Abstract Book

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Sports Education in the Community: Health, Well-being, and Inclusion

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Active breaks in secondary school teacher training

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Today, adolescents spend most of their time engaging in sedentary behaviors, particularly during school hours. The World Health Organization recommends an average of 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity to achieve health benefits. For this reason, a global action plan has been launched aimed to reduce physical inactivity and sedentary behavior by 15% by 2030, including through school-based interventions. Active breaks are a potential strategy for increasing physical activity levels in school without reducing the attention to instruction. Although the positive effects, the adoption of such practices in secondary schools still appears limited. Among the causes, the perception of inadequate preparation by teachers stands out. The aim is to understand the teachers perceptions on active breaks and the adequacy of their training and skills necessary to implement them.

Fifteen teachers from different subject areas at a technical high school participated in the study. Half of the teachers observed a six-week pilot program during which different approaches to implementing active breaks were tested from an expert. Finally, an hoc questionnaire was administered to investigate teachers' opinions on the importance of physical activity in schools, their perceived level of preparation and implementation difficulties.

The results show positive perceptions on the use of active breaks, recognizing their potential to improve students' attention levels, inclusion, and classroom atmosphere, despite challenges related to organizational aspects. However, in terms of training, challenges emerged, as most teachers feel they lack adequate knowledge and skills to plan and conduct such interventions without a support figure.

Secondary school teachers view active breaks as an effective educational strategy, but they highlight the need to strengthen professional development in this area. Dedicated professional development programs and the support of a health specialist could help integrate physical activities more fully into regular classroom instruction.

Physical education, physical stability and social inclusion: the effects of an injury prevention program for adults with disabilities.

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Adults with intellectual disabilities often present deficits in strength, balance, and postural control, leading to an increased risk of falls and reduced functional independence. Adapted physical activity and injury prevention programs may represent effective intervention strategies. Objective. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of a structured injury reduction program on postural stability, muscular strength, and functional mobility in adults with intellectual disabilities. Methods. Sixteen adults with intellectual disabilities (30–50 years) were randomly assigned to an experimental group (n=8) and a control group (n=8). The experimental group performed a 12-week program including breathing exercises, mobility work, stretching, and strength training (3 sessions/week), while the control group followed traditional postural gymnastics. Between-group differences were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and Cohen's d ($p<0.05$). Results. The experimental group showed a significant improvement in the Chair Rising Test compared to the control group ($p = 0.028$; $d = 1.22$), indicating increased lower-limb strength and endurance. No statistically significant differences were found in the Sit-Up Test ($p = 0.146$; $d = 0.77$), Standing Long Jump Test ($p = 0.111$; $d = 0.85$), or TUG ($p = 0.093$; $d = 0.90$), although effect sizes indicated moderate to large improvements. Conclusions. The standardized program primarily improved lower-limb strength, suggesting potential benefits for neuromuscular capacity and functional independence, although not all variables reached statistical significance. Interventions based on breathing, myofascial release, mobility, and strength training may contribute to injury prevention and improvements in postural stability and personal autonomy.

School Staff Experiences of a Health Promotion Initiative to Prevent School Absenteeism Among Students

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An increasing challenge in Swedish compulsory schools is the combination of declining levels of physical activity, rising psychosocial ill health, and growing rates of problematic school absenteeism among students. Against this backdrop, the PIA project (Promote Health, Important Choices and Attendance) was implemented as a three-year health promotion initiative in three secondary schools in Sweden.

The aim of this study was to explore school staff experiences of their involvement in the PIA project. More specifically, the study examined which effects and outcomes school staff considered most prominent regarding students' school motivation, physical activity, well-being, and attendance.

Individual qualitative interviews were conducted with ten members of school staff who were part of the student health teams. The interview data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The project was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Ref: 2024-01326-01).

Three themes were constructed from the interview data. The first theme, "Peer Conflicts and Social Stress," highlighted how social difficulties among students could initiate a negative spiral leading to increased absenteeism and widening knowledge gaps. According to the participants, this often contributed to feelings of inadequacy, stress, and failure among students. The second theme, "Domestic Challenges," reflected staff perceptions that school absenteeism was often linked to factors outside the school environment, such as family conflicts, limited parental support, and neurodevelopmental difficulties. The third theme, "Lack of Leadership," captured the challenges associated with establishing sustainable health-promoting initiatives within schools. Participants described an unclear division of responsibilities and a lack of organizational support as barriers to long-term implementation.

Overall, school absenteeism was viewed as a complex and multifaceted issue without simple solutions. The participants emphasized that addressing and preventing problematic absenteeism requires a whole-school approach involving all levels of the organization.

Academic Approaches for Promoting Healthy Lifestyles among University Students

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University is a key time for developing lifelong healthy habits. In the Western Balkans, students often face physical inactivity, poor diets, mental health struggles, and growing dependence on digital technology. Limited health promotion resources and cultural barriers make these problems worse. Currently there is no evidence-based educational framework in the region that covers all four areas, leaving universities without clear guidance for creating effective health promotion programs.

This review brings together research on educational strategies that support healthy lifestyles in four main areas: physical activity, nutrition, mental health, and digital wellbeing. Studies from 2015 to 2026 were found using Scopus, Web of Science, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The focus was on research from the Western Balkans and the European Union, where university health promotion has been studied more closely.

The findings show that these four areas are closely connected. Successful interventions are part of daily university life, use behavior-change principles, and are supported by the institution over time. Evidence from the European Union shows that coordinated, multi-part strategies work well. For the Western Balkans, approaches should focus on being practical, culturally relevant, and flexible for different university settings.

Based on this review, the VITAL Framework (Vitality through Integrated Teaching, Activity and Lifestyle Education) is recommended as a comprehensive, evidence-based model. It connects proven European practices with the particular needs of universities in the Western Balkans. Testing the framework in different university settings is a key goal for future research.

