

Status

Published

Published Date

Mar 15, 2026

Visibility

Public



Monash University students and Yinnar South Primary School students in a swimming pool. Rachel Williams and Yinnar South Primary School students. PHOTOGRAPHS LAURA FERGUSON

Behind the Paper

# How do Partnerships Work in Early Childhood for Teacher Education and Industry? United Nations SDG 17

Sustainable Development Goal 17 calls for partnerships to achieve global goals, but what does this mean in practice when we combine Initial Teacher Education (ITE) with industry expertise to strengthen the physical dimension of early childhood development?

Published in Sustainability, Biomedical Research, and Education

Mar 15, 2026

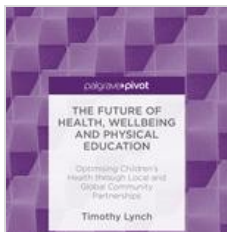


**Timothy Lynch**  
Adjunct Professor, Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education



Liked by You and 4 others

Explore the Research



Springer International Publishing

## The Future of Health, Wellbeing and Physical Education

This book uses the example of a partnership journey between universities, schools, the local health industry as well as a number of government...

In an era where education must be future-ready and technology-driven, the question of how we prepare our youngest learners - children aged 2-5 - for lifelong wellbeing has never been more urgent. Sustainable Development Goal 17 calls for partnerships to achieve global goals, but what does this mean in practice when we combine Initial Teacher Education (ITE) with industry expertise to strengthen the physical dimension of early childhood development?

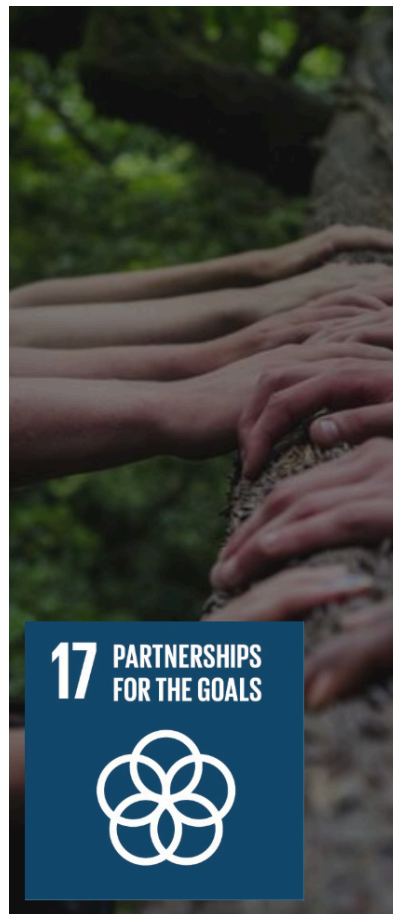
The answer lies in applied pedagogy that bridges university classrooms with real-world industry standards, creating transformative learning experiences for pre-service teachers while simultaneously delivering quality physical dimension development to children who need it most.

## The Nine Building Blocks: A Framework for Success

The International Civil Society Centre identifies nine essential building blocks for successful partnerships, organized across three domains: Actors, Process, and Context [1]. These building blocks provide a roadmap for creating meaningful collaborations that extend beyond good intentions to deliver measurable impact.

**Actors** require strong leadership to create momentum and guide the process, while partners must foster group cohesion, combine the right resources and skills, and prioritize inclusiveness [1]. **Process** elements include goal-setting that creates common vision aligned with global norms, innovative funding solutions, professional management through independent secretariats, and robust monitoring and evaluation systems that learn from mistakes and adapt behavior [1]. Finally, **Context** considerations involve meta-governance that sets minimum criteria for partnerships, problem-structure awareness that adapts expectations accordingly, and political and social context analysis that identifies challenges like corruption and engages in capacity building [1].

When applied to early childhood physical development, these building blocks transform abstract partnership principles into concrete pathways that connect universities, schools, and industry partners in service of children's holistic development.



