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## TRAINING PATHWAYS THAT INTEGRATE DANCE AND SPORTS MOTOR SKILLS



2024

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### **Introduction:** Empowering Active Aging through Movement

As we age, staying physically active is one of the most important things we can do to maintain our health, independence, and overall well-being. However, exercise in the third and fourth age should go beyond just maintaining physical strength. It should nurture balance, flexibility, cognitive function, and emotional health, all while being fun and engaging.

To address this, we've designed 8 innovative and balanced training pathways that merge various aspects of physical fitness, each catering to different needs, interests, and levels of ability. These pathways integrate functional exercises, sport-inspired movements, and dance, offering a diverse approach to staying fit, improving mobility, and enhancing mental clarity.

Each pathway is carefully crafted to improve key areas such as strength, flexibility, coordination, and endurance, while also promoting mental focus, relaxation, and social interaction. From dance-based cardio sessions to mindfulness practices, each training pathway emphasizes holistic health, making sure that both body and mind are cared for.

Whether you're looking to improve your strength and agility, stay balanced, or simply enjoy the joy of movement, these pathways offer a variety of choices to keep you engaged and motivated. The goal is to create an accessible and enjoyable exercise routine that supports a healthy, active lifestyle well into the later years of life.

Let's dive into the eight unique pathways designed to inspire, challenge, and empower you, helping you stay active, healthy, and vibrant for years to come.

This introduction serves to set the stage for the upcoming training pathways, highlighting the importance of holistic, engaging exercise routines for older adults and the benefits of combining movement, sport, and dance into daily life.

**Pathway 1 Concept:** "Circle of Strength, Motion and coordination"

**Goals of the Game:**

**Enhance Physical Fitness:** Improve flexibility, balance, and muscle strength through structured, low-impact movements.

**Promote Cognitive Engagement:** Stimulate coordination and concentration by synchronizing movements with the rhythm of the music and the flow of the game.

**Encourage Social Interaction:** Foster a sense of community and teamwork as participants collaborate and cheer for each other.

**Provide Joyful Exercise:** Make physical activity enjoyable, motivating consistent participation.

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**Description:**

"Circle of Strength and Motion" is an engaging group activity designed for elderly individuals aged 60 and above. The game combines music, physical activity, and social interaction to improve mobility, strength and coordination. Played with 6-8 participants seated in a circle on chairs, it uses simple equipment: a hula hoop and a ball.

While music plays, participants pass the hula hoop around, performing gentle movements designed to enhance flexibility and mobility. Simultaneously, a ball is passed in the same direction, starting across the person with the hula-hoop, with participants performing targeted strength-enhancing and coordination exercises. These movements are guided by a pre-set repertoire of 7 mobility exercises for the hula hoop and 7 strength-building exercises for the ball, ensuring a balanced workout.

When the music stops, the participant holding the ball attempts to "shoot" it into the hula hoop. The player holding the hula hoop assists by adjusting its position, ensuring a successful "basket." The game then resumes with music, fostering an ongoing rhythm of fun and activity.

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**Health Benefits for Elderly Participants:**

**Improved Mobility:** The hula hoop movements increase joint flexibility and range of motion, crucial for daily activities like bending and reaching.

**Increased Strength:** Passing and lifting the ball helps strengthen key muscle groups, particularly in the arms, shoulders, and core, reducing the risk of falls and injuries.

**Better Balance and Coordination:** The dynamic nature of the game enhances balance and motor coordination, supporting independent living.

**Cognitive Stimulation:** Following the music and game flow improves focus, memory, and reaction time.

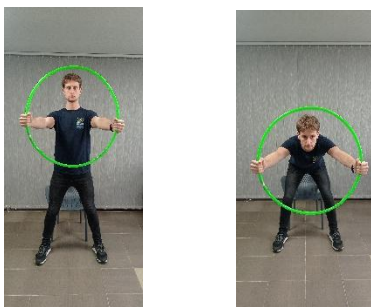
**Social Well-Being:** The interactive setup promotes laughter, connection, and emotional health by reducing isolation.

