introducing the later at a slow pace after having gained credibility and social capital.

In turn, Côté and Gilbert seek to identify which factors differentiate effective and ineffective coaches to discover reliable and valid ways to assess coaches' knowledge and athletes' results in different contexts, so that true comparative studies can be carried out (Côté and Gilbert 2009). These authors provide a definition of coaching effectiveness that allow to differentiate between coaching effectiveness, coaching expertise, effective coach, and expert coach: "The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes' competence, confidence, connection, and character in specific coaching contexts" (pp316). This definition suggest that the effectiveness of coaching must first be defined according to its particular context over some time.

Other have looked at the consequences of coaches' careers where the focus has been on developing 'expertise' rather than questioning the context in which these 'experts' operate (Purdy and Potrac, 2016)

All these studies have underlined the importance of context regarding coaches' practices and behaviour. The same has been pointed out with relation to athletes. That is the case of Vaughan et. al., who claims that long-term athletic development and moment-to-moment creativity arise from deeply contextualized athlete-environment interactions (Vaughan et al., 2019). They propose that the skilful manipulation—dampening or amplifying—of sociocultural constraints on behaviours is central to developing an environment conducive to creativity. Manipulating constraints in the moment and over time (by coaches and other support personnel in football clubs, sports organizations, and governing bodies) can better co-create the environmental conditions, customs, habits, and ways of doing things, in a form of life that constrain and afford creative moments. The authors sustain that "creative moments, skill and more generally talent in sport, are not traits possessed by individuals alone, but rather can be conceived as properties of the athlete-environment system shaped by changing constraints" and conclude that pedagogies should emerge from, and evolve in, interaction with the sociocultural context in which practitioners and athletes are embedded "(Vaughan et al., 2019)

Another context that is useful to briefly refer, is the one related to the articulation between sport and work. In what concerns the work context and recruitment, it seems that a history of sport participation (inclusive of voluntary experience) may include desirable traits for employment (Griffiths et al. 2017). Cabane and Clark show that childhood sport participation is positively correlated with adult labour-market outcomes and show that different types of childhood sports

are associated with managerial responsibilities (individual sport) and autonomy (collective) at work when adult (Cabane and Clark 2015). The study carried out by Demazière, Ohl and Le Noé, seeks the referred articulation, but from another perspective, emphasising one dimension of sports activities: competition. The objective is to analyse the production mechanisms of sports performance (Demazière, Ohl and Le Noé, 2015).

According to Demazière et al. sport designates an extremely heterogeneous set of disciplines and ways to practice it, and it does not consider only direct practitioners, (whether they are more or less professionalised high-level athletes), but a large number of actors which are impossible to list exhaustively. Thus, although it is possible to formulate the question about the mechanisms of production of sports performance in terms of individual success factors, the authors recognise that "in sport and in the arts or sciences, this track ends up being an illusion", because, in addition to a particular performance limit, it becomes impossible to identify an ideal combination of individual factors, which "explains these differences in merits using the notion of individual talent", and indicate an alternative route: "consider that performance is not a direct product of skills, but the derivative of work, oriented precisely to the production of performance", (Demazière, Ohl, Le Noé, 2015).

Thus, the authors present research that seeks to combine these perspectives and consider sport as a job. It is necessary to distinguish two ways of articulating sport and work: considering work in the sports sector, or focusing more on sports work, which is directly oriented towards improving performance (Demazière, Ohl and Le Noé, 2015).

Skills transfer and employability

Beyond the question of skills development and its learning contexts and actors, lies the problem of transferability. Diverse authors recognise that "...a major component of life skills includes the necessity of skill transfer and application to other contexts outside of where it was learned, such as school, home, work, or within one's community to help youth develop the capacity" (Gould & Carson, 2008; Papacharisis, et al., 2005).

One important issue is whether life skills and its transferability are implicit result of sports practice or should be intentional and explicitly programmed.

Researchers have long debated whether life skills should be intentionally and purposefully thought through sport or an automatic sport participation product. The results of this research "has yielded mixed findings as sports programs have been found to yield positive outcomes both when

intentionally and unintentionally structured" (Bean & Forneris, 2017). In Bean & Forneris (2017) study, most respondents acknowledge that such skills are a by-product of participation in sport and transfer them to other areas of life. However, they also indicate that this transfer "occurred through mere participation", or that "it simply happens" and even that it is an "automatic or implicit process and few or no intentional opportunities for transfer have been outlined in training practices. On the other hand, "many coaches acknowledged that any time a life skill was addressed, it was done so by taking on a reactive approach", and when "young people struggle to control their emotions coaches outlined how they took these opportunities to teach youth (...) [and] recognise the value of intentionally teaching life skills", (Bean & Forneris, 2017).

Likewise, other authors indicate that there is a disconnection between recognising the importance of these skills and their practical application in training (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005; Gould & Carson, 2008; Petitpas et al., 2005).

Based on the challenges identified by coaches, the authors assume that there is a need to implement formal education and training around intentional integration and transfer of life skills within the coaching practice. They sustain that "despite the potential for youth involved in the sport context to yield positive outcomes, researchers note that outcomes could be improved if better implemented a positive youth development framework in program design (Bean & Forneris, 2017). This result relates to the difference between implicit and explicit approaches to the development and transfer of life skills, with the authors of this study also pointing out that "for professionals and policymakers, it is essential to recognise the importance of moving away from an implicit approach to an explicit approach, particularly with regard to coach education" (Bean & Forneris, 2017)

Bean & Forneris conclude that integrating life skills development into a coach training program (for example, National Coaching Certification Program; Coaching Association of Canada, 2016) would help reach a large number of coaches, eliminating the need for additional training time. Referring to the work of Lacroix & Vargas-Tonsing, (2007), they note that, since youth sports coaches tend to be volunteers, investing additional time tends to hinder any involvement in training or education. Some practical recommendations are thus provided for the training of coaches: "four steps to integrate life skills in regular sports training practices. These steps include: (a) focus on a life skill per lesson, (b) introduce life skill at the beginning of the lesson, (c) integrate strategies to teach life skill throughout the lesson, and (d) report life skills at the end of the lesson and discuss the transfer" (Bean & Forneris, 2017).

Another critical issue has been the interface between education and the job market. This question is the focus of inquiry in a study by T. Schlesinger, Studer, Nagel (2016). They explore the

professional careers of sports science graduates to identify the acquired competences and understand the relevance of requirements of their job's insertion, considering those competencies. Likewise, Mrazek & Hartmann-Tews analysed the relationship between the competencies acquired through academic sports science courses and the relevant jobs in Switzerland. According to the authors, although schools continue to be very relevant in graduating in sports sciences and should guarantee the acquisition of "generic employability skills that can be adapted to a variety of work-related environments and challenges" (Schlesinger, Studer & Nagel, 2016). Results of existing studies indicate that a degree in sports science often is not enough for the job in question, especially outside schools (Emrich et al., 2010; Thiel & Cachay, 2004). New areas are opening up as a result of increasing differentiation and commercialisation of sports (e.g., Camy, 2006; Kaiser & Beech, 2012).

Schlesinger et al. (2016) recognise that "increasing numbers of graduates are finding jobs outside schools (e.g., in sports management, sports tourism, etc.)" and ask a relevant question: "How well do the employability competencies that graduates acquire through their academic sport-related education prepare them for the requirements of work-related environments?" (Schlesinger, Studer & Nagel, 2016). To answer to this question and considering that competencies are necessary for different social areas of life to act in different contexts successfully, the authors propose to differentiate concepts about other competencies, which are essential to fulfil the job requirements for employability: social competence, methodological competence, subject-specific expertise, and self-competence. The results show that communication skills appear to be the most important, followed in second place by planning and organisational skills. This order applies equally across all occupational fields, except sports at schools, where methodological and didactic competencies are also quite relevant. There are no significant differences in the competencies of critical thinking/judgement and team skills across the different occupational fields. Multidisciplinary thinking and the use of scientific methods scores lowest among school teachers. As compared with the other occupational areas, team skills, and use of scientific methods were related higher in occupations outside of sports (Schlesinger, Studer & Nagel, 2016).

The results reveal that newer courses seem to communicate the following competencies more fully: critical thinking/judgement, multidisciplinary thinking and use of scientific methods. All other competencies appear to be communicated less by present-day courses of study.

Overall, the authors conclude that it became clear that the demands made in different occupational fields, especially in sports outside of schools, are not always in line with the qualifications obtained by graduates during their university education. At the same time, the

increasing diversity in the courses of study and the creation of specific profiles, as well as the resulting "inflation in sports scientific degrees", do not necessarily lead to a good functional specialisation and appropriate competencies for the occupational field in question.

However, surpluses in subject-specific areas and deficits in multidisciplinary competencies appear to be the rule, and probably cannot be avoided. Due to the permanent changes in the sport-related labour market, even employers cannot make precise forecasts with long-term validity which qualifications will be required for different jobs.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve project objectives of the Research (Gap Analysis), a qualitative research design was drawn, based on Focus Groups and/or interviews. In particular, two different interview tracks were developed by ASAG and shared with the other partners: one to be used with coaches and sport instructors and one to be used with stakeholders and decision makers in the field of labor (i.e., HR managers, HR agencies).

We decided to use focus group (FG), a qualitative data collection technique widely used in social research. This methodological choice relies on the fact that FG is a data collection tool based on the information that emerges from a group discussion on a topic or topics that the researcher wishes to investigate in depth, allowing for participants to explore representations, perceptions and opinions on topics of interest; analyze the needs of a context, an organization or an institution, activate participatory processes, facilitate learning processes and evaluate the impact of a service or project. All these characteristics match the project objectives for this research phase. However, it is important not to lose sight of the socio-cultural aspects of the historical period in which the research was carried out, characterized by an unprecedented health emergency. The explicit reflections on the professional scenarios that are foreseen in the near future by the participants were certainly influenced by the experience of the lockdown and the economic crisis caused by Covid-19.

Data collection guidelines

Tracks were developed to explore the participants' representations, perceptions and opinions about the relationship between skills developed through sport and potential use in the world of work. Tracks were prepared according to a funnel-shaped scheme: a brief general presentation, a vague introductory question on the subject, so that participants could express a first round of opinions, an opening overview on the proposed topic; on the basis of the issues that emerged, more specific questions related to the areas investigated in the research were asked.

Specifically, for the organisational area, in general, the following track/draft was used:

- Open by asking participants to tell professional histories and current roles.
- From your observatories, which professional scenarios do you foresee in the near future? (if they keep the focus only on 'post Covid-19', ask also about a broader future perspective)
- Based on these scenarios, which skills do you think will be decisive to access the job market?
- According to your experience, how are actually developed these skills? (explore formal and non-formal contexts)
- Among non-formal contexts, sport can occupy an important space for skills development. Which skills - useful for a job placement - can be developed through sports?
- Do you think these skills are directly transferable or are required further steps?
- In the second case, what can be done?
- Have you already experienced this kind of process in your company? (or ask if they know examples about other realities)

Instead to get information from the sports actors, the researchers used the following track/draft:

- Brief narration of one's professional history (areas of work, experiences, training and formation)
- In your experience what are the main skills developed while doing sports?
- Which of these skills are most useful for employability today?
- Specifically, what training practices help develop these skills in your experience?
- What skills are needed for a coach to manage these practices?

