



International Association of Education and
Science in Snow sports



National Sports Academy, Sofia, Bulgaria

Meeting Report Summary regarding "Snow sports Training in Universities"

Date: January 29 - February 1, 2025 **Venue:** Sofia, Bulgaria

Host: National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski"

Purpose of the meeting: to find solutions to several important issues:

1. How to integrate the 21st century skills into our snow sport curricula to make it sustainable / future proof?
2. How do we make snow sports attractive to students?
3. How can we harmonize educational standards between professional snow sport teachers and universities?
4. How do you motivate students to continue doing snow sports and make them their profession?

Program:

29th Meeting on Campus with Rector and Deans. Presentations on 21st Century Skills and Snow sports, Country Perspectives, structures and issues and the Benefits of Snow sports participation

30th Ongoing Discussions and Ski tour to Vitosha Mountain Accommodation.

Workshop on Cross Country – theory and practice

31st Workshop on Alpine Skiing – theory and practice

Workshop on Snowboarding – theory and practice

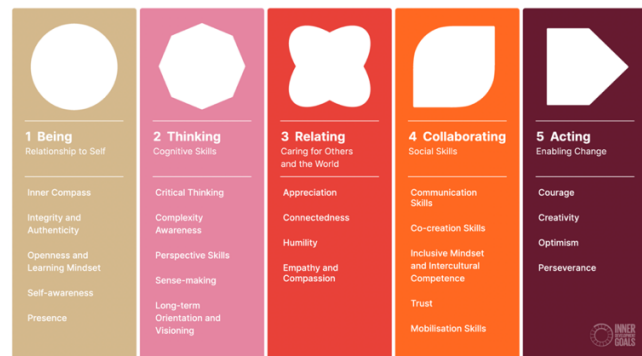
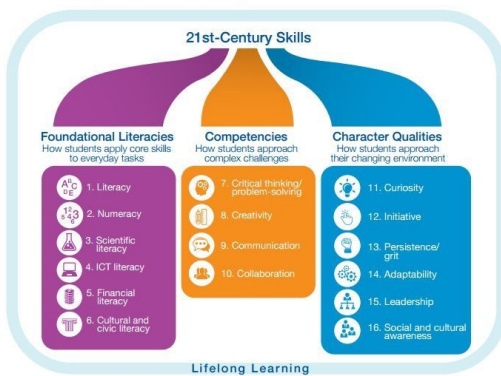
1st. Return to Sofia and onward travel

Countries Represented:

Austria	Bulgaria	Canada	Germany
Romania	Serbia	Slovenia	Sweden
UK	USA		

Wide ranging discussions were enjoyed and enriched by the presence of approximately 10 staff and 15 students from the National Sports Academy. Much discussion focused on the World Economic Forum 21st Century Skills and the UNESCO Inner Development Goals (summarized below) and their fit into the different international snow sport curricula. There was an agreement that the national curricula should try to focus more on the Inner Development Goals to facilitate state of the art and modern teaching in the 21st century.

Exhibit 1: Students require 16 skills for the 21st century



During the symposium we discussed that the integration of UNESCO's Inner Development Goals (IDGs) into the training of snow sport instructors offers a transformative approach to fostering personal and professional growth. These goals emphasize the development of inner qualities and skills that contribute to overall well-being and effective leadership. By embedding these principles into the training curriculum, snow sport instructors can become more resilient, empathetic, and effective educators. Here are possible aspects how the five IDGs can be integrated into snow sport instructor training at the universities:

1. **Being – Relationship with Self:**
 - **Self-Awareness and Mindfulness:** Encourage instructors to cultivate self-awareness and mindfulness through reflective practices such as learning logs or reflective reading. This can help them stay present and attentive, enhancing their ability to connect with students and adapt to changing conditions on the slopes.
 - **Emotional Regulation:** Teach instructors techniques for managing stress and emotions, enabling them to remain calm and composed in challenging situations.
2. **Thinking – Cognitive Skills:**

- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Incorporate scenarios and case studies that require instructors to analyze situations, identify potential problems, and devise effective solutions. This can enhance their decision-making skills and ability to respond to emergencies.
 - Systems Thinking: Encourage instructors to consider the broader context of their actions, including environmental impact and sustainability. This fosters a holistic approach to snow sport education.
3. Relating – Interpersonal Skills:
- Empathy and Compassion: Provide training on active listening and empathetic communication to help instructors build strong, supportive relationships with students. This can create a positive learning environment and improve student outcomes.
 - Teamwork and Collaboration: Emphasize the importance of teamwork and collaboration through group activities and cooperative exercises, promoting a sense of community among instructors and students.
4. Collaborating – Social Skills:
- Inclusive Leadership: Train instructors to lead inclusively by recognizing and valuing diversity among students. This includes understanding different learning styles and adapting teaching methods to meet individual needs.
 - Conflict Resolution: Equip instructors with conflict resolution skills to effectively manage disagreements and create a harmonious learning environment.
5. Acting – Practical Skills:
- Goal Setting and Planning: Teach instructors how to set realistic goals and develop actionable plans for both their own professional development and their students' progress. This can enhance motivation and achievement.
 - Resilience and Adaptability: Foster resilience and adaptability by exposing instructors to various teaching scenarios and encouraging them to learn from challenges and setbacks.

