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Bridging the Divide between Policy and Practice in Sport and Sustainable Development: Findings of a Global Survey



A comprehensive global survey conducted by the Japan Sport Council (JSC) and the International Platform on Sport and Development (sportanddev) has illustrated a clear need to build capacity in programme/project management and policy implementation among stakeholders using sport to promote sustainable development and peace.

The survey sought to identify challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and/or organisations when managing policies, programmes or projects that use sport for development. This included actors in the overall sport sector (including sport for development and peace actors) and the broader global development sector.

Survey Respondents

The survey was distributed widely through online and offline platforms, and with support from key partners. In total, 681 respondents (458 male; 207 female; 16 identified as other) completed the survey with representation from all six continents. Respondents were diverse, from the public sector, private sector, academic sector, sport sector, sport for development and peace sector, and broader development sector.

74% of respondents are involved with policies and/or projects using sport to promote development. Respondents used sport to address the following thematic areas: Education and learning (67%); Health and well-being (63%); Gender equality and female empowerment (46%); Social inclusion and/or integration (55%); and Child or youth development (61%). Other development outcomes and priorities were also listed.

Survey Findings

Findings revealed the need to build stakeholder capacity and bridge the divide between policy and practice.

Despite most respondents being involved in using sport for development, they exhibited **limited awareness of key international sporting policies and plans**. 29% of all respondents were unaware of ALL of the following: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and/or the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Kazan Action Plan; the World Health Organisation Global Action Plan for Physical Activity; and the UN Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace. Given this most respondents reflected that these plans or policies do not majorly influence their work. While a greater proportion of respondents to this question were male (431) versus female (181), overall females exhibited greater awareness of the listed international policies and plans.

Challenges and Capacity Gaps

Respondents identified key challenges to implementing policies/projects that use sport for development:

- 74% strongly or mostly agreed that 'increasing sport participation is prioritised in sport policy'
- 71% strongly or mostly agreed they 'do not have budget and/or resources for such projects'
- 67% strongly or mostly agreed 'improving sport performance/excellence is prioritised in sport policy'
- 57% strongly or mostly agreed that 'it is hard to cooperate with other sectors outside sport'
- 55% strongly or mostly agreed that they 'do not know how to measure such projects'

78% of respondents indicated that further support, tools and resources are required to better manage projects and policies using sport for development, illustrating a clear need to build capacity. Most of the skills and knowledge listed were rated as ‘most needed’ or ‘needed a lot’ by the majority of respondents, including:

- 83% of respondents rated ‘How to raise funds and resources’ as ‘most needed’ or ‘needed a lot’
- 79% of respondents rated ‘How to ensure sustainability’ as ‘most needed’ or ‘needed a lot’
- 74% of respondents rated ‘How to draft a project plan’ as ‘most needed’ or ‘needed a lot’

In addition, respondents were asked to rate the following support and/or resources:

- 74% of respondents felt education and training modules were ‘most needed’ or ‘needed a lot’
- 63% of respondents felt that a website or online platform were ‘most needed’ or ‘needed a lot’
- 61% of respondents felt that a guidebook or toolkit were ‘most needed’ or ‘needed a lot’

[Click here to access the full report on the survey findings](#)

Developing a fit for purpose Guidebook

The survey reiterated the need for a guidebook that builds capacity for project managers and policy makers on how to incorporate sport as a development tool. **Less than 50% of respondents felt there were existing guidebooks/toolkits that met their needs** related to applying the attributes of sport; planning, delivering and measuring programmes using sport for development; and bridging the gap between policy and practice.

Respondents cited the need for a guidebook to be accompanied by online tools/resources and capacity building (e.g. training/workshops) related to all the phases of the project cycle - from planning, design and programme theories to implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and continuous adjustment. The need to align sport policies/programmes to the SDGs, including measurement approaches, was made repeatedly.

The survey forms part of a larger project entitled: [Bridging the Divide: A Guide for Translating Policy into Practice and Managing Projects to Maximise the use of Sport for Sustainable Development](#). This project aims to build the capacity of those in the sport sector and beyond, by developing a comprehensive guidebook with resources and support on how to design, deliver and evaluate policies, programmes or projects. The findings will be complemented by a literature review and expert interviews to produce a fit for purpose guidebook.

The project has been certified as a **Tokyo 2020 Support Programme**, part of the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, contributing to the enhanced role of sport in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

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About the Japan Sport Council (JSC) Established in 2003, JSC is the national agency responsible for the development of sport in Japan. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and Japan Sports Agency, JSC plays a vital role in delivering sport policy in Japan and enhancing the value of sport in society.

About the International Platform on Sport and Development (sportanddev) sportanddev is operated by the Swiss Academy for Development. It is the leading hub for organisations and individuals using sport for development to share knowledge, build good practice, coordinate with others and create partnerships. For more information about sportanddev visit <http://www.sportanddev.org>