In order to maximize information and leave ample room for freedom of intervention, the aforementioned tracks displayed a minimum structure. Interviewers remained free to refer to the tracks shared by UCSC or to rephrase questions as long as a common rule was respected: "questions have to be formulated in an open way, they don't have to be ambiguous or suggest an answer". Furthermore, each partner has received some indications on how to conduct FG and/or interviews in order to ensure greater consistency and convergence in data collection.

Participants

Participant's selection and composition

Participants were selected through a non-probabilistic sampling strategy with maximum variability. Subjects were recruited by combining the research staff's knowledge network and a snowball

sampling process, which consists of selecting cases using the relational networks of a group of people initially contacted. Participants were approached through the sports and corporate network consolidated by each partner over the years. They were contacted by e-mail or telephone and provided with a letter of presentation of the research. Those who agreed to participate in the research were asked to fill in and send the signed informed consent and privacy form.

The inclusion criteria provided that the participants belonged to two specific areas of work:

- ❖ Organisational stakeholders (HR manager, trainers, consultants...);
- ❖ Sports actors (coaches, sport instructors, former athletes...).

According to the research aims, it was important to select participants according to the following characteristics:

- socio-demographic and/or socio-cultural;
- professional role;
- professional and/or personal experiences

Specific criteria should also be clear and consistent with the purpose of the research: include sport coaches and instructors who work exclusively with young people, from the grassroots and on a federated level, and those who work with non-formal sports covering all ages. It was also sought to include the maximum differentiation in the choice of modalities practiced by each of the interviewees and the level of training (amateur or professional; high yield / other segments).

In what concerns the organisational stakeholders, we also tried to obtain some diversity in the testimonies. Thus, companies' opinions are linked essentially to HR and other more specific sectors such as Law consultants, IT, psychologists of sport and performance, for example, and some company managers' contributions.

Still regarding the profile of the interviewees, it was considered necessary to ensure equity by gender.

Usually, FG participants vary from 8 to 12 participants and the discussion takes place in the presence of a moderator (possibly joined by an assistant) and lasts from two to three hours. In this study we considered advisable to reduce the number of participants (maximum 4) and the overall duration of the FG (maximum two hours). Thus, due to the pandemic of Covid-19, all the FG have

been organized online and a smaller group would have been more manageable with a remote interaction.

The table below shows sample composition for each partner (alphabetical order):

ASAG (Alta Scuola di Psicologia Agostino Gemelli) - Italy			
		<i>sport field</i>	<i>organisational field</i>
FG	n.7	n.4	3
Participants	n.17	n.8	n.9
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FG 1 [n.2]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a professional footballer - a former athletic trainer of a professional football club and coordinator of a sport company - FG 2 [n.2] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a psychomotorist - a sports educator - FG 3 [n.2]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a former professional footballer and manager of an elite football team youth academy - a physical education teacher and trainer - FG 4 [n.2]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - athletics area coordinator of a football team's youth academy - a former footballer currently coach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FG 1 [n.3 (female)] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a UCSC professor - a customer-marketing intelligence specialist - the HR manager of a professional football team - FG 2 [n.4 (1 female - 3 male)] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the general manager of a social cooperative - the HR manager of a firm - an entrepreneur - a UCSC professor and professional trainer - FG 3 [n.2 (male)]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a firm consultant - a CEO

ICSS (International Centre for Sport Security) - SAVE THE DREAM

		<i>sport field</i>	<i>organisational field</i>
FG/interview	n.2	n.1	n.1
Participants	n.3	n.2	n.1

CSO (Cyprus Sports Organization) - Republic of Cyprus

		<i>sport field</i>	<i>organisational field</i>
CAWI interview	n.271	n.220	n.51
Participants	n.271	n.220	n.51

IOTC (The International Olympic Truce Centre) - Greece

		<i>sport field</i>	<i>organisational field</i>
FG/interview	n.7	n.5 (FG)	n.2 (interviews)
Participants	n.17	n.15	n.2

ISCTE (University Institute of Lisbon) - Portugal

		<i>sport field</i>	<i>organisational field</i>
FG	n.4	n.4	
Participants	n.16	n.16	

UNIVERSITAT DE LES ILLES BALEARS - Spain

		<i>sport field</i>	<i>organisational field</i>
FG	n.1	n.1	
Participants	n.6	n.6	

Data analysis - content analysis

We decided to apply a qualitative content analysis because it matches the type of qualitative data collected through interviews. It goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). These categories can represent either explicit

communication or inferred communication. Qualitative content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.

The success of a content analysis depends greatly on the coding process. In the first phase of the work, which includes content analysis assisted by the MaxQda computer program, systematic reading of the interview transcripts and testimonies began. This reading allowed the adjustment of the analysis categories (previously built from the corresponding blocks of the scripts, on which the collected statements were based) to a definitive grid with a view to their insertion in the program. The categories to be analysed thus resulted from a mixed procedure, (a priori and a posteriori), having been theoretically and empirically based. From this stage onwards, the categories found were progressively refined based on the selection of more detailed information from empirical information, the codification stage.

At this point all the parts that correspond to the same category come together. The result was an organized text used for drafting this report.

Each partner has received some indications to analyze data collected to ensure greater consistency and convergence in data collection.

It should be noted that open categorization and codification procedures such as those adopted here generally correspond to a predominantly descriptive level of investigation, with no intention of discovering covariations or associations or identifying cause-effect relationships between phenomena. This type of comprehensive analysis is not intended to obtain statistical representation, but a sociological one, which translates into the characterization of the selected panel, composed of a small number of "socially significant" participants concerning the question under study.

RESULTS

Focus Group - organisational stakeholders

The results of the focus groups conducted with the stakeholders of the organisational contexts were organized into 4 macro areas that allow us to focus on a) the professional scenarios that can be foreseen for the future, b) the employability skills, c) the skills produced through sports and d) the transferability and use of skills in work contexts.

Future professional scenarios

The idea that we live in a professional world that is currently characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability is one of the most salient emerging from the Focus Groups conducted with representatives of the HR and organisational world (theoretical references: Bauman). These aspects of today's world of work make it necessary for young people, who are preparing to approach it, to develop considerable adaptability. In fact, it appears necessary to learn to face complexity, accept and manage continuous change.

"So, the professional scenarios today are certainly difficult to establish because change always catches us unprepared. I believe that it is precisely necessary to change the management model of companies and the type of skills we expect. If we are going to ask for divided and specific skills, a vision of work divided and divided by skills, I don't know if we will face these challenges "¹

"For youths and unemployed people to be selected they should have the basic skills to allow them to access the job market (technology, communication, numeracy and ability to learn and adapt). There are lot of current demands and changes in the world right now, which means the skills and competencies for the job opportunities will change and from there we should start"

"It seems to me that all this will lead to very complex scenarios or at least with new complexities."

Furthermore, in such increasingly complex scenarios the selection of employees will be based less on professional knowledge and their work experience (e.g. technical knowledge of the work field, experience in a similar position) and to a greater degree interpersonal knowledge (e.g. leadership skills, ability to work in a team, acceptance of a different point of view) and finally, academic qualifications. Some features that are not necessarily connected with formal education, such as agility mindset and professional agility, will drive the candidates' evaluation. Finally, if creativity will be added in the evaluation during the recruitment, it will be a skill that all

¹ All text excerpts presented in the report are the result of the opinion of the participants (organizational and sport stakeholders) and were collected through the interviews carried out

companies will seek. It is something that you can not easily evaluate but it is really important, it makes a significant difference.

Decisive skills for entering the job market - employability skills

With regard to the decisive skills for accessing the labor market, the need arises, recursively, to overcome a vision based on technical-specialist skills. In this direction, technical skills lose their dominance in favor of an integration between soft skills.

When it comes to skills in the workplace, the distinction between hard skills and soft skills is often used. Hard skills refer to all those knowledge and technical skills necessary to perform a certain job (Robles, 2012). They are specific, teachable, and learnable skills that can be defined and measured (eg: writing, reading, mathematics, knowing other languages, the use of a specific machine or software). Specifically, hard skills include technical-specialist skills that refer to know-how (D'Amato, Mazzara, & Tosca, 2018). These skills are easily recognizable by the employer or by the person in charge of hiring. Although hard skills are losing their dominance, it is still essential to have experience in a job position similar to that attempt and the ability to use new technologies.

Moss and Tilly (2001, p. 44) define soft skills as: "Skills, competences and traits that relate to personality, attitude and behavior rather than formal or technical knowledge".

Soft skills include, in addition to the personal characteristics that an individual possesses, all those interpersonal skills that allow him to interact and relate to others effectively.

Soft skills are therefore configured as interpersonal and life skills that help individuals share and effectively use their hard skills. Soft skills revolve around knowing how to be as opposed to knowing how to do hard skills. These skills encompass a series of emotional skills (having self-awareness of one's emotions and reactions and knowing how to manage them), cognitive (knowing how to decode a situation, having a correct understanding of the other and his requests) and social (effectively conducting relationships with others, knowing how to integrate into a work group and knowing how to constructively manage conflicts). In general, these are skills that include personality characteristics and peculiar ways of recognizing one's own inner experiences and understanding oneself, others and the world (D'Amato et al., 2018).

The main difference between the two types of skills is that hard skills are specific skills applicable to a specific activity or task, while soft skills are attributable to an understanding of oneself and applicable to the domain of interpersonal relationships.

Soft skills therefore acquire a transversal character since they basically embrace two domains: the individual and the relational/social.

Non-technical skills are configured as cognitive and transversal skills necessary to successfully and innovatively apply disciplinary knowledge in the workplace.

The participants in the Focus Groups sustain this view, considering that, in the current job landscape, transversal skills are becoming increasingly important.

"An important meeting between hard skills and soft skills is envisaged, without which hard ones are really of little use"

"From the point of view of professional skills then you must not be second to none, but they come a second later with respect to these characteristics (soft skills) which are absolutely necessary, obviously according to our point of view, to be able to enter the world of work. "

"There are roles within the organization that I believe are more oriented precisely to a transversality for which technicality is not necessary."

