



SPORT AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

An overview outlining the contribution of sport to the SDGs





The United Nations have long recognized, advocated for and supported the important contributions of sport to development and peace, with a significant record of General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, UN treaties, Secretary-General's reports and other guiding documents highlighting the unique potential of sport.

The processes and milestones which led to the historic adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 were followed by the Sport for Development and Peace community with strong interest and a commitment to continue using sport as a unique tool to support this new global plan of action. As a result of joint efforts, particularly including UN Member States' support to recognize the contribution of sport to the SDGs, Heads of State and Government and High Representatives declared in the Political Declaration for the new Agenda:

Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1, paragraph 37).

This unprecedented recognition offers a compelling incentive and an unmissable opportunity for further joint efforts and action in the field Sport for Development and Peace. With the aspiration of leaving no one behind and maximizing the contribution of sport for a better and peaceful world, sport will continue advancing development as a powerful enabler of the SDGs, as it did for the preceding MDGs. Sport's potential should therefore be revisited in view of the new framework for sustainable development in order to promote synergy, coherence and harmonization of programmes for the implementation of the SDGs. Overall, the global reach and appeal of sport is an extraordinary tool at our disposal for promoting a global outlook on sport at the service of advancing the achievement the SDGs.

The contributions of sport to the SDGs outlined in this overview reflect the expertise, experiences and welcome input of various SDP players, including UN entities and sport and development organizations, which have used sport and recognized its value as a flexible tool for enabling development and peace outcomes.

Drawing from that experience, this overview addresses sport's role and potential in relation to all 17 SDGs, being mindful of the importance of each goal. While doing so, it however discerns between the SDGs where greater evidence and practice with regard to the contributions of sport were identified – marked with the SDG wheel symbol – and those SDGs where sport has a more limited or indirect potential.

Ultimately, the present overview aims at informing, inspiring, encouraging and supporting sport's contributions to the SDGs by relevant stakeholders including States, entities of the United Nations system, sport-related organizations, sport federations and associations, foundations, non-governmental organizations, athletes, the media, civil society, academia and the private sector.



1 NO POVERTY



Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere (In particular targets: 1.1, 1.2, 1.a)

- Sport values such as fairness and respect can serve as examples for an economic system that builds on fair competition and supports an equal sharing of resources. Reinforcing competencies and values such as teamwork, cooperation, fair-play and goal-setting, sport can teach and practice transferable employment skills which can support employment readiness, productivity and income-generating activities.
- Sport can be used as a platform to speak out for the realization of human rights, including the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to social security and the equal rights of women in economic life, which have direct impacts on the goal to end poverty. Sport can also be used as a platform to campaign for socio-economic progress and raise funds to alleviate poverty.
- Sport initiatives can raise and generate funds for poverty programmes, as well as assist in raising awareness and facilitating the mobilization of needed resources to alleviate poverty through partnerships with local and international bodies.
- Sport can promote personal well-being and encourage social inclusion which may lead to larger economic participation. It can help educate empower individuals with social and life skills for a self-reliant and sustainable life.
- Sport programmes in refugee camps can help young people understand the need for cooperation as well as self-reliance. Involvement in sport programmes can provide stability and a safe environment for homeless individuals.
- Sport is itself a productive industry with the ability to lift people out of poverty through employment and contributing to local economies. Sport and sustainable sport tourism can promote livelihoods, including in host communities of sport events.



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture (In particular targets: 2.1, 2.3)

- Sport-based initiatives can mobilize resources, both financial and in-kind, for assisting vulnerable communities in the field or for awareness raising activities that can mobilize the public towards ending hunger.
- The right to adequate food is required for participation in sport. Sport can promote balanced diets, educate individuals with regard to sustainable food production, and encourage improved nutrition that discards industrially processed food items and replaces them by natural and healthy food.
- Sport-based activities are a viable platform to disseminate information and messages on nutrition, issues that affect food security around the world, and the global zero hunger target. Support gathered through sport-based initiatives is fundamental to building the Zero Hunger Generation; to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030, it is necessary to engage the public and encourage them to drive political, business and societal decisions that can effect world change.
- Sport can raise awareness on food waste and create educational initiatives to change behaviors towards a sustainable future. Organizations can set an example by sourcing food from sustainable and responsible producers. Sport can be an enabler to build capacities and best practices for food waste management in order to tackle food waste in sport, as well as to put systems in place to reduce food waste impact especially at sport events.



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (In particular targets: 3.1-3.5, 3.7, 3.9)



The right to health serves as the basis for achieving healthy lives through physical activity and sport.

Physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality by the World Health Organization. Regular sport is a countermeasure available to nearly everyone, which can also address the economic impact of physical inactivity.

