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**Wintle, Jordan ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1195-4964>, Shafi, Adeela ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6265-5024>, Templeton, Sian ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0962-6531> and Clarke, Dan ORCID logoORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7277-2825> (2025) Active Games 4 Change - Implementing a Teaching Personal & Social Responsibility Intervention with Young Offenders in Europe. In: AIESEP International Conference 2025At: St Petersburg, Florida, USA, 18-22/05/2025, St Petersburg, Florida. (Unpublished)**

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# Active Games 4 Change - Implementing a Teaching Personal & Social Responsibility Intervention with Young Offenders in Europe

**Dr Jordan Wintle**

Associate Head of School  
School of Education & Science

Co-authors

Dr Adeela Shafi, Dan Clark, Dr Sian Templeton



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# Project Team – University of Gloucestershire

**Dr Jordan Wintle**

Associate Head of  
School



**Dr Adeela Shafi**

Associate  
Professor in  
Education



**Dr Sian Templeton**

Educational  
Psychologist



**Dan Clark**

Research Assistant



# Project Overview

A 3-year EU funded project designed to develop social, emotional and civic competencies in young offenders through active games and sport.



# Project Brief

Design, implement, and evaluate an intervention using sport and active games with young people who are either in conflict with the law or at high risk of offending.

The intervention aimed to develop the participants' social and emotional competence, increasing their likelihood of making positive contributions to their communities.

# Target group - young people in conflict with the law

An estimated 261,200 children are in detention worldwide (UNICEF, 2021).

- Educational attainment is low, and school dropout is high (Little, 2015).
- High prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and learning difficulties (Chitsabesan & Hughes, 2016).
- Emotional and behaviour problems (Abram, 2003; Young et al., 2015).
- Language and communication difficulties (Snow et al., 2016).
- Complex family and socioeconomic backgrounds – higher prevalence of ACES (Lambie & Randall, 2013).

# The importance of social & emotional competence

- Social and emotional competence in young people has clear links to positive outcomes and general well-being (Klapp et al., 2017)
- Social and emotional competencies are protective factors in managing change and predictors of academic success (Heckman & Kautz, 2012)
- Social and emotional competence can be 'learned' and results in social and psychological improvements for the individual (Vaida, 2016)

# The potential of active games and sport

- Respect for self and others, personal responsibility, self-regulation, communication skills, motivation and self-awareness (Ubago- Jiménez et al., 2019)
- A range of capitals, e.g. social, emotional and intellectual.  
(Bailey et al., 2013)
- Personal qualities, such as emotion regulation (Hellison, 2010; Morgan et al., 2020)
- Personal assets development  
(Côté et al., 2022)



# Project Output 1 - State of the Art Analysis

**Part I** – An overview of the literature and policy status in the partner countries.

**Part II** - Theoretical and conceptual evidence base, which indicates the importance of social and emotional competencies for the target population.

**Part III** - Methodology for the selection of tools to assess the development of the competencies alongside the contextual challenges of engaging young people within youth justice systems.

You can view the full document at  
[www.activegames4change.org](http://www.activegames4change.org)

# The social, emotional and civic competencies in AG4C

- Young people in conflict with the law would benefit from the development of these competencies.
- An absence or delay in development has a correlation with poorer academic outcomes, reduced financial stability in adulthood and an increase in the likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviours (Gutman & Schoon, 2013).



# Teaching Personal & Social Responsibility

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**Journal of Teaching in Physical Education**  
Endorsed by the Curriculum and Instruction Academy of the NASPE and the AIESEP  
[www.JTPE-Journal.com](http://www.JTPE-Journal.com)  
RESEARCH NOTE

## Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility and Transfer of Learning: Opportunities and Challenges for Teachers and Coaches

Barrie Gordon and Stephanie Doyle  
Victoria University

The transfer of learning from the gym to other areas of participants' lives has always been a core component of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model. The degree to which transfer of learning is successfully facilitated in the reality of Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model-based teaching and coaching is, however, uncertain. The research findings are mixed both in the commitment to transfer of learning and the level of success that has been achieved. The interest in transfer of learning is not restricted to the area of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model or physical education and sport in general, but is an area of strong academic interest with a long history of research and debate. This article draws on the knowledge and understandings of transfer of learning from this wider literature to explore ways in which to help facilitate transfer of learning for practitioners of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model.