It, therefore, appears necessary to develop a transversal view and overcome a static and technical vision of skills. Transversal skills are nowadays fundamental, associated with hard and technical skills. In fact, if in the last century the technical-specific skills were sufficient and extremely important in guaranteeing access to the labor market; today the dual challenges of competition in a world market and rapid technological advances have made it necessary to redesign the workplace. Workers are expected to solve problems, create ways to improve the tools they use and interact effectively with their colleagues (Bailey, 1997; Packer, 1998, cited in Alston et al., 2009). In the era of globalization, hires expect employees to know how to behave in the workplace, understand the importance of intrapersonal/interpersonal skills and know-how to master them over time, as in most work contexts it is essential to team up to carry out the objectives set. For these reasons, employers are looking for a correct blend of hard and soft skills. Workers must understand and use their skills and knowledge effectively in the workplace, being flexible and responsive to changing technology, environment and market demand. In this context, the employee is inevitably required to effectively adapt their skills and knowledge to the continuous changes in the working environment in which they operate. The integration between soft and hard skills, therefore, replaces a vision based on exclusive specialization and sectorization:

"Lately, when I see new collaborators to be introduced to the company, I don't technically talk about the work they have to do, because at that moment I don't care. I am not technically interested in explaining the job to them during the interview, because they will learn that when they are here to work on what is the playing field and they will learn it with their teammates. They will have to be basically prepared but everything is refined when you are here on the pitch, on the playing field. "

"I never go to investigate technical competence because maybe someone else has already investigated it or because maybe the people I meet in that area are more competent than me and therefore I don't investigate them."

"I try a lot to understand, to think about the meaning they give to that job there without wanting to give it a broader meaning, but really if they can, if it is possible, if I see fertile ground to be able to build and be able to insert that operational activity more or less simple, more or less complex, within a project that they are able to grasp or not grasp."

"We must also cross many ways of thinking and knowing instead we often tend to reason with patterns that come from our culture and these can be dangerous"

However, the concept of soft skills is decidedly less tangible, more difficult to quantify and there is no unanimous definition within the literature. Soft skills are therefore more tied to who we are rather than to what we know; for this reason, they are more difficult to acquire and modify than hard skills, which can be learned and perfected over time (Robles, 2012).

Although transversal skills have become increasingly important in different professional fields, the participants acknowledge the possible difficulties that may be encountered in identifying and assessing them and monitoring their evolution:

"Soft skills are certainly the most difficult to measure or monitor"

"Compared to how to evaluate, how to monitor the development of these transversal skills it is very difficult to measure these aspects here (soft skills)."

"In fact, the softer, non-technical skills are certainly more difficult to verify."

Below is a list of the main skills traced by the participants in the FG as fundamental to approaching the world of work today.

- Update; continuous training; experiential learning
- Active listening
- Adaptability
- Ability to contextualize (knowing how to read reality and context)
- Anticipatory ability (knowing how to prefigure future scenarios)
- Cognitive skills (Critical Thinking, cognitive flexibility oriented towards continuous learning, decision making, Creativity, problem solving
- anticipatory ability, prospective thinking, agility mindset and target setting)
- Communication skills
- Digital skills; Basic IT skills
- Understanding and managing the error
- Curiosity; desire to learn
- Empathy (ability to immediately place oneself in the mood or situation of another person)
- Flexibility
- Emotional management
- Commitment and participation
- Emotional intelligence, Emotional Intelligence
- Multicultural intelligence
- Exceeding the limit; tendency not to be satisfied ("allergy to the comfort zone")
- Team working, Teamwork
- Speed; reactivity
- Management of difficult situations; Resilience / Autonomy
- Integrity of character and dignity
- Leadership skills
- Labor relationship management
- Acceptance of diversity
- Professional agility
- Language skills, in some cases especially the knowledge of the local language
- Multitasking
- People Management, Coordinating with Others

It seems appropriate to articulate these specific skills into three different macro categories:

- ❖ Intrapersonal skills: allow individuals to effectively face the needs and challenges of daily life. Intrapersonal skills are composed of personal, cognitive and physical skills that allow people to control and orient their lives. Some examples of intrapersonal skills are: decision making; that of solving complex problems (problem solving); creative and critical thinking; self-awareness of oneself and one's limits; the ability to manage emotions and stress. The learning and development of intrapersonal skills allows the management of one's well-being starting from the ability to face daily challenges.
- ❖ Interpersonal skills: category that includes communication, relational and empathic skills. These skills concern: knowing how to express oneself (both verbal and non-verbal); expressing opinions and needs while respecting the point of view of the interlocutor; being able, in case of need, to ask for advice and help. They also allow you to relate and interact with others in a positive way, to be able to develop and maintain relationships that can have a strong impact on the well-being of the individual and the group. Such skills can therefore enable individuals to manage conflicts constructively.
- ❖ Contextual skills: they allow you to understand the context in which you find yourself and to adapt to it appropriately or to modify it effectively. They, therefore, refer to the adaptability of individuals. Contextual skills allow you to develop the ability to live with and to produce changes in your environment. They also concern the use, based on specific situations, of appropriate methods of acting consistent with the culture - organisational and non - of reference.

Intrapersonal skills	Interpersonal skills	Contextual and organisational skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous learning - curiosity - Cognitive skills (problem solving, decision making, creativity, agility mindset, target setting) - Language skills - knowledge of the local language - Handling of new technologies - Understanding and managing the error ; Persistence and resilience in dealing with problems - Commitment and participation - reactivity - competitiveness - goal orientation - management of difficult situations - Flexibility - Emotional management - Self-confidence - Exceeding the limit - Integrity of character and dignity - loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active listening - Verbal communication skills and non-verbal communication - Empathy - Emotional intelligence - Team working - Leadership skills - Diversity management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anticipatory capacity - Ability to contextualize - Adaptability - Multicultural intelligence - Professional agility - Ethics at work - Global awareness and internationalisation

Skills developed through sport

Sport is identified by all the organisational actors who took part in the FG as one of the non-formal contexts that occupies an important space to encourage the development of skills useful for future job placement (employability skills).

"Sports has an impact not only on physical well-being but also in acquiring the value of the educational benefits of sport. Young people will learn through their participation in sport a lot of soft skills like teamwork, time management skills, handling Pressure, leadership, communication skills, Interpersonal Skills, flexibility etc."

The previous typology of skills can also be applied to classify the skills that the participants consider to be developed through sport.

Intrapersonal skills

- Resilience; spirit of sacrifice; effort; tenacity; perseverance; constancy; discipline; integrity of character and dignity

"I thought it was a myth until I approached the sport with another approach. I would propose sport compulsorily for life, as well as being a way to prevent disease and it would impact the social and health system, but it would also impact the individual by giving him greater awareness in all jobs, it would also help to force our laziness. Often the inertia, the laziness, typical of man is our most vile evil. Sport allows you to have a balance of your energies and not disperse them excessively, sport teaches us to understand what the energies within us are and the superpowers that we thought we did not have."

- Overcoming one's physical and mental limits; propulsive thrust; self-assess; adaptability

"Sport is also highly educational for a young person who has to train. We discover limits of ourselves that we did not know we had, we understand that the fatigue threshold can be raised and trained and that we can overcome resistance of the body and mind. Athletes also have to overcome barriers, this leads

you to have greater awareness of limits, the bar is raised and it is understood that much more can be done. So at work when they give me orders or limits I will not be crushed but I will accept challenges."

- Emotional management (eg management of anxiety, errors and failures)
"Team working and healthy ambition, the competitiveness it generates, the respect that is fundamental in my opinion and how the ability to manage errors and failures and so on, the resilience, the endurance that athletes experience every day are fundamental values that must be brought to the company."
- Fatigue and stress management
"It is driven by attention to the common goal, but also the ability to withstand stress, also make decisions for the company and not the individual good if you do it in a match for the good of the team you should also do it in the company, from the most trivial decisions to the more complex ones. Sport naturally leads you to do it"
- Cognitive skills (problem solving; decision making, target setting)
"I have a football player in the workplace and he is a guy who knows a lot to work in a team and knows how to work as a team, he knows how to take responsibility probably also because he is captain of his own team and this reflects taking responsibility as captain and luckily I have a coach, a football children's coach and also in this case I found the availability, I found the search to solve the problems or the solution. "
- Devotion; consistency; commitment; responsibility; ambition
"Skills such as devotion, consistency and teamwork are not necessarily implied in the business world. It's not something you can study, it's a matter of character and sports form characters. And they can make the difference!"

Relational - interpersonal skills

- Team spirit; camaraderie; orientation towards group goals

"When you talk to a person, you immediately understand if he has worked, if he has had experiences abroad, if he has played sports or team sports. They have the ability to convey when they tell the experiences of their lives the importance of the sacrifice of fatigue and training and refer to goals that are not only individual but group and team goals. Being more confident ("ease") and having had many experiences away from home are also crucial characteristics of those who have played sports. Team sport is essential, being part of a team helps to grow, to be able to work and follow certain patterns, to develop your talents. Today it is impossible for a talented person to be able to do everything alone, but you have to put your talents and resources at the disposal of others for something greater "

- Empathy; "Put on the shoes of others"; recognition and acceptance by others; acceptance of diversity

"A plus that I was able to receive is that of having to deal with the whole spectrum of society. I came from an elitist background or in any case from a privileged environment while I played football with people who had spent 13 months in prison or was a farmer. Then inside the locker room certain so you live them in a different and simpler way, you know stories and people that I would never have lived or heard and this helps me today because our production reality, being small, reflects this spectrum a little, it helps me to example to reason and talk with employees who were scared about Covid or who want holidays and not layoffs. It helps me to be much more empathetic because thanks to sport I have seen worlds and known stories that I would never have lived or known "

- Team working; interconnection (ability to respect roles and identify strengths and weaknesses); management of working relationship; collaboration

"Of course, also the ability, I can think of, to work in a team that belongs to sportsmen, which is a competence that is translated from the world of sport as well as respect."

"This very theme of feeling inserted in a broader sense and feeling inserted in a complex system that goes beyond what I do and therefore recognizing that interaction with others has an influence on my work is in my opinion crucial; in sport, in my opinion, it is evident. "

- Conflict management; negotiation; communication

"In this for me sport is fundamental, that is the ability to recognize, not exasperate, to face I would dare to say the conflict that very, very, very often is left latent thinking that not taking it in hand nothing happens while in reality this generates many consequences and I see great difficulty for people to manage dynamics."

- Mastery of holding leadership positions

"Probably these people would have been regardless, maybe in the DNA they were still people who had these easy characteristics but I can tell you that healthy sport done in a positive way in my opinion has helped to help them and find their place in the world of work"

Contextual and organisational skills

"In the experience we have had, a lot depends on the attitude ... on the approach that people have ... That is, there is never a mathematical equation that can be transported, each context is a story in itself and must be evaluated for what is."

Considering contexts outside the practice of sport, the family contexts of the younger students are at stake. In addition to teaching, coaches feel that they often must have the same attitude towards their students' parents, because they consider that "often the greatest barrier we have is parents, because they have a lot more addictions"

"(...) Parents are late for training. So, I had to instill within my team, - Junior Juveniles, - a responsibility: those who arrive late for training pay a fine of 20 cents (...) they started

to force their parents, to leave the house... (...) they ended up having this kind of responsibility, and we ended up guaranteeing 20 cents, which then gives 1 € and then they can go "to McDonalds" at the end of the season, eat anything. But it is not a question of money, it is a question of the responsibility that was required, which ended up being incumbent on parents by their children. And I think I managed to somehow guarantee some balance and some responsibility there. It was one of the measures that we adopted in our training teams

Transferability and use of skills in work contexts

Research participants argue that the skills potentially developed in the sports environment have a positive impact on business contexts. Furthermore, almost all of the actors in the HR world say that these skills are transferred directly into the workplace and many claim to have experienced this within their company.

