

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SPORT

Research report

March 2026

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Introduction



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Context

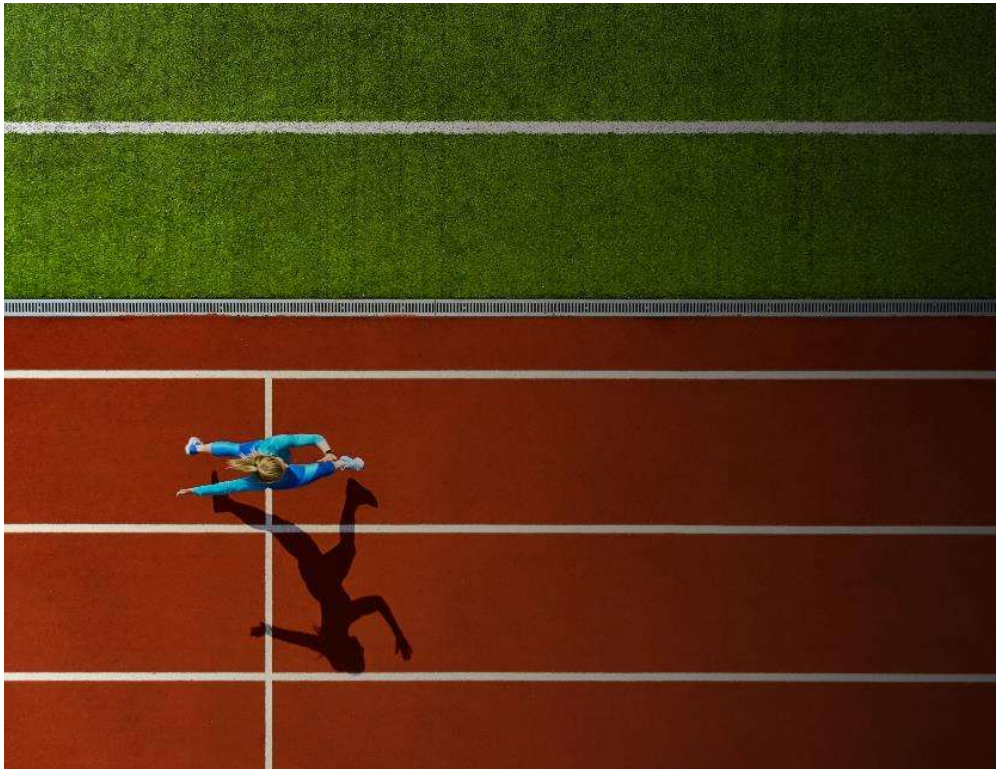
Sport and physical activity have a unique ability to improve health, strengthen communities, and create opportunity, particularly in areas facing social and economic challenges. Yet participation gaps persist, inequalities remain, and many impactful initiatives struggle to move beyond short-term funding cycles.

A growing movement of social entrepreneurs is addressing this challenge. These locally rooted leaders combine business models with social purpose, generating income and reinvesting profits to deliver long-term impact through sport and physical activity. While this model shows great promise, there remains significant potential to enhance system-wide support and scalability.

In 2024, Think Beyond, supported by UnLtd and Sport England, undertook research to explore the long-term opportunity for social entrepreneurship within sport and physical activity. The research examined structural barriers to realizing the opportunity at scale.

The findings highlight a clear opportunity: shifting from isolated individual programmes to a more collaborative ecosystem approach, aligning funding, measurement, and support with how sustainable community impact is created.

This report shares those insights and sets out why social entrepreneurship is a critical lever for unlocking sport's untapped social impact



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Research aims and approach

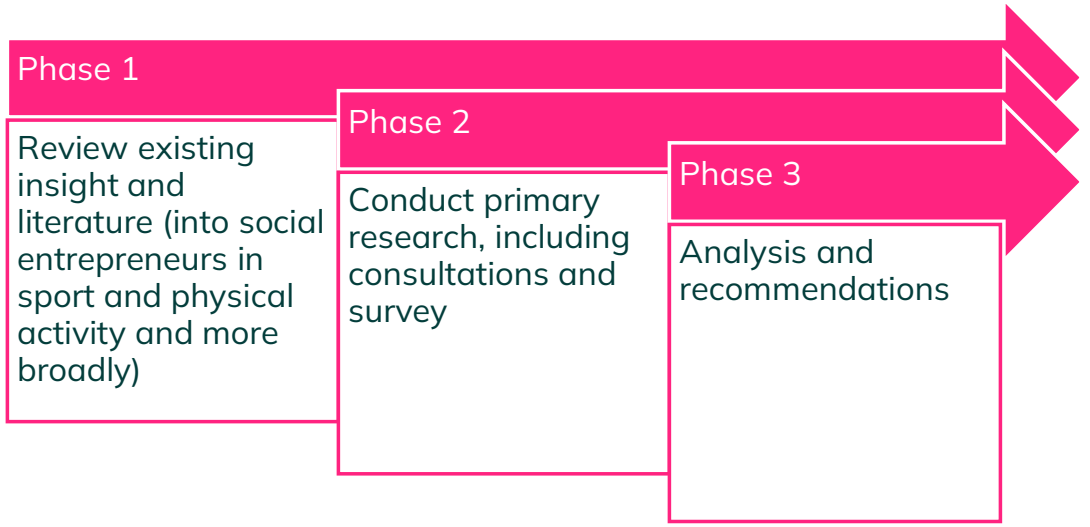
The research project was structured to meet the two following objectives and undertaken via the below approach.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify **gaps and opportunities** within the sport and physical activity sector, aligned to social impact needs and wider market demand, and assess **how social entrepreneurs can respond effectively.**

2. Understand the **components of success and blockers** experienced by social entrepreneurs who are creating/trying to create a positive impact in the sector

APPROACH:



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Executive summary

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What did we find?



Untapped opportunity

The sport and physical activity sector has more opportunity to fulfil its potential as a deliverer of wider personal and societal benefits through sport.

The social entrepreneurship model can help unlock the sector's full potential by effectively addressing unmet personal and community needs.



New approaches can enable progress

To maximise this potential opportunity, systemic solutions need to be applied that enable social enterprise, as a model, to thrive throughout the sector.

This requires aligned funding, coordinated support, and measurement frameworks that reflect the long-term social and financial impact of locally led entrepreneurships.



We need to use 'shared value'* to leverage funding

The overarching opportunity is a clearer understanding of the mutual benefit of investing in social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity and the effective mechanisms to doing so amongst funders, investors and other relevant stakeholders.

**A shared understanding of the long-term mutual financial and societal benefit available to all stakeholders, and the mechanisms in place to enable investment.*

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What could a shared value model look like

Six recommendations for the sport and physical activity sector.

1.SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Define what social entrepreneurship in sport means and promote its qualities to the long-term benefit of the sector.

2.SHARED FUNDING AND RISK

Create a central mechanism to allow investment into numerous enterprises, co-creation between social enterprises, and develop hybrid long-term funding models blending grants, impact investments, and social bonds for sustainable growth.

3.SHARED FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Develop sustainable business models with diverse income streams and promote financial resilience by blending revenue-generating activities with social impact, reducing reliance on grants.



4.SHARED DESIGN AND REPORTING

Create a standardised, accessible impact measurement framework and tool. Combine with a centralised mechanism for reporting impact to investors and stakeholders.

5.SHARED RESOURCE PLATFORM

Develop shared platforms where social entrepreneurs can access support, engage experts and co-create solutions.

6.SHARED SCALABILITY

Redefine what scalability means and encourage collaboration between social entrepreneurs via a 'Train the Trainer model' to scale growth and impact of the ecosystem as whole.

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The challenge



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The bigger picture

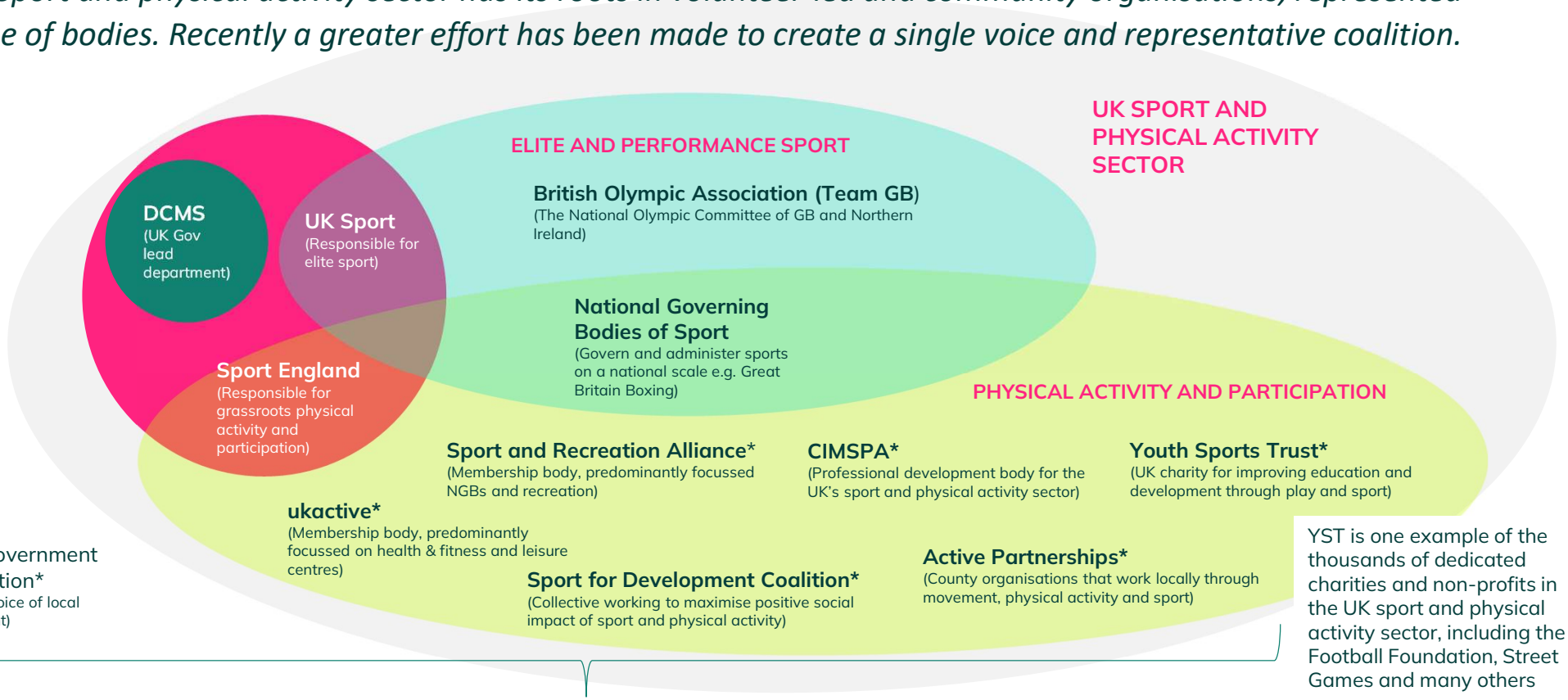


- **Macro societal challenges in the UK are worsening**. For example; cost of living challenges, worsening mental health, climate change and widening inequality *(Human Rights Watch).*
- These challenges are **disproportionately felt across demographics** including geography, socio-economic status, gender and ethnicity (*UK Gov ONS 2026)* I.e. inequalities persist in our society. Social issues manifest themselves in community settings.
- **Sport and physical activity can make a tangible difference in tackling these challenges**, especially within communities. Using sport and physical activity intentionally is particularly effective in helping solve social challenges *(Sported 2023).*
- The **UK Government continues to invest in sport and physical activity** (albeit with varied budgets), recognising the opportunity to address social outcomes through sport.
- **Sport England is the body responsible for developing grassroots sport** and getting more people active across England. It is a key enabler of the UK Government wider objectives for sport and physical activity.
- **Brands, rights holders and corporate businesses** are increasingly looking for **ways to demonstrate their positive impact on society**. Sport is a recognised and attractive prospect for them to do so.

