

A PROPOSAL FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

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Abstract

According to the United Nations (2023), we must develop sustainably today if we want a better tomorrow, by meeting present needs without compromising the chances of future generations to meet their needs. A total of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all UN member states in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which set out a 15-year plan to achieve these goals. They constitute a universal plan of action to end poverty, protect the planet, and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. For this reason, citizens must acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to address sustainable development challenges. Education therefore plays a key role in this endeavour.

In response to the challenges of sustainable development, many universities across the world have embedded SDGs into their visions, strategies, management, and plans (Xue, 2022). University teachers, irrespective of their discipline, are educating future change agents who will shape society, the environment, and the economy in the years to come. Education should not only aim for academic success but should also teach students how to become good citizens who contribute to the successful implementation of the UN SDGs (Klaperski-van der Wal, 2022). In particular, education for sustainable development empowers learners to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to change society and care for the planet, and as such is an essential part of students' education and empowerment (UNESCO, 2023).

This study focuses on the subject of Psychology of Physical Activity and Sport, taught in the Bachelor's degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences. This subject deals with the study of people and their behaviour in the social context of sport and physical activity, which involves understanding how basic psychological factors and processes affect the physical performance of individuals as well as how participation in individual or team sport and physical activity affects their physical performance, development, health and psychosocial well-being. The aim of this study is to raise students' knowledge and awareness of the challenges of sustainable development by integrating SDGs in this subject, so they might apply this learning to their future professional careers, regardless of the sphere of physical activity in which they work. Our proposal includes specific activities addressed to SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being) and SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). We expect to improve students' knowledge about these SDGs, and so induce positive changes in pro-environmental values, attitudes, and behaviours to build an inclusive and sustainable world for people and the planet.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Psychology of Physical Activity and Sport, university, student learning.

1 THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

We must develop sustainably today if we want a better tomorrow, by meeting present needs without compromising the chances of future generations to meet their needs. A total of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which set out a 15-year plan to achieve these goals. They are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go together with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, all while confronting climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests [1]. The 17 SDGs (see Table 1) are structured around the five pillars of the 2030 Agenda: People (end poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality), Planet (protect our planet's natural resources and climate for future generations), Prosperity

(ensure prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature), Peace (foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies), and Partnerships (implement the agenda through a solid global partnership) [2, 3] (see Figure 1).

Table 1. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

	Goal
1	No poverty. Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.
2	Zero hunger. The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development and is central for hunger and poverty eradication.
3	Good health and well-being. Ensuring healthy lives and promoting the well-being for all at all ages is essential to sustainable development.
4	Quality education. Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people’s lives and sustainable development.
5	Gender equality. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world.
6	Clean water and sanitation. Clean, accessible water for all is an essential part of the world we want to live in.
7	Affordable and clean energy. Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity.
8	Decent work and economic growth. Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs.
9	Industry, innovation, and infrastructure. Investments in infrastructure are crucial to achieving sustainable development.
10	Reduced Inequalities. To reduce inequalities, policies should be universal in principle, paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised populations.
11	Sustainable cities and communities. There needs to be a future in which cities provide opportunities for all, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more.
12	Responsible consumption and production. Responsible production and consumption.
13	Climate action. Climate change is a global challenge that affects everyone, everywhere.
14	Life below water. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.
15	Life on land. Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss.
16	Peace, justice, and strong institutions. Access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.
17	Partnerships. Revitalise global partnership for sustainable development.



Figure 1. The pillars and frameworks of the SDGs.

Consequently, citizens must acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to address the challenges of sustainable development. Education therefore plays a key role in this endeavour. Education is a goal (SDG4) and a means for attaining all the other SDGs. It constitutes not only an

integral part of sustainable development, but also a key enabler for it, and as such is an essential strategy in the achievement of the SDGs [4].

In response to the challenges of sustainable development, many universities across the world have embedded SDGs in their visions, strategies, management, and plans. One example is Universitat Jaume I, the university where this proposal is framed, which has drawn up its University Social Responsibility Plan oriented to SDGs 2023-2026 [5]. Universities are crucial actors in knowledge transfer and innovation. Many universities worldwide explicitly introduce the concept of sustainable development into the curriculum in all disciplines and equip all students with the knowledge that enables them to think and act in sustainable ways [6]. University teachers, irrespective of their discipline, are educating future change agents who will shape society, the environment, and the economy in the years to come. Education should not only aim for academic success but should also teach students how to become good citizens who contribute to the successful implementation of the SDGs [7]. Education for sustainable development empowers learners to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to change society and care for the planet, and as such is an essential part of students' education and empowerment [8]. Teachers should proactively generate teaching-learning situations in which students are given the knowledge that they can apply in practice, that develops professional skills, and that helps them form coherent and appropriate attitudes, within the framework of the SDGs.