"Surely there are skills that derive from the world of sport but that we also find in the world of work that can be useful from sport to the world of work."

"The participation of people in sport is an aggregative element for the company."

"That's a lot of what the sporting world can bring to the company."

However, little clarity emerges about the issue of transferability, i.e. how these skills migrate or can migrate from the world of sport to the world of work and the most effective ways to promote the transfer of skills from sports to work contexts. The actors of the HR world, while unanimously recognizing the importance of sporting practice, struggle not only to explain how these skills are or can be transferred within the workplace but also to monitor and verify if and how this transfer takes place. Some research participants argue that an internship could help young people transfer skills learned on the playing field into work.

"It must be clear that it cannot be so immediate to move from living the world of sport to working in the company."

"I believe that sport gives added value, but then you also need to be able to translate it, that is, to transfer it, not to trivialize it."

"They live in a bubble, in an unreal world, their transition is difficult and frustrating"

"They think they will continue to have aids and help, facing the real job market is some kind of shock for them"

It is also not taken for granted that athletes will mature an adequate awareness of the role that these skills (mainly soft skills) can play in facilitating their entry into the working world and, subsequently, their work experience and professional growth.

"There are those who are aware that this type of approach can help them and those who manage to bring only a part of it into the company, the fact of being used to working towards objectives emerges, if you have done it in the sports field you tend to bring him into the world of work. Being in a company where these things are said in a transparent and explicit way makes those who are already prepared to do it even more and to pass it on to others "

"We have to create synergies with companies, and potential employers, related with the club"

The crucial role of communication is also acknowledged: a more active and explicit communicative exchange between sports and business / professional contexts could facilitate the transmission of the skills from the world of sport to the corporate or, more generally, professional world.

"If there was communication between the corporate and sports world, it would be only a positive exchange, companies should be open but, in reality, there are few enlightened ones. In a transition from autocratic to participatory leadership, sport could play a key role and this push could come from young people. Even telling the kids in the field "take into account that what you are learning here will serve you elsewhere and at work" could be a first step. There should be communication and mutual exchange between company and sport, even the world of sport should be more aware of the advantages it can bring to the company "

Therefore, the organisational actors need to communicate more conspicuously with sporting contexts in order to facilitate the transmission of skills that favor employability and prepare athletes, at the end of their sports career, to find a place on the labor market.

According to participants some practical actions to support the transition of athletes from sport and sporting contexts to the job market could include: officially recognized coaching courses and federation continuing education programs; include the athletes in basic and postgraduate/specialist training for various agents associated with the sport (eg Sports managers and administrators); take care of the athlete's Dual Career, not only in university studies but by considering other studies, more aimed at the job market. Elite-level public and private sports institutions (e.g. foundations, associations) of every country, state, etc. could devise awareness campaigns relating to any little-known Best Practices, intended in particular for companies, federations and athletes. Finally, the use of examples of successful cases where athletes have successfully integrated into the labour market, both in a sport and in a non-sport context, are considered useful.

"It is very often difficult to dialogue with sport."

"We as companies must find the way to go to work precisely from this point of view, because if we do not go to work on the boys and the coaches and make them understand that certain certainties must not be certainties but must always feel challenged because excellence is not really there and they always have to learn; it will constantly end up that these sporting excellences who were sporting excellences will never have the awareness that they have to be in the company."

"The greatest satisfaction I had was a guy who decided to go to university and we talk periodically and who also came to ask me ... an appointment to ask me for information telling me I want to understand how to do your job, but he didn't mean the work itself; he really wanted to understand the world of work because he had the curiosity to realize that if one day he didn't become a footballer he had to have a second path."

The following quote, on the other hand, brings out another relevant theme, namely the role that subjectivity can play in the acquisition and transfer of certain skills.

"I would say a lie if I said that I have clear evidence that those who have practiced or play sports then transfer those positive things about sport within the cooperative. There are people that I have in mind that absolutely yes, there are people who absolutely not and the question is whether the chicken or the egg was born first, that is, but they do sports because they were like this or are like that thanks to sport that becomes reasoning too difficult for me ... I don't know but the sport ingredient in some cases I see it, in other cases I see it less the concept but it is the passion of the people and the fact that people can tell about it, can share it on the spot of work. This is an element that draws and unites which, however, is a bit like bringing the individual self into the organization. Give people the opportunity to express a little and tell their self within the organization because that really creates a lot from different points of view. "

It is clear that sports play a fundamental part in the development of skills, but it is also important to emphasize the function of the individual. It would seem that people, with their own internal provisions, are able to positively influence or not the acquisition of the aforementioned skills and, consequently, the transfer of them to non-sport sectors and fields.

"In my opinion a common factor that helps us a little, at least in my head, to think about what all this has in common and therefore where to put the focus is a little bit the person ... that is to really understand what they can be a little, I would like to say, the projects and dreams of this person. "

"In 20 years, I have met many people, many people; many who have worked in the world of sport as athletes can easily work in the company, many others cannot. "

Furthermore, always connected to the issue of transferability, the important role of awareness was found. It would seem, in fact, that through a process of personal reflection on the skills learned, young people who have practiced sports become able to use them with the aim of obtaining a placement on the job market in line with their characteristics and aspirations. Through a process of acquiring awareness, it will therefore be possible for them to act by experimenting and effectively transforming these soft and life skills matured thanks to sports practice into actions and practices.

"So the athlete must be able when he enters the world of work to understand that it is a world, a different way of working and therefore must understand that he actually has skills that he can bring to the world of work."

"What is certain is that the story of how one is in sport because he likes to do that sport, as he sees himself in a team, so the story of himself in a sporting dimension is very useful."

"So I believe that the coach can help, the clubs can help to transfer the value of what they are doing, that is, helping the children to report significant episodes they have experienced and that have given them learnings; to focus on them, to re-read the experience a little bit beyond knowing how to work in a team because I played football because it isn't that, but maybe it could be that I maybe learned to tolerate defeat because that time the decisive point I have wrong, that is, I got up after this experience and therefore doing a slightly deeper, more structured reading that can really transfer the value of what you do to the other side."

From this last transcript, the fundamental role that coaches can play in promoting awareness of the skills developed or to be developed emerges. Coaches should also be able to help athletes by explaining and defining these skills, allowing young athletes to reflect on their transferability in professional contexts. Furthermore, coaches are often sport and life examples for young people given their role as role models on and off the playing field, can be a source of continuous learning and actively transmit different skills.

"Team play is determined by the experience of being together, but the coach is fundamental."

"The coach is one of the figures that remains in the thoughts of many guys for many years, many guys remember my first coach I had when I was in the chicks, my first athletics coach, my second coach of ... say that the coach positively or negatively teaches you or quits. "

"I remember one of the most evocative moments I heard was when there were two of our boys who missed penalty kicks, I don't remember in which competition, I called

Franco Baresi who obviously missed important penalties; called them and to hear Franco Baresi, who you know very well is not a man of many words, to explain how he managed the failure in his life of penalty football and how it became a stimulus for the after, it was sensational and to the boys it is it was very useful to be told by a champion how to manage failure."

Therefore, the actions implemented by coaches and professionals who work within sports contexts are relevant to explain the skills that athletes develop and make them understand in which situations and professional contexts they can be useful, facilitate acquisition of a greater degree of awareness and, consequently, favoring the transmission of the skills acquired.

"Maybe you have internalized something but until they point it out you don't know it, but it is necessary to become aware and understand that psychophysical improvements can also be used at work as a general improvement."

Finally, in relation to the development of skills through sport, it is not that simple: it is not enough just to talk about these skills for someone to acquire them directly, it is necessary to have a structured procedure based on experiential learning. This is the attitude of the interviewees, who indicate that practical games, will be the best way to acquire them. Their opinions also reveal that, regarding the work environment, most of the skills already mentioned can be directly transferable. However, they mentioned some additional steps, such as seminars or internships, which would be helpful.

"In my experience, not necessarily people with relevant (sport) studies but athletes have shown that they are more reliable, effective and productive colleagues. Thus the problem is not if the candidates with sport background can integrate and transfer the skills developed through sports in the working environment but the HR Managers themselves. Especially in Greece - if not in most European countries - HR people should change their mindset and realise that they must prefer athletes, exactly because these people have shown that they have the skills mentioned before, they have applied them during their sport career and they have succeeded. As HR Managers, we should give more validity to these people, we need to realise the added value that the sports people can offer to our working teams. This already happens abroad, especially in the US. There are just a few athletes who became case studies or role models in the business world in

Europe. I strongly believe that your project is really interesting and important but one thing is missing: HR Managers should be trained too."

Focus Group - sport stakeholders

The results of the focus groups conducted with the stakeholders of the sporting contexts were organized into 4 macro areas: skills acquired during sports practice and employability, skills and attributes that coaches must possess; sports practice as a tool to promote the development of skills

Learnings and skills acquired during sports practice and employability

The players in the sports world involved in the research list a series of learnings and skills that they believe they have developed while practicing sports that can be grouped into three different macro categories.

In the macro-category of **intra-personal skills**, a reference to a series of skills, personal characteristics, attributes, and qualities that reside in the interior of the individual include:

- The ability to adapt and, specifically, adaptability depending on the level and age of athletes

"Today we are training children, in sport, children in sport who, not only levels of employment, but who will have to carry out jobs that do not yet exist and therefore the ability to adapt and what will happen is decisive".

"Sport, like school, is one of the strongest vehicles for the development of society. I have absolutely no doubt about that. It transforms mentalities it transforms behaviours, and we who have been linked to sport for decades, experience it better than anyone"

- Self-efficacy (understood as awareness of one's own limits and the ability to learn from mistakes) and self-confidence; self-efficacy and analysis, goal setting, self-esteem and confidence

"He started well to talk about the self-need linked to the area, let's say about the skills of effectiveness no, therefore the self-

need that passes through the evaluation of the self-efficacy of the awareness of what can be achieved."

*"I understood that I had more or less oriented myself on what my limits might be and on the categories in which I could play".
"Trying to learn as much as possible from mistakes so this is something I really like."*

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"In sports you recognise your strengths and your limits, and how to exceed your current limits in order to reach bigger goals!"

"(...) The fact is very important, and they succeed, during training and competitive sports, they determined or participated in the determination of goals and objectives for themselves. I think this is a crucial issue for them. Then, I also think that we managed to develop analytical competence. Analysis at various levels: self-knowledge, that is, athletes can analyse what they do well, what they have to improve, what they still cannot do ".