**Mental Relaxation:** The incorporation of music adds a therapeutic element, reducing stress and boosting mood.

### Hula Hoop Exercise Sequence

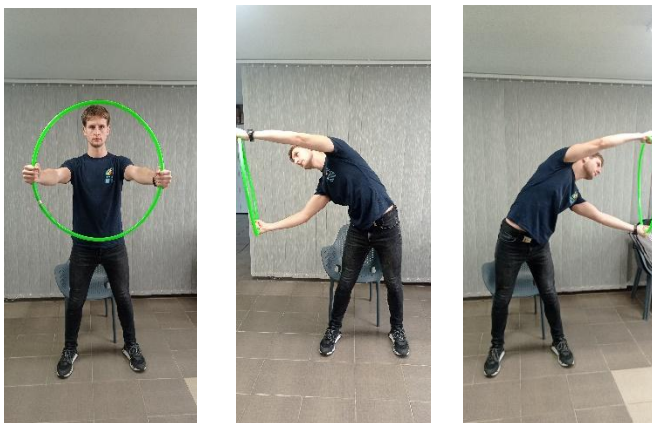
#### Forward Bend with Squat:

Start in a standing position with feet shoulder-width apart, holding the hula hoop with both hands in front of the body at chest level. Perform a forward bend, keeping the hula hoop stationary, and look through the center of the hoop. Optionally, perform a squat. Return to the starting position and repeat.



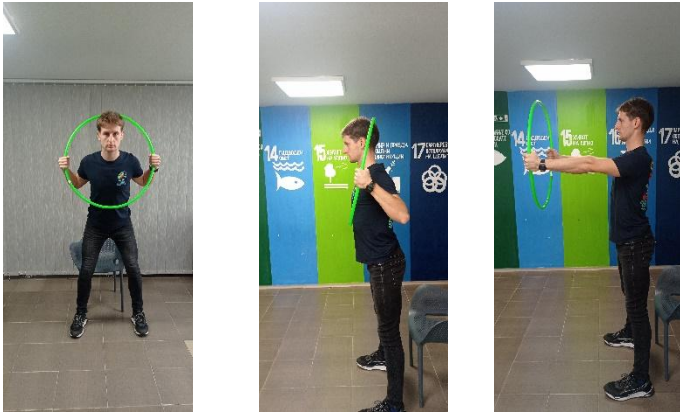
#### Steering Motion:

Maintain the same stance and grip on the hula hoop. Move the hoop in a circular motion as if steering a car, raising one hand overhead (upward position) while the other is lowered (downward position). Alternate hand positions with each movement.



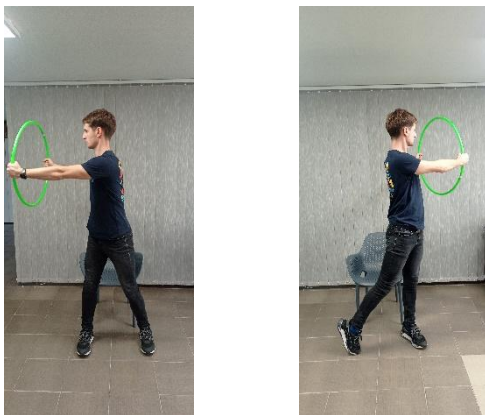
#### Pull Through and Pass:

From the same stance, hold the hula hoop in front of the body. When the hoop is in your hands, pull the hoop closer to the body and pass your head and torso through it, creating a forward motion through the hoop.



**Twisting Motion:**

Maintain the stance and position of the hula hoop. On cue, twist the torso to one side while keeping the hula hoop steady, then twist to the opposite side.



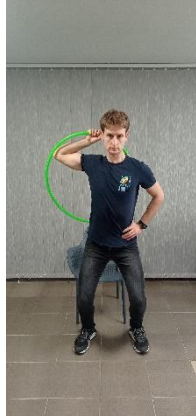
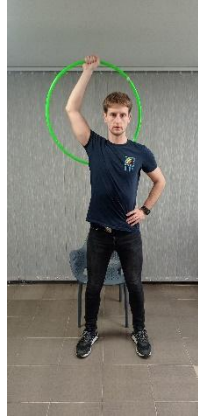
**Overhead Halo with Hip Rotation:**

Stand with a narrow stance, feet slightly apart. Raise the hula hoop overhead with both hands so it frames the head like a halo. On cue, rotate the hips and torso to one side, shifting weight to the back leg. Return to the starting position and repeat on the opposite side.



