

REMEMBERING

FIEP 1970 PHYSICAL EDUCATION WORLD MANIFESTO (Approved by the Fédération Internationale d'Education Physique – FIEP 1970)

I - GENERAL CONCEPT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is the element in Education that systematically applies physical activities and the influence of natural agents: air, sun, water etc., as its specific resources.

Physical activity is nowadays considered to be a privileged educational means because it encompasses the being in its whole aspect. Education in its unity aspect, fostered by physical activities, is universally recognized. But owing to theoretical analysis, we shall distinguish the following specific objectives:

1. Healthy And Balanced Bodies

Bodies are to be ready to resist different obstacles in the social and physical environment, which demands a rational use of the adaptation functions leading to health more than the nonexistence of diseases. This is a hygienic purpose, a fundamental purpose (which hygiene and medicine seek to attain through different means, somehow different) that must never be neglected.

2. Skills For The Action

- Perceptive properties - accurate internal perception (awareness of one's own body), quick and secure external perception (improvement of senses' quality).
- Motor properties - nimbleness, speed, strength, skillfulness, resistance, ability to relax in order to attain efficacy in the action and its maximum result.
- Self-control and reasoning properties – understanding situations and having competence to find convenient solutions quickly. The set of these psychomotor properties, which are often interdependent, must make it easier for the individual to adapt to action in current life, in professional life and also in free-time physical activities.

3. Moral Values

Physical Education (P.E.) must support moral values in its action. The moral environment and the socially active environment (in the groups' activity) that educators can create are essential.

In the world nowadays — and also in the future, which must be considered when we deal with children — these P.E objectives have remarkable social relevance.

We must obviously consider the social factor inherent to every country: the concept and the means of Education will always depend on the political, economical and human circumstances. But considering the probable stage of development in the countries that are about to adopt Physical Education, some common lines can be identified.

There will be a continuous effort to prepare children and help adults and the aged to react efficiently, for the benefit of their psycho-physiological balance, against the harmful effects of mechanization, sedentariness, pollution, nervous stress caused by the accelerated rhythm and tension of civilized life.

There will be an effort to create and keep the taste for physical efforts and the meaning of a healthful life to struggle against great problems, such as addiction to alcohol, to drugs, physical laziness, lack of enthusiasm etc.

II - PHYSICAL EDUCATION MEANS

Physical Education specific means is physical exercise, that is, systematic physical activity planned to exercise (educate, train, improve).

The type of exercise does not play a determining role, but the intention that encourages that action does. The purpose of the action gives it general orientation and specific forms, and it definitely determines its effects on the individual. Every psychomotor activity chiefly conceived for an educational goal is integrated to Physical Education. In final analysis, Physical Education is better

characterized by a state of spirit than by the choice of this or that technique. Techniques are only infinitely varied instruments applied to permanent education, planned to be used for clear educational purposes.

Physical Education's unity is materialized at the higher level of intention; the harmony between techniques that are sometimes fundamentally different although they are coordinated to attain the same end. There are several attempts to classify techniques according to the aspects of life, between which the frontiers are always well defined. The fact is that such classification is inevitably artificial and unconventional. In relation to the chief intention that encourages the action, we propose a classification that seems to be more general and simpler:

- 1- Educational exercises properly saying: The forms and situations are only chosen or created to accomplish the so-considered fundamental formation and educational ends: acquisition and training of maximum skill, development of strength, resistance, self-awareness and self-control etc.
- 2- Practical activities, games and sports, in which the fundamental purpose is to attain a correct and immediate end, amuse oneself, beat an opponent or establish a record mark. To be classified within the P.E.'s frame, those exercises must be guided, at least spiritually, by an educational intent.

The formal feature of the exercises in the former category makes them weakly motivated activities, at least for most students. However, they must not be neglected since they are essential in the first years of development. The pedagogical task consists in making them interesting to all the students.

The latter are usually strongly motivated exercises. However, applying them is complicated because they are in an area of activities that opposes educational interests, namely, between the struggle between passion and reason.

However, in pedagogical practice, these two categories of exercises can (and must) be often interrelated to the same general motivations, which are self command and self affirmation.

This connection must be made primarily at the level of sports activities, now applied.

