



**PAPA**™

Promoting Adolescent Physical Activity

...towards  
**Healthy Sport Experiences**  
for Healthier Kids!



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BIRMINGHAM

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**The PAPA** (Promoting Adolescent Physical Activity) project is a European-based project committed to enhancing young peoples' health and well-being, by promoting more empowering experiences in sport.

The PAPA project was funded by a 4-year research grant from the European Commission Framework 7 Health Programme.

**The Goal** of Project PAPA has been to further develop, deliver and rigorously evaluate a theoretically grounded and evidence-based coach education programme (i.e., Empowering Coaching<sup>TM</sup>) designed to help coaches foster quality motivation and make youth sport more *engaging, empowering, and enjoyable*.

## The Potential


Playing youth sport has the potential to result in a number of psychological benefits, including the promotion of children's psychosocial development and feelings of self worth.


## The Challenge


However, there are a considerable number of children who do not realise the positive consequences that playing sport can bring. Unfortunately, many of these young people choose to drop out of sport.


## Our Vision

Via the delivery and implementation of the theory- and evidence- based Empowering Coaching<sup>TM</sup> programme, our vision is to:

 **Help** coaches understand how they can create a more empowering motivational climate in training and competition.

 **Work** with coaches to make sport participation more enjoyable, engaging and empowering, for every child.

 **Have** children view their sporting environment as more adaptive and thus enhance their desire to continue participation.

 **Promote** healthier sport experiences for healthier kids!

# A European Project

The PAPA Project is led by Professor Joan Duda (Project Director) from the University of Birmingham (UK), and partnered by seven European universities:

- \* University of Bergen, Norway
- \* University of Valencia, Spain
- \* University of Joseph Fourier, France
- \* University of Thessaly, Greece
- \* Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Norway
- \* York St John University, England
- \* Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Members of the PAPA Consortium are internationally recognized for their extensive research and applied activities concerning motivational processes in youth sport and physical education, as well as other physical activity contexts, including exercise and dance.

**PAPA focused  
on football (soccer)  
and involved boys and girls  
(targeting children  
10 – 14 years of age)  
and their coaches  
from 5 European countries.**

The project has had the support of national/regional football associations in all five countries; i.e., The Football Association (England), Fédération Française de Football (France), the Hellenic Football Federation (Greece), The Football Association of Norway and Real Federación Española de Fútbol (Spain).

Involving nearly **10,000** children, **PAPA** is the **LARGEST EVER RESEARCH PROJECT** concerning the coach-created environments operating in youth sport settings. Another important outcome from PAPA is the compelling, multi-national evidence base that points to the importance of the coaching climate to children's **SPORT MOTIVATION, WELL-BEING and SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT.**

# MOTIVATION

Motivation has been defined as our “drive to strive”. Within the PAPA project, we go beyond considering whether players have high or low motivation and focus on the *quality* of their motivation. It is the type of motive (i.e., the reasons why one participates in football) that determines whether motivation is high or low quality. Motivation impacts players’ actions (and inactions!) and the way they interpret their football experiences.

When young athletes engage in football because they enjoy it, are personally interested, and value the benefits of playing, they have high quality motivation. These types of motives are also described as “autonomous”. On the other hand, low quality forms of motivation are evident when the reasons for participation are more extrinsic or outside of one’s control. These types of reasons (controlled motives) may be adopted because of pressure from others and what players feel they “must” or “should” do. Sometimes players exhibit amotivation (i.e., there is no longer any motivation for the activity). Amotivated players cannot identify any good reason to continue their training and are likely to dropout.

## QUALITY MOTIVATION



### HIGH Quality Motivation

*“I play football because I enjoy it”*

*“I play football because I value the benefits”*



### LOW Quality Motivation

*“I play football because I would feel guilty if I quit”*

*“I play football to win the league trophy”*



### Amotivation (No Motivation)

*“I don’t know why I am playing football”*



A critical factor in determining the quality of sport motivation and whether young people persist or withdraw from sport is the “climate” created by significant others such as the coach. The climate is created via what coaches say and how they say it, what they do and how they do it, how they organise their training sessions, and how they try to impact their players in practice and competitive situations.

# MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE

## EMPOWERING CLIMATE

Children will flourish and remain involved when the climate is empowering. In an empowering team atmosphere, children recognize the importance of striving for mastery goals and “doing one’s best”, feel a sense of belonging, and believe they have a voice and choice.

## DISEMPOWERING CLIMATE

Players feel intimidated and controlled by the coach when the climate is disempowering. They are likely to see themselves as rejected by and disconnected from the coach and their teammates. In a disempowering team atmosphere, coaches encourage players to outperform others rather than emphasize each player’s personal development.

COACHES  
MAKE  
THE  
DIFFERENCE

Within the PAPA Project, the Empowering Coaching™ programme was customized for grassroots football, piloted in England and then implemented and rigorously tested in a multi-country trial in England, France, Greece, Norway, and Spain.

## Early days...

### Further development & customization of Empowering Coaching™

An innovative and comprehensive programme to train tutors to deliver the Empowering Coaching™ programme was developed and piloted in the UK.

## Empowering Coaching™ Programme

The Empowering Coaching™ education programme comprises workshop and/or e-learning education.

Our workshops are delivered by experienced coach educators who have been trained by world leading experts in sport motivation and youth development.

In the interactive workshops, coaches are exposed to high quality education materials (including PowerPoint slides, workbook, video clips, learning-orientated games) that we specifically designed to foster awareness and application of the principles of Empowering Coaching™.

Coaches are supported in developing specific strategies to create and maintain an empowering environment in training and competition.