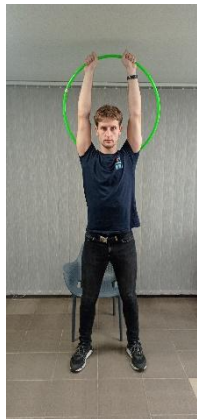
**Wide Stance with Half Squat:**

Stand with a wide stance, legs straight. Hold the hula hoop in one hand extended overhead, with the other hand on your hip. On cue, perform a half squat while lowering the arm with the hula hoop behind your back. Switch arms and repeat.



**Double-Handed Variation:**

Repeat the previous exercise but hold the hula hoop with both hands. Lower the hoop behind your back during the half squat while maintaining control and balance.



**Notes:**

This sequence incorporates movements that improve flexibility, core strength, and balance. Each exercise can be adjusted to match the participant's fitness level, ensuring safety and inclusivity. The use of a hula hoop adds an engaging element, making the routine both functional and enjoyable.

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**Ball Exercise Sequence**

**Alternating Knee Taps:**

Sit on a chair with feet flat on the floor. Hold the ball with both hands at chest level in front of the body. Alternately tap the ball to your right knee and then to your left knee, maintaining an upright posture throughout.





### Standing Ball Raise:

Start seated on the chair, holding the ball with both hands at chest level. As you receive the ball, stand up while raising the ball overhead. Return to the seated position and repeat.



### Leg Extension with Ball Reach:

While seated, hold the ball in front of the body with both hands. When receiving the ball, extend one leg straight forward and move the ball to align with the extended leg. Alternate between legs, repeating the movement with the ball reaching to the corresponding side.



### Behind-the-Back Ball Pass:

Sit on the chair with the ball held in front of the body. Upon receiving the ball, stand up and pass it

behind your back, transferring it from one hand to the other to complete two full rotations. Sit back down and repeat three more times, alternating the direction of the ball pass with each round.



#### Knee Lifts with Ball Squeeze:

Sit on the chair with the ball placed between your knees. Hold the edges of the chair with your hands for stability. On cue, lift your knees toward your chest while keeping the ball securely squeezed between them. Lower the legs back to the starting position and repeat.



#### Overhead Ball Drop and Return:

From a seated position, hold the ball overhead with both hands. On cue, stand up while lowering the ball behind your head. Return the ball to the overhead position, then sit back down in the starting position.



### Under-the-Knee Ball Pass:

While seated, hold the ball with both hands in front of the body. On cue, move the ball alternately under one knee and then the other, passing it with one hand beneath the knee to the other hand. Maintain a steady rhythm and an upright posture.



### Notes:

This sequence is designed to improve coordination, core strength, flexibility, and overall body awareness. Each exercise emphasizes proper form and is adaptable to different fitness levels. The use of a ball adds an engaging and functional element, promoting both physical and cognitive engagement during the routine.

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"Circle of Strength, Motion and coordination" is more than just a game—it's a holistic exercise that supports healthy aging through movement, music, and meaningful social connections

### **Pathway 2** Concept: "The Balanced Molecules"

#### Goals of the Game:

**Enhance Balance and Stability:** Teach participants to maintain posture and control while moving, improving their ability to perform daily activities.

**Foster Social Interaction:** Encourage connection and teamwork by introducing a partner-based element.

**Promote Inclusion:** Adaptable to various fitness levels, the game ensures everyone can participate comfortably.

**Build Confidence:** Help participants develop a sense of accomplishment as they improve their balance and coordination.

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#### Description:

"The Balanced Molecules" is a fun and inclusive game designed to improve balance and coordination while fostering interaction among participants. Played individually yet collaboratively, participants balance a book on their heads as they move freely around the space. Each person goes at their own pace, ensuring the activity is mindful of individual abilities and conditions.