The above mentioned are just examples of our discussions and can be found in any setting of snow sport education and IDGs can be developed as a synergistic unit. All in all, by integrating these Inner Development Goals into their training, we came to the conclusion, that snow sport instructor training at universities can not only improve the technical skills of the students but also develop the inner qualities that make them exceptional educators and leaders. This holistic approach ensures that they are well-equipped to inspire and guide their future students, ultimately enhancing the overall snow sport experience. This leads to an outstanding position of snow sport education at universities and therefore to an indispensable necessity for teaching snow sports at universities.

As a special trial to determine the extent to which the 5 IDGs were applied during the symposium at the National Sports Academy in Sofia a review of the symposium based on the perspective of the UNESCO “Inner Development Goals” was done by using Padlet. The responses are displayed in the following table:

Vanessa Mann • 13 • 1. Februar 2025
Wrap Up Vitosha
 Take 10min to fill in how you saw or experienced behaviours that demonstrate any of those 5 goals

Being

- That was my first time on snowboarding. It was very good experience for me to try something new. To teach new skills.
- I noticed they were starting to self-analyze.
- I tried carving for the first time today. I was not very good in it and I'm learning to do it because it's difficult for me but I'm trying my best. I really like it actually, it was an amazing experience.
- It is great to be in a mountains with such a great group having in mind just what will be next snowsport experiences
- The ability to adapt to the new by finding successful solutions. I tried to get out of my comfort zone by practicing a new winter activity in a new group of people.
- On alpine workshop I was totally myself and again confirm way I chose ski to be very important part of my life
- The ability to adapt to the new by finding successful solutions. I tried to get out of my comfort zone by practicing a new winter activity in a new group of people. I realized that success is largely due to the group and the trainer.

Thinking

- Approach in downhill was great to see!
- Today I realised that snowboarding is something that make me happy. Yeah, it was difficult and hurts , but it was good experience to try myself
- I noticed that critical thinking
- I realised that carving is really hard but I'm motivated to do it because I like it.
- The more experience we get from different Snowsports easier we improve alpine skiing
- Without critical thinking, there is no progress
- Progress comes when you think critically!
- There are many paths to the ultimate goal (skiing).
- Personal critical thinking was quickly swept away by the atmosphere created by the group. Transfer between practiced disciplines, especially winter activities were activated.

Relating

- Today I related to my students from last two weeks. It was like I was student again and going through again
- Feeling the compassion of the staff about the wellbeing of the participants and guests was heart warming!
- there was mutual aid
- We are thankful to the new people we met yesterday! We are very happy to have this opportunity to chat with them, to ski and learn from them. We learned a lot and we hope we have the opportunity to be with them again.
- In the games and competition in cross-country we had crazy fun with people that we met just few days ago and we don't really know each other- these make us closer
- Feeling the positive empathy of the coaches and teachers helps me to learn faster and creates an inspiring and relaxed learning scenery
- After my three days here, this category was iconic for me. I felt appreciated, I made important connections with the people I interacted with and most of all I identified expatriate and compassion.

Collaborating

- Seeing the various nations working together- despite language differences was inspiring
- We have a great privilege to communicate with specialists like you and teach and discuss for snow sports. It's a good experience for us like a future sport specialist or teachers
- I felt understanding and I was glad to know that others going through similar things that I do, and was easy to talk about it
- they knew each other, they worked together, there was condensation
- Every progress, even if it was small, was appreciated by the teacher and the whole team
- This part where we were again instructors of the instructors. We remembered the connection with them
- Being open to new teaching and learning models helps me to widen my learning mindset
- We all have same objectives those days - to find a way how to improve Snowsports education and how to motivate students for these great sport - and only collaboration and open discussion can lead to great outcomes
- It is good to have an exchange of knowledge with other specialists
- Trying new skills helps me to be more aware of myself, how I learn new movements
- The importance of trust in practicing new activities, in the instructor and the group.

Acting

- Views of nature made my heart explode with happiness
- Here we learn how to work with other specialists and learn how to communicate with nature. Today I realised that we have very big gift to be here with professional experts from all world
- For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.
- Im so thankful for the nature here and to be in this beautiful place
- everyone was motivated there were new movements that were probably carried over from other sports
- Everyone showed courage when they tried something new, they persevered to learn and showed optimism, they believed that they would succeed
- Great idea to organise this event and we should meet again on this topic
- The perseverance of the instructors to teach us the basics of the winter activities as quickly as possible!

