



1st Round Table - 2012

Importance of Sports in Education



**A THOUGHT
LEADERSHIP
INITIATIVE**

In association with



Skill Development &
Knowledge Partners

SEPTEMBER 20, 2012
PRAGATI MAIDAN, NEW DELHI



1st Round Table - 2012 *on* Importance of Sports in Education

A THOUGHT LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

PROGRAM FLOW

Kindly be seated by 1400 Hours

Registration & Networking Tea	1330 – 1400 Hrs
Opening remarks (Purpose of the Round Table) Mr. Aditya Gupta – CEO: India DIDACTICS Association	1415 – 1425 Hrs
Commencement Presentation (Structure of the Round Table) Mr. Rajpal Singh - Director and Head: Sports & Youth Affairs – FICCI	1425 – 1440 Hrs
Round table deliberations	1440 – 1600 Hrs
Closing comments & takeaways Mr. Rajan Kohli – Advisor: FICCI	1600 – 1615 Hrs

ROUND TABLE GUIDELINES

1. Since this will be a rare gathering of the best minds on the subject, we will attempt to maximize the impact with specific and solution based discussions.
2. We request all the eminent guests to participate wholeheartedly and table their valuable views or write it on a piece of paper and hand it over to the moderator for record and archive.
3. If there is a paper/presentation/film/input/ success story that you want to put on record, please feel free to hand it over to the moderator and it will be archived under your name.
4. Please use the provided sheet to offer your suggestions on the specific topics mentioned, so that we can plan better for our follow-on activities under the subject of discussion.
5. We request minimal use of the word “SHOULD” in our discussions and aim to replace it with “COULD” to enable us to draw up an action plan.

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CONTEXT & FLOW OF THE ROUNDTABLE

The roundtable discussions have been designed to “**Promote Thought & Prescribe Solutions**” to the rapidly emerging need for balance between academic excellence and physical fitness & sporting enthusiasm/ability among the youth population.

Please note that the word sport has been used throughout this document to indicate all physical activity towards fitness, sport and play.

A “Thought suggestion” module to encourage discussions during this round table and a set of success stories follow each of the following sections, which are:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| SECTION – 1 | Is Holistic Education Achievable? |
| SECTION – 2 | Are there really lifelong career options in sports? |
| SECTION – 3 | How to harness the contribution of Government & Society
Recommendations & suggestions |

We have showcased a few success stories from one of the leading sports advocacy groups in the world, Our thanks to Right to play.

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SECTION - 1

Is Holistic Education Achievable?

India, as we know is the emerging youth base of the world where it is expected, that over 52% of the population will be below the age of 29 years by year 2022.

COUNTRIES WITH THE YOUNGEST AND OLDEST POPULATIONS, 2011

YOUNGEST		% AGES <15	INDIA 52% <15 >29	OLDEST		% AGES 65+
Niger		48.9			Japan	
Uganda		48.3		Germany		20.7
Mali		47.6		Italy		20.2
Angola		47.3		Greece		18.9
Zambia		46.5		Sweden		18.5
Burundi		46.3		Portugal		17.9
Congo, Dem. Rep.		46.0		Bulgaria		17.7
Mozambique		45.3		Austria		17.6
Chad		45.3		Finland		17.5
Burkina Faso		45.2		Latvia		17.4

In the given situation, and although traditional attitudes have been skewed towards a 'either/or' choice between sports and academics, it probably becomes immensely important to adopt a more holistic and inclusive attitude of 'sports AND academics' being equally important and being successfully inculcated into the Indian education system. More important than that is the acceptability of such a holistic system by educationists, parents, students and society. Sports have traditionally been seen as a confrontational activity in comparison to education. It is even today, considered inversely proportional to high academic excellence.

We however, may be unanimous in our acceptance of some of the things that highlight the important role of sports in advancing education, such as:

Sports help us learn

In developmental psychology, it has been proven that motor skills enhance the workings of the mind. For young children, their brains are being developed every time they engage themselves in physical activities.

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Sports teach discipline

Joining sports teams encourage respect for rules, regulations, and authorities. Moreover, members of the team will learn to be more responsible and accountable if the team sets a grade requirement for each of its members; thus encouraging better academic goals for the players.

