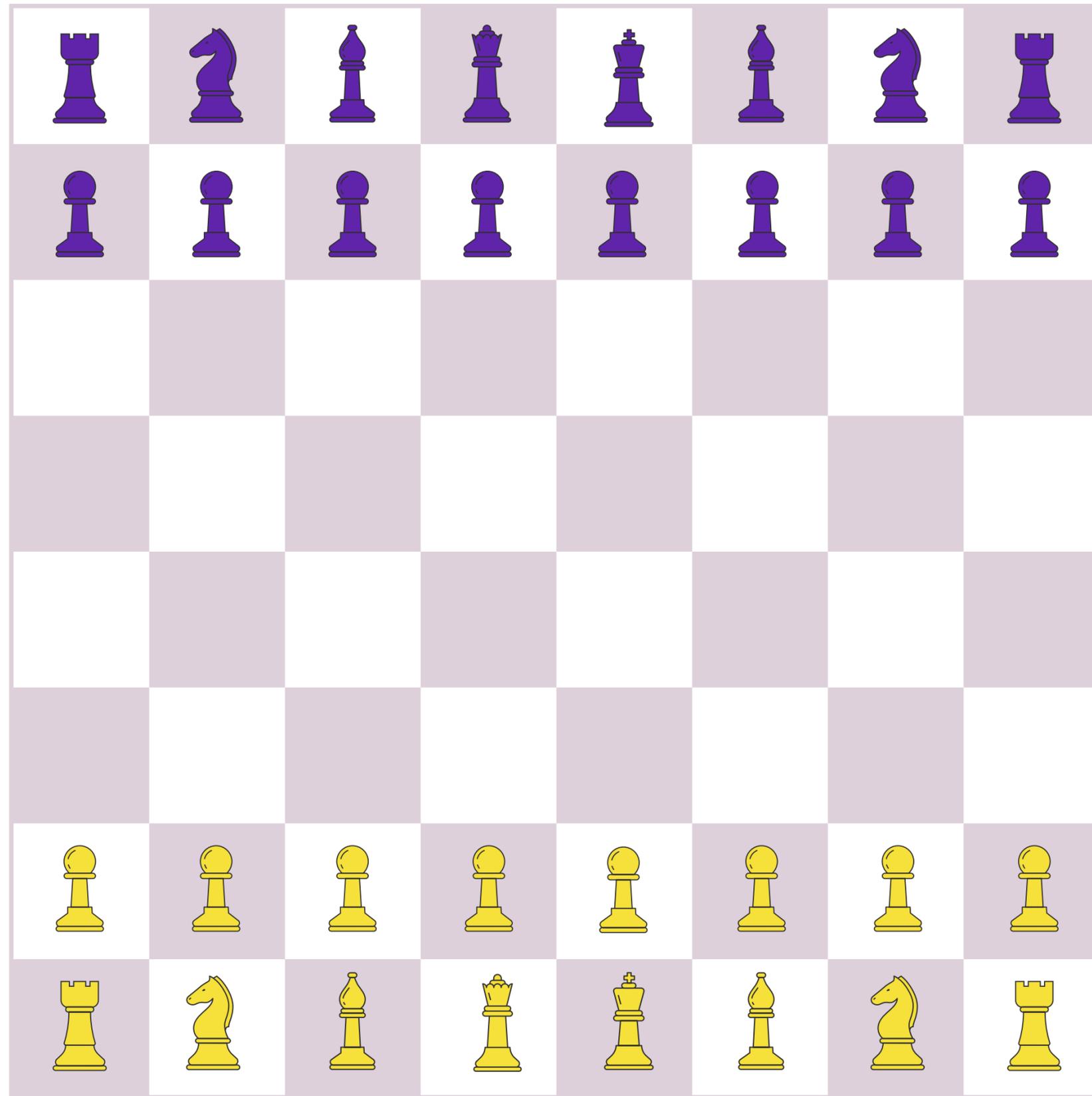


PROJECT CAISSA

HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS

**SAY YES TO
CHESS**



ABOUT ME



MARIA ANNA STEFANIDI

**Chess got into my life from an early age. Participated in almost every kind of Championship or Tournament in my country - Greece.
Obtained the titles of WFM & FI.**

Entered University in 2004 (BSc Social Anthropology) and soon after followed a career into the burgeoning market of digital marketing.