As participants move, they interact with others by performing an "arm under arm" turn—a simple movement that requires them to briefly pair up, link arms, and rotate together without letting the book fall. If a participant's book falls, they are out of the game. The game continues until only one participant remains with their book successfully balanced.

Music can be added as an optional element to make the experience more lively and engaging.



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#### Health Benefits for Elderly Participants:

**Improved Balance:** Balancing the book on the head strengthens stabilizing muscles, reducing the risk of falls.

**Posture Correction:** Maintaining the book upright encourages participants to align their head, neck, and back properly.

**Enhanced Coordination:** Linking arms and turning with others requires careful movement synchronization, enhancing motor skills.

**Increased Focus:** Balancing while moving demands concentration, benefiting cognitive sharpness.

**Social Well-Being:** The game's partner interactions reduce feelings of isolation and create moments of joy and connection.

**Inclusivity and Adaptability:** The game can be modified to suit different abilities, ensuring all participants feel included and valued.

"The Balanced Molecules" is a delightful way to combine physical activity with social engagement, helping elderly participants build balance, posture, and community bonds—all while having fun!

### Pathway 3 Concept: "Local Tai Chi"

#### Goals of Local Tai Chi:

**Promote Balance and Strength:** Teach participants to harmonize their movements, building physical stability and muscle strength.

**Celebrate Cultural Identity:** Encourage participants to connect with their heritage through local dance elements.

**Support Emotional Well-Being:** Use meditative music and mindful movement to foster relaxation and inner peace.

**Encourage Inclusivity and Creativity:** Create a welcoming activity adaptable to different fitness levels and cultural expressions.

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#### Description:

"Local Tai Chi" is a graceful and inclusive activity inspired by the ancient Chinese practice of Tai Chi, a martial art known for its slow, deliberate movements that promote balance, strength, and mindfulness. In this game, participants follow a choreographed sequence of slow and controlled movements designed to evoke the spirit of Tai Chi while incorporating elements of their region's traditional dances.

Set to soothing and meditative music, the choreography blends artistic expression with functional fitness. Movements can be easily adjusted to accommodate varying physical abilities, ensuring accessibility for all participants. This culturally adaptable format allows every region to infuse the activity with its own unique dance traditions and aesthetic, creating a personalized and meaningful experience.



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#### Benefits of Practicing Local Tai Chi:

##### Physical Benefits:

**Improved Balance:** Slow, controlled movements train stability and reduce the risk of falls.

**Enhanced Muscle Strength:** Movements that incorporate weight shifting and body control strengthen key muscle groups, particularly in the legs and core.

Flexibility and Coordination: Stretching and fluid transitions improve joint flexibility and overall coordination.

Low-Impact Fitness: Gentle on the joints, it provides a safe way for elderly participants to stay active.

Mental and Emotional Benefits:

Stress Reduction: The meditative pace and music help calm the mind and reduce anxiety.

Focus and Mindfulness: Participants develop concentration and body awareness as they flow through the sequences.

Cultural Appreciation: Incorporating local dance movements fosters pride and connection to one's heritage.

Social Benefits:

Strengthened Community Bonds: Sharing a culturally rich activity creates a sense of unity among participants.

Inclusivity and Belonging: The adaptable nature ensures everyone, regardless of ability, feels welcome and engaged.

"Local Tai Chi" combines the art of mindful movement with the vibrancy of cultural traditions, creating a holistic activity that nurtures the body, mind, and spirit while celebrating the uniqueness of each community.

#### Game 4 LAGO (Lento)

##### Playing

Through an initial individual assessment of the person, exercises for muscle warm-up could be suggested.

The muscle warm-up phase is essential. This warm-up involves movements for stretching and relaxing the arms and legs.

##### Opportunity:

It is highlighted that the warm-up activities result in significant physical improvement, contributing to well-being and health.

##### MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO

For a healthy mind, it is necessary to have a healthy body.

#### Pathway 4 LAGO (Lento)

The new dance named Lago (Lento) stands out particularly in the movements that resemble those used in swimming.

The new dance, called Lago, aims to improve both arm and leg movements.

##### Method of Performing Exercises

\*Circular Head Movements\* – Stand upright and gently rotate your head in a circle, first in one direction, then in the other.