Sports increase self-confidence

Once again it has been clinically proved that there is a direct and quantifiable relationship between personal excellence in and the resultant increase in self-confidence. If a person is good at one thing, s/he will surely gain confidence in other fields.

Sports increase morale

Loners in school tend to be average in the classroom, but when they meet new friends, the positive mood makes them more comfortable. As a consequence, such student is able to improve his grades.

Sports introduce the world

When students join sports competitions, they are given the chance to know the world, especially if the competition is an international one. In competitions, students meet new people; thus, gaining knowledge about the culture, customs, and habits of others.

Sports increase energy and decrease depression.

Physical activities make people healthy and increase people's energy. This increases the release of endorphins in the body, which makes a person happy and in a good mood. And such kind of mood is the most conducive atmosphere for learning.

However, such academic understanding of the value of physical activity and sports might not produce sustainable action points unless we are able to focus on the factors that drive physical activity in the first place. Unless there is a complete and compounded approach to address the gaps in each of the following (See diagrams below) factors by educationists, institutions, government and society at large, we may not reach a sustainable roadmap.

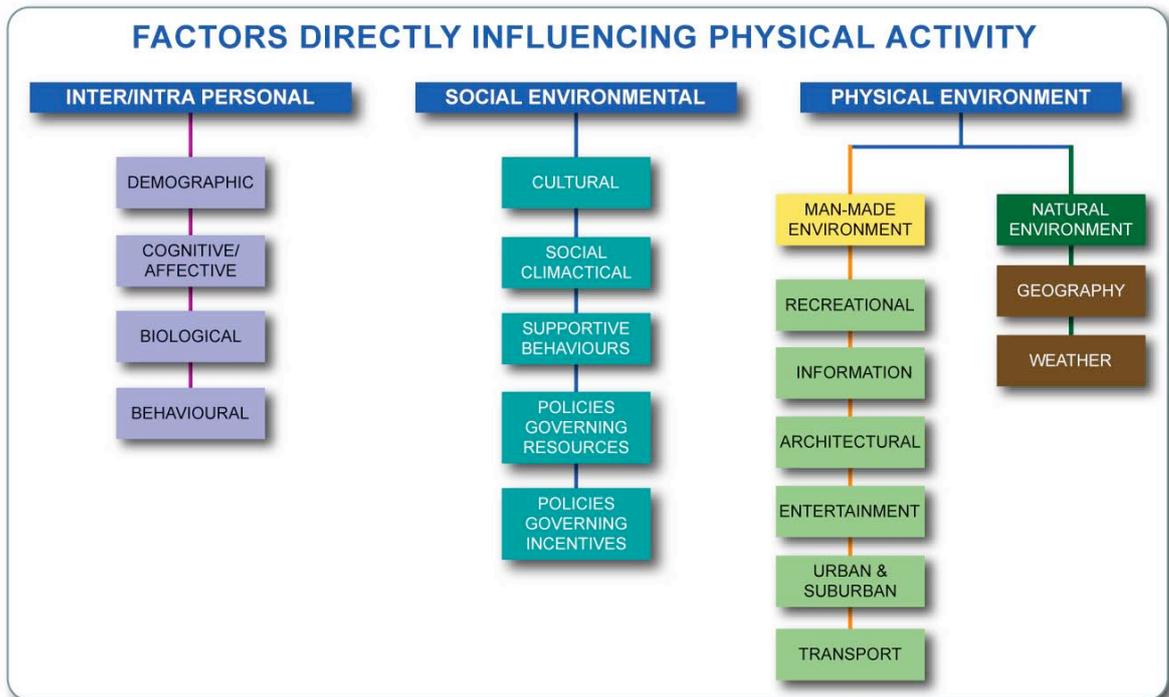
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THOUGHT SUGGESTION