- Flexibility and curiosity

"In the world of work today clearly, you said it well, it is necessary to be flexible and on the move, because if you learn your technique, your working methodology and you move with that it is fine as long as the world is orderly, but when a cat comes and passes in front of you, the scenario changes, you have to change no, you have to rearrange yourself. so then curiosity and flexibility

- Autonomy and proactivity / spirit of initiative, Proactivity; Independence

"I want to develop autonomy and proactivity".

- Ambition and passion, Liking the sport

"For me in the world of work it is a feature in my opinion that distinguishes those who are hungry from those who are not hungry and therefore those who have ambition from those who have no ambition. That is, if I were an employer, I would look for someone who wants to try, to jump in, to jump in and in my opinion with passion with enthusiasm".

"With my trainers as a player I understood the spirit of sacrifice and self-confidence".

- Work culture (understood as self-discipline, the ability to tolerate fatigue and the spirit of sacrifice), responsibility, commitment and stress management, Discipline / Sacrifice, Stress management, the ability to deal with pressure, Awareness of methods and objectives, Always be up to date (technical skills)

"But the right work culture and respect are two things that come to my mind, the last thing I'm thinking about is choice, that is, whatever the weight of choice and this, there is choice ...".

"It made me understand that if I really wanted to achieve something I had to go through fatigue and discipline

"It is really important that you learn how to manage a bad result, a failure in order to improve".

- Resilience: the resilience capacity stands out as a fundamental tool for sport practice. It has to do with the ability to deal with adversities, be persistent in achieving goals, and not give up on overcoming them.

"The resilience capacity to endure the clashes, the frustrations, the defeats, and stay focused, keep the way, move on, because, we have won many important things, but we have lost so much, so much, so much, and to get there, it is defeat in defeat, until the final victory "

“Any athlete, of any type, has to know how to overcome the adversities that arise in the process: injuries, illnesses, two or three days that one cannot attend because there was an unfortunate family event, which affects... there was a funeral, etc. The athlete has to learn from an early age to overcome adversity, he has to learn how to win and how to lose, especially how to win. So, knowing how to win and knowing how to lose, we often value knowing how to lose, and we forget that knowing how to win is much more important than knowing how to lose”

- Functional/Physical skills (individual motor skills; mastery of specific techniques): These are motor skills that practitioners must acquire in order to practice the sport, such as motor coordination, at a more individual level, or the specific techniques of the sport they practice, such as handball, dribbling, pass, reception, and also related to rules of behaviour assumed as basic, such as the ability to organise, discipline, assiduity, punctuality, and being aware of methods and goals, as well as knowing how to fight to achieve them. Motor skills, curiously, are most strongly referred to by coaches who train young people with intellectual and physical disabilities, perhaps because they have to be repeatedly trained because it is a daily and difficult struggle, most necessary on the part of these athletes/students, as well as by those who train very young athletes/students.

“The less functional the athlete is, the more this assumes a leading role here, the more we are able to work on these skills, for example, fine praxis, hand strength, etc., etc.”

“Increasingly more and especially in recent years, we have shown that awareness of the motor act is, in fact, something very important since the child starts to have experience with sports, for example: the fact that I decide, that I am constantly deciding, to get around a barrier, to get around obstacles, to jump, to do zig-zag, in short, very simple tasks that effectively stimulate the logical-mathematical reasoning, and the logical-mathematical reasoning also stimulates the solidity of thought, of reflection, finally... decision making...”

- The thinking skills understood as executive functions, that is, mental processes aimed at developing adaptive cognitive-behavioral patterns in response to new and challenging environmental conditions, are considered relevant. They include: decision making; creativity and inventiveness; dynamic thinking; multi-tasking, Have analytical skills

"The last thing, I'm thinking about it, is the choice, that is, whatever the weight of the choice and this, there is the choice..."

"Creativity in my opinion, which is something that has helped me a lot in my job".

"Having a dynamic thinking, so listening is linked to the perception that there are people around me who can allow me to produce better, to be more productive, and the second listening is that things change, things change, there is never a truth that stops and obviously there is never a level of understanding that stops; who has this type of ability is a person who in my opinion manages to stay within the context in a dynamic way, so he adapts to the changing time, adapts to the fact that the team is changing, that there is a coach new..."

"(...) the tasks that we propose regarding decision making (...) the point here is that they realise that this type of decision making will facilitate the same decision making that they may have in other situations because they have to be made in fractions of a second. There is little room for manoeuvre in terms of quick decision making, and they have to be able to act. This happens later in their lives in a vast array of situations."

- Emphasis was placed, by the players in the world of sports, on the competence defined as "self-need". This construct is a new concept, and it is interesting to deepen it independently. The self-need is declined by the participants into two elements: one strictly individual and

the other group oriented. If the second aspect is, without doubt, desirable, since the value of an orientation towards group goals is universally recognized, the other is more controversial. The individual perspective is divided into two further connotations. One is linked to becoming someone and, consequently, connected to having a prestigious and crucial role, manager, football player or professional coach; the other reveals the idea of improving oneself beyond social prestige and, therefore, linked to being. In this context, we could define self-need as a form of motivation which can be extrinsic or intrinsic, depending on the connotation (to have or to be). According to the participants, it seems that in contexts increasingly characterized by difficulties, uncertainties and teamwork, it is more desirable to encourage and promote intrinsic motivation. Workers with this trait will likely prove more curious, adaptive, resilient, and able to work with other people.

"The self-need we forget that to be truly innovative in some way, to really change something, there is somehow a collective need and a good of the community that brings me a good, because otherwise it becomes complicated, otherwise we always remain of the idea of a self-need understood only as mine and therefore perhaps the others have nothing to do with it, they feel little. "

"This self-need is linked to two elements: one linked to the need to be something, so I see a lot of young people, probably it was also for me, that is, I want to become someone who is the coach or the manager or what it is, so I work hard on this and this is linked to two aspects that mix in different people in a different way, in the sense that for some it is more directed towards being, being someone, succeeding to be someone, identifying with what one does or wants to become, and the other is a self-need simply to improve, so beyond wanting to become someone I want to be better, then where I arrive I arrive is indifferent, but I do not want become someone ".

Inter-personal skills are often mentioned, which translate into a series of specific skills which, together, can be traced back to the more general ability to work effectively in a group. These include:

- The ability to perceive the strength of the collective, creating positive working relationships, managing responsibilities within a team, ability to work in a team and to build team spirit.

"There were some kids who had interpersonal skills in the locker room".

"The ability to perceive the strength of the collective, that is, if I realize, and therefore have the competence to understand this thing, that if I can work with others what we produce is better than it is if I did it alone, this has obviously a direct relationship with team sport, but it has a direct relationship with the work in the staff for the coach".

"In sports, you learn to observe yourself and then to observe the others. This leads to the development of a better team energy".

"In sports you learn how to relate to your colleagues. Companies want competitive people but that understand the importance of team work too."

- Respect for others and for roles, empathy and respect diversity, Tolerance and humility, Respect

"Respect, however, respect for roles, respect for teammates and respect for the coach, the president, the storekeeper is fundamental".

"You learn how to manage different people and different situations".

- Collaboration, motivation through the practice of leadership behavior and conflict management, Knowing how to be in a group, Know how to communicate

"We have always had the idea of a formative game, that it was a purposeful game, that it was a game based on ball possession, therefore requiring particular collaboration, closeness".

"Team spirit is essential. Nowadays, maybe it will be... often, maybe, pick up the kids and say, "let's all fight together for this goal" - sometimes it's difficult! And we touched on this very well: there is the father who has an idea, then the mother also has another idea, then there is the entrepreneur... so, there is a set of ideas here, which this aspect makes things more difficult"

- The ability to trust others and gain the trust of peers

"It depends on how I approach the competition theme; if I face it in a context, in a modality that we consider formative it has values in itself, it brings with it values that are linked to what I said before: the theme of trust in companions, the theme of obtaining, of trusting".

- Communication skills that consist in listening skills, in expressing oneself clearly and sensitively, adjusting one's style according to the nature of the audience and finally, knowing how to compare constructively.

"I put the listening skills."

"How important relationships, dialogue and discussion were for me."

Finally, the **contextual and organisational skills** emerge, that is the ability to read situations, understand contexts and know how to move within them but also to plan actions according to the objectives and the management of time and space.

"Compared to having made them independent from even a city like Milan, to knowing how to extricate themselves, to move within a complicated context".

"The best athletes that learn that balance is the once that progress faster"

"Because, for example, I think another thing translated, even with respect to the type of work, also thinking about smart-working, also thinking about the present moment; but I believe that the specific competence of knowing how to work towards objectives and therefore organize oneself in the time and space that one has available, therefore that autonomy which however must bring a result, are skills that the world of sport and an intelligent coach and capable of transferring to the boys ".

"(...) In different contexts of practice, I look for different skills (...) there is one thing that I would say is transversal to any one of them, and that is the one I start with: has to do with personal profile issues. Seriousness, ethics, organisational skills, punctuality, and above all, one that is passionate about its work, about the sport".

The stakeholders from the sports world who took part in the focus groups believe that these three macro-categories of skills are not only functional to sports but that they can also be used in the labor market.

"It's really hard for me to choose some of the skills already mentioned. I believe almost all the skills that someone acquires through sports are useful for employability".

Skills and attributes that coaches must possess

Sport and sporting activity is conceived by the participants as a fundamental tool for transmitting values and skills to young people. The players in the sports world pay particular attention to the issue of values inherent in the sport, stating that they should guide the actions of coaches. Values are, in a certain sense, conceived as elements that guide the direction to take and skills as "that know-how" in the specific situation. Indeed, it would seem that values and competencies in sporting practice are strictly interconnected. For these values to be internalized by young sportsmen, intentional actions are needed by all the staff in order to cultivate the development and growth of the children in their entirety, dealing with both the technical-tactical-physical and the human aspects.

"The theme of values, of sport as a tool to bring values, here I think it always depends on how we use sport, on how, on what use we make of this tool that is given to us. I believe that in sport, in particular in football, since we are talking about football there are all those tools so that even values can emerge and go hand in hand, they go hand in hand with skills".

"We take the responsibility of educating future leaders and coaches."

"And so those skills there in my head as I think, start from values".

"If that is the value I want to bring out, it is right to go in that direction there and therefore also the methodological choices in my opinion are based on the values and therefore on the skills that you want to develop in the children you educate and accompany in their path. "

It is therefore necessary that professionals in the world of sports develop a series of skills, values and attributes in order to manage training practices in the best possible way. Specifically - through certain values, skills and attributes - coaches would play a fundamental role in encouraging athletes to acquire employability skills.

Among **the intra-personal skills** necessary to effectively perform one's professional role from a training point of view, the following are indicated.

- Humility and dignity.

"To have the humility to know how to accept what is suggested to me, what I am told and in the same way to have, I still feel the humility of knowing how to speak, trying not to make him feel at a different level".

- Credibility, consistency and integrity of character.

"It is a necessary component as I understand it to be a coach, that is, you must be credible".

"We also create a problem for young people because there is a risk of not being consistent with what we are doing".

