



AN UP-DATE ON THE STATUS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS WORLDWIDE:
TECHNICAL REPORT FOR THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

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This Report comprises five sections. Section One provides a context-setting introductory overview of the situation of physical education in schools, which culminated in the Berlin Physical Education World Summit in November 1999. Section Two looks at key features of developments since the 1999 Physical Education World Summit in selected continental regions and countries, whilst Section Three embraces the issue of Inclusion and Disability. Section Four focuses on inter-governmental and non-governmental agencies' recent initiatives and Section Five contains concluding comments.

Section One: Background Context

A perceived decline in the position and presence of physical education in school curricula worldwide was apparent in some countries in the 1970s and 1980s. Subsequent manifestations of a deteriorating situation were evidenced by a number of conference themes, a range of journal articles reporting on the perilous position of physical education in schools, several international and national surveys, on-going analyses of national and international trends (see Hardman 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1999) and a plethora of international agencies' and regional continental organisations' Position, Policy, Advocacy and Declaration Statements (refer Hardman and Marshall, 2000, pp.1-2). It is a matter of historical record that the widespread concerns, particularly in the 1990s, led to the International Council for Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE) initiated (with International Olympic Committee (IOC) support), worldwide survey into the state and status of physical education in schools. One important outcome of this initiative was the *World Summit on Physical Education* 3-5 November 1999 in Berlin organised by ICSSPE with patronage and support from the IOC, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Berlin 'Summit' brought together policy makers, administrators, researchers and physical education practitioners from around the world to share information on the situation of, and case for, physical education in schools. The disseminated findings from the survey reaffirmed the perilous position of physical education revealed in earlier findings and brought a later UNESCO concessionary response that the principles of its 1978 International Charter had not filtered down into practice with physical education and sport not yet established as a national priority. Physical education was seen to have been pushed into a defensive position. It was suffering from decreasing curriculum time allocation, budgetary controls with inadequate financial, material and personnel resources; it had low subject status and esteem and was being ever more marginalised and undervalued by authorities. School physical education appeared to be under threat in all regions of the world. At best it seemed to occupy a tenuous place in the school curriculum: in many countries, it was not accepted on par with seemingly superior academic subjects concerned with developing a child's intellect. The survey formed the basis for establishing that indeed there was cause for considerable disquiet about the situation of physical education in schools across the world, and that, notwithstanding the difficulties and problems of collecting, interpreting and reporting on data from a broad sample and wide range of sources, there were common trends and issues, which were a source for serious concern. The survey pointed to inadequate watching briefs on what was happening (or not as the case may be) in physical education in many countries and also highlighted the need for more and better quality baseline data in each country.

The Physical Education World Summit culminated in the formulation of Action Agendas and an Appeal to UNESCO General Conference and the Ministers with responsibility for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS III) meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay (30 November - 3 December 1999). The so-called 'Berlin Agenda' called for governmental and ministerial action to implement policies for physical education as a human right for all children in recognition of its distinctive role in physical health, overall development and safe, supportive communities. Furthermore, in making the case for quality physical education, it called for investment in initial and in-service professional training and development for well-qualified educators and support for research to improve the effectiveness and quality of physical education. These were issues, which were repeated in an *Appeal to the General Conference of UNESCO*: the General Conference was urged to commit to developing strategies for effective implementation of and properly resourced physical education programmes, to mobilise inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, public and private sectors to co-operate in the promotion and development of physical education and was requested to invite the Director General of UNESCO to submit the World PE Summit's *Appeal* to the MINEPS III meeting in Punta del Este, November 30-December 3, 1999. Subsequently, the MINEPS III Punta del Este Declaration endorsed the Berlin Agenda for Action and called upon member states to implement it through incorporation in school programmes or, as a minimum, meeting with any legal requirements with respect to physical education programmes in school curricula (refer Doll-Tepper and Scoretz, 2001). The Ministers reiterated the importance of physical education as an essential element and an integral part in the process of continuing education and human and social development, expressed concern that, in spite of the expansion of elite sport and sport for all programmes in recent years, opportunities for



children to participate in physical education had been significantly curtailed and noted that the time required for physical education in schools was not being respected and was even being substantially reduced in many countries because of changing priorities. In essence, MINEPS III was acknowledging that member states were not wholly complying with the 1978 UNESCO Charter.

A year after the publication of the World-wide Survey *Final Report* (Hardman and Marshall, 2000), a Council of Europe Committee for the Development of Sport (CDDS) 'Working Group of Experts' on *Access of Children to Physical Education and Sport* picked up the baton. The Working Group resolved to examine the situation of school physical education and sport in the member states of the Council of Europe with a view to providing informed recommendations for discussion and action at the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Sport in Warsaw, Poland 12-13 September 2002. In the event, the ministerial *Conclusions* acknowledged a serious decline in the quality and the time allocated for teaching physical education and sport for children and young people in schools as well as inadequate opportunities to participate in recreational sport out of school. Additionally, they indicated a need to study ways in which the provision of physical education and sport can be improved in Council of Europe member countries for all children and young people, including those with disabilities. According to the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe in her Warsaw Informal Ministerial Meeting Opening Address "the crux of the issue is that there is too much of a gap between the promise and the reality" (De Boer-Buquicchio, 2002, p.2).

Section Two: Post-Berlin Developments

Generally, since the Berlin Summit developments in school physical education policies and practices across the world have been diverse. Essentially, because the situation in economically under-developed and developing regions has changed little in the five years since the Berlin PE Summit and UNESCO Punta del Este Declaration in 1999, and whereas there have been significant developments in economically developed countries, this Section provides a summary overview of the relatively unchanged situation on the African and Indian Sub-Continent and a more detailed review of main features of developments in those continental regions and countries, where developments in school physical education have been more significant. Developments in economically developed countries are typified in economically developed countries and regions by 'mixed messages'; the review highlights initiatives and trends to illustrate the "mixed messages" thesis¹.