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An overview of the sector

The UK's Sport and physical activity sector has its roots in volunteer-led and community organisations, represented by a range of bodies. Recently a greater effort has been made to create a single voice and representative coalition.



YST is one example of the thousands of dedicated charities and non-profits in the UK sport and physical activity sector, including the Football Foundation, Street Games and many others

The **national Sector Partners Group (NSPG)** is a coalition of organisations* that represent the sport, recreation and physical activity sectors in the UK. It was formed in 2022 and provides a more cohesive and coordinated voice, especially when negotiating with and lobbying government departments

Note: This is not exhaustive and is designed to provide an overarching view of the sector, rather than a detailed audit

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Sport and physical activity is a solution

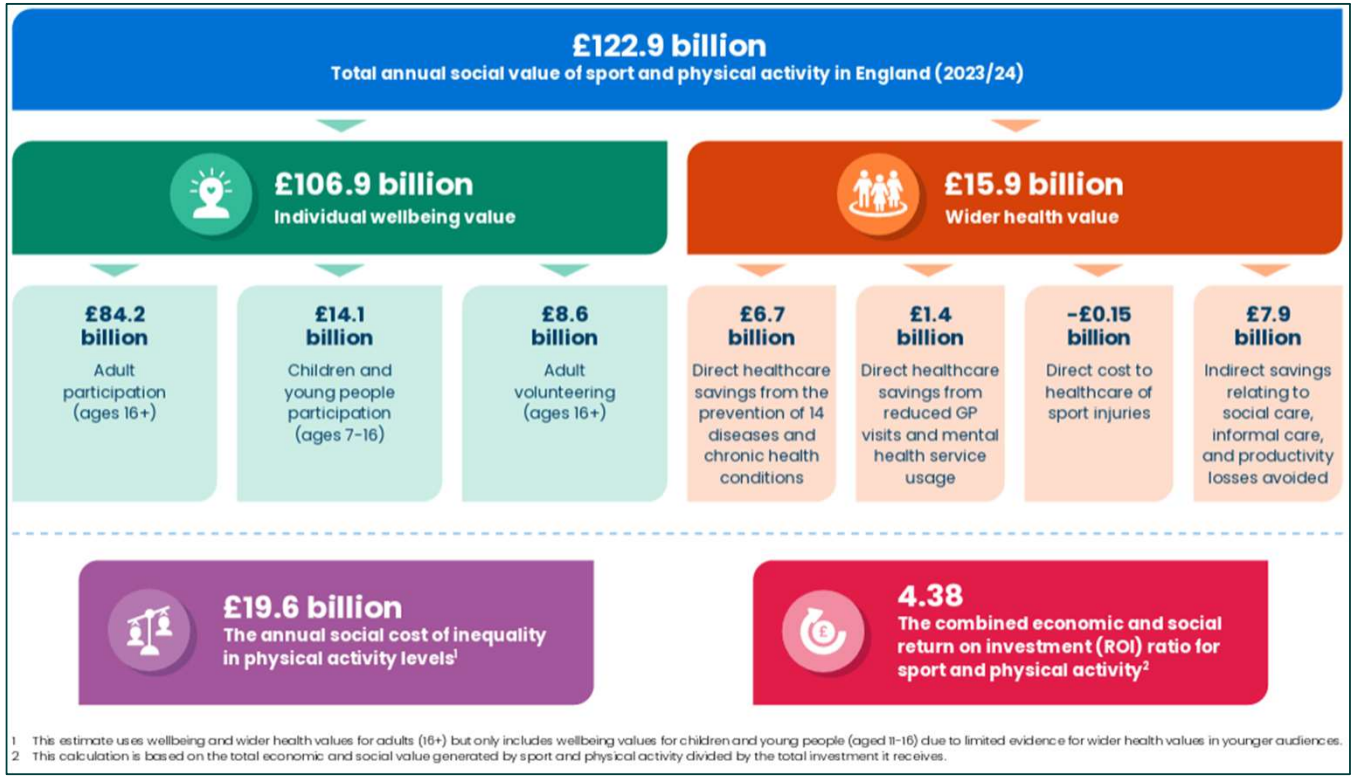
The case for investing in sport as a solution to social challenges is well known.

There is proven high social return on investment (particularly sport for good / sport for development) which underpins the social and economic case for investing in sport.

This is widely understood within the sector, including acknowledgement by successive governments.

However, effectively acting on this information to maximise the potential available has not been realised.

Type of intervention	SROI	*Source*
High performance sport	£1.7	*Newton for Made by Sport*
Participation based sport	£4 (£3.91)	*2020 Sport England and Sheffield Hallam report https://www.sportengland.org/news/why-investing-physical-activitygreat-our-health-and-our-nation*
Sport for good	£6 (£5.90)	*Newton for Made by Sport*



Source: Sport England The social value of sport and physical activity in England report Nov 2025

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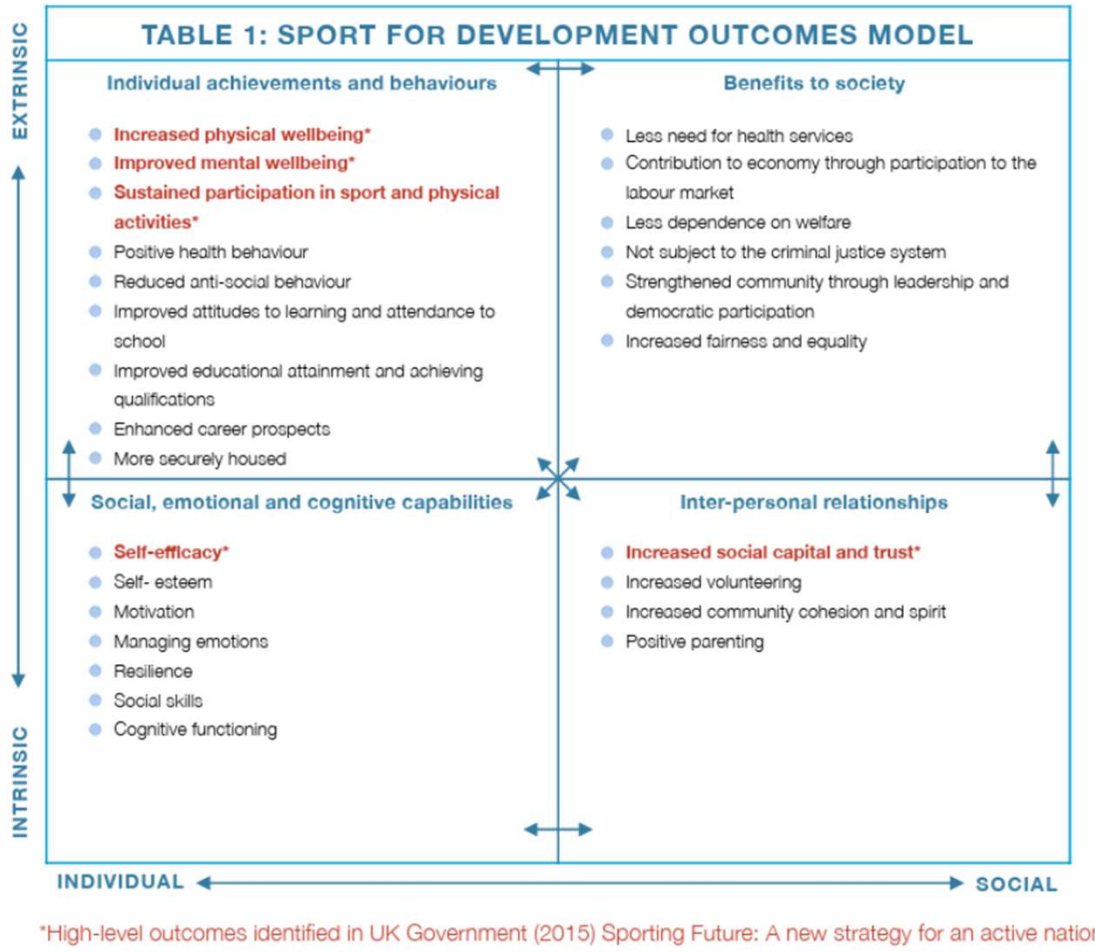
Sport and physical activity is a solution

The intentional use of sport as a mechanism for tackling wider societal challenges has been well-researched.

The potential to affect individual, social, inter-personal, community and societal outcomes through sport is understood; especially within the sport for development community in the UK (driven by the 'Sport for Development coalition').

Outcomes like 'increased physical well-being' are inherent through participation in sport.

Other outcomes such as social, inter-personal and wider benefits to society (e.g. strengthened communities) need intentional design, with communities of how physical activity is delivered in order to be enabled.

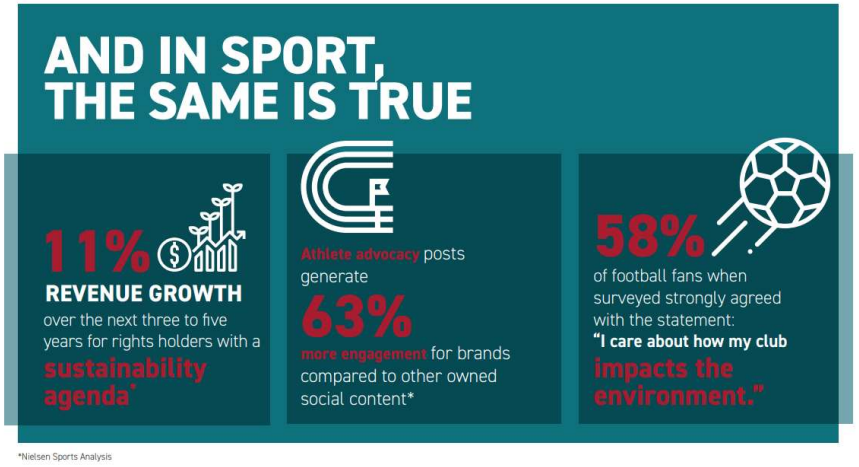


Sport For Development: outcomes and measurement framework (Sport For Development Coalition), 2015

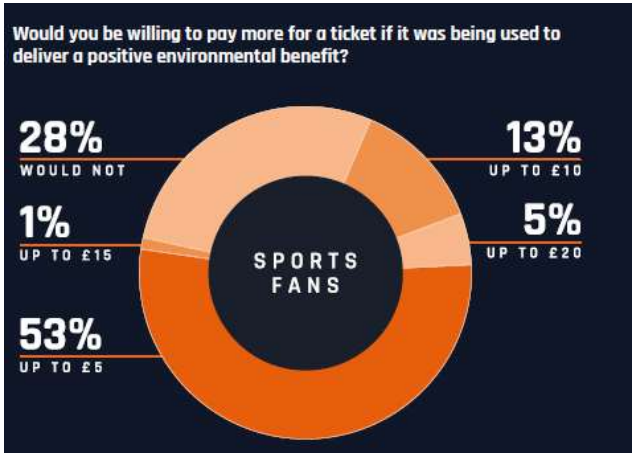
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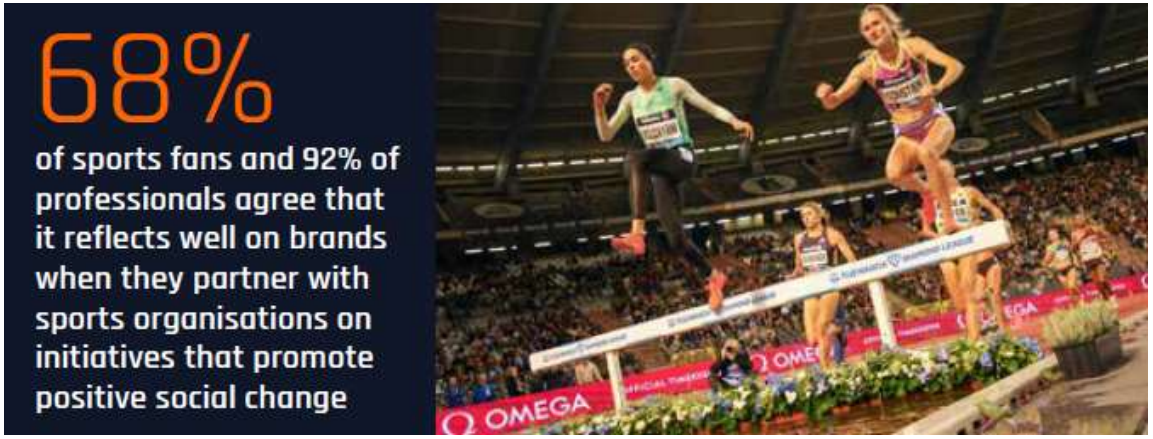
Commercial value in sport and physical activity





And there is an increasing appetite and imperative for businesses in sport to demonstrate how they are having a positive impact on society in and through sport. Providing an indication of the opportunity available to channel more private sector investment via commercial partnerships into 'sport for good'.