- The self-need connected to the idea of continuous learning and a constant trend towards improvement and self-assessment

"Both for the athlete and for the coach in fact, but I believe that this is really a skill that becomes transversal for life in general, so both for personal, emotional-personal situations and probably for any kind of work then go and do. So this is a skill that is valid for the sportsman but which is transferable when I start doing something else, but which in my opinion characterizes anyone in the different areas who is led to improve, yes improve".

- The ability to adapt and flexibility.

"So a coach who wants to work in contact with people but also in relationship with society and everything, the fact of knowing how to adapt and above all to launch into change, in experimenting different things is a fundamental characteristic in short, obviously it is not always easy, a lot of fear, however, that is, however, I think it is a very useful thing that makes you grow".

- Among the different forms of thinking skills, the one that is most useful to coaches is creativity, understood as a propensity to experiment and innovate to be creative

"Creativity in my opinion, which is something that has helped me a lot in my job".

"(...) Issues related to creativity - I emphasise again - because, at least for me, being creative was fundamental, but a creative conscious of reality; knowing how to innovate to optimise our actions"

- Coaches should set clear limits.

"He / she must be aware of his / her borders and set them".

- Coaches should trust their athletes and let them handle failure.
"The coach should give the tools, take a step back and see what happens. He/she must have the courage to give space for mistakes to the athletes".
- Cognitive skills: Concentration, Attention, Have decision-making ability, Have problem-solving skills

A fundamental skill for coaches that straddles two macro-categories, **intra-personal and inter-personal skills**, is emotional intelligence, understood as the ability to monitor one's own feelings and those of others, discriminating between various types of emotion and using this information to channel thoughts and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

"In my opinion, emotional skills are lacking, not so much methodological skills".

"Sometime what I see with other coaches is that they only care about the winning or the result and they forget we need to work on their development and psychological skills"

Among the **inter-personal skills**, extremely important specifically for team sports, there are some that concern the relationship between coach and athlete and the relationship between coach and group-team.

- Verbal communication skills (expressing oneself effectively and knowing how to listen) and non-verbal (using one's body)

"In my opinion, listening is a value".

"I think that as far as I'm concerned, as I told you right away at the beginning, I am certainly a very corporeal person and let's say that my body speaks for me many times I do it better through gestures and using my body than with my words and I think that for an instructor, a coach is a fundamental weapon".

"We must speak the same 'language' with the athletes".

"(...) We have to show out what we are not getting inside, we have to show a tranquility that we are not feeling, but we have

to pass, we have to say the right words at the right time, we have to be able to know that we may not like something, but to know that it is not the right time to say it, we have to measure words well... "

- Leadership, that is the ability to influence, persuade and convince others, to challenge, sometimes, the procedures and policies in force and to promote the development of people. Connected to leadership, knowing how to balance oneself between severity and acceptance (authoritative severity) is fundamental. If, within the staff, there is more than one coach or more figures who hold leadership, it is not necessary that both be welcoming and strict at the same time. In this direction, at least one figure should be welcoming, balancing the regulatory function performed by someone else, Have leadership skills

"There was a maybe a block, due or to the condition, let's say, of leadership management".

"You recognized, in two leaders, two fundamental characteristics on the one hand severity and on the other welcome".

"Not to be afraid - and the leadership is also there - not to be afraid, to believe in your work, and if your work has to be shared, it will have to be shared, it will have to be discussed with people or other team members technical".

- Show confidence in athletes, Be fair to athletes

"For me this thing here (feeling the coach's confidence) for me is an additional tank of petrol".

- Enhance collaboration, create a strong sense of belonging and willingness to inspire and motivate.

"Most coaches today have a rather particular attitude towards collaboration and relationship, they are very very individualistic,

even if football should be a totally different sport from this thought everyone thinks for himself and clearly it becomes difficult to do then acquire skills if you do not start to train them in youth ".

"Let's say the most beautiful thing that remains to me of those years is the feeling of family that I found again, let's say, as if it were a second home, of how important relationships and dialogue and comparison were for me".

"Strengths of a team is that everyone runs in the same direction"

- Be supportive, welcoming, empathetic and knowledge of athletes (e.g. family issues, financial status, etc.), Be empathetic, Having emotional control

"My goalkeeper coach who was there tells me:" you have to stay calm you know what the truth is, that is, think of yourself and do not let him influence you ". That is, he gave me support ".

"As a coach, as a trainer, I feel that one of my characteristics is to make people feel at ease. The fact of being a sunny person, of having a certain tone of voice, of still being a sensitive person, very attentive to details ".

"From an early age, the ability that has always made me crazy about a coach was the empathy that was created between the coach and me as a player".

- The ability to promote the individual goal within the group goal. In this direction, one should never forget the needs of the individuals who make up and form the work group. It is very important that the needs of the team do not stifle the individual ones and vice versa. In this intricate process, it is up to the coach to keep the balance.

"In my opinion, what is said is very important, that is, the individual goal within the group goal".

"Understand how you can fit in the group, how the group and the team become more important than the individual, understand the difference between team and individual goals"

- Closely interconnected with the ability to promote the individual goal within the group is the ability to pay attention to individual differences, giving value to diversity and providing the right tools based on the specific characteristics of the athlete. Many research participants stressed the importance and need to pay attention to the characteristics and personality traits of individuals. When it comes to the acquisition and transmission of skills, there is a risk of thinking of standardized programs or activities and of considering children as empty containers to be filled with a series of skills and values. In this way, there is a risk of simplifying the complexity of the human being and one's experience. These aspects should always be taken into consideration by coaches and staff both when planning workouts and when interacting with young athletes.

"The last is competitiveness, here there was a moment of debate between Michael and Anna but in the proper sense of different starting points, because for Anna it is overwhelming and for Michael it is a very important challenge to himself. We have seen that the difference in personality traits is linked to the fact that those who need this way of working towards goals and personal challenges and those who find it hard to bear them

"Without wanting to homologate a thought and without wishing to homologate people because then we know how much difference, diversity can be a value".

"He was very good at giving each player the right tool to be able to express themselves in the group context".

"Then I always speak from my point of view both as a coach and as a player, feeling taken into consideration has always made the difference, that is, the coaches I remembered that I closed my eyes today in thinking who to tell you are the ones who gave me the possibility of expressing myself for who I was, for who I was, for all my abilities ".

"All the athletes are equal but not the same".

"(...) there is a set of important social skills: work capacity, knowledge, diversity (...) and also, perhaps a little linked to emotional intelligence, the search for knowledge and the perception of what... our students... I think these are skills that are acquired"

Another particularly relevant skill that emerges is the ability to **contextualize**. It is divided into:

- Knowing how to listen and read needs and pay attention to the context; have the flexibility to assume different roles, adaptation to new responses

"Listening [...] to the care of needs and to a reading of the situation and context, therefore of the here and now and consequently the choices".

"We cannot ignore the context".

"A coach must adjust his/her plan, training, strategy with what/who he/she has in front of him/her".

"Really important that coaches understand their role. Understand the context and the type of kids you are working with. You can no treaty all kids the same way. All of them are different culturally and socially. Understand their background"

"The coach must be, above all, a leader and must have good communication. You must listen to the students; you have to be

with everyone, you have to understand them all, you have to be a coach, dad, you have to be everything."

"Badminton is the school's club, the school participates in school sports and federated sports competitions, so I play as a driver, a psychologist, a receptionist, a coach. I take the water, I do a set of things, (...) networking with other coaches has been very, very important "

- Possess a broad vision that allows you to observe the athlete in the overall sporting experience.

"Having a vision that is even a bit broader, a complete vision of what the athlete is, what the player is in my opinion is fundamental."

"Taking into account both the pitch and what happens off the pitch".

- Commitment to tasks, Knowing how to deal with pressure, Fight for goals, Motivate students

More generally, according to the stakeholders of the sports world, coaches should be aware that for many children and young they represent a model to follow. For this reason, it is therefore essential that - in addition to dealing with athletic training and teaching schemes - coaches should know how to act as an educational reference point, welcome and listen to the needs of athletes and activate coherent decision-making processes.

"So the ability to listen as a prerequisite together with presence, that is, being there constantly as a reference whether we like it or not".

"It happened that some coaches had well understood this attitude [...] which in my opinion are important precisely linked to the fact of transferring the ability to choose to the players".

For these reasons, the stakeholders of the sports world affirm that it is not enough to have practiced a certain sport, even at high levels, to be able to train.

"The fact that someone has played at great levels does not absolutely mean that he has certain skills; in my opinion skills must be accompanied".

Finally, the stakeholders of the sports world share a critical vision of current training courses, defining them as self-referential and old as they are focused almost exclusively on the technical-tactical aspects and rarely deal with implementation, relational, effectiveness and managerial skills.

"To try to go specifically, for sure, in my opinion, the competence to stay inside all the things we have talked about in this hour and a half or what has been is not given to us by anyone in our studies. Exercise sciences and then in-depth studies on motor sciences rather than federal courses, nobody talks about these things, nothing, just zero".

"At the federal training level where the skills are provided let's say ... technical skills, [...] content skills, mostly very old, that is of people who have really stopped and are totally self-referential, so they never open up to what is happening in the world because they are totally self-referential; some pedagogical skills but also in this case maybe we will be at the Maslow Pyramid, ste robe qui, how a group works, how relationships are managed, how a self-need is stimulated totally nothing and this problem is inevitably reflected on the players that I think they are perhaps the weak link of this thing".

Concrete actions: sports practice as a tool to promote the development of skills

The players in the sports world, despite listing different attributes and skills necessary for coaches in order to promote the development of skills in young athletes, show some difficulties in indicating how these attributes translate into training practices and concrete actions. Furthermore, it emerges that ideally coaches should promote discipline, trust, perseverance, leadership, behavior and teamwork but fail to explain how.

However, from the analysis of the focus groups it is possible to bring out various indications regarding the conduct that coaches and staff should keep regarding different areas: interaction, relationship management, process management, context analysis.

With regard to interaction, the importance of providing support using reassuring words that allow, in some way, both athletes to maintain focus on their worth, and coaches to show to their athletes that they recognize their talents, is first emphasized. Additionally, staff should incentivize athletes to expose themselves and encourage them to follow their own inclinations. It would be useful for the coach to act as a facilitator of the player's awareness process. However, the techniques and ways to implement this are not explained.

"You have to stay calm you know what the truth is, that is, think of you and do not let yourself be influenced by him" that is, he gave me support "

"Embrace fear, embrace fragility, let the other look at you and try to go your own way. If I am the facilitator of the process, I put myself in the condition that a person does not necessarily do mine, but that he can at least go through his own. If I can do this, in my opinion I help to train a person who will find the right job or that that job will find the person "

The importance of fostering creativity and imagination in athletes emerges by experimenting with innovative practices, trying to make everyone protagonists.

"To foster creativity in my opinion, which is something that has helped me a lot in my job and that I think they are looking for a lot and that then it worked, at least for me and for how I did it, I said" tell me what I can not do for sure not to hurt for everything else I will play it "because if they tell you what you can do it does not favor either creativity or imagination".