1. *Sporting and physical activity centres might want to experiment with setting up academic counseling and support modules alongside the sporting venues to showcase the importance of academics and help trainees achieve their academic goals pre or post sporting sessions. The Den-Haag football association in Holland is running such a successful model. (Please see following success stories)*
2. *According to researchers at Michigan State University's Institute for the Study of Youth Sports, young people who play sports perform better in school than those who don't. If students want to get on the field, the court or the ring, they could earn that privilege by performing well in the classroom. Playing sports then serves as motivation for doing well in the classroom.*
3. *One of the top benefits of participating in sports is that athletes who perform well in their chosen field and meet their academic responsibilities may be able to win a scholarship. While the scholarship may be based on their success in sports, it gives young people the chance to gain an education that they might not otherwise be able to afford.*
4. *Caution: While the educational and athletic system can work extremely well to help young people develop the system could be corrupted. For example, a sports performer might not be able to play because s/he is not performing up to standard in the classroom. If the coach attempts to pressure the teacher, or if the teacher gives the student a "break" and*

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SUCCESS STORIES

While on the one hand it may be desirable to set up such systems and policies that drive the movement towards holistic education, it is also very important to create a viable economic model both for the institutions as well as the community at large.

Success **1** Story: INDIA

One of the better examples of just such a hybrid is the Kendriya Vidyalaya at Andrewsganj, New Delhi, which has entered into a joint venture with ——— to best use their field and realty for the benefit of the students as well as the community.

———— has completely remodeled the area, which includes a play field an indoor facility, swimming pool, changing rooms, MI room and gym with two gates to the facilities. One gate opens into the school and is for the exclusive use of students during the time they spend in the school, while the other gate opens onto the main road and is opened to public when the school is not in session, like early mornings and late evenings. This is a great way to maximize utilization and earn revenues that support the physical activity efforts of the institution without resorting to large investments.

Success **2** Story: THE NETHERLANDS

On his recent visit to Den Haag (The Hague) in The Netherlands, Mr. Rajpal Singh, Director FICCI came across a brilliant hybrid that bridges the gap between education and sports in a most meaningful manner.



The club in question, Ado Den Haag, has set up a separate building for the purpose of furthering academics within the complex where young trainees come to practice soccer. The building is equipped with classrooms and highly qualified teaching volunteers from the community, who help these trainees with their homework, assignments and projects so that s/he has completed her academic commitments even before entering the field.

This has brought about a complete change in the way the community views sports and a huge turnover of sports enthusiasts. It has found great acclaim with the educationists who are now absolved of the extra responsibility of finding innovative ways to keep sports loving children on their desks. The youth themselves are extremely

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happy and satisfied at finding the right balance between their passion and their academic responsibilities. The resultant is turning out to be a group of sports professionals with good academic backgrounds and a bright career opportunity beyond their sporting years. The community, on the other hand, is already experiencing rapid changes in the number of street crimes, usually caused by purposeless youngsters. It is finally a win-win for all stakeholders in Den Haag.

Success **3** Story: AFRICA

In April 2012, Right To Play Athlete Ambassador Meghan Mutrie visited Benin – a small West African country where Right To Play has been operating since 2001. As a former member of the Canadian Women’s Rugby team, Meghan grew up immersed in sport and play, and truly understands the positive impact they can have in a child’s life.

Incredibly passionate and dedicated Meghan shared with us her experience in Benin.



She recalls “Growing up, I was that kid with a mushroom cut who would come home late from school, covered in dirt because a game had started in the neighborhood and I just had to play.”

I know how fortunate I am – because of my parents and the country I lived in – to do that without thinking twice. Every kid should have the opportunity to be a kid and just play. Sport has done so much for me personally, and being able to reach other

children in areas who wouldn’t normally get that chance.

My five-day field visit to West Africa taught me more lessons than a four-year degree! I learned a lot, on all sorts of levels, but one of the most striking things for me was how confident and empowered the children were, they carried themselves so well and were just so happy. Sport is a microcosm for life and it gives kids a chance to develop their personalities and practice life skills in a safe environment that builds character. But kids



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don't know this! They have no idea that's what's happening while they're playing! To them it's just fun, as it should be. It's not until they grow older and are tested as people, to make correct choices and important decisions that their solid foundations from sport comes into play. Sport and play are important opportunities for all children around the world, but especially for those in disadvantaged countries; the issues the children face about health, safety, peace and education are very serious in these areas.

There is no way to narrow down my experiences in Benin to just one memorable moment. However, "Meghan Says" playing a Simon Says-type game where the kids can't lose and always ends in a hug with the kids was awesome. As an adult, it can be tough to let go and just play with kids, but I loved it, and getting all the kids to hug each other [and me!] was so much fun!