**Keywords:** personal and social responsibility, physical activity, transfer of learning



**D**uring the past decade the field of youth development has grown by leaps and bounds. Numerous initiatives addressing the challenges that many youth face in their community — especially those who are underserved — have emerged with this growth. These initiatives have been guided by a variety of curricular models. Individuals who work in youth programs are what motivates them to work with kids. Teachers guided by national, state and local standards often include responsibility-based experiences in their programs (E America National Standard 4; Society of Health and Physical Educators, 2014). Unlike teachers, after-school and summer leaders have fewer restrictions and enjoy the flexibility of the intermediary space between school physical education and free play (Hellison, 1995/2011). Beyond the technical elements of youth development — especially those that are connected to teaching kids to be personally and socially responsible. This JOPERD feature centers on the community of practice that is grounded in the work of Don Hellison and his teaching personal and social responsibility (TPSR) model. This model guides practitioners in using physical activity to help kids take more responsibility for their well-being and be more sensitive and responsive to the well-being of others (see Table 1). The model is reflected by a diverse collection of professionals who have, in their own way, provided programs that have exposed kids to experiences formed by a common set of core values. Fostering a sense of human decency, putting kids first, believing in holistic development, and embracing a way of being (Nick Forsberg) are the values that underlie the work of these individuals.

In a sense, these individuals form what Lave and Wenger call a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The community of practice is a group of people who are committed to learning together and who share a common purpose or goal. The community of practice is a group of people who are committed to learning together and who share a common purpose or goal.

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**Abstract**  
The purpose of this study was to conduct a review of research on the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model-based programme within physical education. Papers selected for analysis were found through searches of Web of Science, SportDiscus, SCOPUS, and ERIC (ProQuest) databases. The keywords 'responsibility model' and 'physical education' were used in different combinations. The relevant articles were checked for the following criteria: (a) the study is been published in a peer-reviewed international journal; (b) it included Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model-based programme implementation; (c) programmes were implemented within physical education classes; and (d) the full text was available in English or Spanish. The quality of the selected studies was scored using a quality assessment list. Twenty-two papers satisfied the selection criteria were identified. A practical analysis of these papers to present results placed them into three categories: (a) impact of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility model-based programme on teachers; (b) programme implementation features; and (c) outcomes of the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility-based programme on student participants. Longer studies with follow-up data, quantitative methodological designs, and larger samples would be particularly important for future investigations.

## Teaching personal and social responsibility in physical education: A systematic review

Pablo Pozo

Pablo de Olavide University, Sevilla, Spain

Alberto Grao-Cruces

University of Cádiz, Spain

Raquel Pérez-Ordás

Pablo de Olavide University, Sevilla, Spain

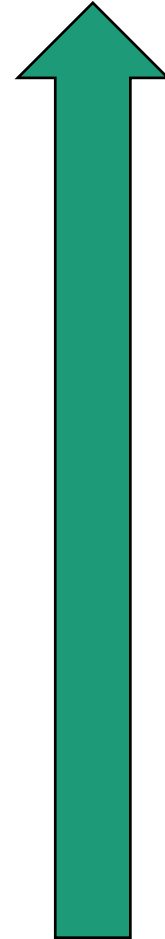
European Physical Education Review  
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DOI: 10.1177/1356336X16664749  
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# Teaching Personal Social Responsibility

The intervention was designed to implement the key pedagogies and principles of TPSR.

- Positive relationships
- Gradual empowerment
- Reflection & awareness talks
- Transfer

(Hellison, 2010)



