ICSSPE
International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education
Conseil International pour l'Education Physique et la Science du Sport
Weltrat für Sportwissenschaft und Leibes-/Körpererziehung
Consejo Internacional para la Ciencia del Deporte y la Educación Física

Update on the State and Status of Physical Education World-wide

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Introduction

The Berlin Physical Education World Summit in November 1999 confirmed a decline and/or marginalisation of physical education in schools in many countries of the world with perceived deficiencies in curriculum time allocation, subject status, material, human and financial resources, gender and disability issues and the quality of programme delivery (Hardman & Marshall, 2000). The Summit's *Agenda for Action* precipitated an array of institutional initiatives to improve access to, and provision of, quality physical education. The initiatives include: the International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS) III Punta del Este *Declaration* (1999); the Council of Europe's *Recommendations* (2003); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) *'Round Table' Communiqué* (2003); the United Nations General Assembly *Resolution 58/5* (2003); the MINEPS IV Athens *Declaration* (2004); the World Health Organisation's (WHO) *Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health* (2004); and the UN dedicated *2005 Year of Sport and Physical Education* with its associated outcomes such as *The Bangkok Agenda for Actions on Physical Education and Sport in* School (2005) as well as various governmental (national and regional) and non-governmental (e.g. International Olympic Committee (IOC), International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF), European Non-governmental Sports Organisations (ENGSO) and European Physical Education Association (EUPEA) *inter alia*) agencies' policies and advocacy commitments.

Collectively the various advocacy statements raise hopes about a sustained and positive future for physical education. However, since the Berlin Summit, the developments in school physical education policies and practices across the world have been diverse: there has been, as indicated above, a plethora of initiatives, which points to an international consensus that issues surrounding physical education in schools deserve serious consideration; and equally there is evidence to generate continuing disquiet about the situation. There is a gap between "hope and happening" (Lundgren, 1983). Essentially, the situation now is typified by little change in some countries and

regions and by 'mixed messages' in others. The gap between "hope and happening" is occurring at a time of reported widespread increases in obesity epitomised in the CBS headline, "Obesity Up, Phys Ed Down" (Turner, 2005), and sedentary lifestyle-related illnesses and associated rising health care costs, especially in economically developed countries. Policy and practice do not always add up, a situation suitably summed up in Maude de Boer-Buqiccio's, (Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General) comment at the September 2002 *Informal Meeting of Ministers with responsibility for Sport* in Warsaw that "… the crux of the issue is that there is too much of a gap between the promise and the reality". The advocacy of positive policy principles witnessed in *Resolutions*, *Declarations*, *Communiqués* and *Strategies* need to be juxtaposed with reality checks!

For the "reality check" overview of the global situation of physical education in schools, we draw from a preliminary (note not final) analysis of an on-going follow-up world-wide survey and relevant research-related literature. The follow-up survey is being undertaken on behalf of the North Western Counties Physical Education Association (a regional association in England) with support from the University of Worcester, ICSSPE and Council of Europe, and endorsement by UNESCO and WHO. The primary aim of this survey is to determine the extent to which the situation in school physical education/sport has changed since the Berlin Physical Education Summit of 1999. Specifically, the survey focuses on the following items.

Section I: national level policy and practice-related issues in school physical education (legal status, responsible authority, curriculum time allocation and examination status)
Section II: the physical education curriculum (aims, themes, content evaluation and monitoring; and gender and disability equity issues)
Section III: resources (facilities and equipment and teaching personnel)
Section IV: the physical education environment (school subject and physical education teacher status; and pathway links to physical education activity in out-of-school settings)
Section V: issues in provision (concerns and/or problems related to school physical education)
Section VI: 'Best Practice' exemplars in school physical education.

As a cautionary note, we reiterate that the present survey is on-going and that any conclusions drawn from the preliminary analysis of current data are necessarily tentative.

