



Getting into the Game

Understanding the evidence for
child-focused sport for development





In 2006, Barcelona Football Club (FC Barcelona) and the Barça Foundation signed a pioneering partnership with UNICEF. Since then, over two million children in seven countries have been reached through UNICEF programme support amounting to €19 million. The partners' focus is to improve children's lives through sport, play and protection.

While delivering projects, the partners have identified a critical gap in the availability of robust evidence to underpin sport for development (S4D) practice. Therefore, in 2017, they expanded their strategic direction to include initiatives designed to build the body of global knowledge on S4D and demonstrate the need for greater understanding of evidence on child-focused S4D.

The partners engaged UNICEF's Office of Research – Innocenti to undertake the first phase of the research, which has culminated in the study: *Getting into the Game: Understanding the evidence for child-focused sport for development* – the first comprehensive global research effort of its kind on S4D for children. This document is a summary of the full research report.

A second phase of research will take place in 2019. Current findings will be tested, including emerging theories of change, utilizing secondary analysis of the data collected in the *Sport for Development Programming Survey*. Primary data collection tools will be designed, piloted and refined to help understand the common characteristics and practices running through S4D initiatives which are needed for transferability and scaling up in different contexts. This will also involve meaningful consultation with young people, S4D experts and other stakeholders.

Another important initiative the partnership has undertaken was to establish an international multi-sectoral S4D working group to promote better coordination and knowledge sharing. Professionals from a range of institutions and sectors are convened to contribute to the design of a specific framework on S4D for children. In the culmination of Phase 2 of the research, efforts will focus on translating the knowledge gathered into policy, practice and actionable recommendations for organizations and policymakers developing and delivering programmes for children that have an S4D component.



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Report Summary

Introduction

Purpose of the study

Sport is a powerful tool for involving all children – including the most marginalized and vulnerable – in group activities from an early age (UNHCR, 2013). For this reason, sport for development (S4D) organizations use sport as an inclusive means of helping children to improve their health; to develop their physical abilities; to develop their social, educational and leadership skills; and of course, to play and have fun.

S4D initiatives come in various forms – from those that build personal and social programmes around sport, to those that include sport as one of many approaches to achieving social goals.

Reviewing evidence on sport for development

The new UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti report, *Getting into the Game: Understanding the evidence for child-focused sport for development*, analyses available evidence on S4D initiatives for children and youth, to identify what works, how it works, and how to improve S4D policy and practice. This document is a summary of the full research report, which can be accessed in final manuscript form at www.unicef-irc.org/getting-into-the-game.

Getting into the Game – the first phase of a two-stage research project – seeks to strengthen the evidence base on policies and practices for S4D and to build knowledge on how to effectively use S4D to promote positive outcomes in four specific areas:

- Education
- Social inclusion
- Child protection
- Empowerment

The goal of the research is to map current initiatives and present evidence on harnessing the power of sport to improve the lives of children and youth. This study first defines sport and presents data to show the coverage, content, and monitoring and evaluation approaches of S4D programmes from an array of organizations surveyed in this research, including UNICEF and the Barça Foundation. It then compares a diverse set of evidence-based programmes and practices to refocus attention on the advantages of S4D approaches to meet the needs of children and youth and to foster cross-national learning.

This summary of the *Getting into the Game* report highlights lessons learned on the positive contribution of

S4D programmes, and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners and researchers, articulated in four sections:

- Sport and sport for development: Background
- Getting into the Game: Key messages
- Summary of findings in four outcome areas
 - Education: Teaching and learning with and through sport
 - Social inclusion: All children in the game
 - Child protection: Risk and security – the sport-protection paradox
 - Empowerment: New skills, team support and confidence building
- Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals

Where next?

The findings cover how the key outcomes of education, social inclusion, protection and empowerment link to sport; what works in practice; the main challenges for implementation; and recommendations for better policy, practice and research.



Sport for development: A definition

Sport for development (S4D) refers to the use of sport, or any form of physical activity, to provide both children and adults with the opportunity to achieve their full potential through initiatives that promote personal and social development.