**Level 5 - TRANSFER**

**Level 4 - CARING**

**Level 3 - SELF DIRECTION**

**Level 2 - PARTICIPATION**

**Level 1 - RESPECT**



# Pedagogy Overview

## ACTIVE GAMES FOR CHANGE A PEDAGOGY OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

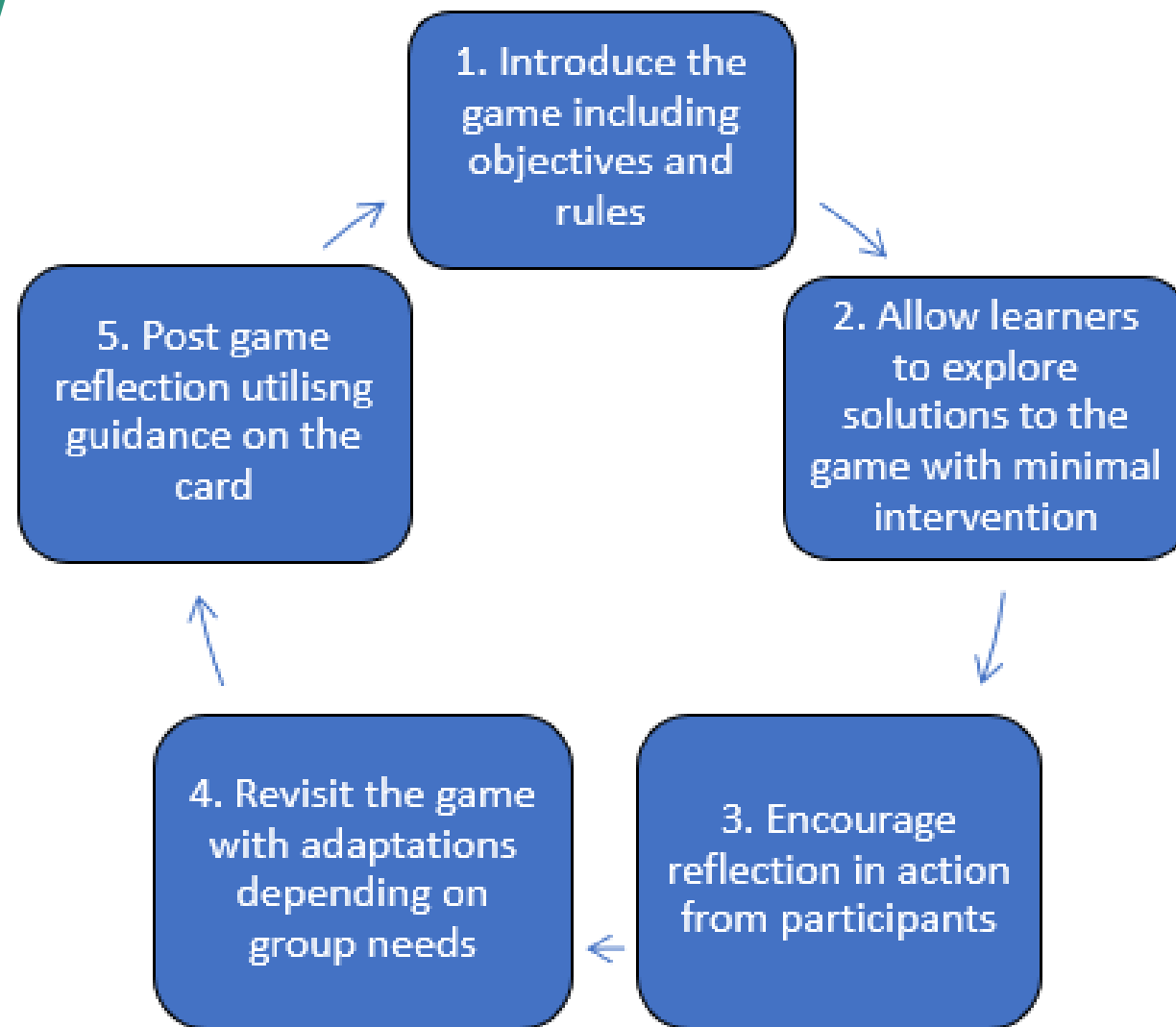
Physical education, sport and physical activity have a long history of being beneficial for the personal development of young people (Morgan, Parker, Meek & Cryer, 2020; Côté, Turnridge, Vierimaa, 2018; Bailey, 2008). Active Games for Change (AG4C) is an Erasmus Key Action 3 project that aims to support young people in conflict with the law in the acquisition and usage of key competences to facilitate inclusion, education and employability, by developing an innovative framework of active games that seek to develop a range of social and emotional competencies in our target population. This overarching aim is achieved through the creation and implementation of active games delivered through a hybrid pedagogical model to maximise personal growth. The project, led by the University of Gloucestershire, has ten European

Turkey, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Partners include two universities, a ministry of justice and non-government organisations (NGOs), all of which are involved in researching or working as practitioners with young people who have come into contact with youth justice systems in their respective countries. The overarching aim of the project is to influence EU policy to adopt physical education and sport as key areas of rehabilitation and personal development of young offenders (or those at risk of offending). The key areas of development are outlined in Table 1.

