

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 952

SP 035 321

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 TITLE Physical Education in the Dominican Republic.
 PUB DATE 8 Apr 94
 NOTE 46p.
 PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Educational Planning; *Educational Policy; Elementary School Curriculum; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; *General Education; Higher Education; *National Programs; *Physical Education; Preservice Teacher Education; Private Schools; Problem Solving; Program Descriptions; Program Implementation; Public Schools; Secondary School Curriculum; *Teacher Certification
 IDENTIFIERS *Dominican Republic; *Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

Physical education is an active part of all public and private schools in the Dominican Republic. This research report is a first time compilation of Dominican Physical Education programs, structure, problems, and proposed solutions. The first of two parts reviews the history, structure, and function of the Dominican educational system, including specific curricula and educational programs. To date, numerous problems in school attendance, teacher training, educational leadership, curriculum development, and modernization have led to a national education crisis. To alleviate current problems, a national educational program has been implemented. The plan is designed as a 10-year collective effort to find solutions, restructure educational leadership and structure, increase funds for education, improve school efficiency, and improve teacher training. Part two specifically examines the Physical Education program, its history, structure, specific curricula, and facilities. A review of current public school physical education curriculum (grades 1-12), teacher training programs, and specific problems related to physical education is included. In addition, programs designed to improve the state of physical education are described, including current progress through the 10-year plan. While physical education is not specifically mentioned in any national program, it is recommended that reform is needed for all education, including specialty subjects. (Author/LL)

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Physical Education in the Dominican Republic

TONY MONAHAN

April 8, 1994

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Abstract

Physical education is an active part of all public and private schools in the Dominican Republic. This research report is a first time compilation of Dominican Physical Education programs, structure, problems and proposed solutions.

The report is structured into two parts. Part one reviews the history, structure and function of the Dominican educational system. Included are specific curriculums and educational programs. Problems in education are examined. To date, numerous problems in school attendance, teacher training, educational leadership, curriculum development and modernization have led to a national "educational crisis." To alleviate the current problems, a national educational program *Plan Decenal de Educación* has been implemented. The plan is designed as a 10 year collective effort to find solutions, including an effort to restructure educational leadership and structure, increase funds for education, improve school efficiency and improve teacher training.

Part two specifically examines the Physical Education program, its history, structure, specific curriculums and facilities. Included is a review of the current public school physical education curriculum, teacher training programs and specific problems related to physical education. In addition, programs designed to improve the state of physical education are described, including current progress through *Plan Decenal de Educación*. It is expected that this research will give a clear description of the state, purpose and direction of physical education, as well as total education, in the Dominican Republic.

Background Information

The Dominican Republic is a Caribbean nation that occupies the eastern two thirds of the island Hispaniola (Española), located between Cuba (to the West) and Puerto Rico (to the East). The Eastern one third of Hispaniola is occupied by Haiti. At 48,442 square kilometers (roughly the size of Vermont and New Hampshire), it is the second largest island nation in the Caribbean. Formerly known as Quisqueya (Mother's land), the island was inhabited by the Tainos, a peaceful Arowak speaking Native American tribe. In 1492, Christopher Columbus became the first European to set foot on Quisqueya. His voyages to the Western Hemisphere soon led to a wave of Spanish and other Europeans in search of gold, spices, religious crusades and power. He subsequently renamed the island Española. The arrival of the Spanish quickly led to the demise of the Taino tribe, whose numbers were reduced from 1 million to 500 within 50 years.

The capital city, Santo Domingo, founded by Columbus' brother Bartholomew in 1496, is considered the oldest city in the "new world."

The country's physical features contain mostly mountainous terrain but also include flatlands (plains) and desert areas. The climate is maritime tropical, with temperatures ranging from 18° to 29° Celsius and an average annual rainfall of 45 inches.

There are an (1990) estimated 7.1 million people in the Dominican Republic. Commonly referred to as *Dominicans*, the majority (73 %) of the population is racially mixed or mulatto. Around 50% of Dominicans live in the rural, agricultural areas of the country known as the *campo*. Spanish is the official language and is widely spoken (98%). Some English is spoken in Santo Domingo and a Creole-French dialect is spoken along the western border of Haiti.

Religious freedom is tolerated in the Dominican Republic. However, Roman Catholicism is the predominant practiced religion.

The Dominican Republic is regarded as a middle-income developing country. It relies primarily on agriculture (one of the world's largest producers of sugarcane), industrial free-trade zones and a rapidly growing tourist industry. Nevertheless, the Dominican people are generally poor. The (1990) average annual per capita gross domestic product (GDP) is only (U.S.) \$998.00 (Background notes, 1991).

Under the present constitution of 1966, the Dominican government is considered a Representative Democracy. It's national powers are divided among executive, legislative and judicial branches. Presidential terms last 4 years, after which national elections are held. Elected officials are chosen by popular vote. The country is divided into 29 provinces and one National District, where the Capital is. Each province is directed by a presidentially-appointed governor.

Education

A Brief History of Education

After Dominican independence in 1844, the responsibility of education was officially transferred from the Catholic Church to the State. Although all governmental cabinets had a minister of education, little emphasis was placed on its funding and development. This was evident by 1857, when educational expenditures could only provide for 5 schools in the entire country. In 1879, General Gregorio Luperón enacted a law to set up teacher-training schools, the *Escuelas Normales*. Luperón was considered to be the first Dominican statesman to realize the importance of education for the country and its people. He recognized that creating a body of trained teachers would be essential for development of education. Luperón was an advocate of Eugenio de Maria Hostos, a Puerto Rican educationalist who developed the teacher-training system. Hostos saw the *Escuelas Normales* as the commencement of a plan to establish a centrally controlled, nationwide education system, similar to what the French government was doing at the time. However, his liberalist views and practices put him in disfavor with the Church, and soon after, the State. Hostos, although revered today, never saw his educational ambitions reach fruition.

During the first part of the twentieth century, education was again de-emphasized. The most serious blow came in 1914, when legislation reversed the state governed system and dispersed government's responsibility over education. During the United States military occupation of 1916 - 1924, the military government did little to improve education. During this time, Executive Order 145 (1918) was enacted. This law was an attempt to re-organize education. Yet, lack of attention, effort and funds virtually invalidated the law.

In 1930, Military General Rafael Trujillo was elected president of the Dominican Republic. His presidency soon became a *dictatorship*. He maintained absolute power and control over the country until his assassination in 1961. Trujillo, a man of only rudimentary education, was not overly concerned with the education of the Dominican people and did little to develop education during his administration. He was not interested in any intellectual advancement beyond his own level. What he was interested in was practicality. He wanted the schools to produce "generations of practical, methodical, disciplined and brave men" (Bell, 1981).

