

MOVENOW MOVE365

UNDERSTANDING TRENDS IN YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN SPORT



A REPORT CO-COMMISSIONED BY



International
Olympic
Committee

Allianz 



OLYMPISM 365

Olympism365 is the IOC's strategy aimed at strengthening the role of sport as an important enabler for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which it achieves by collaborating with a range of partners from both within and outside the Olympic Movement. The themes and priority areas for Olympism365 reflect the role that sport and Olympism in society can play for the SDGs by contributing to creating healthier and more active communities, more equitable, safer and inclusive communities, peacebuilding, and education and livelihoods.

move now

The MoveNow programme was launched as part of the IOC and IPC's purpose-led partnership with Allianz, to encourage the next generation across the globe to move. Covering movement across body, mind and soul, the programme includes a range of initiatives; from sports camps and the first fully inclusive Training Series, to a thriving TikTok Club and 'hackathons'.





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of their commitment to ensuring more young people benefit from sports participation and Olympism, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) through its Olympism365 strategy, and Worldwide Olympic and Paralympic Insurance Partner, Allianz SE (Allianz), through the MoveNow programme, commissioned independent research to identify young people's current levels of engagement with sport and physical activity, and the factors that influence it.

Five thousand young people between 12 and 24 years, and two thousand parents of 12–18-year-olds, across 10 countries (Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Spain, Switzerland and USA) were surveyed to understand levels of sport participation, motivations, barriers, and concerns, particularly in the context of current global challenges.

The research findings are consistent with the broad body of evidence about young people and sport participation. However, the research provides a contemporary snapshot and a unique level of demographic detail which highlights key and emerging issues. In particular:

- Seventy-two per cent of young people think sports participation is important.
- Over 90% of parents said improving physical and mental health, having fun (94%) and improving self-confidence applied to them (a lot or a little) as reasons for their child to play sport.
- Young people report that they enjoy school more (55%), and find it easier to concentrate (46%) after physical activity.
- Despite this, levels of engagement with sport and physical activity remain insufficient, with less than 20% of young people reporting being physically active for five or more hours a week.¹

When asked about barriers or concerns that prevent them from playing more sport, young people report having other responsibilities as the main barrier. They also have concerns about not wanting to play sport alone, or with people they don't know.



The research also found that current global challenges are contributing to insufficient physical activity. For instance, young people's engagement in sport has been adversely affected by both the cost-of-living crisis and by COVID-19.

- Over a third of young people (37%) report they are playing less sport due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- Thirty-four per cent cite that they have an ongoing concern (a lot or a little) about COVID-19 and this is preventing them from being more active.
- Thirty-one per cent report playing less sport due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the drivers of these two global challenges are likely to be time-limited, the behavioural change around sports participation may be permanent, with participation remaining lower than previously, even after these challenges recede.

The impact of climate change is also seen as a factor in reduced participation rates and represents an emerging challenge to the maintenance of activity and engagement.

- Thirty per cent of young people report reducing their sports participation due to climate change, for example due to hotter or wetter weather or water shortages.

The current research also reinforces evidence that there are demographic profiles that make some young people less likely to be involved in sport and physical activity. There are consistent findings that females, young people from low-income households and people aged 20 to 24 have lower participation rates compared to their counterparts.

The report identifies issues and topics that will be further analysed in the next steps of the project, through a series of a series of expert workshops to identify good practices, partnership opportunities and policy options for government, businesses, the not-for-profit sector, and the wider Olympic Movement to further support young people to benefit from sport and physical activity.





1 ABOUT THE RESEARCH

1.1 CONTEXT, PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Over the past three years, the COVID-19 pandemic, the accelerating impact of climate change and cost-of-living crisis have negatively impacted the opportunities for young people to garner the health, well-being and social benefits of sport participation.

These benefits are well evidenced, and on this basis sport was recognised as “an important enabler of sustainable development” by the United Nations General Assemblyⁱⁱ upon adopting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In this context, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), through its Olympism365 strategy, is working with Worldwide Olympic and Paralympic Insurance Partner, Allianz in support of its MoveNow programme, to strengthen the role sport participation and Olympism can play in creating a healthier environment for young people and building their confidence in the future.

Through this partnership, the IOC and Allianz are undertaking research and developing a series of knowledge products on the potential wider benefits of sport participation in order to generate insight and to provide advice on how to maximise these benefits, including in response to major global changes such as those related to the cost of living, climate change, and COVID-19.