Meanwhile, chess was always a huge part of my life. In 2017, I became president of my chess club, got married and relocated from Greece.

By 2019, being Head of Marketing in a multinational company, travelling all over Europe I faced a dilemma: What's Next?

The answer was easy: Create something of yourself. My company was set by March 2020 & pandemic hit me just before launching.

Just like in chess: evaluation, regroup and attack!

That is how Shah Mat Masters became reality.

WHY CYPRUS



**Business Background
Holistic Educational
Approach
Chess Experience
Professionalism
Service quality**



S

W



**Huge amount of R&D
Not a local Trainer/Player
Individual Initiative
New to Industry (CYP)**

**High Niche Market
Innovative Idea
Expansion Opportunity
Oligopoly Competition
Small Country**



O

T



**Children have lots of other
options
Chess is not a popular
sport in CYP
Local Federation
Economic Uncertainty**

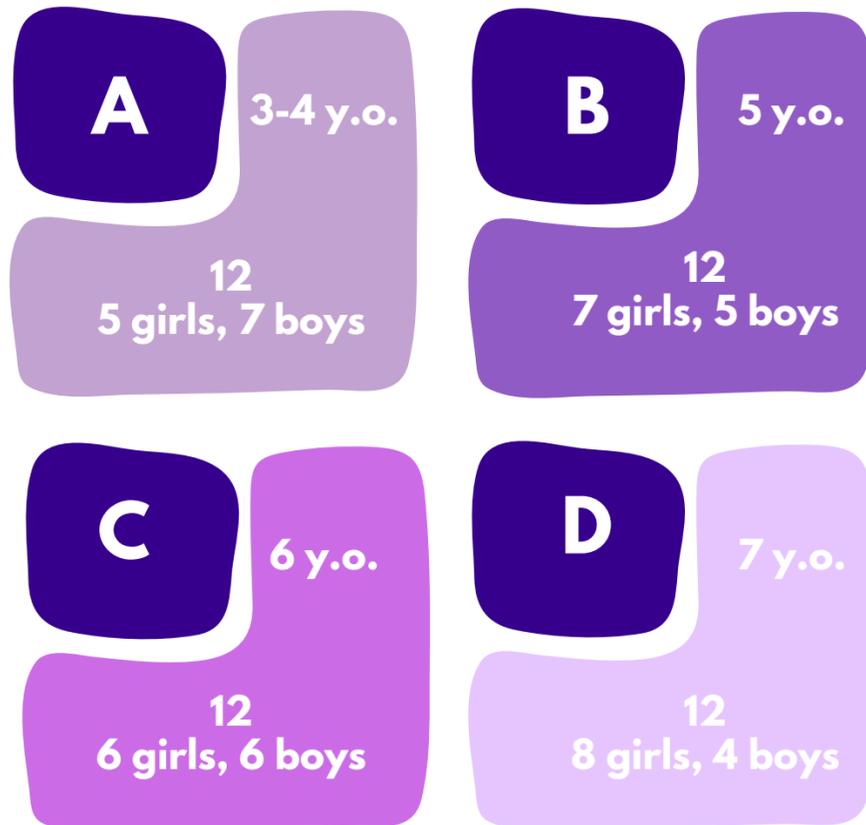
GIRLS VS BOYS

Chess as activity

Joining forces with an established educational organization is always helpful for a new business.

Chess in education is something new in Cyprus so when I suggested chess as a creative activity (1 h per week) in a Saturday programme, failure was a sure thing.

INSIGHTS



2019 - 2020 Data
Girls are more than boys.