"Furthermore, one thing that characterizes Matteo when he trains is precisely the fact of making everyone protagonists ... Protagonists but all the players therefore passing from the contact that can be the physical, it can be ocular, maybe pass from empathy instead something that does not you can see but that there is but making everyone protagonists of a process is his, one of his greatest qualities in addition to the fact that he transmits the fire, the desire, the hunger he has in doing things, he also transmits it in the who he listens and in the one who sees him as an educator "

"Give the lead of the session to a different person every time!"

"The exercises have to be constructed in a way that, afterwards, when I make them explicit I have to explain what behaviour I want to observe during those exercises, what is to be expected, what I would like them to do. In the end, after the exercise, they will have the freedom to present other behaviours that will give new solutions to the problems that I am going to pose to them in the training exercises "

Connected to the previous point is the creation of conditions that allow to give positive reinforcements, it is particularly useful to reward the initiative rather than the result.

"I feel like saying something straight away that perhaps because as you have noticed and you say we are all women but the idea is that saying good has worked much more for now. That is, for example, this thing of positive reinforcement has a strong transference in my opinion from sport to work because I realize that the moment I say no-good a negative trend is created, not so much in productivity that oh well that it is also physiological but of personal growth of the subject within the context, both in sports and professional, very strong and long and I need to rebalance that bad guy, let's say, with 5,6,10 times good. Except I'm not one who says them because he knows that this is how it works, he tells them if there are reasons to say them and therefore to realize the reasons to get to 10 good that then balance a no-good is not easy you have to work on that, you have to work on creating a condition that allows us to continually give ourselves positive reinforcements at least for the initiative taken if not for the outcome. This could be one way "

"A crucial feature of the training is to give responsibilities to the athletes, to empower them, to reward them".

As regards relationship management, coaches need to be able to share passions and interests by getting in tune with the players, building a space for exchange that goes beyond the playing field, to create a stable and balanced relationship that reduces the asymmetry of power between coaches and athlete. In this direction, a strategy could be to set up regular meetings between staff members to discuss their representations.

"There were other coaches that I had, having passions in common, we managed to get in tune more ... absolutely yes, that's right this thing helped me in short, there is the fact

that I have something in common that I liked. it helped to do something more, that is not to do something more concrete, but to feel better to do something more ".

"The music helped me to be in perfect harmony with him".

"The most balanced relationship possible, in short, that can be credible as Michael says, it would be to tend both those who are here and those beyond the relationship to thin as much as possible between the credit and the debt, so that one does not feel or too much guilty or too much in credit for having done something for someone and consequently mounting an expectation that will never be fulfilled. This this thing here in my opinion was a crucial passage in the relationship between those who are trained and those who train and making it explicit continuously could be a means, dialogue, even continuing to say to each other, because then we are made of our very personal perceived, and therefore the perceived that a coach or a trainer could have with respect to this sought-after imbalance between debt and credit, keep saying it, talking about it, continuing to try to thin it out. to have a relationship I feel even purer, however, not only more stable, but more credible ".

Concerning to the management of the process, the first fundamental aspect seems to be that of trying to transmit one's own principle/value /philosophy with coherent practices and work proposals. For example, if we believe that sharing and the concept of collectivity is a value, we should pursue a game methodology that enhances these aspects. In this direction, the style of play can acquire a formative value and favor the development of specific skills. Through certain methodological choices (proposing an open and proactive football) certain competences are formed in athletes (ability to choose and thinking skills). Hence, transversal skills arise from technical-tactical skills

"I send my principle, I tell it, I look for my best channel to convince those who go to war for me with respect to my principle".

"I believe that there is a big difference and for me this is a value between individualism and collectivity so when I push in a methodological dynamic towards individualism I am carrying on a value, if I bring it through a methodological model towards the importance

of the community, of the relationship with others, in my opinion, I am pursuing another value ".

"We have always had the idea of a formative game, that it was a purposeful game, that it was a game based on ball possession and therefore that required in particular collaboration, closeness, that required courage, but understood precisely as awareness of what a player go to do so the more I am aware of what I am doing and perhaps the more I move away from an idea of courage in the sense, how can I say, that I go towards risk, I don't know if I have made the idea ".

"So today we want to talk about a different football with a proactive thought, in another way, this football could form specific skills a little different compared to specific skills related to a utilitarian, opportunistic and wait-and-see football, because it clearly forms a completely thought different also on a specific level on the field because if I try to transfer a specific competence on a tactical behavior, but also an attitude if we want not only specifically linked to tactical behavior therefore linked to the player's ability to choose, but related to an attitude of thought , certainly I form different skills because if I live on negativity or wait, instead I want to go and propose something myself, clearly they are different complex specific skills so even the specific skills form from this point of view different skills in the way of thinking and playing clearly [...] the disk bear is that they are the general and transversal skills in my opinion that are then also transferred into the specificity of the game here".

It is essential to recognize that the learning process is not linear and that there are moments of difficulty that must be valued and managed effectively. It is important for the staff to be aware that the athlete's growth also passes through problematic and complex moments. For this reason, the painful experience of the athlete should be recognized and welcomed, avoiding representing the conflict as a destructive element.

"Connected both to those who are managers rather than those who are coaches on the field also to all that discourse of a growth path that is made up of moments of difficulty, which is made up of an idea that learning is not linear, but it has moments instead of regression and indeed of difficulty which, however, are part of a path that goes ... of a

process that needs to be developed and to which fundamental importance must be given

In addition, a number of training practices useful to develop employability skills are indicated as particularly essential such as reflection, self-knowledge exercises, decision-making games and experiential learning.

"Find the necessary time to reflect, to get your players' feedback".

"It is important to give the step to the athletes, to give them the opportunity to think and suggest exercises/games".

It seems necessary to plan the training and set a goal to pursue in the field. One way could be to use the game as a training practice. However, the way how to implement this has not been made explicit.

"So I feel like saying now, thinking a little about our path as coaches is in short the planning of training trying to give a goal I don't know, for example I like to use games, you will know it better than me than we use many games on the field that can develop more or less skills then based on the goal we give to training we choose whether to develop more collaboration, more choice or more I don't know how to feel in a group, the responsibility because in my opinion even through play certain things can pass".

"It is really important to create exercises in the practice where players have to make their own decisions, they have to evaluate the situation and think about the problematic. Try to develop psychological skills in the same exercises. All is compatible"

"We have to organise the training sessions well, define the objectives well, mainly, match the objectives well within the training session, and between training sessions, which is another thing that sometimes we fail to do. Then we used others, and the athlete was in the water for a few hours and ended up having negative information, because instead of one task valuing the other, no, it cancelled out the other. So, this is one of the requirements that the coach has to fulfil."

It appears that it is useful to design certain practices considering the individual characteristics of athletes. Connected to this aspect, a very important issue appears, namely the individual with his specificity. It appears necessary for coaches to have a wide-ranging vision, thus being able to understand the needs, individual differences, and personality traits of each young athlete. In this direction, the coaches, and more generally the entire staff, could take effective actions to make the athletes protagonists and to transmit the passion, modulating their actions according to the recipient.

"On Anna, as I said before, I start by putting continuous cadences of individual comparisons for the fact that I know that she has characteristics, ways, ideas, needs with respect to doing these things here in such a way that one arrives, possible to arrive with a certain prevention done in such a way that more times good and less bad, more times it came out good less times it came out bad. It is not always possible, but this is a tool. With Chiara, for example, the opposite".

"Having a vision that is even a bit broader, a complete vision of what the athlete is, what the player is in my opinion is fundamental, but this is a lot ... in my opinion this type of competence does not exist or in any case it does not I think it is pushed to date, but because in my opinion there is no awareness of how important you are."

"He was very good at giving each player the right tool to be able to express themselves in the group context."

"Furthermore, one thing that characterizes Matteo when he trains is precisely the fact of making everyone protagonists ... Protagonists but all the players therefore passing from the contact that can be the physical, it can be ocular, maybe pass from empathy instead something that does not you can see but that there is but making everyone protagonists of a process is his, one of his greatest qualities in addition to the fact that he transmits the fire, the desire, the hunger he has in doing things, he also transmits it in the who he listens and in the one who sees him as an educator".

Therefore, the necessity to promote the athlete's ability to express themselves and reward them when this happens is indicated as a fundamental aspect. It is very important to promote self-assessment in players and make sure that it is explicit. Through group self-assessment, players

could not only develop self-monitoring skills but, through comparison with others, reach a higher degree of awareness about their own resources and weaknesses. The ability to carry out self-assessment, initially on specific technical-tactical elements of the game, could be transferred to multiple aspects of children's lives.

"The only real means that the children will have is not so much to become aware immediately but probably not to be afraid to dialogue; do not be afraid to speak, to say things, what is perceived, that is, I think so".

"The desire to put these people in a position, meanwhile, of not feeling fear when they express themselves by responding to what they feel and on the other hand to favor it and reward it when it is done, to recognize it".

"In this speech I always had the coach in the youth sector, what did he do? [...] On Tuesday, on the day of return from the match Monday-Tuesday, on the first day of return he would gather us all and say to me: "Michael but how did the game go? tell us a little / how it went / how you felt / what you did / what you felt / why did you make that choice?". And this for me, a 10-year-old, seen speaking in front of 18-19 year-olds, speaking in front of my coach who helped me to form maybe my own, that is, my character in short".

"Self-evaluation, but above all making self-evaluation explicit and therefore putting it in the judgment of others this becomes an important means".

Promoting self-assessment could, of course, be effective for extroverted children but the effect that this practice could cause in shy and introverted children has not been taken into consideration. Once again, the specificity and particularity of the individual emerges and the difficulty in defining and designing universal techniques to promote the learning of certain skills.

For the staff, it is essential to know how to coordinate and use the meeting tool to stay aligned on the principles to be pursued; one above all to do "maintenance" of relations within the work team. It is relevant to create and maintain a workgroup through moments of meeting and sharing off the playing field.

"We have one technical meeting a week for the areas and a monthly meeting on this among all areas, so whether she is a hairdresser or a physiotherapist or psychomotor we

talk about exactly who we are and how we are moving within our context. let's say regardless of the type of job, however with that job but within an integrated context ".

"In my opinion, his ability was to also create a work team from volunteers, managers to the second coach at ... In short, the one who collected the balls that were involved, that is inside ... To give an example I don't know the Thursday, every Thursday after training each of us brought something but not only us as players something to eat or something to share and that created a strong sense of belonging not only to the company but to the group that was, to the group that it was created ".

Finally, as regards the analysis of the context, an aspect of primary importance is that the learning context and, consequently, the development of skills of the young athlete is represented by the entire sports experience. For this reason, the coach and staff must pay attention to the general context and not exclusively to the playing field. Some skills that are not visible during the game or training can emerge and manifest themselves in different environments (bus trips, leisure moments, trips, changing rooms etc.), moreover, when training children and young it would be advisable to involve families.

