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## ORIGINAL

# SCHOOL SPORT PROGRAMS IN SPAIN AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL AGENTS

## PROGRAMAS DE DEPORTE ESCOLAR EN ESPAÑA E IMPLICACIÓN DE LOS AGENTES EDUCATIVOS

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### ABSTRACT

The Autonomous Communities in Spain (CCAA in Spanish) have the competency to promote sports in schools. The participation of educational agents in their programs is necessary for the correct tutoring ability of any sport. This study's objective was to analyze the agents involved in the management,

organization and putting into practice the school sports programs, as well as the involvement of the agents within the educational realm. We carried out a transverse study in a sample of 15 CCAA. The data were obtained through different qualitative investigation methods. The results showed a lack of uniformity in the management of the autonomous school sports programs, detecting an important absence of implication of the educational agents.

**KEY WORDS:** School Sports, Sports Plans and Programs, Educational Agents.

## **RESUMEN**

Las Comunidades Autónomas de España (CCAA) tienen competencias en la promoción deportiva escolar. La participación de agentes educativos en sus planes y programas es necesaria para una correcta pedagogía del deporte. Este trabajo presenta como objetivo el análisis de los agentes involucrados en la gestión, organización y puesta en práctica de los planes deportivos escolares, así como la implicación de agentes del ámbito educativo. Se realizó un estudio transversal sobre una muestra de 15 CCAA. Los datos fueron extraídos a través de diferentes técnicas de investigación cualitativa. Los resultados muestran una falta de uniformidad en la gestión de los planes autonómicos de deporte escolar, detectándose una importante ausencia de implicación de agentes educativos.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Deporte Escolar, Planes y Programas Deportivos, Agentes Educativos

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

We consider sports, during school ages, all those activities that in an organized setting are performed outside the Physical Education Program Courses, at school centers, clubs, associations, etc., in which school age students participate (Higher Sports Council, 2014). The term school sports make reference to sports carried out within the school setting, primarily in the Physical Education classroom. They both should promote a healthy lifestyle guarantying the correct approach to sport practices and good sport politics. (Lee et al., 2006).

The Higher Sports Council (CSD in Spanish) is one of the agencies with maximum responsibility in Spain for sports during school ages. CSD is a body dependent of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECD in Spanish) and presently, the promoter for the Integral Plan for the Physical Education and Sports in the field of Spots during School Ages. This plan has as an objective to encourage the universal Access to a quality sport practice for the general population (Higher Sports Council 2010) and introduce themselves in close cooperation with the Autonomous Communities (CCAA in Spanish), local Entities, Universities and other ministerial organizations, together with the necessary participation of the private sector. It was founded in 2010 and its useful life is expected until 2020. The integral Plan is composed of different

programs, that by definition are focused in actions, definitive due dates, expected results, resources required and persons involved, which are different from the more detailed and rigid plans (Paris, 2005).

The sport plans during school ages present a complex framework immersed within a multi-competency environment. On one part, the CCAA has their own competencies in the subject of development of sports in their autonomous territory (art. 148.1.19 in the Spanish Constitution 1978); therefore the different autonomic lays concerning sports will delineate the guidelines for the sport plans during school ages. On the other part, the CSD, full competency of sports Championships in Spain during school ages and acts in coordination and collaboration with the CCAA, to help them achieve their competencies reflected in their autonomous statutes.

Therefore, to analyze the agents that take place in Spain, involved in sports during school ages, we have to analyze and study the sport plans and programs of the CCAA, due to their competencies in the organization of school competitions at the local, regional, province and autonomous community level and to promote the creation of sport entities and associations as well as the administration of monetary assistance for them.

Within the European realm, the Executive Agency in the Educational, Audio-Visual and Cultural Areas (EACEA in Spanish, Eurodyce and Political Support) (European Commission et al., 2013), in collaboration with the General Administration of the European Commission for Education and Culture, have elaborated a report about School Physical Education dedicating a specific chapter to the extracurricular sport activities. In it, they make a brief analysis of the present state, comparing information from 30 countries of the Eury Network, which says and points out, that besides the public administrations, there exists other agents in the sports field, such as, Olympic Committees, Sport Federations, Associations and Foundations, that promote and contribute to the support a wide offer of extracurricular activities. These organizations necessarily collaborate with the school centers in order to organize and implement these activities.