1. The Situation of Physical Education in Schools

a) General

> "Lack of policies for national PE; programme is elaborated but not totally carried out (and is in) need of some changes, it is not updated; Directors in PE are not specialists; government contributions are not enough; lack of infrastructure; lack of materials, resources, facilities and maintenance: there is not the appropriate environment for teaching; lack of time for teaching - the time assigned in the curriculum is too short to reach the objectives;; (there is) a national policy (but) the government does not take care of it; there are laws but they are not followed…" (PE Teachers, Venezuela).

Within the general education system, a majority of countries (81% primary schools; 82% secondary schools) have legal requirements for physical education in schools for at least some part of the compulsory schooling years (see figures 1a and 1b). Together with countries where there is no compulsory requirement for physical education but where it is generally practised, this figure rises to 92% (in the European region, it is all countries). In 5% of countries (40% in Africa; 17% in the Middle East), physical education is neither compulsory nor might it be offered for girls.

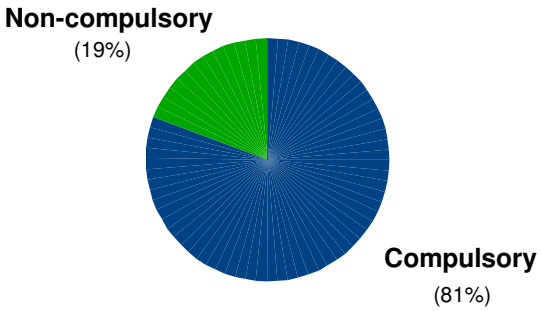

Figure 1a. PE status in primary schools

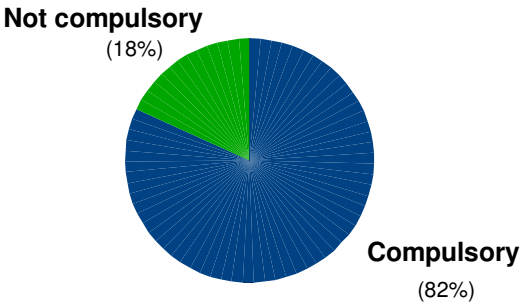

Figure 1b. PE status in secondary schools.

b) Post 2000 Education Reform Features

> "After the educational reform, PE is merged with health education, which led to the reduction in the teaching time of physical activities. The time allocated to PE will be affected, since the teaching time of English has increased, and new subject (e.g. computer and dialects) were introduced into the curriculum" (PE Teacher, Taiwan).

Over the last decade a number of nations have undertaken educational reforms. Whilst it is encouraging that physical education has remained or become compulsory in a large majority of countries, since 2000, it has lost its compulsory status in 6% of countries.

c) Implementation of Physical Education

> "It can be considered compulsory in the 1st cycle, but, many times it is not taught" (PE Teacher, Portugal)

> "Our State, Illinois, has a daily PE requirement but many districts do not enforce this and the state does nothing" (PE Teacher, Illinois, USA).

Figures 2 and 3 respectively suggest that in around 82% of countries (in Asia only 33%) the physical education curriculum is implemented in accordance with regulations, but that in 40% of countries (Middle East 100%; Central and Latin America 67%; and Africa 66%) physical education lessons are more likely to be cancelled than other curriculum subjects.