SATURDAY PROGRAMME

1 time/week: Not Enough
1h lesson: Not suitable for 3-5 y.o.

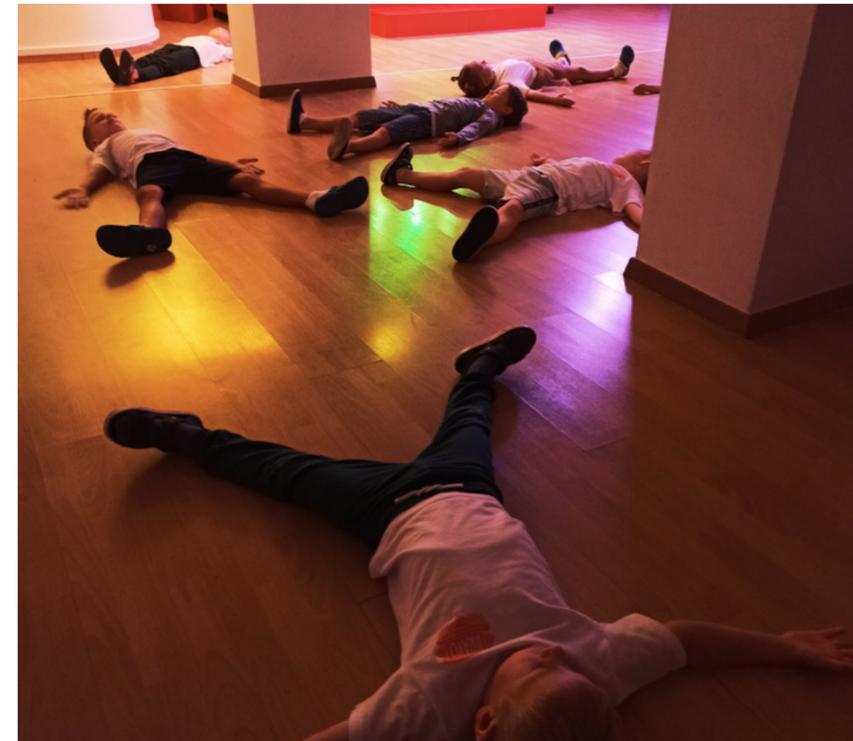
PROJECT CAISSA: HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS

JOINT VENTURE



**In September 2020,
Shah Mat Masters Chess Academy &
Bravo Intellect School
joined forces & launched an experimental, preschool
programme.**

PROJECT CAISSA: HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS



CURRICULUM

ENGLISH
THEATRICAL GAME
MENTAL CALCULATION
BRAIN FITNESS

GREEK
DANCE
CHESS
ICT - INTRO

OPENING

The SMM & BIS collaboration started in 2019 and one of our first obstacles was that girls* were not attracted or even interested to try and learn chess. Pandemic made the problem worse.

The Cypriot anti-covid protocol allowed only to preschools to resume from September and that generated the final idea.

There was the perfect chance to prove that if chess is involved from early age gender doesn't matter.

PROJECT CAISSA: HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS

OUR STRENGTH

Holistic Educational Approach

The goal of holistic education is to cultivate a developing child's physical, emotional, moral, psychological, and spiritual attributes. Serving the whole child means providing opportunities that are personalized to a child's skills and feelings. Lessons are conducted in a safe, supportive environment that allows students to utilize their individual strengths.

Trainers/Educators must be prepared to nurture students with varying educational levels and learning capabilities. While holistic education is guided by one overarching philosophy, teachers may employ a number of methods and strategies to create a holistic learning culture.