Presently in Spain, there is coexistence at the core of sports in school ages of three great gradients of sport practice: the competitive, mainly settled and promoted from the federation scope; the educational gradient, coming from the sport schools at city council or educational centers, and the last gradient, based on spare time, very tied to the two previous agents. A complex system of agents intervenes in the sport plans for school ages at the different CCAAs. Their classification (Figure 1) is complicated as well as committed. Next we will detail the competencies assumed by each of these agents:

**1) Socio-political Agents.** Participate in writing, development, approval and dissemination of the programs. It encompasses organizations of public nature, administrators, entities, agencies or societies that the public administration has created to develop sports promotion policies.

**2) Collaborating Agents.** Collaborate in the programs contributing with human resources, equipment or infrastructures. These agents also, occasionally, participate preparing and writing the programs, specially the sports federations. In general, they are non-profit organizations, except the corporate network, and usually work jointly with the public administration.

**3) Technical-sports Agents.** Execute the programs and put them into practice, assuming different tasks in the execution phase such as organizing sports matches or phases, transportation for athletic groups, etc. Occasionally, they also contribute with resources and infrastructures, which convert them into collaborating agents. They are usually non-profit organizations and constitute the origin and the foundation for sports in the majority of countries. In this last group, it also exist different roles and responsibilities for the program technicians. This way the sport technician that is in direct contact with the athletes should plan the educational-sport actions, work on the integral development of the child, educate values and clean play, establishing routines for a healthy lifestyle, reporting to the fathers/mothers the sport formative process of their children, etc. The coordinators of the program should supervise the correct execution of same; alert the directors in case it exist any malpractice made by the technicians, coordinate the installations and resources, etc. The directors of the programs should insure the correct financing of same, broadcasting the information, the integration and inclusion in sports, training and updating the knowledge of the technicians, etc.

**4) Duplicate Agents:** Refers to persons or entities that share, or not, the same vision or ideology as the sport technician that supervises the training of a group of boys/girls, and therefore can affect, positively or negatively, the conduct of the athletes. These last agents primarily affect the emotional and social aspect of the boys/girls, such is the case of the parents of the athlete (Milošević & Vesković, 2013)(Tuero del Prado et al., 2012) (Videmšek et al., 2007).

**5) Disciplinary Agents:** They are the agents in charge of enforcing the regulations and the discipline in competitions.

**Figure 1.** Agents implicated in the school sport programs



Therefore, this work presents a double objective, to analyze and describe the number and type of agents involved in the organization and puts into place the sport plans and programs in school age promoted by the CCAA in Spain and study the implication of the educational agents in said plans and programs.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Sampling

The sample used for this study was composed by all 15 CCAA within Peninsular Spain (Andalucía, Aragón, Principado de Asturias, Cantabria, Castilla-La Mancha, Castilla y León, Cataluña, Comunidad Valenciana, Extremadura, Galicia, Comunidad de Madrid, Región de Murcia, Comunidad Foral de Navarra, País Vasco and La Rioja). We excluded the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, and the islands (Canarias and Islas Baleares), because they have their own political organization and administration unlawfully held by Town Councils / Insular Councils that imply a different hierarchical dependency concerning the structure of the different plans.

## **2.2. Design, procedures and instruments**

We carried out an extensive transverse and qualitative study, during the 2010/2011 academic year. As instruments to gather information we used content analysis of different documentary sources (Neuendorf, 2002) and semi-structured interviews. To obtain the information concerning the sport plans and programs in school age, as well as the characteristics of the implicated agents we have utilized the following sources: the official web pages and the publication of official bulletins of each autonomous government. To give our study greater reliability we triangulated the instruments and cities, supporting the content analysis on semi-structured interviews conducted by telephone with the purpose of verifying or find out the contributions analyzed in the programs. Whenever it was necessary to pinpoint even more the information obtained through the phone we proceeded to contact via e-mail the person in charge of the sport program during school ages.