This study focuses on the subject of Psychology of Physical Activity and Sport, which is taught in the Bachelor's degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences. This subject provides students with an understanding of the basic psychological processes (perception, attention, learning, motivation, and emotion) related to human behaviour in sports situations. It addresses the study of people and their behaviour in the social context of sport and physical activity and has two main objectives: (1) to learn how basic psychological factors and processes affect the physical performance of individuals, and (2) to understand how participation in sport and physical activity carried out individually or in teams affects the physical performance of individuals' development, health, and psychosocial well-being.

In this course, students learn about basic aspects of psychology that regulate human behaviour in physical activity and sport, the reasons why a sports activity is practiced or abandoned, the effects of emotions on sports performance, and how the practice of a sports activity can be improved through motor learning. In addition, sport is social by nature and is an area where groups have a predominant role, as people develop, train and/or compete in groups. Sport also plays a fundamental role in shaping people's personal and social identity throughout their lives. For this reason, it is essential to study the behaviour of individuals and groups in all sports contexts, as well as the specific psychosocial factors that condition the practice of sport and the psychosocial effects that derive from it.

The students, who are in their first year of university, have a very limited knowledge of the professional opportunities their degree offers (most of them aspire to work as high-performance sports coaches or physical trainers of sports teams and others do not know what they are going to do). However, one career with a growing demand for professionals is related to regular physical exercise in clinical patients. Non-communicable diseases, such as stroke, cancer and diabetes, now account for increasingly high percentages of mortality and morbidity rates in both developed and developing countries. Accordingly, we consider it important to explicitly address SDG3 (good health and well-being). In addition, women do less physical sports activity than men [9]. This is reflected in university enrolment for the third year in a row: the percentage of women is 28%, compared to 72% of men, in the current academic year (2023-2024). The student body is therefore predominantly male and female students are underrepresented in the classroom, which translates into a more limited role during classes. For this reason, we consider it important to explicitly address SDG5 (gender equality).

The aim of this study is to raise knowledge and awareness among the students about the challenges of sustainable development by integrating the SDGs in this subject so they can apply this learning in their future careers, regardless of the sphere of physical activity in which they work. Our proposal includes specific activities addressed to SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being) and SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), which are included in the pillar focused on People.

2 INTEGRATING SDGS 3 AND 5 IN THE TEACHING OF PSYCHOLOGY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

Increasing physical activity will directly contribute to SDG3 (good health and well-being) as well as other SDGs, including, but not limited to, SDG2 (ending all forms of malnutrition); SDG4 (quality education); SDG5 (gender equality); SDG8 (decent work and economic growth); and SDG9 (industry, innovation, and

infrastructure). In this section we describe the activities introduced to increase students' knowledge and awareness of two specific SDGs (3 and 5) during the four-month period in which the subject is taught.

2.1 Activities oriented to SDG3

Regular physical activity of moderate intensity, such as walking, cycling, or playing sports, has significant benefits for health. These activities are key components of active lifestyles and mental well-being; they can help to prevent risks such as non-communicable diseases, as well as serve as a tool for education on sexual, reproductive, and other health issues [10, 11]. In what follows we propose five activities related to this goal:

Activity 1. Physical activity and cancer. Seminar given by members and patients from the Universitat Jaume I's Càtedra de Actividad Física y Oncología *Fundación José Soriano Ramos*. The Foundation's main objective is to promote and lead research, training and knowledge dissemination activities related to the benefits of physical activity in cancer patients. Students gain first-hand knowledge of and reflect on professional careers linked to regular physical exercise in clinical patients who have been diagnosed with and/or are undergoing cancer treatment.

Activity 2. Physical activity in the elderly population. In teams, the students design a 50-hour physical exercise programme for elderly people. Before proposing specific exercises, they analyse the physical characteristics of this group. The resulting physical exercise programme is then assessed for viability by the regional government's (Generalitat Valenciana) active ageing centres. These outpatient day centres provide specialised and preventive professional care for the elderly, promoting active ageing in a healthy way. They run regular prevention, rehabilitation, counselling, and personal support activities designed to increase personal autonomy among the elderly.

Activity 3. Physical activity and prevention of substance abuse. This activity aims to strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol. The students design an advertising campaign to encourage teenagers to lead a healthy life through sport as a way of preventing substance abuse. This advertising campaign can be implemented in high schools to assess its effectiveness in developing favourable attitudes towards physical exercise and rejecting toxic substances.

Activity 4. Tackling a sedentary lifestyle. This activity concerns physical inactivity, which has been identified as significant risk factor for global mortality by the World Health Organisation. Regular sport is a countermeasure available to nearly everyone that can also address the economic impact of physical inactivity. The students design a weekly physical exercise programme to encourage physical activity and avoid a sedentary lifestyle for office workers who do not practice any sport.

Activity 5. The importance of sport in children's development. Physical activity and sport are key components of an active lifestyle, good mental health and well-being, and are considered a right for children. The students work in groups to draw up a set of guidelines and reasons why physical activity and sport are essential for children's development. This document includes examples of famous athletes who attest to the way sport helps them to combat possible stress, anxiety and improve mood. The students could share these guidelines with primary schools.

