

Sport at the Dawn of the 21st Century - Current Trends

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Word of Welcome

On behalf of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE) I welcome all participants of this International Symposium which is being held in the framework of the 50th anniversary of the International Military Sports Council. I wish to congratulate the organizers of this event for having prepared such a well-rounded program which offers a unique opportunity to look at the past, present and future developments in sport with special emphasis on sport in the military context. In my presentation today I will highlight some of the challenges and trends for all involved in physical education and sport. Following a brief introduction, I will address the issues of terminology, competitive sports, the training of professionals in sport science and physical education, the current situation of physical education around the world, the sport for all movement, environmental awareness. To conclude draw from current examples to indicate the critical role of partnerships now - in the dawn of the 21st century.

1. Introduction

The turn of the century is a particularly relevant time to reflect on the roles and contributions of sport in society. Throughout history, physical activity has played a significant role in the lives of people, being closely linked to and seen as an expression of specific cultural phenomena.

Currently however, our world is undergoing considerable changes in terms of political, socio-economical, technological, social and cultural developments.

Among the specific changes and challenges that need to be explored are the political and social relationships in the world, the rise of health on the modern value scale, the rediscovery of the body, the growth of the ageing population, increased awareness of individuals with disabilities, the commercialization of sport, the development of multi-cultural societies, and the changing roles of schools and sport organizations in society.

There are two major trends that currently affect a great number of our societies and they are well-reflected in the world of sport and physical education: the trend towards globalization and the trend towards individualizations. More than ever before, the new communication super highways and increasing migration have contributed to the idea that sport is a homogeneous cultural flow across national and state boundaries. Sport provides a generative frame of unity in which diversity can take place. However, modern life in many countries around the world is increasingly characterized by a growing particularization of areas of life such as family, leisure time and education. It can be observed that traditional ties provided by family and religious value systems are declining. Young people today are called upon to be the producers of their own biographies and a growing spectrum of options are now available for the individual. These changes present complex challenges to the young generations and they are closely linked to development in the world of sport. During the past decades, physical activity and sport have become global issues serving various purposes. The key now is to recognise and activate their full potential and to enhance international awareness and understanding.

2. The issue of terminology - from an international perspective

What is sport and how is it understood? In the past- and in some countries still today- a clear distinction has been made between physical education and sport. Of course, sport has been and can be defined and understood in many different ways. This is important to recognise because it can make mutual understanding difficult. Often it is necessary for two parties to clarify what is encompassed in their understanding of sport before embarking on further discussion or actions.

There is a trend now to use the term "sport" in a broader sense - not only limited to activities with a competitive element.

It is interesting to note that MARCHAND (1990) in the context of the European Charter on "Sport for All" presented the following definition:

"Sport (..) is to be understood in the modern sense of free, spontaneous physical activity engaged in during leisure time; its functions ... being recreation, amusement and relaxation. Sport in this sense includes "sports proper" and various other activities provided they demand some effort" (MARCHAND 1990, 3).

Within this system of sport, 4 activity groups are distinguished:

- competitive games and sport;
- outdoor pursuits;
- aesthetic movement; and -
- conditions activity.

HARTMANN-TEWS (1996) in a recent publication stresses the specific understanding of the term sport in its broadest sense and the political impact aiming to involve the entire population in active sport participation. Comparisons on the international level have shown that there are not only diverse definitions and interpretations of the term "sport" existing, but differences can also be identified as far as the aspect of "including all" is concerned. That is, discrepancies exist in the definitions of the activities as well as the target groups involved,

International organisations are working to clarify understanding about sport and physical activity across borders. In this respect, I would like to highlight the efforts made by International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), of which the International Military Sport Council is a member organisation, to bridge the gap between physical education and sport. When ICSSPE was established forty years ago, the founders recognised the widening gap between the fields of sport, sport science and physical education. The multi-disciplinary and international Council was created in order to reinforce the link between these areas, encourage dialogue between professionals and to develop a more inclusive perspective.

Currently, discussions in international organisations continue, in which some experts are in favour of using the term "physical activity" instead of sport or physical education. It remains to be seen in the future if it will be possible to identify a terminology that is highly inclusive and acceptable internationally.

3. Competitive sports

During the last decades sport competitions on regional, national and international levels have become key elements of our societies around the world and are presenting us with new challenges. They are increasingly connected to economic and media interests. In fact, without sponsorship involvement, most competitions would not be possible today. Moreover, specific issues such as the doping problem are being raised and currently more questions than answers exist.