But yeah, I think the kids – they were the most memorable part.

Megan currently lives in New Zealand, where she is a sports reporter for Prime's The Crowd Goes Wild (CGW).

Success **4** Story: PAKISTAN



In a bright pink t-shirt that reads "Peace begins with me," Muhammad Nawaz would have a hard time fading into the background even if he wasn't famous. But he is. To the children at the Government Primary School in Sherpur, Pakistan, this 60-year-old teacher is a celebrity.

To add to the legend, he calls himself Zero Meter. A veteran teacher of 30 years, Zero says from the beginning of his career he wanted his students to be competent, hard working, well-disciplined and high academic achievers. "I used to work very hard with my class and used all those methods which I had seen my teachers use and that all my colleagues were using, but to be honest, those techniques never worked to any good," says Zero. I was totally confused about what was the problem with my teaching." Finally Zero – then still know as Nawaz – turned to punishment.

"My motive to punish the children was only to foster their better academic performance," says Zero. But the result, he says, was "horrible." The students became afraid of their teacher, hesitant to ask any questions or share their ideas. Absenteeism increased, and despite meeting with parents, classes became a tedious chore for both Zero and his pupils. And then something happened.

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On October 8, 2005, a devastating 7.6 Richter earthquake struck the Mansehra district of Pakistan. More than 70,000 people were killed. Houses and entire communities were destroyed, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. More than 6,000 schools and colleges crumbled under the strength of the quake.



A Right To Play coach began running daily activities for children in the school in July 2008. At first, Zero – still going by Nawaz at this point – considered play at school a waste of time, until one day he began a health lesson and discovered his students were eager to share the answers they had already learned.

“This was astonishing news for me – that children have not only learned from game activities in an excellent way, but also shared with me confidently, which I could not see in my students ever before,” he says.

Zero, along with other teachers, joined a training session to learn how to teach using different games and activities, how to engage students through discussion, and how to include everyone. The trainees learned how to relate to children, how to talk to them politely, listen to their issues, and teach them according to their needs. “That week-long training overshadowed my 30-year-long teaching career.” And that’s when he decided to change his name.

Zero-meter is a term used locally for brand new cars, as their mileage meter shows all zeroes – the very beginning.

“Now I feel as if I am reborn, not only as a teacher, but as a human being as well,” says Zero. “I have a desire to do more for these children and to use innovative methodology and also spread it to other teachers. “The same children who used to cry while coming to school now have smile on their faces while entering my class.”

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SECTION - 2

Are there really lifelong career options in sports?

We might want to take a look at the numbers in real terms when we speak of a populous country like India, to arrive at the size of the challenge as well as the expected size of the pie in making sports as a career for our young population.

- Today's global sports industry is worth between \$480 - \$620bn
- Global sports event sponsorship alone would rise from \$45.4bn in 2009 to \$60.0bn in 2012.
- Estimates show that in 2022, an average Indian will only be 29 years, compared to 37 years in China, 45 years in Western Europe, and 48 years in Japan.
- India currently enjoys a population of 1.2 billion people of which 624 million (52%) can be classified as youth.
- There are an estimated 61% of the youth or approximately 380 million school dropouts.
- The unemployment rate stands at 4.2% or roughly 50 million people.
- It is estimated that 78% of the children who join school show some interest and often, good aptitude for one sport or the other.
- All major sporting goods brands have made their entry into India and are running profitable businesses across many verticals.

Therefore, for the sake of assumption, if we safely assume that only 10% of the youth comprising of school dropouts, unemployed and sports loving persons were to be targeted for spotting by the sports authority, it would mean 38 million persons. Dividing them equally into the top twenty sport disciplines and then into a ten-year period we would arrive at a hundred and ninety thousand people per annum per sport. This would then be the number of persons who could go into careers related to sport.

These numbers only go to show that sport, as a full time career is a viable and doable option staring at us in very real terms and waiting to be exploited to its full potential.

Add to this the fact that India is abuzz with new sporting investments flowing into the country almost on a weekly basis. The F1 track is ready and functional, Football is suddenly becoming a craze again, and Hockey is regaining its foothold steadily. The Canadian kabaddi league has a winning prize equivalent of 10 crore rupees. These are

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good signs and they must be matched with a shift in mindset right from our village level. We cannot afford to not present the best talent that India has, just because it is not available in the cities. Most sports investors are realizing the potential of India's huge demographic dividend and are willing to go the extra step to make sports careers a real option in the near future.