2.1 Africa

Shortage of facilities and adequately trained personnel are widely reported throughout the continent as are the peripheral value in the curriculum (regarded as non-educational, non-productive use of time, is treated as recreation/play time especially in primary schools) and inadequate monitoring inspections in secondary schools (e.g. in Benin, Botswana and Uganda). Generally, priority is accorded to language and mathematics with even meagre allocated physical education/sport resources often diverted to other subjects. In some countries (e.g. Botswana and Malawi) physical education for girls often suffers from optional status with many preferring not to take part, a situation, which is exacerbated by dearth of amenities such as changing rooms. In South Africa, physical education as a school subject no longer exists though it is a focus (physical development and movement) of the learning area "Life Orientation" along with health promotion, social development, personal development and orientation to the world of work foci in grades R-9 (General Education and Training Band) (Van Deventer, 2003).

The majority of African countries has either no or minimal provision for physical education for children with a disability. Typical is a Benin government official's comment that his country does "not have any programme, which deals with the physical education teaching to the disabilities". In Botswana a Professor of Physical Education observes that "cultural beliefs and attitudes do not allow the handicapped to be exposed to free physical activities and sports, for fear of their being injured or being ridiculed by their normal peers" but that "some of the courses offered at the Department of Physical Education to all grades of programmes include those on adapted Physical Education including the adapted sports".

2.2 Asia

In many Indian and Pakistani schools, lack of qualified teachers and facilities, inadequate inspection, perception of physical education as a non-educational fun activity and inferiority to academic subjects, collectively contribute to either minimal provision or to not even being a feature of the curriculum. Girls are discouraged from participating in physical education clubs in many rural areas especially because of what it will do to their bodies (render them "unfeminine"). In Pakistan, cultural and religious constraints limit the scope of physical education for girls, who are not allowed to take part in sports and physical activities except within the four walls of the schools. In Vietnam, it is alleged that time allocation does not reach requirements, the physical education lesson is more likely to be cancelled than other subjects and teachers' technique is poor. The Indian sub-continent generally has minimal provision for disabled students. In India, for example, a Physical Education Lecturer asserts "there is no special provision of

physical education lesson of the students with disabilities in the school... The percentage of students with disabilities in the schools is very negligible”.

2.3. Central and Latin America including the Caribbean

In the Bahamas and St. Vincent, physical education is viewed as play/fun time. It is often used as a class venue for disruptive or backward students. In Jamaica, it is regarded as a ‘Cinderella’ subject and/or as a waste of time.

In the most Latin American countries², the most recent legislation has made physical education in elementary and middle schools (basic education) a compulsory curriculum subject, though timetable allocation, for which there are no legal prescriptions, is generally minimal or low. Despite the legislation on requirement, in most countries (Chile and Colombia are exceptions) there has been a decrease in the actual number of physical education classes.

The number of facilities for the general population participation in physical and sporting activity has generally increased and outdoor amenities (e.g. beaches) are accessible but community-oriented physical education programmes have not kept pace with facility provision.

The number of courses leading to qualified teacher status and masters and doctoral programmes has developed favourably throughout the continent; in Brazil alone there are 400 Physical Education College Education Institutions and 12 Physical Education Masters and Doctors programmes. Concomitantly, the number of publishing companies and specialist journals in Physical Education has grown steadily, especially in Brazil, Mexico and Colombia. In Brazil, the *Conselho Federal de Educação Física (CONFEF)*, The Federal Physical Education Council) has established a regulatory *Register of Physical Education Professionals* (currently about 100,000 physical educators). *CONFEF* has also issued a *Brazilian Physical Education Charter*, which accords with the Berlin PE Summit Action Agenda principles for ‘Quality’, as well as a *Code of Ethics* for registered professionals. Other countries in the region have started developing processes similar to the Brazilian example, mainly because there is general consensus that the regulation has improved the quality and organization of physical education in the country.

In research investigation in the physical education domain, despite growing interest, Latin America lags well behind North America and Europe. However, physical educators’ commitment to professional development is evident in Conference etc. attendance figures: the FIEP Physical Education International Congress in Foz do Iguaçu attracted some 3,000 teachers from 12 nations, including 9 Latin American countries in 2004; the FIEP Physical Education South American Annual Congress regularly has 1,000+ delegates in 2003; the Biennial Physical Education Pan-American Congress had 2,500 participants at its 2003 venue in Mexico; and the CELAFISCS Sports Science International Symposium, which is about to hold its 30th event had more than 2,000 participants in 2003. There is a trend towards closer relationships between physical education and health; it is a trend that has emanated from *Sports for All* programmes, which have raised levels of awareness. The main referral point here *Agita São Paulo (Move São Paulo)*, which has already become *Agita América (Move America)*, and *Agita Mundo” (Move the World)*. This health-centred programme prescribes 30 minutes activity every day. The Argentine programme *Movete* is also relevant in health-oriented promotion. Awareness of the importance of physical education and activity is increasing throughout Latin America and in some large cities at least, physical activities are being incorporated into people’s individual cultures: gymnastic centres, beach and park sports practice, home condominiums’ programmes, and social clubs’ activities etc. are testimony to the significant role of physical education in modern life.

2.4 Europe

Europe with its admixture of economically developed and developing countries and regions and various and different historical and socio-cultural settings is a continental region, in which both diversity and congruence are evident. This sub-section addresses physical education across Europe by drawing from the Council of Europe CDDS commissioned survey of school physical education in member states and includes specific information on developments in the United Kingdom (specifically England and Scotland). The immediate following summary highlights the main findings of the CDDS survey (refer Hardman, 2002a and 2002b).