### Active Games 4 Change introduction

The AG4C programme contains 18 active games pitched at three different levels (six at each level). Level one games require less complex social and emotional competencies whilst level three requires

“Physical education, sport and physical activity have a long history of being beneficial for the personal development of young people.”



Full text at [www.activegames4change.org](http://www.activegames4change.org)

# Games Overview – suggested delivery order

		Competency Rating				
		Self- awareness	Self- management	Responsible Decision making	Relationship Skills	Social Awareness
Level 1	Tarp Turnover	★	★	★★	★★★	★
	Over the River	★★	★★	★	★★	★★
	Scatterball	★★	★★	★★	★★	★★
	Team Challenges	★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
	Get Over That	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★
	Gutter Ball	★★★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
Level 2	4- Way Volleyball	★★	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★
	Cross the Swamp	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
	Corner Ball	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★
	Rob the Nest	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
	Spiders Web	★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
	Leaky Bucket	★★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
Level 3	Retrieval Challenge	★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
	Invasion	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★
	Tower of Hanoi	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★
	Shelter Build	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
	Games Design	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
	Escape Route	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★

# Retrieval Challenge

## Level 3

### Game Overview



#### Set Up

Create a circle approximately 5m in diameter out of the cones. In the centre of the circle place a water bottle on an upturned box.

#### Challenge

Using the equipment provided retrieve the bottle without touching inside the circle. The bottle must not touch the ground until it is outside the circle. If the rules are broken the game must re-start.

### Set-Up



### Competences



Self-awareness	★
Self-management	★ ★
Responsible decision making	★ ★ ★ ★
Relationship skills	★ ★ ★ ★
Social awareness	★ ★ ★ ★

Detailed information on competencies, indicators and levels on the back

### Equipment



- 8 cones
- 6-8 lengths of rope (approximately 2m in length each). Skipping ropes can work well.
- 1 small box
- 1 water bottle
- Blindfolds (for progression)
- Coat hanger (for regression)

### Adaptations



#### To simplify

Tape a coat hanger to the bottle to create an easier shape to hook. Alternatively, provide the group with a longer length of rope or make the circle smaller.

#### To Progress

Blindfold half of the participants, only blindfolded participants can touch the rope. Alternatively, increase the size of the circle or only allow participants to use one hand through the challenge

### Reflection



- What role did you play within the task? How did this contribute to the success of the group?
- Pick another group member and explain how they had a positive impact on the task
- What could the group do in the future to improve their performance in similar tasks?
- What skills were used in this task and how could they transfer to other areas of your life?

# Retrieval Challenge Competencies

## Competencies Defined

<b>Self-awareness</b>	Self-awareness is the thinking skill that focuses on an individual's ability to accurately judge their own performance and behaviour and to respond appropriately to different social situations. Self-Awareness helps an individual to tune into their feelings, as well as to the behaviours and feelings of others.
<b>Self-management</b>	Self-management refers to the ability of a person to regulate their own activity with little or no intervention with others. This will include staying on task even when distractions are present and making good choices in terms of actions and behaviour.
<b>Responsible decision making</b>	Responsible decision making involves being able to demonstrate making a reasoned decision that considers the views of various stakeholders (other people) with a clear rationale behind the decision-making process. This may involve seeking the views of others or experts.
<b>Relationship skills</b>	Relationship skills refers to the skills, tools, knowledge and understanding to create, communicate, evolve, grow, trust and maintain a relationship. This involves being able to work effectively with a broad range of individuals from different backgrounds.
<b>Social awareness</b>	Social awareness is the ability to know and feel the people around you and the ability to interact with them in the most efficient and proper manner. This includes being to empathise with various viewpoints and consider how your own actions may be interpreted by others.

