



United Nations  
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# QUALITY PHYSICAL EDUCATION

**Policy  
Guidelines**  
Methodology

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# OVERVIEW

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The implementation of the QPE Guidelines should be managed by a national expert coordinator who will accompany each government in the revision of QPE policy and provision, and ensure liaison between the Ministries involved and the UN Country team/implementing office.

The national expert coordinator, and in-country teams, will be supported at the international level by a coordination committee. This coordination committee comprises representatives from a range of organizations<sup>1</sup>. Each member of the group brings a wealth of expertise and will play a catalyzing role through the provision of expert guidance and support throughout each stage of the implementation process.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education, International Olympic Committee, Nike, UNESCO International Bureau of Education, UNDP, UNICEF and WHO

# HOW TO ENSURE PARTICIPATORY POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Each country should establish the following participatory mechanisms to ensure the development of robust policy measures which will reinforce inclusive QPE provision:

## Steering Committee:

The Steering Committee is the highest mechanism at the policy level, with overarching responsibility for the final product of the policy development process. It identifies the mandate of the process and validates the outcomes in the different stages as well as the final recommendations.

### Member profile:

High-level Ministerial representatives, UN country team resident coordinator (where available), national focal point, representatives of other relevant organizations.

### Key actions:

- Responsible for the final product of the policy development process
- Validates the phased outcomes as well as the final recommendations

## Technical Working Group:

The Technical Working Group (TWG) is the technical and operational group that is responsible for guiding preparation on a day-to-day basis. It brings together representatives of the main stakeholder organizations that are involved in the policy development process. A focal point for advocacy and outreach, it steers the process towards constructive follow-up.

### Member profile:

Led by the National Expert Coordinator, and including technical experts on physical education policy from the relevant Ministry, representatives of professional teaching bodies and/or teacher training institutions, and other relevant physical education professionals.

### Key actions:

- Responsible for driving proceedings on a day-to-day basis
- Bringing together representatives of the main stakeholders that are involved in the policy development process
- Regular reporting on key developments/milestones and the impact of these
- Acting as a focal point for advocacy and outreach
- Drafting/redrafting policy during the pilot phase
- Steering the process towards constructive follow-up

The Technical Working Group should meet for the first time after the participating partners have reviewed the QPE Policy Guidelines. During the first meeting of the Technical Working Group a work plan, deadlines, and division of labour during the implementation of the pilot should be discussed.

Depending on the results of the national needs analysis, the TWG may want to establish a sub-group to focus solely on improving one aspect of provision e.g. inclusion. This group should take guidance from the relevant chapter of the Guidelines for Policy-Makers, and work closely with the TWG.

# WHY INCLUSION IS KEY

The entire process should enable the participation and inclusion of all groups of stakeholders involved in, and affected by, the Policy on QPE. Inclusive consultation broadens analysis and consideration of policy options, and strengthens prospects for the implementation of recommendations.

## Key questions:

- Is the Technical Working Group drawing on perspectives and expertise from a diverse range of groups and institutions?
- Do consultation, research and writing involve participatory mechanisms at various stages (such as steering committees, readers' groups, seminars, etc.)?
- Has a two-way interaction been established between the policy formulation process and the UN Country Team's work on building partnerships and developing capacity?

## The policy development should be guided by the following principles:

### Local ownership:

Policy should meet the local needs and work within local processes.

### Participation:

All relevant stakeholders should be encouraged to participate in the policy development process.

### Inclusiveness:

All should feel they have a stake in the policy, including representatives of disadvantaged populations.

### Gender sensitivity:

Policy development should be viewed through a gender lens.

# KEY STAGES IN THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

## 1. Preparatory stage

The first step towards initiating policy development is to establish to what extent the conditions are already favourable for such a process.

### Key questions:

- How much advocacy is required to ensure consensus on applying a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach to the process, as well as following the Guidelines proposed by UNESCO?
- What is the level of capacity already existing among all stakeholders, including specific population groups (e.g. women and girls, migrants, indigenous and/or people with disability), that the policy would eventually address or focus on?
- What work have other multilateral or bilateral stakeholders already developed in the country in this regard. How would UNESCO's approach and initiative add value and leverage such work?