After neglecting education for twenty years, Trujillo enacted the Organic Law of Education 2909 in 1951. This law continues to be the basic framework for the present system of education in the Dominican Republic. However, in essence, the Organic Law of Education is a replica of Executive Order 145 of 1918 (Malagón, 1992).

Education expanded after the Trujillo era as various presidential administrations dedicated more effort and money for development of programs. In 1970, President Antonio Guzmán instituted a reform plan designed to reduce illiteracy and increase opportunities for vocational education. The reform plan included an overhaul of the middle school program and the development of a vocational and polytechnic training school system.

The current administration of President Joaquin Balaguer has produced a mixed record on education. Balaguer has served 6 nonconsecutive terms as president since 1961. He has traditionally used public money for infrastructure projects, support of the military and political support of his administration. The educational low point of the Balaguer administration came in 1989 when only 6.6% of the governmental budget was allotted for education (Wiarda & Kryzanek, 1992). This figure was, by far, the lowest percent of governmental money spent on

education in Latin America. In comparison, the 1985 educational expenditure of the United States was 21% of total government expenditures ("Estimates of," 1992). The bright side of the Balaguer administration is his support for vocational training. The advancement of industry in the country, as a result of growing free trade zones, has produced an increased opportunity for technical and vocational training. Presently, Balaguer is said to be a supporter of *Plan Decenal*, the 1992 - 2001 educational reform project.

Structure of Education

The Dominican school year runs from August through June covering approximately 190 days of instruction. There are approximately 6,000 primary schools (grades 1 - 6), 2,000 secondary schools (grades 7 - 12), and over 20 recognized universities. Law requires all citizens equal and free access to education. Primary school education is compulsory (up to age 14). Secondary school, although not compulsory, is also tuition free. The present educational system is highly centralized. All primary and secondary schools, public or private, operate under the jurisdiction of the presidentially appointed Minister of Education, SEEBAC (*Secretaria de Estado de Educación Bellas Artes y Cultos*). The Minister has regional representatives and area directors but their powers are limited. All school text books and educational curriculums must be of, or approved by, the State. At the secondary level, all diplomas must be certified by competent government authorities conforming to state standards. Dominican public school students are required to wear to school a "national uniform" consisting of a blue shirt or blouse, khaki pants, shorts or skirt and footwear (private schools have their own uniform regulations). Students without proper dress are not permitted into school.

Private schools are generally considered to be academically superior in the Dominican Republic. Referred to as *colegios* or *institutos*, they are known to be better staffed and supplied. Most *colegios* are run by the Catholic Church. Also represented are tuition supported schools, schools run by private companies, Montessori, and schools run by other religious organizations. Among the academically superior *colegios* are the English speaking schools, which are geared toward student entrance into U.S. universities. *Colegios* are considered to be the only educational hope in the Dominican Republic. Yet, a private school education is unattainable to the majority of the Dominican population. Only the most affluent Dominicans can afford to pay the tuition for a private school. Entrance into private schools can be attained through tuition and successful completion of an entrance examination.

Pre-primary school (including kindergarten) is not compulsory. There are several pre-primary and nursery schools in operation. Most are private and are limited to the urban areas. It is estimated that only 0.5% of students between the ages of 0 to 6 attend school (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 1992).

There are several specialty schools for the teaching of mentally and physically handicapped, deaf and blind. Included is the state-operated *Centro de Rehabilitación*. It is estimated that no more than 1% of the Dominican handicapped population attend school (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 1992). To date, students with mental or physical handicaps are excluded from the mainstream education. However, schools are required to make special provisions for children with learning disabilities or emotional and social adjustment problems.

Higher education is not under the jurisdiction of the SEEBAC. Each university is autonomously run, including the State-operated *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo*

(UASD). Formerly the *Universitas Santi Dominici*, established in 1538, UASD is considered the oldest university in the Western Hemisphere. It is also the largest university in the Dominican Republic, with an estimated 40,000 students.

Basic Curriculum

Curriculum development is primarily the responsibility of the SEEBAC, who has a development committee for this purpose. As stated previously, Dominican law dictates that all curriculums must be of, or accepted by, the State.

Primary school contains grades 1 through 6. Under the present structure, the primary school is divided into cycles, grades 1 through 4 forming first cycle, and grades 5 and 6 forming second cycle. Students are grouped according to academic level and ability, not necessarily by age. The basic objective of the primary school curriculum is to provide students with fundamental skills in literacy and mathematics and basic knowledge of the physical and social world. It also strives to convey an appreciation for natural sciences, fine arts, civics and history. An additional objective of the primary curriculum is to impart knowledge as to what it is to be a Dominican citizen, both in Dominican society and in world society.

The primary school curriculum is divided into 6 specific areas of study; language and communication (Spanish), mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, expressive arts, and physical education. Upon completion of primary school, students are expected to have acquired a basic preparation for secondary school work. Students receive a certificate of sufficiency, the *certificado de suficiencia en estudios primarios*, for successful completion of primary school.

When entering secondary school, students have a choice of education. Most students enter the six year *liceo*, which is a traditional academic, college preparatory school similar to secondary

schools in the United States. *Liceo* is divided into 2 levels. Middle school, *nivel medio*, consists of grades 7 and 8 and secondary school, *nivel secundario*, makes up grades 9 through 12. The objective of the *liceo* is to prepare students for university admission. Students graduating from the *liceo* receive a *Bachillerato* (Baccalaureate) degree. The other choices offered to students are training and vocational schools designed to offer students options of agriculture education, business education, industrial education, journalism and teacher training. Specifically, these schools are the teacher training schools (*escuelas normales*), vocational schools and polytechnic schools. They usually have shorter programs (3 to 4 years) and are both academic and experience oriented. Students graduating from vocational and polytechnic school receive a *Bachillerato técnico - profesional* (technical - professional baccalaureate). Students graduating from the *escuelas normales* receive a degree of *Maestro normal* (teaching degree).

Community service is a requirement for certification or diploma for all public and private secondary school students. Order 4-88 (1988) requires that students work a total of 60 hours of service "for the welfare of the community" (Duarte, 1992). The program begins in middle school. Program objectives are:

- to help the impoverished citizens of the Dominican Republic
- to create an awareness of problems in society
- to contribute to the finding of solutions to societal problems
- to contribute toward the common good through helping others

Students may select to work in educational assistance, school and community maintenance, health centers, cultural centers, or reforestation and agriculture programs.