Healthy Lifestyle Network Europe (HLNE) Project

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The Healthy Lifestyle Network Europe (HLNE) is a three-year European project (2023–2026), funded by the Erasmus+ Sport programme (No. 101133533) with a budget of €400,000. It builds upon the achievements of the previous New Health 2022 (NH2022) project (2020–2022), with both initiatives aiming to promote healthier lifestyles among European citizens through physical activity, healthy nutrition, and mental.

During the NH2022 project, several educational and digital resources were developed, including qualification standards for Healthy Lifestyle Promoters (HLPs), a blended-learning training course, an online platform, a free mobile application, a lifestyle assessment tool, educational videos, and an e-book on lifestyle coaching and behaviour change. The project also provided free training to 163 HLPs.

Building on these outcomes, HLNE seeks to expand its impact by training approximately 1,000 additional HLPs, who will support around 50,000 citizens in adopting healthier lifestyles. The project will also develop qualification standards for Healthy Lifestyle Coaches (HLCs), create a dedicated training programme, and educate 80 HLCs. These coaches will provide support to individuals facing health inequalities, reaching approximately 400 consumers. In addition, HLNE plans to establish a European Healthy Lifestyle Education Institute.

Overall, HLNE aims to improve the quality of life of European citizens by promoting healthy behaviours and addressing key risk factors such as physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, and stress, which contribute to the development of non-communicable diseases. Everyone can sign up as participant, professional or company and already use the Lifestyle scan. https://new-health.eu/en/register

USSI– Universal Sports for Social Impact

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The USSI Erasmus sport project (Project Nº.: 101183224) brings together partners from across Europe to develop innovative, inclusive methods for educating martial arts coaches. Rooted in the values of respect, discipline, and non-discrimination, the program aims to empower coaches to become community leaders and role models — far beyond the dojo.

Through international cooperation, USSI provides a framework for teaching that combines practical training with social engagement. Trainers receive resources in four languages, participate in workshops and camps, and are supported through a mentoring system that fosters growth both as educators and as citizens.

By focusing on social inclusion, cultural exchange, and educational development, USSI encourages coaches to reach underrepresented communities and promote martial arts as a tool for social impact. The project offers a structured approach to learning, while also building a European network of like-minded professionals committed to making sport more accessible and meaningful.

Evaluating Malta's National Sport School and the Promise of the Dual-Career Elite Athlete.

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Across Europe, specialised sports schools have been established to cultivate elite athletes while safeguarding academic achievement through dual-career pathways. However, their effectiveness remains debated, particularly in small-state contexts with limited resources and talent pools. This study critically evaluated the National Sport School (NSS) in Malta, established in 2012 to support student-athletes aged 11–16 in achieving international sporting performance alongside educational progression. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining semi-structured interviews with three members of the school leadership team and questionnaire responses from 58 former students across four cohorts (2016–2020). The findings indicated high levels of sporting engagement and progression, with approximately 85% of respondents representing Malta at national level and strong aspirations for international sporting careers. Furthermore, around 90% of respondents believed the NSS supported their dual-career development. Key institutional strengths included strong teacher–coach–student communication, small-scale personalised support, and flexible academic provision for travelling athletes. Nevertheless, structural challenges were identified, particularly regarding facilities, logistical constraints, and coordination between school and club training programmes. The study concludes that while the NSS effectively supports dual-career development, infrastructural and systemic limitations reduce its capacity to consistently produce elite international athletes.

Technology-Enhanced Assessment in Physical Education: New Perspectives for Motor Competence, Engagement and Educational Practice

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Contemporary physical education is increasingly moving beyond traditional assessment models centred on performance measurement and standardized evaluation. Recent pedagogical perspectives view assessment as a process that supports learning, participation and learner development. Within this context, digital technologies offer new opportunities to rethink the educational value of assessment. Purpose. This paper develops a theoretical reflection on the role of technology-enhanced assessment in physical education, exploring its contribution to Physical Literacy, motor competence and student engagement. Theoretical Discussion. Drawing on contemporary perspectives on Physical Literacy and formative assessment, the article argues that technology-enhanced assessment should be understood not merely as a means of collecting performance data but as a pedagogical mediator that makes learning visible. Digital technologies support the shift from product-oriented evaluation to process-oriented assessment by fostering feedback, reflection and self-regulation. Moreover, they can facilitate more personalized and inclusive learning pathways while strengthening the educational dialogue between learners, movement experiences and pedagogical decision-making. Conclusions. Technology-enhanced assessment provides an opportunity to reconsider the educational foundations of evaluation in physical education. Its value lies not in data collection itself but in the capacity to transform information into pedagogical meaning. The future of assessment will depend on educators' ability to integrate technological innovation within human-centred approaches that promote Physical Literacy, motor competence and lifelong engagement in physical activity.

Building Sustainability in Sport. Designing: Sport (S)core for Sustainability, a Self-Assessment Tool for Environmental Sustainability in Mediterranean Sports Organisations

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This study aims to develop a self-assessment tool for sports organisations to foster critical reflection on their environmental and social sustainability practices, with particular reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The tool is designed not only to evaluate sustainability performance but also to stimulate reflective and participatory learning processes capable of generating both cultural and strategic transformation.

Design: Grounded in Transformative Learning Theory and Organisational Learning, the research adopts a qualitative approach inspired by Action Research. The initial version of the tool was developed from a prior analytical report on sports organisations and their alignment with SDGs relevant to the sports sector. Subsequent validation and refinement were conducted through six semi-structured interviews and two focus groups involving 18 European experts in sustainability and sports sociology. Data analysis employed structural and pattern coding, leading to the identification of seven overarching macro-themes.