### Key actions:

It is globally advised to assess these elements carefully as the success of the whole process depends on proper preparation. They are also key in terms of building consensus on the process to be followed before initiating it. Some of the elements that could potentially be required at this stage (depending on the specific context in each country) include:

- Desk research and consultations: collect key data and information to enable a preliminary identification of specific areas for policy development as well as related capacity gaps.
- Identification of responsible authorities and relevant stakeholders: as a very first step, the responsible authorities (e.g. Ministries of Education, Health and Sport) and relevant stakeholders (e.g. physical education organizations, educational institutions, NGOs or partners from the private sector) have to be identified and mobilized. At the same time, other institutions that might be affected by the policy development may want to contribute and should therefore be invited to participate (e.g. teaching unions, religious bodies, families, women's associations or groups for the disabled). As the establishment of a policy and a budget for physical education promotion

may involve a redistribution of resources, the affected Ministries and institutions should also be included in the planning process. Furthermore, it is important to build trust and knowledge among the different players and to establish an appropriate information and communication system right from the beginning (see suggested activity on the right).

- **Availability of resources:** at the very beginning of the policy development process, it is crucial to secure the necessary human and financial resources (by the country, the UN or partners) to enable a fully participatory process for the development of a policy which, once adopted, should lead to the allocation of funds for its implementation.
- **Advocacy and consultations with key stakeholders** that would be involved during the process to ensure consensus on the approach and methodology.
- **Training on the policy development process and a thorough review of the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers.**

## Suggested activity

### Consultation workshop

- At this stage a short participatory workshop (organized by the Technical Working Group) could be convened to bring together all key stakeholders to orient them on the policy development process and the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers.
- The workshop should enable representatives of government and civil society organisations working with marginalised groups to be consulted on both the review of existing policy and the identification of strategies aimed at supporting the inclusion of such groups in physical education.
- The Technical Working Group may also identify activities to engage with stakeholders at the central and decentralized levels (e.g. government authorities, head teachers, teachers, teachers unions, physical education associations, local interest groups, representatives from the communities etc.). Activities could include: one-day workshops, consultations or simple questionnaires in order to collect the information necessary on existing policy and strategies, and identify specific strengths and weaknesses.
- The Technical Working Group would be responsible for the assessment of the data obtained from this activity, and would use this to support their own thorough review of existing policy. This should be presented to the Steering Committee with recommended interventions to strengthen physical education provision (see part 3 of the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers).

## 2. National situation analysis: identifying key policy areas to be addressed

**The policy development process and the final policy document should be context specific to the country and should be linked to existing national plans, to enable the outcome to feed directly into those plans.**

The Technical Working Group should be called upon to lead a review of current practice. Undertaking a critical evaluation of relevant and existing policies, as well as an analysis of policy alternatives, and identifying recommendations/options that are clear, concrete and realistic are key prerequisites to ensuring quality of the overall analysis and final outcome. Those involved are invited to assess strengths and weaknesses within their own locality.

N.B. Figure 1 within the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers outlines the key steps towards achieving an inclusive QPE policy environment, and should be consulted at this stage of the process to guide policy development.

**Identify the specific issues within each selected area (see figure 2:**

**Core aspects of inclusive QPE provision, within the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers) that need strengthening.**

- What are the provisions in policies/strategies that are in place that move the government toward its stated outcomes? How?
- What are the provisions in policies/strategies that are in place that move the government away from its stated outcomes? How?

**Set objectives for policies and strategies going forward.**

- What are the goals and objectives for change?
- Do the goals address the root of the problem, or its symptoms?
- How will change be measured?
- How will new goals and objectives contribute to the implementation of quality physical education provision?

**Determine types of indicators available for measuring change.**

- What evidence is currently available to inform analysis and/or planning?
  - Who holds this data and how can it be accessed?
  - Does the available data present any quality or relevance issues?
  - What are the limitations to the data available?
  - How have the statistics been compiled?
- What information is critical to support decision-making?
- Can national data be benchmarked against data from any comparable jurisdictions overseas?