Private School Curriculum

Many private schools attempt to develop their own academic curriculums or use other established models. The SEEBAC does give some latitude to program development and educational practices of private schools. However, these schools are still under state jurisdiction and are dependent on the SEEBAC to supply diplomas for their students. There are a few English speaking schools with U.S. accreditation. Because of this, they do not seek approval or accreditation from the SEEBAC, nor try to conform to State standards. These schools usually purchase U.S. textbooks and curriculums and distribute their own diplomas.

Problems in Education

Many problems afflict the educational system of the Dominican Republic. Generally considered the "crisis in education," these problems are gaining national attention. Consider the following statement: It is common to see a Dominican student attend school an average of only 80 days in a school year, becoming one of the shortest school calendars in the world. The low number of attendance is deduced from school days missed because of general strikes, teachers not attending school at the beginning or the end of each week, classes suspended because of SEEBAC activities, classes suspended because of teachers union meetings, days missed because of student illness or from having to work to help support the family, days that the student isn't sent to school because current schooling is considered a waste of time, times that students cannot attend evening classes because there is no electrical power, and teacher absence because of illness or because of lack of transportation to school (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 1992).

The *Secretaria de Educación* Jacqueline Malegón (1992) states that education is a system with many problems that will only increase unless decisions at "the highest level" are adopted. She groups these "grave" problems around the following categories (pp. 12 - 15):

I. The "Actors" of the Education Process.

A. The Student.

Access to schools strongly depends on the socio-economic situation of their homes. Although primary education is compulsory, not all students attend school. In order for children to attend school, families must be able to purchase school uniforms and, in most cases, textbooks. The majority of the student population in the Dominican Republic comes from very low income families. They live in great conditions of poverty, making them susceptible to infectious illness and malnutrition, and exposing them to drug addiction, delinquency, prostitution and unemployment. Over 11% of Dominicans receive no schooling at all. Middle class students have the chance of registering in schools, but the chance of completing their studies will highly depend on the direction of their families' income. Other problems such as desertion, overage students and repetition of grade levels contribute to a high dropout rate. For every 100 students that begin elementary school, only 5 actually finish secondary school.

B. Teachers.

At the beginning of this decade, a teacher's salary was one third less than that of any other public service worker in the Dominican Republic. Teachers' salaries were, on the average, approximately \$3,000 pesos (\$240. U.S.) per month. In 1991, President Balaguer gave teachers a modest, yet insufficient 67% raise. Nevertheless, problems still exist in providing teachers with service benefits such as pharmacy assistance, medical insurance, adequate housing and pensions.

Teachers also have to cope with overcrowding in the classroom (an estimated 50 students to 1 teacher in public schools), the absence of teaching materials, and shortened instruction time. Because of the large number of students, combined with a general lack of teachers and facilities, schools break up the school day into sessions or *tandas*, each being an average of 3 hours per day.

C. Families and Communities.

Parents associations, which should have a strong presence in the schools, have an extremely weak association with education. In addition, community organizations have only a nominal existence. Only 1.3% of these associations are efficiently working with the schools. This abandonment has undermined efforts to keep students in school and denied schools of a much needed helping resource. It is hoped that the community service requirement for graduation will foster a greater affiliation between schools and the community. Although developed in 1988, the project has been slow to develop.

II. The Democracy of Education.

It has been difficult for educators to change the structure of the general educational system. Its infrastructure is embedded within a tangled web of conflicting historical laws. The respective democratization holds in place the existing philosophical plan, educational structure and educational politics that severely limits its development. The following references are evidence of the problems confronting the purposes of democracy in education:

1. The 1990 rate of illiterates was 23.4% of the population (over the age of 10). This figure has changed very little since President Guzman's literacy reforms of 1970.
2. There appears to be a pyramidal effect of school desertions. First grade students represent the largest desertion rate (33%). Of every 1,000 secondary school graduates, only 223

(22%) graduate within 13 years.

3. Only 404 of every 1,000 middle school students finish their education (40%).

4. The desertion rate of adults (who deserted school as children) is 27.5% in the first grade, 7.3% in the second grade and 18.7% in the third grade.

III. Problems in Quality.

A. Educational Leadership

The quality of education is permanently jeopardized by the existing tension between traditional and modern views. Conservative components are predominant over modern issues, therefore limiting any actions towards modernization.

B. Curriculum

The present curriculum in itself is a principal problem affecting education. The actual curriculum is not based on a precise (modern) conception of what education should be. It is more concerned with the product instead of emphasizing the process of education. It places emphasis on the application of curriculum standards, which does not take into account the creativity of teacher and student, or allow flexibility for the teacher to adapt to students' needs. As for science and technology education, there appears to be no specific plans in existence that correspond with basic educational goals and objectives. There is apparent confusion over the administrators' specific roles in regulation, supervision and operation of the program. There is also the problem of finding knowledgeable instructors for "high level" technology education.

IV. Difficulties in Modernization

A. Centralized Power

As previously stated, modernization trends in Dominican education have been difficult to

establish. Centralized power within the educational system has been a constant generator of non operant bureaucracy. Only top leaders make decisions. Those decisions have traditionally been to maintain the "status quo" in keeping the system intact while avoiding making any changes for the future. A need exists for an adequate information system that provides data necessary for decision making.

B. Laws Pertaining to Education

Among the factors that hinder the modernization of education are the legal statutes that regulate the system. Laws pertaining to education have basically remained the same for the last 74 years (Executive Order 145 of 1918).

C. Money for Education

Adequate funding has proved to be a major obstacle of modernization in education. The educational budget has been insufficient for the size and demands of the educational system. The government continues to postpone any help in the area of education. Throughout the 1980's, public expense for education was systematically reduced. Money allocated for education in 1990 was only 44% of that in 1980 (Malegón, 1992).

After comparing the physical size of the Dominican Republic with that of Taiwan, a fundamental difference was noted between each country's educational expenditures. Taiwan destines 20% of the national budget, 25% of the provincial budget and 35% of the municipal budget towards education ("La educación," 1993).