2.4.1 CDDS Survey Findings

1. Legal Status of School Physical Education

- Legal requirements for physical education in schools are in place: physical education is an obligatory subject or is generally practised in all member states for at least some part of the compulsory schooling years for both boys and girls
- Required weekly/annual time allocation is around 6-7% of total curriculum time; the highest physical education time allocation occurs in the lower to upper middle phase of schooling (children aged 9-14); time allocation reduces with increasing age, especially in the upper secondary or final years of schooling, when it either becomes an optional subject or it disappears from the timetable



- Recent educational reforms have not significantly affected the legal status of physical education but across Europe there have been reductions in physical education curriculum timetable allocation especially in countries where curriculum responsibilities have been divested to schools
- Actual implementation frequently does not meet with statutory (legal) obligations or expectations. Examinations in the subject vary from non-existent to annual but few countries have specific obligatory requirements

2. Physical Education/Sport Implementation and Subject Status

- Physical education seems to have attained the same or a similar legal status as other subjects
- The actual status of physical education in relation to other school subjects is perceived to be lower than that accorded within the legal framework; in short, legally it has similar status but in reality it does not
- The regard of physical education as a recreational, free play and non-productive educational activity and importance of academic subjects as stepping-stones to a successful future are European-wide features

3. Pedagogical Issues: Curriculum Aims, Content, Monitoring and Equity

- Despite developments in redefining purpose and function and a commitment to a healthy well-being focus in some countries, curriculum aims, themes and content are pervasively oriented towards sports-dominated programmes, in which competitive activities have a significant role
- Links with other school subjects are evident in over 50% of European countries
- Mixed practices in monitoring physical education/sport programmes are evident in some countries; they vary from regular to irregular or random or not defined
- The majority of countries consider that there is equality of opportunity for boys and girls in physical education often with legislative measures as the main means, supported by an array of pedagogical and didactical measures and human and material resources to ensure this; however, gender inequalities based in religious/cultural grounds, limited opportunities/range of activities for girls, male dominated or biased curricula and physical education classes and poorly qualified and uninformed teachers are evident
- Opportunities for disabled pupils in physical education seem to be increasing but there are regional variations: in central and eastern Europe the level of integration is considerably lower than the rest of Europe. Problems in realising integration embrace: the lack of official policy to address and to raise broader awareness of integration issues, shortage of material resources, a shortage of trained specialist personnel, physical barriers to access, class management inadequacies, programme content and class sizes
- Over two-thirds of member states claim to utilise physical education in, and out of, schools in helping integration of children from minority groups into school and society.

4. Resources

a) Finance

- Financial considerations have had a number of impacts on physical education in Europe: failure to refurbish/reconstruct/replace/maintain (out)dated and/or provide new facilities; shortages of equipment; employment of lower salaried unqualified teaching personnel; exit of physical educators to better paid jobs; and reductions in numbers of physical education lessons and time-table allocation
- A widely reported impact of funding limitations is on the activity area swimming: the considerable financial investment of gaining access to swimming facilities exposes this area of physical activity to reduced opportunities or even omission from curricula in many countries

b) Facilities and Equipment

- Physical education is commonly faced with the challenge of inadequate facilities and poor maintenance of teaching sites. Central and eastern European countries are less well endowed with facilities and equipment and there are signs of deteriorating provision. The problem appears to stretch beyond the geographical and economic divides: whilst there are higher expectations over levels and standards of facilities and equipment in more economically developed countries, there are indicators of inadequacies and shortages in facilities and equipment and low maintenance levels in other European regions.
- School physical education facilities are reported as widely available for after-school hours leisure time and/or community use

c) Qualified Teaching Personnel

- A common scenario is qualified 'specialist' physical education teachers at secondary level and 'generalist' teachers at elementary level; some countries do have specialist physical educators in elementary (primary) schools but the variation is wide and there are marked regional differences
- In some countries, the generalist teacher in primary schools is often inadequately or inappropriately prepared to teach physical education and initial teacher training presents a problem with minimal hours allocated for physical education teaching training



- Close to two-thirds of countries require in-service training (INSET), which means that one third does not; there are substantial variations in frequency (free choice or nothing to every five years) and time allocated (12 hours annually to 100 hours over 5 years) for INSET
- A consistent feature on the issue of further professional development of teachers involved in physical education teaching is a need for INSET and a recognition that in some countries, in-service and resource materials have been minimal and have been exacerbated by a marked decline in physical education advisory service numbers
- There is very limited use of volunteers in teaching physical education/sport classes. There is a need for induction and mentoring and monitoring for linked extra-curricular and out-of-school participation

5. The Physical Education Environment

- Teacher networks exist at schools' level in most countries; municipal, region/county and national levels networks exist in around 70% of countries; less widespread are networks of physical education teachers and sports club
- Just over 50% of countries report obligatory links between school physical education and community physical activity settings
- Voluntary links between school physical education/sport and wider community physical activity are reported in only around 36% of countries
- Co-operation of school physical education with sports organisations occurs on a regular basis in most countries

6. Issues in Provision

- There are considerable inadequacies in facility and equipment supply, especially in central and eastern Europe and in regions within southern Europe; a related issue in the facility-equipment concern is finance with some countries concerned about financial resources and under-funding of physical education/sport as well as the low remuneration of physical education teachers
- There is disquiet about teacher supply and quality: insufficiency and inadequacy of appropriately qualified physical education teachers is widely evident, particularly at the primary (elementary) school phase.
- Curriculum time allocation is a concern in some countries as are implementation and monitoring (as well as an associated failure to strictly apply legislation of the physical education curriculum, falling fitness standards of young people and high youth drop-out rates from physical/sporting activity engagement); the latter concerns are exacerbated in some countries by insufficient and/or inadequate school-community co-ordination and problems of communication
- Additional concerns are: the problem of reconciliation of elite sport and regular schooling; and perhaps more seriously, the failure of society to attach value to school physical education and sport