**Identify, analyze and develop Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound (SMART) options/recommendations.**

- Which options/recommendations are most likely to address the identified problem effectively and best contribute to achieving the objectives and desired outcomes?
- How will each option affect the population groups or subgroups?
- What resource will be needed to implement each of the options?
- Will the social and economic benefits of implementing these options outweigh the costs?
- What are the risks associated with the options being considered, including the risk of unintended and undesired consequences, and how might these risks be managed?
- Identify preferred option, and why? What are the trade-offs?
- How could the preferred options be monitored and evaluated, if implemented, and how might monitoring and evaluation be funded?
- What would be a realistic timeframe to implement the proposal?
- Are the recommendations feasible and do they provide alternative, clearly considered perspectives?

On the basis of the results of the national situation analysis, the Technical Working Group will identify the main policy areas that should be addressed by, and incorporated in, the national policy on QPE (see figure 2: Core aspects of inclusive QPE provision in the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers).

If necessary, sub-groups could be established to work on specific aspects, as identified in figure 2 of the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers. If this is deemed appropriate, the Technical Working Group must agree and decide on their membership and composition. For example, in the thematic sub-groups it would be pertinent to have technical staff from all the relevant Ministries, representatives of national/regional physical education organizations, universities and initial teacher training institutions, physical education professionals, specific technical experts (i.e. inclusion/child protection and safeguarding/physical literacy etc.), and other relevant stakeholders. This is key in building consensus around, and ownership of, the policy development process and, eventually, the ensuing recommendations and document.

### 3. Preparing the revised national policy document and peer review

**The text of the national policy should be developed based on the findings and policy recommendations/options that are identified by the national situation analysis.**

Having gathered the results of the national situation analysis, the QPE Guidelines should then be consulted to inform the drafting of the national policy document. Following the introductory chapters, Part 3 of the Guidelines *QPE Policy in Action* has been divided up to address different elements of QPE provision. As such, users of the Guidelines will find that each sub-section can be studied independently to strengthen the specific areas identified as needing improvement.

To optimize the user-experience, each sub-section also has simple checklists to guide the enrichment of policy and practice. Moreover, a series of case studies, providing examples of successful strategies for quality physical education provision, offer ideas and inspiration when designing similar initiatives, suited to the specific country requirements.

Once the individual sub-sections have been consulted, the user can then move to Part 4 of the Guidelines, the *Policy Matrix*, to connect core concerns with policy questions and proposed actions.

The objective of this stage is to consolidate the work and the recommendations of the expert groups in one draft document. The first draft would be developed by the Technical Working Group, and would present an overview of the situation, along with concrete and costed policy recommendations, based on the QPE Guidelines.

The revised text of the national policy should be accompanied by a fully budgeted implementation plan that presents specific actions and measures; responsible and contributing Ministries; related costs and timelines; and details of the partners and stakeholders contributing to the implementation of the policy presented. It should also incorporate provisions for communication and advocacy on QPE, as well as details of a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Once agreed upon within the Technical Working Group, the draft would then be submitted to a peer-review process (after consultation with the Steering Committee). UNESCO would circulate the final draft of the document to peer reviewers (based outside of the country) who have not been involved as core players in the preparation of the policy review and who are equivalent in competence and expertise to members of the national team. These people will be selected and contacted by UNESCO, thereby ensuring that their expertise is relevant and the feedback they will offer is of value. Optimally, a peer review should be a voluntary system of exchanges.

## 4. Validating the revised national policy

**Even if consensus was achieved during the preparatory process, there is still a necessity to continue consensus building around the emerging policy. The revised national policy document needs to be circulated to ALL relevant stakeholders for their comments and input.**

Following this circulation, the draft document should be revised and submitted for discussion at a national consultation bringing together all concerned stakeholders. The consultation will allow for the examination of the national situation analysis, ensure consensus on the revised text, and agree on the next steps.