In addition to highly attractive games such as the Olympic Summer and Winter Games, and World Championships in various sports organised by International Sport Federations, there is a growing number of competitions targeting specific population groups and including new and formerly unimaginable sporting events. For example, fifty years ago, on July 20, 1948, the Olympic Summer Games were opened in London. Very few people know that on this same day the first games for athletes with spinal cord injuries - all of them British war veterans of World War II - took place in Stoke Mandeville under the guidance of a medical doctor, the famous Sir Ludwig Guttmann. Today, Dr. Guttmann is called the "father" of the Paralympic Movement. This international sport movement has rapidly developed and the Paralympic Games have been regularly organised in the host city of the Olympic Games since 1988. The number of athletes and the number of events is rising steadily: since 1996, athletes with various disabilities (spinal cord injuries, amputation, cerebral palsy, blindness and visual impairment as well as intellectual disabilities) compete in these Games. Injuries and disabilities are, of course, no longer caused only by war, but are due to traffic and work accident or result from congenital disabilities and chronic health problems.

In this context, it is important to mention that initiatives are underway - in which UNESCO, ICSSPE, CISM and several other international organizations are co-operating - to set up an International Conference next year emphasizing the role and importance of physical activity and sport in the rehabilitation and social integration persons injured due to war. This is clearly an important and relevant topic. This Conference is also another excellent example of international co-operation and collaboration between organisations with specific areas of expertise aiming to serve the needs of people today and to bridge the gap between practical work and scientific approaches.

4. Sport science and physical education - research and training of professionals

Remarkable progress has taken place in the development of sport science approaches. Fifty years ago, scientific work in the field of sport was strongly influenced by the medical and educational professions. Today, we witness an ever-increasing specialization in sport science. Today students in sport science institutes are not only preparing to become physical education teachers. Courses and specializations in the following areas are also available:

- biomechanics
- sport facilities
- sport information and documentation
- kinanthropometry
- sports law
- sport management
- sport history
- sport pedagogy
- sport philosophy

- sport psychology
- sport sociology
- sport medicine
- adapted physical activity and sport for persons with a disability.

Many universities and colleges around the world have structured their departments following these specialization areas and sub-disciplines. Professional training of teachers, coaches and researchers is increasingly influenced by this trend toward specialization. While it is necessary to support these trends toward specialization, it is also crucial for future development to create opportunities for inter- and multidisciplinary communication and co-operation.

Additionally, in the professional training programmes, it is essential that the training includes both a theoretical knowledge base and practical, hands-on experiences. I am pleased to learn about the increasing number of international degree and exchange programmes that are being set up which rely on the co-operation between several different institutes of higher education. These programmes enable student to learn about developments in other countries, strengthen international networks and apply scientific results to practice. In our fields, knowledge of the existing regional and international networks is essential and student must learn to work in collaboration with other professionals and to access the wide range of information resources. ICSSPE is working to ensure that information material is circulated and widely available. One new initiative that we are presently developing will facilitate the access that professionals and student in developing countries have to sport and sport science resources. The programme is called 'Share the Knowledge' and it is a joint venture planned between ICSSPE, Human Kinetics Publishers and UNESCO. The Share the Knowledge Programme is a joint project aiming to distribute sport science and physical education books to institutions who do not have the financial resources to buy them. Human Kinetics has agreed to donate books that are not fit for resale to institutes in developing countries who are in need of literature for study, research and practical work in sport science, physical education, sport and fitness. The intent is to make use of existing networks and resources and ensure that scientific information is available to as many interested individuals as possible. We are now working to find a means to transport the books and co-operation between governmental and non-governmental as well as the private sector will need to be established. perhaps this is also an area where CISM members can play a leading role.

Further to the issue of information sources, several organisations, such as the Sport Information Resource Centre in Canada, are producing comprehensive databases. Literary bibliographies and references to relevant research and publications is now available in many languages and is increasingly being made available on the Internet. Telecommunications technology is clearly enabling progress in all fields due to the flow of information across national and disciplinary borders.

Let me give you some selected examples of areas where inter-disciplinary co-operation is essential. Firstly, the doping issue can no longer be linked to merely one sport science discipline - biochemistry or sports medicine. Rather, it needs to be studied from various scientific perspectives, including ethics, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, and biomedicine to name but a few. Also, the growing lack of interest of young people in many countries around the world to actively participate in physical activity and sport or the increased number of drop-outs from sport in youth can serve as another example of topics where multidisciplinary perspectives and approaches are urgently needed. In this respect we cannot underestimate the

extreme importance of regular physical education for children and youth throughout their school lives.

