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*National Preliminary Outputs
(Ireland)*

English Version

Technical Sheet

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For further information on the EuPEO Project please follow the links:

Website: www.eupeo.eu

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Introduction

The European Physical Education Association identified (EUPEA) the diverse conditions pertaining to Physical Education (PE), School Sports (SS), and other forms of school-based Physical Activity (PA) within Europe. The EUPEA further highlighted the importance of implementing a systematic monitoring for PE, and health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) as the European Physical Education Observatory (EuPEO). The EuPEO project is co-led by the Laboratory of Pedagogy, Faculty of Human Kinetics in the University of Lisbon, and by the Portuguese Society of Physical Education, involving 12 partners and two observers from a total of nine countries.

The EuPEO project aims to implement a monitoring system by developing the EuPEO webpage, a manual for externally monitoring (MEA) PE at Europe-wide country level, and a toolkit to prepare and provide internal self-monitoring (TIM) of quality PE and SS at the school level.

This internal report covers the process and product of the activity developed during the first seven months of the project, and aims to identify both the weaknesses and strengths in the procedures adopted to (a) develop its first outputs, and (b) the results from each country. Starting in January 2018, the European School Questionnaire (ESQ), the National External Assessment Systems (NELAS) inventory, and the European Country Questionnaire (ECQ) have been iterated. The first step to the development of these questionnaires was workshop-based, and resulted in the identification of an agreed framework of dimensions for these instruments. The final framework is directly informed by the UNESCO (2015) proposal for Quality Physical Education dimensions. All the researchers were involved in the discussion and definition of the indicators for each instrument. The original English version of the ESQ was designed to target a sample of schools in each partner country and completed by the Head of the PE Department within each school. In order to be user-friendly, it was translated into the mother language of the participating countries and tested to verify its ecological validity. The ECQ, design to be completed by National PE representatives, was also translated to the mother language of the participating country. NELAS questionnaires were only developed in an English version, as the respondents were the EuPEO project participants, and as such were national representatives with expert knowledge, and fluent English. The final versions of the questionnaires were digitised to an on-line format, using the Limesurvey software (version 2.65.0+170502).

The project and these instruments were approved by the Portuguese National Data Protection Commission, and the Ethics Commission of the coordinating institution (Faculty of Human Kinetics, University of Lisbon)). Each questionnaire included an informed consent element to comply with ethical standards. Note for the ESQ application, a cover letter was firstly written in English, and then translated to the mother language of the participating country. This was then sent to each school's Principal and Head of PE.

The collected data was first exported from *Limesurvey* to an Excel format (version 15.17), and then to SPSS (version 23). A descriptive analysis of the different variables was run. The results were shared with the participating countries, who used them to develop this report.

To better understand the following analysis of the process and product of this first project phase, some contextual aspects of methodological implementation of Ireland must be raised. In the Republic of Ireland, there is a central government unit entitled the Department of Education and Skills (DES), who regulate the quality of teaching Physical Education (PE) as a subject in schools. They are supported by the Government's National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Teaching Council of Ireland. The PE curriculum for Ireland's primary and post-primary schools is determined by the Minister for Education and Skills, who is advised by the NCCA (established on a statutory basis in 2001). The Teaching Council of Ireland (established as a statutory body in March 2006) promote teaching as a profession, at primary and post-primary levels, and further promote the professional development of teachers by regulating standards in the profession. Physical Education is compulsory in both Primary and Post-Primary Education. It is a chosen examination subject for the final Post-Primary school examination – The Leaving Certificate (with first assessment due to commence in 2020 in Ireland).

The current report is critical for the EuPEO's future steps, namely as it enables data-based decision making on the innovative EuPEO Pupils Questionnaire (EPQ), informing the next work-package where the EuPEO MEA, and TIM will be developed and piloted. The EPQ will essentially focus on the pupils' perceptions about the required learning outcomes, and respective assessment processes, from what is identified as most common across the partners' countries in terms of "curriculum flexibility". Moreover, at this level, it is envisioned that the questionnaire will address pupils' perceptions about participation opportunities in School Sport, and other forms of school-based PA, as well as on the "facilities, equipment and resources", as supporting infrastructures and policies that promote participation in all forms of school-based PA. The validation process of this questionnaire will result in a pupil-centred instrument to be part of the MEA and TIM in WP3.

The EuPEO Product – Preliminary Results

Demographic characterisation of participating schools

- Single Sex Secondary School: 2 Urban, 3 Rural
- Private single sex: Urban 2
- Private mixed: 1 rural
- Mixed secondary school: 3 rural
- Mixed Community School 1 Urban, 4 Rural

1.1. National External Learning Assessment System (NELAS)

There is no NELAS in Ireland.

