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KEY FINDINGS OF A NATIONAL STUDY ON SCHOOL SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

According to the United Nations, physical education and school sport (PESS), as integrated entity, forms a cornerstone for societal change as capsulated by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the call by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for quality physical education (PE). This perspective is evident in global, regional and national policy frameworks with a call for action to implementation. This set the scene for a national study in South Africa across four school types. Key findings are reported obtained through a concurrent Mixed Method Research (MMR) approach utilising observations of physical resources, interviews with school representatives, including school leadership (n=121) and teachers (n=177); focus group discussions with teachers (n=232) and learners (n=677). Questionnaires were also completed by 153 teachers and 2681 learners. Results show diverse implementation approaches and practices reflective of access to resources, support from school leadership, teacher-coach competence and stakeholder collaboration. The monitoring of policies and implementation support from government, stakeholder involvement and appropriately qualified teacher-coaches are pivotal to the present state of sport and PE at South African public schools and their inclusion in the public school sport system.

Keywords: PESS; Policy; Resources; South African public schools; Sport; Teacher-coaches.

INTRODUCTION

Sport is a comprehensive concept and comprising of activities as identified by UNESCO (2017a) to include diverse activities – ranging from casual physical activity to highly organised and commercial sport (Orlowski *et al*., 2017). Sport is a social construct that finds meaning in the experiences and perceptions of people (individuals and groups), who may refer to what they consider as sport with reference to a place. In the latter instance, they may refer to informal sport or games at the school or when referring to 'school sport' (SS) it may bear the meaning of a formally structured system of competitive leagues and events. Sport at school and the more formalised version of school sport (SS) (inclusive of mass participation, competitive and high performance) are both linked to PE practices and a learning ground for the mastery of sport-related skills and authentic experiences.

Global policies and strategic drives articulate PE and SS as interrelated fields expressed by the acronym PESS (Physical Education and School Sport). Physical activity (PA) has gained global popularity and the concept of health-related PE and choice of sports that would lead to

healthy living and life-long participation are increasingly prioritised (Bailey *et al*., 2013; Draper *et al*., 2019). The integration between PE and SS represents a collective response for active citizenship and healthy living evident in the Human Capital Model (HCM) (Bailey, 2015) and national programmes in countries like Australia (Active After Schools), Scotland (Active Schools), England (School Sport Partnership Programme) and South Africa (*Siyadlala* and School Sport Mass Participation Programme) (Burnett, 2009; Rainer *et al*., 2015).

Active sport participation aims to counter physical inactivity and sedentary living associated with poor health and various life-style diseases (Draper *et al*., 2019) whilst also delivering on broader societal outcomes (Kirk, *et al*., 2018). However, competitive sport carries the risk of injury, high levels of stress and potentially dangerous practices associated with over-training and using of performance enhancing substances, whilst positive and meaningful sport practices have health-enhancing effects (Bailey *et al*., 2013).

Through PESS, sport is placed in an educational perspective with synergies that include progressive programme designs and flexible didactics. The Sport Education (SE) model provides meaningful and authentic sport experiences in PE lessons and after-school sport competitions organised between classes within a particular school (intra-school) or between different schools (inter-school) (Siedentop *et al.*, 2011). Similar models include Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) and Teaching Games for Understanding Game-Sense (TGfU-GS) (Green *et al*., 2018). The physical literacy approach of Whitehead (2011) features centrally in the multi-(sport) activity model by focusing on the mastery, refinement and practice of physical and movement competencies as building blocks for sport participation and competition (Metzler, 2017). This is also evident in of the South African curriculum (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement or CAPS) that features motor competencies as prerequisite for active living across the life span (DBE, 2011a & b).

Another global trend entails value-education encapsulated by programmes on Olympism education emanating from mega-event legacy and school-based programmes driven by the sport and educational sectors (Naul *et al*., 2017). Value-education informs PE curricula and standard sport coaching practices, which in impoverished communities are presented by teachers and external agencies, often framed for secondary schools as positive youth development (PYD) approaches (Coalter, 2013). These realities and aspirations are reflected in influential policy frameworks that may influence structures, systems and practices.

POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Global level

Policy convergence and alignment drive global constitutional reform to channel action relating to sport in education towards the achievement of firstly the Millennium (pre-2015) and now the Sustainable Development Goals (post-2015) (Lindsey & Chapman, 2017). The ***United Nations agencies*** play a significant role in formulating human rights declarations that paved the way for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). By 2015, this Convention became the most widely ratified instrument for nation-states and human rights-based approaches (UNICEF, 2020).