## Competency Ratings – Retrieval Challenge

	Emerging	Developing	Established
<b>Self-awareness</b>	Rarely recognises the impact of their contribution and the impact this has on others.	At times recognises the impact of their contribution and the impact this has on others.	Clearly recognises the impact of their contribution and the impact this has on others.
<b>Self-management</b>	Struggles to maintain - concentration on the task throughout with frequent intervention needed from others.	Maintains good concentration on the task throughout with some intervention from others.	Maintains full concentration on the task throughout with no intervention from others.
<b>Responsible decision making</b>	Rarely seeks others views before deciding on a strategy to solve the problem.	Sometimes seeks others views before deciding on a strategy to solve the problem.	Seeks others views before deciding on a strategy to solve the problem.
<b>Relationship skills</b>	Little communication with others often working alone.	Communicates effectively throughout most of the task offering frequent contributions.	Communicates effectively throughout the task and is able to lead effectively.
<b>Social awareness</b>	Is often unaware of their impact on others and the task. Finds it difficult to understand others views.	Shows empathy at times during the task and is able to understand most ideas from a range of viewpoints.	Shows empathy throughout the task and is able to synthesise ideas from a range of viewpoints.





# Assessment Tools

## Quantitative:

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale  
(WEMWBS)

Questions mapped to CASEL framework.

## Qualitative:

2 questions for the participants to answer

### The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.  
Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks

STATEMENTS	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

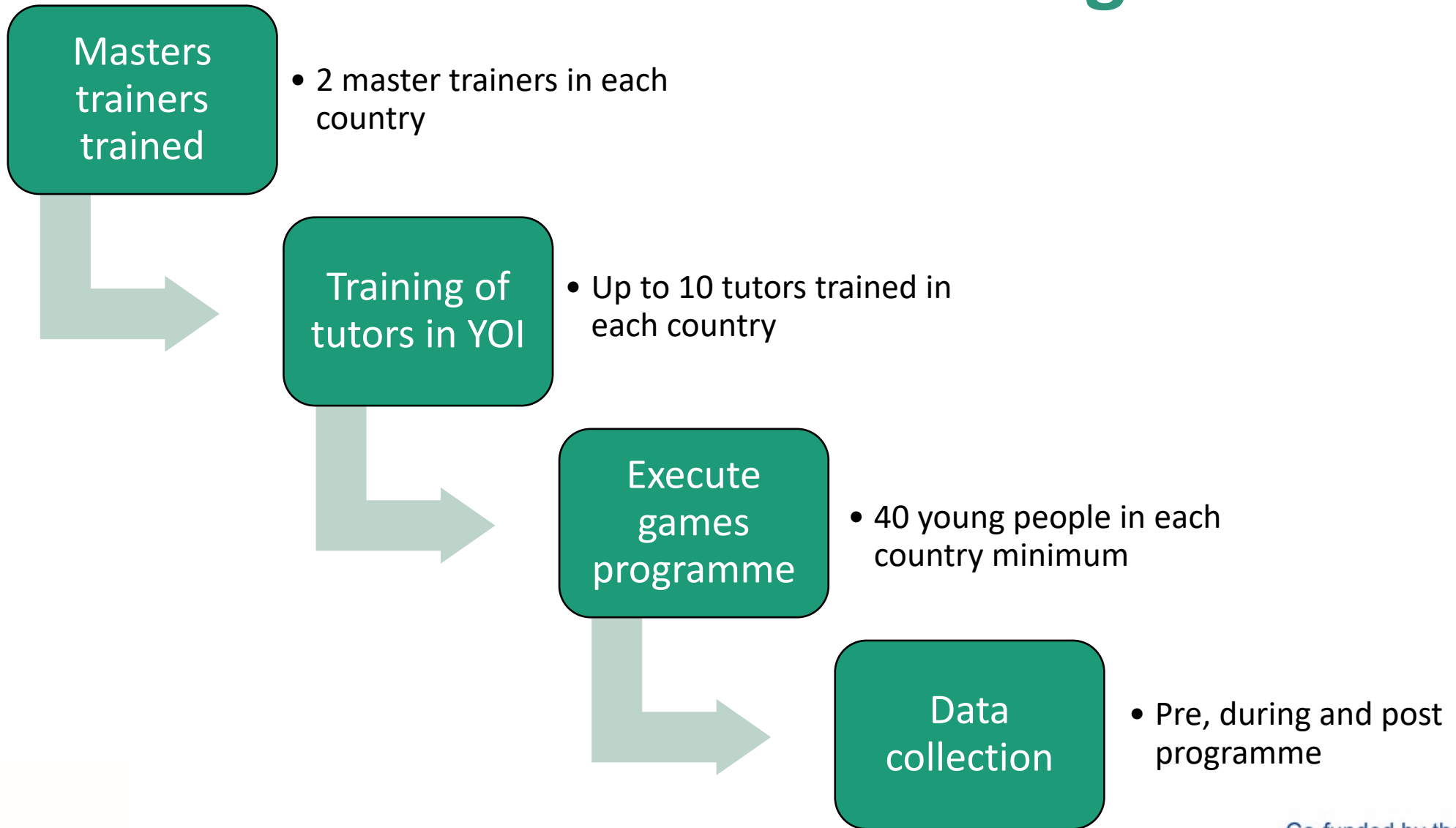
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)  
© NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006, all rights reserved.