III - ROLE OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical activities include:

- 1- Sports competition, often systematically organized by sports federations. It is the best known form and the most characteristic of sports nowadays. It is mainly made through elimination and selection. It is strictly codified by technical methods, figures, length etc.
- 2- Sports training, which encompasses the set of activities that prepares for sports competition. It seeks to reach general conditions, then to reach special conditions and to keep fit. In principle, it seeks the same purposes as Physical Education: improvement of fundamental attributes (nimbleness, skill, strength, body control etc), determination etc.
- 3- Sports-game, which is the competition freely adapted to attend essentially the recreational and education needs. Example: playing basketball among schoolmates, on improvised teams.

This form of Sports does not eliminate the weak. It can do without spectators and expensive premises. It depends only on the educators' responsibility or on the responsibility of those who practice it; they are the ones entitled to change rules for a better adaptation to everyone's needs and possibilities.

It is understood that sports training and sport-games are easily integrated to the general system of Physical Education.

In the modern world, it is convenient to assign to them an essential role because they correspond to a great need of use of free time and, in addition to this factor, they play a basic role in the school stage of an individual's formation and constitute powerful motivation.

The use of classical sports competition is much more delicate. The action of educators as well as the action of clubs' leaders and coaches, physicians, journalists is a determining factor. Every precaution must be taken so that competition keeps a safe educational and instructive value. It must be a sector of action limited to a certain number of practitioners, and limited to the duration of its real practice (average, a dozen years).

Greatest opportunities of success and more valid human action lie in actions of Sports for All.

Sports for All will include essentially sports-game and classical sport competition,

fundamentally conceived in its educational objectives.

In fact, Sports for All cannot be based on the current structures of federated sport, on selective competition, since it would inevitably lead to the remarked dangers.

This basis will lie mainly on School and College Sports, directed by educators, free from the trend that prescribes victory at any price, depending as little as possible on financial circumstances, organized according to formulas that allow the participation of the weakest, and in such a way that its frequency and volume shall be constantly adapted to students' possibilities (in such a way that it will benefit the students, and not harm them).

It shall be the family's Sport and the corporation's Sport during free time. It shall be, in sports clubs, the friendly challenge, at last reencountered. It will be wise enough to keep out of mandatory rules of duration, replacement of players etc., to keep the level of pleasure for those who practice it.

From this Sports-game, Sports-pastime, Sports of the masses will naturally emerge an elite among youth, and similarly to what happens nowadays, such elite will develop to its highest level. It will, then, be expected to engender a different spirit of sport, cleaner, more loyal, more transparent, calmer, as Pierre de Coubertin remarked.

IV- TECHNIQUES AND PEDAGOGICAL FORMS

Physical Education is a relatively recent science. It cannot be dogmatic and fixed on certain techniques or pedagogical forms.

In order to ensure its convenient development, to determine the best techniques and the most efficacious pedagogical forms, it must be better organized and develop scientific investigation of its own.

It is regrettable that the investigation centers have, so far, guided their work exclusively to the knowledge of extreme efforts and organic and psychic adaptation to strenuous situations (height, submarine diving etc), and it has only dedicated insufficient efforts to investigate fundamental issues in School Physical Education and Sports for All.

Scientific investigation must be in the hands of experienced specialists, united on work teams, in regional or national centers of research (mutually connected through international organizations and related to other biological, psychological, sociological and pedagogical research centers). It must not be forgotten that experiments, in this case, are necessarily carried out in groups of children, experimental material that cannot undergo any kind of sacrifice at all. Therefore, experiments must be guided with competence, prudence and deep human feelings.

In addition, Physical Education must become an applied, autonomous science, having a domain of its own and its specific methods. Thus, through reciprocating contributions, it can cooperate to the progress of other human sciences.

Current empirical knowledge and some scientifically established data allow us to carry out an extremely valuable action in the field of education through physical activities. Some fundamental principles can guide the educators' action:

1. Biological Degree Of Effort

Efforts are educational and can be translated into progress if they are made at certain intensity and repeated a certain number of times. It is the overload principle scientifically established, both in biology and psychology.

2. Effort Dose (Adaptation To Individual Possibilities)

Efforts must be intense enough to be in the positive sector of biological degree, but excesses that lead to extenuation must be avoided.

Coming to extenuation is an exception in Physical Education (both in school sessions or voluntary gymnastics for adults). Practiced exercises are often below the necessary intensity or number of times (time to practice is not long enough). In sports training and above all in competition exercises practices are at the limits of the physiological efforts. If the intense effort is beneficial to young people (both in physiological and psychological aspects), it may be dangerous for adults and for the aged.