Following are two examples of sporting success that can raise aspirations as well as questions about whether or not academics played a vital part in their growth and life.



The diagram above showcases the gamut of opportunities available to a sport lover, not necessarily a sports person, for developing a career in sports, should s/he decide to opt for any one of the over forty two varieties of activities that go to form the entire spectrum of physical activities and sports.

The first step towards making sports as a viable career option will unfortunately not come from the sports community at all. Rather it will have to come from within the civil

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SUCCESS STORIES



Mr. Kapil Dev: From Indian cricket Skipper (world cup 1984) to brand ambassador, to hotelier, to golf maestro to social worker, to art collector, to motivational speaker and life coach. The inspiring story of an Indian sporting individual.



Mr. Sebastian Newbold Coe: From a 12 year old Halletshire Harreir athlete, to two multiple Olympic Golds, to brand ambassador for Nike and Horne bros, to owner of a health club to a degree in economics & social history to the chairman of the London Olympics (LOCOG). The story of an English sportsman with a half Indian mother.

The growing awareness of sports and all the media attention throughout the world has made sports a very lucrative career. With an increase in international events, there is a greater requirement of talented sportspersons to represent the country. The government is making relentless efforts in developing sports facilities of international standards, so that sportspersons in our country are able to develop the competitive edge. Scholarships provided by the government under various schemes, sponsorship by big companies, endorsements, television campaigns and awards have made sports a very remunerative career. Agreed, life as a sportsperson is short, but it does not stop there. Off -field sportspersons can now follow interesting, exciting and rewarding careers related to their sport as a coach, umpire, teacher, columnist, medical specialist, media expert or a consultant for the business of sports.

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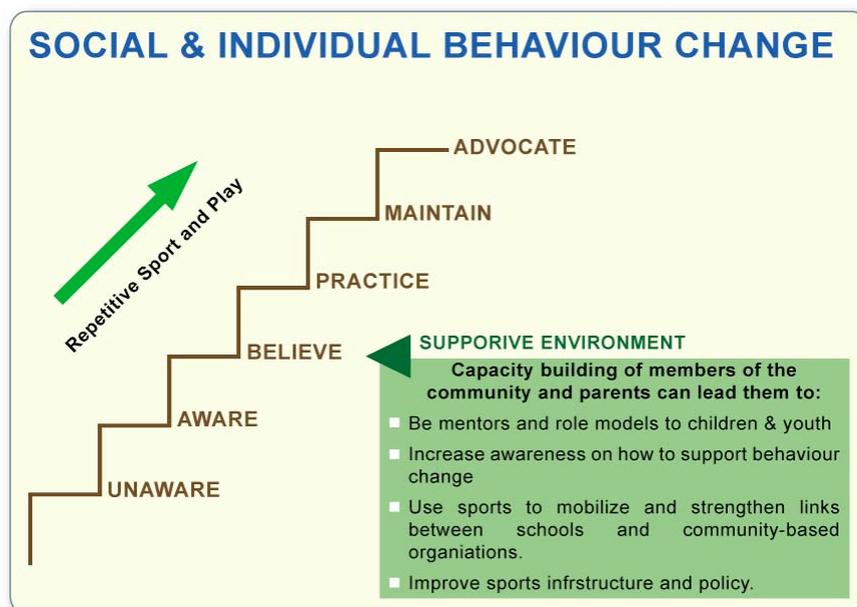
SECTION - 3

How to harness the contribution of Government & Society - Recommendations & suggestions

Teachers and school-based administrators alike have searched to find ways to increase student achievement in their schools. Several widely known and discussed strategies include using data to drive instruction, employing highly qualified teachers, and improving school leadership.

Additionally, positive student engagement in the classroom is another compelling factor—but not as widely discussed—that research has reported to be critical in enhancing student achievement. Positive student engagement is not an easy term to define, yet we know it when we see it. Students are engaged when they “devote substantial time and effort to a task, when they care about the quality of their work, and when they commit themselves because the work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value” (Newmann, 1986).