UNESCO's drive for policy reform on Quality Physical Education (QPE) has direct implications for school sport from a life-course approach that requires multi-stakeholder collaboration (UNESCO, 2020). The World Health Organisation (WHO) significantly influences disease and public health issues (WHO, 2018). Since 2002, the WHO has targeted

PE and sport-related practices to contribute to healthy living through their strategy to combat physical inactivity. This is clearly articulated in their Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (2018-2030) and corresponds with current UN policy directives (Malm *et al*., 2019). It is also a response to the Kazan Action Plan drafted at the sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS VI) in June 2017 (UNESCO, 2017b) that calls for multi-stakeholder engagement, particularly from the educational and sport sectors.

The ***sport sector,*** represented by major institutions such as the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and affiliated international sport federations (ISFs), has policy frameworks to guide and safeguard sport participation of different age groups. The IOC has an influential role to play having enjoyed observer status at the United Nations Assemblies since 2009 and declared a 'direct partner' for the UN to deliver on selected outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Mann, 2017). High-level sport competition for youth requires sport talent identification and development at school level. Various international Youth Games provide competitions for youth between 14 and 18 years that require early sport specialisation. The Association of National Olympic Committees in Africa (ANOCA) and the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) feature youth games dependent on functional school sport systems. On the other hand, the commitment to life-long participation and healthy living is an important under-current for meaningful participation and human development. Development is a complex process and prominent on continental (regional) and national levels with reference to the potential role of PESS.

Continental and national level

In 2018 at the ***African Union*** Conference of the Ministers of Sport in Accra (Ghana), the African Union (AU) drafted the sustainable development of a sport policy framework (2008-2018) (AU, 2019). Staying the course of development, by 2018, they adopted the "Antananarivo Recommendations", stating:

> *The recommendations stress inclusiveness, gender equality, youth participation, the valorisation of traditional sports and games, as well as multi-stakeholder partnerships as critical components of comprehensive policies for human, social and economic development in Africa.* (UNESCO, 2018:1)

The role of Sport Ministries as a collaborative partner with in country educational sectors (school and higher education), have direct bearing on future developments in PE and SS. The revised draft of the School Sport Policy for schools in South Africa, governed by the *South African Schools Act 84* of 1996, encouraged "A rights-based, socially inclusive and cohesive school sport environment, that promotes healthy living and lifelong participation within a sporting culture" (DBE, 2017:5).

The National Sport and Recreation Plan (NSRP) provides a framework for the school sport policy with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Sport, Arts and Culture (formerly known as Sport and Recreation South Africa or SRSA) as responsible ministries (SRSA, 2012). In South Africa, the two responsible ministries have entered into a contractual agreement to provide resources for the implementation of PE and SS. In 2011, DBE and SRSA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in terms of the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act (Act No 13 of 2005), and agreed to share accountability for policy-to-practice integration of school sport with direct implication for PE (DBE & SRSA, 2011). The MoU was

revised in 2017, and DBE took full responsibility of funding of school sport for levels one to three (from intra-school to cluster levels) and the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture agreed to take care of funding and facilitating levels four to six (district, provincial and national/international levels) (SRSA, 2018a).

Against these policy changes, a partnership between UNICEF and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) mandated two interrelated national research projects, namely 'The state and status of PE in South African public schools' (*PE research*) followed by a situation analysis of school sport (*SS research*) at South African public schools (Burnett, 2018, 2020). This research addresses a gap in the literature of an integrated approach between PE and SS (PESS) in answer to a global and national agenda for positive social change and transformation within the South African context. It established a baseline of current practices as to inform strategic decision-making at the policy, structural and implementation levels.

AIM AND DESIGN OF STUDY

The research aims to generate key insights and information on the state and status of school sport in articulation with PE within different school types representative of the South African public school system. The research design is underpinned by descriptive and evaluative epistemologies that utilised constructivist approach by describing and analysing data collected from the field (Houlihan, 2014). Countering the positivism and empiricism evident in the epistemology of quantitative research, narrative accounts provide the meaning, purpose and motivation of the social worlds in which individuals and groups construct and interpret their realities at the ontological level of knowledge production.

The study follows a descriptive design that is inherent in a situation analysis whereby current practices are reported and interpreted against envisaged outcomes of policy actors and schools as implementing agencies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research setting, population and sample

The research strategy was to access the same schools as the PE research to study the coherence of PE and SS practices at schools. Because of logistical challenges, 21 new schools were included for follow-up research at 34 schools that took part in the PE research. The non-probability sample was selected to represent four school types based on different socio-economic categories (Quintiles 1-3, Quintiles 4-5), geographical distribution (rural and urban settings) and type of learners (primary and secondary school learners, as well as learners with special educational needs or LSEN). The Department of Basic Education classifies all public schools according to a socio-economic ranking scale where Quintile 1 schools is a group of schools that cater for the poorest 20% of learners. Each successive Quintile (2, 3, 4 and 5) cater for the next 20% of the socio-economic clustering of learners - from the poorest (Quintile 1) to the least poor (Quintile 5).