Sport and sport for development: Background

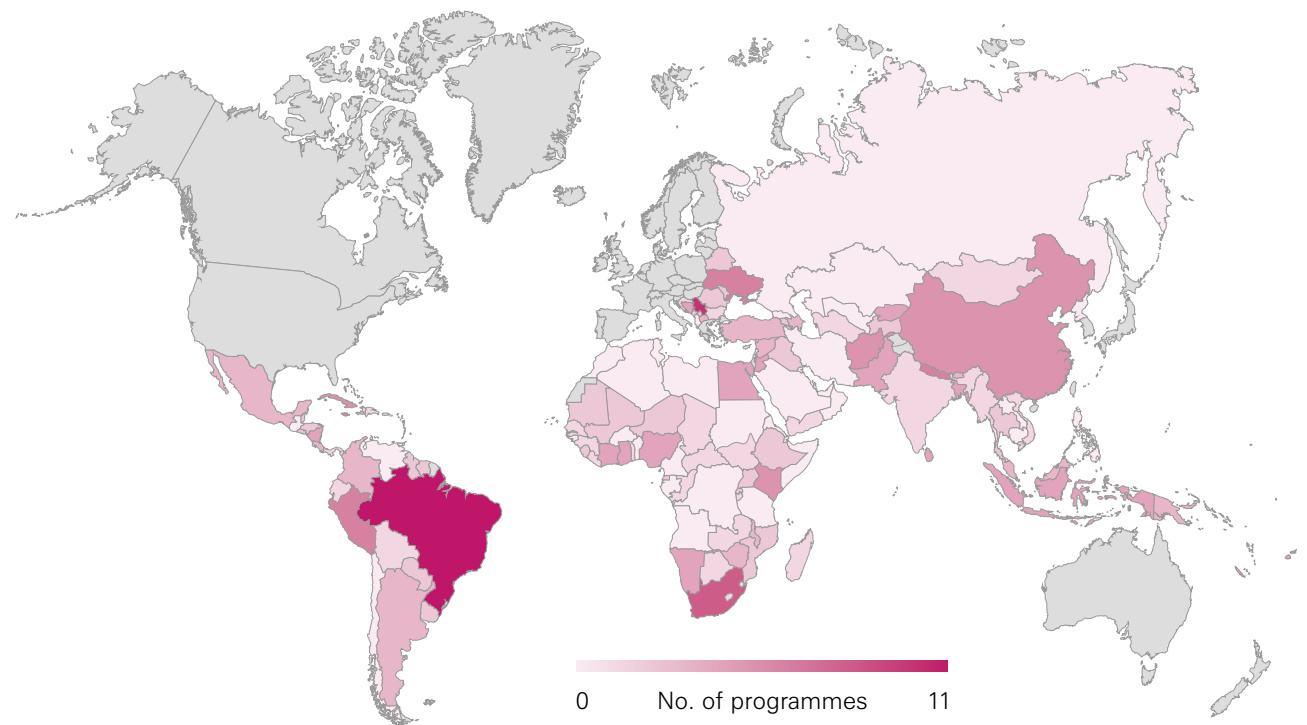


Sport is any physical activity – participative, casual, organized or competitive, either rule-bound or unstructured – that includes a form of active play, active recreation, or game. Sport is not restricted to nationally recognized activities, such as those with professional leagues, and equally includes indigenous games and sports.

Over the last two decades, the number of S4D initiatives has increased globally. The excitement and enthusiasm for sport programming is evident. For example, Beyond Sport, a global organization based in the United Kingdom, convenes a network of 2,140 organizations with a global sample of 2,985 projects in 148 countries – many of these targeting young people.

Since the year 2000, UNICEF has advocated for the role of sport, recreation and play in child development from early childhood to adolescence. During the initial stages of UNICEF's involvement in the S4D field, multiple potential benefits of sport were verified by research (UNICEF, 2004).

UNICEF Country Offices with S4D programmes



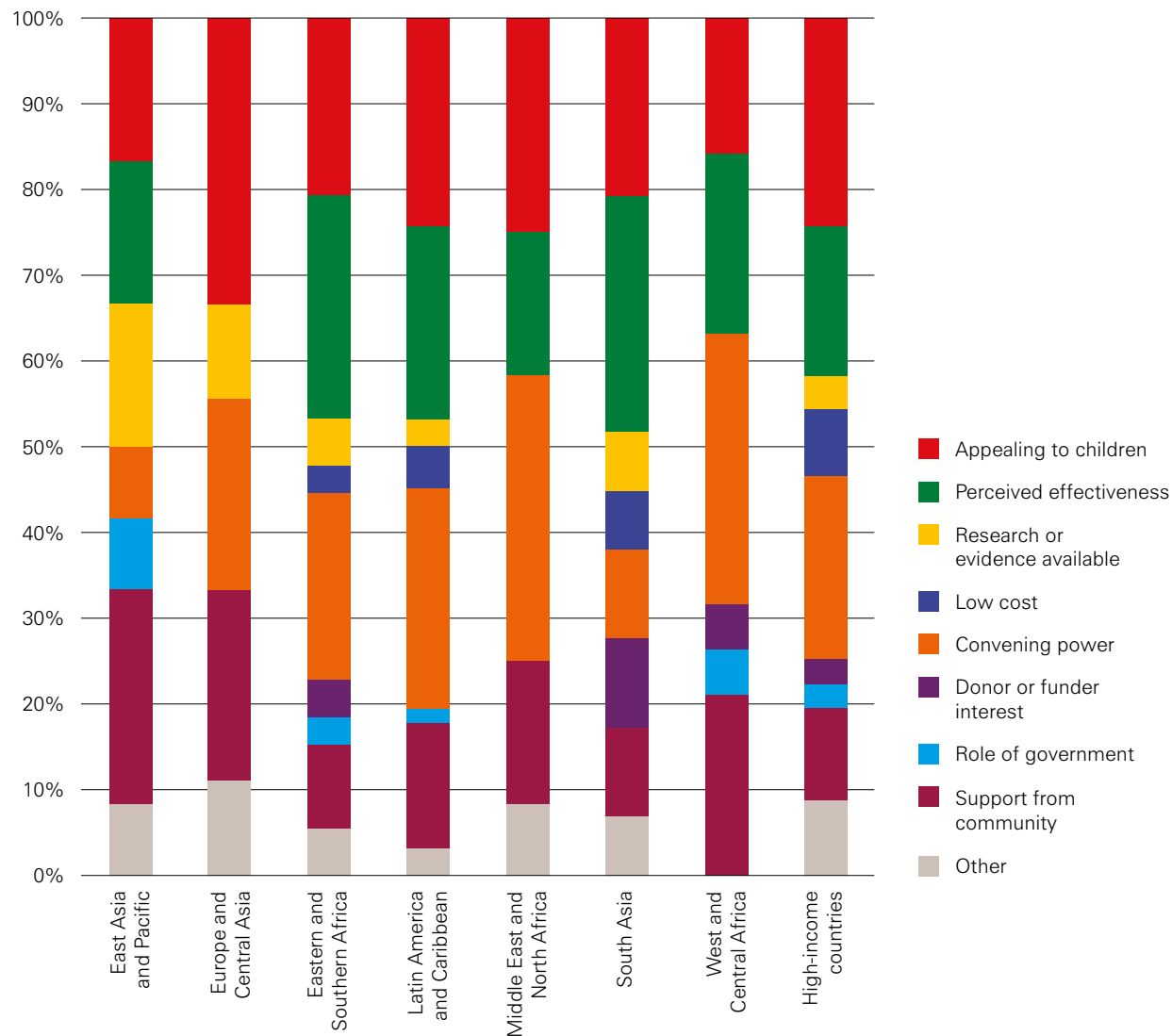
These potential benefits include: better health; reduced stress and depression; improved confidence and self-esteem; improved learning and academic performance; reduced likelihood of smoking and illicit drug use; and reduced crime. However, evidence from real life case studies showed that the positive effects of sports participation were likely to be associated with short-term, individual-level outcomes for children rather than with long-term development goals.

According to a recent review of S4D organizations, there may be more than 3,000 S4D initiatives (Schulenkorf et al., 2016). UNICEF, along with a wide array of other organizations, promotes every child's right to play through S4D programming. For example, UNICEF has developed partnerships in high-income countries with sports organizations, such as with the Barça Foundation, across several sectors, including education, social inclusion, child protection, and health.