**\*Shoulder Rotation\*** – Place your arms by your sides and make circular movements with your shoulders – first forward, then backward.



**\*Wrist Joint Warm-Up\*** – Extend your arms to the sides and make circular movements with your wrists, first in one direction, then in the other.



\*While the arms are extended, first lift the right arm above the head, then lower the left arm beside the body and start making circular movements (swimming) with the arms and moving the legs as if swimming the "freestyle" stroke.



\*Dynamic Leg Stretching\* – Perform lunges forward, backward, and sideways. Hold each lunge position for a few seconds to stretch the muscles.





**\*Torso Rotations Warm-Up\*** – Stand upright with your feet shoulder-width apart and rotate your upper body from left to right, keeping your arms relaxed.



\*After warming up the legs, we move on to the second swimming stroke – "dolphin". We stand upright, with the arms relaxed by the sides of the body, and begin making circular movements with the arms forward, while the legs move from the hips like a mermaid swimming.



\*The position of the legs should be in the shape of the letter "O", with the arms next to the chest, palms together, so that the body resembles a frog. The arms are lifted upward, then spread out to the sides and returned to the chest, while the legs are simultaneously brought together and returned to their original position. This is the "breaststroke" swimming style.



\*We return the body to an upright position. Now, lift the left arm next to the head and the right arm beside the body, and start making circular movements, but backward, while moving the knees forward and backward to achieve the "backstroke" style.



\*The speed of performing the exercises and the number of repetitions should be adjusted to the rhythm of the music and the age of the person performing this dance. It is recommended that this exercise lasts for about 5 to 10 minutes. So that each part of the body and muscle groups are adequately warmed up for further activities.

### **Pathway 5** Psychomotor Theme: Body Experience

Rhythmic movement in time with music "Caye Sukariye" (trainer Latifa )

Exercise description:

The participants stand in a semi circle of 3 people in front

2 People in back

Therapist sets the pace with drums and music

Participants dance along

In tact, left foot forward, toe slightly touches the ground

Alternately right toe forward touches the ground slightly

At the same time, both arms are stretched up to the sides, both wrists circle right and left 2x

Same steps with the torso slightly bent forward

this time circling with both forearms in the front in opposite directions

Pay attention to fast tempo, slow tempo and rhythm and to instructions from the trainers

According to the trainer's instructions, one partner can sit one knee bent in Front of the other partner, with one hand stretched upwards

the partner circles around in one direction and in the opposite direction

Time 7 min

Dance steps can be changed depending on the condition of the participants

Intention: Improvement of coordination and mobility Strengthening of the thigh, abdominal and hip muscles, rhythmization ability, promotion of mobility





#### Benefits:

The sense of balance can be trained particularly well when dancing. Since the shift of the body weight or the body's center of gravity as well as jumps and turns are an essential part of dancing, dynamic balance, in contrast to static balance, is an important component in dance.

Sense of movement in dance is crucial for kinesthetic differentiation. This is about feeling into one's own body in order to become aware of one's posture and movements.

By moving on different levels and in different directions, spatial awareness is created in dance. The music is also used to train the sense of time when dancing.

Spatial orientation is mainly used during turns, as well as when dancing with a partner or in a group.

The ability to react can also be trained through dance.

In addition to coordinative skills, dancing also trains physical skills.

#### **Pathway 6** Psychomotor Theme: Social experiences

##### Intention:

Loosening of the abdominal muscles, stretching of the abdominal muscles

Care and Balance

Cool down

Exercise description:

### Abdominal Breathing

instructions in 8 steps: (Derya)

Time 9 min

1. Find a position in which your stomach can move as freely as possible.
2. Place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest.
3. Breathe deeply into your stomach through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise significantly, the hand on your chest only slightly.
4. Breathe out slowly through your mouth.
5. Take a short break.
6. Then repeat the process. Consciously feel how the abdominal wall rises significantly and then slowly falls again.
7. As you breathe in, let your stomach become completely full. As you breathe out, let the air out very slowly.
8. Imagine you are standing on the sandy beach in front of the sea. As you inhale, a wave rolls onto the beach and glides over your feet. As you exhale, the wave slowly retreats into the sea.