This sampling afforded a clustered comparison as per school type and associated contextual realities (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Within the clustered sampling, research participants were purposively selected to include school leadership, teachers (also teacher-coaches) and the random sampling of mostly Grade 7 and Grade 11 learners. After selecting a particular class within a grade (7 or 11) randomly, all learners within the class completed questionnaires up to

a quota of 100 or if less than that, the whole class. Following this, an equal number of boys and girls (about five of each gender) were selected for focus group discussions based on their language proficiency, willingness to participate and those who participated in different sports at the school (inclusion criteria).

Research methods

A concurrent Mixed Method Research (MMR) approach was adopted to ensure a synergy between qualitative and quantitative data and capture the multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the world (Greene, 2007). The approach integrates two forms of data concurrently via theme-integration of issues and local context in a sequential way (Creswell, 2013). For this study, the questionnaire data, derived from deductive themes and concepts, were captured first.

The narrative accounts and observations represented an inductive approach with some thematic areas that overlap with that of the deductive codes. It allows for the triangulation of results from multiple data sets as an adaptation of the S·DIAT (Sport-in-Development Impact Assessment Tool) that includes a variety of methods (interviews, focus groups, observation and questionnaires), and constitutes a mixed-method design for sequential data integration between different data sets. The first level of integration occurs within different research participant cohorts, prior to thematic integration of data sets across different research participant cohorts and triangulated for saturation with thematic document analysis and observations (Burnett, 2014).

The research commenced in June 2017 and was completed in February 2020, and linked with the research on *The State and Status of Physical Education* in Public Schools of South Africa (PE Research) that was completed in 2018.

Qualitative research

Semi-structured protocols allowed the researchers to pitch *interview* and *focus group questions* at the level of the research participant cohorts. Interviews were conducted with:

- 55 school leadership representatives (Principals or Deputy-Principals);
- 65 teachers, including sport directors and teacher-coaches.

Focus group discussions were held with:

- 232 HODs and teachers offering the PE component;
- 601 learners of whom 274 were from primary, 251 from secondary and 76 from schools for LSEN.

During school visits, researchers observed PE lessons, coaching sessions and the available infrastructure with the permission of the Principal and relevant staff member. In all cases, a native speaker of the research team or language teacher assisted in translations and explanations.

Thematic document analysis was conducted by the researchers who consulted policy documents and on-line reports to extract interpretive content, strategic information and allow for verification, contextualisation and triangulation of data (Spicker, 2014).

Quantitative research

Adapted S·DIAT questionnaires captured the "values, perceptions and interests of the respondent" (Gray, 2009:339). Questionnaires were completed by:

- 153 teachers including HODs, Life Skills/Life Orientation teachers, sport masters/directors and teacher-coaches;
- 1333 primary and 1348 secondary school learners.

All questionnaires were designed to obtain firstly biographical data, followed by perceptions and experiences of respondents, the identification of good practices, challenges and recommendations. For teachers, a Likert scale delivered nuanced responses compared to that of learners who had two categorical options ('agree' or 'disagree') to accommodate learners who struggled to respond accurately to a more nuanced Likert scale. In addition to possible language barriers, a teacher may direct choices when illustrating meaning by offering concrete examples.

Analysis of data and integration

Most researchers used the coding steps propagated by Strauss and Corbin (1990), where researchers first sorted and categorised raw units to cluster semantic associated concepts. Then, cause-effect relationships emerged through line-to-line coding, followed by axial coding to connect sub-categories and refine them for theme identification (Houlihan, 2014). The deductive themes were integrated with those emerging from the inductive approach taken with the qualitative data, with additional emerging themes being reported separately.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 21) generated descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations and frequencies. A cluster analysis was applied and cross-tabulation to determine statistical significance levels (Pearson Chi-Square values, $p=<0.05$ and $p=<0.0001$), as well as Cramer's V to determine effect size ranges.

Validity, reliability and trustworthiness

Multiple ways of triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Kimchi *et al*., 1991; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011) contributed to significant depth, reliability, validity and trustworthiness, which in this study addressed different methods, different settings, clustered samples, and different levels (individuals and groups). To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the criteria of dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability were applied. By keeping an audit trail of all research-related decisions and processes, phases and levels of analysis. Multiple researchers produce a written report on the qualitative data and one team worked with the integration of quantitative and qualitative data sets across the nine provinces. Researchers were consulted, who in turn would consult research participants to ensure accurate interpretations.