Notes: Results are based on document analysis and *Country Office S4D Survey* results within UNICEF. Number of programmes by country available in the full report. Not shown: Joint regions (e.g. Eastern Caribbean = 1 programme)

Source: UNICEF-Innocenti, 2019.

Reasons why programmes chose sport to address child development needs



Source: *Sport for Development Programming Survey*, 2018.

Research methods

Getting into the Game contains a synthesis of findings from several data-gathering components: an integrative literature review; a systematic mapping of available evidence; surveys of S4D programmes within UNICEF and those implemented by a wide range of other organizations around the world. Surveys were carried out in eight languages and were structured with the aim of understanding the evidence in each of the four key outcome areas.

A literature review enabled the research team to analyse studies using qualitative and/or quantitative data collection techniques. Close to 200 articles were reviewed for the full report, of which 107 were accepted and included in the final analysis. The evidence reviewed was collected within the last 10 years and was limited to robust peer-reviewed articles that focused on programmes that served children and youth under 18 years. Literature in both English and Spanish was included.

Each of the articles reviewed was systematically mapped and synthesized based on specific criteria, including:

primary objectives, enacting organization, year of initiative, target participants, specific sport, geographic location, study methods, and results – as related to each of the four outcome areas. The quality of the research presented in each article was evaluated on the basis of three criteria: conceptualization; internal validity of methods and analyses; and external validity/utility. Ethical considerations were also noted where the study included a description of such considerations. Eighty per cent of the articles included in the analysis were of medium to high quality.

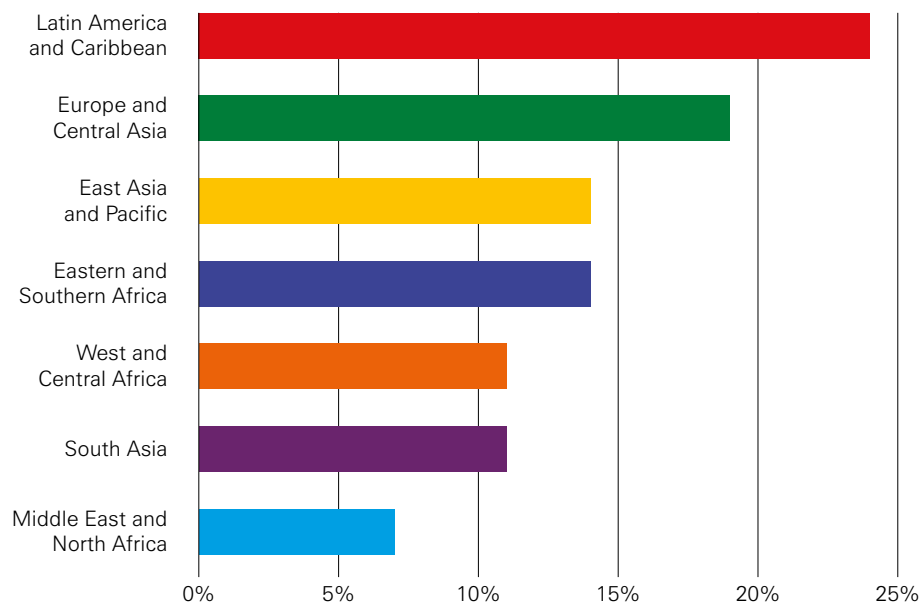
Two surveys were designed and developed to further inform the analysis. These provide a richer description of what works and where evidence gaps lie, and in some cases validate programme theories developed in each chapter of the full report. The *Sport for Development Programming Survey*, created by UNICEF, gathered information on S4D programme designs, implementation strategies, monitoring and evaluation systems, partnerships and funding, and participant populations from 106 implementing organizations. The UNICEF *Country Office S4D Survey* gathered relevant information from 263 UNICEF-led or supported S4D initiatives.

Highlights from the two UNICEF sport for development surveys, 2018

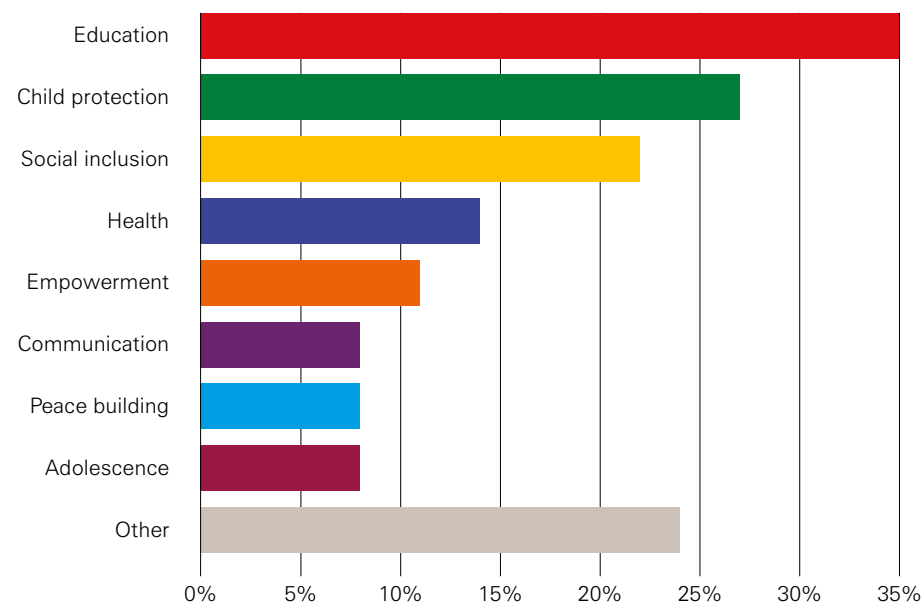
- **The survey of practitioners across 106 S4D programmes from around the world was proportionally similar to a global sample of 2,985 identified programmes, and thus findings are mostly broadly generalizable. In addition, the survey within UNICEF identified 263 UNICEF-led or supported S4D initiatives in 99 countries around the world.**
- **Most programmes were located in Africa but, within each region, S4D programmes tended to be located in higher-income countries (see page 8).**
- **Sport was integrated because it appeals to children (see page 6). Sport (especially football) was used as the main attraction that, when integrated with non-sport activities, helped to promote positive values.**
- **The strengths of using an S4D approach include the value given to sport by a broad national audience as well as government interest, according to select UNICEF Country Offices. However, they also pointed to the challenges of using such an approach, including: fundraising, the gap between policy and practice, and the technical/staff capacity (see page 9).**
- **The programmes identified aim to support the most vulnerable children in a variety of focus areas, including education and child protection (see page 8).**
- **The Sport for Development Programming Survey found that monitoring and evaluation tools were developed by internal programming teams for several reasons, such as internal feedback, planning, annual reports and proposals/grants (see page 12). More importantly, the programmes reported (mostly through self-evaluations) that they were moderately to very effective in meeting their sports and non-sports objectives.**