5. The issue of physical education

"The practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all"

"Physical education and sport form an essential element of lifelong education in the overall education system."

The International Charter of Physical Education and Sport UNESCO, 1993

These two statements are taken directly from the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport prepared by UNESCO over twenty years ago and revised again in 1993.

Unfortunately, many education authorities seem unaware of the well-established benefits of school PE for children's physical and cognitive development, or of the increasing role of PE as a pre-vocational subject for future careers in the sport and leisure industries. Despite these direct benefits, and the knowledge that exercise and physical activity are crucial for children's longterm health and development, curriculum time for PE in schools appears to be reducing in many countries, and in some countries, disappearing altogether.

In response to this development, increasingly more local, national, and regional institutions are actively lobbying government ministries. They continue to prepare information materials and undertake research projects in physical education. Additionally, influential, international bodies are now addressing the issue and including physical education in their programmes and activities. For example, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recently committed itself to becoming more actively engaged in the promotion of physical education world-wide and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has begun concrete initiatives to link experts and promote active living, particularly in the school environment.

Many documents by international organizations and national government highlight the virtues of physical education or school sport as:

- contributing to young people's appreciation of the long term beneficial of regular exercise and ability to make informed decisions about adopting a healthy and active lifestyle in future years;
- channelling the energies, high spirits, competitiveness, and aggression of the young in a socially beneficial way; and
- the provision of lessons for life which young people are unlikely to learn so well in any other way; team spirit, good sportsmanship, playing within rules, self-discipline, and dedication.

(Department of National Heritage 1995, 6).

Despite these clear and significant contributions, we are currently facing a dramatic reduction in curriculum time allocation of physical education in many schools around the world.

HARDMAN (1998, 28) states "clearly a hitherto 'essentially' regarded school curriculum subject is at a crisis point in its history" and he recommends "... any reconstruction of physical education should include strategies to foster body/self-concepts, promote healthy well-being and moral education, which together will contribute to the enrichment of quality of life, and stimulate socialisation into habitual regular practice in the pursuit of those values. Any reshaping, however, should recognise local and cultural diversities, traditions as well as

different social and economic conditions and incorporate a range of aspects related to the all-round and harmonious development of the individual within society" (HARDMAN 1998, 29).

We are all challenged to jointly stop this process of reducing or even eliminating physical education from the school curriculum. Efforts have already been undertaken by ICSSPE to set up an international comparative study on the current situation of physical education worldwide. It is financially supported by the IOC and under the leadership of Ken Hardman, Manchester, UK. The result of this study will be available next year and will be presented at the World Summit on physical education next year in Berlin. Joint ventures have been established by governments and non-governmental organisations for this event.

The basis for an active, healthy lifestyle can and should be provided by physical education in schools. However, more opportunities for regular physical activities outside of the school environment need to be offered. This is where organisations such as CISM with a large number of members in countries around the world can play an important role in promoting physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle for individuals of all ages and abilities. With your co-operation and the co-operation of other organisations in the ICSSPE network, we can work together to ensure that this message is spread as effectively as possible. Additionally, the initiatives of organisations specifically involved in the sport for all movement are essential.

6. The Sport for all movement

The sport for all movement has made remarkable progress during the past years (see PALM ...) However, it is challenged to make physical activity accessible and attractive to all. Organisations working in this field need to identify the existing inequities between: men and women, individuals with different abilities, of different ages, and from different economical, social and cultural backgrounds. Clearly a wide range of opportunities for sport participation are necessary.

The importance of the sport for all movement will, no doubt, increase as we approach the next millennium. By concentrating on the human being and encouraging the active participation of all individuals, it can contribute to a person's self-respect and respect for others and also build a future based on cultural diversity and understanding.

So far, these links between education for all and sport for all have been identified by a few, but not yet on a broader scale. It can be and should be linked to the mandates of many international organisations. For example, UNESCO which is involved "in building a culture of peace across all of its programs through addressing the tensions of development - poverty, social injustice, political oppression, discrimination and exclusion, in all their forms, which are the root causes of conflict" (UNESCO 1996, 9) has adopted the slogan: "Investing into people". This remarkable slogan is surely applicable to the sport for all movement. I, therefore, advocate joining forces in promoting sport and education for all in a cultural context and on all levels - regional, national and international.