## Connecting the SDGs: Health, Education, and Partnership

The physical dimension of early childhood development sits at the intersection of three critical Sustainable Development Goals. **SDG 3** (Good Health and Wellbeing) targets reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention while promoting mental health and wellbeing - outcomes directly supported by regular physical activity in early years [2]. Research confirms that the physical dimension delivers not only physical health benefits but also promotes mental, emotional, and social wellbeing [2].

**SDG 4** (Quality Education) aims to ensure all children complete quality primary education with effective learning outcomes [2]. Physical education serves as “the entry-point for lifelong participation in physical activity” and “the most effective means of providing all children and youth with the skills, attitudes,

values, knowledge and understanding for life-long participation in society” [2]. Quality Physical Education is enshrined in UNESCO’s 1978 International Charter as a fundamental right and essential element of lifelong education [2].

**SDG 17** (Partnerships for the Goals) recognizes that partnerships are essential for implementing the SDGs, which apply to all nations [2]. This is where Initial Teacher Education meets industry expertise to create something greater than the sum of its parts.

## Swimming into the Future: An Industry Partnership in Action

The swimming industry partnership exemplifies how ITE - industry collaboration strengthens children’s wellbeing through applied, technology-driven pedagogy. The programme leader established pathways with the Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers Association (ASCTA) as the Registered Training Organisation partner, strategically redesigning university coursework to align with the Swim Australia Teacher qualification [1].

A critical breakthrough occurred when the Victorian Institute of Teaching formally recognized the ASCTA certificate as equivalent to the AustSwim certificate for Physical Education teacher registration [1]. This eliminated a \$350 financial burden students previously faced, demonstrating how partnerships can overcome systemic barriers through strategic advocacy and regulatory engagement [1].

The journey, however, was not without challenges. Transport costs for schools located up to 30 kilometers from venues created accessibility barriers, with students in socio-economically disadvantaged regions paying \$7.50 per week - an unfortunate expense for families already struggling [1]. Communication breakdowns when pool swimming instructors initially handled school liaison proved problematic, with last-minute confirmations compromising safety planning and lesson preparation [1]. After two years, the programme leader made a major amendment: taking direct control of all school liaising rather than relying on leisure centre staff [1].

These challenges underscore the importance of the nine building blocks - particularly professional management, clear goal-setting, and adaptive learning from mistakes.

## **The Highs: Transformative Impact on Children and Teachers**

The rewards of persistence were profound. By offering free lessons through the university program, 100% attendance was achieved from Prep/One/Two students - “which is amazing!” [1]. Teachers reported: “It was a fantastic opportunity for our students as many have never had formal lessons before” [1]. Children’s voices captured the joy: “It was fun because we learnt to swim. I liked the games” and “The swim teachers were kind and sweet” [1].

Research confirms that children aged 3-5 who participated in early years swimming programs scored significantly better in literacy, numeracy, mathematical reasoning, visual motor skills, and oral expression, appearing “many months ahead of their same-age peers” [1]. This demonstrates how the physical dimension catalyzes cognitive development - a powerful argument for integrated ITE-industry partnerships.

Pre-service teachers gained authentic pedagogical experience, marrying theory traditionally learned in university classrooms with experience-based knowledge located often only in schools [1]. This addresses the perennial “Achilles heel” of teacher education - the disconnect between theory and practice [1]. The program received a median satisfaction rating of 4.56 out of 5 from ITE students [1].

## **Building Classrooms of the Future**

The optimum time for children to learn and refine motor skills and be introduced to quality physical education experiences is during preschool and early primary school years [2]. Early learning experiences are crucial to continuing involvement in physical activity [2], making it ideal to begin the physical learning journey as early as possible.