Source: Sports Industry Report 2025

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But the sector has more untapped potential

Current approaches to growing and developing grassroots sport often struggle to fully reach and engage the least active, and most vulnerable in society. ***And therefore, the opportunity to enable positive outcomes through sport for those who need it most is still great.***

Sport for development, whereby physical activity is designed intentionally with communities to deliver individual, social and community benefits through sport is not widely maximised.

Sustained activity levels of marginalised groups remain low, despite progress

↓

Support and funding does not always reach those groups effectively

↓

There is untapped potential to deliver positive outcomes to the most vulnerable in society, through sport

Despite overall, long-term participation rates increasing since 2016 and individual examples of success (such as adults of 55 being the most active they have ever been), inequalities in participation persist.

The least active include those from low socio-economic groups, Black and Asian Britain's, women and those with disability.

Particularly, those from the lowest socio- economic groups (NS-SEC 6-8) are the least likely to be active. Just 52.6% of these groups are active compared to 72.7% of higher socio-economic groups.

The pandemic made things worse. With the gap in physical activity levels in the most deprived areas compared to the least widening.

(2026 Active Lives Survey)

"Almost ***10 million people in England live in 1,108 neighbourhoods*** *which are the most deprived of green space" and "almost* ***40 per cent of people of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds*** *(BAME) live in England's most green space-deprived neighbourhoods"*

- Friends of the Earth

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There are examples of success

Sport England has made significant progress in enabling participation-based outcomes through sport. And there are individual examples of organisations, NGO's, brands and social enterprises successfully, intentionally using sport and physical activity to enable wider positive societal change (sport for development). This provides an indication of the wider opportunity.

Sport England has seen success in better engaging the least active groups in physical activity via recent funding models such as Place Based partnerships *(Sport England)*.

The Sport for Development Coalition in the UK is made up of 400+ charities, organisations, networks. Using sport intentionally to affect positive wellbeing, physical and emotional benefits for young people *(S4D coalition)*.

Brands, rights holders and clubs are using their sport and platform to support people and communities, as well as further their long-term commercial objectives.

WHO	WHAT	HOW
Get Set to GO mind	**Young people's mental health**	• Supported 10,000 young people • A peer support model • Collaboration with mental health services • 19 local minds deliver community support • Funded by Sport England and National Lottery
Street games	**Healthier, safer and more successful communities**	• Sport is used as the vehicle to tackle the specific issues faced by low-income, underserved communities • Accessible versions of sport that help break down barriers to participation • Community-led delivery
NFL FOUNDATION UNITED KINGDOM	**Inequality**	• Supported 1,500 young Londoners to achieve education outcomes • Focused on long-term change • Collaboration with local partners with direct relationships with community • Utilises NFL brand and aligns to commercial success
LIVERPOOL THE RED WAY	**Climate change, sports participation, community benefits**	• Holistic sustainability and social impact strategy embedded in the operations of the football club 'The Red Way' • Enabling community benefits through sport via the LFC Foundation • Integrated into the commercial objectives of the club via alignment with brand purpose and partnerships objectives.

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But consistent sector wide challenges remain

*There are **systemic challenges** that have so far held the sport and **physical activity sector back** from fulfilling its potential as a solution to societal challenges. Ultimately, participation (and the associated benefits such as physical well-being) amongst the least active has not been realised. And the intentional delivery of sport (sport for development) and the associated wider community and social benefits has not been scaled to its maximum potential.*

1. Top-down decision making	Sports and physical activity delivery is not being built with the communities it involves, which means sport and physical is not designed to meet needs in the best possible way (and therefore realise wider social and community benefits).
2. Short-term funding	There is a lack of long-term funding in sport and physical activity aligned to long-term vision that is measured against outcomes…so that sport and physical activity providers can make a sustained difference to people's lives (through consistent participation in physical activity, and the time it takes to realise positive social and community benefits through sport).
3. Fixed mindsets	Traditional funding models, measures of success that do not fully understand the potential outcomes enabled through sport, and traditional delivery models (such as club-based participation, and volunteer-led coaching)…mean models that deliver maximum possible benefits through sport (i.e. community-led, sustained delivery in a financially sustainable way), to those who need it most are not supported and scaled in the right way.
4. Siloed thinking	Lack of sector-wide shared messaging, understanding and collaboration… and the challenge of supporting small, individual organisations… means, matching delivery organisation needs to funding requirements, effective support for early-stage organisations, economies of scale and innovation is held back.

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The opportunity



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Why social entrepreneurship in sport and physical activity?

The model of social entrepreneurs is not widely successful or used in the UK sport and physical activity sector… but it is uniquely placed to help the sector deliver on its potential… by enabling the participation of sports and physical activity by the least active and the realisation of wider personal, societal and community benefits through sport.

1. IT TENDS TO BE COMMUNITY-LED (Vs top down)

Social entrepreneurs are often community-driven, trusted leaders with the capability, and understanding to engage their local community and address local social issues through sport and physical activity with relevant solutions.

→ Enabling participation in physical activity and the realisation of wider personal, societal and community benefits (outcomes) through sport and physical activity.

2. IT IS IMPACT ORIENTED BY NATURE (Vs traditional delivery models)

Social entrepreneurs are closest to social challenges, often driven by passion for their local community, have purpose at the heart of their ventures and are willing to take risks for innovative solutions.

→ Meaning flexible, adaptable delivery through innovation helps address changing personal, social and community needs.



4. REPLICATION AND COLLABORATON (Vs siloed thinking)

The model of social entrepreneurship in sport and physical activity is effective and innovative. If replicated, it could help realise the potential of sport and physical activity in lots of different geographies by empowering local leaders.

→Supporting the sport and physical activity to fulfil its potential.

3. LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY (Vs reliance on short-term funding)

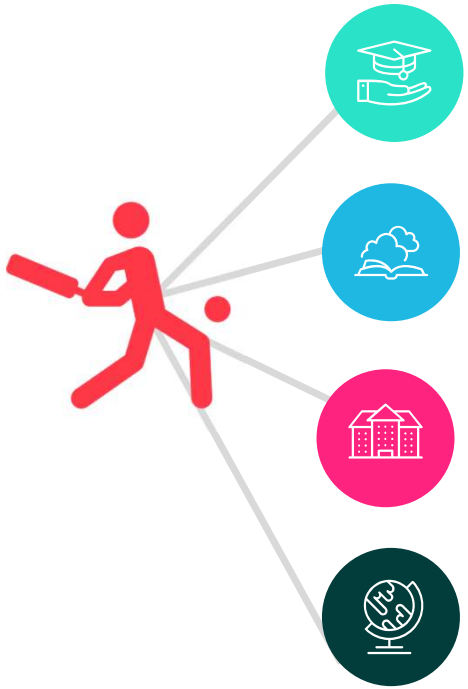
Successful social entrepreneurs are self-sustainable by their very nature, ensuring continuity, consistency and community ownership of sustained delivery of sport and physical activity.

→ Enabling sustained participation in physical activity and the long-term realisation of personal, social and community benefits.

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What is different about social entrepreneurs delivering through sport and physical activity compared to other sectors?

Considering unique opportunities and challenges experienced by social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity helps us highlight what support mechanisms and delivery models are best placed to enable change.



Human-led and community-centered

Social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity often relies on people-centric delivery with localised solutions, **which means they often have unique definitions of scaling and success.** Often working in community settings, it is **also harder to generate income streams through paid for services.**

Social outcomes by nature

The unrivaled power of sport and physical activity to enable personal, social and community benefit is built into delivery models from the start. But **they are difficult to measure and communicate.**

Resource Intensive

Human-centered solutions via sport and physical activity need a team of well-trained individuals. **It is difficult to retain and scale such models**, in comparison to technology-based enterprise, for example.

Impact over financial return

High social return on investment makes social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity a fantastic opportunity to drive impact. However, **lower likely financial returns due to their small nature**, and **unique challenges in scaling do not meet traditional criteria laid out by funders.**

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How could sport social entrepreneurship be delivered?

There are various delivery models that work for sport and physical activity. Their unique characteristics mean delivery models in other sectors are not always applicable. The main delivery model's options are outlined below.

SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS

- **Tech-Enabled Service Delivery**: Leveraging technology (apps, platforms, wearables) to provide sports-related services, such as virtual coaching, training programmes, or facility booking.
- **Human-led Service Delivery**: Focused on direct, in-person interactions, like coaching, mentoring, yoga, education, football etc.
- **Hybrid Delivery:** Combining both technology and personal interaction to enhance the effectiveness of sports services.

PRODUCT DELIVERY MODELS

- **Platforms for Access:** Digital or physical platforms that help individuals access sports facilities, equipment, or training, often functioning as aggregators or marketplaces.
- **Social Impact Retail**: Sporting goods shops or online stores with a mission to support social causes, such as donating profits to community sports programmes or ensuring ethical production.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODELS

- **Community Development Programmes**: Initiatives that use sports to drive social change, focusing on inclusion, health, and education.
- **Events and Campaigns**: Organizing sports events or awareness campaigns to address social issues and raise funds for specific causes.

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Human or hybrid delivery models are the most impactful

To effectively enable participation, and the long-term benefits of sport and physical activity it needs to involve human interaction. But innovation is needed to make this sustainable and scalable by leveraging hybrid models.

Sport and physical activity in the UK is currently heavily human-led in its delivery

- Sport and physical activity is often volunteer and club-led, often relying on local community delivery of activity to groups of people.
- Participating in physical activity, usually in group settings, inherently relies on human-led coordination, guidance, and coaching to effectively drive behaviour change.

And the benefits of sport and physical activity are maximised via human-led delivery

- **Trusted leaders** within the communities, delivering physical activity in person is often critical to catalysing the initial confidence of the participant to try sport, and continue to participate (and therefore the long-term realisation of the benefits of sport).
- Deeper outcomes through sport (such as social, emotional learning for an individual) take time and consistent interaction with human-led delivery.
- Wider societal and community benefits such as inter-personal relationships, involve consistent group participation which by their very nature rely on human-led delivery.

However, this could be achieved via human or a hybrid of delivery of services

- Whilst there does often need to be an element of human interaction, there needs to be **innovative thinking** as to how this can be delivered.
- For example; via a hybrid delivery model that leverages technology, capacity building of other local deliverers, or a product delivery that strengthens existing community delivery of sport and physical activity.