Sport and physical activity reduce the risk of contracting non-communicable diseases by strengthening cardiovascular health in particular. Participation in sport can contribute to tackling and preventing obesity.

Sport encourages individuals, including the elderly, to adopt active lifestyles. It has a positive impact on child and healthy adolescent development and well-being.

Sport can help reduce infant, child and maternal mortality and improve post-natal recovery by increasing personal fitness of mothers and contributing to the prevention of play-related deaths. By implementing child safeguarding measures, sport programmes can ensure the safety and well-being of children and cause change in other sectors by setting a good example.

Sport-based education programmes are a viable platform for health education, including for hard-to-reach groups, particularly to disseminate information on sexual and reproductive health, alcohol and substance abuse, as well as communicable diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS.

Sport-based social programmes promote mental well-being for at-risk communities through trauma counselling and inclusion efforts. Sport can enhance mental health by delivering social, psychological and physiological benefits.

Sport programmes in refugee camps which are run as organized projects on a continual basis can deliver social, psychological and physiological benefits.

Sport can promote sustainable lifestyles and encourage demand for sustainable consumption of goods and services. Sport can raise awareness about the need for sustainable consumption and production for healthy life and healthy people.

Sport can promote the importance of clean air for health and can provide sustainable solutions.



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all (In particular targets: 4.1, 4.3-4.5, 4.7, 4.a-4.c)



-  The right to education and equal rights of women and girls in the field of education form the basis of this goal. Inclusive sport activities have long been used to foster education and have therefore been identified as a tool to advance those rights. Sport can encourage inclusion and the equal participation of women and girls, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable or underrepresented groups and individuals.
-  Stakeholders in sport and education can cooperate to promote tolerance, diversity and non-discrimination in school programmes.
-  Joint programmes with schools offer additional and alternative physical education and physical activities to support the full learning process and deliver holistic education.
-  Sport can improve learning outcomes by fostering academic performance and achievement, leadership abilities, and concentration and focus capabilities.
-  Sport-based programmes offer education opportunities and life skills to be used beyond school including the workplace.
-  Sport, physical education, physical activity and play can motivate children and youth to attend school and engage with formal and informal education. Sport programmes for girls, including in refugee camps, can be used as an incentive to stay in school.
-  Sport can raise awareness about sustainability through designing sustainable educational curriculums and greening schools and universities.



5 GENDER EQUALITY



Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (In particular targets: 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.c)

 Sport can be a powerful platform for advocacy and awareness raising for gender equality. It can contribute to abolish all forms of discrimination against women and girls; human rights based rules of a sport can help to replace culturally discriminative norms that exclude women and girls from sport.

 While women and girls' rights to participate in sport as athletes or spectators are not respected in many countries, sport can help to foster gender equality in countries and regions where women are discriminated.

 Addressing current gender inequalities across participation, performance and leadership in sport can make a valuable contribution to this Goal. Sport can be used to address constricting gender norms and to promote equal participation of girls and women in sport.

 Sport and sport-based community programmes in particular can, if designed inclusively, cause positive shifts in gender norms and promote gender equality.

 Sport can foster increased self-esteem and confidence of women and girls, empower them and develop skills needed to become equal participants and leaders in their communities. Through sport-based programmes, women and girls can be equipped with knowledge and skills on health, on how to live a healthy and active lifestyle, on how to act in case they experience violence, on employability, and with leadership skills needed to progress in society.

 Sport can provide safe and fair environments for women and girls. A safe playing area for girls is especially essential, for instance in refugee camps.

 Sport can raise awareness and address abuse and gender-based violence within sport.

 Men and boys can be engaged in achieving gender equality in and through sport. Sport can promote better gender relations and cooperation.



Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (In particular targets: 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6a)

- Sport can be an effective educational platform for disseminating messages on water sanitation requirements and management. Educational messages regarding sanitation and hygiene can be transmitted through sport programmes.
- Sport and sport facilities can contribute to targets on water and sanitation by respecting standards and recommendations.
- Access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all can be enhanced through sport settings such as sport facilities adequately equipped to this end. Water-use efficiency can be increased in the sport sector, particularly in sport facilities.
- Improvements in water quality by reducing pollution, dumping and wastewater can be promoted and realized in sport contexts such as aquatic and other sport events.
- Sport can raise awareness on the importance to limit or ban single-use plastic and micro-beads and develop campaigns and initiatives to educate and change the behaviours of spectators and consumers.



Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (In particular targets: 7.2, 7.3, 7a)

- Sport programmes and activities can support initiatives aiming at developing energy provision systems and ensuring access to energy.
- Sport can be a forum for discussion and promotion of energy efficiency. It can promote energy efficiency and clean energy through joint work by relevant stakeholders.
- Sport facilities and sport events can contribute to targets concerning renewable energy, energy efficiency and access to clean energy by respecting standards and recommendations in these regards.
- Sport infrastructures can promote organization models that adopt clean and sustainable energy use.