2.2 Activities oriented to SDG5

Sport can be a powerful platform for raising awareness of and advocating for gender equality. As well as a vehicle to address constricting gender norms and to promote equal participation in sport for girls and women, sport can contribute to the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; human rights-based rules of a sport can help to replace culturally discriminative norms that exclude women and girls from sport [12]. Below, we propose five activities related to this goal:

Activity 1. Women's leadership during the practical exercises. Women students are a minority in this subject (women account for 28%, men, 72%), which contributes to their invisibility during the activities. For this reason, we propose that the female students lead two-thirds of the teams created for group exercises in the course. By doing so, we aim to raise their self-esteem and confidence, empower them, and help them develop the leadership skills needed to become equal participants and leaders.

Activity 2. Case analysis: Sexual harassment. The elimination of violence against women and girls is an issue of paramount urgency. Sport can raise awareness and address abuse and gender-based violence within sport. The students work in teams to analyse and discuss a case of sexual harassment in sport. The groups then share their analyses and agree on the type of intervention to be carried out in this case.

Activity 3. Giving visibility to female athletes. Because sport is seen as a male activity and women and their sporting achievements are pushed into the background, female athletes must be given greater visibility. The students work in teams to draw up a list of female athletes, which sports they play and their sporting achievements, highlighting the obstacles they have had to overcome to become successful in their chosen sport. The students should reflect on how these athletes' gender has hindered their sports career.

Activity 4. Sport without gender constraints. Men, boys, women and girls must all commit to achieving gender equality in and through sport. Sport can promote better gender relations and cooperation. The students work in teams to design an advertising campaign encouraging children to take up any sport and making them aware that no sports are exclusively for boys or for girls. This advertising campaign can be implemented in schools to assess its effectiveness in encouraging children to take up sports that are not associated with their gender.

Activity 5. Eradicating homophobia in sport. Sport has historically been dominated by men, and more specifically, reserved for men who meet the requirements of hegemonic masculinity (heterosexuality, physical development, limited emotional expression). This domination explains both the low participation of women and the rejection of homosexuality in sports [13]. The students work in teams to reflect on and debate this issue and how societal norms permeate all spheres of life, including sport, and transfer hostile attitudes towards the presence of gays and lesbians in the spaces where they are practiced.

3 CONCLUSIONS

Teachers should proactively generate teaching-learning situations which allow students to acquire knowledge that they can apply in practice, that develops professional skills, and that helps them form coherent and appropriate attitudes, within the framework of the SDGs. In this study, we proposed specific activities related to SDGs 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being) and 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) within the subject of Psychology of Physical Activity and Sport, which is taught in the Bachelor's degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences at Universitat Jaume I. We focused on these goals because sport helps to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, regardless of age, and because sport and physical activity empower women and girls, thus further improving their psychosocial conditions and health.

In relation to SDG3, we designed activities for specific groups of people. These included clinical patients diagnosed with and/or undergoing cancer treatment, whose physical condition and quality of life could be improved by physical activity; elderly people, whose personal autonomy could be enhanced through physical activity, thus contributing to active ageing; teenagers for whom sport can be a way of preventing substance abuse; office workers susceptible to a sedentary lifestyle; and children for whom physical activity and sport are pivotal to their well-being and development. In turn, we incorporated SDG5 to address gender inequalities by promoting the female students' leadership of practical exercises; giving visibility to less celebrated or well-known female athletes; analysing a case of abuse and gender-based violence within sport; raising awareness among children that there are no specific 'boys' or 'girls' sports; and reflecting on homophobia in sport and how to eradicate it.

By implementing these activities, we hope to raise students' awareness of sustainable development, which will improve the lives of both present and future generations. Sustainable development aims to foster a healthy life for the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to have a well-balanced and meaningful life. We designed these activities to increase students' knowledge about SDGs 3 and 5, and so induce positive changes in pro-environmental values, attitudes and behaviours that help to build an inclusive and sustainable world for people and the planet. These activities, together with other initiatives related to the remaining 15 SDGs, may encourage students to think and act in a more sustainable way. As future physical activity and sports professionals, these students will play an essential role because sport is an important enabler of sustainable development.

Sport contributes to the fulfilment of development and peace. It promotes tolerance and respect, stimulates the empowerment of young people, individuals, and communities, and contributes to health, education, and social inclusion targets. Sport benefits the well-being of all, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. It is enjoyed by all, and its reach is unrivalled. Furthermore, sport in its most basic form encourages balanced participation and has the capacity to promote gender equality. Women's participation in sport can also dismantle stereotypes and societal roles commonly associated with women. Sport can help women's and girls' talents and achievements become visible in society by emphasising their skills and abilities, which in turn, improves their self-esteem and self-confidence. Sport also offers opportunities for social interaction

and friendship, which can raise awareness of gender roles among their male counterparts and bring social and psychological benefits to both individuals and groups [14].

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