"There is general industry suspicion of social entrepreneurship and a culture of human-led volunteerism. This makes it challenging to innovate" – **Sport England**

"Sport is human-led; (when scaling)…one methodology could be to enable more individual changemakers (deliver's) to take forward solutions" – **Ashoka**

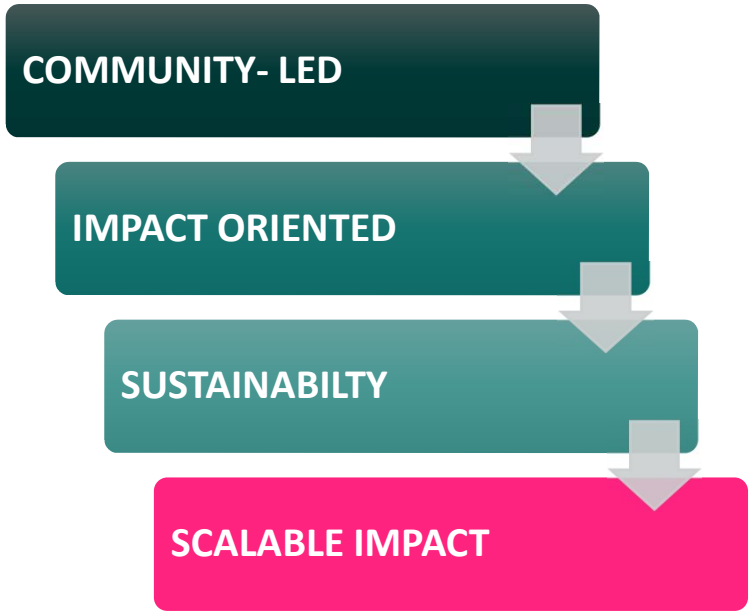
M4C cohort 'Living Fitness' *delivers physical activity in care homes, which is reliant on human-led delivery.*

However, sessions are also delivered via 'Zoom', maintaining human interaction whilst increasing efficiency and profitability of delivery.

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The opportunity

The social entrepreneurship model, at scale has the potential to support widespread change in sports and physical activity, overcoming systemic barriers and tackling long-term challenges.



Scaling effective models has the potential to help the sector fulfil its potential, addressing:

- Activity of marginalised groups
- Limited flow of funding to support priority groups
- Sustainability of business models
- Realisation of community and societal outcomes through sport.

However, to enable this transformation, support must address the specific systemic barriers that social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity face.

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The key consideration

SCALING IMPACT

If ‘Scaling’ the model of social entrepreneurship is a key opportunity….what does it actually mean for social entrepreneurs working in sport and physical activity?

And what are the unique requirements needed to make this happen?

**Scaling: the process of growing a social enterprise's impact or operations to reach more people or regions, particularly through expanding access to sports programmes.*



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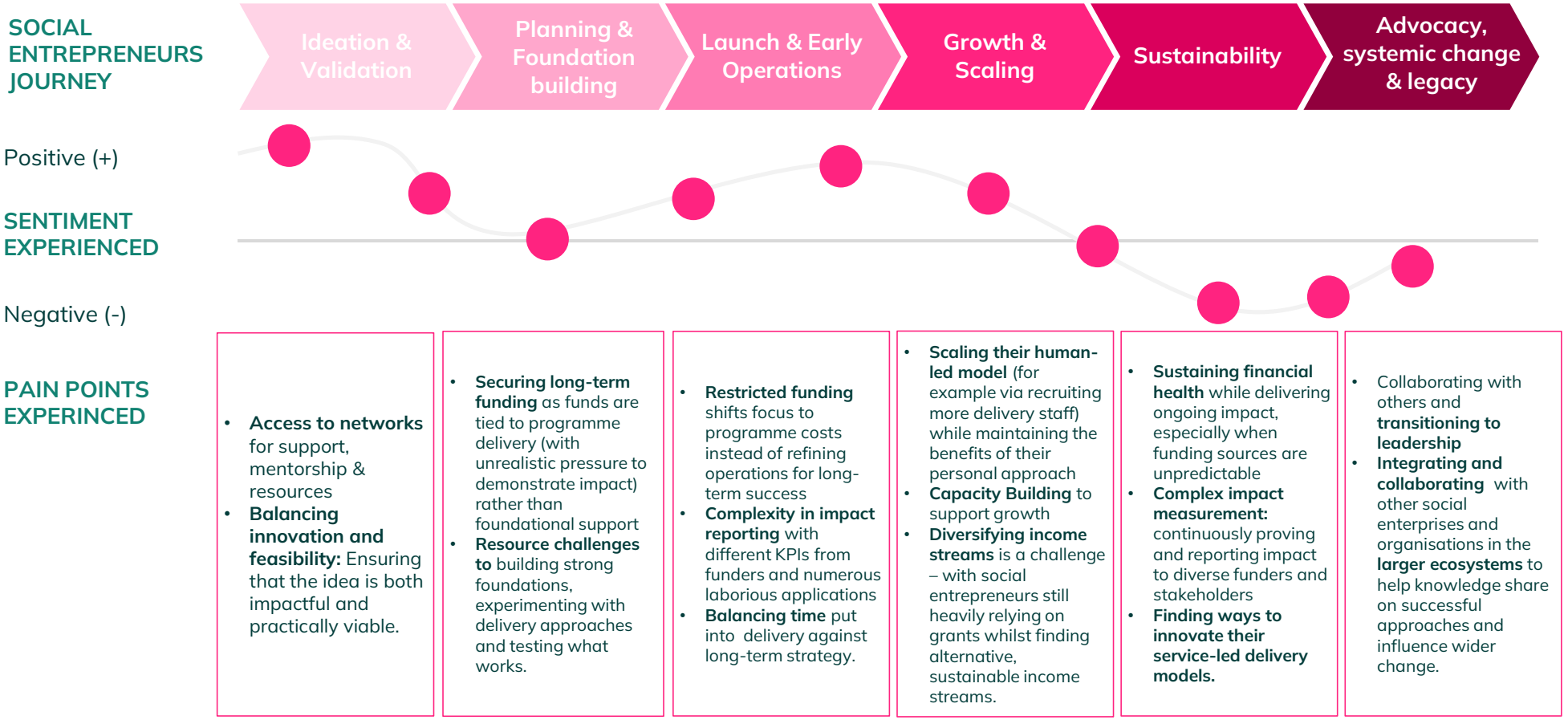
Blockers and success factors



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Pain-points – what we heard

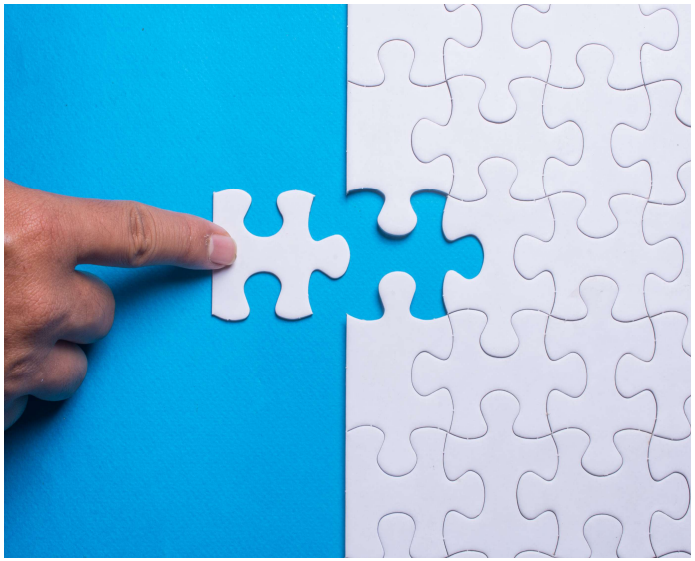
Firstly, we identified specific pain-points on the journey of a social entrepreneur from fulfilling their potential in sport and physical activity. Some are consistent with other sectors, and others are more intensely felt by those in sport and physical activity.



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What is the overarching systemic challenge?

There is a disconnect between the unique characteristics, and benefits of social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity and the expectations of investors, funders and stakeholders.



"Sport and physical activity are very high–impact investments, but they **are harder to scale and often require more work (than other sectors) with lower ROI**."- **Big Issue Invest**

"**You never get a perfect funding criteria** from funders that aligns to local needs so we act as an intermediary, to make funding flexible enough for the local needs. **- Street Games**

"Having an **unrestricted capital and shift from quantitative metrics and getting into qualitative** metrics involving wider system change. Solutions should be seen from a collaboration lens" **- Ashoka**

"The **concept of social entrepreneurship in grassroots sport basically does not exist**. There is suspicion and a mindset of 'the way it's always been done' when it comes to supporting social entrepreneurs in sport" **- Sport England**

"Fundraising, maintaining financial sustainability, and lack of awareness / visibility, are compounded by systemic challenges in the recreational sport sector and directly impact our ability to meet growing demand for cricket programs in Ontario schools." **- OSCA from Survey*.**

**You can find a full breakdown of survey respondents and results in the appendix of this report.*

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The systemic challenge broken down

Breaking the systemic challenge down helps identify consistencies across the pain-points felt by social entrepreneurs and therefore highlight solutions that could be implemented at a systemic level, leading to sector-wide change.

Restricted unsustainable funding

Limited flexible funding hampers human-led businesses from demonstrating long-term impact and experimenting with effective models. High running costs, inconsistent funding, and lack of shared resources hinder scalability and impact measurement. Additionally, dependence on grants persists due to insufficient guidance on diversifying income streams.

Unrealistic expectations

Pressure to prove the personal, social, and community value of their human-led delivery models to investors. The challenge is heightened by unstandardised KPIs, evolving community needs, and the small scale of these enterprises, making ROI expectations difficult to meet. Achieving financial sustainability and long-term social change in these people-centric models requires time and patience.

Fixed sector-wide mindsets

The support system needs to be tailored to sport social entrepreneurships including education and awareness around the impactful benefits of social entrepreneurship in sport (i.e. being purposeful with own profits to reinvest meaning long-term financial sustainability and impact). This includes re-defining expectations of scaling.

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The key consideration

SCALING IMPACT

The expectations and meaning of ‘scaling’ in the context of social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity needs to be redefined.

The long-term financial size of these businesses is often limited, but the social Impacts being created are disproportionately large (compared to other sectors).

‘Scalability’ often means consolidating the entrepreneur’s own business model by deepening local engagement (to deliver really effective sport and physical activity), whilst expansion can mean the creation of more local social entrepreneurs who deliver comparable models in new geographies.

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What is the key solution

Moving from isolated efforts to a shared value model that catalyses existing support networks to better support the growth of individual (and groups of) social entrepreneurs, whilst scaling the positive benefits through sport and physical activity.



