European School Sport Day

Action Plan

in the framework of ERASMUS+

Created by Hungarian School Sport Federation, International Sport and Culture Association, Youth Sport Trust, Fundacja V4SPORT, BG Be Active, The European Physical Education Association

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# Table of contents

1. Introduction......................................................................................................................... 3
2. What is ESSD?....................................................................................................................... 4
3. The structure of the action plan............................................................................................ 5
   3.1. “What”............................................................................................................................ 6
   3.2. “Who”............................................................................................................................ 7
   3.3. “When”............................................................................................................................ 8
   3.4. Communication .............................................................................................................. 9
   3.5. Sustainability ................................................................................................................ 10
4. Conclusions.......................................................................................................................... 13
References................................................................................................................................. 14
1. Introduction

One of the biggest challenges of the 21st century in the field of healthcare and healthy life management is to deal with growing tendencies of physical inactivity. Sedentary behaviour and the lack of Physical activity is the main reason of the emergence of overweight and obesity among adults throughout the world, which leads directly to many chronic, non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, certain forms of cancer, mental health issues and chronic respiratory as well as musculoskeletal illnesses. Also the negative effect of physical inactivity can be viewed in many aspects:

- Today’s children may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents because of the lack of physical activity (designedtomove.org).
- 600,000 people in Europe die each year due to reduced physical activity (Eurobarometer, 2014).
- Physical inactivity is estimated to cost €300 per inhabitant per year in Europe (Case Investing Public Health WHO Europe, 2014). This is equivalent to losses of € 152 billion annually.
- Globally physical inactivity accounts for 1.5–3% of national health care budgets (Oldridge, 2008)

Regular physical activity not only has positive effect on all of these health risks (Kruk, 2007), but as a preventive tool it is the most effective and the cheapest solution to reduce the number of overweight and obese people. In the past decade, promoting physical activity and health has become one of the main trends among the EU policies within education. The Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors (2013) proclaims that „physical education at school has the potential to be an effective tool to increase awareness of the importance of health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA), and schools can be easily and effectively targeted to implement activities in this regard”.

According to WHO Case Investing Public Health document (2014), the cost effective interventions in public healthcare investments can be separated to three areas: environmental level, social level and personal level. Although the intervention system is very complicated, it can be stated that developing knowledge and skills to lead a health conscious life is a task schools have to fulfil. Within this process schools have a huge effect on the environmental and social level as well. Therefore, initiatives, programs and campaigns that promote physical activity and healthy life management are essential part of the schools pedagogical programs and goals.

In accordance with the above-mentioned conclusions, the main objective of European School Sport Day (ESSD) is to promote healthy lifestyle, physical activity and volunteering in sport inside (and expectedly outside) school. In other words, ESSD will reflect on and promote the societal role of sport in many ways. ESSD is a side-event of the European Week of Sport - and the ISCA initiation MOVE Week as well - , ensuring that the school generation will also participate in the program, but the event is meant to be more than just a not for profit sport event.
2. What is ESSD?

The European School Sport Day is a pan-European initiative; we intend to make it accessible for every European country.

The event’s main goal is to promote physical activity on international level and to involve as many children and young people, schools and organizations as possible. It is a celebration which provides the opportunity for schools to:

- Connect with other European countries
- Raise the profile of physical education (PE) and sport in schools.
- Create fun and enjoyment through physical activity for young people
- Promote health and wellbeing for lifelong learning
- Empower inclusion and develop social skills amongst pupils

The European School Sport Day is inspired by the Hungarian School Sport Day; an event which is organized by the Hungarian School Sport Federation for the last 10 years. It has been a day dedicated to promote physical activity, to try out new ways of physical activities and sports, and of course to empower the “belonging to the school” experience for every participant.