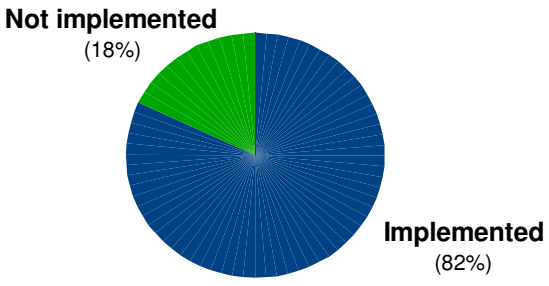

Figure 2. Implementation of PE

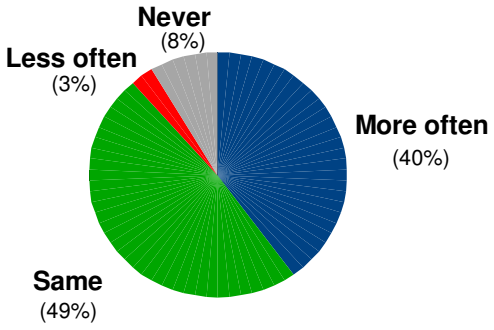

Figure 3. Cancellation of PE Lessons

d) PE Subject and Teacher Status

> "Less value/importance is placed on PE" (Government Official, Jamaica)
>
> "Low status – priority given to 'academic subjects'; the 'Life Skills' programme does not allow for active participation in secondary schools – treated as a non-subject and of non-academic status" (PE Teacher, South Africa)
>
> "Family not understanding the importance of PE for student; the school administration not supporting PE lessons/subject); parents don't given enough attention to PE lessons; the school board has no interest in PE lessons because the grade does not count in the final examination certificate (thus) parents don't encourage their children to take part in all PE lessons" (PE Teachers, Kuwait).

There are issues surrounding legal and perceived actual status of physical education and its teachers in relation to other subjects. Whilst in 82% (only 33% in Africa and Central and Latin America) of countries its legal position is equal (figure 4a), in 44% of countries its actual subject status is perceived to be lower (figure 4b); this is particularly the case in the continental regions of Africa (67%), Central and Latin America (67%), North America (100%) and Middle East (100%). Moreover, in 27% of countries (Middle East 100%; North America 67% and Africa 50%), physical education teachers are deemed to have inferior status. Generally, the perceived lower status is perhaps one reason why physical education classes are cancelled more often than other subjects (refer figure 5.).

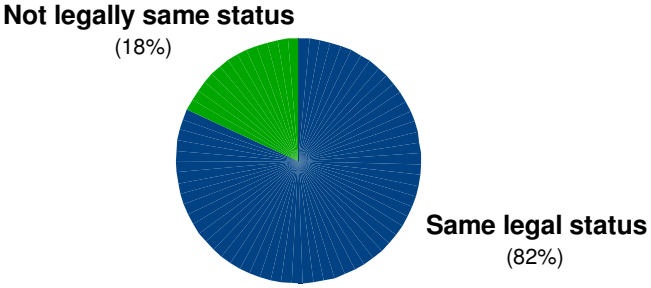

Figure 4a. Legal Status of PE

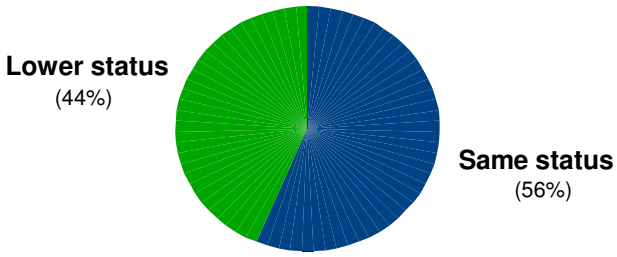

Figure 4b. Perceived Actual Status of PE

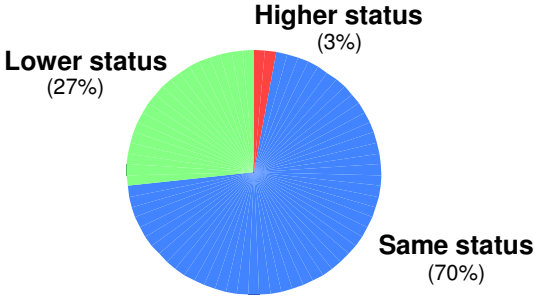

Figure 5. Physical Education Teacher Status

2. Curriculum Time Allocation for Physical Education

> "PE is being squeezed out of the education system by more and more compulsory academic courses… which hold little benefit compared to PE" (PE Teacher, Ireland).