Provide Real Experience wherever you are because "Chess is Life" 

PERSONNEL

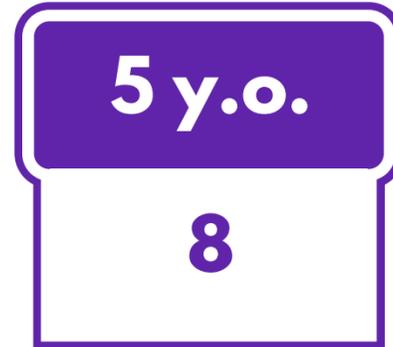
English Teacher
Greek Teacher
Russian Teacher
Chess Instructor
Mathematician
Child Psychologist
Pilates Instructor/ Dance Trainer
Drama Teacher



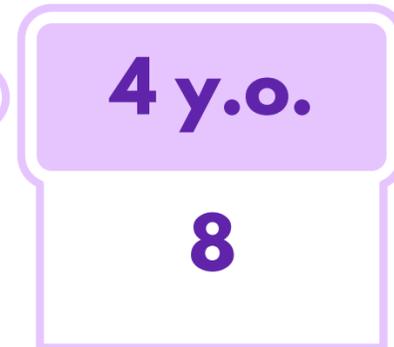
PROJECT CAISSA: HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS

ADMISSIONS

MASTERS



CANDIDATES



2 Age Groups *

BOYS



GIRLS *



2021-2022 Data.
Kids' admissions are carried out in such a way to reach valid conclusions.

GIRLS VS BOYS

Chess as Educational Tool

Chess-theme preschool programme seemed ideal at that time because it was easy to switch online in any circumstance. Our risky experiment/ case study was about to launch and prove that there is or not gender gap when it comes to chess IF the fundamentals are solid.

The number of girls / boys was scheduled (+/-) to be equal and the admissions restricted (24 students max).

From March 2020 everything was forced to stop due to Corona pandemic and in May both companies brainstormed on how to resume in September.

TRADITIONAL TRAINING

12 preschoolers in a classroom & discipline = Utopia
Chess Terminology = Foreign Language
Pieces = meant to lie on the Floor

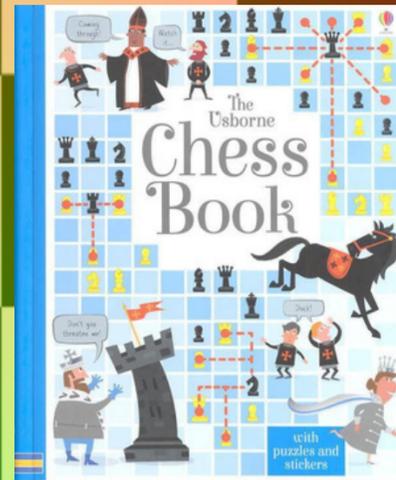
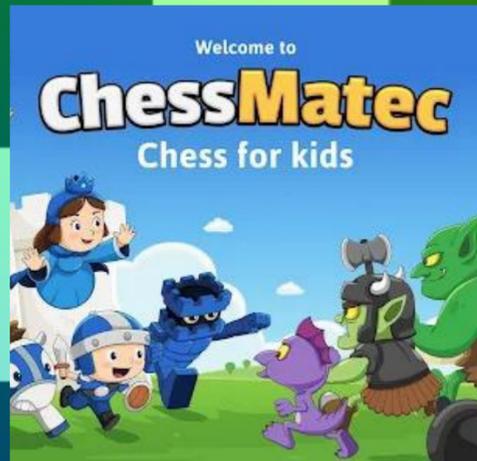
Forget about it!