Findings: The final version of the tool encompasses four core dimensions – Environment, Social, Governance, and Strategic Approach – each subdivided into specific sub-dimensions and descriptive indicators organised along a four-level scale. A complementary section guides organisations in formulating action plans for continuous improvement, facilitating the integration of organisational practices with the SDGs.

Originality: This research addresses a gap in literature by presenting the first self-assessment tool explicitly designed to activate transformative learning processes within sports organisations. The tool reframes assessment as an educational and reflective practice, linking organisational evaluation directly to the principles of global sustainable development.
Practical and Social Implications: The tool provides practical guidance for sports organisations seeking to embed sustainability and SDG principles into their strategic vision and daily practices, promoting a cultural shift towards greater environmental and social responsibility.

An Integrated Assessment Model for Evaluating Motor Skills in Trainee Primary School Teachers

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This study presents an integrated assessment model for evaluating motor skills in trainee generalist primary school teachers. The model integrates objective performance measures with self-reported qualitative observations, aiming to promote body awareness and highlight the quality of movement. A total of 547 university students, divided into two cohorts (2023/24 and 2024/25), completed a battery of standardized field tests and recorded both quantitative results (e.g., times, repetitions) and qualitative reflections on their execution. The findings show that the 2024/25 cohort performed better in balance and muscular endurance, while showing slower times in agility and sprint tests. Qualitative data revealed more fluid execution, a wider range of motor strategies, and greater self-reflection, suggesting a more mature motor profile. These differences are not solely attributable to individual factors; they may also reflect the evolving structure of the training program, the instructional approach, and the learning environment. The integration of objective and subjective data enabled the construction of multidimensional motor profiles, capturing not only outcomes but also processes. This model supports the development of reflective and adaptive motor competence and offers promising applications in teacher training and health promotion, contributing to a more inclusive and effective approach to physical education in primary schools.

Exploring the Influence of Cognitive and Ecological Dynamics Approaches on Countermovement Jumping Enhancement A Comparative Training Study

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The selection of appropriate teaching and learning approaches represents a key challenge for professionals involved in physical activity promotion and physical education. Cognitive approaches emphasise demonstration, repetition, and feedback, whereas ecological dynamics approaches promote learner autonomy, exploration, and adaptive problem-solving. Although both frameworks are discussed in sport pedagogy and motor learning literature, comparative evidence in real-world physical activity settings remains limited. This study compared the effects of cognitive and ecological dynamics-based instructional approaches on motor skill development in physically active adults.
Methods
Thirty-six physically active adults (28.15 ± 5.89 years) were assigned to either a Cognitive Group (CG; n = 18) or an Ecological Dynamics Group (EDG; n = 18). Both groups completed a 12-week intervention consisting of three weekly sessions. CG protocol was based on coach-directed instruction, structured practice, and repeated execution of specific tasks. EDG protocol incorporated video observation, group reflection, learner-centred decision making, and self-organised practice activities. Countermovement jump (CMJ) and free-arm countermovement jump (CMJ-FA) performance were assessed before and after the intervention using an Optojump system as indicators of motor skill acquisition and adaptation. Statistical analyses included paired and independent-sample t-tests ($p \leq .05$).
Results
Both groups significantly improved motor performance. The CG improved CMJ performance by 12.2% and CMJ-FA by 7.8%, whereas the EDG improved CMJ by 10.2% and CMJ-FA by 19.5%. No significant between-group differences were observed for CMJ. However, the EDG demonstrated significantly greater gains in CMJ-FA performance ($p = .05$), suggesting superior adaptation in tasks characterised by greater movement variability and coordination demands.
Conclusions
The findings provide practical insights for physical activity professionals, coaches, and educators seeking to design learner-centred environments that support motor competence, engagement, and lifelong participation in physical activity.

The Power of Cycling and its transfer to sustainability and (Individual) Resilience

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Resilience means being able to draw on your own resources and strengths – especially in challenging times. It has seven pillars – they support people in crises, stress or change. Cycling means freedom and makes an enormous contribution to your own health.

Many aspects of cycling – whether in everyday life or as a leisure activity – promote and strengthen your own resilience. Within the project, examples and practical applications provide guidance on how much cycling can contribute to your own resilience and, as a consequence, offer added value for private and professional challenges and situations.

The idea is to raise awareness and provide knowledge on the health benefits of cycling, with a particular focus on strengthening individual resilience. How one can transfer the experiences of a cycling tour into being resilient in private and especially in business situations is also a goal of the project. Guiding and motivating people to use cycling not only as a method of transportation or leisure activity, but also as a metaphor for their daily challenges and how to face them well prepared.

Crises, uncertain times and unforeseen events affect everyone, both personally and professionally. If you cycle, you will not only become physically better and live a healthy lifestyle, you (sometimes) also handle challenging times like climbing a mountain or fighting against the headwind. You are (kind of) resilient to these obstacles. But you will make it and, as a consequence, this is the best training program for being resilient off the bike, too. You just need to reflect a little bit and transfer those physical experiences into practical behaviour – no matter if it is for private or business purposes. A guideline to do so is the aim of the project.

Students' Perceptions of Health-Promoting Initiatives Aimed at Reducing Problematic School Absenteeism

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Introduction: School absenteeism in Sweden is currently described as a growing problem. Previous studies clearly show that problematic school absenteeism rarely has a single cause but arises through an interaction of several risk factors at different levels. Recurrent absenteeism can have direct and long-term negative effects on academic performance, grades, social functioning, and overall health.

Aim: The PIA project (Promote Health, Important Choices and Attendance) is a three-year school project conducted in three smaller municipalities and three secondary schools in western Sweden. This study´s aim was to identify, analyze and evaluate; how have students experienced the health-promoting activities in the PIA project? What are the most prominent success factors and the most significant barriers according to the students?