Watching briefs on what is happening in physical education in many European countries are inadequate; there is need for more and better quality baseline data in each country. There are common trends and issues, which are a source for some concern:

- deficiencies in curriculum time allocation, subject status, material, human and financial resources, gender and disability issues and the quality of the physical education/sport curriculum
- a narrow and unjustifiable conception of the role of physical education merely to provide experiences, which serve to reinforce achievement-orientated competition performance sport, thus limiting participatory options rather than expanding horizons (in this context, it is unsurprising that pupil interest in physical education declines throughout the school years and young people become less active in later school years). This observation is also indirectly supported in the minimal attention paid to broader pedagogical and didactical activities in physical education and an overwhelming pre-disposition of countries to cite competitive sport-oriented programmes (e.g. sports competition structures, sports talent development and provision of specialist facilities) as examples of best practice and the problem of reconciliation of elite sport and regular schooling. Whilst it may not be pervasively the case in every Council of Europe member state that there are decreasing numbers of participants from school-based and post-school life sports-related activity, it is the case in too many countries not only in the region but also in other parts of the world
- the most recent information indicates that generally timetable allocation has stabilised across the region and that in some countries, for example the Nordic countries, physical education curricula are concentrating more on health-related and active lifestyle issues

2.4.2 England

Physical Education remains a compulsory 'Foundation' subject within the modified National Curriculum for children aged 5-16. There is a government aim of entitlement of every child to two hours of sporting or physical recreation



activity per school week by 2004. This entitlement remains somewhat hypothetical because the reality of practice is that in many schools, particularly in primary stages (ages 5-11), where literacy and numeracy are prioritised, timetable allocation for physical education averages nearer 90 minutes and in some schools can be less than 60 minutes.

Over the last 10 years, a number of strategic policy documents have been published by government and quasi-governmental agencies, which variously represent responses to drop-out rates from sport by teenagers (40% of girls drop out of sport by the age of 18 with girls as young as 7 being put off the idea of sport for good; 20% of girls have no regular sport at all during or outside school hours: some girls cite embarrassment about their bodies, ability or kit to be worn as reasons for non-participation - Bee, 2003, p.23), fostering of potential medal-winning athletes, deficiencies in physical education teaching and qualifications, particularly in primary schools and increasingly the perceived epidemic of obesity of young children. Two examples of strategic initiatives are provided here.

(i) The *Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL)* scheme is a direct result of the government's acknowledgement that physical education and school sport help young people and reflects its commitment that all school children should have access to two hours of quality physical education and school sport each week. Furthermore, the strategy is recognition of the growing evidence that quality physical education and school sport can play a key role in improving whole school issues such as pupil attendance, attainment and behaviour. One of the key aims of the *PESSCL* strategy is to improve the quality of teaching, coaching and learning. Thus, £18 million has been allocated for the new National Physical Education Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme for teachers and others in England, which will initially run for a three-year period. The National CPD Programme, which is one of a number of inter-linked initiatives, will ensure that teachers in every primary, secondary and special school have the knowledge, resources and confidence to develop quality PE and school sport in their schools. The National CPD Programme involves teachers attending a local workshop, completing a self-review, and then selecting CPD opportunities from a menu of modules. Every maintained school in England will be able to access these training modules free of charge. An independent research project will monitor progress and schools are required to participate in an annual review process. Sharing best practice is a key element of the programme.

(ii) The *Learning through PE and Sport* strategy launched jointly by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport with a three year projected investment cost of £458 million. The overall objective is to enhance take up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year olds. Targets set include:

- establishment of a national infrastructure for physical education and school sport by creating over 400 Specialist Sports Colleges by 2005; 400 School Sport Coordinator partnerships by 2006; 3,200 School Sport Coordinators in secondary schools and 18,000 Primary or Special School Link Teachers by 2006
- improvement of the quality of teaching, coaching and learning in physical education and school sport
- an increase in the proportion of children guided into clubs from School Sport Coordinator partnerships.

Scotland

At present, in Scotland, for the 5-14 age group (from primary schools to secondary S2), physical education is included in the *Expressive Arts* (art, drama, music and physical education) that should make up 15% of the curriculum, but exactly how this is organised is left up to head-teachers with the consequence that the quality of PE in primary schools can vary drastically from school to school: "if the school panto is the priority in a crowded curriculum then PE or something else has to suffer" (Crichton, 2004). For children in S3 and S4, 80 hours out of 1200 hours in school have to be spent on physical education. There are no prescribed guidelines for S5 and S6 pupils, which "means that something like 40% of girls in this age group do no physical exercise at all" (Crichton, 2004). Littlefield et al (2003) indicate that physical education is an elective subject within the National framework (though schools are not required to offer it) and that numbers of pupils exercising their choice for physical education is increasing. Those not electing for physical education take a core programme. In their recent investigative study, they report "positive features" mixed with "serious concerns": popularity amongst pupils of Standard and Higher grade physical education demonstrates that certification flourishing and allocation of time for Standard grade has increased in a majority of schools contrast with a reduction in time for core physical education in the first two years of secondary school and declining access to facilities and extra-curricula provision (Littlefield et al, 2003).