Ethical considerations

The University of the Research Coordinator provided two rounds of ethical approval. For the first proposal, with the reference number, REC-01-116-2017, was issued on the 3rd of October 2017. For the second round the ethical clearance number, REC-01-35-2019, was issued on the 16th of July 2019. The researchers conducted their part of the investigation in the most conscientious and responsible manner possible, thus ensuring the safety and protection of the identity of all involved. Written informed assent (learners) and consent (adults) were obtained and all verbatim transcripts were password protected.

RESULTS

Opportunities for participation

The knockout structure of inter-school leagues cause a low number of matches played, especially if they lose in the first or second round. Most learners (51%) played between four and six matches annually, followed by 29% having played either one to three inclusive of community club participation. A Sport Master of a rural primary school in the Free State said that their learners may compete "once a year and, if they are fortunate enough, twice a year". This is in contrast to 14% learners who played seven or more matches per year.

In some instances, Quintile 5 schools compete in different leagues in addition to friendly matches, whilst most lower quintile schools gained access to privately sponsored leagues, such as those by Investec (a financial institution) and by Matsepe Foundation.

Schools value sport tours as 45 (32.8%) indicated that they took their team on a tour in the past three years, with 21.7% of Quintile 1, and 26.7% of lower quintile schools having done so, compared to 44.4% of higher quintile schools. Higher quintile schools offer a broader spectrum of sports with some Quintile 5 schools offering as many as 15 sports compared to some lower quintile schools only offering soccer for boys and netball for girls. Observations confirmed the stark contrasts of multiple sports facilities in higher quintile schools or at sport focused schools in lower socio-economic schools. Sport participation is highly dependent on dedicated teacher-coaches as voiced by the Deputy-Principal of a rural school in the Northern Cape who said:

> *Apart from the soccer that trains regularly during the week and throughout the year, being driven by an enthusiastic and capable person, the other sport training is a bare minimum… [preparing for competitions] It is at the eleventh hour.*

For well-resourced schools that can field multiple teams in different age divisions, experience a challenge to find-competition for all teams. A sport organiser from a well-known Quintile 5 school in the Free State explained:

> *Often the leagues that we can participate in are restricted to one or two teams. So, you do have your lesser ranked teams that do not always get the opportunity to participate in set leagues. That is one of the biggest challenges to find opposition for these kids. Otherwise they lose interest.*

The overall sport participation at school or outside school is rather high at 82% for primary school respondents and 64.5% for secondary school respondents. It seems that most learners either take part at school or outside school and not in both settings. Considering the proportion of primary and secondary school active learners, there is 25.4% and 15.7% of primary and secondary learners respectively who play sport at school and outside school. Figure 1 shows a comparative profile of participation between primary and secondary schools across different types of schools.

Relatively more primary school learners than their secondary school counterparts participate in sport across most school types, whilst learners with special educational needs are most active (88.2% and 81.3% respectively) (Figure 1). Low participation rates are evident in lower quintile secondary schools, where less than one third of learners take part in sport in Quintile 2 and Quintile 3 schools.

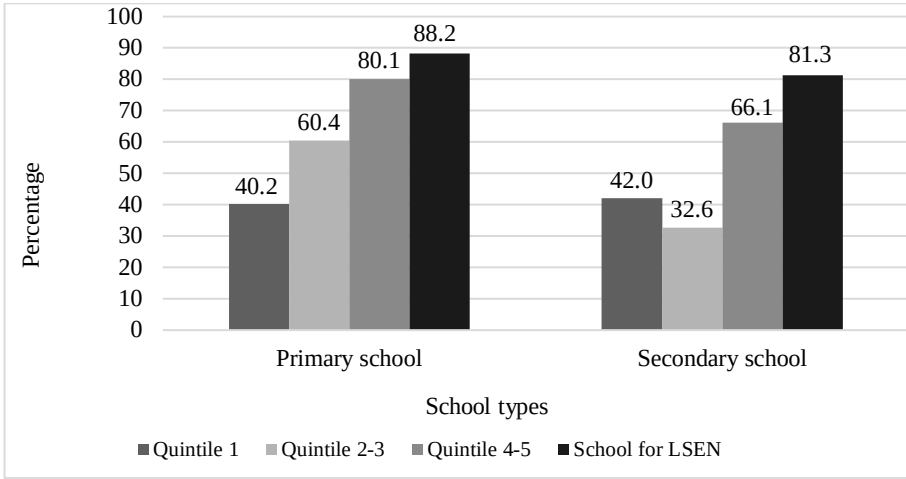

Figure 1. **SPORT PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS PER SCHOOL TYPE**

The Pearson Chi-Square values (χ^2 =137.503, df=3; p<0.0001) show a high associated statistical significant level between the different quintile schools and sport participation of primary school learners, as well as secondary schools and (χ^2 =91.072, df=3; p<0.0001). In all cases, schools for LSEN have the highest percentage of sport participants, followed by Quintile 4 and Quintile 5 schools. For LSEN, independence and travelling is challenging, but because most learners stay in school hostels, they take part in extramural sports.