**You can find a full breakdown of survey respondents and results in the appendix of this report.*

"Provide a wrap-around of support that helps local community orgs ongoing deliver. The sustainability of delivery and impact comes from the fact they consistently deliver in their communities so will always be there" – **Street Games**

"Effective support would be sector-wide standardisation on impact measurement, templates, best practice. Give funders a 'menu' of organisations to choose from. We need a Lloyds bank for the system". – **UpShot**

"Important to address systems change and mindset change in how people address problems within sport and physical activity. What could be done differently? What is the role of a body like Sport England?" – Ashoka

" I currently feel trusted by UnLtd and Sport England through unrestricted funding, and not demanding individual impact metrics from me"- **Play Culture**

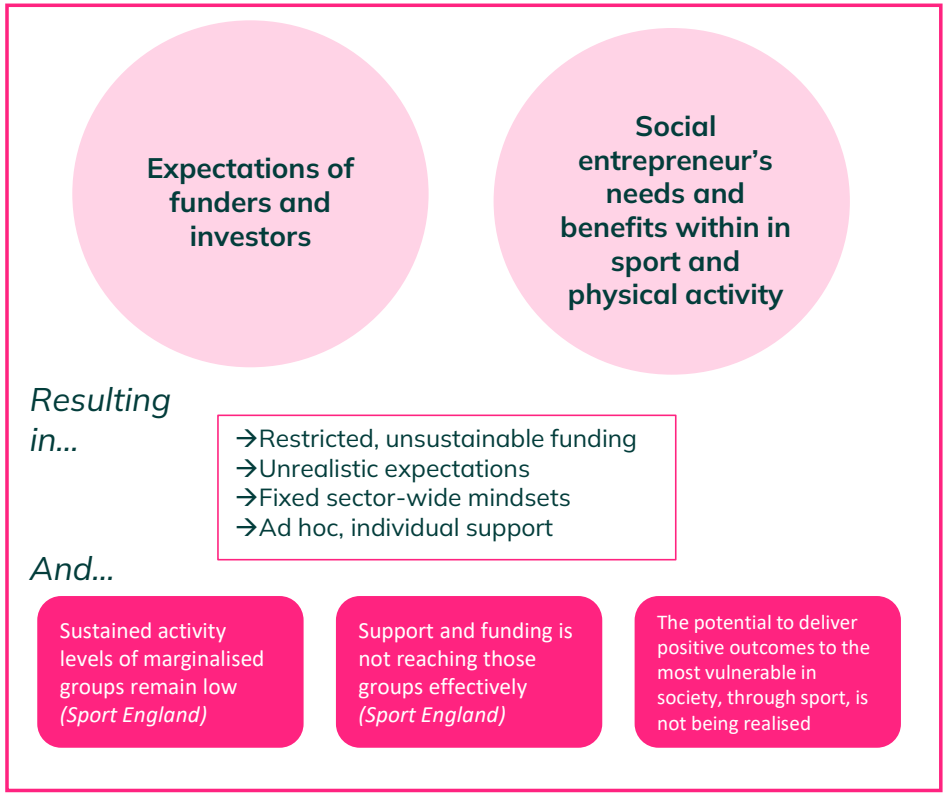
"When asked what their approach to scaling/ growth was; social entrepreneurs selected a diverse range of options including; strengthening their offer and impact in existing geographies, training more coaches, enhancing digital presence, broadening delivery model, partnering with local organisations and increasing advocacy efforts" – **Survey*.**

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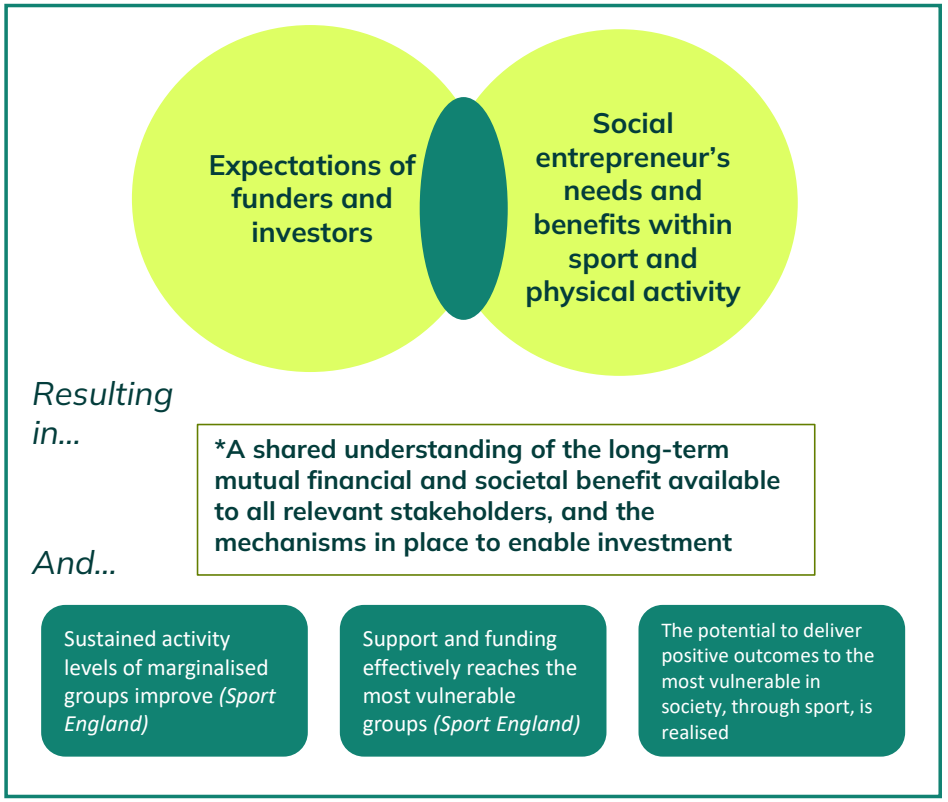
Moving to a shared value model

Transforming the sport and physical activity sector from isolated efforts in supporting social entrepreneurs to a collaborative social entrepreneurship ecosystem, helping the sector fulfil its potential.

From disconnected, isolated efforts...



...To a shared value model



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Recommendations



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What could a shared value model look like

Six key recommendations for the sport and physical activity sector.

1.SHARED UNDERSTANDING

Define what social entrepreneurship in sport means and promote its qualities to the long-term benefit of the sector.

2.SHARED FUNDING AND RISK

Create a central mechanism to allow investment into numerous enterprises, co-creation between social enterprises, and develop hybrid long-term funding models blending grants, impact investments, and social bonds for sustainable growth.

3.SHARED FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Develop sustainable business models with diverse income streams and promote financial resilience by blending revenue-generating activities with social impact, reducing reliance on grants.



4.SHARED DESIGN AND REPORTING

Create a standardised, accessible impact measurement framework and tool. Combine with a centralised mechanism for reporting impact to investors and stakeholders.

5.SHARED RESOURCE PLATFORM

Develop shared platforms where social entrepreneurs can access support, engage experts and co-create solutions.

6.SHARED SCALABILITY

Redefine what scalability means and encourage collaboration between social entrepreneurs via a 'Train the Trainer model' to scale growth and impact of the ecosystem as whole.

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Recommendations in detail

THEME	WHAT	WHY	HOW
1.SHARED UNDERSTANDING	Define what social entrepreneurship in sport means and promote its qualities to the long-term benefit of the sector.	Level set understanding of definitions and benefits among key stakeholders.	• Knowledge sharing and collaboration via industry events, forums and senior leaders • Disseminate definitions to build understanding amongst key stakeholders • Influence mindset and culture change throughout the ecosystem of sport and physical activity
2.SHARED FUNDING AND RISK	Create a central mechanism to allow investment into numerous enterprises, co-creation between social enterprises, and develop hybrid long-term funding models blending grants, impact investments, and social bonds for sustainable growth.	Social Entrepreneurs in sport need long term funding to catalyse financial sustainability and maximise impact, whilst investors need stronger guarantees on return on investment.	• Facilitate access to unrestricted long-term funding based on financial and impact appetite for both investors and entrepreneurs, promoting sustainable growth • Encourage diverse, tailored funding mechanisms and income streams aligned with the social value proposition of each enterprise • Develop networks and platforms connecting social entrepreneurs with funders to avoid multiple funding applications and create investment mechanisms that allow investors to fund multiple small enterprises, sharing risk and increasing returns
3.SHARED FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	Develop sustainable business models with diverse income streams and promote financial resilience by blending revenue-generating activities with social impact, reducing reliance on grants	Enable required financial returns to make the model self-sustainable to foster long-term financial sustainability through collaboration.	• Help entrepreneurs develop **sustainable business models** by leveraging **diverse income sources** such as fee-for-service, corporate partnerships, and cross-subsidy models to reduce reliance on grants • Promote **financial resilience** by integrating **revenue-generating activities** with social impact, ensuring long-term sustainability without overdependence on external funding
4.SHARED DESIGN AND REPORTING	Create a standardised, accessible impact measurement framework and tool. Combine with a centralised mechanism for reporting impact to investors and stakeholders.	Build a simple way for social entrepreneurs and investors to understand and communicate impact.	• Simplify and standardise impact reporting tools, metrics and KPIs, co-developed with funders, industry bodies and other relevant stakeholders • Create central support that takes the pressure off social entrepreneurs to consistently report impact. Leveraging data analytics, psychometric tools, and technology platforms to track and showcase impact to community in real-time
5.SHARED RESOURCE PLATFORM	Develop shared platforms where social entrepreneurs can access support, engage experts and co-create solutions.	Support economies of scale in the delivery of support.	• Create a platform for resources (including marketing and the accessibility of impact and reporting tools, e.g. SROI Tailored for physical activity-based SEs) • Place emphasis on shared value and impact created • Enable access to expert support, guidance and networks that help social entrepreneurs find new solutions and connect with right partners to enhance impact
6.SHARED SCALABILITY	Redefine what scalability means and encourage collaboration between social entrepreneurs via a 'Train the Trainer model' to scale growth and impact of the ecosystem as whole.	Replicated effective delivery models in different geographies and tailored to local needs can scale impact.	• Build knowledge on what realistic scalability means for social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity, particularly amongst funders to support capacity building for growth • Enable champions by open-source training to connect entrepreneurs on similar business models, who can 'train' each other and scale delivery in different geographies • Encourage innovation so that human-led can be combined with other delivery methods such as AI Technology to make it cost effective and more scalable

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Case studies and spotlights



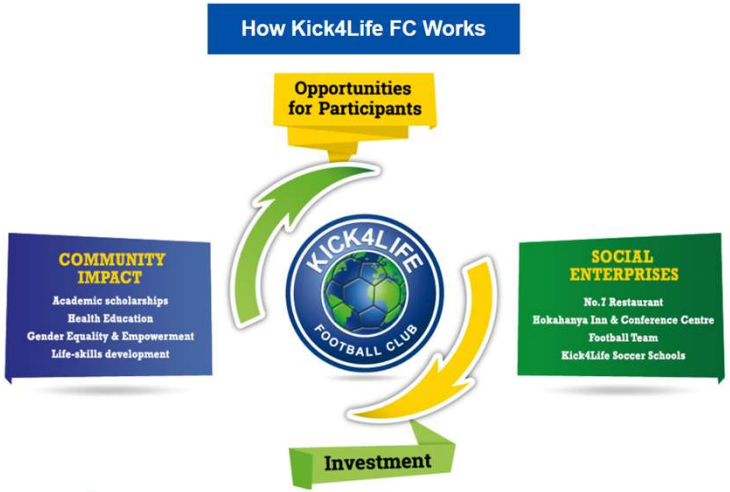
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Case study 1: Kick4Life

A leading sport for development NGO with a shared financial sustainability and scalability model

What it is

Kick4Life is a pioneering social enterprise that uses the power of football to transform lives in Lesotho, focusing on health, education, and employability for youth and vulnerable populations. Founded in 2005, the organisation runs football programmes, a social enterprise restaurant, and a guesthouse, using profits from these ventures to support social development initiatives. Their holistic approach empowers participants through sport while addressing critical issues like HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and job training.



Why it works

- **Iterative Monitoring & Evaluation** including pre and post course surveys to assess changes in knowledge, skills and attitude during the course, with focus groups conducted at intervals after the course to assess how interventions have led to lasting changes in behaviour and improved health outcomes.
- **Access to flexible unrestricted funding** allowed Kick4Life to invest in strategic initiatives, scale operations, and innovate within its programmes.
- **Diversified funding** streams with a mix of grants, social investment, and revenue from its social enterprises (restaurant and lodge), ensuring financial sustainability.
- **Cross-sector collaboration** with various partners, including corporate sponsors and government entities, to leverage additional resources and expertise, further enhancing their impact.
- **Integration of income generating business models** (e.g., No.7 Restaurant and Kick4Life Hotel) into their model, which not only provided financial sustainability but also created additional social impact through employment and training opportunities.
- **Scaling:** expanding impact locally in South Africa and creating a strong hold, to create employment and social mobility opportunities for kids. Also assisting other organisations by their S4D Methodology and enable champions to create more such models across the world.

Learnings

- **Shared Understanding**: Kick4Life demonstrated how football can be an effective tool for addressing broader social issues like health, education, and economic empowerment. They did through engaging with the local community, funders, partners and investors.
- **Shared Financial Sustainability**: By blending charity and enterprise, Kick4Life ensures it can sustain operations even if external donations fluctuate. Combining its social impact programmes with revenue-generating businesses like a restaurant and guesthouse, they reduce dependence on external funding. Leveraging a **Cross-Subsidy Model**, profits from their social enterprises directly fund community-based projects, creating a sustainable financial model.
- **Shared Scalability:** While maximizing impact in Africa, they are scaling this model around the world by training other budding social entrepreneurs tackling similar social outcomes.

