

## **ICSSPE's International Position Statement on Physical Education**

Physical education develops physical competence so that all children can move efficiently, effectively and safely and understand what they are doing. The outcome, physical literacy, is an essential basis for their full development and achievement.

Physical education in school is the most effective and inclusive means of providing all children, whatever their ability/disability, sex, age, cultural, race/ethnicity, religious or social background, with the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding for lifelong participation in physical activity and sport.

It is the only school subject whose primary focus is on the body, physical activity, physical development and health; and helps children to develop the patterns of and interest in physical activity, which are essential for healthy development and which lay the foundations for adult healthy lifestyles.

It contributes to children's confidence and self esteem; enhances social development by preparing children to cope with competition, winning and losing; and cooperation and collaboration. It is increasingly being used as a tool in development, including recovery from trauma and conflict; and encouragement for school attendance and retention.

ICSSPE reaffirms the 1978 UNESCO International Charter on Physical Education and Sport and the Berlin Agenda for Governments, agreed at the 1st World Summit on Physical Education in 1999 in Berlin, and endorsed by the Declaration of Punta del Este at MINEPS III in the same year, which calls on governments' commitment to:

- implement policies for physical education as a human right for all children;
- recognise that good quality physical education depends on well qualified educators and scheduled time within the curriculum, both of which are possible to provide even when other resources like equipment are in short supply;
- invest in initial and in-service professional training and development for educators;
- support research to improve the effectiveness and quality of physical education;
- work with international financial institutions to ensure physical education is included as part of their aid programmes in education;
- recognise the distinctive role of physical education in health, overall development and safe, supportive communities.

## **UNESCO's Statement on Physical Education**

Since 1952, UNESCO has worked actively to promote the power and cross-cutting potential of sport; and the Organization has had a clear mandate to facilitate access to physical education in formal and non-formal settings in particular.

An important contribution was the development of the 1978 UNESCO International Charter on Physical Education and Sport. This Charter, which guarantees sport and physical education as a fundamental right for all, still serves as a key reference document 33 years later. It lays the foundation for action in the field of sport and physical education.

Physical education and sport is essential to both physical and cognitive development. Not only does physical education improve a child's ability to learn and absorb information; it can also be used as a tool to promote understanding and cooperation, and to improve communication skills. Fundamental movement skills need to be taught at an early age and reinforced as young people continue grow and develop. The establishment of active lifestyles through the practice of physical education and sport can also reduce current negative health trends, such as growing obesity around the world.

Therefore, it is vital that governments incorporate physical education and sport into their educational systems. Accordingly, UNESCO calls for the development of quality physical education programmes, supported by teacher training and the allocation of sufficient resources. We also pledge our support, through the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport, to the global initiative to reverse the decline of physical education and sport. It is essential that all children and young people have the opportunity to develop and to achieve their potential.