Primary school multi-sport participation is slightly higher in the secondary schools although about 30% less learners participate in four or more sports compared to those who only take part in one sport. LSEN schools is the outliers as indicated in Figure 2.

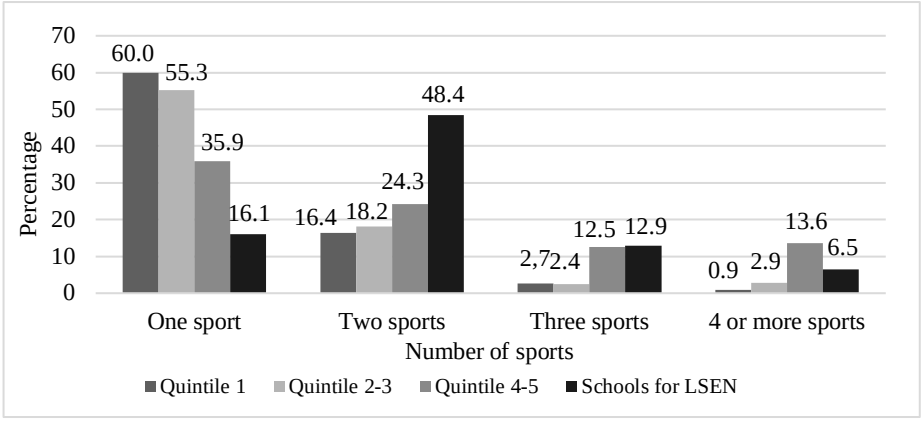

Figure 2. **NUMBER OF SPORTS PARTICIPATED IN FOR SCHOOL TYPES**

For secondary school learners, 46.8% report playing sport outside school. Of the secondary school boys and girls, 61.1% and 35.0% report playing sport outside school, respectively. These percentages are somewhat different and a test of the association between playing sport outside school and gender suggests there is a significant association (χ^2 =76.224, df=1; p=0.000). Based on the percentages, the association is a significant higher proportion of secondary school boys who play sport outside school than secondary school girls. Cramer's V statistic of 0.264 suggests a medium effect size.

Gender brings another dimension to access to school sport participation, particularly at most schools where traditional male sports, such as rugby or soccer are most popular and best resourced. A teacher-coach from a township school in Mpumalanga said:

> *Our entire budget goes towards the boys for soccer. Our girls for netball get nothing, as we do not have the opportunity to participate in many leagues. If we lose one game in winter games, we must leave. So, the netball girls maybe play two game per year.*

The lack of parental support and domestic commitments of girls made it difficult for girls from impoverished homes to participate as the parents expect girls to be home during daylight and have adult supervision.

Approaches to implementation

The different approaches find expression in models of delivery at schools that relate to different school types and entail a combination of factors and resource availability.

Ad hoc sport participation at lower quintile and rural schools presents infrequent participation in a narrow range of mostly (traditionally) male sports due to the lack of parental support and poor facilities. It represents 'dysfunctional sports' of about two teams per sport code for boys (soccer) and for girls (netball) with limited participation in athletics. There are little or no intra- or inter-school competitions.

Events-driven sport participation shows some features of a relatively more structured form of participation – at least in inter-school (cluster) events. Some lower quintile schools may compete in sponsored external leagues or can afford to register one or two teams for officially organised leagues, such as the ABC Motsepe League (inclusive of the Football Cup and Schools Netball Cup). Participation may still be in a narrow range of sports with increased practices close to events.

Structured school sport participation falls within the envisaged functional sport system in adherence to the framework and practice of Long-term Participant Development (LTAD) model promoted by SASCOC (SRSA, 2018a & 2018b). At the launch of the School Sport League Programme in 2012, 41.2% public schools registered that could afford the fees and had favourable conditions, qualified teacher-coaches, access to transport and funding to cover competition-related expenses. It offers a progression or pathway of talent identification and development up to district level as part of the formal school sport system. Sport-focused (lower quintile) schools offer competitive sport leagues in priority sports, such as football, netball, cricket, rugby, athletics, basketball, chess, gymnastics, hockey and/or volleyball.

A comprehensive and integrated approach evidenced, exists in affluent public schools (mostly former Model C) where school sport is well structured with community (and parents) representation on school sport committees and supported by different stakeholders from the

corporate, government and competitive sport sectors. School sport offerings range from recreation and mass participation to high performance sport with pathways for Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD).

The competitive edge is evidenced in a single-gender sport-focused school that features a high level of widespread participation, a high level of sporting success at the national level, professional sport scientific support and multiple multi-year sponsorships. Parents are highly involved and professional coaches are contracted to support qualified teacher-coaches.

