



# Social Entrepreneurship in Physical Education: A Move for the Future

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## Abstract

In this article, we offer to infuse social entrepreneurship (SE) into physical education (PE) programs in schools. SE is an approach undertaken with the explicit objective of addressing societal problems. Physical inactivity in adolescents is a global public health problem. The recent global status report of WHO on physical activity (PA) 2022 noted that the WHO's recommended levels of PA are now not being met by 81% of adolescents which affects not only people's life throughout them and their families but also the health care system and society at large. An ever-growing body of literature suggests schools are an ideal location for addressing youth physical inactivity. However, PE teachers taking on the role of social entrepreneurs to make PE more meaningful has not been suggested. Although this serves as a conceptual framework we leave the reader with some practical suggestions.

**Keywords:** Physical Education Teacher; Social Entrepreneurship; Physical Activity; Marketing

**Abbreviations:** SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals, NCDs: Non-Communicable Diseases, CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility, PE: Physical Education, SE: Social Entrepreneurship.

## Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations introduced the concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has introduced 17 goals to eradicate social issues at the global level. Since then, policymakers, academicians and stakeholders across the world have been striving to achieve all 17 SDGs with their ideas. In 2020 the United Nations published. "The World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda" [1]. This report seeks to contribute to understanding how The youth social entrepreneurship (SE) World Youth Report: youth social entrepreneurship and the

2030 Agenda can both support youth development and help accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. Goal 3 "Good Health and Well-being" reminds us to advocate physical education (PE) activities such as physical activities, sports and other recreational activities across a variety of sectors including education, commerce, and medicine.

The education sector has witnessed many challenges after the COVID-19 pandemic, however, some of these challenges have opened the window of opportunities to improve the situation for PE. For instance, Gerostathis A, et al. [2] suggest the threat, danger, and uncertainty of the pandemic have shifted society's focus on the values of life, health, and safety. Similarly, Blain, et al. [3] claim that the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of physical health as a core educational aim which suggests the importance of increasing physical activity (PA) across all populations, including youth.

Prior to COVID-19 the soaring cases of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) were a serious issue for public health experts and it is no coincidence that physical widely accepted as a prime tool for PA promotion [4-6]. PE is particularly positive for PE as it has been misunderstood by society despite the numerous benefits of PE throughout its storied history. This misunderstanding of purpose has led to PE being designated as a marginalized subject in many countries. Despite several efforts, PE has failed to convince the students, parents, and society of its relevance. However, post-COVID appears to offer an opening and PE has gained more attention than ever as suggested by WHO and UNESCO recognizing the value of PE in PA promotion [7].

In an attempt to elaborate on the importance of PE, especially after COVID-19, Shirotriya and Beighle [8] alluded to the notion that the word “P” in PE could also be looked at as “potential”, suggesting that implementing PE in the school system has a great capacity for increasing the PA of youth. To do this, the PE fraternity must find feasible strategies to alter societal perceptions. PE teachers should cultivate entrepreneurial abilities to address social issues. As we firmly believe that the word “E” from the PE indicates integrating the “entrepreneurship” approach in PE programs. This may help to shift the paradigm of this subject from marginalization to capitalization. Tarhan M [9] highlights that entrepreneurship education has an undeniable effect on human life and the success of countries in social, economic, cultural and technological fields. PE teachers are the real game changers in the school for advocating the PA and if they organize activities as an entrepreneur so it might be helpful to connect with society in line with this, Bonnstetter [10] claims that entrepreneurial-minded people are extremely valuable to an organization. As an entrepreneur, PE teachers focus on critical thinking and problem-solving skills to motivate students for the promotion of PA.

Over the years many scholars have described many types to define entrepreneurship in various domains. In this article, we suggest infusing the social entrepreneurship (SE) concept into the PE offerings at schools. As SE is an underrated concept in the field of PE, this concept has a wide range of perspectives to improve the PE offerings in schools therefore, this paper aims to suggest ways for PE teachers to develop social entrepreneurship (SE) skills to establish PE as a brand in society.

