

# Special Basketball School

In Macedonia the awareness of including people with limited abilities in the society and in every normal activity is on a really low level. That really concerns me. People with limited abilities are denied, discriminated and sometimes even offended by others. What really is expected from them is to have some low level of education and stay at home. The purpose of this project will be to overcome the stereotypes, and the negative thoughts other people have about people with limited abilities by including the non – disabled youth population as volunteers.

## CATEGORY

[Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations](#)

## LOCATION

[Macedonia](#)

## WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE OR NEED YOUR PROJECT WILL ADDRESS AND WHAT INNOVATIVE METHODS WILL YOU EMPLOY?

### Describe the specific need or challenge that your team will address with this project

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### Briefly describe the specific solution or approach to address the need or challenge and explain why it is innovative

The whole idea behind this is to raise the awareness about people with Down syndrome and put a strong accent on the youth population in aspects of volunteering and educating them regarding this topic. Because of the lack of education in this field, non – disabled people often hesitate to be around people with limited abilities. My idea is to start the first basketball practice school for kids with Down syndrome in Macedonia. The long – term objective is to include people with limited abilities in everyday activities, sports and socializing with people with no limited abilities.

### How will the project impact your community? What changes (in people, institutions, attitudes, practices) do you think you will see?

In Macedonia people with limited abilities have a life struggle finding a job, access to education, or even living a normal life in general. Starting with this project in our capital city, Skopje, and then implementing it in 3 other cities including Radovish, Struga, and Kumanovo we will show to the whole country that people with limited abilities are just as normal as any other people. With this project shown on the national TV stations, and other local TV stations we can show that with a little bit more effort, people with limited abilities can have a normal life. All this will result in a way that we all want to see, and that is equality. The social inclusion of vulnerable populations in the society is crucial. People with no limited abilities will have a chance to meet and spend time with people with Down syndrome people and peek into their world for just a moment. This will build a lot higher tolerance and understanding and create strong relationships between these two groups.

## WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

### MEET THE TEAM

Project owner

[Ljupce Stojanov](#)  
[Macedonia](#)  
[YES \(Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study\) Program](#)

Project members

[Manage members](#)  
[Metodija Nikolovski](#)  
[Macedonia](#)  
[YES \(Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study\) Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Bojan Aleksovski](#)  
[Macedonia](#)  
[YES \(Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study\) Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Joseph Marah](#)  
[Sierra Leone](#)  
[YES \(Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study\) Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Mahmoud Suliman](#)  
[Israel](#)  
[Fulbright Student Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Noemi Chausidis](#)  
[Macedonia](#)  
[YES \(Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study\) Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Angela Gjekanovikj](#)  
[Macedonia](#)  
[YES \(Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study\) Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Ivana Bilic](#)  
[Croatia](#)  
[Junior Faculty Development Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Dimche Micevski](#)  
[Macedonia](#)  
[J-1 Visa: Summer Work Travel](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Divna Pencic](#)  
[Macedonia](#)  
[Junior Faculty Development Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

[Muhammad Asfandyar](#)

[Pakistan](#)  
[YES \(Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study\) Program](#)  
[\[remove from project\]](#)

### **Beneficiaries: who are your target groups (or communities) and how many people will directly benefit from your project?**

Our main target group is kids with Down syndrome ages 5 and above. We target this group because it is really important to us to involve as many kids as possible.

Our anticipation about the number of kids with Down syndrome taking part in this project is 40-60. This group benefits directly by taking part in this project, they socialize and meet other people, live a healthy life, play sports...

The estimated number of high school volunteers working with the Down syndrome kids is around 45.

There are going to be around 10 volunteers from YES Alumni and American Councils for International Education office in Macedonia. They will also be part of the educational process along with the high school volunteers. They will be in charge of the participants in aspects of dividing them into groups, informing them about the events, practices, and communicate with their parents.

There will be 12 teachers mentoring the high school volunteers.

### **Local partners**

Ljupce Stojanov as a project manager and YES Alumni are responsible of making sure this project happens. Starting from searching and arranging places for practice, finding volunteers, high school students, mentors, logistics, making a schedule of all the activities, preparing for the educational seminar, finding guest speakers, and planning the final tournament day. The high school volunteers will be in charge of coaching a certain team and working with the limited abilities participants. Each high school student will have a team assigned to work with. The American Councils staff will be here to help us make a connection with the parents, send them notifications, talk to them and make sure everything goes smooth with them. The media will help us share our project with the rest of the country, and make this a popular basketball practice school for people with limited abilities. The same applies for the local TVs. The Macedonian American Alumni Association and people from the American Embassy will be invited to join on our opening day and give us their much appreciated support.

### **Alumni team**

Ljupche Stojanov is the project manager and will be in charge of the logistics and managing each alumnus in fulfilling their assigned tasks

Simona Ristovska will be in charge of finding volunteers, contacting high schools and receiving applications from the people interested in volunteering.