The interviews were used to corroborate the data provided in the published plans and programs. These interviews were prepared by a group of experts, composed of professionals and researchers specialized in the objective being studied. The interviews facilitated the comprehension of the relative data in the following categories: number and type of agents involved, function and competency of each one of the agents within the program, hierarchical structure of the agents, management of the economic, human and equipment resources and the presence of agreements with the Ministry of Education. Additionally, we consulted other documents, books, articles, that due to their valuable information, were considered important to be read and analyzed to better understand these work models.

## **3. RESULTS**

Promoting of sports for school ages by the different CCAA is done through the creation of numerous plans and programs using different terminologies in each autonomous community. There is no uniformity in this subject matter and some communities differentiate between competition sport programs and educational sport programs. In table 1 we present a list of programs offered and their yearly length at each CCAA during the 2010/2011 school year.

**Table 1.** Number, name and length of the sport programs for school ages promoted by the different CCAA in Spain during the 2010/2011 school year.

CCAA	Nº Programs	Programs offered	Length of programs
<b>ANDALUCIA</b>	4	1- Sports in Schools –Sport Schools- 2- School Sport Games 3- Andaluca's Basic Sport Championships IAD 4- Other programs - Andaluca's Program to Identify Athletes in School - Across the Border Collaboration Sport Program: Andaluca – Algarve, Portugal	October June
<b>ARAGÓN</b>	4	1- Sport Games for school age children. 2- Promotion of the A.F. and Sport Programs (Program at Centers) 3- National Meeting for School Centers. Nature Pre-sports and Sports 4- Proades	October June
<b>CANTABRIA</b>	1	1- School Sport Games by the Government of Cantabria	October September
<b>CASTILLA LA MANCHA</b>	3	1- Sport Regional Championships for school ages 2- Clean Games 3- Youth Games	September May
<b>CASTILLA LEÓN</b>	3	1- Castilla Leon's School Games (training recreational activities): Sport General Administration, Municipalities, City Council 2- School Age Regional Championships ( sport performance activities): Sport Federation of Castilla Leon 3- Broadcasting of sport activities and promotion of leisure and free time (Non-regulated activities of sport nature that contemplate the educational and recreational aspects of sports)	October June
<b>CATALUÑA</b>	2	1- Cataluña's School Sport Games 2- Catalan's School Sport Plan	October June
<b>COMUNIDAD DE MADRID</b>	3	1- Children's Sports: Basic and preferential series 2- Public High School Championships 3- Olympic Madrid Community	October June
<b>COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA</b>	2	1- Valencia's Community Sports Games. Promotional Level 2- Introduction to performance level	September June
<b>EXTREMADURA</b>	5	1- Extremeños Sport Games 2- Special Sport Games Program 3- PROADES 4- Sport's School 5- Sport's Promotion <i>Extremeña's Network Program for Ac.F. Promoting Centers</i>	October June
<b>MURCIA</b>	2	1- Promotion (non-federated students) 2- Performance (federated students)	October June
<b>NAVARRA</b>	5	1- Sport Schools 2- Sport's Campaign for school age children 3- Navarra's Sport Games. 4- School's Sport Pilot Project 5- Additional Campaigns	September June
<b>LA RIOJA</b>	3	1- La Rioja's Sport Games o Competition Sport Activities with competitive nature (Benjamín, Alevín, children, cadets, juvenile). o Promotional Sport Activities of recreational nature (Pre-Benjamín, Benjamín, Alevín). 2- Multi-sports Programs in schools with a larger percentage of immigrant children. 3- Proades	October June
<b>PAIS VASCO</b>	1	- Pais Vasco's School Sports o 1- Sport's participation itinerary o 2- Introduction and performance itinerary. o 3- Talent and sport's future promises identification itinerary.	September August

<b>PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS</b>	4	1- Principado de Asturias's sport games. 2- Proades 3- Support Programs through City Hall or Municipal Patronage subsidies. 4- Sport's subsidies, Assistance or Technology through Club or Association's subsidies.	October June
<b>GALICIA</b>	4	1- Game Programs. Federated Activity 2. School Sport Activities 3. Popular Games 4. Sports and Values Education 5. Meet my club 6. Paying with the wind 7. Move yourself + 8. Playful Activities	October June