Method: The group of students (aged 13–16) who participated in the focus groups consisted of students with between 15 and 30 percent absenteeism. Data collection was carried out through seven focus groups (Participants =38). The students' responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. The project was approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Ref:2024-01326-01).

Results: Three main themes emerged from the focus groups: "Engaged and Present Adults," "Negative Emotions Related to School" and "Challenges in Social Relationships." Students reported that supportive environments are created where adults are visible and actively engaged. During the school day, students look forward to meeting their friends, which serves as a positive reinforcement. However, students experienced long school days as a barrier, negatively affecting their motivation. Overall, the focus groups indicate that students call for more variation during the school day, a supportive workplace, and greater student influence over the school environment.

Talent Development in Youth Football: Comparison of Training Models, Management Strategies and Regulation in Italy and Spain

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Modern football demands that players make highly effective decisions. Although the ecological-dynamic approach, which involves the use of small-sided games, has demonstrated benefits for decision-making compared to the traditional approach, the potential impact of football eSports has not been thoroughly investigated. Purpose: The aim of the study is to measure the effectiveness of three different training protocols: 1) traditional, 2) ecological-dynamic with small-sided games, and a hybrid eSports-based protocol, in terms of decision-making and reaction time in youth football. Methods: 69 young footballers were assigned to three groups: Group A (traditional training), Group B (ecological-dynamic training) and Group C (hybrid e-sport-based training). All groups followed a 24-week protocol with pre-, mid- and post-intervention assessments. General, offensive and defensive decision-making was assessed using the TacticUP Video The data were analysed using mixed ANOVA with Bonferroni post-hoc tests. Results: Significant Group × Time interactions emerged for all variables analysed, with significant improvements observed particularly in Group C ($p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .21–.28$). Simple effects analyses revealed significant improvements exclusively in Group C, with a reduction in reaction time (−12.5%) and an increase in overall decision-making (+20%), offensive decision-making (+22.3%) and defensive decision-making (+20.8%) between pre- and post-tests ($p<.001$), whilst Group A showed minimal and non-significant changes (< 2% in reaction time and < 1% in decision-making, $p > .05$) and Group B showed moderate improvements (approximately −5% in reaction time and +3% in overall decision-making), results that were significant only in some post-hoc comparisons. . Conclusion: Overall, the results indicate that the innovative protocols (ecological-dynamic and Hybrid eSport-based) are more effective than the traditional model in promoting the development of decision-making and reaction speed in young footballers.

E-Combat Games as an Educational Tool for Promoting Motor Skills, Self-Regulation, and Awareness in Youth

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Background: Online competitive video games have become an increasingly central part of adolescents' daily lives. Although the growing interest in integrating digital technologies with physical activities has opened new educational perspectives, the potential of competitive gaming as a tool for promoting motor skills and awareness regarding video game use remains underexplored. Purpose: This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of an experimental program based on the integration of e-combat games and physical activities in improving visuo-motor reaction time and students' awareness regarding video game use. Method: The sample consisted of 80 participants equally divided into an experimental group, involved in an integrated program based on e-combat games and physical activities, and a control group engaged in traditional physical education classes. The intervention lasted 12 weeks and included two 90-minute sessions per week. Visuo-motor reaction time was assessed using the Ruler Drop Test, whereas awareness was evaluated through an ad hoc questionnaire specifically developed for the study. Results: The experimental group showed a reduction in reaction time, decreasing from a mean pre-test value of 21.4 ± 3.2 cm to 16.8 ± 2.9 cm at post-test, indicating faster visuo-motor responses. In contrast, the control group showed only limited changes. Regarding awareness and perceptions of the educational use of video games, participants in the experimental group demonstrated a significant increase in questionnaire scores, rising from 48.6 ± 7.4 to 61.9 ± 6.8 points, whereas the control group showed only modest improvements. Conclusion: The findings suggest that the integration of e-combat games and structured physical activities may represent an effective educational strategy for promoting the development of perceptual-motor skills and enhancing awareness in the use of digital technologies during adolescence.

Beyond the Finish Line: How Motivation, Communication, and Engagement Shape Student Well-Being in Sports Higher Education.

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The transition to higher education introduces complex academic, psychological, and communicative challenges that significantly influence student retention, well-being, and overall success. This case study investigates the structural relationships between student motivation, self-regulated learning strategies, and institutional participation at the University of Sports, emphasizing the role of strategic communication in fostering student connection.

The research utilizes a quantitative methodology, featuring an original multi-pillar diagnostic instrument administered digitally to the sports university student cohort. Grounded in self-determination theory and instructional communication models, the structural framework comprehensively measures internal and external motivational profiles, active cognitive learning strategies, social capital built through peer communication and campus engagement, task-specific academic self-efficacy, and performance sustainability driven by a growth mindset. Data were collected via a validated Likert scale to map cross-variable correlations and assess how institutional communication flows affect student involvement.

The preliminary findings indicate a profound predictive correlation between internal motivational dynamics and advanced cognitive learning strategies. Crucially, the data reveals that effective interpersonal and digital communication channels are primary catalysts for campus engagement. Students who actively utilize institutional networks exhibit robust academic self-efficacy and a higher degree of social integration. This multidimensional involvement serves as a buffer against academic burnout, promoting psychological resilience and positive student well-being.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates that higher education sports institutions must look beyond traditional metrics. By leveraging these diagnostic benchmarks, universities can design targeted, communication-driven interventions that merge intellectual growth with physical and social well-being. This framework offers a highly scalable model for modernizing educator training, student support structures, and institutional communication strategies across European sports education networks.