Table 1 - Key strengths and challenges of the NELAS

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Physical	-	-
2. Psychological	-	-
3. Social	-	-
4. Cognitive	-	-

1.2. EuPEO Country Questionnaire (ECQ)

1.2.1. Physical Education National Strategy

Table 1 - Key strengths and challenges of ECQ's PE National Strategy at the Country level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Existence	There is a PE National Strategy Fully implement the physical education curriculum for all primary and post-primary pupils to meet Department of Education and Skills guidelines.	Timeline of 2020 very ambitious, considering the recent curricular changes for Junior and Senior Cycle PE in Ireland.
2. Support	Government funding 12bn for capital funding for PE sports halls A national development plan – known as Project Ireland 2040 has recently promised a 70 per cent increase in school capital funding over the next decade to build new schools and modernise existing ones.	1. Funding for CPD for PE teachers to deliver new curricula at Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle/Leaving Certificate 2. Payment and conditions for teachers in Ireland 3. The quality of PE infrastructure in schools.

1.2.2. Teacher Workforce

Table 2 - Key strengths and challenges of ECQ's Teacher Workforce at the Country level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
3. Teacher Demographics	It is difficult to attain this information	The pay and conditions of teachers in Ireland

1.2.3. Teacher Education

Table 3 - Key strengths and challenges of ECQ's Teacher Education at the Country level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Initial Teacher Education	Robust teacher accreditation pathway for Irish Physical Education.	Primary PE teachers could aim to become specialists to provide PE at Primary schools.
		Reliance on National Governing Bodies to provide Primary PE.
2. Induction	Droichead programme - two-year induction programme for all teachers prior to full registration with Teaching Council.	

3. Continuous Professional Development	Physical Education Association of Ireland, Junior Cycle for Teachers, and Professional Development for Secondary Teachers provide CPD. Third level providers are also developing and implementing courses.	Many teachers needing PE-CPD with new curricula being introduced. Difficulties in teachers being able to attend these CPD courses, due to school release etc.
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1.2.4. Curriculum Flexibility

Table 4 - Key strengths and challenges of ECQ's Curriculum Flexibility at the Country level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Physical Education	Department of Education and Skills, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment govern the development of curriculum. New data on curriculum changes and PE provision forthcoming in the CSPPA 2018-19 Report.	Schools accepting the variety of curriculum changes, particularly the junior cycle changes for PE i.e. short course option for PE now in place.
2. School Sports	No dedicated governing body, working closely with PE. New data on school sports forthcoming in the CSPPA 2018-19 Report.	School Sports mostly focus on competition with little opportunities for participation. The reliance on team games, as a dominant extra school sports pathway. Funding for school sport.
3. Other Forms of PA	New data on childhood PA surveillance nationally forthcoming in the CSPPA 2018-19 Report.	Healthy Ireland (Part of Department of Health) have challenges in trying to identify the range of providers in Ireland for PA promotion i.e. at school, community, and national level etc.

1.3. EuPEO School Questionnaire (ESQ)

ALL LOWER SECONDARY - Full pupil numbers

Total (schools) = 16

Public Single Sex Secondary School: 2 Urban, 3 Rural [Mixed SES, Migrant]

Private single sex: Urban 2 [1 boys (800) and 1 girls (800)]

Private mixed: 1 rural (650)

Public Mixed secondary school: 3 rural [3 Mixed SES with Migrant] (a) 300 Girls; 250 boys (b) 350 Girls; 300 boys; (c) 250 girls; 200 boys

Public Mixed Community School 1 Urban [Mixed SES, Migrant] 600 girls and 550 boys, 4 Rural [Mixed SES, Migrant] (a) 300 Girls; 250 boys (b) 350 Girls; 300 boys; (c) 250 girls; 200 boys; (d) 300 Girls; 250 boys.

Table 5 - Demographics of ESQ's Participating Schools by Educational Level, Context, Government Dependence, Student Population (global, PE and SS)

Educational Levels (ISCED)	Context
(2) Lower Secondary (n=16)	Urban (n= 5) Rural (n= 11)

1.3.1. Community Partnerships

Table 6 - Key strengths and challenges of ESQ's Community Partnerships at the School level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Public	Public partnerships in relation to School Sports [after school clubs]	
2. Private	Public partnerships in relation to School Sports [after school clubs]	

1.3.2. Facilities, Equipment and Resources

Table 7 - Key strengths and challenges of ESQ's Facilities, Equipment and Resources at the School level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Facilities	Some schools with well maintained facilities	Some schools with limited facilities.
2. Equipment	Some schools with well maintained capital and non-capital items	Some schools with limited capital and non-capital equipment
3. Finances		

Since completed this, the government have committed to a 12bn cash injection for capital projects in schools specifically targeting PE. As reported recently, many schools across Ireland have outdated facilities for the provision of PE, and have had applications for facilities such as PE halls rejected through varying funding applications. The introduction of PE as a Leaving Certificate subject this year, along with concerns over childhood obesity, has helped focus attention on the need for proper PE facilities in many schools. Project Ireland's funding announcement as part the national development plan has promised a 70 per cent increase in school capital funding over the next decade to build new schools and modernise existing ones. Along with new and upgraded PE halls, there will be a focus on modernising school equipment, and providing digital equipment in schools and energy-saving upgrades.