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Case study 2: Street Games

*A leading sport for development NGO leveraging **shared understanding and reporting of impact** to channel funding to small scale deliverers.*

What it is

Street Games is a UK-based organisation dedicated to making sport and physical activity accessible to young people in underserved communities. Established in 2007, it serves as an intermediary between funders, policymakers, and local deliverers to ensure effective programme delivery. Street Games focuses on overcoming barriers to participation by tailoring programmes to community needs, providing training and support, and using standardised impact measurement to demonstrate effectiveness. Their collaborative approach to funding and risk management promotes the sustainability of their initiatives, ultimately aiming to enhance the health, well-being, and social inclusion of youth in high-need areas.

Why it works

- **Localised community centric programmes:** Sport and physical activity is delivered by trusted community leaders, who understand the needs of the local community. How sport and physical activity is played is owned and shaped by the young people, so its relatable and relevant to them.
- **Facilitates collaboration**: Street Games serves as a bridge between funders, policymakers, and local deliverers, ensuring alignment and effective resource sharing; taking the pressure off small, local organisations to seek and pitch for individual funding grants.
- **Investment in capacity building**: The organisation offers training and resources to local deliverers, strengthening their ability to run successful sports programmes.
- **Flexible impact measurement**: They utilise standardised metrics and reporting frameworks with enough flexibility for entrepreneurs to track and showcase programme effectiveness, ensuring transparency and continued support.
- **Long-term funding:** Project-specific funding allows for tailored solutions to local needs and collaboration with community partners for direct impact, while unrestricted funding offers flexibility to adapt strategies and leverage additional resources. Street Games approach involves three funding models and a policy cycle of testing, learning, and scaling to maximize effectiveness and sustainability.

"You never get a perfect funding criteria from funders that aligns to local needs. So, Street Games act as an intermediary, so the funding can flow but also flexible enough for the local needs. It works at both ends".

"We are the people beside the people who change lives and communities"

Learnings

- **Shared understanding** of impact so there is a consistent thread between deliverers, policy makers, funders. Street Games acts as an intermediary between funders and local deliverers, facilitating communication and ensuring that all parties have a shared understanding of goals, expectations, and impact. This helps in aligning efforts and reducing misunderstandings
- **Shared design and impact reporting:** They invest in building the capacity of local deliverers by providing training, resources, and support including consistent impact reporting standards, which helps in tracking progress and demonstrating outcomes across different programmes
- **Shared funding and risk:** They enable shared funding models and risk management strategies, which distribute financial responsibilities and risks among funders, deliverers, and other partners. So, entrepreneurs can only focus on maximising impact and ensuring that programmes are tailored to meet the needs of the communities they serve
- **Shared scalability**: By empowering local leaders and organisations, Street Games ensures that successful programmes can be scaled and replicated across different communities, enhancing their reach and impact.

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Case study 3: Love.Fútbol

Leverages a collaborative model to foster both financial sustainability and long-term community impact, ensuring that football spaces continue to thrive.

What it is

Love.Fútbol is a nonprofit organisation that builds safe, accessible football spaces for underserved communities worldwide. Their approach emphasises collaboration with local communities, where they co-create and co-finance the projects, ensuring that these spaces become sustainable community hubs. The community & local partners harness this energy, social network, and space towards long-term social impact.

Why it works

- **Community-driven:** Local communities are deeply involved in building and maintaining football spaces, ensuring long-term ownership and sustainability.
- **Meeting local needs:** Football spaces are designed based on specific community needs, promoting health, inclusion, and youth development through sport.
- **Sustainable financial model:** The co-financing model encourages community investment, reducing reliance on external funding and fostering sustainability.
- **Scalable & replicable:** The adaptable model can be scaled to different regions, addressing local needs while spreading the benefits of sport globally.
- **Long-term social impact:** Football spaces become community hubs for education, social inclusion, and youth empowerment, creating lasting change.
- **Partnerships:** Strong collaborations with local organisations, governments, and sponsors enhance resources and ensure project success and sustainability.



"We found shared value or alignment on similar objectives with partners and local governments helped co-create benefits for all in the system"

"A community-driven methodology underpinning the project sponsorship model from corporates helped us become financially sustainability"

Learnings

- **Shared financial sustainability:** Love.Fútbol partners with local communities to co-finance football spaces, ensuring long-term financial stability by involving local ownership and responsibility. Corporate Partnerships form another source of income by delivering impactful programmes aligned with various social objectives relevant for the corporates.
- **Shared scalability:** Their grassroots-led approach allows for community-driven growth, where each new project is adaptable and scaled based on local capacity and engagement. They also train the communities on diverse income generation avenues to enable self-sustainability and community ownership of the football spaces.
- **Shared funding and risk:** The co-financing model ensures shared financial responsibility between Love.Fútbol and the communities, reducing financial risk for both parties.
- **Shared understanding:** The organisation builds trust with communities by collaborating on project design and execution, fostering a deep understanding of local needs and ownership.

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Case study 4: Upshot

Making performance tracking more accessible whilst fostering a culture of shared learning and accountability, to drive more effective and impactful programmes.



What it is

Upshot is a cloud-based monitoring and evaluation platform designed to help charities, social enterprises, and sport-for-development organisations track and measure their impact. By providing tools for data collection, analysis, and reporting, Upshot enables organisations to better manage their programmes and demonstrate their outcomes effectively.

Why it works

- **Data-driven decision making:** Upshot equips organisations with tools to collect and analyse real-time data on participation, progress, and outcomes. This helps sport-based social enterprises track their impact more accurately and make informed decisions to improve their programmes.
- **Demonstrating impact to funders:** By providing detailed, customisable reports, Upshot enables organisations to showcase their successes and impact to funders and stakeholders, enhancing their credibility and increasing chances of securing further funding.
- **Efficiency and scalability:** The platform allows users to manage multiple programmes efficiently, saving time and resources. This scalability makes it easier for social entrepreneurs to expand their initiatives across regions or sectors.
- **Collaboration and transparency:** Upshot encourages collaboration among organisations by providing a shared platform for monitoring and reporting. This transparency builds trust and accountability among funders, partners, and participants.
- **Tailored for physical activity programmes:** Designed specifically with sport and physical activity organisations in mind, Upshot ensures that metrics important to these sectors, such as participant engagement and health outcomes, are captured effectively.
- **Cost-effective solution:** The platform offers a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation tool that is cost-effective, enabling even smaller organisations to access professional-grade data management systems without the need for large investments in infrastructure.

'Decolonisation and democratisation of MEL (Monitor, Evaluate and Measure) is essential where entrepreneurs decide what they measure and use that data to stimulate their business, maximising impact. Measures of success cannot be led by funders.'

Learnings

Shared resources: Upshot offers an accessible, centralised platform that allows organisations to pool resources for monitoring and evaluation. This reduces individual costs and enables smaller organisations to access advanced tools for tracking impact and performance.

- **Shared design and impact reporting:** The platform is built with a user-focused design, tailored to the needs of sport and social enterprises. Upshot allows users to collaboratively design reporting frameworks, ensuring that both funders' and beneficiaries' requirements are met. This shared approach to impact reporting ensures consistency and transparency across multiple stakeholders.

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Case study 5: OSCA (One School for All)

Promoting healthy active lifestyles and physical and mental well-being among young people of all genders through the sport of cricket by working with school boards and education sector partners.

What it is

Ontario Schools Cricket Association (OSCA) is a federally incorporated not for profit organization formed to promote a life-long love of physical activity among young people through cricket**.** This social entrepreneurship focuses on providing high-quality, inclusive education to marginalized and underserved communities. Its goal is to bridge educational gaps, often in areas with limited access to resources, by creating affordable, adaptable learning models that can thrive in diverse environments.
Impact: 5000+ children impacted by programs, 150+ schools supported, and 500+ sets of equipment donated to Ontario schools to help with capacity issues

Why it works

- **Clear Social Mission:** OSCA addresses a specific problem—access to quality education for underserved communities—which rallies support, attracts funding, and enables focused impact.
- **Innovative Education Delivery:** By using adaptable, tech-integrated learning models, OSCA operates effectively in low-resource areas, similar to Bridge International Academies' approach with innovative ideas like Table Cricket
- **Sustainable Revenue Model:** OSCA utilises low-cost tuition, partnerships, and cross-subsidisation, reducing dependency on donations and ensuring financial sustainability.
- **Community Engagement:** By involving local leaders and forming partnerships with community organizations, OSCA gains trust and improves program success and retention.
- **Impact Measurement:** Regular tracking of student progress and transparency with stakeholders builds credibility, attracts support, and ensures accountability. Methods used include Pre & Post Surveys, Focus Groups, Surveys, Participation Metrics, feedback loops with stakeholders and collaboration with educational institutions to gather data and compare participants' results with broader school data, promoting well-being.
- **Adaptability:** OSCA's flexibility in adjusting its operations to local conditions makes it resilient to challenges, enhancing long-term sustainability.

'The landmark event, titled "Get Moving With OSCA," brought together over 150 young cricketers and their families, showcasing the powerful intersection of cricket and educational development. The CricketEd Symposium provided a dynamic platform for participants to engage in various learning opportunities, including financial literacy, cyber safety, and STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine), alongside hands-on cricket activities. This multifaceted approach not only enriched participants' understanding of the sport but also equipped them with essential life skills, demonstrating how cricket can serve as a vehicle for holistic youth development.'

'Weekly questionnaires / surveys help us capture immediate insights about what aspects of the program are resonating with students and what challenges they may be facing. The real-time data enables us to make timely adjustments to enhance program delivery and engagement'

Learnings

- **Shared Design:** Involve communities in designing programs to ensure relevance and increase adoption.
- **Shared Understanding**: Clearly defined and communicated mission among all stakeholders aligns efforts and strengthens commitment to the social cause, making it easier to achieve collective goals.
- **Shared Resource Platform**: Use shared resources, like technology platforms or pooled expertise, to lower operational costs and improve efficiency
- **Shared Reporting:** In collaboration with schools and institutions with diverse sources to gather both quantitative and qualitative metrics
- **Shared Funding:** Diversify funding sources through partnerships and cross-subsidisation models.
- **Shared Financial Sustainability:** charging affordable fees to some while providing free or reduced-cost access to others can sustain operations long-term.

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Spotlight 1: Shared Financial Sustainability

There are various models' social entrepreneurs could use to ensure financial sustainability. Listed below and some models, with examples within sport. While still utilising grants and donations, the focus is on reducing overdependence by pairing them with other sources of revenue to empower the social entrepreneurs become financially self-sustainable in the long run.

Financial Sustainability Models	Examples
Fee-for-Service: Charging fees for services, such as training programmes or coaching, to generate consistent revenue.	**Sport 4 Life UK** offers employability workshops and charges for tailored services to sustain operations.
Corporate Partnerships: Building partnerships with businesses to secure sponsorships, funding, or in-kind resources (e.g., equipment, facilities).	**Football United** (Australia)**, Kick4Life** (South Africa) and **Love.Fútbol** (US) partners with corporations to provide sports education programs to marginalised communities.
Cross Subsidy Models: Profits from one programme are used to subsidise other social impact initiatives, ensuring overall financial balance.	**Kick4Life** (South Africa) operates a social enterprise restaurant, using profits to fund football-based health and education programs.
Social Enterprises: Creating revenue-generating businesses that align with social missions, such as selling merchandise or offering sports clinics.	**Mathare Youth Sports Association** (Kenya) leverages football to offer community services and attract corporate sponsorship.
Public-Private Collaborations: Engaging in collaborations with local governments and private sector for grants, tax benefits, and long-term funding opportunities.	**Soccer in the Streets** (US) partners with local transit authorities to build pitches, blending public and private support to drive free youth soccer and adult league play.
Crowdfunding & Community Support: Mobilising the community through online crowdfunding campaigns or membership models to generate small, regular contributions. **Community co-financing** enhances ownership and reduces financial strain on the entrepreneur.	**Iringa Development of Youth Disabled and Children Care (IDYDC)** (Tanzania) and **Love.Fútbol**' (US) leverages local community support to sustain operation. IDYDC leverages sport to create a community without disease, poverty, or illiteracy, where human rights prevail.