Metodija Nikolovski is responsible for arranging meetings with the local authorities or the school's principals in order to find sports venues where we will be holding our practices during the 8 week period.

Noemi Chausidis will be contacting the media needed to promote our project, our activities, to inform the public about our first ever Basketball practice school for people with limited abilities. Noemi will also be in charge of the public affairs section.

Blagoja Srbov will be taking care of organizing the transportation which means contacting the participants or their parents, get information about where their live and organize the pick - up/drop - off spots for the participants

**Proposed Project Dates:** September 12, 2015 - June 10, 2016

## **HOW AND WHEN WILL YOU IMPLEMENT YOUR PROJECT?**

### **Implementing Plan and Timeline**

On September 12-13, 2015 there will be a two day seminar for the professors who will be mentoring the volunteers and working with the participants. On this seminar they will be educated about Down syndrome kids, the proper way to communicate with them, the proper ways to behave and they will be instructed how to run the practices working by a special basketball practice program sent from the USA from the people running the Special Olympics basketball team in Kansas City, MO. Guest speakers with experience in these fields will be invited to give a lecture.

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 is the day when the Special Basketball School officially starts in Radovich. We will invite people from the US Embassy to be our guests, people from the American

Councils - Macedonia, YES Alumni, MAAA, and national TV Stations. These invitations will be sent for the each opening ceremony to this group of people.

October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 is the opening day in Struga. We will meet with all of the participants, be part of their first practice and officially open the practice school in this city.

The practices will be held in these two cities in the next 8 weeks, until November the 28<sup>th</sup> 2015. That is the closing ceremony for these two cities. Two days after each practice, each mentor will have to submit an evaluation of the practice, with a description of the tasks done. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 is the opening ceremony for the Special Basketball School in Kumanovo.

The 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 2016 is the opening ceremony for the Special Basketball School in Skopje.

The practices for these two cities will end on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, 2016.

After the 8 weeks of practice are over, we will give each kid a certificate of attendance of the first basketball practice school in Macedonia for kids with Down syndrome, and a medal. Each volunteer and their mentors will receive a certificate of attendance a special "Thank you" certificate, and a medal.

This project will take place 4 cities in Macedonia including Radovish, Struga, Kumanovo and Skopje, including a final tournament day in Skopje where the teams from each city will meet, play basketball, spend the day together, make new friendships, and exchange their experiences and impressions from the practices.

### **Communication Plan**

We will use our YES Alumni network to share information about this project. YES Alumni network consists of:

- Facebook fan page with over 1000 fans

- More than 60 YES Alumni

We will promote our project by getting help from our American Councils Office and their FB fan page with more than 1000 fans.

The project will also be promoted through our friends from the Macedonian American Alumni Association

National TV will be included as well where we will talk about the significance of this project, the long-term objectives, how it impacts our society, and its goals.

There will be at least 5 local TV's sharing information in different languages about the project in different cities in Macedonia.

By using these ways of promoting our project we will inform the public about it and ask for unconditional support and mass participation of volunteers and kids with Down syndrome.

### **Evaluation**

During the 8 - weeks of practice, each one of the participants with limited abilities will receive a survey made by people who already have experience in working with people with Down syndrome. After the 8 weeks, when the practice school is over for a certain city, we will conduct an interview with each of the participants, and their parents to see if we have met their expectations, ask for any suggestions, how to improve our practice school and other advices.

For the volunteers and the teachers each week after the practice is done, we will go through our predicted program for the day, discuss about what we did, how do we improve our next practice, check each activity individually and each of the volunteers will briefly describe their views of the practice that day. When the practice school is over for each city, we will meet again to discuss what we have done so far, have we met the goals set before the school started, we will discuss about the way we implemented the predicted program, how the participants reacted to it. We need as much feedback as we can get. This is crucial in order for us to evaluate and measure our results.

### **Sustainability**

Before we start with the basketball practice school, there will be a 2-day seminar with guest speakers and all the mentors. There will be sessions about people with Down syndrome in order for us to make sure that everyone knows the proper way to communicate and behave with such people. Each one of the mentors will sign an agreement saying that they will

cooperate and work with the kids each Sunday throughout the entire practice school program. When the seminar is over, the mentors will have a meeting with the volunteers where they will transfer the knowledge gained on the seminars. They will educate the volunteers about what they've learned and they will work with the volunteers on the practice program sent from Kansas City from the people who run the Special Olympics Basketball team.

When the project is over, we will have highly educated professionals who can work with such groups of people, which gives us a chance to work on the same project next year again, without spending finance resources about educating new people. We will also make an arrangement with the local authorities in order to use the sports venues throughout the entire time. After the project is over, we will have the resources needed to do the project again.

## **TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED**

\$15,109.00

## **PROPOSAL DOCUMENT:**

[Download budget](#)