



## Секція

Філософські, організаційні та соціально-  
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культури і спорту

## 1

## Section

Philosophical, organizational, social  
and economic aspects of physical  
culture

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN ACTIVE SCHOOL AND ITS LIMITS DURING THE CORONA PANDEMIC – CASE OF SLOVAKIA

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Physical inactivity is today big problem with significant related health, economic and social consequences. To achieve the goal of people to be more active due the recommendations of WHO will require joint action across multiple sectors and stakeholders to implement a combination of effective policy actions organised around these four strategic areas: creating an active society; creating active environments; creating active lives and creating active systems.

These four strategic areas will influence creating of important subsystem and it is “Active school”. Active school is school giving many opportunities for children and youth to be physically active in school environment. Active school open opportunities to be active before school, during school day and after school. Most important role in systems of physical activities in active school remain to “Physical Education” as a school subject a formal part of the system.

During the Corona Crisis exist lot of difficulties of successful implementation of physical education in practice in Active school. One example from Slovakia. Restriction related Physical Education and physical activities of children and youth in school affected all Slovak school population. Physical education is forbidden to teach indoors such as gyms, swimming pools, exercise rooms, etc. Physical education is allowed to be taught only in outdoor open spaces. In the outdoor areas, use such physical activities where students come into personal contact as little as possible. In secondary school physical education is included in the group of “complementary subjects” that do not have a permanent on-line teaching schedule. In the end it will be included some recommendations for PE teachers during Corona pandemic.

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### WHAT IS A REALITY OF THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN SPORT AT THE MUNICIPALITY LEVEL IN LITHUANIA?

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**Introduction.** In October 2018, the Lithuanian Seimas adopted the Law on Sports, on the basis of which (from January 2019), the formulation, coordination and implementation of state sports policy was transferred to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports. The Law on Sports defines the principles of sport, foresees the role of the stakeholders and the competence of the specialists, and determines other important sports related issues. Article 8 of the Law on Sports defines the functions of the municipal council in setting long-term goals for the development of sports, sports



areas to be financed from the municipal budget, criteria and procedures for financing from the municipal budget, and promoting public-private partnerships in sports. Municipalities are tasked with wide range of responsibilities pertaining delivery of various sports programs: from grass-root sports development to elite level athlete preparation, and from construction and maintenance of sports facilities to popularization of physical activity among general population. It would be naive to assume that municipality has sufficient capacity to adequately deliver on every level of aforementioned domains. Aside from limited budget, it also lacks required human resources as well as managerial expertise. As a result, outsourcing by bringing in partners could be seen as the essential condition in modern society exploring the concept of new public management.

Public-private partnerships (PPP) are a popular way to build synergies between public organizations and private companies to answer contemporary challenges and to develop new opportunities. These are collaborative arrangements between public and private partners to share resources, risks, responsibilities, and benefits and to pursue mutually beneficial social, economic, or environmental goals (Kwak et al., 2009).

According to scholarly literature (Wang et al., 2018; Rybnicek et al., 2020), there are many examples of public-private partnerships in both developed and developing economies. Roehrich et al. (2014), emphasizes that European governments in particular seek to use the private sector to finance and build the necessary infrastructure and provide services. It is obvious that due to shortage of state or local (municipal) government budgets, but with the growing needs of society and the infrastructure and services required to meet them, alternative financing mechanisms are being sought. Looking from a historical perspective and explaining the reasons for the emergence and popularity of public-private partnerships, it is important to understand the prevailing background of needs and the theoretical knowledge that analyzes and explains those needs. Naturally, the beginnings of public-private partnerships stemmed primarily from needs of an economic nature.

The main advantages of public-private partnerships are the opportunities for public partners to obtain additional private funding, increase operational efficiency, import management expertise or implement cost reduction mechanisms. Meanwhile, private partners can share the risk and transfer it, while entering public projects in which they would not otherwise have the opportunity to participate.

However, public-private partnerships also have certain and substantive shortcomings. Partners involved in a public-private partnership project may have different interests. The different goals of organizations, while likely to be inevitable, in no way imply the collapse of public-private partnerships. Also, especially in developing economies, there is a public concern that through such a partnership, the state ownership will pass into the private hands and, ultimately, the quality of service will suffer. In addition, Roehrich et al. (2014) and Wang et al. (2018) acknowledge that public-private partnerships may have both more and higher levels risks than conventional projects. This is because public-private partnerships may have more stakeholders, project procedures may be more complex, special rules on funding, documentation and fees may be set, or there may be a lack of experienced partners.

**Aim of research.** The aim of this research was to investigate local government's perception of public-private partnership within youth sport delivery system. As a result, the key aim of this investigation was to construct an understanding of specific sector representative's interpretations regarding their professional experiences, namely those related to partnerships with private sport program providers.