**E-LEARNING**

**INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS**

**TAUGHT BY EXPERT COACHES**

## European Expansion

Next, **Empowering Coaching™** and our measurement tools were revised and then carefully translated into **French, Greek, Norwegian and Spanish** and a second phase of piloting ensued across the five countries. As a result of this work, prior to our main trial, the workshop had been delivered in pilot offerings to **846 coaches**, and **41 coach educators** had been **trained up to deliver the programme**.

## PAPA PROJECT Main Trial:

**5** countries  
**175** clubs  
**854** teams  
**7769** children

## Main Trial Intervention & Data Collection

✕ **7769 children** completed **questionnaires** tapping their perceptions of the coach-created motivational climate, self-esteem, enjoyment, anxiety and intentions to drop out.

✕ **429 children** wore **accelerometers** to record activity levels throughout the week.

✕ **71 coaches** were **filmed** and their behaviours coded using a rating system designed during the PAPA project.

✕ **521 coaches** attended the Empowering Coaching™ **workshops**.

QUESTIONNAIRES

ACCELEROMETERS

FILMING

FOCUS GROUP  
INTERVIEWS

Project data were analysed to help us to understand more about the relationships between coaching climates and young peoples' health, well-being and intentions to stay active. We were also interested in examining the impact of the Empowering Coaching™ programme upon the different variables measured during the project.

## MOTIVATIONAL CLIMATE

**The MOTIVATIONAL  
CLIMATE created by  
COACHES is a significant  
determinant of  
CHILDRENS' MOTIVATION,  
WELL- BEING, PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY levels and  
INTENTIONS TO DROP OUT!**

7769 grassroots players // Targeted age range: 10 -14 years // ENGLAND, FRANCE, GREECE, NORWAY AND SPAIN

# KEY FINDINGS



# MOTIVATION

Empowering climates correspond to higher quality motivation. Disempowering climates are linked to low quality motivation. High quality motivation fosters players' well-being whereas low quality motivation corresponds to reduced well-being and other negative outcomes for players.

## WELL-BEING

When the coaching climate is perceived as more empowering, children feel better about their sport and better about themselves. Disempowering climates negatively relate to children's well-being.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Coaching climates that are more empowering are positively related to moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) both during youth sport engagement (i.e., children are more active during training and matches) and during everyday life (i.e., children are more active during an average day during the week).

## INTENTION TO DROP OUT

Drop-out from sport participation during adolescence is extremely common. This is a major problem as quitting sport leaves young people at risk of adopting a sedentary lifestyle and the negative health consequences associated with insufficient levels of physical activity.

When coaches create a more empowering climate, young people are less likely to consider dropping out.

**PROMOTING**  
**WELL-BEING**

**ENJOYMENT**

Players who enjoy participating in football have an optimal experience that is intrinsically rewarding and an end in itself.

*"I find that time flies when I am playing football"*

**vitality**  
**enjoyment**  
**self esteem**



# OTING - BEING

## SELF ESTEEM

Self-esteem is one's global sense of worth as a person.  
*"Overall, I have a lot to be proud of"*

## VI TA LI TY

Vitality refers to players' feelings of personal energy and aliveness.  
*"I nearly always feel alert and awake"*



## KEY FINDINGS

When the coaching climate is perceived as **EMPOWERING** players experience more **ENJOYMENT, VITALITY** and report higher **SELF ESTEEM**. Perceived **DISEMPOWERING CLIMATES** predict lower levels of these indicators of well-being.



# PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The World Health Organisation (WHO) emphasizes the importance of regular engagement in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) to health promotion, the prevention of disease onset, and as a means to combating the obesity epidemic that is facing youth in many countries around the world.

## KEY FINDINGS

COACHING CLIMATES THAT ARE VIEWED AS BEING MARKED BY EMPOWERING CHARACTERISTICS ARE POSITIVELY RELATED TO OBJECTIVE **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** LEVELS

12 **physical activity** 



# MINIMIZING INTENTION TO DROP OUT

There are a considerable number of children who find participating in sport more stressful than fun and their participation has a negative impact on self worth. There are children who are playing football with low quality motivation. Many of these young people choose to drop out.

## KEY FINDINGS

**WHEN COACHES CREATE A  
MORE EMPOWERING CLIMATE,  
YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LESS  
LIKELY TO CONSIDER  
DROPPING OUT**

**to drop out** 

## EMPOWERING COACHING™ CHANGES HOW COACHES COACH!

As a result of attending the Empowering Coaching™ workshop, coaches reported that they changed their behaviour. The quotations below represent the views expressed by coaches in group interviews held one month after the workshops:

*I organized a small feedback session where I could hear what they thought of my [coaching] style, where I could communicate. After the game... instead of 'who won?' I asked them 'how did you do?' I got a very different response.*

*I listen to the players a bit more... its ok to have a group discussion about what they want to get out of the training session and how they felt the previous game went.*

*My terminology is changing as well. Its "can you try to" instead of "ok I want you to do this and this is how you do it"*

These findings suggest that the coaches are able to integrate the principles of Empowering Coaching™ when they work with children.

**EMPOWERING COACHING™  
CHANGES THE YOUTH SPORT  
CLIMATE FOR THE BETTER!**

Children whose coaches participated in the Empowering Coaching™ training perceived the climate on their team to be less disempowering than those who didn't receive the training.



Children whose coach attended the Empowering Coaching™ workshop indicated lower intentions to drop out of football when compared to children who played for a coach who did not have the training.

**CHILDREN WHOSE COACHES  
HAVE ATTENDED THE  
EMPOWERING COACHING™  
WORKSHOP DEVELOP A  
STRONGER DESIRE TO STAY  
IN SPORT!**

*Interestingly, these findings regarding the impact of the workshop were most pronounced in the French sample. We will be exploring between country differences in future analyses of the PAPA data!*

# KEY FINDINGS



Project PAPA is funded by the European Commission under the Framework 7 Health programme.

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