'Profit combined with a non-profit model can drive forward wider systematic change'
- Ashoka

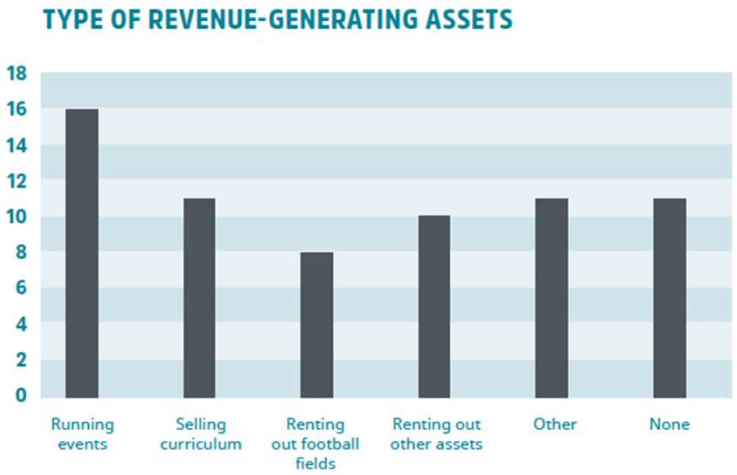


Figure 4 – Type of revenue generating asset

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Spotlight 2: Shared Scalability

Empowering local leaders or "champions" by equipping them with the skills and knowledge to teach others, creating a ripple effect of leadership and capacity building. This approach allows for scalability and sustainability as local leaders continue training others within their communities. Some ways it can be delivered include open sourcing, train the trainer model, creating champions, sharing methodology.

Examples:

Coaches Across Continents (CAC)

Model: a global organisation that uses sport for social impact by training local coaches and community leaders to use football as a tool to teach life skills, health education, and conflict resolution. They empower local coaches to continue educating and training others, creating a sustainable system of knowledge transfer.

Scaling: The programme operates in over 60 countries and impacts millions through its "train-the-trainer" model, where trained coaches are responsible for scaling the impact by working with youth in their own communities.

Model: Use soccer to empower underprivileged communities, teaching life skills, confidence, and teamwork. Their 'train-the-trainer' approach involves training community members to take leadership roles and enable the programmes to expand organically as local leaders take on the role of scaling the initiatives in their areas, fostering leadership and local ownership.

Scaling: By working through local leaders, SSUSA has scaled to several U.S. cities, creating sustainable, community-led soccer programmes that also provide education and employment opportunities.
Kick4Life generated new income and expanded internationally by training local coaches and community leaders to deliver football-based programmes that promote health education, HIV prevention, gender equality, and life skills.

Model: Right to play uses sports and play to educate and empower children facing adversity by training teachers, coaches, and local community leaders to use play-based learning to improve health, education, and social inclusion outcomes.

Scaling: The programme has reached over 2.3 million children annually in 15 countries by training local leaders to continue delivering and expanding the initiative.

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Spotlight 3: Impact measurement (1/2)

There is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach or sector wide framework/ tool currently used to measure the impact of sport and physical activity. Social entrepreneurs typically use a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators to thoroughly assess their impact like Theory of Change frameworks, impact assessments, and social impact evaluations to guide. Below is an overview of some widely recognised principles for effectively measuring impact, relevant for social entrepreneurship in sport and physical activity.

Impact measurement in sport for development

Best practice for an organisation or enterprise using sport to affect positive outcomes involves:

- Creating a **Theory of Change** that defines the intended social impact and an evidence-based plan for why the activities taken by the organisation can affect that change (the outcomes)
- A list of specific outcomes (such as improved health and well-being) that support the intended impact
- Measures of success against those outcomes (including quantitative, such as number of participants, and qualitative, such as change in well-being felt)
- Data collection methods and tools for tracking success (including registrants and surveys/ interviews).

Sport England and the Sport For Development Coalition, and other relevant bodies have published guidance, principles and tools that help align impact measurement to the best practice described above.

Uniqueness and challenges:

Measuring social impact in sport is fundamentally about tracking behaviour change, as the positive outcomes are reflected in shifts in participants' attitudes, actions, and experiences resulting from physical activity. Key indicators for this include data gathered through surveys and interviews.

Challenges often involve effectively measuring the nuance of this outcome-led, behaviour change reliant impact; i.e. the individual changes experienced by people. This nuance needs to be deliverer led, but still ladder up to broader social issues that align to funders, brands and partners.

Survey highlighted the following challenges faced by SEs in impact measurement -
Limited Resources for Data Collection and Analysis; Capacity; Engaging Participants in Evaluation Processes; Attributing Outcomes to Specific Programs; Communicating Impact to Stakeholders

Having clear theory of change and the developing indicators about how success looks like. Followed by data collection both quantitative and qualitative. Using validated measures, comparative figures using relevant existing cohorts ***- UpShot***

Shared system and tools being funded, that also leverage relationships with organisations (that can use standardised research to inform measures) such as universities would help, as individualised data collection is costly ***- UpShot***

Without clear and impactful storytelling, we risk losing the support and engagement necessary to sustain and grow our programs. Overcoming these challenges will require OSCA to invest in developing robust measurement tools, building capacity for data collection and analysis, and fostering a culture of evaluation that encourages participant engagement. - ***OSCA***

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Spotlight 3: Impact measurement (2/2)

Below is an overview of some widely useful frameworks and assessments within social entrepreneurship, and an indication of how relevant and useful they are to sport and physical activity.

Impact tools	Summary	Relevance to sport and physical activity
Theory of Change	A framework that defines the intended social impact and an evidence-based plan for why the activities taken by the organisation can affect that change (the outcomes).	Widely used in sport and physical activity, it helps organisations clearly understand the social issue they want to address and outlines specific outcomes for people and communities that help achieve that change.
Social Value TOMs framework	A framework based on themes, outcomes and measures that simplifies impact measurements whilst also aligning to broader objectives of government and Sustainable Development Goals.	Themes, outcomes and measures simples reporting in alignment with the outcome-led requirements of sport and physical activity., laddered up to broader themes underpinned by industry data and best practice.
SROI	Combination of monetised value of social impact, financial investment and monetized value of social return on investment.	Widely used by Sport England and other government bodies providing the case for investment in sport. However, the widespread use by smaller organisations is in its infancy due to access, cost and complexity.
Balanced Scorecard	It is a multi-dimensional management tool that includes perspectives from various stakeholders and organisational operations.	Helpful holistic performance measurement tool for social enterprise but would need to be complimented with a deeper measurement of social impact in sport and physical activity (that is outcome-led).
Robin Hood Foundation/Benefi t/ Cost Ratio	The purpose of Robin Hood's Benefit-Cost Ratio is to translate the outcomes of diverse programmes into a single, monetized value that measures.	This technique is problematic when the goal is nonmonetary, such as outcomes associated with sport and physical activity (e.g. better health and wellbeing).
Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)	This approach helps answer the question: what development impact does $1 of spending achieve?	It is difficult to quantify social impact in monetary terms mainly because there is a lot of subjectivity in its determination (i.e. when and how wellbeing benefits are achieved).
Cost Effective Analysis (CEA)	The cost-effective analysis takes the same idea of the cost benefit analysis except that it doesn't monetize the impact for instance the impact would be stated as number of kids graduated from high school and divides it by the cost of the programme.	Because of the individuality of programmes and their impacts, it is almost impossible to compare it against other programmes that don't have similar impacts.

Survey highlighted the following measurement tools currently used by SEs –

1. **Pre- and Post-Surveys:** to assess participants' knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to cricket and physical activity.
2. **Weekly Questionnaires:** to gather ongoing feedback from participants regarding their experiences in our programs.
3. **Focus Groups and Interviews:** To gain deeper qualitative insights, we conduct focus groups and interviews with students, teachers, and community members.
4. **Participation Metrics:** including demographic information to ensure we are reaching diverse groups.
5. **Collaboration with Educational Institutions**: to gather data on students' overall physical and mental health outcomes.
6. **Feedback Loops with Stakeholders:** to gather feedback and insights about our programs and refine our initiatives, meeting the needs of the community.

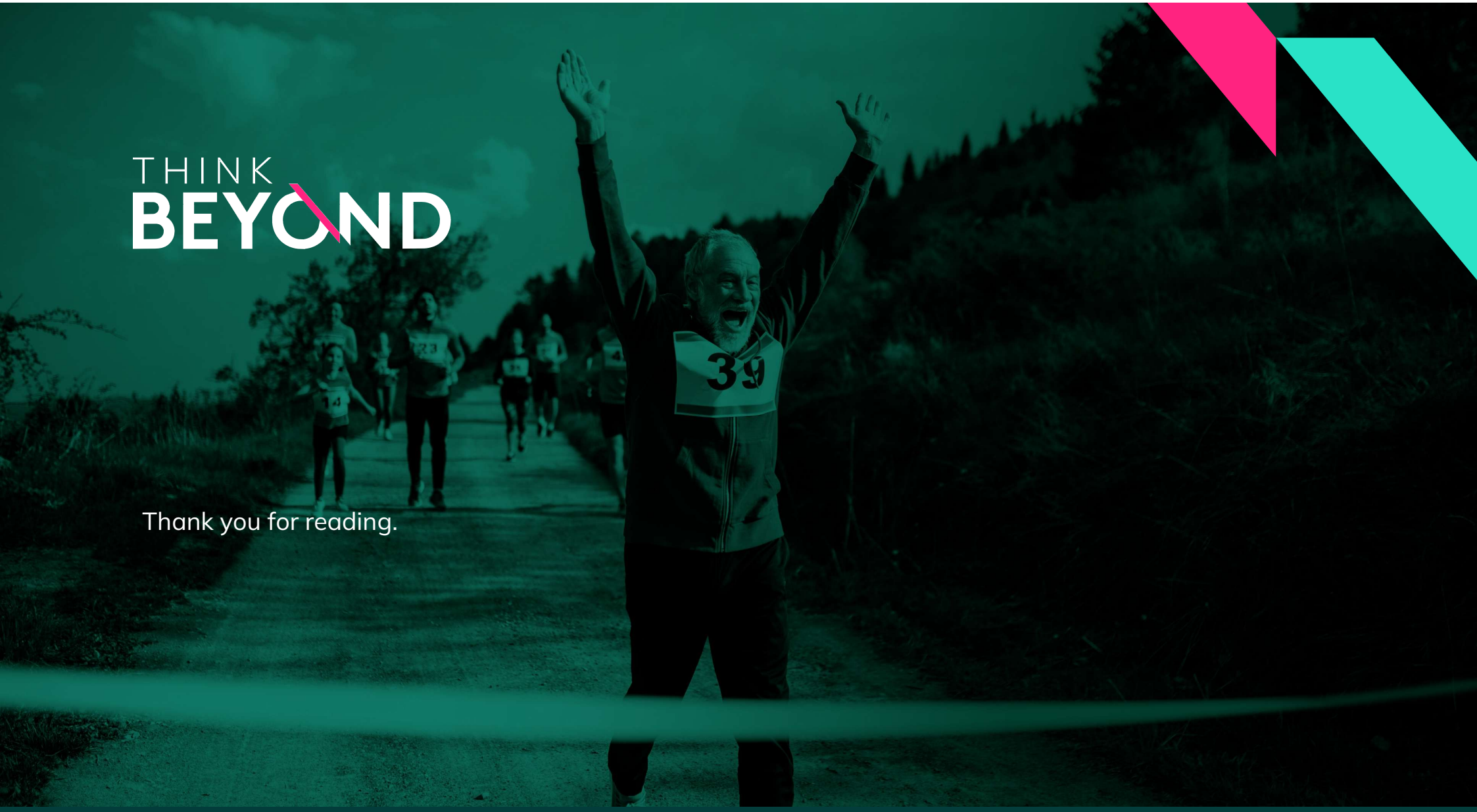
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What could good look like?