CHALLENGES

Physical resources

For many such schools that do not have adequate school facilities, the location and access to community facilities are often problematic. Access to community facilities poses various challenges as conveyed by a secondary township teacher in KwaZulu-Natal:

> *We keep trying, but the infrastructure lets us down. We do it half a kilometre away, the students walk there. It's just a poor facility. Especially when it's been raining, there are patches of the area that are unplayable.*

Another teacher from North-West primary township school said the school uses the nearby community hall or Kikageng Stadium, but it is not always accessible. A sport director at one of the rural primary schools in the Western Cape said, "We have no field and we have only the two netball courts that need updating and one is being used as a car park." This is exacerbated by the lack of equipment. A sport director from a township school in Limpopo said:

> *… if we don't have sports grounds, what must we do? Even our equipment - we don't have any. We make the soccer ball out of lots of paper because the kids they play on the gravel and stones…*

Relatively poor-resourced schools are highly dependent on external funding for the construction or renovation of facilities and purchasing equipment. A Principal in a secondary township school in Limpopo explained their predicament:

> *We applied four times to lottery, but we have never heard back from them. Even our equipment is little (sic), the netball court you see outside is one built by the learners themselves three years ago.*

Observations confirm that many poorly resourced schools do not have adequate facilities, but although they may be in close proximity to community facilities, they cannot access that due to issues of safety. A Sport Director of a rural primary school in the Western Cape explained:

> *When you are at the community grounds, once there, it is considered part of the school. The problem is walking between the two. What happens if 20 parents say yes and 10 say no?*

The number and quality of sport facilities, or the lack thereof, are experienced by lower quintile schools – a situation that perpetuates due to the lack of funding to afford basic maintenance. Learners with special educational needs face confounding barriers to access a diversity of opportunities and to excel in sport.

Financial resources

Inadequate financial resources is indicated by 60.6% teachers as a 'big problem' and 24.4% teachers identified it as a 'problem'. Without adequate funding, schools could contract qualified coaches, subsidise learners or pay for public transport, purchase sports kit and equipment and pay for the maintenance of facilities. In Figure 3, actual figures of sport budgets appear.

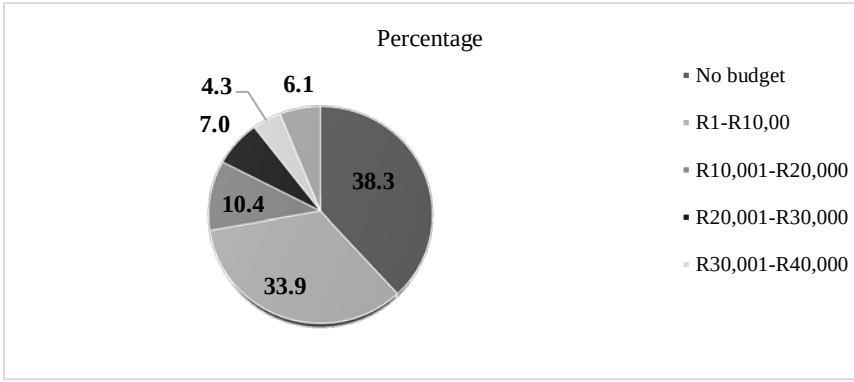

Figure 3. **BUDGET ALLOCATION IN PERCENTAGE FOR SCHOOL SPORT**

The absence of a dedicated budget for school sport for 38.3% of schools paints a rather bleak picture as most of the lower quintile schools have to channel funding designated for essential learning materials. The situation is dire for a LSEN school in Mpumalanga. The principal stated:

> *When you are so behind on financials and you must make choices for the school to stay open, you can't make emotional decisions based on the children's needs like sport… at the end of the day the school has to stay open.*

Most schools have no budget (38.3%) or have a very limited budget of under R10,000 per year for school sport (33.9%) showing the dire financial constraints of 72.2% of schools to operationalise active sport participation. Most funding is spent on transport for athletes to attend provincial and national events (12.4%) or league matches (10.6%) and provide meals (11.3%); the purchase of sports kit (12.1%); equipment (9.9%); specialist services, like sport science (12.4%), or remunerate coaches and umpires (13.1%).

Several teachers from township schools shared the predicament of schools not being able to compete in a league or even in friendly matches against other schools:

> *…we train the children and they do not compete against other schools… The problem is we do not have money to transport them from this area to another area to compete in inter school competitions.* (KwaZulu-Natal)
>
> *You know, we can have all the motivation in the world for our learners to do sports and PE, but if we don't have money to send them to the district [competitions]. Do you think they will come back next year [to participate in sports]?* (Mpumalanga)
>
> *We have to share the kit – even in matches, we swop t-shirts with our teammates. In addition, it never starts clean because we have to give it back at the end. It's not nice.* (Gauteng)

Fundraising and access to local sponsors remain challenges for lower quintile schools and, in most instances, is a once-off occasion compared to extensive commercial sponsorship for "sport schools" in affluent communities.