The perceived obesity epidemic (estimated to cost the Scottish National Health Service £700 million annually) amongst young children is concentrating the minds of the Scottish Executive as it is in many governments in economically developed countries. In Scotland, more than 20% of three-and-a half-year-olds are overweight with a further 8.8% considered obese and around 5% registered as severely obese; 20% of 12 year-olds are clinically obese with a further third diagnosed as overweight (Qureshi and Barnes, 2004). A Scottish Executive established *Physical Activity Task Force* has recommended a target of two hours of quality physical education per week for all school children by 2007 to assist in offsetting decline in health-related fitness and activity levels. The quality issue is specifically directed at changing the negative image of physical education by moving the emphasis of activity away



from competition towards widening participation opportunities. This widening participation theme along with a the imposition of a two-hour minimum requirement for physical education from nursery school to the end of secondary school to promote active life-styles and increase exercise are key features in a Report by another Scottish Executive appointed group, the *Physical Education Review Group*. Important as these recommendations are, there has been an immediate reaction based on realities: an already stretched school curriculum (to expand physical activity necessitates the disappearance of something else from the curriculum); and a requirement of additional resources (facilities, equipment and appropriately trained and qualified personnel – already, even before the Education Minister pronounces on the Review Committee's Report, there is growing concern that Scotland's school sector will be unable to deliver because of a lack of human resources) for schools, although two local government authorities (Scottish Borders and Clackmannanshire with 10 specialist posts) have jumped the gun and advertised new posts for specialist physical education teachers in primary schools (Barnes, 2004).

2.5. North America

In Canada, despite support from medical practitioners, physical educators continue to experience problems in convincing provincial Ministries of Education that physical education has an important role both in the education system generally and in health promotion in particular. Timetable allocations have remained relatively stable since the Physical Education World Summit but budget allocations have been reduced and many schools have sought to raise monies from other sources in order to sustain physical education programmes. The main trend in Canadian physical education as evidenced in new curricula is promotion of active lifestyle, which includes use of external resources for which there are costs' implications. There have been widespread cuts in numbers of provincial and school district consultants and/or curriculum co-ordinators. In provinces such as British Columbia, where 'generalist' teachers teach most elementary school physical education classes with little or no training in physical education, the shortfall in advisory consultants and curriculum co-ordinators has impacted negatively. This is especially the case where new curricula have been developed and which need the assistance of relevant professionals to implement them. Thus, these innovative curricula are left to gather dust on shelves (Turkington, 2002, pp.42-43).

In the United States, the "effect of the Berlin PE Summit has had no impact in the United States, where 9/11 and the terrorism threat together with the war in Iraq have significantly impacted on the economy and diverted funds into the military" (Feingold³, 2004). At the same time, there is an educational environment that stresses accountability and standardized testing primarily focused on the so-called "academic subjects". The result is that school administrators look to cut back on special subjects, such as health, physical education, art and music. There are almost daily reports about the obesity epidemic and health costs, yet the general public does not relate much of this to the need to increase physical education (Feingold, 2004).

An initial post-Berlin Summit initiative was the *US Congress Bill* on 15 December 2000, which included a \$5million appropriation for the *Physical Education for Progress (PEP) Act* for 2001. Grants are to help initiate, expand and improve physical education programs for K-12 students. Funds can be used to purchase equipment, develop curriculum, hire and/or train physical education staff, and support other initiatives designed to enable students to participate in physical education activities. Subsequent clarification on grant aid revealed that PEP grants were intended for so-called Title 1 schools (i.e. academic deficient schools) only. Nevertheless, this enactment was a positive step in securing funds for physical education resources in deprived school settings. However, a year on from the *PEP Act*, another legislative initiative has worked counter to the interests of school physical education. President Bush's January 2002 *No Child Left Behind Elementary and Secondary Education (NCLB) Act*, intended to stimulate educational reform and promote academic achievement and accountability in curricula that are identified as 'core' subject areas, neglected in omitting some subjects such as physical education and health to address the debilitating condition of the nation's youth and did not acknowledge the link between health, physical activity and academic performance. Thus, the Act has created unintended negative consequences (diminishing time and resources) and has contributed to increased marginalisation of physical education in many states (Keyes, 2004). Following the Act, the President of the Education Association in Alaska pointed out that teachers need to be "highly qualified", except for PE and computer science teachers (Orr, 2002) and in doing so rendered inferior status to both physical educators and the subject. As if the fall-out from the *No Child Left Behind* enactment was not enough to impact negatively on physical education, in the same newspaper article in which Health and Human Services Secretary, Tommy Thompson, announced that "We are eating just too darn much and we're going to do something about it" (voluntarily, of course), the Bush administration announced that funding for the *VERB* campaign, a CDC project to promote physical activity among 9-13 year olds, will be cut from 36 million dollars to 5 million dollars (Herzog, 2004).



United States' teachers report inadequacies in facilities (mainly dilapidation and use for other purposes), reductions in timetable allocation and waivers allowing exemption from physical education classes, large class sizes and budget deficits. Illustrations of these problems are abundant. The following selected exemplars suffice to illustrate the problems.

(i) Facilities

- an Intermediate School teacher observes (2001) that he has “no office. My desk sits in the middle of the gym, which is used almost every evening for other activities as well as on Sundays for Church. I also have use of the old Home Ec room for health class, but this room is also used for scout meetings, church, and even some science classes. The store-room, in the gym, is extremely small and, I have to remove several ball caddies and large barrels to get to other equipment. Oh yes, the gym roof leaks. While they are attempting to repair it, in the mean time this adds to my challenges as several of the tiles have come up leaving exposed concrete”.

(ii) Time Allocation Reductions and Waivers

In some states mandated time is not being met (e.g. Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, Washington and Wisconsin). Even districts that “meet state requirements are slashing time and equipment for gym class” (Kippers, 2004).