In 2015, the event will be piloted in Hungary, Poland and Bulgaria, with additional countries joining in the following years. The analysis of the pilot events in the above mentioned countries will presumably need further justification for the western and central European countries.
3. The structure of the action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis of the current situation</th>
<th>Aim (referring to the goal of the project)</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“What”</td>
<td>Reviewing the content of the currently ongoing programs related to ESSD</td>
<td>To define the ESSD and to give ideas and examples of possible activities (Toolkit)</td>
<td>Establishing ESSD and involving national and local participants to the initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Who”</td>
<td>Reviewing the target groups and the stakeholders of the currently ongoing programs related to ESSD</td>
<td>To define the target groups of the ESSD on every relevant level To reach as many participants as possible during the three years</td>
<td>Stipulating and drawing in every relevant actor related to ESSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When”</td>
<td>Reviewing the currently ongoing programs related to ESSD Defining the timing possibilities of the ESSD – regarding the European Week of Sport initiative</td>
<td>To position the ESSD in a not interfering way to different initiatives that share the fundamental goals</td>
<td>Establishing and securing the ESSD as a highlight event within the European Week of Sport initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Reviewing the communicational system of the currently ongoing programs related to ESSD</td>
<td>To build up a communicational strategy which helps to reach the established goals of the ESSD project</td>
<td>Finding and utilizing adequate communicational channels to every relevant partner and stakeholder of the ESSD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Reviewing the sustainability policy (e.g. financial and motivational background) of the currently ongoing programs related to ESSD.</td>
<td>To examine and define the critical aspects regarding the sustainability of the ESSD events</td>
<td>Defining the key aspects which substantiate the annual ESSD events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1. “What”

At the moment, there is no initiative running on a European level with regard to a School Sport Day. In many countries, however, there exist initiatives to organize a national school sport day, each fulfilling national objectives and particularities.

With regard to the content of ongoing initiatives, there can be distinguished between on one side national school sport days focusing on competition (1) and on the other side initiatives that focus more on the promotion of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle (2). Whilst the competitive initiatives are mainly limited to the best performers in sports, the second category of initiatives focus more on the participation of every child or adolescent in an inclusive way.


(2) Inclusive initiatives focusing mainly on participation exist in Croatia (“Youth Sports Games”: http://www.igremladih.org/bs/partneri), in Greece with two initiatives (“Panhellenic Day of School Sport” in the wider context of the "Social School"; “Sports and Cultural Day” dedicated to athletics, games, sports and cultural activities to celebrate the end of the school year in each school community), in Ireland (Annual School Sport Day in all the schools), Italy (with several theme specific School Sport Days, like in Winter or in Summer), in Luxembourg (“Schoulsportdag” / School Sport Day in elementary schools to promote an active and healthy lifestyle and to fight against physical inactivity and unhealthy diet), in Sweden (a running day for all students in Sweden organized every semester) and in The Netherlands (National School Sport Day organized all through the country on every elementary school level).

Aim

The main objective of the ESSD is to get children and adolescents more active by participating in physical and sport activities in their schools and thus promoting an active and healthy lifestyle. Another aim is to train the students to prepare and organize their own activities in the frame of the ESSD. By this, further competencies on a social level can be developed as well.

Possible activities are physical and sports activities on school level or even community level, by eventually bringing together local partners – like sports clubs or associations – preparing these activities for children and adolescents.

An interesting idea could be to have every year a different topic for the ESSD, like e.g. “Olympic games”, “Cultural diversity”, “All for one – one for all”, “Cooperative games”, ... .

Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Planned Actions and Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>First ESSDs – definition, pilot year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Second ESSDs - A clarified toolkit and strengthen promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Third ESSDs – Creating a sustainability pillar ( Upgraded toolkit with PR and fundraising part)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2. “Who”

The target groups of existing initiatives are on the individual level children and adolescents. On an institutional level, the target groups for competitive school sport days (1) are school teams or individuals that perform best in school sport competitions. Generally, the national school sport day gives the frame for final competitions, where only qualified students or teams can participate in. Inclusive initiatives (2), on the other hand, target the schools as institutions themselves, as they generally organize the events for all their students. Other institutions or stakeholders involved in the organization of national school sport days are Ministries (Education and/or Sports), National Olympic Committees, Sport Federations and PE Teacher Associations, depending on the different countries.

Aim

Teachers:

One main target group are teachers in all school levels (kindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, vocational education, special education, etc.). Even if PE teachers – because of their expertise in the field – can be identified to be the most relevant teachers to be involved, the focus should also lie on classroom teachers and on other teachers teaching other subjects. Physical activity and sports are of importance for the entire school, in order that during an ESSD, other actors and activities in schools related to physical activity could be integrated in the organization.

Students:

The students are the focal target group, as the aim is to get them more active and practice physical activities and sports. In the frame of the ESSD, it is of highest importance to reach every student in all age levels, independent of gender, race, cultural background, etc.

Parents:

Parents are the first and most important models for students. Therefore, it is of major importance that parents are aware of the relevance of an active lifestyle of their children.