Selected data from UNICEF Country Office S4D Survey

In which regions are S4D programmes found?

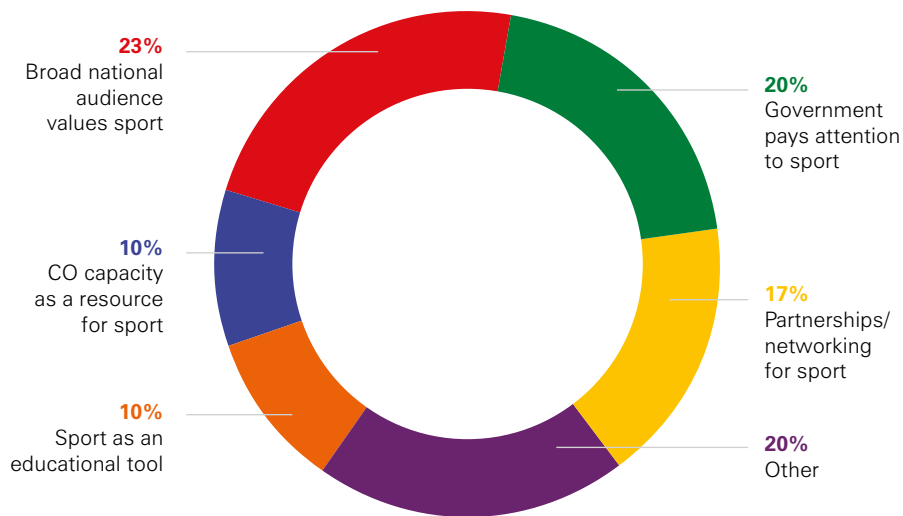


What are the focus areas of S4D programmes?

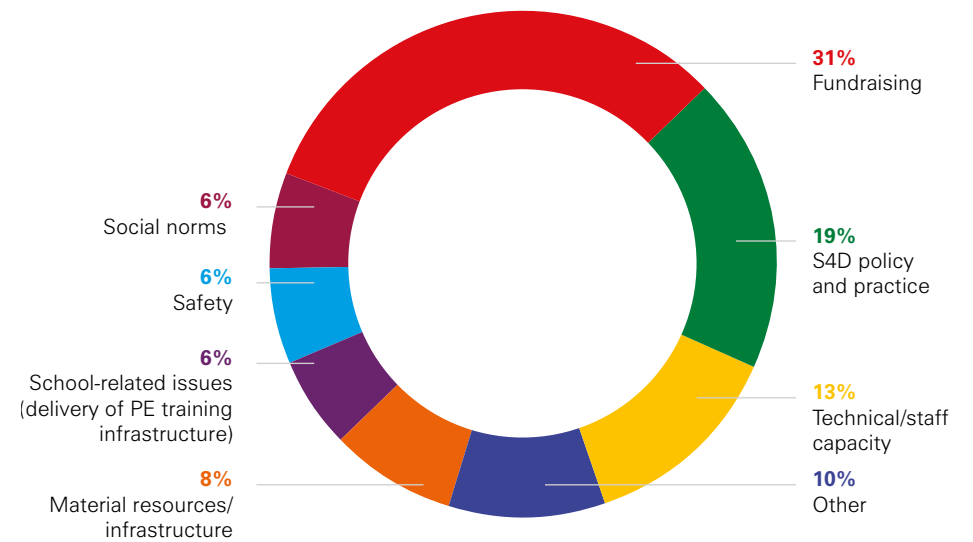


Source: UNICEF-Innocenti, 2019. Based on analysis of *Country Office S4D Survey* results within UNICEF.

Strengths of S4D approach



Challenges of S4D approach



Notes: Results based on document analysis and *Country Office S4D Survey* results within UNICEF. Pie charts based on 20 UNICEF Country Office responses out of a possible 99.

Source: UNICEF-Innocenti, 2019.

Getting into the Game: Key messages



S4D initiatives can increase student engagement in education, including those most at risk of leaving school: They have been shown to improve the attainment of life skills, such as empowerment, leadership skills and self-esteem, and to create better relationships with teachers and adults.

Sport can be a positive factor in children's lives: Evidence shows that well-designed S4D initiatives are improving the lives of children everywhere. Sports activities increase access to, and participation in, initiatives and services for children – including the most marginalized children. By so doing, sport promotes equitable outcomes in learning, skills development, inclusion, safety and empowerment.

Improve the quality of programme design: To achieve positive outcomes, the programmes and implementation plans of sports initiatives must be designed in line with specific objectives/strategies, such as education or empowerment. Across all key outcomes, it is important to consider context when undertaking programme design, as this generates understanding of

Children may in fact go for the sport but stay for the support.



barriers to access and of community needs and children's individual needs. Adopting a multisectoral and co-production approach to programme design is critical to addressing concerns and achieving complementarities at the community and system levels – this includes work with other child services and sectors to build complementarity, capacity and impact.

Programmes that spend a greater percentage of time on sport tended to also report a *higher* number of children leaving the programme.

Provide quality training and clear standards

for coaches and trainers: Coaches and trainers play a crucial role in generating beneficial outcomes for children as they can instil positive behaviour and act as role models. Safeguarding children, especially the most vulnerable, in and around sports initiatives is of immense importance and must be a priority in the training of S4D coaches and trainers. A balance in gender and diversity of experience in the coaching and training of staff, attuned to the needs of the children, is critical.