# Assessment Tools: Qualitative

## Questions:

1. How did working with others help you to achieve the end goal of the games? (Relationship Skills)
2. How did you overcome any difficulties that you felt in achieving the end goal of the games?  
(Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making, Self-Awareness, Relationship Skills, Social Awareness)

# Training and Piloting



# Key Data

Data point description	When?
1. Educator Survey	Post training
2. WEMHWBS scale with young people	Pre-pilot
3. Rating SEC of young people	After each level of games
4. Game observation grid	After each game
5. WEMHWBS scale with young people	Post-pilot
6. Qualitative questions with young people	Post-pilot
7. Educator Survey post piloting	Post-pilot
8. Testimonials and case studies from educators	Post pilot
9. Testimonials and case studies from young people	Post pilot



# Results from the piloting

## Who participated?

The training, materials and resources were piloted in the partner countries - Turkey, Romania, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Hungary and the UK across 17 settings.

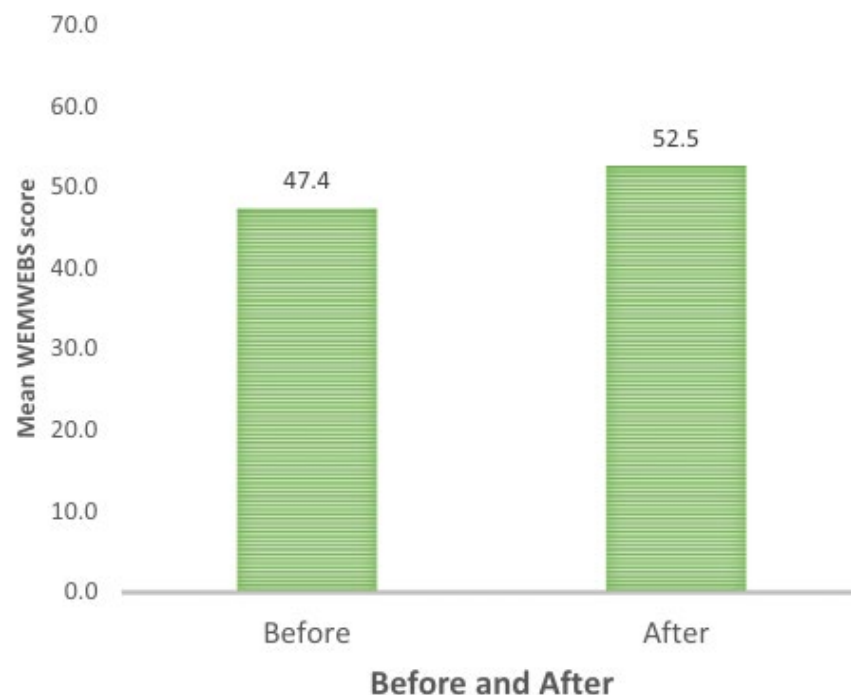
	Educators Trained	Young people (aged 16-24)
UK	11	60 (48 pre and post)
Portugal	20	56
Italy	28	48 (47 pre and post)
Spain	5	26 (23 pre and post)
Hungary	29	46
Romania	2	40
Turkey	10	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>326 (291 pre and post)</b>