Some programs of the CCAA branch out into numerous sub-programs; such is the case in the Galicia Community, which has up to 8 sport programs, all of them enclosed within Galicia's Healthy Plan. Its diversity embraces children that are seeking to practice federated sports, children that are only looking to have fun and have a good time or other that have a preference for popular games. Additionally there are specific programs for sea related activities; given the extensive costal surface it possesses this autonomous community, taking advantage this way of the natural resources in Galicia. It also calls our attention the Move Yourself+ Program, a program consisting in the fulfillment of distinct choreographies in the realm of Physical Education and that tries to promote a healthy lifestyle.

In some CCAA, like in the case of Extremadura, we detected that an innovative program was been carried out called Sport Center Project (PDC in Spanish). Those educational centers that put into practice their PCD and desire to participate in the sport program for school ages denominated by Extremadura's Government called *Extremeña's Network Program* for Centers Promoting the Physical-Sport Activities will obtain some advantages; by placing an emblem that identifies them as a member of the network, they receive a subsidy of up to 20.00 Euros per child, with preference to the campaigns that are done by the Youth and Sports Department: Sport School, PROADES, etc., facilitate the use of Extremadura's Youth Facilities, invitations to assist to sporting events organized by the Ministry, possibility to have access to equipment or athletes sponsored by Extremadura's Brand to organize workshops and activities at the centers, guided tours to the Teaching Centers,, among other advantages.

Navarra recognizes PDC in their program and also present a first experience program called School's Sport Pilot Project. This program pretends to promote carrying out fun-recreational physical activities oriented to spare time and health.

On table 2 we include a list of responsible and collaborating agents for the programs previously outlined. In some cases, the responsibility for one or various programs offered within the Community is divided between the

participating agents. The number given to each agent makes reference to the sport program for which he/she is responsible as indicated on Table 1. The agencies involved in the sport programs are very diverse. In all of them, the sport federations are contemplated as collaborating agencies, however, the same does not apply to City Halls or Council Offices.

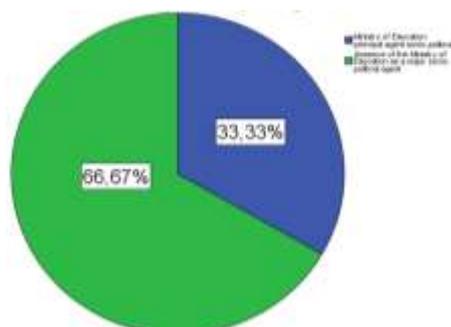
**Table 2.** Participating agents in the sport programs for school ages at the different CCAA in Spain and responsible for the different programs offered

	<b>Socio-political Agents</b>	<b>Collaborating Agents</b>	<b>Technical-sport Agents</b>	<b>Duplicate Agents</b>	<b>Disciplinary Agents</b>
<b>ANDALUCÍA</b>	Ministry of Education (1,2,3,4) Andalucia's Sports Institute (3, 4)	- Council Offices (1, 2) - City Halls (1) - Ministry of Health and Tourism, Commerce and Sports (1) - Federations (3)	- Educational Centers (1) - Clubs (4)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>ARAGÓN</b>	Department of Education, Culture and Sports (1,2,3,4)	- City Halls (1) - Federations (1 technical support)	-Educational Centers (1)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>CANTABRIA</b>	Ministry of Culture, Tourism y Sports – Sports General Management Office	- Sports Federations - Municipalities	Not contemplated	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>CASTILLA LA MANCHA</b>	Sport's General Secretary Appointed by the Ministry of Education	- Council Offices (1,2,3) - City Halls (1,2,3) - Federations (1,2,3)	- Clubs (2) - Associations (2) - Educational Centers (1,2,3)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>CASTILLA LEÓN</b>	Ministry of Culture, Tourism y Sports - Sport's General Management Office	- Municipalities with population above 20.000 (1) - State Council Offices (1) - Sports Federations (2)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>CATALUÑA</b>	Generalitat de Catalunya Sport's General Secretary Generalitat de Catalunya Education Department	- Sport Councils. (1,2) - City Halls. (1,2) - Federations (very few) (2)	- Educational Centers through Sport Associations (1,2)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>COMUNIDAD DE MADRID</b>	Madrid's Community Sports General Management Office	- Federations (1 preferential series) - City Halls (1 basic series) - Sports General Management Office (1, 2, 3)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA</b>	Sports General Management Office	- Federations (1 state and autonomous level) - City Halls (1 local and inter-municipal levels)	- Clubs (1) - Educational Centers (1) - Associations (1)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>EXTREMADURA</b>	Sports General Management Office (appointed by Youth and Sport's Council)	- Sports Federations (1) - City Halls (3)	- Educational Centers (3, 5)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated

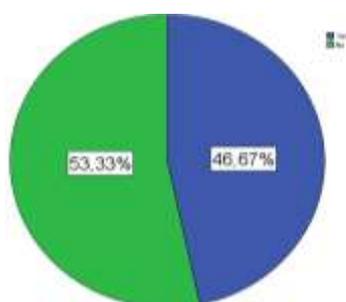
<b>MURCIA</b>	Sports General Management Office	- City Halls (1) - Federations (2)	- Educational Centers and clubs (1)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>NAVARRA</b>	Navarra Floral Community's Sport Administration and Education Administration	- Federations (3)	- Educational Centers (1,2, 4) - AMPAS (1,2) - Sport Associations (1,2)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>LA RIOJA</b>	Ministry of Culture, Tourism y Sports - Sports General Management Office	- Sports Federations (1) - Municipalities (allow use of their facilities)	- Educational Centers (3) - Clubs (1)	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>PAIS VASCO</b>	Basque Government o Basque's School Sport Floral Authority Commission	City Halls: allow use of their facilities Federations: technical assistance	- Educational Centers: Professors assist with the organization - Clubs: technical assistance	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>PRINCIPADO DE ASTURIAS</b>	Ministry of Culture and Tourism through Sports Executive Management Office	- Municipalities - Sports Federations -Municipal Sport's Board	Not contemplated	Not contemplated	Not contemplated
<b>GALICIA</b>	Sports General Ministry	Sports Federations	- Clubs and Sports Federations. - Educational Centers - AMPAS	Not contemplated	Not contemplated

In connection to the implication of the ministry of Education as principal education agent and political partner involved in the sport programs in school ages, we validated the following results, 66,67% of the communities do not contemplate the Ministry of Education as and educational or socio-political agent for the sport programs in school ages (Graph 1). 46,67% have established agreements with the Ministry of Education so that the Physical Education Teachers involved with the program enjoy certain benefits (Figure 2).

**Graph 1.** Inclusion of the Ministry of Education as an educational or socio-political agent for the sport programs



**Graph 2.** Existence of agreements with the Ministry of Education so that the Physical Education Teachers enjoy certain benefits for their participation in the programs.



#### 4. DISCUSSION

This study is a novelty and it does not have any precedence in the literature. We are seeking a double objective, analyze and describe the number and types of agents involved in the organization and put into practice the sport plans and programs for school ages promoted by the CCAA in Spain and study the involvement of the educational agents in said plans and programs.

The sport programs for school ages should involve agents that are seeking an educational and training model that improves the social, emotional, physical and psychiatric wellbeing of the child (Hold et al., 2012) (Torlaković et al., 2014). In some communities the programs are linked to sport schools or to centers that promote sports and in other communities, they have programs mainly oriented to performance. Within the European realm, we detected three gradients for sports extracurricular activities, incorporated into the plans and programs of school sports in different countries, according to the Eurydice Report (European Commission et al., 2013): competition and other sport events, health related activities and measures for the “active school day”.