And exercises can make anyone exhausted when practiced repeatedly. Prudence and regular medical control are requirements. Biology and pedagogy are in charge of solving the delicate problem of individual measure in group teaching.

3. Prevalence Of General Preparation

In the essential period of mental, affective and body formation, during childhood and adolescence, educational action must be centered on the development of potential availability to learn and on fundamental qualities (health, nimbleness, speed, strength and resistance, critical spirit, self-command etc.). These factors impose a general physical preparation, including very different exercises in equally different situations. There lies the best preparation for future activities in everyday life, in professional life and in the participation in sports. At the educational sports level, it is convenient to avoid any premature specialization. Children must not be confined to a single activity in a closed environment. That would model their bodies and souls through a narrow conditioning and could prevent them from affirming some of their potentialities. Exactly the same way as in other educational domains, children and, later, adolescents must be gradually introduced to situations in which they can make free and sensible choices of one or several sports activities, which they will then practice the longest they can. It is convenient to prepare them for the physical activities in the adult life, which are fundamental, since adult age (period of family and social responsibility) is the period when men and women need to have good health and to be physically skilled.

4. Relevance Of Outdoors Activities

In modern world, when there is a growing trend to urban civilization, one must admit that for school and for the rest of adults, outdoor space is important for open-air physical activities. Those activities will be chiefly formative, energizing and harmonizing.

5. Motivation For Exercises

Education only exists if it is based on individual's voluntary commitment and active participation. From a pedagogical viewpoint, it is important to find a motivation that will lead the individual to act positively towards his/her own progress. Modern psychology determines that most of the interests are created by Education and by the environment (family, social group, advertisement). But there is a fundamental, universal, specific interest for human beings: their nature to submit to tests, to overcome, to seek success.

The need of affirmation and improvement through any activity is naturally expressed in games and sports. So, man is fundamentally a sports being. In the wide meaning of the term, there lies one of the essential differences between humankind and animals.

Therefore, ludic and sportive motivation must occupy a fundamental place in Physical Education.

But sports and games must be prudently applied and they cannot be the only motivation in practice. With the exception of the first school periods (from the ages of 4 to 8 years approximately) it would be impossible to bear an educational system based solely on games. As a preparation for life, the notion of labor must also appear clearly and the children must learn to like work.

Moreover, usual sports motivation (related to competition) is very complex. It is formed — and often deformed — by the influence of social environment. It corresponds to a characteristic of the modern world, to the struggle for life with the elimination of the opponent, a characteristic that should be desirably replaced by shared efforts for mutual progress, aiming a more fraternal world. In order to be valid, sports motivation must be detached from any socially dangerous environment for Education and, in fact, overcome it.

The notion of sport motivation must be enlarged and it should be taken into consideration that any exercise that leads children to get to know and experience themselves better, to affirm themselves in every situation, is a sports act.

A sports act meaning self discovery and experience is also present in educational exercises properly saying (fully conscious, methodical and voluntary efforts for the systematic development of fundamental qualities), in the action oriented towards mutual help, in the rough efforts outdoors, away from the confined rooms of competition and away from the views' influence etc. Educators who are aware of their high mission could not neglect such noble motivations, which, in addition to that, make up the true sports spirit.

6. Group's Educational Action And Influence Of Social Environment

In the modern world, education has essentially a collective order. The relationship between teacher-students-groups of students, at the level of schools or clubs, is considered a fundamental factor of educational action.

Physical Education must appeal more and more to psycho-sociology for the determination of its pedagogical methods and it must always consider the favorable or unfavorable influence of the social environment.

V- EDUCATORS

Techniques, pedagogical forms and even material possibilities are only instruments whose efficacious application definitely depends on those who use them. Those who are responsible for the policies and administration of sports in several countries must necessarily become aware that the profitability of their efforts for the sake of Physical Education depends primarily on the appropriate number and value of their educators.

Physical activities' educational mission demands solid biological, psychological knowledge plus good pedagogical qualification. That should be so during the most delicate period of childhood and adolescence, when it should be under the responsibility of educators who have solid university qualification.

The major concern in the formation of those educators must be not only general culture, scientific knowledge and fundamental techniques (culture that has general and permanent value), but also educational intentions and trends of scientific spirit. The deep study of sports technique — quite varied and in constant transformation — must be faced as free specialization, during and after general studies.