If a shared value model, that addresses systemic challenges was implemented – what could this mean for effective support at each stage of a social entrepreneur's journey? For each pain-point identified earlier, we identified success factors that could help social entrepreneurs fulfill their potential in sport and physical activity.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS JOURNEY	Ideation & Validation	Planning & Foundation building	Launch & Early Operations	Growth & Scaling	Sustainability	Advocacy, systemic change & legacy
SUCCESS FACTORS	• **Thorough research** to map the needs of their community to sport based programmes + wider sector objectives • **Pilot small scale projects** to test ideas • **Access mentorship networks** • **Involve potential beneficiaries and partners** for early validation & fostering shared value.	• **Collaborative seed funding** with flexibility around KPIs, time to deliver impact, and recognising long-term shared value to investor • Psychometric tools and surveys to demonstrate potential impact in the short term to funders • **Access to key partnerships in sport ecosystem.**	• **Un-Restricted long-term funding** to enable business operations, whilst expanding delivery to maximise impact through sport • **Communicating impact early in a way that resonates with key funders and partners in sport,** though story telling and case studies.	• **Capacity building of human-led delivery via** training & development of other trainers • **Exploring diverse income streams** for regular sustainable income and focus on delivery • **Scaling effectively to enhance impact** locally whilst expanding delivery in other geographies (e.g. by creating champions).	• **Securing long term commercial partnerships** • **Regularly review and refinement of delivery** based on learning and evaluation • Explore and adapt business models that **balance financial sustainability** with the intended impact.	• **Influencing policy change** that supports the broader sport ecosystem to better support the needs of social entrepreneurs • Strengthen **community ownership of sport and physical activity** to ensure that the delivery of sport and its benefits continues independently.

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Appendix



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Glossary

1. **Shared Value**: A shared understanding of the long-term financial and societal benefit available for all stakeholders, and the mechanisms in place to enable investment.

2. **Social Entrepreneurs:** Individuals who use innovative solutions to address social, cultural, or environmental issues alongside commercial success, often leveraging sports or physical activities to create positive change in communities.

3. **Scaling:** The process of growing a social enterprise's impact or operations to reach more people or regions, particularly through expanding access to sports programmes.

4. **Systemic Challenges:** Fundamental barriers that affect entire systems, such as social inequalities or unequal access to sports infrastructure, which hinder participation in physical activities and the benefits of it by certain groups in society.

5. **Self-Sustainable Business Models**: Business models that generate sufficient revenue to maintain operations without depending solely on external donations or grants, ensuring ongoing sports or physical activity programmes.

6. **Financial Sustainability:** The ability of a social enterprise to maintain stable financial resources over time, ensuring the long-term viability of sports and development programmes.

7. **Community ownership**: A model where local communities take an active role in managing and directing sports initiatives, ensuring programmes are relevant and tailored to their needs.

8. **Innovation**: The creation or adoption of new approaches, technologies, or strategies to solve challenges, such as using digital platforms to promote participation in sports.

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Sources and references

The research drew upon the sources listed under the literature review and the primary research involved interviews with the organisations listed. The findings in this report are informed by a combination of both information sources.

Literature Review

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- Adebowdale Commission on Social Investment | Social entrepreneursUK
- World Economic Forum: State of Social entrepreneurs
- Social enterprise UK: Mission Critical State of Social enterprise Survey 2023
- Sport England Active Lives Survey 2026
- Reaching the less active: A guide for public sport and leisure services
- UK Government Get Active Strategy
- Sport For Development Coalition
- Exploring how external stakeholders shape social innovation in sport for development: Sport Management Review, 2019
- Ashoka Sport For Changemakers Agenda: Seven Steps for Funding System Change
- Ashoka Sport For Changemakers: Changemaking Takes a Team 2023
- UnLtd Movement For Change Year 1 Annual Report, 2026
- Sported: The SROI of Sport For Good
- Sported: Made for sport; The Power of Sport Individual Case Studies
- Sport For Development Measurement Framework (2015)

Primary research (interviews and consultation)

Sector Partners

Movement for Change Cohort

Think Beyond Cohort

Social Entrepreneurs survey

Seven respondents asked for their opinion on challenges and opportunities faced by social entrepreneurs in sport and physical activity (the full details can be found in the appendix of this report)

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Research survey

Approach: alongside the main research project (involving a literature review and primary interviews), an open survey was also conducted which asked social entrepreneurs to provide their views on the challenges and opportunities they faced delivering sport. The response rate was not extensive; with a total of seven social entrepreneurs providing answers but still provided useful insight. As such, the results and answers provided were used to test and validate the main findings in the report. You can find an overview of the questions asked, and the results on the subsequent three pages.

Survey respondents:

1. Adrian Ashton - Associate of Unltd, and consultant in the M4C programme, London, UK
2. Coachmotiv Ltd, Surrey, UK
3. GRM Sport marketing, Glasgow, UK
4. Makolokwe Sports Development, Makolokwe, South Africa
5. Ontario Schools Cricket Association (OSCA), Ontario, Canada
6. Integrated Community Development Initiative (ICODI) Uganda, Africa
7. Empower active learning, Worcestershire, UK
8. Hockeyball, Canada

Survey questions:

1. To get started, please provide the following information, to help us analyse the data collected as part of this survey.
2. Has your business or organisation delivered services within the sport and physical activity sector in the past or currently? If you selected no, why not
3. How effective do you believe social entrepreneurs and social enterprises currently are in delivering positive social outcomes in sports and sport development?
4. What are the top three barriers your organisation faces in the sport for development sector? Please provide more detail as to why you selected those options, as well as any specific examples that provide more information about your experience or challenges.
5. What are the top three opportunities for the sport and development sector, if it can work more effectively with social entrepreneurs? Please provide more detail as to why you selected those options, as well as any specific examples that provide more information about your experience.
6. a) What challenges do you currently face in impact measurement to demonstrate the impact you are creating?
   b) Despite the challenges, which tools and best practices are you currently using for impact measurement to demonstrate the impact you are creating?
7. Can you share any success stories, from your organisation or others, where social entrepreneurs have been able to deliver positive outcomes in and through sport for development?
8. Looking forward, what is your approach for growing and scaling the positive impact of your organisation?
9. What are the methods or models you use, or plan to use in the future, that support the financial sustainability of your organisation?
10. What support or resources would most help your organization grow and increase its impact in the sport for development sector?

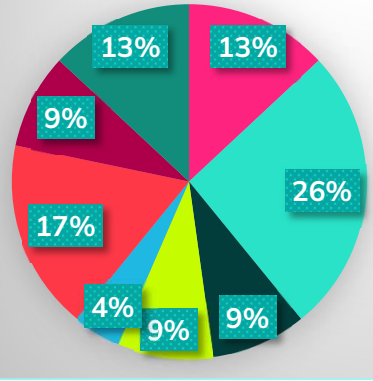
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Survey results – Barriers faced by social entrepreneurs

88% of 7 social entrepreneurs surveyed believe social entrepreneurs and social enterprises currently are effective in delivering positive social outcomes in physical activity sector.
However, top barriers faced include:

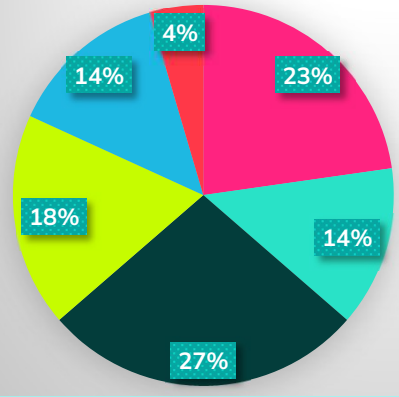
- **52%** SEs face difficulties related to **financial sustainability**
- **73%** SEs highly dependent on external sources
- **26%** stated that maintaining financial sustainability was their top challenge.

Top barriers faced by seven survey respondents in sport for development sector



- Fundraising
- Maintaining financial sustainability
- Regulatory challenges
- Lack of awareness / visibility
- Difficulty in measuring impact
- Limited access to skilled staff / volunteers

Current methods used by SEs for financial sustainability



- Grants and Donations
- Social Impact Investment
- Revenue from Sports Programs and Services
- Sponsorship and Corporate Partnerships
- Membership Fees
- Public Funding and Subsidies

'Fundraising, maintaining financial sustainability, and lack of awareness/visibility—are compounded by systemic challenges in the recreational sport sector and directly impact our ability to meet growing demand for cricket programs in Ontario schools.' - **OSCA**

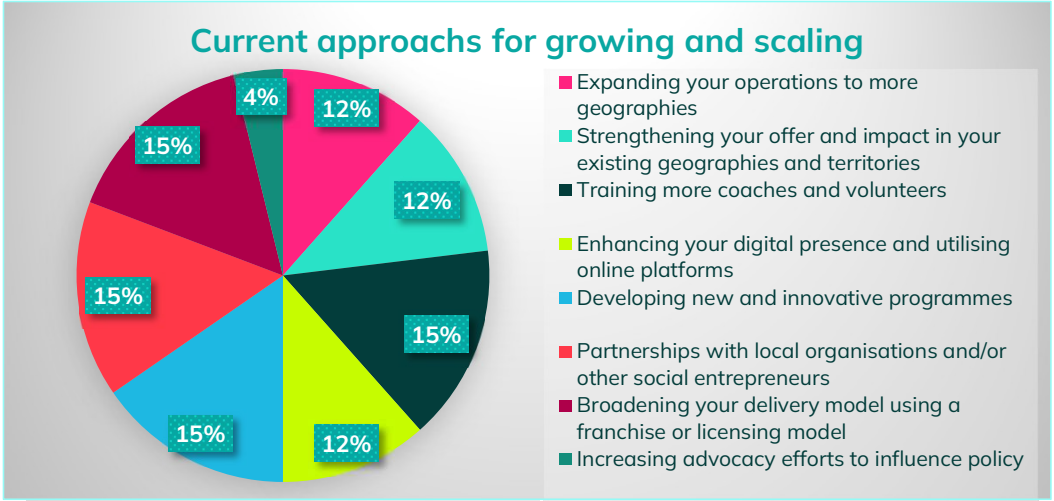
'Income generation through trading income (too reliant on grant funding), lack of human resource in sales and marketing. Try to everything themselves, rather than partnering with other organisations' - **Anonymous surveyor**

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Survey results – Opportunities highlighted by social entrepreneurs

Responses from seven social entrepreneurs surveyed show:

- A diverse range of approaches to scaling and growth, including strengthening your offer and impact in existing geographies, training more coaches, enhancing digital presence, broadening delivery model, partnering with local organisations and increasing advocacy efforts.
- Support survey respondents selected to make this happen included; shared learning, peer groups, investment and unrestricted funding.



Opportunities highlighted by survey respondents for the sport and development sector, if it can work more effectively with social entrepreneurs, include:

- Enhanced physical and mental health outcomes for communities
- Increased community involvement and social cohesion through sports activities
- Youth development and empowerment through sports programs

Support or resources that survey respondents needed, include:

- Shared learning, peer groups
- Sponsorship and investment
- A sustainable funding formula with stable recurring funding to deliver programs
- Corporate partners
- Innovative funding from biggest funders for sports for development

'Our selection of enhanced physical and mental health outcomes, increased community involvement and social cohesion, and youth development and empowerment' - **OSCA**

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