Engaged students also are more likely to perform well academically. Therefore, teachers need a large inventory of instructional strategies to engage a variety of students (Garcia-Reid et al., 2005).



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The trick may be to consciously engage as many sectors as possible in developing and implementing physical activity promotion strategies.

The WHO has identified actions that a broad range of sectors can take to promote participation in regular physical activity and healthy sports, ensure equitable access to these activities, and foster supportive environments.

It also recommends that it is imperative to incorporate monitoring and evaluation processes into all initiatives from the outset to assess their effectiveness, continuously improve them, and help make resource allocation decisions. The evaluation of one such activity involving all stakeholders in 'Agita São Paulo' shows that it is possible to evaluate the process and the impact of diverse strategies used to increase physical activity among large populations such as India's.

Evidence from São Paulo shows that these approaches result in increased physical activity.

- In small cities, construction of walking and biking paths resulted in a 33% increase in physical activity among those using them.
- Walking has increased 2% per year in the population, with 520,000 adults starting to walk on a regular basis (30 minutes, five times a week).
- In one city with a large network of recently constructed walking paths, hospitalizations due to type 2 diabetes declined by 57% and hospitalizations due to stroke declined by 50%.
- Similarly, a community that introduced an open-school program on weekends experienced a 46% decline in incidents of physical aggression and a 34% decline in robberies, among other benefits.



Therefore it is important to note that planning and implementation of evaluation measures will be more successful if built into the program at the initial strategic planning stage, with a budget set aside for this purpose.

Partners and stakeholders could be involved in the evaluation process. Evaluation could be an essential part of all program components and could be designed to

obtain feedback and improve interventions.

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The list of sectors below is not exhaustive, but is offered as a starting point for institutions and communities interested in cross-sector partnerships to increase physical activity.

The sport sector could:

- Initiate and strengthen programs for physical activity and sport for all, promoting the concept that sport is a human right for all individuals regardless of race, social class, gender and disability. *(Already initiated by the ministry MoYaS)*
- Make community use of local sport facilities easy and convenient.
- Allocate a proportion of sport funds to promoting physical activity.
- Include education on the benefits of physical activity in sport sector training programs.
- Advocate for physical activity and sport for all at professional, amateur and school sporting events.
- Organize physical activity events in the community.
- Support the use of physical activity and sport to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce violence and foster social integration, development and peace.



The health sector could:

- Undertake nationwide evidence-based advocacy to inform the public and policy-makers of the health, social and economic benefits of physical activity.
- Develop action-oriented networks with other relevant sectors and stakeholders on physical activity.
- Promote integrated, cross-sector, public policy development.
- Promote community-based physical activity programs with family-based activities.
- Support the teaching of basic sport skills to children in schools and community programs.

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- Address barriers to providing a safe and welcoming environment for sport participants (e.g., abuse, harassment, racism, sexism).
- Secure start-up investment and mobilize resources for physical activity initiatives.
- Participate in global actions to promote physical activity.

The education and culture sectors could:

- Make school sport facilities available for public use when not in use by students.
- Commit to physical education as an integral part of the school curriculum.
- Ensure all schools have at least two teachers trained in physical education.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in sport and physical activity during and after school.
- Increase physical activity in cultural and leisure programs and events.
- Contribute significantly through colleges, universities and research institutes to the data collection, research, evaluation, knowledge dissemination, and training dimensions of broad-based strategies to improve physical activity levels and mobilize sport as a communication and public education platform.



The urban planning & development sectors could:

The physical and social environments of cities have a major impact on physical activity levels. Crowding, crime, traffic, and poor air quality, coupled with a lack of parks, sidewalks, and sports and recreational facilities make physical activity and sports a difficult choice for many people. The challenge for governments is to

foster sustainable environments that encourage the regular practice of physical activity and sport in the community.

