

Shortly Reports

International Physical Literacy Conference and Forum 2017

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The International Physical Literacy Association (IPLA) organised a one-day conference followed by a three-day Forum with the mission “Choosing Physical Activity for Life”. The events were held in the Liner Hotel in Liverpool, UK, from 27th to 30th of June 2017 and the conference was open free of charge to anyone interested in this topic. The main purpose was to introduce Physical literacy (PL) and its holistic approach to people from various branches, not only from the academic sphere but also to practitioners, community workers, PhD students, teachers and others working with people.

There were already two conferences with the same topic organised in 2011 and 2013, followed by workshops in 2014 (where IPLA was founded) and 2016 in the UK. These were held under the supervision of the University of Bedfordshire (the first two) and Liverpool John Moores University (the last two).

The opening session of the conference included the keynote speaker and the president of the IPLA professor Margaret Whitehead who set out the objectives of the day and introduced the IPLA and the concept (and importance) of PL to the delegates who were less aware of both.

Elizabeth Myers, the vice chair of the IPLA and the senior lecturer in physical education (PE), spoke about four attributes of PL that can be described as a disposition to capitalize on the human embodied capability, wherein the individual has “the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engaging in physical activities for life”. Nigel Green, the facilitator and chair of the IPLA from the Liverpool John Moores University spoke about the importance of PL for holistic health throughout life.

The programme of the conference was divided into three panel sessions and afternoon "breakout sessions". The first panel session was focused on "why and how PL is so important for all of our health"; the second panel session focused on "why PL is so valuable at all ages and stages of life"; and the third session reflected "the challenges of widespread adoption and gaining traction in varied sectors of the community". In the breakout sessions people grouped with regard to specific life stages and during discussions tried to develop and share PL life stage specific benefits and ideas of how to promote its PL widespread adoption. Then each group presented a five-minute feedback to other participants.

The next three days IPLA forum took place for those who are very committed to this topic and its dissemination. During the first two days, four sessions were organised, followed by fruitful discussions. At the first session six speakers from Jersey, Scotland, Wales, Singapore, Canada, and the Netherlands presented "what has been happening with PL around the world?" The afternoon session focused on the theme "moving the concept forward – research and scholarly activities" with five different topics. On Thursday, there was one practical session with Tai Chi by Tony Ulatowski who is teaching this exercise at six elementary schools within London. In the afternoon after the session about operationalising PL in practise, the participants discussed the question "What do you / other sectors / organisations, need / want?"

The programme was concluded by work in pairs with the objective of producing any kind of material that would help to answer the question: "What do you/we want people to know (about PL) and how do we disseminate information?"

Friday discussions focused on the question "In an ideal world, what would PL look like? How do we get there?" and later on each of the participants presented their own objectives in the effort to find steps to better promotion of PL in practice.

The participants of the Forum appreciated the meeting, sharing the general agreement that intellectual exchange and new contacts will help in future collaboration and support in PL dissemination. The next major international Physical Literacy event will take place in April 2018 in Bahrain.

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