Create a culture of positive participation: Evidence shows that special care should be taken to ensure sports initiatives do not reinforce negative social-cultural attitudes and norms that present a risk to children or that undermine the goals of the initiatives, including:

- Sports cultures that can underscore violence and power relations
- Exclusiveness (due to cost, peer pressure, limited access, etc.)
- Pervasive structural and social inequality.

Address risks and limitations: It is critical to note that sport is not the answer to all the issues children and young people face. As such, both the advantages and disadvantages of S4D must be recognized. Some evidence may even indicate negative effects on children, such as the child protection risks of participation in sport, or the contrasting gender equity effects of certain empowerment programmes. Some survey data indicate that programmes which spend a greater percentage of time on sport tended to also report a *higher* number of children leaving the S4D programme. This speaks to the importance of directly addressing risks and getting the balance right between the amount of sport and the

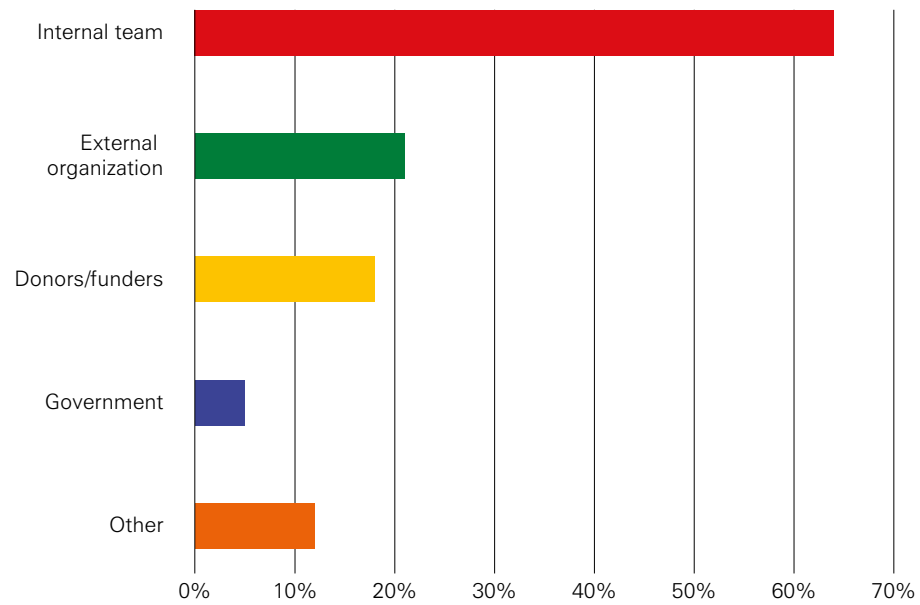
Coaches and trainers play a crucial role in generating positive outcomes for children. Safeguarding children must be a priority when training S4D coaches.

amount of social development in S4D interventions. Children may in fact go for the sport but stay for the support. Lessons from the literature indicate that the design of S4D programmes in itself can create challenges in terms of distinguishing the degree to which the sports activity is the reason for programme effects.

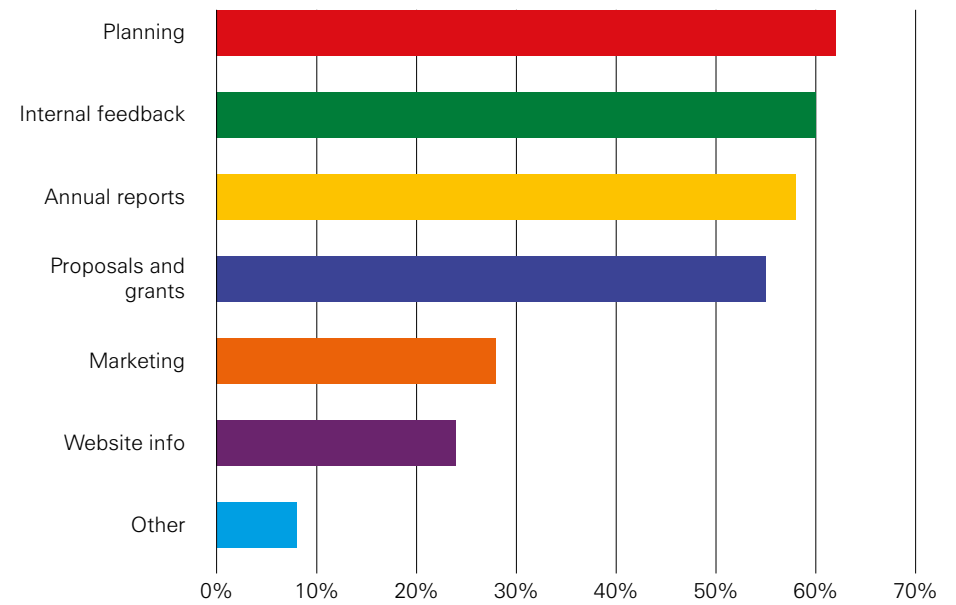
Invest in evidence generation: Better research and data are needed to support programming, policy and advocacy, and it is hoped that this report summary will stimulate further efforts. There is a need to develop more robust quantitative methods and effective evaluations that contribute to the body of knowledge. It is essential to integrate efforts to prioritize the child's voice in evidence generation and the child's perspective in setting programme goals.

Evidence shows that well-designed S4D initiatives are improving the lives of children everywhere.

Who develops monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems for programmes?



How are M&E results used by programmes?



Source: Sport for Development Programming Survey, 2018.

Summary of findings in four outcome areas



Education

Teaching and learning with and through sport



Sport can incentivize children to engage in S4D programmes, although the paths by which it can improve academic performance are less clear.

What is education and how can it relate to sport?

Education is the process of learning and gaining the knowledge, skills and competence that all children and young people need to succeed and achieve, to which they have rights, regardless of their circumstances. Educational outcomes can refer, for instance, to levels of proficiency in academic subjects, completion rates, out-of-school rates, and attainment of life skills for the future. Education-focused S4D initiatives have the potential to address the challenges education systems face by contributing to positive educational outcomes, such as student engagement, attendance, their overall enjoyment in school, and improved behaviour and relationship with teachers and peers which are key for a positive teaching and learning environment.