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Workforce Sustainability in Sport: Exploring the Potential of New Forms of Employment in Europe and Albanian

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The European sport sector increasingly depends on a skilled, adaptable, and inclusive workforce. However, it faces persistent labour market challenges, including skills shortages, workforce instability, high levels of part-time and self-employment, undeclared work, seasonal employment, and limited opportunities for long-term career development. These challenges, intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, have exposed the limitations of traditional employment models in meeting the evolving needs of the sector.

This paper presents a European project that investigates the potential of new forms of employment to enhance employability, workforce retention, inclusion, and professional development in sport. Innovative employment arrangements including ICT-based mobile work, platform work, employee sharing, job sharing, collaborative employment, interim management, and portfolio work offer opportunities to increase labour market flexibility and organizational resilience. At the same time, they raise important questions regarding job security, social protection, and regulatory governance.

The Albanian context provides a relevant case for examining these developments. While awareness of innovative employment models is growing among policymakers and sport stakeholders, their practical implementation remains limited. Key barriers include the absence of a comprehensive legal and terminological framework aligned with European labour market standards and limited institutional experience in applying such arrangements. Nevertheless, Albania's National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030 supports workforce modernization, skills development, and labour market adaptability, creating favourable conditions for future adoption.

The project aims to generate evidence-based knowledge on emerging employment practices, develop policy recommendations, create practical implementation tools for employers and workers, and strengthen organizational capacity within the sport sector. Ultimately, it seeks to contribute to a more sustainable, inclusive, and professional sport workforce across Europe while providing valuable insights for labour market and sport policy development in Albania.

Gender Equality in Coaching - Insights from the SheCOACH Project

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SheCOACH is a multi-stakeholder Erasmus+ funded initiative aimed at advancing gender equality in sport coaching through the increased participation of women in basketball coaching education across Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and Spain. The project seeks to mainstream gender equality within sports coaching education by embedding gender perspectives as a structural and transversal component of coach education systems, rather than addressing them as an isolated topic. In line with established gender mainstreaming approaches in sport policy and education (European Commission, 2020; UNESCO, 2015), SheCOACH focuses on strengthening the capacity of coaching education providers to systematically integrate gender-related content into curricula and daily educational practice, while also supporting national and regional sport authorities in the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming policies within coaching education frameworks.

This abstract presents the SheCOACH project and outlines its key objectives and implementation activities. In particular, it focuses on the piloting and evaluation of the "Framework for Gender Mainstreaming in Coaching Education," conducted over a four-month period (February–May 2026) by coaching education and qualification providers across partner countries. During this phase, the framework was applied, tested, and critically discussed in real educational contexts.

Overall, the evaluation results demonstrate that the SheCOACH project, and in particular the monthly meetings within the framework pilot, were received very positively by participants. The consistently high average scores and strong proportions of positive responses indicate that both the framework and the workshops substantially contributed to participants' understanding of gender equality, increased awareness of gender stereotypes, and the development of practical tools and strategies applicable to coaching education and practice.

Physical Activity, Leisure-Time Exercise, and Sedentary Behavior among University Students: Findings from an IPAQ-Based Study

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Physical activity plays an important role in maintaining students' physical health, well-being, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Assessing physical activity levels among university students provides valuable information about their engagement in daily, recreational, and sport-related activities.

This study aimed to assess the level of physical activity participation among students enrolled in the Master program at the University of Tirana. The study evaluated the frequency of physical activity, participation in moderate- and high-intensity activities, and leisure-time physical activity. A total of 180 students participated in the study. Data were collected using the standardized International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) through Google Forms during the academic year 2025–2026.

The results showed that 69.27% of students engaged in paid or unpaid daily activities, indicating a considerable level of physical activity in their daily routine. Walking was the most common activity, with 62.8% of students reporting walking for at least 10 minutes on more than 5 days per week. Participation in high- and moderate-intensity activities was more limited, with 30% of students reporting no high-intensity activity and 30.56% reporting no moderate-intensity activity during the previous week. Sedentary behavior was also identified, as 45% of students spent 2–3 hours sitting per day, while 16.11% reported up to 5 hours daily.

Although students demonstrated a satisfactory level of physical activity, walking was the most preferred form of activity compared to structured sports activities. Limited participation in high- and moderate-intensity leisure-time activities highlights the need to promote regular exercise and reduce sedentary behaviors among university students.

Tennis ball coordination with movement (TECO-M): An empirical study on the effects on cognitive and regulative functions of students

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Experimental studies in the area of sports science highlight the effects of physical exercise on specific executive and cognitive functions of children and students or their academic performance. However, studies focusing specifically on the effects of coordinative exercises in physical education on students' learning and social behaviour embedded in everyday school routines are rare. Nonetheless, more studies in this respect are needed in order to provide more ecologically valid knowledge about the implementation of research-based knowledge in sports science with respect to pedagogical routines in schools. The authors conclude that research has to consider to a much greater extent perspectives from educational research as well as pedagogical practice. The present quasi-experimental study aims to answer the following research question: Do students experience a better learning/social behaviour after physical education lessons that focus on coordinative exercises with tennis balls compared to physical education lessons that do not? For that purpose, a quasi-experimental longitudinal design was conducted over eleven weeks with students aged between 13-14. In order to enhance the ecological validity of the study with respect to school routines, most stages of the study included the perspectives of the teachers. Consequently, the study design follows to a large extent the principles of Design-Based Research. The results of the study indicate that specifically for the self-reported attention and persistence the intervention shows no effects, while for self-perception the scores increased significantly after the first three weeks. The study also revealed that the interest in the subject matter that followed after the physical education lessons contributes to a large extent to the effects. The quantitative results of the study are complemented by a focus group discussion that was conducted with four students from the intervention group, and which provides further insights for advancing future research.