**Material and methods.** Following research framework adopted by Legg and colleagues (2018), a critical realist approach was utilized for this study. Such descriptive qualitative methodology enables to make a distinction between external (or contingent) and internal (or necessary) relations



among objects. External relationships are those that exist between bodies that can have independent existence but nevertheless can influence one another, thus, making it appropriate match for public-private partnership studies. Predetermined criteria for potential study participants included that he/she worked for a municipality and had direct contact with youth sports programs. As a result, heads of the divisions of sport within local city municipalities were personally contacted and asked if they would be willing to participate. In case of inability to participate, they were asked to assign one of their subordinates, who would be best equipped for such a role. The territory of the Republic of Lithuania currently comprises of 10 counties and 60 municipalities (Regions of Lithuania, 2021). Municipalities from seven different counties were contacted for this study. Ten questionnaires were returned, but two of them were improperly completed, thus, rounding out total number of research participants at eight (n=8).

An online questionnaire was constructed by adopting Legg's et al. (2018) semi-structured interview framework. Anonymous link to a questionnaire was forwarded to each participant electronically. Data collection was performed in February, 2021. Data analysis was driven by the framework established by research questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed along three phases of partnership governance – formation, management, and outcomes. As a result, data findings were constructed according to an identical pattern. Lived experiences of participants were traced and summarized in results section.

**Results.** In formation phase the researchers looked into what organizations municipalities enter into partnership with, what form those partnerships took, and how compatible were the goals of partnering organizations. Each municipality had cooperation with multiple (well over 10 subjects) youth sport program providers. Partnering organizations also displayed wide variety of sports disciplines (ranging from team sports, such as basketball, ice hockey, football, to individual sports, such as tennis, canoeing, curling). In terms of partnership forms, majority, as indicated by the municipalities' representatives, collaborations were in organizing sporting events and development of elite level athletes. Goal compatibility of PPP actors, which included promotion of physical activity and sports competition achievements, was indicated as "compatible" or "very much compatible" by 88 % of the participants.

Management phase placed focus on advantages and disadvantages of public-private partnership in youth sport delivery system, as well as potential suggestions for the betterment of the process. When asked to indicate main advantages of such partnerships, participants agreed that such collaborations enabled resource savings and utilization of each partner's specific skills, knowledge. Also, PPP allowed for a wider reach and helped to increase popularity of particular sport. Interestingly, when asked to point major challenges in public-private partnership, participants indicated differing goals of public and private sectors (75 %). Also, scarcity of financial resources (75 %) and sports facilities (63 %) were acknowledged among major challenges to the effective PPPs. When asked about what needed to be changed in order to create an ideal partnership, research participants indicated that legal regulation must be improved (63 %) and compatibility of goals achieved (75 %). Division of responsibilities and increased effectiveness were among key suggestions by the participants, as Respondent 4 noted, "there must be understanding of common goals, agreement on how and in which way to operate effectively." Possible solutions were recommended by Participants 3 and 6, "we should strive for a gradual transfer of public sports services to non-governmental organizations. In the end the municipality should be the purchaser and the private sector the provider of services."

Finally, the outcomes phase focused on the performance of partnerships with particular attention paid to the most efficient, as well as the most inefficient cases. Pupil's non-formal education voucher has been notified by several participants as an effective and efficient mechanism in youth sports delivery system. Non-formal education voucher is a system established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in 2013 (Non-formal education, 2021), according to which



pupils can attend classes at various non-formal education schools, such as sports, music, fine arts, etc. Most of these activities are free of charge or paid from the pupil's education voucher. "Introduction of pupil's voucher system resulted an increase in number of non-governmental sports organizations from 17 to 32, while the number of children practicing sports in sports clubs increased from 1,150 to 3,000", noted Participant 2. Also, particular effectiveness of public-private partnership was noticed during a sport event organization, as Participant 5 stated, "clear regulation of the program was achieved during the implementation city representing sport events program. All sides agreed on understanding of long-term goals, thus enabling business continuity and effective implementation."

**Conclusions.** With an apparent shift of state policy towards a private sector in youth sport program delivery, understanding the public-private partnerships becomes increasingly important in addressing development and sustainability of such programs. The aim of this study was to construct local government's comprehension regarding their partnerships with private sport program providers. Key findings of this research revealed that within youth sport delivery system municipalities consider private sector representatives as partners with whom they share mutual goals. Such partnerships enable municipalities save resources, utilize lacking skills and knowledge, and increase general popularity of sports. However, further enhancement of efficiency of public-private partnerships needs improvement of legal regulatory base as well as professional competencies of private partners.

This article contributes to the growing body of academic understanding about how partnerships in youth sport programs work by providing the perceptions of public institutions towards PPP. By using a critical realist approach this study detailed three phases of public-private partnership as it relates to youth sport delivery system: formation, management, and outcomes. Findings of this research also carry practical implications. First of all, it enables information dissemination between different municipalities, thus, enabling recognition of comparable patterns or problems and opening meaningful discussions. Second of all, it reinforces the notion of need for risk sharing as well as knowledge transfer and search for mutual long-term solutions in public-private partnership projects. Finally, the strengthening of the understanding of partnership concept helps to better understand the specificities of regional development through sport.

Limitations of this research are obvious, as it only provides the view of one side of the partnership – that of local government. These shortcomings are legit and in the process of being addressed, as the immediate follow up to this research involving participants from the private sector, is currently under construction. Future research should provide the perceptions of private sport program providers, as well as comparisons with those of public actors.

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