Integrated Sports and Physical Activity Plan: Plan A+S
The Sports Environment at the University

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INTRODUCTION

The practice of physical and sports activity in Spain still presents issues for debate in the media in the reference to European countries and the prevalence of obesity and its upward trend over the past two decades has led one to consider it a veritable epidemic.

In weighing up the advances and public initiatives in this area, many groups still have difficulties in accessing the daily practice of sport in connection with objectives of health, social cohesion or recreation.

With the aim of promoting universal access to good quality practice of sport for the whole of the Spanish population, helping to combat the elevated level of sedentary lifestyles and obesity among our population, the Consejo Superior de Deporte [Superior Sports Council], in close collaboration with the Autonomous Communities [Comunidades Autónomas], the Municipalities and private sector business, has sought to gain support for, and to substantiate a series of lines of action that are set out in the INTEGRATED SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVCITY PLAN: PLAN A+D [PLAN INTEGRAL DEL DEPORTE Y LA ACTIVIADA FÍSICA: Plan A+D].

The plan is structured around the consideration of the different groups and their access to the practice of sport.
These groups are divided into 8 areas of work that are classified into 3 levels, as in the following diagram:

With this strategic Plan we can aim to have an on-going tool for analysis of the practice of physical activity and sport for the entire Spanish population which enables the establishment of the proposed initiatives and improves the current situation.

Its **General Objectives** are:

- **To raise**, in particular, our level of sports activity;
- **To encourage widespread practice** of sport at school age;
- **To promote** sport as a tool for social cohesion;
- **To advance the cause** of effective equality between women and men.

The **methodological process** developed in the construction of the Plan A+D is summarised in the following diagram:

We will then focus on the process of development and launching the Plan A+D within the environment of University Sport.

THE UNIVERSITY SPORTS ENVIRONMENT IN PLAN A+D

1. <u>Description and Initial Diagnosis</u>

The **21st century** is characterised by the **"universalisation"** of access to universities in our country, student fees have been reduced and this fact has facilitated access to higher education studies for many young people for whom this would previously not have been possible. This situation generated a **strong impetus** that began in the 1970s and continued to its maximum level in the 1990s.

In Spain there are currently **77 Universities:**

- **50 public universities**: 1 with distance learning
- **27 private universities**: 4 with distance learning

The decline in the birth-rate has meant that the number of enrolments has fallen in recent years, leading to a high level of competition between the universities.

The **provision of physical activity and sport** has transformed into a **strategic element** in the competition between universities, a factor that needs to be given serious consideration by their **managers** in relation to their future management policies.

The Bolonia Plan has encompassed major changes that have significantly affected the structure of Spanish university education which is in the process of adapting to the new European university system.

2. Sports Provision in the Spanish Universities

Physical and sports activities available in the universities can be classified as follows:

- ***Directed Physical/Sports Activities:*** constitute a very open, extensive, and multiple provision, in that the objective of the physical activity is oriented towards the individuals taking part.

Among these activities one can **differentiate three areas of focus:**

- Enhancement of health and fitness,
- Learning various different sports,
- Activities oriented towards the natural environment.

- ***Sports Competition Programmes***: internal, external and international.

- **Internal competition** has a social objective and participation is very irregular.
- **External competition** arranged in EU zonal and international heats culminating with final heats.
- **International competitions** such as the World Championships, the Universiades or the European University Championships.

This model of competition presents major management, promotional and participation issues, and requires urgent reform and re-thinking.

3. Opportunities

Among the opportunities presented by the practice of physical activity in the universities are the following factors:

- **The positive image** embodied in the practice of physical and sports activities.

- **The university is the final educational phase** in which to achieve a future quality of life and to prevent obesity and sedentary lifestyles.

- **Through the practice of physical and sports activity** there is an opportunity to acquire and to reinforce significant aspects of ones **overall personal development**, which will be useful and necessary for one's professional future and for life in general.

- **Sport in the university encompasses the entire university community**, involving its professional sector as much as it does the students.

- **The current Ley de Ordenación Universitaria [University Ordinance Law]:**

  . Recognises the **importance of sport in the university**
  . **Devotes 6 ECTS credits** to the practice of sport
  . **Reinforces the competencies of the Autonomous Community** in the co-ordination of university sport in its territory
  . **Assigns the University Management** a major **task** of **co-ordination**, based on the notice issued by the Consejo de Universidades [Universities Council] and the Conferencia General de Política Universitaria [General University Policy Conference].

- **The existence of programmes for the support of high level and high performance sports individuals** (DAN) that enable them to combine this activity with their studies with greater ease.

- The commitment of universities to a **culture of high quality management.**

4. Limitations

In contrast to these opportunities, there exist the following limiting factors:

- The **continuing decline in student enrolments**, as a result of the falling birth rate.

- **The lack of a routine** in the practice of a physical activity being continued on from educational stages prior to the university: obesity and sedentary lifestyles are a major problem.

- The emergence of **new forms of leisure activity** (nocturnal leisure activities, digital leisure activities) that run diametrically counter to the pursuit of sports activities.

- The difficulty in **co-ordinating all agents** involved in university sport.

- **The major difficulty in assessing the nature of university level sport with access to reliable, sound data:**

- **The generic deficiency in data** that is up to date and reliable with which to be able to ascertain with any degree of accuracy what goes on in sports departments, university budgets and sports facilities.

- T**he need to generate a series of indicators** for all universities, to create a system of periodic data gathering, to carry out work that will provide us with an understanding of university sport, as well as its pattern of evolution over time.