Summary of discussions regarding 'How do we make snow sports more attractive to more people?':

1. Focus on the objectives – what do people want? Try and encourage a greater focus on fun, simple language around technique and tailoring the lesson towards the needs of the individual.
2. Encourage schools and youth groups to have more camps for education to offer opportunities for younger people to experience snow sports early in life and 'catch the bug'.
3. Identify ways of funding camps and lessons to make them more accessible.
4. Explain the benefits of participation in snow sports – for example have educational campaigns focusing on healthy lifestyles and connections to school subjects as an opportunity to bring interdisciplinary learning to life.

5. Research and campaign to make snow sports more attractive to younger generations. Use findings from the research to lobby and influence political decisions to support opportunities for snow sports for young people.
6. Use of technology and electronic devices to make snow sports more appealing to young people.
7. Utilize indoor facilities to ensure access and get people started AND ready for the learning in mountain environments.
8. Focus instructor education to ensure they are empathetic and are lighthouses of inspiration.

Additional Learning Highlighted by participants included:

1. **Understanding Global Snow Sport Education Standards**
 - Compare and contrast snow sport education frameworks used in universities worldwide.
 - Identify best practices and innovative approaches in academic snow sport training.
2. **Intercultural Exchange & Networking**
 - Engage in discussions with international experts, educators, and students to foster intercultural collaboration.
 - Develop a deeper understanding of how cultural perspectives influence snow sport education and coaching.
3. **Insights into Snow sport Education in Bulgaria**
 - Gain a comprehensive overview of the snow sport education system in Bulgaria with a focus on the National Sports Academy
 - Analyze the methodologies and curriculum structure used in Bulgarian snow sport training.
4. **Enhancing Professional Competencies**
 - Reflect on how international approaches to snow sport education can enhance teaching methods and professional development.
 - Explore opportunities for Collaborative Partnerships for future collaborations and research in snow sport education.

**Results on discussions about a new Erasmus+ Application:
“Learning and Teaching in Snow sports” – SkiEasy SnowLink**

SKIEASY SNOWLINK – a new application at Erasmus Sport Collaborative Partnerships project will be prepared in partnership with the similar consortium like in SKIEASY project (2021 – 2023). The new project will not only build on the achievements of the previous SKIEASY project but will also introduce a significant leap forward by integrating cutting-edge technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), in the development of didactic tools in teaching snow sports aimed at enhancing both skiing teaching skills and technical skills.

This will represent an entirely innovative approach, one that has yet to be seen in the field of snow sports.

In parallel, we will enrich the content of teacher manuals for snow sports by placing a greater emphasis on sensitive issues within teaching, such as environmental protection, the integration of tolerance, diversity and inclusion principles, and the development of essential competencies for instructors, particularly in people and teaching skills.

In line with the demands of the 21st century skills, we will also outline a strategy to reconcile the diverse interests of various stakeholders in snow sports sector (including teacher associations, snow sport program providers, tourist destinations, ski equipment manufacturers, ski resorts, and more). This will be accomplished through coordinated, high-level networking, strategic decision-making, and advocacy by responsible institutions, aligning collective initiatives with modern, sustainable approaches that aim to re-engage users with snow sports.

By leveraging modern and innovative technologies and engaging all relevant stakeholders, we will unify our efforts toward a single goal: making snow sports more attractive, exciting, and widely enjoyed once again.

Conclusion and Outlook

During the evaluation of the Snow sport Symposium the positive and motivating atmosphere was frequently pointed out, with participants feeling more connected to snow sports through this event. Many attendees expressed a desire to continue participating in such events in the future, citing the inspiration they gained to persevere in their pursuits, particularly in teaching skiing to kids and fostering discipline, communication, and a love for sports.

A strong need of collaboration among key stakeholders was requested - politicians, business leaders, and sports professionals to support the development of schools and universities as the biggest “Skischools of the World”.

The need of professional and proactive marketing efforts and the promotion of both students and teachers as influential decision-makers in the field was a wish expressed by all participants to continue the growth of the sport.

From various perspectives the 1st Symposium with the topic “Snow sport Training at Universities” was a complete success:

- The outstanding friendliness of the hosts from the National Sports Academy in Sofia leads to very inspiring and fruitful discussions with new insights and perspectives on the education in snow sports and the specificity of the snow sport education at the universities due to the integrative effect of the different scientific fields of sport science.

- The provided overviews about the educational system in snow sports in the different countries led to a better understanding how snow sport education is conducted in the different countries. This mutual understanding was perfectly deepened in the lively discussions and exchange during the practical workshops.
- The big interest from the Rectors of the different departments of the NSA, the provision of perfect seminar facilities and the big interest of 10 member nations of IAESS on the symposium topic underlines the importance of this topic and makes follow up seminars necessary.

Our deepest thanks go to the Rector of the National Sports Academy in Sofia and his whole team and colleges. Especially the work of Prof. Petar Yankov and Prof. Krastio Zgurovski for organizing this meeting made the symposium a great success.

For the board of IAESS:

Vanessa Mann, Asa Tugetam (PhD), Dave Schuiling, Pete Allison (Prof. PhD), Rado Pisot (Prof. PhD), Gerhard Angerer, Krastio Zgurovski (Prof.) and Dieter Bubeck (Dr.)