- Illinois remains the only State requiring daily PE K-12 but a waiver programme now allows exemption from the mandate and there are no time or content guidelines. The mandate is for 150 minutes per week but “one district has PE cut down to 25 minutes once a week (about 13 hours per year)” (Stretch, 2002).
- The daily mandate for physical education “as many of my fellow Illinoisans know... is really not true and a joke the way the waivers are handed out....” (Hatten, 2001).
- New Mexico State Board of Education has eliminated the requirement of one credit of physical education for high school graduation (Crooks, 2002) L., PE Digest, Saturday 9 November 2002)
- In Washington State, “100 minutes for PE in grades 1-8 are mandated - in reality, few schools observe this law; many offer only 60 minutes per week; others cut back further; and some administrators count recess!” (Editorial, 2003).
- “Some school districts offer ‘waivers’ for PE if involved with a Marching Band; others offer waivers if the student participates in 2 sport seasons out of 4 after the freshman year. One High School credit is given for PE if the student meets this requirement. Wisconsin and Michigan have laws, which permit interscholastic athletics or other extra-curricular activities involving physical activity to substitute for PE requirement. Less than two-thirds of high school students attend physical education classes. Nearly a third of all high schools exempt youngsters from taking gym if they are cheerleaders, members of the band, choir, or an athletic team” (Wickham, 2001).
- Time reductions in Racine, Wisconsin brings the comment from Kippers (2004), co-ordinator of health and PE for Racine Unified School District: “...with obesity going up, the only place where kids are getting any physical activity is in the schools... And now we’re cutting back in that area”; according to Evers, (2004), the Deputy State Superintendent, “‘No Child Left Behind’ does play a role in that, there’s no doubt about it... With the focus on math and reading and other areas, it leaves the other subject areas that don’t have the accountability push searching for support”.

iii) Large Class Sizes

In many states, large class sizes are the norm for physical education classes. Californian elementary school teachers for example regularly 40-70 children on average in a class. Large class sizes can and do affect quality of delivery of physical education.

- In California, “... Physical educators and physical education programs are cut every year because large class size does not allow for quality instruction. Decision makers have experienced the lack of quality in our programs and see little value in what we do”. Union support of large classes is cited as a source of saving of monies, which are then bargained for by all district employees. If physical education were “to have the same class average as other subjects, the district would have to hire about 8 new physical educators” (Vickroy, 2001) at a cost of about \$400,000.
- An Adapted PE teacher in San Diego reports that the 35 teachers are overwhelmed with caseloads of 60-85 children and that APE teachers are not part of the Education Code governing caseloads as in Speech, Occupational or Physical Therapy (Speech is set at 55). APE seems to parallel regular PE (classes of 55-60) (Wanner, 2000).
- A Connecticut teacher on receiving her year’s schedule of 40-46 students per class expressed “concerns to the administration. I have even invited the superintendent/principal... to come and watch a fourth grade class with 26 students (there are a few special need students and a blind student in the class).



He said it wouldn't change his mind. I even told him that the schedule would wipe out the curriculum that I have worked sixteen years to build" (Valentini, 2001).

- In Texas, the physical education increased time mandate is being achieved through large class sizes: one teacher reports 75 in one class and 150 in another (Needham 2002).

(iv) Budget Deficits

- In Rockford Public Schools Board there is a \$300m deficit. The Board has decided to decrease PE credits from 7 to 3 in High Schools and make it a totally elective programme in middle schools (art and music to increase from 2 to 4). Teachers lack support. "It is not uncommon for a HS class... to have between 50-100 kids in their... classes. Thus many have quit and given up... So it could be easy to see why the board cut the programs, as it is not easy to sell what goes on in these classes... Thus the schools do not believe the kids need to take physical education or as much of it, even though it is required every day in the great State of Illinois" (Hatten, 2001).

Section Three: Inclusion and Disability Issues⁴

The Berlin Physical Education World Summit Action Plans embraced the issues of inclusion for all children. Naturally, this included children with disabilities. In terms of these actions as they relate to children with disabilities in physical education there appears to be varying amounts success on how they have been implemented world wide.

The in-service training and professional development of teachers to assist them with the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular physical education classes has been addressed by a number of countries since 1999. The issue of inclusion is an ongoing cross-curriculum challenge of which physical education can play an important part. Often, physical education can act as a catalyst for change as the results and benefits of inclusion are more transparent and immediate. Countries such as England, Sweden, Canada, Australia, Finland and Israel have in place specific programmes to support the inclusion of children with disabilities into physical education. Undoubtedly, these programs are making progress and are beginning to cater for a much more diverse group of children than ever before. Several notable characteristics and commonalities have emerged from these programmes that continue to challenge inclusion generally. These are:

- The 'space' for inclusion given the crowded curriculum, decline in physical education generally, increasing class sizes and declining specialist PE teachers. There remains a general perception that 'inclusion' is an additional process on top of what teachers already have to do. Education is focusing on empowering teachers to adjust current practices rather than 'add on' to current curriculum requirements;
- Inclusion in PE is not generally being driven by Education. Many of the successful current inclusive professional development programs are being implemented outside the core work of Education Departments. This indicates a lack of commitment from Education toward inclusion in PE and sport. Also, while financial support from government and non-government agencies is improving, particularly in the UK and Australia, there is still widespread difficulty in obtaining the necessary financial support to conduct training and professional development;
- Community understanding and awareness is improving, allowing a more progressive 'social model' approach to inclusion. Legal mandates and greater advocacy is leading to improved awareness and a willingness to accept and provide for children with disabilities;
- There is ongoing debate concerning the role of specialist providers of adapted physical activity services. In a truly inclusive environment regular teachers provide for disability in the day-to-day teaching role. In this sense the specialist role is to train and facilitate inclusion through existing services. Often, however, the specialist role becomes one of provider, so helping regular teachers abdicate responsibility for inclusion;
- As a great deal of in-service training and professional development focuses on attitudinal change, the evaluation of such services becomes very problematic. How attitudinal training results in increased opportunities and greater inclusion is difficult to measure;
- There is still a perception that disability specific opportunities in PE sit outside the inclusion continuum. Often, these important services are being left to disability agencies or welfare groups rather than through regular teaching environments.