Headmasters:

The leaders in schools represent an important target group, as it often lies in their responsibility in how far schools decide to be more or less active schools, in the sense of promoting physical activities.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Pilot countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Increasing the number of participant countries, the number of participating schools and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Getting closer to a Pan-European event with the number of participant countries</td>
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</tbody>
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3.3. “When”

Existing initiatives take place all over the school year: some more in the beginning of the school year in September or October, whilst others take place more at the end of the school year between March and June (which is mainly the case for final competitions and events that are organized to accompany the end of the school year). Furthermore, there exist national initiatives for specific sports that can only be organized during a special period during the year (e.g. winter games during winter or water games in the summer).

Aim

The ESSD should take place – as far as possible – during the EWoS. As in many countries the possibility to organize ESSD falls in the summer holiday period or just after it, this goal will be difficult to reach for organizational reasons. Therefore, a flexible solution, e.g. a longer period to organize the ESSD all over Europe might be a possibility. The last week in September could be a possibility, collisions with National School Sport Days could be avoided, as most of the National events take place in late Spring or early Summer.

As many European countries already have their National School Sport Day, these existing National events could be organized under the umbrella of the ESSD. In this case, the different countries should be free to decide when the ESSD takes place in their country. This solution, of course, is not compatible with an ESSD organized on one specific day all over Europe.

Actions

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Pilot events during EWoS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Setting the definitive date for ESSD, based on the experiences of the pilot year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>ESSD on the date defined in the previous year.</td>
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</table>
3.4. Communication

The situation of the ESSD regarding communication is quite unique. The ESSD will be organized under the umbrella of European Week of Sport, which is based on the 10 years of experience of the Hungarian School Sport Day (HSSD). The HSSD is one of the main events of the ISCA Wove Week initiative, although the HSSD is focusing on the school generations, while the Move Week targets the whole society with the message of healthy, active living. Both programs joined the European Week of Sport.

The communicational tasks of the ESSD are well defined for the upcoming years, which will support the positioning, organizing and promoting processes. From the sustainability point of view choosing the proper way to communicate the ESSD events will be crucial, because the expansion of the program depends hugely on the professional and functional communication within the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Planned Actions and Achievements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Finalizing the communicational tools of the ESSD, including the image the logo of the ESSD, the official press release templates, registration platforms (these will only be available on national level, which will probably be helpful in establishing the international platform). Further task will be to back up the international data of the project foundation with valid data from national level. In addition that task can be linked with post-event communication of the pilot events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Establishing an international registration platform, which will support the process of involving more countries, schools and students into the initiative and will help to assess and evaluate the events. Preparing the fundraising process and protocol for the upcoming year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Fulfilling the communicational tasks necessary for sustainability. Broadening the motivational basis to involve more schools and students from further countries. Linked to that carrying on with the regular and well-aimed communicational tasks of promoting the event.</td>
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</table>
3.5. Sustainability

EU funding will support the development of ESSD in 2015 only. To sustain ESSD beyond 2015 in all partner countries will require:

1. Interest and motivation by schools to want to participate on an annual basis.

We need to ensure that schools have a positive experience in 2015 so that they will sign up for future years. Also ESSD needs to be communicated widely to encourage more schools to take part in future years. Motivational elements for the future could include incentives to take part, such as sports equipment, collateral such as flags, posters, t-shirts or an athlete visit.

2. Funding arrangements to support the ongoing delivery of ESSD be put in place in each partner EU country.

Additional funding sourced from EU grants for a Pan European Programme.

Funding could potentially be generated via government grants, corporate sponsorship or fundraising activity by schools themselves. Value in kind support provided by volunteers (parents, young people and company employees) could also make a valuable and cost saving contribution.

Aim

The event’s main goal is to promote physical activity on international level and involve as many children and young people, schools and organisations as possible. It is a celebration which provides the opportunity for schools to:

- Connect with other European countries
- Raise the profile of physical education (PE) and sport in schools.
- Create fun and enjoyment through physical activity for young people
- Promote health and wellbeing for lifelong learning
- Empower inclusion and develop social skills amongst students

To define the critical aspects regarding the sustainability of ESSD we suggest a simple plan of action for schools to follow:

- **1 – Sign up – promotion of resources and incentives for schools**
  This allows you to monitor how many schools are participating in ESSD and accessing the support materials. Crucial data for when applying for grants or pitching to corporate investors

- **2 – Event Planning – ramp up social media, emails to schools, communication and incentive competitions**
  - This allows you to raise the profile of the event and again download the number of hits, hashtags and access through social media – important for investors

- **3 – Live Phase – encourage schools to tweet/facebook/PR whilst events are happening. Seeking national and local PR coverage local allows you to raise the profile of the event**
4 – Wrap up – Capture your impact through online surveys and registration for schools for the following year. Announce competition winners through national and social media.