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (In particular targets: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5-8.7, 8.9)



-  The growing scale of the sport industry, and its links with other sectors, offer opportunities for economic growth and decent employment.
-  Stakeholders in sport that base their activity on the respect of human rights can spur to positively impact local and regional business when organizing sport events.
-  Sport goods and equipment should be produced in line with labour standards and in particular free from forced and child labour and discriminations of all forms.
-  Sport programmes can foster increased employability for women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, thus contributing to inclusive economic growth.
-  Sport-based educational programmes provide skills for employability and opportunities to enter the labour market for youth.
-  Sport-based employment and entrepreneurship can contribute to create decent jobs for all by complying with labour standards throughout their value chain and in line with businesses policies and practices.
-  Sport can generate enhanced overall community involvement, and it can motivate mobilization of the wider community and growth of economic activities associated with sport.
-  Sport events can have long lasting effects on the population if they involve the population for their legacy, to be in line with human rights and labour standards, and to be sustainable.
-  Sport organizations and sport events, if they adopt adequate policies and procedures, can be an opportunity for capacity building, creating jobs, and for economic, social and environmental sustainable development in general.
-  Sport tourism, including tourism involving sport events, can create jobs and promote local culture and products.
-  Sport can promote the effective and responsible management of volunteers, helping to promote their participation in society and community engagement.



Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (In particular targets: 9.1, 9.2, 9.c)

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Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries (In particular targets: 10.2, 10.3)

- The right to equality and non-discrimination is a cornerstone of international law. Sport can promote equality and can serve as a platform to promote the value of diversity. Stakeholders in sport can amplify the message of equality and respect for diversity.
- Sport, including sport events, can be used to celebrate and value diversity. Stakeholders in sport can promote mutual understanding and address discriminatory practices and various forms of discrimination. Sport stadia that serve as stages for human behaviour can become platforms for human rights based inclusiveness and respect for diversity.
- Sport is recognized as a contributor to the empowerment of individuals, such as women and young people, and communities. Participation in sport offers opportunities for the empowerment of people with disabilities; it showcases ability, not disability, thus raising awareness and promoting respect. Sport can therefore be effectively used for the inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, race, ethnicity, origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or economic or other status.
- Equal opportunities can be achieved in and through sport by raising awareness towards existent inequalities and establishing sport-related policies and programmes aimed at reducing them.
- The popularity of, and positive attitude towards sport make it a suitable tool for tackling inequality in areas and populations that are difficult to reach. It can also tackle prejudice and intolerance by promoting tolerance and pro-social behaviour instead.



Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (In particular targets: 11.3, 11.7, 11.c)



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Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (In particular targets: 12.2, 12.3, 12.5, 12.6, 12.8, 12.b)

- Sport can advocate for and contribute to provide inclusive, safe, green and cohesive settlements which are usable for sport and other physical activities. Affordable and accessible sport infrastructures, facilities and related services can contribute to creating inclusive, safe and healthy communities.
- Sport can promote the use of public spaces where diverse populations and marginalized community members can interact and create friendly relations. Sport can reduce anti-social behaviour through the provision of facilities and opportunities in areas affected by poverty, disengagement and low social development.
- Sport can be used to integrate refugees and migrants into communities. Refugee camps, Internally Displaced People locations, and urban locations can include people of all ages, ethnicities and origins.
- Sport can raise awareness with regard to equal rights and inclusive settlements for people with disabilities, the elderly, women and girls, and other vulnerable groups and individuals.
- Sport can help eliminate obstacles and barriers in the environment, transportation, public facilities and services to ensure that people facing those barriers such as persons with disabilities can access sport and physical activities.
- Sport can enhance the sustainable development of cities by building facilities with the most enhanced resource and energy efficiency, and by assessing policies and procedures with procurement standards labelling.



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (In particular targets: 13.1, 13.3)

- Sport can promote sustainable consumption and production through education and awareness raising campaigns. The popularity and outreach of sport offer opportunities for awareness raising and information sharing, including sustainable development and nature-friendly lifestyles. Messages and awareness raising campaigns concerning sustainable consumption and production can be disseminated through sport products, services and events.
- The incorporation of sustainability standards in the production and provision of sport products can contribute to sustainable consumption and production patterns, also involving other industries.
- With regard to natural resources, their sustainable management and efficient use can be enhanced in sport contexts. Sport-based activities involving natural resources, such as outdoor sport, can be platforms to promote the responsible use of natural resources.
- Sport can encourage sustainable tourism and lifestyles as well as sustainable tourism products and services for instance in host cities of sport events. Sport can educate tourists on ways to minimize their travel footprint and promote eco-mobility for example when attending sport events. It can build capacities in tourism and engage relevant stakeholders in sustainable practices which report their impacts on the environment.



Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (In particular targets: 14.2, 14.c)

- Sport-based education programmes can teach children and youth about environmental sustainability and climate change.
- Sport-based public awareness campaigns can promote awareness towards climate protection and can stimulate enhanced community response for local environment preservation. Sport, including sport events and stakeholders involved, can transmit messages regarding climate change and encourage policy developments in this context.
- Sport can help disaster recovery efforts through psychosocial support to affected individuals, especially children, by giving back a sense of normality, identity and belonging. Equally, sport-based projects can support the relief of communities and reconstruction of facilities affected by natural disasters.
- Sport can promote clean air in sport events through awareness raising campaigns, installation of air-pollution detectors and communication of results to the general public.



Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (In particular targets: 15.1, 15.4, 15.9)

- Sport offers a platform for education and promotion regarding the preservation of terrestrial ecosystems.
- Sport can promote awareness raising campaigns on biodiversity, including the dangers of the illegal trade in wildlife. It can contribute to preserve biodiversity through responsible lifestyle choices.
- Sport, through educational initiatives, can provide well-researched insights into the interactions between biodiversity and the lifestyle choices by explaining the interrelatedness of food, consumption, culture and biodiversity conservation.
- Sport in natural terrestrial settings can play an important role in ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. Sport, especially outdoor sport, can incorporate safeguards, activities and messages promoting the sustainable and environmentally respectful use of terrestrial resources.
- Sport is associated to important values and proved to be an effective platform for values advocacy and education. It can therefore be used as a tool for the integration of ecosystem and biodiversity related values into development processes.
- The environmentally friendly organization of sport events, including the construction of sport facilities and infrastructure, can serve as a best practise model and provide sustainability assessment and recommendations on best practices to protect the ecosystem, e.g. prior to the construction of sport facilities for sport events. This comes with innovative solutions and the most resource efficient and clean energy initiatives.



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (In particular targets: 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.5, 16.10)

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Sport can help to rebuild post-conflict societies and uplift affected communities and individuals by fostering the respect, protection and implementation of human rights. Sport can amplify important human rights messages, such as the value of inclusion, respect for diversity and non-discrimination.
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Sport provides a powerful communication platform that can be used to disseminate solidarity and reconciliation messages and to promote a culture of peace. Sport events can provide opportunities for advocating and realizing peace, as notably the Olympic Truce has allowed since ancient history.
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Sport and sport events can promote national unity and identity in a peaceful way, respecting others.
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Role models in sport can promote peace and human rights and foster dialogue and social cohesion.
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Sport activities can help to address war-related trauma and promote healing by providing safe spaces for activities that enable victims of war to regain a sense of security and normalcy.
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Sport can serve as a tool for supporting demobilization and disarmament efforts as well as supporting the reintegration of ex-combatants, particularly former child soldiers, into their communities.
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Sport can support the rapprochement and integration of divided communities and cultures through friendly games. The universal popularity of sport offers an important means of engaging communities that are hard to reach and socially excluded groups, for example via sport programmes for refugees or indigenous peoples.
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Sport provides a useful vehicle to train a number of important social and life skills and to address important risk factors for crime and violence, especially amongst youth. For instance, sport can raise awareness and be a platform to share information on sexual and gender-based violence, including in conflict situations. Ending abuse, violence and exploitation in sport can significantly contribute to achieving peaceful societies.
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Respect, equality and fair-play, some of the core values in sport are also fundamental principles for peaceful and inclusive societies, thus sport programmes that emphasize these values can contribute to the realization of such societies.
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Upholding sport ideals such as respect for the opponent and the rules of the game and maintaining dignity in victory as well as defeat, can foster democratic processes and institutions. Reforming sport institutions can help to ensure that they are effective, accountable and inclusive by basing their policies and actions on human rights including principles of justice and good governance, and to promote a culture of ethics, integrity, and lawfulness.
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The promotion and maintenance of clean sport is fundamental to underpin fairness in society.





Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (In particular, targets:17.9, 17.13, 17.16, 17.17,17.19)



-  The global reach, unmatched popularity, wide appeal, universal character and value-based foundation of sport, as well as its particular association with youth, make it a versatile means of implementation.
-  Sport can catalyze, build and strengthen multi-stakeholder networks and partnerships for sustainable development and peace goals, involving and bringing together governments, donors, NGOs, sport organizations, the private sector, academia and the media.
-  The presence and diversity of sport and sport organizations on local, national, regional and international levels can provide effective networks for partnerships and implementation of programmes.
-  Sport can serve as a link between different sectors which can address a wide variety of topics, pool resources and create synergies.
-  The sport, development and peace communities can contribute to collaboratively measuring progress of sustainable development by assessing and reporting on the contributions of sport to the SDGs.