The National Congress of Education, *Congreso Nacional de Educación* (1992) has characterized the crisis of Dominican education as the following problems:

1. Inadequate quality of education

2. Absence of teaching materials
3. Inadequate educational budget
4. Inadequate coverage of pre-school education
5. Inadequate coverage of special education
6. Inadequate coverage of cultural programs
7. Growing national illiteracy rate
8. Negligence of the technical education
9. Lack of collective communication throughout the educational system
10. Extremely short instruction time
11. Disassociation of parents, community and schools
12. Lack of attention given to poor students
13. The increasing deterioration of the physical infrastructure
14. The increasing impoverishment of the teacher
15. Inefficient administration

These seemingly interminable problems have helped to generate a drop in quality of education, which, in turn, produces a lack of confidence in students, teachers, and the system alike.

Plan Decenal de Educación

In the latter part of 1990, *Plan Decenal* was presented to the Dominican people as a collective effort to find solutions to the problems of education. Beginning with the philosophy that all the indicated educational problems have possible solutions, a national committee (*Congreso Nacional de Educación*) was formed to develop a new direction for education. *Plan Decenal* was created to be an instrument of planning and administration designed to promote the development and

preparation of education for the twenty first century. The scope and ambition of this project are evident by the recruitment of numerous public and private institutions to participate in the creation and implementation of the plan. Included are representatives of education such as SEEBAC, the Dominican teachers organization (*Asociación Dominicana de Profesores*) ADP, the Dominican parents organization (*Asociaciones de Padres y Amigos de la Escuela*), private business organizations, the state university UASD, private universities such as INTEC (*Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo*), PUCMM (*Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra*), and UNPHU (*Universidad Nacional Pedro Henríquez Ureña*), and international organizations such as UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), UNICEF, CARE, the Spanish Mission (*Misión Española de Cooperación*), and the Catholic Church.

According to the *Congreso Nacional de Educación* (1992), *Plan Decenal* is structured around improving the following general areas:

1. The quality of education - improvements with educational aims and objectives; scientific and technological education; cultural education (including conservation, historic, patriotic and artistic education); work and production, and the educational curriculum.
2. The democratization of education - in terms of educational demand and deficits, as well as efforts to reduce the unbalance, inequalities and inadequate efficiency of the educational system.
3. Support for educational innovations - increasing investigation and experimentation in education; increasing innovations such as the use of solar energy; implementing the pedagogy of industry.
4. The modernization of education - updating educational apparatus and supplies; the search of

new financial options (including increased participation of the state); developing and implementing a new Law of Education and corresponding regulations; improving the existing physical plant, its equipment and maintenance.

5. The social - cultural context of teachers, parents and students - increasing the professionalization of the teacher; increasing teacher salary, professional incentives, and teacher training institutions; increasing services to low income students; increasing involvement and effective participation of parents; increasing involvement of the community in the educational process.

The final objective of the *Plan Decenal* is to obtain, within a period of 10 years, a profound reform of the educational system in the sense of national development and each citizen's own social and personal development. It is designed to construct a more just, humane and equal society for the year 2,000 (Congreso Nacional de Educación, 1992).

Specific objectives of the *Plan Decenal* include the following:

- To formulate a new legal order in regards to education.
 - To create a new nation wide organizational structure for education.
 - To formulate an effective system of parent participation.
 - To create regional foundations for educational development and financial assistance.
- To develop new curriculums which include cultural aspects of the different regions of the country.
- To create developmental funds for scientific research, technology and human resources.
 - To develop a proposal for alternative public schools which appropriate the realities, conditions and aspirations of the population of the "marginal zones" (poor areas).
 - To define a new salary policy for educators.

- To develop small but functional educational projects.
- To improve the conditions of the teacher's life.

An important aspect of the *Plan Decenal* is the improvement of teacher training. The plan proposes that the *Escuelas Normales* (teacher training schools) be eventually phased out. All teacher training will take place in the universities. The proposed plan has 4 universities preparing teacher training courses in the following areas: UASD - Social Sciences; UNPHU - Science; INTEC - Spanish and Literacy; PUCMM - Mathematics.

Current Results of Plan Decenal

Presently, *Plan Decenal* is in its "implementation" stage. Beginning in 1992, all Eighth grade students in the Dominican Republic, public or private, are required to take *Pruebas Nacionales* (National Tests). The test requirements were expanded to fourth grade in 1993 and in 1994, a sixth grade diagnostic test and a twelfth grade test. The tests are designed for students in: the fourth grade (a. Spanish, b. Social Studies, c. Math, d. Science); sixth grade (1994 Diagnostic test), eighth grade test (a. Spanish, b. Math, c. Dominican Social Studies, e. Science); review tests for grades 9 through 11 in preparation for the twelfth grade test (in Spanish language, Spanish literature, Math, Social Studies and Natural Sciences); and twelfth grade (a. Physical Science and Advanced Math b. Physical Science and Natural Science, c. Philosophy, Economics, Psychology, d. Sciences and Economics). These tests are requirements for graduation (*Bachillerato*) from Dominican secondary schools. For all students, including private school students attending U.S. accredited schools, the *Pruebas Nacionales* are a prerequisite for entrance into a Dominican university (SEEBAC, 1994).

The following developments and results of the *Plan Decenal* were reported in the Dominican national newspaper *Listin Diario* ("El Plan Decenal," 1994):

With regard to equal access and permanence of the educational system:

- Enrollment in preschool education programs has quadrupled since 1990.
- A literacy program, designed for implementation in the service areas, construction areas, free trade zones and tourist areas, is ready to commence in March 1994.
- A school breakfast program is being supported in the urban marginal zones. The program presently serves 70,000 students school breakfast on a daily basis. Its goal is to increase to 100,000 students by the year 2001.

With regard to school efficiency:

- There has been a significant reduction in the repetition rate in the first and second grades. The school desertion rate for the 1989 - 1990 school year was 34%. The 1991 - 1992 and 1992 - 1993 rates decreased to 6.6% and 7.6% respectively.

With regard to the improvement of administration:

- Modifications toward decentralization and modernization of the education system have begun. Emphasis is being placed on placing more responsibility at the district level (including the capacity to handle resources, finances and school maintenance projects).
- A manual has been created detailing the job descriptions of all administrative positions.
- Administrative salaries have been improved to increase dedication toward work in education.
- Computer equipment has been acquired for the central (national) and district educational offices.
- A telephone-computer network is planned to be in operation by April 1994.
- SEEBAC has been reorganized and restructured in order to operate in a more modern, efficient

manner.

With regard to curriculum:

- 25% of actual school time has been recovered since 1990.
- National tests (*pruebas nacionales*) are being administered to 300, 000 students annually.
- Approximately 6,000,000 text books have been produced for the 1993 - 94 school year. The texts include instruction of Spanish, math, science and social studies for grades 1 through 8.
- Teaching and laboratory materials (maps, geometry equipment, science equipment, paper, chalk, erasers, etc.) have been provided for 6,000 educational centers.
- Efforts are underway to transform the general curriculum, including new programs for pre-school, primary education and middle school (all grades and subjects). It is hoped that the new curriculum will be applied by September 1994.