Human resources

The lack of qualified staff for coaching sport is a 'big problem' for 42.6% teachers, followed by issues relating to a 'heavy workload' (64.3%), lack of incentives (34.9%), weekend involvement (31.5%) and the availability of training opportunities to qualify as coaches or officiating (40.5%).

Teachers have different roles and responsibilities, namely to coach sports, do administration and/or umpire or act as technical official at sport competitions. About a third (32.8%) of teachers have no formal qualification in sport coaching or officiating that resonates with expressed needs for professional development. The level indicates that teachers are qualified to deliver a service at intra-school competitions (introductory level), or inter-school competitions (intermediate level) or at zonal and provincial competitions (advanced level). Most teachers are in need of training in administration (54.2%) or officiating (59.3%). Another area of concern is the small percentage of teachers who can coach at an advanced level (10.4%), act as an administrator (9.2%) or officiate (4.4%) (Table 1).

Table 1. **ROLE AND LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS INVOLVED IN SPORT**

Role in sport	**Introductory Level** Count (%)	**Intermediate Level** Count (%)	**Advanced Level** Count (%)	**Total** Count (%)
Coach	53 (39.6%)	23 (17.2%)	14 (10.4%)	134 (100%)
Administrator	24 (24.5%)	12 (12.2%)	9 (9.2%)	98 (100%)
Technical Official	19 (20.9%)	14 (15.4%)	4 (4.4%)	91 (100%)

There seems to be a lack of offerings for which DBE and/or federations are criticised. Poor communication and the cost in time and travel add to the already systemic fault lines. Without adequate qualifications, teacher-coaches rely on their own background as former players. A learner from a former township school in Gauteng said:

> *They don't know netball… they just stand there and tell us to do things that are not part of the netball… so we train on our own. We have three teams.*

Several teachers described a similar situation:

> *I think it would have been better if it was, you know, a professional – a qualified soccer coach and a qualified netball coach or qualified cross-country athlete and so forth. [They] would inspire the learners a little more because, I mean, if Miss X for*

> *instance just comes, you know to go to sport wearing her heels and stuff, it's not as effective you know.* (Teacher from Gauteng)

In some cases, teachers try to learn from television, as they do not have any prior knowledge or experience in some sports. A teacher said that *sometimes we record beach volleyball on DSTV at home, but its beach volleyball and we see what they do, and we take that back to the children.* Despite the lack of education, the dedication and innovative initiatives of teachers overcome many existing barriers, although the following challenges continue to hamper meaningful educational and sport practices.

Material resources

Participation in school sport necessitates access to sport clothing and in low socio-economic environments, it is not affordable. Many schools have limited sports kits available, which in most cases is given to first teams.

Many learners in township and rural schools are dependent on public (taxi) transport run on set schedules that do not allow flexibility in 'pick-up times'. Not being able to practise after school diminishes the pool of talented players and prevent many to reach their potential as athletes.

The unreliability of public transport also causes players to arrive late at competitions that led to the cancellation of events or teams had to forfeit a match. The safety issue of transporting learners, even with the signed informed consent from parents, pose a risk to participants for which the school is accountable.

Environment and context

The school is not divorced from the broader culture and contextual realities of the community. Poverty has many manifestations and in addition to parental neglect, some learners are compelled to contribute to their household work and/or have to supplement the household income. Public violence adds another layer to an impoverished existence in many schools, where 'good players' are often the target of gangs in addition to existing violence as voiced by a sport director from a township school in the Western Cape:

> *We were using the community pitch at the back [of the school] and a gang stormed the pitch last year and threatened the learners. The learners are a soft target (sic) with bags with stuff that they want.*

Unsafe communities also means that crime is rife and school property is stolen or damaged as in the case of a Gauteng township school. A teacher explained:

> *…you know with aluminium and everything, tennis court and all that. A month was enough [and] it was vandalised… As we speak we don't have posts – football posts are stolen – are taken for recycling. It's a problem we have to face.*

Contextual factors also refer to harsh weather conditions of extreme heat during summer and heavy rains or cold during winter. This situation is aggravated by the lack of water and shade provided by indoor sport facilities that are mostly located at higher quintile shools. In other schools, parents, volunteers and companies supply the necessary funding or labour for facility development and maintenance. A Deputy Principal from a Quintile 5 school said: *Well, all our sporting facilities is maintained by our SGB [School Governing Body] and local*

sponsors, we also have a local football club, Black Leopards that come and so maintenance to our pitches…

DISCUSSION

This situation analysis reflects on the implementation and associated outcomes of the various policy frameworks with the UN's drive for policy reform at the core of steering a human rights agenda and address inequalities through targeted areas of development (UNICEF, 2020). Addressing existing inequalities and proclaiming PESS as a human right, speaks to the right of children to healthy living and an improved quality of life by accessing QPE, structured and health-optimising PA and meaningful sport activities (UNESCO, 2017b). From a policy perspective, such activities should provide inclusive and quality experiences that would meet educational requirements for lifelong benefits and learning, provide safe opportunities for individual and collective growth and development to the benefit of schools and the larger community (Bailey *et al*., 2013; Rainer *et al*., 2015; Kirk *et al*., 2018).