Sport can incentivize children and young people to engage in S4D programmes, although the paths followed to effectively improve educational outcomes – such as enrolment, achievement and performance – are less clear. In high-income countries, evidence indicates a positive link between education-focused S4D and academic performance, while evidence from other regions suggests no improved educational outcomes or that indirect positive outcomes may also influence better academic performance, such as better concentration and more alertness in class as well as better health.

S4D programmes that work for education are those that:

- Create a positive teaching and learning environment where participants and educators can engage in problem identification and problem-solving to enable critical thinking around the challenges that participants and their communities face.
- Recruit, train and develop quality educators – whether they are teachers, coaches, mentors or volunteers, they need to facilitate positive relationships, support youth and teach the key competencies and skills. Their contracts and benefits are also key factors that need to be considered.
- Meaningfully engage key stakeholders and local experts, including participants, families, communities and schools, to meet programme goals. In one example, a programme brought participants back as mentors and coaches, to apply their contextual knowledge and experience.

Challenges to S4D programmes seeking to improve educational outcomes include:

- Designing and delivering quality education-focused S4D initiatives without local experts and stakeholders, such as schools, can prove challenging. For example, this can lead to learning materials not reflecting the needs of participants, inadequate training of implementing educators, or bullying being replicated in S4D initiatives.
- Overreach in setting objectives and attempts to meet multiple social goals rather than prioritizing goals based on target-group needs. Education interventions, coupled with other goals, can create challenges for the S4D organization in terms of available staff capacity.
- Lack of research on and clarity around how sport can play a larger role in achieving educational outcomes, particularly in regard to academic performance.

Policymakers and practitioners seeking to improve educational outcomes can trial the following promising practices:

- Strengthen capacity of organizations to deliver pedagogy aligned to clear, realistic objectives which reflect the financial, human and material resources available as well as the expectations and conditions of participants and educators. To this end, encourage engagement with local schools – physical education may provide a platform from which to align and strengthen the engagement with and impact of S4D initiatives.
- Experiment with the design, delivery, implementation and funding of programmes to sustain long-term educational engagement and ensure ownership of the projects by seeking to achieve long-term outcomes. S4D initiatives should also better understand how to continue positive outcomes with post-programming activities.
- Fine-tune the available research tools to better understand how organizations achieve educational outcomes (by type of outcome) and promote a culture of evidence-informed practice which aligns with and feeds into the improvement of S4D initiatives. Longitudinal research can also be aligned with practice to assess sustained impacts and effects and to support S4D initiatives.



**SPOTLIGHT:
Mathare Youth Sport Association**

Since 1987, Mathare Youth Sport Association (MYSA) has been using sport for social improvement and community development in Kenya. Today, it engages over 30,000 children and young people in sport activities through a range of interventions, which include, among others, work readiness and employability programmes. These aim to help youth participants develop knowledge and skills to access employment opportunities after education through career guidance, skills training, internships, career fairs and job placements.

For each programme, MYSA links inputs with activities to programme and community outcomes through a visual pathway that is connected to its theory of change. The organization collects data to show participants' progress in gaining the knowledge needed for identifying career paths and perceived understanding of the application process. Through a high degree of self-reflection informed by data and focus group discussions, MYSA is able to build stronger links between its programmes and its desired outcomes.

www.mysakenya.org

Social inclusion

All children in the game



Sport programmes facilitate a sense of belonging and acceptance through interactions with peers... and increased participation of marginalized groups.

What is social inclusion and why use sport to promote it?

Social inclusion refers to a multidimensional concept, adapted from Bailey (2005), which focuses on three dimensions with unique links to sport. The *relational* dimension of social inclusion pertains to ensuring a sense of belonging and acceptance through interactions with peers, or other social interactions. Sport programmes are shown to facilitate this form of inclusion through team sport and increased participation of young people from marginalized groups. *Functional* social inclusion encompasses improvement of skills, equity and empowerment, facilitated by sport programmes that focus on skills development, reducing socio-economic inequality, or focusing on girls' empowerment. *Physical* social inclusion refers to the availability and suitability of safe spaces for marginalized groups to convene, interact and participate in social life – as well as to address their physical needs or preferences. Sport programmes that act on perceptions of suitability, access and the safety of the intervention – among others – will perform best.

S4D programmes that work for social inclusion are those that:

- Develop team sports that are participatory and yet can be adapted to meet the needs of all children and youth (in terms of format, rules, kit, equipment and facilities, etc.).
- Create supportive, participatory environments that also publicly recognize the accomplishments of individuals from marginalized groups.
- Promote sports that challenge norms of ability and gender suitability, to remove social barriers that prevent marginalized children and young people from participating in sport.
- Build the capacity of marginalized young people and facilitate their participation in all aspects of the programme.

Challenges to S4D programmes seeking to improve social inclusion include:

- Sports cultures (e.g. masculinization of sport) that promote elitism and exclude certain children and youth (e.g. a specific gender or LGBTQi youth), thus acting as a barrier to inclusion.
- Family or community (societal) views that sport is not for marginalized children who historically have been excluded from sports or are new to sports.
- Pervasive structural inequality, deprivation and inaccessible sites that limit inclusion – whether because of cost or because of physical disability.
- A lack of good research on the effectiveness of different approaches to diversity.

Policymakers and practitioners seeking to achieve social inclusion outcomes can trial the following promising practices:

- Mix teams rather than having homogeneous ones.
- Hire a diverse workforce of coaches and trainers and train them to be fair, to justly address discrimination incidents, and to meet the needs of participants, especially children and young people with disabilities.
- Set up an inclusive system. For example, programmes can introduce culturally sensitive policies/adaptations; establish systems for reporting and fair adjudication; or develop reward systems.
- Recognize that context matters by having a multisectoral collaboration to provide wrap-around services (e.g. education, health, social protection agencies) and involve the community, for instance, through consultation forums.
- Create accessibility through financial subsidies for marginalized participants and by adapting facilities for people with disabilities.