Key issues include access to open spaces, playgrounds, gymnasiums, stairwells and road networks, as well as social factors such as levels of crime and the local sense of community. The urban planning sector could therefore:

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-
- Develop parks and open space where people can practice enjoyable physical activities in clean and safe environments;
 - Facilitating public/community use of existing sport facilities
 - Promoting active transport initiatives (walking, cycling, greater use of public transport, etc.), including ensuring plenty of safe sidewalks and cycling paths.
 - Strengthening efforts to reduce traffic speed, congestion, and pollution in cities
 - Provide support to municipal/local authorities to implement these choices.
 - Tax and price interventions (e.g., to influence the use of public transport to sporting facilities, access to sport activities)

THOUGHT SUGGESTION

1. **Provide positive role models:** Studies show that athletes are seen as positive role models and can favourably influence youth behaviour. In choosing athletes for information and mobilization campaigns, governments and their partners must ensure that selected athletes embody the values they are meant to communicate.
2. **Develop a coherent strategy:** Sport-based health initiatives work best when they are integrated into a broader, coherent overall strategy such as counselling services, provision of additional information, and integration of the issue into school instruction.
3. **Encourage media involvement:** Close cooperation with the media can help ensure that awareness-building campaigns get wide exposure.
4. **Include women and girls:** Sport institutions, practices and communication are traditionally more oriented to men than women in most societies. We might want to take additional measures to reach women and girls and to sensitize male participants (athletes, coaches, teachers and community members) to gender.

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SUCCESS STORIES

Best practices from successful sports programs around the world

We could maximize the effectiveness of our own programs to increase sport and physical activity participation by observing guidelines derived from successful programs around the world, such as:

Best practices in program design

Make it fun (e.g., ensure enjoyable group activities with a social atmosphere);

Make it effective (provide supervision, training and feedback);

Use sports that are culturally relevant and require fewer resources (such as running, soccer, basketball, baseball and other activities) to promote lifelong fitness

Address obstacles to sport and exercise (e.g., need for safe areas, timing, darkness, extreme temperatures, need for child care, cultural mores); and

Promote physical activity and related healthy behaviours in the workplace.

Best practices in program communication

Target public messages aimed at increasing physical activity levels and tailor them for specific audiences.

Targeted messages are culturally specific and emphasize consistency (focusing on accumulated exercise). Messages can foster inclusion through the use of terms like “active” instead of using fitness and sport terminology that can be off-putting to groups who do not see themselves in these terms.

Messages focused on moderate activity and walking are particularly effective with older adults.

Use sport to launch social mobilization efforts: Sport is an ideal launch site when it comes to appealing to people on an emotional level and mobilizing them for specific development goals.

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Success **5** Story: PERU

A country of more than 29 million, 65 per cent of Peru's population lives in extreme poverty. The Andean country's development challenges are exceptionally evident in rural areas, where only seven out of 10 children complete a primary school education.

Moreover, Peru's educational system faces significant capacity challenges.



Primary school classroom in rural Peru

"Youth don't have a lot of options for how to spend their time and energy. The lack of positive and constructive outlets takes a toll on their education and can impact the greater community."

Teachers say they now understand the direct relationship between play-based learning activities, and the benefit to children and youths social development.

Implemented by 25 teachers in two schools in Lambayeque, the project provides nearly 900 children and youth with a safe, alternative space where they can develop their social and leadership skills, through play, thereby improving their ability to become active participants in their communities. Through Scotiabank's Construyendo Futuro, youth in Lambayeque have also started to develop a culture of financial responsibility and are in the process of organizing a business fair and an October sporting championship. In Ancash, another district in northern Peru, a sports program has helped youth to build their leadership skills and expand their role in society to include social and educational advocacy. In the communities of Chavín and Llata, 91 per cent of youth participants have managed to organize themselves and produce action plans for monitoring the quality of education in their respective communities.

Of the teachers participating in the Ancash programs, 70 per cent say they have benefit from capacity building through these initiatives. The children are going to migrate, taking the methodology they have learned with them. They are going to be able to see the change grow in other cities. They are going to create an atmosphere that lets them work more lucratively.

That is the ultimate vision of sustainable change that will be upheld through generations.

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Success **6** Story: JORDAN

For 24-year-old Abu Aziz, football (soccer) is about more than just a game – it is about challenging stereotypes, accomplishing dreams and finally being accepted as “one of the boys.”



Aziz has Down syndrome. Despite his love for the Beautiful Game, he has long been held off the pitch because of his disability, but in 2010, things began to change.