- **The sparse investment** by the universities, the CCAA and the national government in the promotion of university sport in the light of the economic crisis.

5. The Future Vision

The challenge of Plan A+D for the future is to achieve a university environment that offers the following:

- **Sports education programmes managed in an efficient manner,** adopting **quality management programmes.**

- A sports activity that is entirely **integrated into the educational strategies** of the university**, and** that is recognised, beyond the 6 credits

- **Research programmes** related to the area for its development and enhancement.

- **That high performance sports individuals** are assured every option in order to combine their studies with their sports activity.

6. Specific objectives of Plan A+D in the University Environment

In order to pursue the vision of the future, the following objectives must first be secured:

- **The promotion of the regular practice** of physical and sports activity **in the university** that can contribute to the integrated education of the student body and to promoting the transmission of educational values, enhancing health and well-being.

- Ensuring an **adequate provision**, that is on a sufficient scale and extent appropriate to all the individuals that make up the **Spanish** university community

- Fostering **collaboration between the university and society** in order to facilitate access to the practice of physical and sports activity

- **Promoting investigation and the implementation of studies** in the field of physical and sports activity and the transfer of findings.

7. Measures and initiatives

With a view to achieving the objectives referred to in the university environment in the Plan A+D the following measures have been put in place via their corresponding initiatives:

MEASURE 1:
The promotion, on the part of each university, of the provision of physical and sports activity for the entire university community

Initiatives:

• Co-operation agreements with the Spanish Universities running specific programmes in order to extend the range of practice of activities encouraging good physical health:

- The University of Valladolid: "Integración Campus de la Excelencia" [Integration of Campus Excellence]
- Pilot projects in 2010 with Spanish Universities: "Actívate …"

• The establishment of promotion and popularisation programmes for the disciplines being organised in the 2010 Spanish University Championships

• Implementation by the CSD of a programme of activities directed at health, sports training and nature offering students new options for involvement

• Initiation of the "Snow 2015" programme promoting the practice of ice and snow sports to university, 2nd cycle ESO and baccalaureate students

MEASURE 2:
Creation, with the CCAA, of a map of the university sports facilities, with a definition of the minimum requirement and applications for grants for the adaptation and/or construction of university sports facilities.

Initiatives:

• University of Cádiz: "Diagnóstico de la actividad físico deportiva en las Universidades españolas". [Diagnosis of physical and sports activity in Spanish universities]

• Analysis of findings and study of the map of facilities by the CSD, CCAA and universities

• Designing co-operation agreements between the CSD and the Ministry of Education

MEASURE 3:
Inclusion of the majority of universities in the Red Española de Universidades Saludables (REUS) [Spanish Healthy Universities Network]

Initiatives:

• Promoting initiatives with the Red Española de Universidades Saludables (REUS) in relation to the benefits and enhancement of health associated with the practice of physical and sports activities.

• The Consejo Superior de Deportes must be a member of this Network and instigate initiatives directed at collaboration with the universities.

MEASURE 4:
The Programa Universitario de Voluntariado y Cooperación a través del Deporte [University volunteer and co-operation through sport programme].

Initiatives:

• Applications for grants and collaboration agreements with Spanish universities.

• Prioritisation in the inclusion of voluntary work courses in the universities organising national and international activities.

MEASURE 5

Establishment of quality management systems in the sports departments of the universities

Initiatives:

• A work plan with the Universities General Secretariat of the Ministry of Education, in pursuit of a better adaptation to the new European Higher Education Area (University Strategy 2015, ECTS credits in sports subjects, etc.)

• Extending this work plan with the Directorate General of the CCAA

• Developing documentation and resolutions that will enable the establishment of such systems with all universities.

MEASURE 6:
Implementation of a diagnostic study of the national programme of Spanish University Championships

Initiatives:

• Adaptation and publication in the Spanish University Championships Resolution of new routes to initiatives and subsidies.

• Establishment of promotion and popularisation programmes for the disciplines being organised in the 2010 Spanish University Championships.

• Implementation of a diagnostic study of the national programme of Spanish University Championships on the part of the various committees represented in CEDU.

• Creation of a "Dedicated Committee" in order to submit a proposal for a competition in 2011. This committee will be formed from representatives of the universities, CCAA, RUNAE and CSD.

• Creation and presentation to the participants in the 2010 Spanish Championships of a "University Sports Code of Ethics" indicating the various differentiating and distinctive aspects of what we want our sport to embody.

• Implementation of a study of individual sports practices amongst university students.

• Implementation by the CSD of a programme of activities focusing on health, sports training and nature offering students new options for involvement.

CONCLUSION

Having reviewed the first two phases of the Plan A+D, in its version 0 and version 1, in which the current situation for each parameter has been described, in its limitations and opportunities, objectives, measure and initiatives, this strategic plan moves into a third stage in which each General Subdivision of the Consejo Superior de Deportes has been responsible for the promotion and setting in motion of refined initiatives in their area, involving the various Administrative bodies, Autonomous Communities, municipalities and private entities.

It must be stressed that it is this work of co-ordination and co-operation between the entities involved, that will ensure the success and robustness of this project, turning the future vision set out both for sport in the universities as well as in the other spheres into a reality.

Finally, demonstrating that all the endeavours applied to this strategic plan are directed towards the goal that in the next ten years we shall be able to see a country with a normal level of practice of the other European countries of reference, with a significantly reduced level of obesity and excess weight for the whole population, and with a real provision of accessibility to sports activities to all those groups for whom access is currently difficult.