**SPOTLIGHT:
Barça Foundation – Contextualizing social inclusion**

Each year the Barça Foundation works with over 120,000 children through its social inclusion and violence prevention programmes in 50 countries. Among the Barça Foundation’s many efforts to improve the lives of vulnerable children is its FutbolNet Methodology, a sports-based social intervention that has reached more than 22,000 refugee children since 2016 in Greece, Italy, Lebanon and Spain.

FutbolNet aims to increase participation in inclusive and adapted recreational sports, develop inclusiveness, promote the active participation of children with different abilities, foster inclusion between refugees and host communities, and improve social educators’ skills in using sport as a teaching tool. Teams are comprised of different genders, disability statuses, origins and skills, and all are encouraged to participate in the game.

foundation.fcbarcelona.com/futbolnet_en

Child protection

Risk and security: the sport-protection paradox



Although inconsistent, evidence shows that sport can contribute to the reduction of risky behaviour and gender-based violence.

What is child protection and why use it in sport?

Child protection refers to the prevention of and response to violence, exploitation and abuse against children and youth. Child protection services target children with unique vulnerabilities to abuse, which may include those who live without access to parental care, those in conflict with the law, those in settings of armed conflict, and others (UNICEF, 2006).

Sport is important for child protection because even though evidence is inconsistent, it shows it can contribute to positive child outcomes through the reduction of violence and risky behaviour (e.g. non-violent crime, delinquency, substance misuse and recidivism) and – promisingly – reductions in gender-based violence.

No evidence identified in the report has been found to show that sport contributes to a reduction of exploitation or abuse of children – both of which are key components of the definition of child protection. Importantly, participation in sport can come with justifiable, and serious, child protection concerns.

S4D programmes that work for child protection are those that:

- Contribute to protection of children and young people through the development of agency via the promotion of social capital and relationships of support that can lead to education and employment.
- Are set in a safe space that provides a sense of security to socialize without stigmatization or scrutiny by authorities.
- Develop conflict resolution competencies and can encourage cooperative behaviour. For example, fair play with discipline for violations, such as penalties (as opposed to rewards) for overly aggressive behaviours.
- See coaches as role models for athletes to help reduce gender inequities and gender-based violence by generating discussions related to violence involving other athletes and increasing bystander intervention.

Challenges to S4D programmes seeking to promote child protection include:

- Lack of evidence on how sport can be used for child protection and the risk that localized interventions overstate potential effects on systemic drivers of violence, such as social norms and biases.
- Evidence that points towards inadequate regulation to safeguard the protection of children in sports.
- Understaffing of child protection-trained programmers.
- Some sports that continue to expose children to multiple forms of risk and violence that are normalized within the sports' contexts and cultures (and supported by reward/power structures and hypermasculinity).

No evidence identified in the report has been found to show that sport contributes to a reduction of exploitation or abuse of children... participation in sport can come with justifiable, and serious, child protection concerns.



Policymakers and practitioners seeking to promote child protection can trial the following promising practices:

- Create uniform/standard practices that make coach training mandatory to reduce the likelihood of abusive practices.
- Tie sports into existing social programmes that tackle structural problems and child protection risks at the systemic level, such as poverty and education, which have the potential to hinder protection outcomes.
- Advocate for the production of more rigorous research and evidence that specifically explores the impact of sports-based programming on violence reduction in all its forms.
- Follow through and monitor the implementation of international and national safeguarding standards.

**SPOTLIGHT:
AMANDLA's Safe-Hubs for child protection**

AMANDLA is a South African non-profit organization that aims to create safe spaces by using football to engage youth in holistic development through daily, after-school activities. Its 'Safe-Hubs' provide structured play, sport activities and training in life skills and employability. Sport serves as the foundation for building relationships among vulnerable children, youth and adults. Coaches are trained in first aid, child protection, and as child and youth care workers. Social workers are present on site for counselling and providing reliable referral pathways. Young people are central in all decision-making.

AMANDLA prioritizes monitoring and evaluation. Data collected through multiple strategies are constantly evaluated and reported, and critical reflection allows for learning and improvement. Evidence shows a reduction in contact crime in the area surrounding the Safe-Hubs, with large numbers of participants showing more resilience to peer pressure, setting goals and demonstrating motivation to achieving these. Through its Social Franchise System, AMANDLA aims to implement 100 Safe-Hubs across South Africa as well as to roll out Safe-Hubs beyond Africa by 2030.

www.safe-hub.org/en/welcome

Empowerment

New skills, team support and confidence building



The deficit model approach overemphasizes shortcomings and undermines promotion of children's empowerment and agency.

What is empowerment and why use sport to promote it?

In *Getting into the Game*, the conceptualization of empowerment is divided into three categories: individual, group and community. Each category is linked to sport in unique way. *Individual empowerment* refers to self-determination, which children and youth experience through autonomy, self-discipline/control, agency, positive self-concept and the motivation they feel when mastering a sport skill and being able to practise it. *Group empowerment* refers to collective agency that arises from thinking, working and playing in a group towards a shared or common goal – experiences common to team sports. *Community empowerment* is the enhancement of local communities' capacity for civic engagement and for contributing to their own sustainable development. Many sports teams are community-based, are involved in community activities and instil a sense of local pride and standards.

S4D programmes that work for children's personal empowerment are those that:

- Deliver in autonomy-supportive and mastery-oriented sports climates. For example, programmes that use the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model to promote individual empowerment.
- Foster team sport and collective agency. Team sports supported by caring relationships with peers and programme adults (i.e. coaches and mentors) also work for the empowerment of individuals.
- Support participatory approaches using experiential learning and reinforcing community connections, such as with families or through civic engagement.
- Promote children's civic engagement by encouraging the participation of families and communities.

Challenges to S4D programmes seeking to improve children's empowerment include:

- Existing negative social perceptions of certain groups of children and youth.
- Pervasiveness of the deficit model approach, which overemphasizes shortcomings and overlooks the strengths of children and young people – thereby undermining the promotion of empowerment and agency.
- Adultism, whereby adults assume children cannot or should not contribute to participatory activities (including design and implementation of S4D). This, again, discourages participation and can disempower.
- A lack of intentional design to ensure that programme processes facilitate empowerment.
- A lack of guidance/consensus on defining and measuring empowerment – as both an outcome and process, which can be difficult to disentangle.