When ITE programs partner with industry, they create a virtuous cycle: pre-service teachers gain authentic pedagogical experience with industry-standard qualifications; children access expert-led, developmentally appropriate physical education at no cost; schools benefit from enhanced facilities and professional development; and communities build sustainable capacity for health and wellbeing promotion [1].

This is applied pedagogy in action - future-ready, technology-driven, and grounded in the reality that learning through movement involves children from the very beginning truly belonging, being, and becoming physically educated [1]. As we build the classrooms of the future, SDG 17 reminds us that partnerships are not optional extras but essential infrastructure for achieving quality education and lifelong wellbeing for all children.

## References

[1] Lynch, T. (2016). *The future of health, wellbeing and physical education: Optimising children's health and wellbeing through local and global community partnerships*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-31667-3>

[2] Lynch, T. (2024). *Physical education and wellbeing: Global and holistic approaches to child health and academic learning* (2nd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-72874-7>



### Timothy Lynch

Adjunct Professor, Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education

Dr. Timothy Lynch, the most cited school practitioner on Google Scholar, is the Western Co-Head of ECE and Primary at Yew Chung International School of Chongqing (China) and Adjunct Professor at Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education (YCCECE), Hong Kong (China). Timothy is acknowledged by UNESCO as an Inclusive Policy Lab (IPL) expert for education and wellbeing, by the International Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Dance and Sport (IAHPEDS) as Secretary General (Elect) and accredited as a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK Professional Standards Framework). An active teacher, school leader and researcher, he has published widely in the field of education, having taught and researched across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia. Timothy has 24 years' teaching and school leadership experience and eight years' working full time as a teacher/researcher in higher education.

Previous experiences include:

- Deputy Principal at The Joseph Varga School
- Deputy Head of Junior School at the British International School of Cairo
- Assistant Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher at Hornbill School, Brunei - Ofsted outstanding (Ministry of Defence, UK)
- Adjunct Professor at the Universiti of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) in the Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah Institute of Education (SHBIE)
- Plymouth University - Subject Lead in the Institute of Education - Ofsted outstanding (UK) 2015-2017
- Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University - no. 1 in world QS rankings (Australia) (2011-2015).
- Assistant Professor at University of Canberra

Research interests include; Wellbeing, Special Education, Health and Physical Education, pedagogy and quality teaching practices, Early Childhood Education, curriculum reform, and enhancing learning through the physical. An active teacher, school leader and researcher, he has published widely in the field of education for Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education (Hong Kong), Swinburne University of Technology (Melbourne, Aus), Universiti of Brunei Darussalam (Brunei), University of Plymouth (Devon, UK), Monash University (Melbourne, Aus) University of Canberra (Aus), Federation University (Aus) and Australian Catholic University (Aus).

## Comments

Post

### Follow the Topic



International Relations



Media Education



Sustainability



Biomedical Research



Industries



## What are SDG Topics?

An introduction to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Topics and their role in highlighting sustainable development research.

[Read more](#)

### Recommended Content

News and Opinion

#### [Learning from Crisis: School Stabbings in Sweden and the Case for De-Escalation Training](#)



Beyond the Book

#### [How 30 Years of Global Research Led to Lauve Wellbeing.](#)



Behind the Paper

#### [A Gift for All Children During Times of Conflict and Need: Planting Seeds for Future Peace](#)



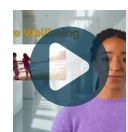
Behind the Paper

#### [Why is Singapore Identified in Global Research as Number One? How Physical Activity and Education Excellence Created a Global Leader](#)



News and Opinion

#### [Lauve Wellbeing](#)



This community is not edited and does not necessarily reflect the views of Springer Nature. Springer Nature makes no representations, warranties or guarantees, whether express or implied, that the content on this community is accurate, complete or up to date, and to the fullest extent permitted by law all liability is excluded.

[Website Terms of Use](#)

[Online privacy notice](#)

[Cookie policy](#)

[Report content](#)

[Manage Cookies](#)

**SPRINGER NATURE**