Let me focus on how communication and co-operation on the international level can be improved and access to active participation can be facilitated. PALM (1991) in his remarkable book on "Sport for All: Approaches from Utopia to Reality" outlined the theoretical framework for the implementation of necessary steps. In his recommendations he addresses the sport administrations and organizations, the scientific community and the physical

education profession. Special attention is given to international co-operation, he emphasizes the need for "bi-lateral and multi-lateral projects, development aid, provision of study courses, sending of experts, mutual research, information exchange, documentation, international Sport for All events" (PALM 1991, 105) in order to achieve a worldwide network of sport activities for all.

In this context I would like to emphasize the importance of co-operating with the existing bodies representing professionals in sport, sport science and physical education; a challenge to be considered by all of us. Despite the fact that international declarations exist which: 1) certify the right of everybody to participate in sport, 2) underline the necessity of co-operation between institutions, and 3) agree to partnership, concrete action is of crucial importance. Important steps have been taken to increase the awareness of traditional sports and games in the different regions of the world and at international events. For example, the 2nd World Festival of Traditional Games in Bangkok in 1996 attracted a record number of spectators and participants. For 2000, in conjunction with the World Fair in Hannover, the 3'd World Festival is currently in preparation, linked to a Scientific Congress.

In addition to encouraging participation and practising sports and games in all forms, there is no doubt that a scientific approach to the traditional and modern sports and games in today's world is of crucial importance in order to obtain a deeper insight into the cultural heritage related to sport. Current developments in the global village of sport and body culture, in industrialized as well as in developing countries play a central role in the evolution of society as a whole and have the potential to make very positive contributions. The influence on social structures and on the environment cannot be underestimated.

Environmental Awareness

If levels of sport participation are to continue to increase, we must recognise and address the impact of sport on our environment. Each one of us can make a difference and international organisations, such as the International Olympic Committee, are emphasising the high priority of this issue. Last year, the IOC hosted an international Congress on the Sport and the Environment in Kuwait. Representatives from all areas of the sport world and private sector were present. Additionally, in June of this year, the European Olympic Committees prepared a Conference on this topic in Rome. The IOC has set up a policy for creating a better balance between the development of sport and the protection of the environment. Concrete working procedures are in place and guide the work of the IOC and the Olympic Family.

All organisations working in the area of sport and physical activity must become aware of the reality of this issue. Strategies naturally depend on each cultural and situational context, therefore, the statement: 'Think globally, act locally' is appropriate. This topic area is a new addition to many university study programmes and numerous resources are available for individuals looking for information on the impact of sport and environmental best practices.

Vision for the future - partnerships

With its membership spanning the countries and continents of the world, your organisation - CISM - can contribute significantly to increasing the understanding and awareness of the importance of sport participation. There is no doubt that the 21st century will require us to join forces and pool our strengths. New partnerships are emerging and, on a world scale, events such as the World Sport Forum held this year for the first time in St. Moritz are

indicators the way of the future. The World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry coordinated this Forum, modelled after yearly Devos Economic Summit, to gather together representatives from the all facets of the sport world - including the private and public sector. This event proved successful in establishing mutually beneficial areas of co-operation and the event will and will be expanded and fine-tuned as a useful tool for sport development in the coming years. Such collaborative ventures are an encouraging sign for the future and illustrate that sport is in a excellent position to set a positive example for other fields.

It is clear to me that CISM's activities are far reaching and that strong international connections are in place within your organisation. I believe this is another area where sport has great potential to facilitate not only international understanding, but also concrete support. The avenues of communication that are in place thanks to sport participation can lead to further development in sport and other area in less developed countries. I would like to acknowledge the significant role that CISM and many other international organisations is playing in bridging the gap between developed and less-developed regions of the world and encourage you to continue strengthen these ties.

How can we best increase and maintain awareness about the significance of sport, physical activity and physical education? How can the preparation of coaches, trainers and teachers in this field be improved world-wide? What steps can be made to enhance the quality of physical activity and sport available for persons of all ages and abilities? How can research in sport sciences best be supported, disseminated and used in practice? These questions, and a common commitment to the development and promotion of sport in the broadest sense bring us together here to determine effective unified action for the future.

On behalf of all other ICSSPE members and the Council's Executive Officers, I look forward to continued co-operation and collaboration with CISM in the future as we strive to successfully meet the challenges ahead. The Council is committed to intensified partnership and collaboration to ensure that the momentum continues to improve the situation of sport and physical activity world-wide. It is clear that our current challenges can best be met with co operative actions, reaching beyond attitudinal, national and disciplinary boundaries.