Translating and Adapting an Evidence-Based Inclusive Physical Activity Intervention for Students with Disabilities: The Burn 2 Learn Germany Project

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From an international perspective, Australia occupies a pioneering role in implementing physical literacy (PL) into policy and practice, while Germany continues to lag implementation (Carl et al., 2023). One opportunity to promote PL in school settings is presented by the Australian school-based high-intensity interval training (HIIT) programs Burn 2 Learn (B2L) and Burn 2 Learn adapted (B2La), developed for adolescent students without and with disabilities respectively at the University of Newcastle (Lubans et al., 2025). The evidence-based interventions demonstrate positive effects on physical fitness and psychosocial health (B2L), and also improvements in functional performance, muscular strength and physical literacy (B2La) (Leitner, 2025; Lubans et al., 2021, 2025).

To harness this potential, the Burn 2 Learn Germany (B2LG) project proposes a multi-stage research process to translate, adapt and develop the program for the German cultural and educational context. In an inclusive design, joint training for students with all abilities will be facilitated as a central feature.

The adaptation will be carried out across four research stages. First, a mapping review will identify existing inclusive physical activity interventions and recommendations for German schools. Second, a co-design study involving teachers, pupils and parents will guide cultural and linguistic translation of program components, identify special needs and enhance acceptance and long-term sustainability. Third, a pilot study will assess feasibility, acceptability and preliminary effectiveness from both teacher and pupil perspectives. Fourth, a cluster-randomised controlled trial will evaluate the B2LG on outcomes such as physical activity, fitness, PL or biopsychosocial health.

B2LG aims to empower teachers to support all students, thereby improving students' health and well-being, establish a scalable opportunity for equal participation in school-based sport, and support the growing uptake of PL as a framework for sustainable physical activity promotion in German schools.

Rethinking Physical Education: A Matter of Cognition?

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Historically centred on skill acquisition, physical development, and movement ability, Physical Education (PE) has progressively expanded its scope to foster social, pedagogical, and psychological dimensions. In recent years, a growing body of evidence from diverse sporting contexts has highlighted that success in sport is inextricably associated with a multitude of cognitive processes, encompassing perception, anticipation, attention, decision-making, creativity, intelligence, and memory. Yet, these cognitive processes appear to be only marginally integrated into contemporary PE practice.

Conceptual Framework and Applied Methods: This presentation introduces the Cognitive Framework for Physical Education (CFPE), a holistic teaching approach that positions cognitive processes as a fundamental component of PE. In an initial step, key cognitive processes relevant to motor learning and sporting performance are presented, together with their theoretical foundations and current empirical evidence supporting their critical role. Building on this foundation, the presentation provides practical, evidence-based teaching examples that illustrate how games and exercises can be systematically designed to foster children's perceptual, anticipatory, decision-making, and creative problem-solving abilities in movement contexts.

Future Implications: Integrating CFPE into PE has the potential not only to enhance sporting performance through the systematic development of cognitive abilities but also to facilitate a more differentiated learning approach, thereby fostering an inclusive environment, long-term motivation, and lifelong engagement in physical activity. By bridging contemporary sport science and educational practice, CFPE adopts a holistic approach to future-oriented PE and offers a conceptual foundation that systematically integrates cognitive and motor processes.

Beyond Sport performance: The Role of Volleyball in Promoting Health, Well-being, and Social Inclusion among Youth Girls.

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Sport is increasingly recognized as an important environment for youth, contributing not only to physical development but also to social inclusion, psychological well-being, and a sense of belonging among the youngest. Volleyball, as a team sport, provides opportunities for active participation, communication, cooperation, and self-confidence. Regarding the broader impact of youth volleyball participation in the Albanian context, evidence remains limited, despite the growing interest in the educational and social value of sport. Aim: This study analyzes the contribution of volleyball participation to the well-being, health promotion, and social inclusion of girls in Albania, from the perspectives of athletes, parents, and coaches. Methods: A descriptive mixed-methods study involving volleyball players, volleyball coaches, and parents was conducted to explore the perceived contributions of youth volleyball to well-being, health, and social inclusion. Results: Volleyball participation is perceived as a positive contribution to physical activity levels, teamwork skills, social connectedness, and self-confidence. Positive reports regarding volleyball participation were provided by coaches and parents, approving that it supports the development of discipline, responsibility, and positive peer relationships. Evidence indicates that volleyball can provide an inclusive environment that encourages participation and a sense of belonging among girls. Conclusion: Findings support the role of team sports programming in promoting well-being, health, and social inclusion and may provide practical implications for coaches, educators, and professionals interested in youth sport development.

Experiential Learning in Health Promotion: Insights from the Beweg' dich für die Seele (BdfdS) Programme

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Well-being-oriented prevention programmes commonly combine physical activity (PA) with psychoeducational sessions (PsycEd). Both components are typically delivered separately, with PA sessions focusing predominantly on functional and physiological training outcomes. The motivational, social, and experiential dimensions that drive sustainable behaviour change are rarely placed at the centre of PA session design. BdfdS is a community-based and inclusive prevention programme for adults experiencing stress and mild psychological burden. While PsycEd sessions follow a conventional format, PA sessions deliberately integrate experiential learning, placing group dynamics and outdoor experience at the centre of the intervention.

PA sessions were conducted outdoors and included nature-based movement tasks, group challenges, walk-and-talk formats, and structured reflection phases, following an experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). Facilitation was guided by outdoor education effectiveness factors (Hildmann, 2020) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1993), prioritising autonomy, competence experience, and social relatedness. A qualitative feedback analysis was conducted across three programme cycles (2023 – 2024; n = 13). Programme effectiveness was further supported by an independent ecological momentary assessment study (Röttger et al., manuscript submitted).