With regard to community participation:

- The parents association, *Asociaciones de Padres y Amigos de la Escuela* has been reorganized at the district level. District managers have been appointed for 11 educational regions.
- The association has been active in recruiting new members, organizing committees for school activities, reconstruction and maintenance.
- The parents association has been actively assisting in the elaboration of the national curriculum transformation.

With regard to financial resources:

- The State budget for education has quintupled since 1990. The 1994 education budget has expanded to \$2,500 million Dominican pesos (RD), a notable increase over the 1990 budget of RD \$55 million. The present (1994) educational allotment represents 12.5% of the national

budget.

It is evident that *Plan Decenal* is helping to improve the education in the Dominican Republic. However, there is some concern that this plan will end up as other educational reforms have. Previous reforms have failed because of a lack of coordination between educational, community and governmental factions, lack of sufficient funds and the inability (or unwillingness) to design new educational laws. Historically, lack of money, concern and political instability has crippled educational development. *Plan Decenal* seems to have an organizational and developmental structure. However, its fate rests upon the government's ability to access more funds for educational development and its ability to create new, modern laws for education. Perhaps Presidential elections, in May 1994, will have a bearing as to whether *Plan Decenal* will be supported, favored, or dropped.

Physical Education

Historical Development of Physical Education

Physical education became incorporated into Dominican public school programs after a teacher training school for Physical Education was formed in 1942. The *Escuela Nacional de Educación Física* (ENEF) was founded in Santo Domingo by foreign (European) personnel contracted to develop technical and pedagogical training for the education of the physical self (SEEBAC, 1992). The school originally had a one year plan of study leading to a *certificado de maestro de cultura física* (teacher's certificate of physical culture). Its plan of study included Pedagogy, Anatomy, First Aid, Swedish Gymnastics and Sport. Track and Field, Baseball and Basketball were added to the curriculum in 1949. For the 1950 - 1951 school year, the ENEF added 2 regional schools; one in Santiago (Central) and one in San Juan de la Maguana (West). The expansion was designed to give better access to all the population. However, the new schools, which had the same plan of study as the ENEF, closed after one year because of low enrollment. The issue of "access for all" was again addressed in 1956, when the ENEF created an intern system for students from the interior of the country. The school was closed from 1960 - 1963 because of political and social unrest in the country. Beginning in 1963, the ENEF expanded its curriculum in to develop a more complete, educated individual.

Physical Education Principles and Philosophies

Dominican physical education teachers are trained to be reflexive, critical, participatory and capable of contributing towards the solutions of societal problems.

Aims of physical education instruction are to:

- be capable of promoting the knowledge and development of the physical culture to constituents

of physical, mental and cultural differences.

- have the capacity to promote and develop an objective conscience.
- reflect the benefits of physical education as contributing factors to the scope of regional and national solidarity.
- contribute to the formation of a civic conscious, under scientific criterion, for the use of natural resources and good use of free time.
- demonstrate that systematic practice of physical activities increase the quality of life.
- divulge a positive image about the importance of psychomotor activities, both inside and outside of school.
- promote activities that favor individual physical and social well being (SEEBAC, 1992).

The Structure of Physical Education

The department of *Educación Física Escolar* (School Physical Education) operates under the jurisdiction of SEEBAC. The department is headed by the SEEBAC-appointed *Director General de Educación Física Escolar*. The director oversees the administration of physical education to primary and secondary school grades preschool through 12. He is directly responsible for: appropriating funds for equipment, supplies, special programs and salaries; development and promotion of the physical education program; assisting in the development of curriculums; developing and supervising the administration of the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Física* (National Physical Aptitude Test).

The ENEF also operates under SEEBAC. However, the ENEF is not under the direct jurisdiction of (and has little affiliation with) the *Educación Física Escolar* (E. Peña Luna, personal communication, February 10, 1993). The ENEF is run by a SEEBAC- appointed

director. All public schools are required to employ a certified and qualified physical education teacher. Yet, because of lack of teachers and insufficient funds, schools tend to hire uncertified "sports knowledgeable people" as physical educators (E. Peña Luna, personal communication, February 10, 1993).

Physical Education Curriculum

The existent physical education program was developed by SEEBAC, between 1980 - 1989, as part of individual grade level curriculums. Each grade level curriculum is designed to be a complete educational program consisting of all areas of study, including physical education. Public school students are required to participate in physical education 2 hours per week (E. Peña Luna, personal communication, March 17, 1993). Private school requirements vary. Written physical education curriculums for grades 1 through 8 are presently in use. There are no written curriculums for grades 9 - 12. Currently, all curriculums, including physical education, are being reviewed and rewritten as part of the *Plan Decenal de Educación*.

First and Second Grades

The physical education curriculum for first and second grade is composed of 2 fundamental units: basic educational gymnastics and recreation, and developing practical, self disciplined character. Development of these programs is conditional to the students' direct needs, interests, physical and mental development. Physical activities consist of: balance and coordination exercises, introductory relaxation exercises, movement of specific body parts (movement education), imitative movements, beginning manipulative skills (bouncing and catching skills), and beginning jumping skills. Recreational activities consist of introductory group activities, games involving chasing and games involving manipulation and transportation of specific objects.

General objectives for Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, First and Second Grades:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- participate in activities that contribute to organic invigoration and improvement of physical aptitude.
- participate and cooperate in individual and collective activities that stress good posture and hygiene.
- show interest for psychomotor activities that contribute to dexterous and corporal movements.
- demonstrate interest for recreational games that help in the formation of good manners and cultivation of a healthy being.
- begin the formation of a personality that demonstrates companionship, discipline, order and cooperation. (SEEBAC, 1989.)

Third Grade

The third grade physical education curriculum is designed to be a progression of the movement skills taught in first and second grades. An introduction to order and discipline is incorporated into third grade activities. The curriculum combines pre-sport recreational games with exercises that improve the physical form of the child. Third grade physical activities consist of corporal education (marching, directions and standing in formation), balance exercises and exercises of specific body parts. Recreational activities consist of simple circle games, tag games and ball games.