But educators' souls must also be taken care of: developing faith and enthusiasm for the work to be accomplished, promote pedagogues' essential qualities, that is, love for the students, dedication, respect for human values etc. Physical Educators must be — and keep that condition as long as possible — examples of good physical condition and sport spirit.

College education is also desirable for the educators who work at other sectors in schools, sports clubs, army and adults' physical education. The educational level will certainly be feasible in lots of countries where the necessary grants are provided by the governments.

Nevertheless, in order to satisfy the multiplicity of need, the qualification of a high number of agents and instructors that can guarantee the existence of these activities will be a factor to be seriously considered. In order to assure the activities, those agents will have to act as regular or voluntary workers, part time or full time. For them, a simple, but precise technical qualification will be essential, as well as good sense, dedication, pedagogical art and a healthy awareness of physical activities in the service of human values.

VI - ADMINISTRATIVE AND MATERIAL CONDITIONS

In order to assure Physical Education's efficacy, the public power and administrative spheres must:

- 1- Make specific efforts to organize Physical Education in Primary School (from the age of 6 to 12-14 years) and also in Children's School (from 2 to 6 years). That is the true departing point, although it has been the most neglected sector in most countries.
In fact, in this period, educational action is determining for its great organic and psychic malleability.
What comes after that is too late.
The Children's Rights, stated in the declaration issued on November 20th, 1956, at United Nations' General Assembly, can only be safeguarded if the schools, parents and the social group offer children a Physical Education conceived as a function of their needs and possibilities.
Children's Physical Education must have a solid formative and educational value and cannot be limited to simple recreation.
- 2- Provide sufficient number of hours for mandatory Physical Education activities at school and make sure that the scheduled hours are complied with. Five hours per week are the essential minimum. That schedule must include free physical activities, outside the school premises, in the form of specialized training, sports games and field activities.
- 3- Make great advertising efforts (especially on newspapers and TV) and support adults' hygienic and recreational Physical Education (voluntary gymnastics) and Sports for All.
Free time activities should not be entirely organized by commercial enterprises, to which

educational goals, if any, are logically left to second plan.

- 4- Multiply the material premises so that the needs of physical activities of most children, adolescents and adults can be attended. Those needs are increasingly contextualized in a mechanized world, where physical efforts tend to disappear. In this effort to provide sport implements, absolute priority must be given to:

- Physical Education gymnasiums, swimming pools and sports fields, which must be simple and practical, in sufficient number, inside or in the proximity of every school and college building.
- Similar premises in every apartment building, house complex and city neighborhoods: Physical Education popular stadiums and public gymnasiums (non commercial), open to all, at anytime, for regular, individual or organized group training; simple and non-expensive premises, provided with sufficient number of personnel for its maintenance, surveillance and administration: employees paid by the State, municipalities' offices or clubs;
- Large game fields, not built farther from the outskirts of town, without special boxes, but provided with convenient dressing rooms and showers;
- Simple premises, but large and comfortable enough to facilitate the practice of great activities practiced in the open air: sailing, alpinism, marching, canoeing etc:

The profitability of the educational effort must constitute the major concern of educators and public powers. To assure this profitability, it is essential to:

- Use most efficient technical and pedagogical processes. This need highlights again the importance of scientific investigation. In Physical Education, as in other sectors, not a thing can be assigned to no matter who is around to do it.
- Use in the whole time granted for Physical Education the best way possible. It should be emphasized that the two fundamental factors of efficacy in educational action are intensity and frequency (adapted to individuals' possibilities). Three sessions of an hour a week practiced at convenient intervals are more efficient than a single three-hour session, considering the real time dedicated to physical activity;
- Consider the need of continuous education, from childhood to old age, since the effects of the training are only temporary and it is not sufficient to have practiced sports between the ages of 15 and 20 years, for example, if physical training is later neglected;
- Make a specific effort regarding the weak, the disabled and the unprivileged, that is, those who need society's greatest help.

The profitability of Physical Education is not defined in function of victories conquered by the best specialists, but by the level of improvement — certainly more difficult to evaluate — that it can bring to physical, intellectual and moral values, to social efficacy, and at last, to the opportunities of happiness to every individual.

Note

The authors of this Manifesto were Pierre Seurin, John Andrews, José Maria Cagigal and others.



FIEP's First Symbol