Team sports supported by caring relationships work to empower children and develop a positive self-concept and motivation, through the mastery of a sports skill.

Policymakers and practitioners seeking to strengthen empowerment outcomes can trial the following promising practices:

- Train coaches to support autonomy and mastery climates in S4D.
- Use evidence-based experiential learning models to develop skills (e.g. TPSR model).
- Include various stakeholders, e.g. youth, parents, community members, and others from various sectors in the community in the programme design, implementation and evaluation.
- Promote the use of evidence-informed and intentionally designed approaches to S4D for empowerment.



**SPOTLIGHT:
Fútbol Más – Community empowerment**

Fútbol Más operates in more than 70 neighbourhoods in seven regions of Chile, in addition to Peru, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Paraguay and Kenya. Its initiatives include recovering public spaces for protection and training, and promoting interaction and recreation in emergency contexts. The organization's model uses football to promote children's well-being and community solidarity.

Fútbol Más targets families and communities to promote the long-term, sustainable impact of its programmes. Its young participants aged 6 to 15 are supported by trained resilience tutors aged 16 to 20. Families participate in Neighborhood Coordination Teams, which help the tutors to lead the management of the programme until they can do so autonomously. Fútbol Más also connects local stakeholders with community leaders, supporting community members to be their own advocates. It aims to foster partnerships between children and adults, expanding their local circle of support and contributing to community empowerment and sustainable development.

futbolmas.org/en/

Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals

Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the child-related targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires new and innovative ways of thinking about how to improve the lives of children and youth around the world. Many sport enthusiasts would suggest that sport can achieve great personal and social development for children and young people (Coakley, 2011). However, while there is consensus that sport can have positive impacts on children's lives, the types of outcomes supported by evidence are varied and the evidence is not always clear.

Understanding that children have a right to play, as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, *Getting into the Game* focuses on four key outcome areas for child development: education, social inclusion, child protection and empowerment. Through this focus, the report provides a wealth of evidence for the potential of S4D programming to support the achievement of SDGs with child-specific targets, including SDGs 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).



Where next?

With the aim of strengthening the global discourse on effective S4D programming, the Barça Foundation and UNICEF partnership will further engage the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti to build evidence on S4D to empower practitioners and policymakers to meet the needs of all the children they work with.

The next phase of work will include: developing and undertaking Phase 2 of the research project; supporting the work of the S4D for Children Working Group; and continuing to build the evidence base through managing the UNICEF *Sport for Development Programming Survey* and publishing its data.

Building on the results of Phase 1, the next steps will be to further strengthen the evidence profile of S4D programmes for children and youth. To do so, Phase 2 aims to illustrate the unique contribution of sport to child and youth development using high-quality evidence from field research. It will test the findings, including the theories of change, from this first phase of the research and involve secondary data analysis from data collected through programmes identified in the supplementary *Sport for Development Programming Survey*. Primary data collection tools will be designed, piloted and refined to complement the secondary data analysis and to help understand the

common characteristics and practices needed for transferability and scaling up in different contexts. This will include meaningful consultation with youth, S4D experts and other stakeholders. In a final stage, Phase 2 will also involve translating this knowledge into policy, practice and actionable recommendations for practitioners, policymakers and researchers, in addition to the S4D for Children Working Group.

The outputs of the *Getting into the Game* report and Phase 2 of the project will support the goal-setting, tasks and outputs of each of the sub-groups in the S4D for Children Working Group, including: 1) framework development, 2) advocacy, 3) monitoring and evaluation, 4) data collection, and 5) literature and case study. Together with the members of the Working Group, the S4D project will support the development of an S4D for children framework, which will provide the structure for S4D for children programmes. This will foster a stronger platform that will enable S4D organizations, sports clubs' foundations and NGOs, among others, to design, implement, monitor and evaluate S4D for children activities.

The *Sport for Development Programming Survey*, 2018 can be accessed here:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/Sport4DevSurvey

www.surveymonkey.com/r/Sport4DevSurveyArabic





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Coach Chee Ha works with a young team in her village in northern Laos to deliver life skills learning through sport.

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A refugee player at a FutbolNet Festival in Athens. Sport has proved to be a good tool for integration into new communities.

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Monrovia Football Academy combines high-quality education with professional football training.

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Opening circle of a Fútbol Más session at Austin Grounds, Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya.

These circles create protection, togetherness and an opportunity for dialogue and connection.

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Adolescent girls participate in running competition during Convention on the Rights of the Child week at Zilla Parishad Upper Primary School, India.

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Children play outside a temporary school set up by UNICEF during a mid-day break, near Mbuji Mayi, Kasai region, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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The Academy's top priority is quality education.

Page 16: © MYSA Shootback

Girls battling for the ball during MYSA Girls Tournament at MYSA headquarters.

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Young players celebrate activities under the leadership of ChildFund Pass It Back Coaches in northern Laos.

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Two refugee children enjoying football in Athens. Sport is an effective way to overcome traumatic experiences.

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Students playing at Efutu Basic School in the Central Region of Ghana.

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Safe-Hub participants engage in a life-skills session with their coaches and mentors.

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Tinka Samajik Sanstha martial arts training programme aims to equip young people with self defence skills, to reduce the risk of them dropping out of school because of harassment.

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Celebrating a goal; in a Fútbol Más session at Escuela San Miguel, Asunción, Paraguay.

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After a day's work, the supervisor at NGO Vasudha Vikas Sansthan, India, engages girls in games.

Page 27: © Barça Foundation/ Manel Gimeno

A girl in Barcelona taking part on one of the sport-related activities Barça Foundation uses to prevent bullying at school.

Page 28: © UNICEF/UN017154/Shrestha

Children play in Barpak village, an epicentral village of Gorkha district, Nepal, where more than 1400 houses were destroyed during the 2015 earthquake.

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Youngsters play in the UNICEF child-friendly space in Esmeraldas, Ecuador.

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Children running for a photograph after their cricket match at a government primary school in Aurangabad, India.





Getting into the Game

Understanding the evidence for
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