Despite national policy concerning required, prescribed, recommended or aspirational guidelines, local levels of actual control of curriculum time allocation give rise to variations between schools and, therefore, difficulties in specifying definitive figures for a country or region. However, some general tendencies are identifiable. Across primary school years there is an average 94 minutes (in 2000, 116) with a range of 30 – 180 minutes; in secondary schools, there is an average of 101 minutes (in 2000, 143) with a range of 45 – 250 minutes per week. There are regional differences in time allocation: Europe 109 minutes for primary schools and 101 minutes for secondary schools; Central and Latin America (including Caribbean countries) 73 minutes in primary schools and 87 minutes in secondary schools. During the period 2000-2005, physical education curriculum time allocation has actually increased in just over a fifth (24%) of countries, has remained the same in 60% of countries but has decreased in a quarter (16%) of countries (refer figure 6).

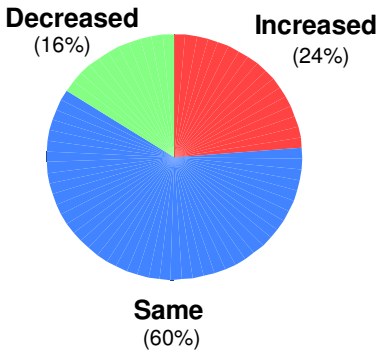

Figure 6. Physical Education Curriculum Time Allocation Change 2000-2005

The figures represent a worrying trend of decreasing time allocation from 2000 to 2005 and this despite international advocacy supported by an overwhelming medical, scientific, economic, social and cultural case for adequately timetabled physical education programmes and moves in some countries to introduce an entitlement of at least 120 minutes per week.

3. Physical Education Curriculum Issues

> "…Last year many of our gym periods were marred by intense and destructive competitions" (Primary School PE Teacher, Toronto, Canada)

> A Scottish person's account of his "… teenage years dreading games, shivering on rugby fields and subject to all manner of rebuke for my ineptitude at the game from staff and schoolmates. In my final week at school I finally confronted my physical education teacher and challenged him as to why I'd been made to endure this torture. "Well son", he replied, "at least you know now that you can't play rugby, and that's what we call an education" (Anon, cited in Kay, 2005).

A major issue is that of the relevance and quality of physical education curricula around the globe. In some parts of the world physical education curricula are undergoing change with signs that its purpose and function are being redefined to accommodate broader life-long educational outcomes. Nevertheless, there remains an orientation towards sports-dominated competitive performance-related activity programmes. Of some significance is the percentage of time devoted to each activity area across the world: there is a predisposition to a competitive sport discourse dominated by games, track and field athletics and gymnastics, which account for 77% and 79% of physical education curriculum content in primary and secondary schools respectively (refer figures 7a and 7b). Such sustained orientation raises issues surrounding meaning and relevance as well as quality of programmes provided and delivered.

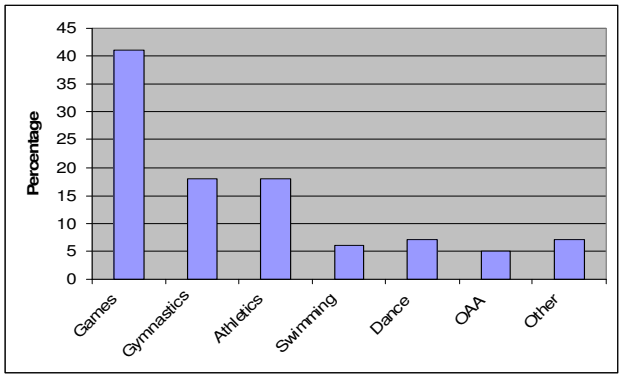

Figure 7a. Physical Education Curriculum Content Areas: Primary Schools (%)