### Social Entrepreneurship

According to the united nations [1] SE is an entrepreneurial activity undertaken with the explicit objective of addressing societal problems. It appears from this statement that this form of entrepreneurship can fit well in the educational and health sector because

of its association with societal problems. Mair J, et al. [11] Define SE “as a process involving the innovative use and combination of resources to pursue opportunities to catalyze social change and/or address social needs”. Further, they point out that social entrepreneurship provides opportunity for researchers from different fields to challenge and rebuild key concepts and assumptions similarly Sarıkaya M [12] suggest that social entrepreneurship education is needed in order to improve the quality of education and raise qualified individuals. Recently, Darmanto S, et al. [13] presented the view that SE develops innovative solutions that are essential to complex social challenges. With the aim to transform society the process of SE must involve innovative solutions to address social challenges.

### Soaring Physical Inactivity: A Challenge to Society

It is well-documented that physical inactivity has become a global public health problem [14]. Guthold R, et al. [15] analyzed data from 298 school-based surveys from 146 countries including 1.6 million students aged 11–17 years and they found that globally, in 2016, 81.0% of students aged 11–17 years were insufficiently physically active. This finding is consistent with the recent global status report of WHO [16] PA indicate that the WHO’s recommended levels of physical activity are now not being met by 81% of adolescents which affects not only people’s life throughout them and their families but also the health care system and society at large. Scientific shreds of evidence proved the disparity between the participation of male and female students in different types of PE/PA classes [17-19].

The lower rate of girls in PA is a major concern worldwide. Duffey K, et al. [20] suggest that low PA levels among adolescent girls are a public health problem that requires quick and evidence-based policy action. Physical inactivity is the biggest challenge that needs PE teachers’ alacrity to be dealt with this. In line with this, many scholars have argued that PE teachers play an important role in the promotion of PA [21]. PE teachers must seek to incorporate innovative ways to motivate students. Therefore, we argue that If PE teachers would adopt many of the skills used by social entrepreneurs, they may better serve to provide youth with meaningful physical activity experiences.

### PE Teacher as A Social Entrepreneur

While PE teachers have many roles in education beyond teaching PE, it is unfortunate that often their multifaceted contribution is being neglected by the school management, parents and sometimes by students. This can lead to demotivation and marginalization effects in their work. Richards KAR, et al. [22] argue that the marginalization of PE

is a complicated issue that continues to hide the distinctive.

Contribution that effective PE can make to [41] young people's lives. Attrition could be another consequence of being marginalized in schools. The study by Zhang X, et al. [23] shed light on the consequences of marginalization in schools, with attrition being a significant outcome. In most aspects, PE teachers have failed to engage in practices that would combat their marginalized status in schools [22]. In this vein, PE teachers need to use enterprise skills as social entrepreneurs to convince society in this context, Gerdin G, et al. [24] suggest that PE teachers are expected to discuss important social issues. We believe that if PE teachers perform their role actively, society can emulate their paths to overcome different societal problems. One approach is to develop entrepreneurial orientation skills such as innovativeness, marketing, and sustainable thinking to address the student's problems. Blain DO, et al. [3] argue that the traditional teaching model of PE fails to motivate all students to engage in healthy active lifestyles. Further, they suggest post COVID-19 PE teachers should consider innovative ways of promoting in regular PA.

Salo JS, et al. [25] remind us that in the teaching context, entrepreneurial orientation skill is intertwined with the teacher's professional competence. Similarly, Peris CC, et al. [26] suggests that adding SE concept in teacher education is crucial for boosting the world's wealth, solving societal issues. A review study by Opstoel K, et al. [27] indicates that students can develop many personal and social skills through their participation in PE classes. However, to do this the offering of PE and the role of PE teachers are important to be evaluated. This is in line with Herguedas AJL, et al. [28] who highlighted that the teachers' skills development must be linked to social transformation. A study conducted by Schnitzius M, et al. [29] to describe PE teachers' personal characteristics suggests that PE teachers are mostly interested in social and entrepreneurial tasks therefore, PE teachers as social entrepreneurs can create positive changes in education and health problems.