- The crucial part is to obtain feedback from the schools and young people on what the event meant for them, how it changed their perception on PE and School Sport, how many participated, how many new sports were accessed by it. Crucial data for future investment and growth of the programme.

Activities include festivals of sport, school sport days, intra sport and inter sport competitions, young leaders leading activities and whole school participation including staff and parents. Each year NSSW has a theme:

- Give me 5
- Pledge to do more sport
- Try a new Olympic/Paralympic sport
- Achieve your personal best
- Host your own Games (London 2012)

(You can find the sample survey monkey questionnaire (online survey) in the Trello toolkit area)

**Interventions**

- Critical success factors to ESSD will be the production of clear and valid resources which are easily accessible and for all stakeholders to use effectively and which ensure ESSD is a positive, fun event which children and teachers alike want to become a fixture in the school year;
- Effective monitoring and evaluation of ESSD to track the outcomes, e.g. schools register online to download resources and complete an online survey afterwards to submit numbers and provide examples of activities.
- Resources available for schools to access 3 months before event to commence planning
- Communication with Government, key stakeholders and social media to raise awareness and encourage participation
- Connections to current agendas important so European School Sports Day is not seen as an additional event, e.g. link to Move it, existing sports competitions, European Sports Week. Position as a tool to help support health and wellbeing of young people, reduce obesity, increase participation rates etc.
- That you are contributing to developing young people and providing them with lifelong skills, such as building confidence, communication, teamwork, resilience, empathy, etc.
- Same date/week each year to ensure consistency and create a high profile opportunity across the countries in the UK, e.g. always the last week of June, 3 weeks before the end of term.
**Actions**

Suggested actions below for consideration year by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Planned Actions and Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2015 | 1. Agree target number of young people and schools to be involved  
     | 2. Produce Toolkit and supporting resources  
     | 3. Evaluate the first year to improve resource for future use and share experience across all participating EU countries |
| 2016 | 4. Increased targets for young people, schools and countries involved  
     | 5. Additional funding secured to strengthen resource and produce supporting collateral.  
     | 6. Theme ESSD by linking to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio, Brazil  
     | 7. Introduce opening and closing ceremonies linked to Rio #roadtorio |
| 2017 | 8. Increased targets for young people, schools and countries involved  
     | 9. ESSD embedded in target number of schools (primary and secondary) across Europe  
     | 10. Theme ESSD – legacy of Olympic/Paralympic Games in Rio  
     | 11. Consider country exchanges, live or virtual led by young people and positioned across the school through art, history, geography lessons  
     | 12. Develop School Sport Day Ambassadors – young leaders that advocate importance of physical activity and introduce new schools/countries to take part at a local level. |
4. Conclusions

ESSD plans to generate an increased participation in physical activity programs on the European Week of Sports. The materials to be developed in the frame of the project will raise the awareness of the students and participants regarding the importance of health-enhancing physical activity and the toolbox will reach an increased participation on a voluntary – and thus sustainable – basis. The developed documents will be available on the website of the partners ensuring that the cost of joining the events of European School Sport Day or taking part in further voluntary sport activities will not be a limiting factor.

In the project, besides creating equal opportunities in the field of access to tools developed during the cooperation, the development of an approach fostering social inclusion and supporting it in the practice is also of key importance. In school communities as well as in less institutionalized environments, sport activities and other programs contribute not only to the physical and mental development of students, but also to the enhancement of social inclusion. Through social activities following patterns and environment determined by sport or physical activities, marginalized and disadvantaged students or groups of students can develop relationships or achieve positive experience and success that may diminish their disadvantages and support their talent.

ESSD hopes to create the culture of volunteering on the area of sport in countries where public education is built on more formal structures and plans to give a ready-to-use toolbox to every participating country to support students in organizing their own school sport programs outside P.E. classes. The toolkit has been designed to take teachers and students on a journey through European School Sports Day. It provides ideas to plan and prepare the day, how to deliver activities, who can support schools to do this, right through to actions after the event. There are useful tips throughout the document as well as ideas from other schools to provide inspiration.
References