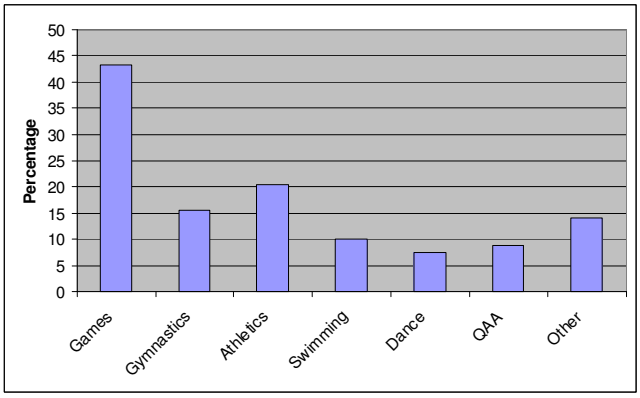

Figure 7b. Physical Education Curriculum Content Areas: Secondary Schools (%)

4. Resources

a) Facilities and Equipment

> "Quality of facilities is below average and quantity of equipment is limited" (Government Official, Serbia Montenegro)

> "Quantity and quality of EQUIPMENT is very poor – pupils need to bring in some of their own equipment in some sports. Damaged equipment is used frequently; quality and quantity of facilities is very poor; and facilities inadequate or poorly maintained" (PE Teacher, England)

A pervasive feature of concern is related to quality and quantity of provision of facilities and equipment (refer figures 8a and 8b). This is particularly the case in economically underdeveloped countries: quality of facilities is rated as below average/inadequate in all Central and Latin America countries and in 67% of African countries; and quality of equipment is deemed to be inadequate in 67% of African countries and below average in 67% of Central and Latin American countries. In Europe as a regional example, there is a marked geo-political differentiation in quality and quantity of facilities and equipment. In the more economically prosperous northern and western European countries, quality and quantity of facilities and equipment are regarded as at least adequate and in some instances excellent; in central and eastern European countries, there are inadequacies/insufficiencies in both quality and quantity of facilities and equipment. Hence, there is an east-west European divide with central and eastern European countries generally far less well endowed with facilities and equipment. Transcending this divide is the view in 63% of European countries (100% in the Middle East and 83% in Africa) that there are problems of low/poor levels of maintenance of existing physical education sites. Generally across the national and regional economic divides there are many expressions of concern about facility and equipment provision in

economically developed countries, though admittedly expectations of levels of are higher. Level of provision can detrimentally affect quality of physical education programmes.

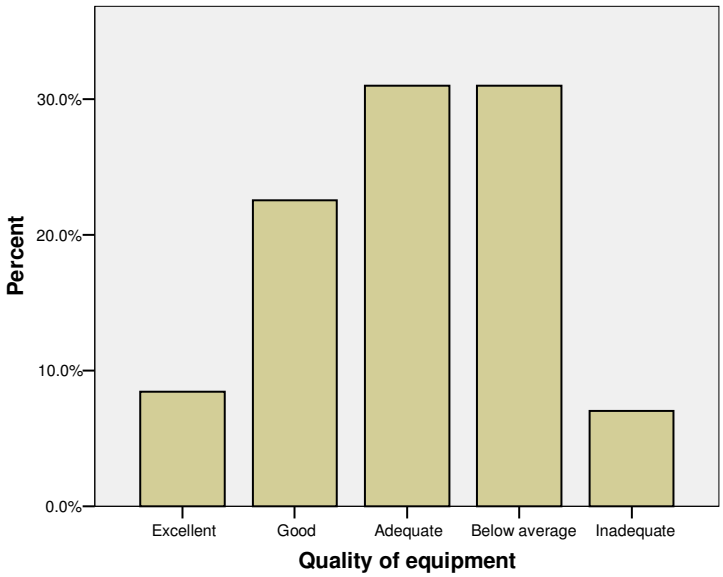

Figure 8. Quality of Facilities

b) PE Teaching Personnel

Quality of provision embraces not only curriculum content but also delivery. Examples from around the world suggest lack of commitment to teaching and pedagogical and didactical inadequacies in some countries:

> "The majority of teachers who have to present the PE section of life orientation is not qualified (PE Teacher, South Africa)
>
> "… Very often teachers take children outdoors and leave them to do their 'own thing'. Some teachers will take the children and play a game with some children and leave others unsupervised. Most sessions are done haphazardly" (St Vincent Government Official).
>
> "We still have coaches/teachers who only worry about summer vacation, and they roll out the ball for nine months waiting until they can go golfing again. This is a huge reason PE has such a bad name" (United States High School PE Teacher).