The high levels of persisting inequalities between higher and lower quintile schools within the South African public school context as an inheritance of Apartheid, lack of resources and competing public agendas with PE and SS, these areas are not considered as priority development activities, mitigate against the implementation of a human justice framework within this sector.

UNESCO's QPE framework and Human Capital Model as proposed by Bailey (2015) and CAPS (PE curriculum) guide such integration and speak to the development framework of Long Term Participant Development (LTPD) (SRSA, 2018a & b). It has ramifications for finding a balance between sport participation and competition, where the health and 'winning' paradigm finds traction in integrated and coordinated practices. Such a perspective rings hollow for poorly resourced schools. Most households struggle to survive and schools have to prioritise academic programmes compared to their more affluent counterparts where learners will receive ample opportunities to participate in a variety of sports, as part of a balanced programme focused on the holistic development of learners.

The challenge is making the most of available resources and delivering on the agenda for 'development' and societal change that is supported in DBE policies (DBE & SRSA, 2017). Structural alignment as per MoU agreement between DBE and SRSA (now Department of Sport, Arts and Culture) to create two pathways, but maintain the notion of the LTPD model to feed into Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) through a functional school sport system does not translate into functional practices for most schools (DBE & SRSA, 2017). Herein lies the anomaly, as national priority the inequality should be addressed by showcasing schools and athletes from lower quintile schools to excel in sport and benefit from a development and human justice (policy-directed) agenda (Lindsey & Chapman, 2017). However, in reality most of these schools are excluded as evidenced in the existing 'sport at school' approaches being ad hoc and event-driven versus 'school sport' of relatively better-resourced schools (Bailey, 2015; Burnett, 2020).

Stakeholder engagement at the national or provincial levels (such as Investec and Motsepe Foundation), including the availability of Lotto funding for school-based resource development, are best practices and contribute to learners from the lower economic strata to have access to regular competitions, although it is in a small range of sports (netball for girls and soccer for boys). It does not address the most crucial resource of trained teacher-coaches, offering in-school and in-cluster mentorship for teachers. An observed best practice in this

regard, is to reallocate teachers' responsibilities to upskill and deploy dedicated teacher-coaches to offer PE classes and lead in sport coaching, administration and officiating.

The dichotomy of exclusionary competitive sport practices and envisaged outcomes of talent identification and development on the one hand and lower levels of mass participation to accommodate all, yet serve as a catchment area for 'talent', is not possible in the current dispensation (SRSA, 2012, 2018a, 2018b).

The role of sport federations, the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture in collaboration with DBE and regional sport structures to come up with strategies that would enable teachers to identify, nurture and channel sporting talent across different sports, should be made operational. Monitoring and evaluation of existing systems would assist in translating research-based evidence into decision-making processes and policy development. Schools need to gain access to resources (including a dedicated sports budget) to tap into a functional pathway for the development of well-equipped teacher-coaches, collaborating stakeholders and athlete development. Sport-focused schools may serve a purpose, but could attract talented players that may make the feeder schools even less competitive and 'left behind'.

Existing good and best practices, such as optimising participation, training and mentoring teachers, offering access to fully-funded league systems, allocating dedicated teachers to sport and PE, aligning structural and stakeholder support, providing access to additional sources of income and mobilising parental support, are to be shared among different school types. The integration of PE and SS, a central funding model and curricular alignment with the PE content and seasonal sport participation, linking up with community sport structures would build on the principle of resource-sharing, strategic alignment and the political will to make a difference.

CONCLUSION

Public ownership and actions should be shared through inter-governmental and inter-sectorial collaboration as a process that is guided by rigorous and informative monitoring, evaluation for reflection and learning. The prerequisites for an enabling environment exist in which essential resources are strategically facilitated and provided, may produce the envisaged outcomes for individuals, schools and society at large.

Good policies and coherence may provide the architecture, but the complexity of building lies with its implementation. The research on policy-to-practice and reflective learnings about Sport, PA and PE at school level should inform current debates and search for solutions without being strangled in the complexity and entrenchment. A way forward may be to learn from good practices and learning from schools that 'got it right'.

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