The Football for Development program is one of three sport-specific resources that have been developed along with Volleyball for Development and Basketball for Development, the Sport Specific resources use popular sports as the foundation for play-based learning activities. The programs

integrate coaching practices, physical education, technique and methodologies into a comprehensive means of implementing sport as a tool for development.

Football is developing children’s intellect – helping them focus and build their observation skills and their memories, teaching them to experiment, strategize, evaluate and make decisions. It is also forming children and youth’s physical wellness by testing and developing their strength, their skill and range, and their coordination and speed. Football, like all sports, also impacts their emotional development by allowing children to discover new abilities within themselves, grow in confidence, interact with their peers, and experience excitement and happiness.

In the case of Aziz, that greater societal development is reflected in new levels of acceptance and inclusion. Aziz was finally given the opportunity to play amongst his peers, as an equal. When ninety-six young footballers from the Karmel Club and Sanabel Charity Association came together for a football tournament on June 30, at Yarmouk University in the Jordanian city of Irbid, Aziz was not only an equal on the pitch, but got the chance to shine. Invited to join the game and be a part of a team, Aziz became the centre of attention, not for his disabilities, but for his skill and contagious spirit. Teammates, opposition players and the audience were all cheering for Aziz, not only encouraging him but also pushing him to his full potential. Eight teams competed in the tournament, which focused on fair play, respect and team work. Thanks to two goals scored by Aziz, his team, Karmel 3, was awarded first place.

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Success **7** Story: PALESTINE



Football-centric programs are also being implemented in the Palestinian Territories to promote the empowerment and inclusion of girls.

As a part of a larger itinerary for engaging girls in football, which coincided with women's world cup competition in Germany, the Girls' Soccer Cup took place July 9 at the Albireh International Stadium in Ramallah, West Bank.

The liveliness and enthusiasm of the girls competing in the tournament stressed the importance of such events to encourage women's participation in sport activities.

Three teams of 53 players, played three 30-minute games each. Many of the players competing also play for the Palestinian Women's National Football squad. As female athletes, they know all-too-well the breadth of challenges women face to play – from checkpoints that impede travel and training schedules, to the pressure of traditional gender roles that fundamentally question the participation of women in public sports events.



By providing equal opportunities for boys and girls to participate in sport and play activities, sports is helping to promote gender equality, participation, inclusion and most importantly, build life skills and values including respect, fair play and team work.

The Girls' Soccer Cup is important to girls achieving a significant role in Palestinian society and ensures a bright future for them.

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Last Word

One of the most effective means of promoting physical activity is by integrating it into universal public education systems. Schools have unique opportunities to provide adequate physical activity for all young people through compulsory physical education programs, school sport programs, and after-school leisure-time physical activity initiatives. However, despite evidence of its value, school-based physical education is declining worldwide.

There is conflicting evidence as to whether physical activity levels in childhood and youth predict physical activity throughout life. However, ample participation in play, games and other physical activities, in school and during free time, is essential for the healthy development of every young person. Access to safe places, opportunities and time, and positive examples set by teachers, parents and friends are all part of ensuring that children and young people move for health.

Strengthening national policies related to physical education, physical activity and sport for all in schools is critical. This means integrating physical education and activity into the school curriculum so that children are active on a daily basis, ensuring adequately trained teachers, and providing access to safe, adequate playgrounds and sport facilities.

The reality is that these challenges are often experienced in very different ways in different places due to the diverse social, economic, demographic, political and environmental contexts in which they unfold. Even within countries, different populations may experience unique challenges but with very different levels of individual and societal resources to meet them.

As a result, Sport for Development policies and programs aimed at influencing academic and health outcomes are most effective when they are firmly rooted in an empirical, gender and culturally sensitive analysis.

Governments must also weigh sport's potential to advance health objectives against their own in-depth understanding of the opportunities and challenges involved.

Effective strategies require general and population-specific baseline data on physical activity levels, trends, infrastructure and the factors influencing them. This information is critical to the initial design of effective strategies and to measuring their impact and creating supportive coalitions and partnerships with investors, media and other organizations. These partnerships can help governments to collect relevant data, contribute diverse perspectives and expertise to the strategy design process, and enable them to leverage national and local resources (information, infrastructural, human, financial and logistical) for their implementation.

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Please share your thoughts
and inputs for inclusion into
Round Table of 2013.

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