Both 'generalist' and 'specialist' qualified personnel teach physical education in primary schools: generalist teachers feature in 66% of countries and specialists in 69% of countries; at secondary school level throughout the region, the large majority (97%) of physical education practitioners

are specialists. In 78% of countries (only 33% in Central and Latin America), there is a requirement for in-service training (INSET)/continuing professional development (CPD) to be undertaken but there are substantial variations in frequency and time allocated for INSET/CPD. Frequency ranges from choice through nothing specifically designated, every year, every two years, every three years to every five years. Duration of INSET/CPD also reveals differences in practice between countries: those with annual training range from 12 to 50 hours, from 3 to 25 days; biennial and triennial training courses of 4 weeks; and five years range from 15 days to 3 weeks or 100 hours over the five year period. In some countries, inadequate promotional infrastructure and finance can inhibit participation in INSET/CPD; a Swedish physical educator reports "…Often I have to find in-service training myself and I have also often to pay for it with my own money". A consistent feature of all the surveys on the issue of further professional development of teachers involved in physical education teaching is countries across the world indicate a need for in-service training and there is a recognition in some countries that in-service and resource materials have been minimal and have been exacerbated by a marked decline in physical education advisory/supervisory service numbers.

5. Equity Issues

Many countries have legislation in place but barriers to inclusion remain for both gender and disability areas.

a) Gender

> "Girls not regularly attend the physical education/sport lesson" (Government Official, Azerbaijan);
>
> "Girls often prefer individual activities, which are occasionally difficult to provide. Range of girls' extra-curricular provision is also often limited because of availability of female staff" (Physical Education Inspector, Northern Ireland)
>
> "PE is equated with sports; more sport options available for boys; boys sports still get more time, space, press (PE Teacher, Ireland)
>
> "Boys gain more budget than girls for PE lessons, equipment; our traditional habits prevent (sometime) girls to take part of sport outside schools" (PE Teacher, Kuwait).

Around 85% countries indicate equality of opportunity for boys and girls in physical education programmes but the evidence suggests that there are barriers to full participation by girls. Such barriers include cultural traditions, especially religion and, societal attitudes and restricted range of opportunities.

b) Disability

> "There is no good infrastructure in the schools; the facilities are not adapted or adequate; the older PE teachers did not receive any education on adapted physical education and they do not know how to deal with disability children. (PE Practitioner, Brazil)
>
> "There are not special sports hall and facilities for students with disabilities" (Government Official, Azerbaijan)
>
> "Lack of support personnel; need more PE teachers with specialisation in adapted physical education" (Government Official, Iceland)
>
> NO (disability equity); teachers are not trained to teach them; appropriate equipment (is) not available; adequate/suitable playing areas are not available (PE Teacher, Jamaica).

In the survey, 80% countries allege availability of opportunities for students with disabilities for access to physical education lessons but as with the gender issue, there are barriers to inclusion and/or integration. Persistently pervasive barriers to facilitate inclusion and/or integration in the area of disability include: lack of appropriate infrastructure, facilities, equipment, as well as qualified or competent teaching personnel.

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 in 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 Australia, Canada, England, Finland, Israel and Sweden have in place specific programmes to support the inclusion of children with disabilities into physical education. Undoubtedly, these programmes are making progress and are beginning to cater for a much more diverse group of children than ever before.

6. Partnership Pathways

With only up to two hours per week time allocation (in many countries as we have shown, it is frequently less), physical education cannot itself satisfy physical activity needs of young people or address activity shortfalls let alone achieve other significant outcomes. Bridges do need to be built, especially to stimulate young people to participate in physical activity during their leisure time. Many children are not made aware of, and how to negotiate, the multifarious pathways to out-of-school and beyond school opportunities. As one French teacher put it there is "not enough co-operation between schools and sport organisations", an observation underlined by some 56% of countries indicating lack of links between school physical education and the community (figure 9).