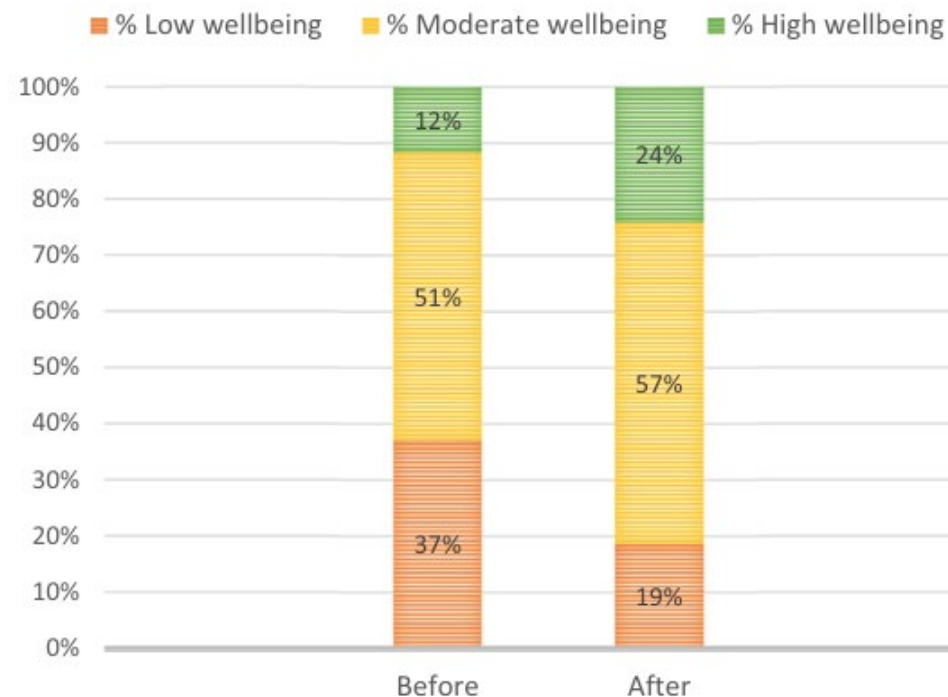
# Data combined from across the partnership

As assessed by the WEMWBS

## MEAN WEMWBS SCORES



## PROPORTIONS OF WELLBEING BEFORE & AFTER INTERVENTION





# Comparing the competencies

## Before and after across the countries

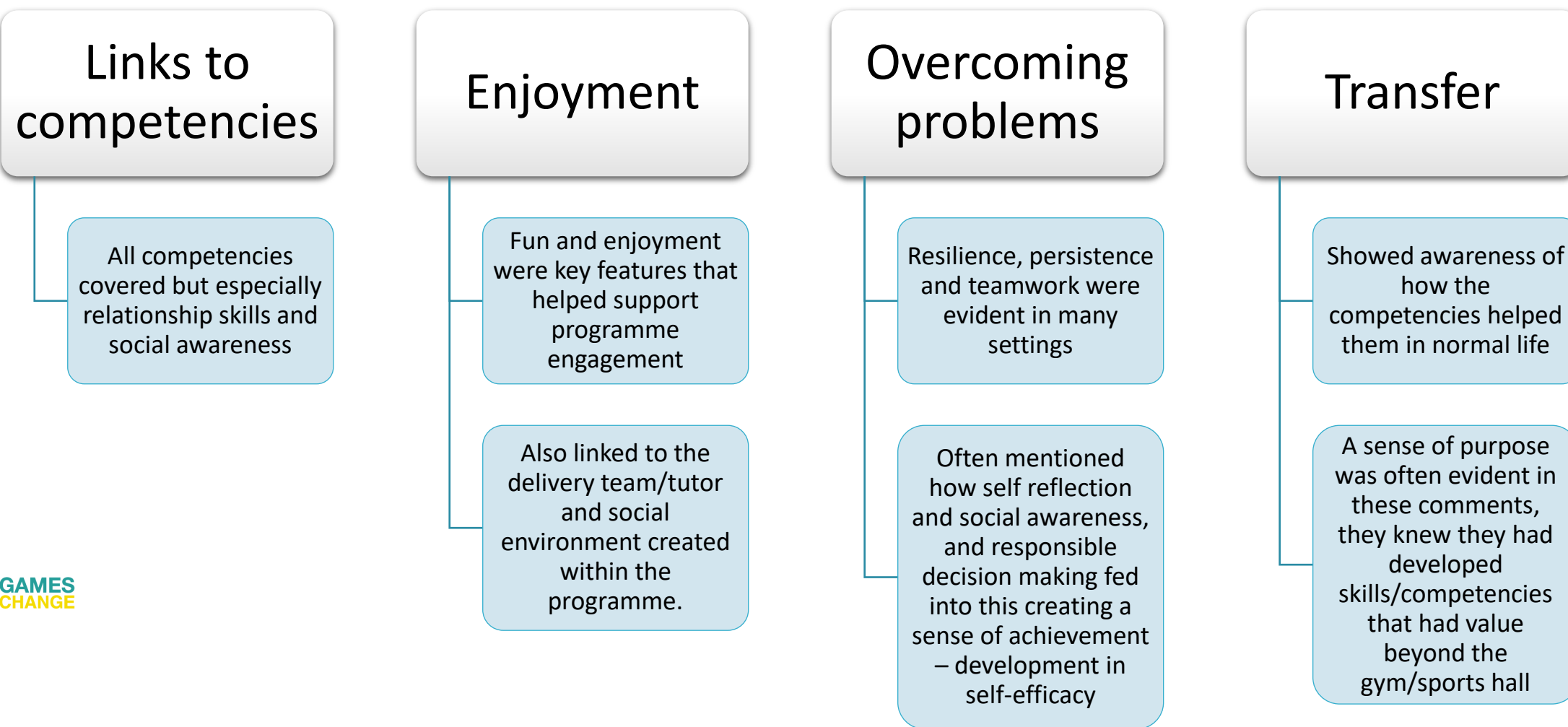
The five key competencies were mapped on to the WEMWBS scale. The questions from the WEMWBS relevant to each competency were extracted and the average changes in wellbeing in these areas were compared before and after participation in the games. The chart here shows the difference before and after for each competency across the partnership.