General objectives for Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, Third Grade:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- participate in corporal activities that contributes to proper and correct posture.
- participate in corporal activities that demonstrate discipline and order.
- demonstrate body awareness through exercises and movements of specific body parts.
- develop a sense of group cooperation and enthusiasm in non-technical recreational games.
- develop a sense of direction, balance and laterality through a series of corporal movements and recreational games. (SEEBAC, 1983a.)

Fourth Grade

Grade four completes the first cycle of primary school. The physical education curriculum continues exercises involving order and discipline, and introduces simple competitive games. Physical activities include smooth movement (stretching) exercises, corporal exercises promoting good posture, discipline exercises (including standing in formation and movements on command), marching and specific body exercises (calisthenics). Recreational activities include simple team competitions such as jumping competitions, relay races, break the chain (red rover), steal the bacon and games involving ball skills.

General objectives for Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, Fourth Grade:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- participate in activities that promote physical growth.
- show ability and dexterity in activities that promote health.
- participate in recreational games that produce happiness and pleasure.
- promote individual and group activities that are amusing and interesting.
- participate in organized games with enthusiasm and interest.

- promote social situations that model proper social conduct. (SEEBAC, 1980.)

Fifth Grade

Grade five begins the first course of the second cycle of primary school. Fifth grade physical education students are introduced to specific parts of the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Física*. The test given includes running (short, medium, long distances), throwing (distance and precision), and jumping (high or standing broad).

The remaining curriculum is divided into physical and recreational activities. The physical activities consist of movement education, corporal education and marching. Movement education includes moving body parts on command, and performing calisthenic routines (gymnastic exercise). Corporal education involves standing at attention, forming rows and columns, and exercises of organization and control, such as following ordered directions and numeration exercises (answering numerical questions such as: "How many students are in your squad? column? row?"). Marching exercises are more organized and developed in the fifth grade. Marching includes turns, multiple direction marching and passing columns on command. Recreational activities continue to involve group games. Included are throwing competitions, dodge ball and lead-up games for volleyball, basketball, soccer and baseball.

General objectives for Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, Fifth Grade:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- participate in activities which strive to conserve and augment a state of good physical and mental health.
- develop, through gymnastic activities, physical growth, elegance and good posture.
- cultivate activities that strive to better personal and social conduct.

- demonstrate greater dexterity upon accomplishing activities that increase speed, agility, balance and resistance.
- demonstrate better effectiveness upon accomplishing activities that generate interest in pre-sport and sport activities. (SEEBAC, 1982.)

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade physical education addresses further development of motor capacity, organization, control and good posture. Its main elements include the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Física*, disciplinary exercises, gymnastic exercises, recreation and sports training. The national test covers running, throwing and jumping components. Disciplinary exercises involve marching, standing in formation and numeration exercises. Gymnastic calisthenics combine movements involving arm, trunk and leg flexion. Strength and balance are achieved by building human pyramids. Recreational activities involve group ball games and beginning track and field activities (obstacle course, relay races, jumping, ball or rock throwing for accuracy, and introducing shot put, discus and javelin). Sixth grade physical education introduces specific sport skills, rules and regulations of basketball, volleyball and soccer.

General objectives for Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, Sixth Grade:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- acquire habits that lead to the conservation of health and good posture.
- increase corporal development through practices of gymnastic activities.
- participate in group activities that strive to satisfy an interest for healthy recreation and sports.
- demonstrate good habits and make use of desirable group standards of conduct.
- identify the literacy content, musical instruments, dress and implements of national folklore.

- demonstrate ability and dexterity in participation of pre-sport and sport games.
- plan oneself socially in whichever medium that presents itself. (SEEBAC, 1983b.)

Seventh Grade

The seventh grade curriculum incorporates theory and health education into the physical education class. Lectures are added to review history, rules and strategies of sport, breakdown specific skills and the analysis of the biomechanics of movement. Health education is introduced in a unit of first aid, hygiene and alcohol, cigarette and drug awareness. The *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Fisica* is given in 2 work sessions. The first session works with exercises of the lower body, throwing exercises and sprint races. The second session includes abdominal exercises (sit-ups), jumping exercises and long distance races. Other physical activities include warm-up exercises, obstacle course races, calisthenics, and station work (flexibility, strength, balance, coordination). Corporal education continues with posture work (standing at attention), turns, directions, marching to cadence and resting in place (at ease). Competitive sports skills are taught for volleyball, basketball, soccer, gymnastic sport and an introduction to team handball. Sport training is broken down into (world and Dominican) history of sport, breakdown of skills and competition. Recreation activities include an introduction to chess, table tennis and aerobic exercise. National folklore continues with the history, skills and practice of *Merengue*, a traditional Dominican music and dance.

General objectives for Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, Seventh Grade:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- be able to arrange free time in order to improve cardio-vascular fitness through psychomotor activities.

- show gymnastic interest and ability by creating and perfecting aesthetic expression, movement and feeling of rhythm.
- show habits of good posture and coordination from gymnastic movements; with or without apparatus.
- value cultural musical expressions, as part of Dominican folklore.
- employ the techniques and fundamental rules that govern school practiced sports.
- appropriately apply the basic principles of first aid, safety and hygiene. (SEEBAC, --a.)

Eighth Grade

The eighth grade physical education curriculum continues many of the components from the seventh grade. Physical fitness components are tested with the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Fisica*, including running, jogging, obstacle course, jumping and throwing events. Corporal exercises include standing in formation, turns, numeration exercises and straight marching to cadence. Gymnastic activities include balance and movement exercises, calisthenics and human pyramids. Specific sports skill progression is taught for track and field, gymnastic sport, volleyball, basketball, soccer and team handball. Recreation activities include chess strategies (attacks and defenses) and table tennis. Health education continues with first aid instruction, personal safety, hygiene and benefits of exercise and recreation. *Merengue* and other traditional dances are practiced as part of the national folklore unit.

General objectives for Physical Education, Sport and Recreation, Eighth Grade:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate adequate physical condition in order to carry out difficult psychomotor activities.
- show ability and dexterity in the organization and practice of physical activity.

- demonstrate the importance of team work and its applications in sport activities.
- apply know-how about fundamental aspects of first aid, personal safety and hygiene.
- recognize the importance of folkloric practices in the national culture. (SEEBAC, --b.)

Grades Nine through Twelve

As stated previously, there is no written physical education curriculum for grades 9 through 12. The program centers around continuing instruction and improving students' demonstrated weak areas of sport skills, recreation activities and national folklore (E. Peña Luna, personal communication, March 17, 1993).

The Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Fisica

The national physical education exam, the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Fisica* is an assessment of the sport capacity of public school students. Students of grades one through eight receive at least a portion of the test. Components include coordination, flexibility, resistance (strength), locomotion and precision ("Unos 320 mil," 1992). The test is an effort to implement a concrete system of evaluating the psychomotor capacity of students on a national scale.

The basic areas of the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Fisica* are applied with general tests in the following areas:

- speed (50 meter dash).
- agility (50 meter zig-zag).
- stamina (200 and 300 meter run).
- leg strength (standing long jump).
- arm strength (push ups).
- flexibility (trunk flexion).

- balance (walking on a gangplank).
- organic function (pulse). (SEEBAC, 1992b).

Specific grade-level appropriate portions of the test are applied accordingly (see *Physical Education Curriculum*, grades 5 through 8, pp. 26 - 30).

General objectives for the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Fisica*:

- to measure the functional organic (physical) capacity of the student.
- to evaluate the application of curricular and co-curricular physical education programs, as well as the general administration of scholastic physical education.
- to offer information about the functional physical condition of public school students.
- to institutionalize the physical aptitude tests into official SEEBAC programs. (SEEBAC, 1992b)

National Director of School Physical Education Emigio de Peña Luna declared that through the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Fisica*, "We (the Department of Physical Education) are searching for the way that we have lost, and we are certain that with this test we will come out of it (O.K.) with the assistance of the physical education teachers throughout the country" ("Unos 320 mil," 1992)

Private School Physical Education

Private schools are given freedom to create their own curriculums. Although many private schools follow SEEBAC curriculums, some create their own or follow established programs. Of the reputed best private schools in the Dominican Republic, 4 out of 10 surveyed schools have their own written physical education curriculums. Many private schools have larger budgets in which to purchase equipment. In addition, private schools are believed to have better facilities and apparatus.

Physical Education Teacher Training

For nearly 52 years, the *Escuela Nacional de Educación Física* (ENEF) has trained teachers of physical education. The ENEF is a 3 year training school. Each year is divided into 2 semesters. Each semester consists of 18 weeks of classes, with an academic load of 40 class periods per week. Additional hours are incorporated on weekends for participation in sport, cultural or other designated activities (SEEBAC, 1992a). Students completing course work are assigned to 6 months of student teaching. Upon graduation from the ENEF, graduates receive a 3 year provisional teaching certification (*diploma de profesor*) to teach school physical education (primary and secondary). The ENEF graduates between 30 - 50 students each year (34 in 1994). Teachers may update their certification by participating in short summer education courses sponsored by the ENEF (F. Pelletier, personal communication, February 10, 1993).

Each year the ENEF conducts a nation-wide admission test for entry into the school. The tests are given in regional areas throughout the Dominican Republic. the test covers Spanish language, mathematics and general culture. In addition, applicants are given a psychological test and a psychomotor (physical aptitude) test. Students completing 2 years of high school (or ages 15 - 20) are eligible to take the test. Admission into the ENEF can be achieved through successful completion of the admission test, a certificate of good health, a certificate of the students last completed grade (school transcript) and a certificate of birth (Liranzo, 1992). First year enrollment is usually 35 - 60 students.

The core curriculum of the ENEF includes courses in the following areas.

Language:

Literary Theory, Spanish Literature, English, French

Mathematics:

General Mathematics, Economy

Science:

General Biology, Human Formation and Orientation, General Physics, General Psychology, Physiology of Exercise, Psychology of Evolution, General Chemistry

Social Sciences:

Dominican History, Dominican Geography, Religious Formation, Introduction to Philosophy, Civics, Sociology, Community Extension

Education:

Methodology of Investigation, General Didactics (Methodology of learning), Foundations of Education, Educational Practice, Administration, School Supervision, Sociology of Education, Educational Psychology, Philosophy of Education

Physical Education and Recreation:

History of Physical Education, Swimming, Theory and Methodology of Physical Education, Athletics, Gymnastics, Recreation, Organization and Control of Good Posture, Basketball, Folklore, Soccer, Volleyball, Team Handball, Baseball (SEEBAC, 1992a).

General objectives of the ENEF. Upon completion of the *Escuela Nacional de Educación Física*, teachers will demonstrate:

- abilities and dexterities that allow for the application of different strategies for the development of psychomotor activities.
- efficiency in the development of educational activities.

- capacity to expound, execute and evaluate physical sport and recreational activities within the social medium in which they develop.
- capacity to contribute to the formation of values and positive attitudes in students within the social medium in which they develop.
- an attitude of self satisfaction in the execution of work and commitment to be a positive role model.

The future of the ENEF is unclear. One of the aspects of *Plan Decenal* is to improve teacher training while phasing out the *Escuelas Normales*. However, school director Jr. Francisco Pelletier (personal communication, April 6, 1994) relates that the school will only benefit from *Plan Decenal*. Students will still be able to obtain a *diploma de profesor*, and if they choose, seek a university degree afterwards. In an effort to uplift the educational standing of the ENEF, he is looking into the possibility of increasing the requirements for applicants to include a *Bachillerato* (Baccalaureate) degree from secondary school.

Until 1994, the ENEF has been the only physical education teacher training institution in the Dominican Republic. However, the State-operated *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo* (UASD) is adding a physical education teacher training curriculum. UASD has committed through *Plan Decenal* to institute teacher training courses in the social sciences. In October, 1993, UASD officials agreed to formulate an undergraduate degree (*licenciatura*) program in physical education. The program was slated to begin in January, 1994, but delays have pushed the starting date to July, 1994. An agreement between UASD and *Secretario de Estado de Deportes, Educación Física y Recreación*, SEDIFIR have cleared the way for a smooth transition for the degree program at the university. SEDIFIR director Elías Wessin Chávez states that opening a

degree program in the principal university of the country opens a new and better chapter in favor of the Dominican Republic's youth (Martinez, 1993). The initial program is expected to graduate 1,000 students with a degree in physical education (A. Lemberg, personal communication, April 6, 1994).

The physical education practicum consists of 8 semesters towards the degree. Curriculum components include courses in the following areas.

Language:

Languages, Spanish Language

Mathematics:

General Mathematics, Statistics, Data Processing

Science:

Biology, Psychology, Anatomy, Psychology, Human Physiology, Chemistry, Biochemistry,

Sports Medicine

Social Sciences:

Sociology, Social History, Etiquette, Sociology of Sport

Education:

Methodology, Didactics (Methodology of learning), Administration and Organization,

Educational Practicum, Artistic Education

Physical Education and Recreation:

Recreation, Swimming, Basketball, Team Handball, Athletics, Volleyball, Gymnastics,

Table Tennis, Tennis, Softball, Weight Lifting, Judo and Karate (Martinez, 1993).