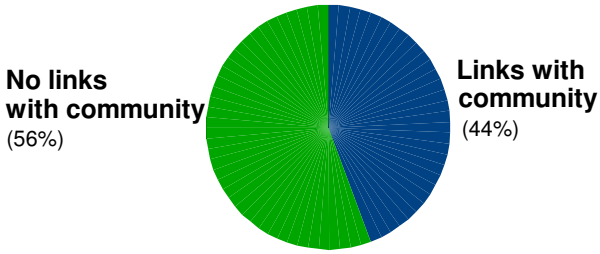

Figure 9. School Physical Education - Community Links

7. Regional Roundup

a) Africa

Throughout Africa diversity and contrasting variations prevail: in Nigeria, physical education is taught and is examinable at Ordinary ('O') and Advanced ('A') levels; in Kenya it is taught but is not examinable; in Uganda it is timetabled but not seriously taught (Toriola, 2005); in South Africa, physical education as a school subject no longer exists but it is taught indirectly as a small component of the learning area "Life Orientation" along with health promotion, personal and social development, and orientation to the world of work foci in grades R-9 (Van Deventer, 2005); and in Botswana it is time tabled but inadequately resourced and there are very few qualified physical education teachers. 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 and as recreation/play time especially in primary schools) and inadequate monitory inspections in secondary schools (e.g. in Benin, Botswana and Uganda). Generally, priority is accorded to language and mathematics with even meagre physical education resources often diverted to other subjects. In some countries (e.g. Malawi) physical education for

girls often suffers from optional status with many preferring not to take part; this situation is exacerbated by a dearth of amenities such as changing rooms.

b) 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 absence from the curriculum. Girls are discouraged from participating in physical education clubs in many rural areas especially because of what allegedly it will do to their bodies (render them "unfeminine"). In Pakistan, cultural and religious constraints also 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. Elsewhere in the sub-continental region, 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; generally there is minimal provision for disabled students.

c) 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 typified by 'mixed messages'. Reports reveal improving situations in some countries and discussions on increasing physical education curriculum time allocation in, for example, Croatia and Denmark. These developments are in contrast with the possibility of intentions to introduce higher quality and more time for physical education under proposed curriculum reform being compromised in Ireland because of insufficient space in the timetable for increased time allocation, since the government introduced two new subjects in an already tight programme.

d) North America

At the present time in the United States, there is an educational environment that stresses accountability and achievement in core, so-called, 'academic subjects'. President Bush's *No Child Left Behind Elementary and Secondary Education (NCLB) Act* (2002), 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 any link between health, physical activity and academic performance. The Act has created unintended negative consequences by contributing to increased marginalisation of physical education in many states (Keyes, 2004) with mandated time not being met (e.g. Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, Washington and Wisconsin) and waiver programmes allowing exemption from mandates. "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 marching band, choir, or an athletic team" (Wickham, 2001).

e) Oceania

Despite the recent re-introduction of daily physical education in Australian states' schools, physical education has a poor branding image in the country, which starkly contrasts with the successful branding of sport. There is far greater recognition of the contribution of sport throughout the community from the prime minister down. In facing the problem of inactivity among children, the Australian Government turned to the sporting community and not to the physical education profession. The concern is unless the physical education profession can find a more relevant and strident voice, the delivery of activity in schools will grow without it and it will be condemned to persistent marginalisation in a world of change and opportunity (Saunders, 2004). In New Zealand, the concern is more on deficiencies in quality of teaching and learning than on image and curriculum time allocation is usually met (Hollard, 2005). Elsewhere in the region, Pacific islands countries variously adhere to the 'mixed messages' theme from no physical education programme in Nauru and no primary school physical education in American Samoa, through limited growth of physical education and school sport in Guam and growing stature of physical education in the Cook Islands to an integral curriculum role for physical education in Kiribati to weekly physical education and sport in Tuvalu (Skinner, 2005).