1.3.3. Teacher Workforce

Table 8 - Key strengths and challenges of ESQ's Teacher Workforce at the School level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Weekly workload	All teachers from schools are given teaching and non-teaching time to perform their duties.	In some schools, there is only 1 PE teacher running and delivering the programme. Poor teacher payment and conditions.
2. Performed Roles	As part of the new Wellbeing area of Learning in Junior Cycle, the PE teacher may become the Wellbeing co-ordinator as part of their school's action planning for Junior Cycle.	Very broad role as they are teach at least two subjects i.e. PE and one other [or more] subjects. Teachers are no longer paid for their involvement in extra-curricular school activities and pursuits.
3. Teacher Demographics		More females than men. Recognition for teacher's seeking higher levels of education at Level 9, or Level 10.

1.3.4. Teacher Education

Table 9 - Key strengths and challenges of ESQ's Teacher Education at the School level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
3. Continuous Professional Development	The professional development is relevant and specific to the PE subject. The PDST and the JCT are providing robust CPD training nationally for PE. Move towards online and face-to-face CPD strategies, a critical component as part of our national education development pathways.	Sometimes, teachers need to take from their free time to undertake CPD. The alignment of these CPD programmes. The demand for CPD in junior and senior cycle PE – where to invest time for the teacher.

1.3.5. Curriculum Flexibility

Table 10 - Key strengths and challenges of ESQ's Curriculum Flexibility at the School level

Categories (Section)	Key Strengths	Key Challenges
1. Physical Education	The Physical Education across schools focuses on the full spectrum of learning outcomes	The curriculum changes i.e. variety of programmes and curriculum ideas for wellbeing, short course physical education,

		junior cycle PE, senior cycle PE, and Leaving Certificate PE.
2. School Sports	There are a range of School Sports.	PE teachers and other teachers deliver this in addition to their teaching workload. Recognising student involvement in school sports – the benefits for parents and the home environment.
3. Other Forms of PA	There are a range of PA.	PE teachers and other teachers deliver this in addition to their teaching workload. Recognising student involvement in PA – the benefits for parents and the home environment.



Appendices

ESQ Complete Results

ECQ Complete Results

ECQ Results

Theme	Categories (Section)	Indicators (Question Groups)	Results
PE National Strategy	1. Existence	1. Existence	
	2. Support	1. Kind and Level of Support	
Teacher Workforce (Considering Full-time teachers)	3. Teacher Demographics	1. Number	
		2. Distribution (Gender, Career Status – Permanent, Contract, Freelance -, Degree, Years of Age, Years of Experience)	
Teacher Education (per educational level based on UNESCO ISCED - ISCED 0-3)	1. Initial Teacher Education	1. Professional/Academic Qualifications (Level and ECTS for PE contents)	
		2. Professional Competences	
		3. School Placement/Internships/Practicum (ECTS, compulsory supervision)	
		4. Providers and Teacher Educators' Requirements (Type and Qualification)	
	2. Induction	1. Presence	
		2. Legal Status (Compulsority and Structure)	
		3. Providers (Institutions)	
	3. Continuous Professional Development	1. Presence	
		2. Legal Status (Compulsority, Time, Content Definition)	
3. Providers			
Curriculum Flexibility (per educational level based on UNESCO ISCED - ISCED 0-3)	1. Physical Education	1. Curriculum Organisation (Presence within and of Core Curriculum, Regulation, Generalization)	
		2. Contents (Declared vs Performed, Required/Optional/Absent, Regulation, Cross-Curricular)	
		3. Assessment and Grading (Declared vs Performed, Assessment Functions, Involvement)	
		4. Learning Outcomes (Presence, Status, Nature, Focus)	
		5. Subject Name	
		6. Field Trips (Presence)	
		7. Pedagogical Principles	
		8. Allocated Time (Declared vs Performed, Schedule Responsibility)	
	2. School Sports	1. Organisation (Curriculum, Governing Institution, Compulsority, Funding)	
		2. Time (Allocation), activities (number), provision, participation (Financial nature, Student percentage, Inclusion)	
		3. Competition (Participation, Number, Inclusion, Level)	



	3. Other Forms of Physical Activity	3. After-School - AKA. Extra-Curricular (Name, Time, Compulsority, Type, Provision)	