ACTUAL FACTS

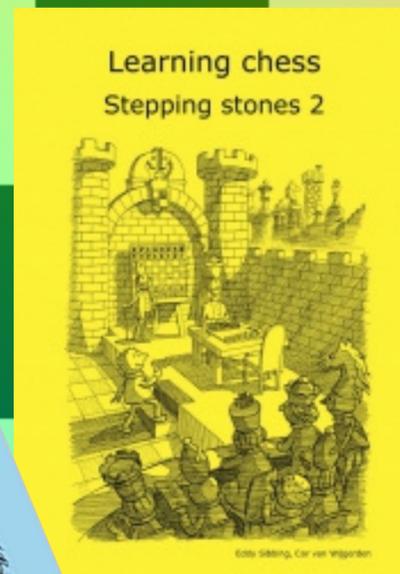
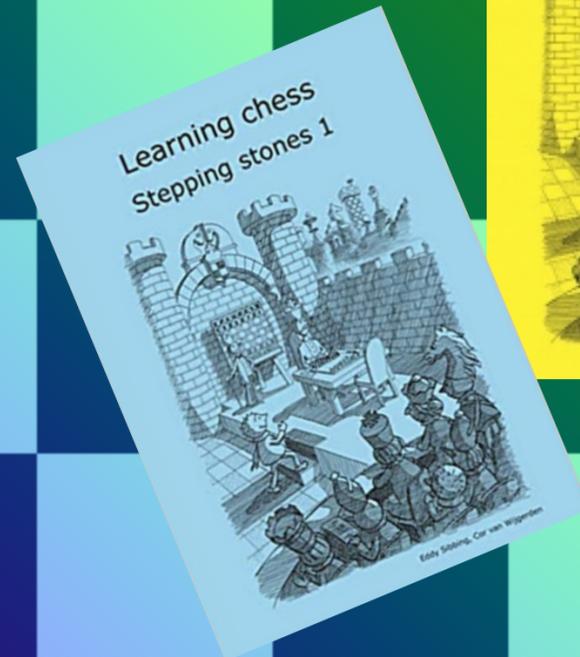
Same number (+/-) of girls/boys were fascinated
Everyone asked for a chessboard from their parents
Most of our kids "force" their parents to play
80% asked for additional training

WHO WANTS MORE?

After School Additional Training
Sunday Tournaments
Boost Trainings
July Chess Camp



Online & Offline Training



OUR TOOLS

Our First Academic Year 2020-2021

Traditional training methods don't apply on preschoolers.

HOW TO ENGAGE A PRESCHOOLER IN CHESS?

make it fun

Forget Rules
Story Telling
Role Playing
Online Apps
Interactive Videos
Movies

Play
Create
Construct
Dance
Cinema
Paint

PROJECT CAISSA: HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS

WEEK

CHESS PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER - JUNE

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Day Off</i>	<p>Chess Basics 9.30 - 10.00 Candidates 10.10 - 10.40 Masters.</p> <p>After School Chess 15.00 - 15.40 Candidates</p>	<p>ICT & Chess 9.30 - 10.00 Candidates 10.10 - 10.40 Masters.</p> <p>After School Chess 15.00 - 15.40 Masters</p>	<p>Chess History 9.30 - 10.00 Candidates 10.10 - 10.40 Masters.</p>	<p>ICT & Chess 9.30 - 10.00 Candidates 10.10 - 10.40 Masters.</p> <p>After School Chess 15.00 - 15.40 Candidates</p>	<p>Gran Prix Friday Rapid Tournament 9.30 - 11.00</p> <p>After School Chess 15.00 - 15.40 Masters</p>	<p>Creative Activities Program (4 groups: 4-7 y.o.)</p> <p>Chess as a creative activity</p>

PROJECT CAISSA: HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS



Mini Chess Queens

Chess as sport: From Greece to Cyprus

Greece is quite active when it comes to women's chess.

Players like Botsari, Makropoulou, Tsolakidou, Kontou, Avramidou, Kouvatsou, Fakhiridou, Pavlidou (the list is quite long) created a legacy that inspired and continues to inspire a lot of Greek girls to enter the magical world of chess.

Meanwhile, Cyprus is tabula rasa in terms of women's chess.

LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK *

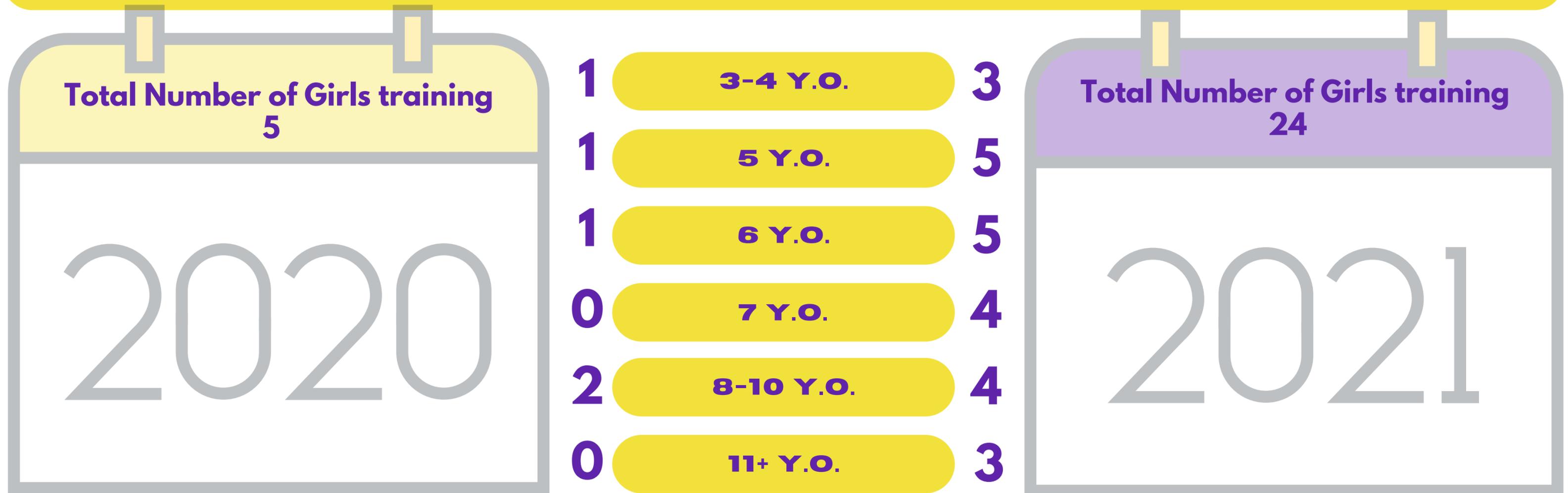


Chess as sport: Our training academy

In 2019 we couldn't finish the academic year due to pandemic. Until March, there were only 2 girls interested in chess. Below you will find our metrics for 2020-2021 vs 2021-2022 academic years.

During 2021-2022 period, all of our tournaments were fee free for girls. Aida Paunescu - our student - is the current U8 CYP champion (Open Cat).

LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK (AGE)



Space is the limit!

Our experiment grows bigger!

Academic year 2022-23 welcomes our first "Year 1" students (Ministry of Education approved our 4 Year Private Primary School extension).

We don't accept additional kids, only the ones that participated in our Preschool Programme.

WHAT'S NEXT

**Time to Visit New Places:
Youth Tournaments
Chess Camps**

**Organize Standard Time
Tournaments**

Guest Trainers

Workshops for Parents



Learn from your audience

Girls need a role model to influence them. In early age, they are more ready (than boys) to:

- ★ participate in tournaments**
- ★ cope with losing a game**
- ★ understand the importance of exercises**

Parents say

~We spent quality time playing chess with my daughter.

~Sofia wants to play only ChessApps on her tablet.

~Varvara tries to finish her workbook and get the next one.

~Our daughter teaches all of our guests how to play chess. She even searches for chessboards when we visit friends.

~My granddaughter wins me all the time with "Fool's Mate". How can I defend?

Girls Rule

~My mother didn't have a teacher like you and now I have to teach her.

~Explain to my father that Magnus will not play next year because he thinks that I am joking.

~If I play simultaneously against our boys and win them all can I challenge Judit?

~Chess is the cool (thumbs up).

~I don't need theory. I need to win boys, now.

~I can't understand how boys play chess. They are so noisy.

PROJECT CAISSA

HOW TO ATTRACT MORE GIRLS TO CHESS

CHECKMATE



#FOLLOW US



@shahmatmasters_academy