"That is, the important experience is not the playing field but it is really the journey before and after".

"It is clear that if I consider the game only when I go on the pitch it is an aspect, if I consider the game in its entirety, in its complexity, in my opinion something very different and much more organic comes out; Here I always see this, not only in the exercise ".

"This coach tells me:" Of course the heck thing Pinco can't emerge, he's not a leader at all "the coach says to me and I tell him:" it depends ". And he says to me: "in what sense does it depend?" Because you are looking at the field, I told them stop for a moment and look on the sofas when they interact who is looking for who and who is the leader. He looks and the next day he comes back and tells me: "oh but it's awesome they are all looking for him, they go to him, man, how can we make sure that the personality that he has outside can bring it in, because if we bring him inside, wow this becomes ..." well, I

said see but you have already changed your perspective of observation, you are already changing the judgment of the boy because in reality for him he was absolutely not a leader because, what Chiara said, he only sees the field; outside this world era, everyone went to look for him only that him on the pitch, go and understand ... The parents, the expectations, the pressures, the understanding of what you are asking I don't know, I don't know but surely you couldn't say that he he was not a leader ".

"As a coach, as a trainer, I feel that one of my characteristics is that of making people feel at ease and not just the child, but also of keeping the family inside a little".

The stakeholders of the sports world explain some possible risks and errors that coaches can run into.

In the first place, the participants state that competition is not negative in itself but particular attention must be paid to the context and the training methods through which it is addressed. However, such practices and training contexts are not made explicit.

"The competitive aspect, the competition aspect and then it depends on how I approach the competition theme; if I face it in a context, in a modality that we consider formative it has values in itself, it brings with it values that are linked to what I said before: the theme of trust in companions, the theme of obtaining, of trusting ".

Due to the pressure for the result and the fear of being exonerated by the company, coaches risk focusing exclusively on the result putting aside the personal growth of the athletes.

"Sorry but how do you train, the methods, the principles, yes, but after three games they send me a few bullshit, I have to do the result .. As if to say that you can do the result in a different way than by not training well and making your team play well and helping them, is one of the biggest dilemmas that are also found paradoxically among the little ones: like if I do these things here I don't win, the children don't come this shit here anymore ".

It is very important to pay attention not to put too many expectations on the players and always remember the emotional and relational "power" that the coach holds in the asymmetrical relationship with the players.

"But many even at the age of pupils, that is, they could not resist this thing and they really collapsed because the coach forced his hand on subjects who were not ready".

The continuing education and development (theory and practice, e.g. scientific publications, conferences, internet, training seminars - theoretical and practical, coaching experience at higher level coaches) and constant involvement with the sport (coaching experience) also appear to be very important.

Finally, some practices to avoid (being deductive and working by schemes), are indicated, to promote autonomy and proactivity in athletes.

"When I want to develop autonomy and proactivity as transversal and general competences it is clear that if I go to the field and I am absolutely deductive and work by schemes, to return to the discourse of one of the principles, I clearly do not develop these competences which are general and the coach he must know that they are general skills that he can transfer through activities that become specific and therefore if I, when I want my player to find a solution, I can use a different methodology in specificity starting from the general, so start from the general but arrive absolutely specifically. The coach on the pitch proposes in a certain way and goes to take general skills, which then in cross or transferable quotes".

INTEGRATED SKILLS ANALYSIS: Convergences and divergences

After an in-depth analysis and comparison of the focus groups carried out both with exponents of the sports world and with actors from the HR world, interesting reflections and converging aspects emerge. First of all, the participants substantially nominate the same skills, demonstrating, at least ideally, a strong link between the skills developed through sports and those useful for entering the job market. Going into detail, communication skills, all that range of inter-personal (collaboration) and intra-personal (adaptation) skills, contextualization skills (management of complexity) and thinking skills (decision making and creativity) are important. Considering a future professional scenario, characterized by increasing complexity and uncertainty, both groups of participants considered the awareness and use of soft skills crucial as fundamental instruments for integration in the labour market but also for the balance of daily life. In this sense, it was evident that this type

of skills is as important as the so-called hard skills, which include specialized techniques and knowledge obtained through academia. In both groups, technical/hard skills (essential for the execution or development of a function or practice) are considered basic, almost pre-acquired, particularly in school contexts, lacking a greater awareness of behavioural or soft skills and their training.

All the participants declared that they consider sport a fundamental tool for the development of employability skills. However, how this potential passage of skills from the playing field to the working world remains in the area of the "unspoken" and "left pending". In fact, although the skills mentioned useful for a potential occupation are the same, there is little clarity about the degree of possibility and the ways in which skills are transferred from sports to work contexts. For example, the same competence of knowing how to work in a team takes on different connotations when you are on the playing field than when you need to reach a group goal in a working context. Despite these difficulties, many members of the HR group agree that these are skills that are directly transferable from sport to the labour market and have already experienced this situation.

The importance attributed to awareness emerges from both areas, connected to the issue of transferability; it would be fundamental, in fact, to promote in children the reflection on the skills and abilities developed through sports practice. In this way, young athletes could practically understand the usefulness of these skills, how to use them and transfer them to many aspects of their lives. Some examples of practical actions that can contribute to the recognition and consolidation of soft skills would be, according to the opinion of the organisational stakeholders, the following: the official recognition of courses for coaches and federations, the implementation of continuous educational programs; include athletes in basic and postgraduate courses, pay attention to athletes' careers, whether at university or in the job market; public and private entities carry out campaigns to raise awareness of best practices. Also, in the political sphere, the lack of visibility of the importance of sport for society in general, the different financial capacities between sports and clubs, the need to implement structures/means that promote sport throughout life are concerns and aspects to improve for the group of coaches interviewed. Participants agree in identifying coaches as key figures to promote this awareness in athletes. The actions implemented by professionals in the world of sports appear to be fundamental, aimed at explaining the skills that athletes develop and making them understand in which situations and professional contexts they can be useful. In this direction, coaches should facilitate the acquisition of a greater degree of awareness and, consequently, favor the transmission of the skills acquired. However, concretely,

some of the participants struggle to explain the methods and practical actions to be implemented on the playing field to promote this awareness in athletes, admitting that systematic training covering a wide range of coaches would be necessary. Recognizing that one of the roles of sports coaches and that of business managers will be to instil and support the development of behavioural skills in their athletes/trainees and their employees, continuous training and learning will be of the utmost importance to cement these skills. Another fundamental aspect, indicated by many participants, appears to be the role that subjectivity can play in the acquisition and transfer of certain skills. It would seem that people, with their own internal provisions, are able to positively influence or not the acquisition of employability skills and, consequently, the transfer of them to non-sport fields.

We can identify two possible causes regarding the difficulty of transferability of skills useful for employability, namely, the tendency (by the actors of the HR world) to idealize the role played by sport in providing employability skills and an insufficient permeability and search for exchange between the world of work and the world of sport. Few opinions showed that some skills that are more connected with a person's character and have been mentioned by the coaches, didn't correspond to the HR feedback. This could be interpreted in two ways: either they take these skills for granted or these skills are not necessarily important for them.

On the other hand, most of the players in the sports world are not familiar with business contexts. In fact, all the participants, both from the sports and HR worlds, argue that a more explicit and active communication exchange between sports and business contexts is desirable; this would have a positive impact on the acquisition of employability skills in young athletes.

In sum, the process that contribute to the acquisition of the essential skills in the sport practice and their transferability to work contexts, seems to be a long and complex one. Of course, there are many fragilities in the process: for example, due to the pressure for obtaining results and the fear of being exonerated by the company, there is a risk that coaches focus exclusively on the results and put aside the personal growth of the athletes. However, both groups of participants agree that it is worth trying other ways to achieve this goal.

Finally, a comment to reflect on, expressed by HR managers, is that their sector needs training on this issue too.

Final remarks and conclusions

The results of WP1 previously detailed can be organized in terms of positive aspects in relation to which there is ample agreement and less positive aspects where the participants identified difficulties and room for improvement.

Agreements/positive aspects

- All the participants declared that they consider sport a fundamental tool for the development of employability skills.
- The participants substantially identify the same skills, demonstrating, at least ideally, a strong link between the skills developed through sports and those helpful in entering the job market. The higher valued skills were communication skills; all that range of inter-personal (collaboration) and intra-personal (adaptation) skills: contextualization skills (management of complexity); and cognitive skills (decision making and creativity).
- The practice implemented by professionals in sports appears to be fundamental for the athletes to acquire the necessary skills and understand how professional contexts can be helpful.
- The importance attributed to awareness emerges from both areas (sport & HR), connected to transferability.
- Coaches are reported as key figures to promote athletes' self-consciousness and awareness
- Both groups of participants recognize that one of their roles will be to instil and support the development of behavioural skills in their athletes/trainees and their workers. In this sense, they recognize and identify leadership practices and the need to create an educational program that allows to cement these skills.

Aspects to improve/Difficulties:

- Participants consider that subjectivity can play a role in acquiring and transferring specific skills depending on each person's internal dispositions. This, in turn, may influence the acquisition of employability skills and, consequently, their transfer to non-sports fields. One possible way for promoting transferability is working on self-consciousness and awareness of athletes. It is not clear how the skills developed by sport are transferred to the labour

market; one possible way for promoting transferability is working on self-consciousness and awareness of athletes

- While coaches mentioned the importance of personality-related skills, HR experts did not. This could be interpreted in two ways: either they take these skills for granted, or these skills are not essential for them too.
- The potential transfer of skills from the playing field to the world of work remains unclear, namely, in what concerns the ways and degree to which that transfer is accomplished. The link between sport and employability still remains vague and ideal, not anchored to consistent practice.
- The participants struggle to explain the methods and practical actions to be implemented on the playing field to promote this awareness among athletes.
- Most of the players in the sports world are not familiar with business contexts. During recruitment interviews, HR managers claim to be unable to recognize a direct correlation between having practised sport and possessing specific skills useful for the job.
- All the participants, both from the sports and HR, argue that a more direct and active communication exchange between sports and business contexts is desirable; this would positively impact the acquisition of employability skills among young athletes.
- HR managers recognize that their sector needs training on this issue too. They also show significant concern over the effects of COVID-19's pandemic over their professional activity and the likeliness of skill development during present times.
- They also agree that hard skills, such as technology, should be taken into account. They could be integrated/developed - even at an elementary level- through sport should be researched.
- In some cases, coaches have expressed a concern over the political lack of attention and visibility accorded to sports and to life- long sports' promotion, the inequality of financial and material resources between different modalities and clubs. All of which are considered aspects to improve.

Results from the gap analysis point to the need for developing training modules to cover a variety of areas, which must be the object of other work packages. These should include, among other, a wider reflection on the societal role of sport aimed at coaches, the reinforcement of the practical

implication of sports toward the development of employability skills, awareness raising towards the sustainability of skill's transferability; different practices and concrete tools for developing employability skills through sport and diversity management.

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Sports and the labour market: a promising and useful relationship

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