The relational dimension – group cohesion and the trainer-participant relationship – was the most frequently cited positive factor, followed by contextual elements such as outdoor settings and programme design. Independent evaluation confirmed improvements in affective well-being (WHO-5). Notably, PA sessions outperformed PsycEd sessions in perceived helpfulness, group atmosphere, and social support – dimensions (Röttger et al., manuscript submitted).

By placing motivational, social, and experiential dimensions at the centre of PA session design, this programme may contribute to outcomes beyond the immediate effects of physical activity alone. The superior ratings of PA sessions on relational and social dimensions suggest that the didactic approach is associated with programme effectiveness. Future research should examine this integrated approach in controlled designs and assess long-term behaviour change.

Mentoring in University Sport: Evaluating the FISU Springboard Programme

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University sport is increasingly expected to generate educational, social and developmental benefits that extend beyond athletic performance and competition. The FISU Springboard Mentoring Programme represents one such initiative, connecting national university sport student ambassadors with experienced professionals from the international university sport community.
This descriptive-evaluative study investigates the developmental outcomes associated with participation in the programme. Using thematic analysis, the study examines how structured mentoring contributes to participants' confidence, career development, leadership, networking and sense of belonging within and beyond the international university sport community. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with mentors, mentees and FISU Education representatives, complemented by an online survey. The study explores participants' motivations for engagement and the educational, personal and social benefits they associate with programme participation, as well as the specific programme characteristics perceived as most valuable.
Findings aim to inform future mentoring initiatives within university sport by identifying perceived strengths, challenges and opportunities for programme development.

Sustainable talent development in Women's Basketball in Germany and Austria

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Girls' and women's basketball in Germany and Austria has gained increasing visibility, yet female players still face structural inequalities, lower participation rates, limited development pathways, and high dropout rates during adolescence. This presentation examines how basketball clubs can build successful girls' sections and create sustainable talent development environments. Using a qualitative research design guided by a constructivist paradigm, ten semi- structured interviews were conducted with coaches, sporting directors, youth coordinators, and experts from Germany and Austria. The data was analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. The theoretical framework combines Martindale et al.'s model of effective talent identification and development procedures with Henriksen's Environment Success Factors model, allowing both developmental processes and organizational structures to be examined. The findings show that success in girls' basketball is multidimensional and includes competitive achievement, long-term player development, participation, enjoyment, and personal growth. Five central strategies emerged: defining success beyond winning, building connected club structures through shared values and communication, developing players through inclusive and flexible pathways, recognizing coaches as key drivers of development, and using role models as developmental resources. Overall, this presentation shows that successful girls' basketball sections require coherent, inclusive, and development- oriented environments that address both performance goals and gender-specific barriers.

Quality of Life in Adults: A Comparison Between Physically Active and Inactive Individuals

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Quality of life (QoL) is a multidimensional construct that reflects individuals' perceptions of their position in life within the context of their culture, value systems, personal goals, expectations, and concerns. The objective is to examine and compare the QoL of physically active and physically inactive Portuguese adults. A cross-sectional study was conducted using the World Health Organization QoL Assessment–BREF. This instrument comprises 26 items that evaluate overall QoL and physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environment domains. A total of 394 Portuguese adults participated (mean age = 41.5 ± 13.2 years), with an equal distribution of women and men (50% each). Most participants were married (54.3%) and 41.4% held an academic bachelor. Participants were categorized into groups: physically active (n = 104), regularly engaged in structured exercise (n = 218), and sedentary (n = 72). Descriptive analyses were performed and differences between groups were examined using One-way Anova, with the effect sizes calculated. Overall, participants reported favourable levels of QoL. The highest scores were in the physical domain (76.2%), followed by social relationships (73.1%) and overall quality of life (71.3%). Comparative analyses revealed significant differences between sedentary individuals and both physically active participants and structured exercise participants. These differences were in overall QoL and in the physical health, psychological well-being, and environmental domains, with effect sizes from small to moderate. The findings indicate that Portuguese adults generally perceive their QoL positively. Compared with sedentary individuals, active participants demonstrated significantly higher scores in overall QoL, physical health, psychological well-being, and environmental domains. These results reinforce the importance of promoting active lifestyles as a strategy for enhancing well-being and health-related QoL among adults.

Teaching Sport for Development: Lessons from University-Based Educational Projects

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This presentation aims to describe and discuss a decade of experience in various educational and research projects and programmes focused on Sport for Development (SfD). The broad SfD field encompasses various approaches that utilise the potential of sports and physical activities to instigate social change and development. These approaches are employed in areas such as supporting socially excluded communities, facilitating post-conflict reconciliation, promoting the education of children and young people, fostering personal and social skills development, addressing environmental issues, and providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in sports. We have led and participated in numerous national and international projects involving students from Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, often alongside students from other countries. A distinctive aspect of our work is the collaboration between students of sports studies and international development studies programmes. This combination provides innovative insights into SfD topics, drawing on experience from various academic disciplines. We utilise various teaching methods to introduce students to the SfD field, covering both theory and practice, including lectures, practical workshops, field trips to other relevant organisations, collaboration in international groups on research assignments, and specific summer or winter schools. A key aspect of our work involves creating and developing an international network of SfD organisations, including universities, NGOs and sports bodies. These organisations participate in teaching activities, host students during field trips and share their experiences. A substantial part of our activities involves securing financial support, primarily from the European Union's Erasmus+ programme and its various chapters. Our goal is to encourage undergraduate and postgraduate students to consider how sport and physical movement can be utilised to promote social cohesion, multicultural communication, conflict resolution and other topics, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Structure, Mastery and Motivation in Fitness-Based Physical Education: Insights from the MEGAFiT Project in Danish Lower Secondary Schools

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Fitness-Based approaches are increasingly integrated into physical education (PE), yet limited research has examined how such formats influence students' motivation, self-efficacy, and physical Literacy. The Danish MEGAFiT project addresses these issues among lower secondary school students (aged 13–16), focusing on instructional design and student experiences.