# Themes from the qualitative data

Qualitative questions designed to assess the key competencies





# Qualitative data

## Quotes from participants

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“After the games I observed  
how skills such as  
communication and teamwork  
developed in normal life”  
(Turkish Participant)

“It helps you build better  
relationships working as team  
– it helps you communicate  
more”  
(UK Participant)



“I overcame the difficulties with my teammates and  
by doing it all with my teammates.  
It was very hard, I thought that I wasn't going to be  
able to, but I believed in myself and in the teacher  
coordinating the games, it helped me feel better  
with myself.”  
(Spanish Participant)

“I went first after my own head, I didn't pay  
attention to the others at all. They said it wasn't  
good that way, the referee also said, pay attention  
to others. It went slowly, but I managed to pay  
attention, I am beginning to understand what the  
cooperation is good for.”  
(Hungarian Participant)



# Feedback – Programme Deliverer

“We have been inundated by young people asking us to reinstate this! Six of them have written letters to the Head and I am requesting that we reignite learning of this format, highlighting how beneficial they found it. Really very good. We are making this a permanent fixture on their timetables and will be ready to roll with a fresh batch of AG4C shortly.”

(Deputy Head of Education, Secure Children's Home in England, 2022)

# Project Outputs

Research paper 1 published in 2024. Two subsequent papers will follow.

Continued use of AG4C in many secure and community settings.

AG4C International Conference – European Commission, Brussels.

The website and all project materials are free to access.

## Developing social and emotional competencies in incarcerated young people in seven countries in Europe through the use of active games and sport

Adeela Ahmed Shafi <sup>a</sup>, Jordan Wintle <sup>a</sup>, Sian Templeton <sup>b</sup> and Dan Clarke <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>School of Education and Science, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, UK; <sup>b</sup>InsightsEPs, Cheltenham, UK

### ABSTRACT

Social and emotional competencies (self-regulation, coping with challenges, positive relationships) are related to positive life outcomes. Justice involved children and young people have not always had the opportunities to develop these competencies due to a range of disadvantages. This research explores the extent to which identified competencies can be developed through specially designed active games. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected to assess the bespoke games' effectiveness and tested in seven European countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Romania, Turkey, UK). A total of 326 young people participated across 17 settings with 105 educators trained in the methodology. The findings suggest that participation in the active games had demonstrable impact, both overall, and for the specific identified competencies. Participation in such programmes can support the holistic development of social and emotional competencies which can facilitate readiness and openness to learning for other interventions. This key finding contributes to dis/engagement theory, recommending that such programmes should form the basis of a suite of interventions designed to support the educational (re)engagement and development of justice involved children and young people. These findings have currency for developing policy which promote positive outcomes on release back into the community, across a range of national contexts.

### KEYWORDS

Education; youth justice; sport; prison education



[www.activegames4change.org](http://www.activegames4change.org)



[jwintle1@glos.ac.uk](mailto:jwintle1@glos.ac.uk)



@jordanwintlePE

**Dr Jordan Wintle**

Associate Head of School

University of Gloucestershire



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