From the results of our work it can be observed that there is no uniformity within promoting agents for the sport programs in school ages. The programs are organized and planned by different agents and have many different participating

entities. It is important to emphasize the incorporation of the Ministry of Education, either through the specific agreements or as being responsible for the programs, in some Autonomous Communities. The fact of involving these Ministries could implicate a greater participation of the educational centers and the Physical Education Teachers. From the educational point of view this is certainly relevant and various authors (Gonzalo et al., 2014) (Alamo et al., 2002) (Valdivia, 2009) confirm the need that the sport practice for school ages has to be supervised by sport educators or technicians that defend that sports be regulated by education administration.

Through the personal interviews with the responsible persons for the programs we confirmed that the programs that have with these agreements, the Physical Education Teachers receive several rewards and benefits that increase the motivation to get involved in their jobs. Some of the verified benefits are: rewards, recognition of their training hours which affects their salary increases, procedures to select their directors and fulfillment of vacancies, decrease in the school day hours, among others.

The idea to create Physical Activity – Sport Promoting Centers as it occurs in Extremadura looks out for a life-long sport practice, given that they are really interested in a healthy and sports oriented population within all age groups and not only in the school areas (Lubans & Morgan, 2008). If we achieve that the child incorporates sport practices in his lifestyle, we will be creating their attachment to sports. This advertising is in accordance with the evidences that validate the importance of educational centers as centers that promote the physical activity and improve the psychological and social abilities of school children (Lubans et al., 2011)(Daley, 2002) (Saenz et al., 2013) (Tomik et al., 2012) (Edwards et al., 2011).

There are numerous studies that confirm that a high rate of sport's abandonment within the ages of 14-16 years old for various reasons, being one of the principal ones the absence of adherence to sports (Delorme et al., 2011) (Guzmán & Kingston, 2012) and in the Community of Navarra they offer a complementary program to the existing ones that makes possible the adherence to sport practices. The project is designed by the School Center's Department of Physical Education and integrated in the educational project. At all times this project will be coordinated by the center's teachers and taught by trained sport technicians.

The PDC is a project that highlights the importance of having it within the sport programs for school ages is already noted in the document from National Framework for the Physical Activity and Sports for School Ages Project (Sport Superior Council, 2010) in which there are established several guidelines for the design of School Center's Sport Projects and several directives for their evaluation and follow-up. This document also noted guidelines for the design of Entities' Sport Projects, Local and Autonomous Administration in accordance with means for transmitting and channeling of values and attitudes (Carreres et al., 2012)(Fraile, 2010)(García et al., 2012). The production and provision to

the public of this document supposes another lever of excellence of these educational centers. It is a sports program at the center level that has all its components perfectly planned and gathered into a single document that has an educational objectives and also social objectives, encouraging global physical activity and proactive attitudes.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The profile of the agents that participate in the sport programs for school ages promoted by the different CCAA is very diverse and it does not follow any uniformity. In some of them, as in the case of Andalusia, there are numerous agencies involved, counting with the cooperation of Council Offices, City Halls, Educational Centers, Federations, Clubs and Ministry of Health and Tourism, Commerce and Sports, while in other autonomies, as in the case of Cantabria, the agencies mainly implicated are only Federations and Municipalities.

The principal office that manages school sports presents two types of well differentiated profiles, in some cases; it corresponds to Sport's General Direction, while in others it is assumed by the Ministry of Education. We can suspect through these facts, the double gradient present in the sport's field, its educational gradient (promoted by educational centers and Physical Education Teachers) and its competitive gradient (promoted by sport federations, clubs and trainers). Other facts that can indicate the involvement level of the Ministry of Education in these programs are the agreements that exist in relation to the benefits to the teachers that become involved in school sports. This way,

Communities such as Andalusia, Castilla la Mancha, Extremadura or Murcia give numerous supplements to their teachers, which without a doubt, is something important so that this sport practice has a high educational component.

## **6. LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

The present investigation was based on data reflected in the official documents published by the Governments of the different CCAA and this information was verified with public servant personnel of the Ministries from the different Autonomous Communities with responsibilities in the sport plans and programs for school ages. It would be interesting to make a greater in depth study of the programs developed from the perspective of other agents, such as the Physical Education Teachers, Sport Technicians or the Associations and Sport Clubs, among others.

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