There is a need for more quality research into the many aspects of inclusion of children with disabilities in physical education. Without research to inform program development the movement toward inclusion will continue to be slow.

The Berlin Agenda clearly placed a heavy emphasis on quality physical education for all and on the rights of all children to physical education. Legal mandates in many countries have attempted to enforce inclusion. But Agenda's and mandates cannot guarantee inclusion alone. World wide there appears to be a lack of recognition, mostly from Education itself, of the important role that children with disabilities play in our playgrounds.



Section Four: Recent Inter- and Non-governmental Organisations' Initiatives

The Berlin World Summit on Physical Education was instrumental in placing physical education on the world political agenda. The MINEPS III Declaration of Punta del Este (1999) was an encouraging initial development, but restructuring within UNESCO has hitherto hindered implementation. The restructuring potentially reduces visibility accorded to physical education and sport. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to see how UNESCO can fulfil its role as focal point of the United Nations for matters related to physical education and sport. Nonetheless, at the UNESCO 'Round Table Meeting' of Ministers and Senior Officials of PE and Sport met in Paris in January 2003 along with proposals related to protection of young athletes and anti-doping, the *Communiqué* adopted by representatives from 103 countries noted that in many countries physical education was being increasingly marginalised within education systems even though it is instrumentally important for health, physical development, social cohesion and inter-cultural dialogue, and this at a time when sport has become a significant economic activity with prominent global visibility. To reverse the marginalisation trend, the 'Round Table' participants committed themselves to working for implementation of MINEPS III policy principles and the full recognition of the place and inclusivity (i.e. non-discriminatory) of physical education and sport both within and outside education systems. The fact that this commitment to implement policy principles was more than three years on from the MINEPS III Punta del Este Declaration is perhaps a stark reminder of the limitations of UNESCO's spheres of influence! The commitment is to be pursued through actions to bring about curriculum, sports facilities and equipment, status of physical education and initial and in-service teacher training improvements together with synergetic co-operation of partners, specifically the family, schools, sporting associations and clubs, communities, local and other relevant authorities, public and private sectors. The participants requested the UNESCO Director-General to draw the United Nations' Secretary-General's attention to the importance of physical education and sport and to the desirability of debating this topic in the General Assembly. Furthermore, they sought to have the *Communiqué* presented to the Fourth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS IV) in Athens in August 2004 (<http://www.UNESCO.org>, 2003). UNESCO General Conference (October, 2003) proclaimed 2005 as an International Year on Physical Education and Sport. A 'Task-Force' has been created, which has effectively side-tracked UNESCO as the focal point for matters linked to PE and Sport in the UN system, which means that physical education is being "diluted" and has to stand along health, development, UNICEF-type work, refugee camp-work, etc. One of the follow-up issues of the Ministers Round-Table that UNESCO has to deal with is the development of an International Anti-Doping Convention, to supplement the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) work, into which a deal of effort is being made and at the expense of addressing physical education-related concerns. Of course, doping issues are much more 'glamorous' than school physical education. The most powerful advocate for physical education in the United Nations' system is now the World Health Organisation (WHO), especially with its adoption of a "Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

The UNESCO *Communiqué* echoes some of the set of *Conclusions* agreed by the European Ministers at their Informal Meeting in Warsaw in September 2002, mentioned in Section One in this Report. However, the *Conclusions* (Hardman, 2002a and 2002b) essentially embracing issues of quality⁵ and delivery (curriculum content, facilities and equipment, teacher training), inclusion, more active lifestyles and an associated variety of pan-European programmes, implementation of a range of measures grouped around perceived spheres of influence (home and family, school, local and wider community collaborative provision and flexible programmes), development of relevant and appropriate national policies, intergovernmental co-operation, sharing information, research findings and national experiences in promotion of physical activity, were more detailed and prescriptive. It remains to be seen what impact, if any, the ministerial deliberations may have. It is encouraging to see physical education and sport in schools on the Council of Europe political agenda but the status of *Conclusions* is far removed from any form of mandatory requirement of member states.

As well as inter-governmental initiatives since the Berlin Physical Education Summit, a number of European non-governmental organisations have begun to address issues and concerns surrounding physical education in schools. Two examples will suffice as illustrations. In October 2002, the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO) held a two-day forum in Malta, in which access to physical education in schools and the role of non-governmental organisations in contributing to a sustainable future for school physical education were main themes discussed. ENGSO pledged its support for school physical education through appropriate partnership advocacy initiatives and demonstrated interest in the EUPEA's recently published *Code of Ethics and Good Practice Guide for Physical Education* to inform its own planned code of ethics and practice for personnel involved in sport. A landmark for EUPEA itself, founded in 1991 to "promote more and better physical education all over Europe", was its 1st Symposium, 9th November 2002 in Brussels, Belgium on the topical theme of *Quality Physical Education*. Nearly 200 delegates from 35 countries attended the Symposium from which a number of perceived challenges emerged. These challenges embrace minimal time requirements, balanced programmes, inclusion strategies and policies, teacher education and competencies, in-service training and planned continuing professional development, ways and means of disseminating good practice and understanding frameworks used by young people to interpret physical education in

contexts of national and cultural diversity across Europe. In summarising the deliberations of the Symposium, EUPEA Vice-President Chris Laws (2002) concluded that in striving for a relevant physical education curriculum there is a role for all European Physical Education Associations to act to provide “quality experiences for all children”. Clearly there is concurrence here with the UNESCO *Communiqué* and the Council of Europe’s ministerial *Conclusions*.