Validation meetings to build consensus should include higher levels of government and civil society to ensure that the consensus will be implemented and the policy is then translated effectively into actions within sectoral and multi-sectoral plans. The media can also play an important role in disseminating and creating debate on the policy leading to a national consensus.

The methodology and format of such consultation should be identified by the Technical Working Group, in consultation with the Steering Committee. Ideally the format of the consultations should combine separate spaces for government, physical education professionals, and other stakeholders to discuss among them, as well as spaces for collective dialogue and exchange on the draft.

This consensus building culminates with the endorsement of the policy at the highest level by government. On the basis of decision-making processes within the institutions involved and their commitments to the policy, the responsible authority needs to sign the document and allocate a budget.

Once the policy is adopted, the government and/or respective sector Ministries have the responsibility to disseminate information on its content. National/regional physical education associations and NGOs may also play an important role in sharing information on the adopted policy and popularizing it among relevant groups, particularly those vulnerable and marginalized.

# FROM POLICY TO ACTION

## 1. Development of structures

At this stage it is necessary to ensure clear structures are in place to support the translation of policy into practice. This should also have been covered in the policy development process but will probably require some capacity development, for example of the Ministry responsible for physical education to be able to play its coordinating and facilitating role. The national coordinating body should have links with the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance and national statistical organizations.

At the same time, to avoid efficiency challenges, it is also important that ownership of the policy and strategies is firmly anchored in the implementing sectoral/line Ministries. This may mean that, to ensure a successful implementation of the policy provisions, there has to be sufficient capacity development of all Ministries concerned.

Moreover, it is important to maintain the broad-based, inclusive participation that was built into the policy development, by enabling a continued and sustained participation of all stakeholders and groups involved in the policy development process and consolidating related participation structures or feedback mechanisms from the local to the national level.

## 2. Resource mobilization

Resource mobilization is crucial in ensuring that the policy is operationalized. While resources may have been allocated to the policy formulation process, it should be anticipated that the implementation of the policy will require greater resources. However, if proper advocacy efforts were made during the development and consensus-building processes, this will greatly enable and facilitate resource mobilization for its implementation.

The primary financing should come from the national budget itself, with clear budget lines for physical education programmes in the different sectors, as appropriate. Once the budgets are allocated by the government, the Ministry responsible for physical education would receive funds to fulfil its coordinating role and monitor implementation.

## 3. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability

The monitoring and evaluation system will need to be incorporated into the policy document for all stages of policy implementation, as well as into the sectoral strategies, based on clear objectives and indicators. These should be linked with overall monitoring and evaluation indicators of national health and physical activity strategies, as appropriate, which should include a specific physical education focus.

Of course the government system should have its own monitoring process, led by the Ministry responsible for physical education – parliament, through its committees, should be capacitated to monitor the physical education aspect of different Ministries, and local councils should monitor at district and sub-district levels.

These monitoring systems should also be backed up by clear methodologies to allow civil society and physical education groups to hold the government systems accountable. Without accountability, monitoring is an empty exercise. This can only be done if the policy and the strategies are well known to all, which implies the production and dissemination of public-friendly versions of the policy and strategies. The media can also play a key role in this.

# EVALUATION OF THE QPE POLICY GUIDELINES

Countries are invited to evaluate the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers, and provide UNESCO with feedback and recommendations on the document's usability.

## Important things to consider when evaluating the QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers:

- **User friendliness:**  
Are the guidelines sufficiently easy to use?
- **Relevance:**  
Do the guidelines ask the right questions? Do they support the development of relevant strategies and curriculum for QPE?
- **Coverage:**  
Do the guidelines enable the participation of all relevant stakeholders? Who feels they can successfully use the guidelines? Does it cover the right issues?
- **Adequacy:**  
Do the guidelines facilitate a useful process for stakeholder dialogue on QPE policy and strategy?
- **Inclusion:**  
Do the guidelines sufficiently support the promotion of equity and inclusion within QPE? Is this adequately reflected in the resulting policy document?
- **Added value:**  
Do the guidelines add value to the plan, preparation, review and appraisal processes? What was done differently or better as a result of using QPE Guidelines for Policy-Makers?