A qualitative design was applied, combining systematic classroom observations across multiple schools with semi-structured group interviews. The analysis examined how organisational structures, differentiation strategies, and teaching practices shape participation, motivation, and learning.
MEGAFiT lessons followed a standardised structure with warm-up, strength-based stations, and high-intensity activities. This format supported classroom management, participation, and task focus, particularly when teachers actively guided instruction. Predictability promoted a sense of safety and enhanced self-efficacy.

However, a pedagogical tension emerged: while structure supported perceived competence, limited variation risked reducing motivation over time. Mastery experiences were central to motivation. Differentiation through scalable exercises enabled meaningful engagement but required teacher support to ensure progression and quality. Students'

engagement depended strongly on perceived success, with challenging yet achievable tasks eliciting high motivation.

From a Physical Literacy perspective, MEGAFiT strengthened physical competence and confidence through repeated practice. In contrast, conceptual understanding of training principles remained limited, affecting transferability. Less experienced students reported increased motivation for physical activity, whereas more experienced students differentiated between school activities and 'real' training contexts. Although the environment was perceived as supportive, disengagement often appeared as quiet withdrawal, raising concerns about inclusion across ability levels.

MEGAFiT shows potential for enhancing self-efficacy and key aspects of Physical Literacy through structured, experience-based teaching. However, outcomes depend on teachers' ability to combine structure with variation, progression, and differentiation.

"It's Not for Me to Be the First with Hijab": Religion, Representation, and Belonging in Norwegian Team Sport

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Organized team sport in Norway is often framed as an inclusive arena, yet questions remain about how inclusion is experienced. This article examines how girls with migrant backgrounds born/raised in Norway with two parents born in Africa or Asia, who identified as Muslims, view being positioned as representatives of religion and "difference" in everyday club sport. Drawing on qualitative in-depth interviews, supported by contextual knowledge from focus groups and observations, the analysis foregrounds how ordinary interactions make religious practices and racialized readings salient and produce a "representational burden" that the girls must manage alongside sport participation. Analytically, the article is grounded in an intersectional perspective, Yuval-Davis' framework of belonging and the politics of belonging and Du Bois notion of Double Consciousness, highlighting how boundaries of "us" and "them" are negotiated through everyday recognition and normative judgments and how the girls navigate through an awareness of how they are read by others. Findings show that practices such as fasting, hijab, and modesty can become hyper-visible and may require explanation, negotiation, or defence in routine sport situations. A few girls described embracing this visibility—actively taking on a role-model position and seeking to "prove" stereotypes wrong. However, most described exhaustion and withdrawal when the pressure of being conspicuously different became too heavy. The material also points to uncertainty and avoidance regarding religion in the sport setting. When religious difference is not addressed, girls described feeling misrecognized, and silence in response to such incidents could heighten vulnerability. The article contributes by specifying how representation pressures operate as everyday mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in organized sport, and by showing how belonging can become conditional when girls with migrant backgrounds are routinely read as symbols of religion, culture, or diversity rather than simply as athletes.

"If You Quit, I Quit": A Qualitative Study of Coaches' Roles in Sport Participation for Girls with Migrant Backgrounds: Perspectives from the Girls and Coaches

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Organized sport is a key arena for young people's social participation and health promotion, yet girls with migrant backgrounds remain underrepresented in Norwegian club sport. This article examines how coaches and girls (raised in Norway with two parents born in Africa or Asia) understand the coach's role in shaping participation and belonging in organized team sport. The analysis is theoretically anchored in Yuval-Davis' framework of belonging and the politics of belonging, emphasizing how recognition and boundary-making shape who feels "at home" in everyday institutional settings. The study draws on fieldwork in four sports clubs, including eighteen observation sessions, four group interviews (N = 29), coach interviews (N = 7), and individual interviews with girls who are current participants (N = 10) and former participants (N = 9). Findings show that coaches are crucial for participation, with relationship-building and facilitation emerging as key components. Building trust with girls and their families, and recognizing diverse needs, can foster inclusion and is highly appreciated. Conversely, limited cultural recognition, rigid expectations, and weak communication with the girls' and their families may unintentionally reinforce exclusionary dynamics. Girls were sensitive to subtle signals of exclusion and recalled discomfort related to questions about religious practices and negative attention to parents' lack of involvement. The study shows how inclusion and exclusion are negotiated in coach–girl relationships. Its contribution lies in demonstrating the importance of cultural recognition in everyday sport practices. The gap between the sport federation's vision of "sports joy for all" and the girls' lived realities underscores the need to prioritize cultural recognition in coach education, policy, and research.

The Sensei as a Lighthouse: Retrospective Insights into the Socio-Moral Development of Children through Traditional Karate

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This presentation investigates the extent to which traditional karate training fosters the socio-moral development of children. Using a qualitative retrospective research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three long-standing karateka who began training as children, as well as two sensei with many years of teaching experience. While the perspective of the karateka reflects how they perceive their own socio-moral development retrospectively, the viewpoint of the sensei provides an objective perspective on their training methods and experiences.

The findings reveal three key mechanisms: first, the dojo serves as a safe haven, providing a stable structural framework for the internalisation of values. Second, the sensei acts as a lighthouse, acting as a formative role model outside the parent–child relationship who stimulates the maturation process through targeted pedagogy and third, practitioners manifest an inner compass in the form of enhanced moral judgement. This presentation demonstrates that the combination of ritual etiquette and pedagogical leadership significantly supports the development of prosocial attitudes. Consequently, these insights yield vital implications for the training of sports coaches and sensei, highlighting the necessity of integrating comprehensive pedagogical and socio-moral competencies into formal coach education frameworks to facilitate holistic youth development.