Section Five: Concluding Comments

Without doubt, there are examples of positively implemented programmes and good practices in physical education and in physical education teacher education in most, if not all, countries across the world. Furthermore, there is an array of individual and institutional endeavours to optimise the quality of physical education delivery and so enhance the experiences of children in schools. Equally there is evidence to generate considerable continuing disquiet about the situation. It is clear that in too many schools in too many countries there is a record of failure in physical education. Children are being denied the opportunities that will transform their lives. Such denial of opportunities is inconsistent with the policy principles of the Council of Europe and UNESCO Charters and does bring into question the effectiveness of these Charters as appropriate standard-setting instruments; perhaps the justification lies in fundamental purposes of the Charters ostensibly to reduce inequalities between countries and ensure minimum standards of provision.

Thus, the messages are mixed and continue to be so as testified by reports in the Minutes of the EUPEA Forum meeting in Brussels, 8 November 2002. Physical education representatives pointed to an improving national situation in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovenia and discussions on increasing physical education curriculum time allocation in Croatia and Denmark. At the same time, it was indicated that in France it is difficult to maintain school sport every Wednesday and that there is a problem with physical education evaluation in the final year of secondary schools: “teachers find it difficult to do” (BVLO, 2002); and in Ireland that intentions to introduce higher quality and more time for physical education under proposed curriculum reform may be compromised because “there is not a lot of room for increased time allocation, since the government introduced two new subjects in an already tight programme” (BVLO, 2002).

There is a sense of *déjà vu* about the ‘mixed messages’ situation. The 1997 EUPEA Survey (Loopstra and Van der Gugten) revealed a similarly confused scenario. On the one hand, the survey indicated that in some countries within the region, especially in central and eastern Europe, there were some encouraging developments in curriculum time allocation. On the other hand, however, the subject appeared to be under greater threat than it had been at the beginning of the decade: only Austria, France and Switzerland were providing two hours per week for physical education at primary and secondary levels (ages 6-18) and only 9 out of 25 countries surveyed were offering two hours per week for the 6-12 years age group; a majority of countries had inadequate training in physical education for primary school teachers, undervaluing the contribution of the primary school phase curriculum as well as insufficient curriculum time, especially for primary age groups and the 17-18 years age group; and there was insufficient monitoring of the quality of physical education programmes.

The evidence presented in this Report indicates that many national governments have committed themselves through legislation to making provision for physical education but they have been either slow or reticent in translating this into action i.e. actual implementation and assurance of quality of delivery at the national level. Deficiencies continue to be apparent in curriculum time allocation, subject status, financial, material and human resources (particularly in primary school teacher preparation for physical education teaching), the quality and relevance of the physical education curriculum and its delivery and gender and disability issues. Of particular concern are the considerable inadequacies in facility and equipment supply, frequently associated with under-funding, especially in economically underdeveloped and developing countries and regions. A matter of some additional concern in some countries (for example within the central and eastern European region) is the issue of low remuneration of physical education/sport teachers. More generally, there is disquiet over the falling fitness standards of young people and high youth dropout rates from physical/sporting activity engagement, which are occurring concomitantly with the perceived decline in the position of physical education in schools and its questionable quality. It seems that the disquiet is exacerbated by insufficient and/or inadequate school-community co-ordination and problems of communication in some countries (see Hardman, 2002).

The Berlin Physical Education Summit *Agenda for Action for Government Ministers*, the Punta del Este *Declaration*, the Council of Europe’s Warsaw Meeting *Conclusions* and UNESCO’s *Round Table’ Communiqué* together with various WHO, IOC and some national governments’ initiatives amongst others demonstrate that there is now an international consensus that issues surrounding physical education in schools deserve serious consideration in order to solve existing and future problems. It is imperative that monitoring of developments in physical education across the world is maintained. Both the Council of Europe’s ministerial *Conclusions* and the UNESCO ‘Round Table’ *Communiqué* called for monitoring systems to be put into place to regularly review the situation of physical education in each country. Indeed, the Council of Europe referred to the introduction of provision for a pan-European survey on physical education policies and practices every five years as a priority! (Bureau of the Committee for the Development



of Sport, 2002a; 2002b). Policy as well as idealistic and sometimes politically inspired rhetoric can, and do, mask the truth. In spite of official documentation on principles, policies and aims, actual implementation into practice exposes the realities of situations. “Promises” need to be converted into “reality” if threats are to be surmounted and a safe future for physical education in schools is to be secured. Otherwise with the Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General’s intimation of a gap between “promise” and “reality”, there is a real danger that the Informal Ministers’ meeting’s agreed *Conclusions* will remain just that – more “promise” than “reality” in too many countries across the world and compliance with Council of Europe and UNESCO Charters will continue to remain compromised.

Notes

1. Sources for information reported in Section Two include physical educators in schools and higher education, advisory supervisors and government officials. In the interests of confidentiality, individual names and designated positions of such individuals have been withheld unless information provided has been publicly or widely disseminated.
2. The information on developments in Latin America has been provided by Prof. Dr. Manoel Tubino, President of the Fédération Internationale Education Physique (FIEP).
3. Prof. Dr. Ronald Feingold is President of the Association Internationale des Ecoles Supérieures d’Education Physique (AIESEP).
4. The information in Section 4 was provided by Peter Downs, Australian Sports Commission and IFAPA representative.
5. The final (revised) *Conclusions* refer to “quality” with an undefined time allocation. This replaced the initial draft, which specified a long-term aim of “a minimum of 180 minutes per week of structured lesson time” (Bureau of the Committee for the Development of Sport, 2002a); the consensus amongst ministerial representatives was that 180 minutes was unrealistic and for at least one country’s representative was unacceptable.

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