Efforts are being made to facilitate current ENEF students into the UASD program in order for them to complete their degree.

Problems in Physical Education

Physical education, along with education in general, has had many historical problems. The major problem effecting the program has been the lack of appropriate funds. Money needed to build and repair facilities and purchase equipment are not available. The ENEF has been in a state of disrepair for many years. Among the school facilities are 2 empty (dysfunctional) swimming pools, 2 basketball courts without backboards or rims, a tennis court with parched, cracked surface and an unfinished 200 meter oval running track. Money for the ENEF is used for teaching supplies and instructors' salaries. Students must pitch in with cleaning, small maintenance projects and office work (F. Pelletier, personal communication, March 17, 1993). Money for scholastic physical education (teachers' salaries and equipment) has also been limited. In 1991, former National Director of Physical Education Rafael "Cucho" Abreu asked for outside (corporate) help for his programs. He stated that the program received only \$5 million pesos (U.S. \$400,000.) for the 1990 - 1991 school year. From that figure, he points out that the average per student expense for physical education was only 2 centavos (.16 of one U.S. cent) for the year (Díaz, 1990). Furthermore, funding dropped to \$3 million pesos (U.S. \$240,000) for the 1992 - 1993 school year (E. Peña Luna, personal communication, February 10, 1993).

Another problem affecting physical education has been lack of qualified teachers. The ENEF has the capacity to graduate 35 - 50 students per year. Many schools and *colegios* do not have certified physical education teachers on staff. To fill positions (and save salary money), schools tend to hire sports-knowledgeable people from the community, many uneducated and uncertified.

It is estimated that there are 1,300 students per certified physical education teacher in the Dominican Republic (E. Peña Luna, personal communication, February 10, 1993).

Most public schools lack adequate physical education facilities. There is only 1 school gymnasium in the country, belonging to a private school. Other private schools have covered courts and some have access to public sporting facilities. Public schools use outside courts and fields to conduct classes. The frequency of rain (being a tropical climate) causes many classes to be canceled throughout a school year. Public school programs have limited equipment and supplies. Nevertheless, curriculum areas such as corporal education, movement education, gymnastics without apparatus, athletics and the *Prueba Nacional de Aptitud Física* can be taught with little or no equipment.

Other problems that exist include no written curriculum for grades 9 - 12, no written curriculum for the emerging pre-school program, no special physical education program and a lack of regional directors or coordinators.

Plan Decenal and Physical Education

National Director of Physical Education Emigio de Peña Luna (personal communication, March 9, 1994) states that through *Plan Decenal*, more support is being given to physical education. In return, the physical education department will be demanding more materials for students. The newly developed plan, *Proceso de Transformación* (Transformation Process) is being applied to physical education. The purpose of the process is to construct a new curriculum (for all levels) and administrative system for physical education. The new curriculum will be based on 5 thematic focal points:

1. Psychomotor activities

2. Corporal and movement education
3. Sport education
4. Recreation education
5. Health and hygiene (E. Peña Luna, personal communication, March 9, 1994).

There has been no mention of whether the department will receive an increase in its supply budget, repairs to facilities or other specific changes.

Previously mentioned (pp. 35 - 36), is the effort, through *Plan Decenal*, to improve teacher training with a degree program in physical education at UASD. For the time being, students at the ENEF will not be affected by the new program. They will still be able to obtain a teacher certification through the ENEF, and continue toward a degree through the UASD program (F. Pelletier, personal communication, April 6, 1994). Sr. Alvaro Lemberg, director of the new physical education program at UASD, states that the department of school physical education can only benefit from the program because, for the first time, students will be able to obtain a degree in physical education (personal communication, April 6, 1994).

Conclusions and Recommendations for the Future

The Dominican Republic is rapidly becoming known for their sports and athletes. There are more than 70 Dominicans on Major League Baseball rosters, the most of any country next to the U.S.A. Sports programs, especially professional baseball, basketball, boxing and volleyball, are revered throughout the country. Former director of school physical education Cucho Abreu has stated that physical education is considered the backbone of higher level athletic competition in the Dominican Republic (Díaz, 1990). Yet, the future status of Dominican physical education is

uncertain. Many problems exist which need attention. There appears to be plenty of room for improvement.

Some positive undertakings have been initiated through *Plan Decenal*. Projects such as the forthcoming degree program at UASD, new written curriculums and the restructuring of administration should improve physical education instruction and direction. However, these efforts alone will not "revive" the entire physical education program. An increase in funds is needed to provide equipment for all schools and repair existing facilities. Aside from *Plan Decenal*, the physical education department could seek to benefit from popular sports, athletes and supporting corporations of the Dominican Republic by soliciting help for its programs. Management and leadership must be delegated to individual school districts, in order to better provide for specific needs and developments. Attention must also be given to students in special education programs and facilities. A curriculum and plan of delivery are needed for the mentally and/ or physically handicapped in order to help facilitate all students.

Physical education is not specifically mentioned in any *Plan Decenal* document. Nonetheless, *Plan Decenal* needs to come through for all education, including specialty subjects. It is understood that educational reform of such a large scale is an enormous effort, but an effort nevertheless that needs to endure through continuous attention, dedication and foresight.

The Dominican educational system needs to ameliorate efforts to make education accessible and useful for all of the population. The role of education is to train people to be responsible, working, contributing members to society. However, it is (or should be) more than that. It is an avenue for discovery, learning and understanding. It should allow all its participants a sound knowledge of the present and a secure hope for the future.

Acknowledgments

Ascertaining information from educational officials, so-called experts and reputable documents have, at times, been extremely difficult. I would like to sincerely thank the following individuals for their direct (and indirect) assistance with this project. Without help, the world becomes a difficult place. Dr. Loraine Bloomquist: University of Rhode Island, supervising professor, Mr. John Williams: Physical Education Chair and Athletic Director at the Carol Morgan School of Santo Domingo, Ms. Teresa Carrion, Foreign Language Chair at the Carol Morgan School, Dr. Francisco Pelletier, Director of the *Escuela Nacional de Educación Física*, Emigio de Peña Luna, National Director of School Physical Education, Jacqueline Malegón, Secretary of Education, Sr. Tony Oville, Ms. Lisa Wilson, Ms. Carmen Fernandez, Ms. Margarita Sordo, Ms. Yanira Veras, Mr. Mike Taylor, Andy Huang, Horacio Veras and the National Police of the Dominican Republic.

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