f) South America

In several Latin American countries, recent legislation has made physical education in elementary and middle schools a compulsory subject, but timetable allocation, for which there are no legal prescriptions, is generally low. Despite the legislation requirement, in most countries (Chile and Colombia are exceptions) there has been a decrease in the actual number of physical education classes. Several countries in the region have started to develop regulatory *Register of Physical Education Professionals* (originally established by the Brazilian Federal Physical Education Council), mainly because there is general consensus that regulation will assist in improving the quality and organization of physical education. There is a trend towards closer relationships between physical education and health; it is a trend that has emanated from *Sports for All* programmes, particularly the Brazilian *Agita São Paulo* (*Move São Paulo*), which has raised levels of consciousness (Tubino, 2004).

7. Conclusions

Arguably, the surveys' data provide a distorted picture of physical education in schools. However, what the survey and literature review data do reveal are congruent features in several areas of school physical education policy and undoubtedly in some specific areas of practice. There are many examples of good practice in many schools in many countries across the world but equally there are continuing causes for serious concern. The 'mixed messages' embrace positive initiatives to assist in contributing to increasing levels of physical activity engagement amongst young people and in combating obesity and sedentary lifestyles' diseases. Examples of these initiatives include:

- A Scottish Executive acceptance of commissioned Reports (*Physical Activity Task Force* and *Physical Education Review Group*) recommendations on a target of two hours minimum requirement of quality physical education per week for all children from nursery school to the end of secondary school by 2007 (and longer term aim of 180 minutes per week) to assist in offsetting decline in health-related fitness and activity levels
- English government £459 million so-called *Physical Education School Sport Club Links* (PESSCL) strategy commitment to "enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5-16 year-olds by increasing the percentage of school children who spend a minimum of two hours each week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum from 25% in 2002 to 75% in 2006 and 85% by 2008"; by 2010 the aim is to offer all children at least 4 hours of sport every week, composed of at least 2 hours high quality PE and sport at school and the opportunity for at least a further 2-3 hours beyond the school day (delivered by a range of school, community and club providers)
- An European Physical Education Association's EUPEA multi-national study, aiming to establish the profile of the physically educated child
- Education reforms, which include physical education/activity inclusion policies to assist in countering health and life-threatening illnesses in 'developing' countries
- Worldwide initiatives surrounding physical activity promotion such as *Agita Mundo,* seeds of which were sown in the *Agita São Paulo* scheme in Brazil a decade or so ago
- Around the world, sports development schemes (though the need for a more grass roots orientation rather than elite sport/talent development is more socially and economically desirable): 'Sport for All' and not 'Sport for Some' should be over-riding aim here.

The "reality check" reveals several areas of continuing concern. These areas embrace: physical education not being delivered or delivered without quality, insufficient time allocation, lack of competent qualified and/or inadequately trained teachers, inadequate provision of facilities and equipment and teaching materials, large class sizes and funding cuts and, in some countries, inadequate provision or awareness of pathway links to wider community programmes and facilities outside of schools. Whilst improvements in inclusion can be identified since the Berlin Physical Education Summit, barriers to equal provision and access for all still remain.

Countries, via the relevant agency authorities, should identify existing areas of inadequacies and should strive to develop a 'Basic Needs Model' in which physical education activity has an essential presence and is integrated with educational policies supported by governmental and non-governmental agencies working co-operatively in partnership(s). Satisfaction of these basic needs requires high quality physical education programmes, provision of equipment and basic facilities, safe environments and appropriately qualified/experienced personnel, who have the necessary relevant knowledge, skills and general and specific competences according to the level and stage of involvement together with opportunities for enrichment through continuing professional development.

It is imperative that monitoring of developments in physical education across the world be maintained. The Council of Europe's, UNESCO and the WHO have 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, 2002). "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 well intentioned initiatives will remain 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 (Hardman, 2005).

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