

S13: Foundations for Health-Enhancing, Sustainable Physical Activity in Children: A Physical Literacy Perspective

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The studies in this symposium highlight a growing European momentum towards embedding physical literacy (PL) not only as a pedagogical or policy framework but as a foundational orientation for sustainable health promotion. PL offers a holistic approach to engaging children in meaningful movement.

Anchored by a Delphi process involving experts from over 40 countries, the first study introduces the Global Physical Literacy Action Framework, proposing a shared foundation of principles that are both globally coherent and adaptable to regional contexts. Recommendations include strengthening links to the Sustainable Development Goals, embedding PL in physical education (PE) curricula and prioritising a flexible framework over a universal definition to respect cultural and contextual diversity.

Building on this foundation, the second and third study present the culturally sensitive adaptation and validation of PL assessment tools in two countries. In Ukraine, researchers adapted and tested the affective and cognitive components of the Canadian Assessment of PL, highlighting the importance of local expert involvement in tool development. In France, the PLC-Quest was translated and validated to assess self-perceived PL in children aged 6–12. Both initiatives demonstrate how culturally resonant tools support not just measurement, but also broader professional capacity-building and alignment with national strategies in health and education.

The fourth study from the Netherlands presents findings from a project exploring how PL is understood and appreciated by PE teachers to support holistic assessment practices and school reporting. Teachers express enthusiasm for using PL to engage all learners – not only those excelling in motor competence – and to promote inclusive, lifelong participation in physical activity. Together, these studies reflect a shift towards a more coordinated European agenda, where the PL concept is not merely used as a measurement instrument but applied in educational and public health contexts. The symposium illustrates the importance of culturally adapted implementation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and engagement with practitioners. This multifaceted approach is essential for building a foundation for sustainable health promotion – empowering the next generation across Europe to move more and move better.

The symposium, led by Dr. Singh, Dr. van Hilvoorde (discussant), will reflect on the studies presented.