Maybe you want to think about a balloon. When you breathe in, the balloon fills with air and expands. When you breathe out, it shrinks in on itself. Find an image that resonates with you and breathe deeply into your stomach for another minute and then exhale slowly.

Benefits: learn to express their feelings, to organize, understand, and ultimately process them. In the process, conflicts can be resolved, aggression can be reduced, or joy can be expressed.

### 4-7-8 breathing

When we experience great tension, fear or even panic, our breathing becomes very deep and rapid. With 4-7-8 breathing you can reduce the physical stress reaction and calm down.

Instructions in three steps:

1. Breathe in for 4 seconds.
2. Hold the air for 7 seconds.
3. Breathe out for 8 seconds.

## Pathway 7

### Activity 1: Sport-Inspired Dance Movement (20-25 minutes)

Goal: Engage the body in dynamic movement while combining sport and dance elements.

#### Dance-Inspired Sports Movement (10 minutes):

**Boxing with Dance:** Combine light punches (jabs, crosses, hooks) with dance footwork (side steps, quick pivots). This builds coordination, improves upper body strength, and enhances rhythm.

**Tennis Footwork with Dance Flair:** Perform side-to-side steps with simulated racquet swings, mimicking tennis actions but with a dance twist. This helps with agility, coordination, and cardiovascular endurance.

#### Balance Dance Flow (10 minutes):

**Waltz Steps or Slow Turns:** Use waltz or ballroom-style turns to promote coordination and balance, focusing on smooth, controlled movements.

**One-Legged Balance with Dance:** Stand on one leg while performing gentle arm movements (e.g., reaching overhead or to the side, or swaying with rhythm), improving balance and core strength. Hold each leg for 15-30 seconds, alternating 2-3 times.

This Sport + Dance Fusion pathway blends the joy of dance with the functional benefits of sports, providing a well-rounded fitness plan that helps older adults stay active, socially engaged, and emotionally fulfilled. It promotes strength, balance, coordination, and cognitive health while offering a fun, holistic approach to fitness

## Pathway 8

Psychomotor Theme: Material experience: to Activation with Ammola Ampoule

Exercise description:

Break open the Ammola ampoule and hold the breaking point down briefly for emptying.

The liquid is absorbed by the sheathing.

Hold the ampoule under your nose to inhale.

Intention: Tension reduction or activation of sensory organs by stimulus

Benefits:

In practical use, smelling the Ammola olfactory stick triggers a strong stimulus that supports the control of dissociative states.

The stimulus activates the synapses in the brain and increases the responsiveness of the muscles.

Through the sense of smell, you learn to express your feelings in order to order, understand and finally process them. In the process, conflicts can be resolved, aggression can be reduced or joy can be expressed.





## Methodology and Conclusion:

In essence, the methodology used in this program combines a scientific understanding of aging and fitness with a person-centered, enjoyable approach. It emphasizes functional movements, emotional well-being, and cognitive health while adapting to individual needs for a balanced, long-term fitness plan.

These eight innovative training pathways combine the best of both sport and dance to offer a comprehensive and enjoyable approach to fitness for those in their third and fourth ages. Whether you're looking to improve cardiovascular health, build strength, increase flexibility, or boost cognitive function, these pathways are designed to support a full spectrum of physical, emotional, and mental well-being. By incorporating movement that is both functional and fun, these pathways ensure that aging doesn't mean slowing down — it means continuing to live a vibrant, active life.

Each pathway can be tailored to individual needs, whether you're just beginning your fitness journey or looking for a more challenging routine. Explore the different options, find what resonates with you, and begin your journey to a stronger, healthier, and more joyful life today.

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This content introduces the pathways in a clear and concise manner, offering a broad overview of each while emphasizing the health and emotional benefits of a balanced, sport-and-dance-inspired fitness routine for older adults.

*This eBook is a deliverable of the project **Kinetic steps (2023-2-IT02-KA210-ADU-000173048)** and is made by the participants during the workshop in Skopje, North Macedonia 07-08-09 December 2024*