### **How Can A PE Teacher Work as A Social Entrepreneur for the Promotion of PA?**

Entrepreneurial teachers have a passion for teaching, and they are more of a coach who supports the student's learning processes with the aim to develop the personal competencies of students [30]. The PE teacher has unique responsibilities in the school PA promotion to ensure that students are physically active with the help of PE classes [31] and to achieve this strong advocacy is required. The advocacy process starts with planning and ends with implementing meaningful PE lessons. We are suggesting the following suggestions:

**Marketing and Branding:** For any level of advocacy marketing and branding are required to realize the relevance of the concept. Beighle A [32] challenged the field to settle on a brand that can be shared with the public with two questions: What is our brand? And Who are we? To date, a glance through our history and the lack of a consistent answer to these. Within the school premises and outside the school the PE teachers need to develop and build their efforts around a theme or brand that is easy to understand and easy to act on. For instance, the state of Hawaii uses ALOHA PE – **A Lifetime of Healthy Activity Physical Education.**

**Value Creation:** Lee O, et al. [33] argue that PE is expected to provide educational contributions to social problems such as inactivity and mental health. In this sense, PE teachers could work in a different direction to create value for them in school and society. In a student's life, PE teachers can serve as an important role model for healthy living. Accumulated evidence suggests that students were more active when the PE teachers were actively involved in PA [34-36]. This can be as simple as a teacher engaging in activity during recess from time to time, to a teacher seeing students outside of school while being active.

**Advocacy with Action:** The PE teacher scope is very wide as suggested in the literature examining SMART teachers [7,37]. PE teachers should work with different stakeholders to implement meaningful PA. To fully advocate for this approach teachers can take on the role to supervise, motivate, advocate, research and teach at the schools. PE teachers assume various roles to establish themselves as valuable contributors to the greater school community. For example, local business may have employees who want to volunteer at recess. Local organizations may also be willing to collaborate to plan a weekend activity festival or a charity walk.

**Thinking Outside the Box: Arrange Funding for Incentives:** Alongside the traditional teaching context, an entrepreneurial approach is also warranted from the PE teachers to get some funding. To motivate more students to get involved in PA, PE teachers can look for innovative sources of funding to provide unique experiences. The external funding can also be used to procure new equipment, offer new activities, integrate new units, and attend training, all designed to better the experiences of youth. Many business organizations are now coming forward to address social problems including those pertinent to population health with corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding [38] Simple conversations with local businesses may be fruitful for a teacher.

It is well-established that schools are frequently identified as an ideal place for encouraging PA in all young people, regardless of background [39]. The PE teacher can use the concept of transformational teaching Slavich GM [40] to encourage students to do regular PA. Throughout history, in which transformation learning has supported PE teachers'

efforts to create an impact from their skills. For instance, the results of one Canadian study Morton KL, et al. [41] suggest that a conceptual model involving transformational teaching may potentially foster students' PA behaviours within schools. Recently, in Spain, Castillo I, et al. [42] found that PE teachers' transformational leadership in the teaching process can promote PA participation.

## Conclusion

It is imperative to say that PE has the potential to strengthen the public health system. The rising physical inactivity level in students is a pressing concern that requires a concrete road map to make PE more adopted by society. After the COVID-19 situation when society is more becoming possessive about physical health, it is high time to focus on entrepreneurship activities to vocal PE voice. We believe that, if PE teachers work as social entrepreneurs, then they can create a social impact with their different roles. In addition to infusing entrepreneurial competencies into the curricula of PE fields, PE teachers can also use the transformational teaching style to improve the teaching to measure their impacts on society.

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