1.2 OUR APPROACH

The IOC and Allianz commissioned the Centre for Sport, Business and Society (CSBS) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to support the project, including by producing this initial research report. The report draws on CSBS’ wide-ranging review of the existing literature and the detailed findings of market research conducted internationally.

The literature review into the benefits of, and barriers to, participation in sport for young people globally, examined the existing evidence to uncover what is already known about the topic. It focussed on peer reviewed research-based publications, with articles published between 2013 and 2023 given preference.

The literature review informed the content of a unique market research survey of young people and parents in 10 countries (Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Spain, Switzerland and USA).

The market research was undertaken by Publicis Sport and Entertainment and surveyed 5,000 young people aged from 12 to 24 years, and 2,000 parents of 12–18-year-olds.ⁱⁱⁱ The survey captured the views of people from different backgrounds and demographics, with robust samples to enable sub-group analysis, and weightings applied such that the young people’s sample was nationally representative in each market.

1.3 ABOUT THIS REPORT

The report does not aim to reproduce a summary of the literature, nor to provide a comprehensive coverage of the market research data. Rather, it uses this information to identify key issues and themes. Those with the most potential to increase sports participation amongst young people will be further explored and developed in a series of expert workshops as part of the next stage of the project. Recommendations will then be presented as a basis for action in a Catalyst for Change report.



2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

2.1 HOW IMPORTANT IS SPORT?

Physical and mental health

The benefits of young people’s active engagement in sport are well documented. All forms of sport are beneficial to physical health, with evidence of increased positive outcomes from organised and team sport, which are also linked to positive psychological and social indicators such as self-esteem, confidence, social skills and interaction, mood and competence.^{iv}

The links between sport and physical wellbeing appear to be well-understood by young people and are reflected in the survey data. Young people were presented with a range of possible reasons to play sport and asked to rank how much those reasons applied to them. Two of the top three reasons given are health-related: to improve physical health and to get into or stay in shape. Overall, 90% said improving physical health applies to them “a lot” or “a little”, and getting in shape applies to them either “a lot” or “a little.”

Figure 1 – Young People: Reasons to do physical activity / play sport

Most parents (95% stated a lot or a little) also want their children to play sport for its physical health benefits. Exactly the same percentage agrees that mental health is a reason for wanting their child to play sport.

Although the link between sport, and mental health and mood are not as strongly articulated as motivators by young people themselves, the impact of participation is clear. Young people who play sport at least once a week are more likely to report a positive mood and self-confidence than those young people who report playing sport less than once a month.

Figure 1
Young People: Reasons to do physical activity / play sport

Q8i/ii/iii. Here are some reasons why people play sport / do physical activity. How much, if at all, do the following reasons apply to you? “I play sport / do physical activity...”

	This applies to me A LOT	NET Applies (a bit or a lot)
To have fun	56%	89%
To improve my physical health	54%	90%
To get into / stay in shape	50%	88%
To feel more energetic	47%	85%
To improve my mental health	47%	84%
To improve my mood	44%	83%
To learn / improve my skills	43%	82%
To improve my self-confidence	41%	80%
To spend time outdoors	41%	82%
To achieve personal bests	40%	77%
To socialise with / make new friends	40%	77%
To spend time focusing on myself	39%	80%
To achieve in other parts of my life	33%	72%
To escape from the things in my life	31%	67%
To help my concentration	30%	69%
Because I have to do it at school	30%	60%
To feel like I belong to a community	25%	58%
To compete against others	24%	54%
To become a professional athlete	21%	44%
Because my parents want me to	15%	41%

In fact, playing sport at least once a week is associated with a range of positive personality traits, including ability to concentrate and a sense of belonging.

Figure 2 – Young people who play sport regularly

Educational and employment outcomes

Sport has been shown to enhance socio-educational outcomes^v, both by increasing students' motivation and engagement with school, and through its ability to improve cognitive function, memory and attention.^{vi} Young people who participate in sport tend to have better academic performance, higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates.^{vii}

The impact of activity on education was apparent in the survey data, with about half of all young people surveyed reporting that on days when there is physical activity, they enjoy school more (55%) and their concentration is better (46%).

Figure 3 – Young people's attitudes towards education

Figure 3 Young People's attitudes towards education

Q13A & Q13B. And finally, we want to ask you about your experience of school. Using the scale provided, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

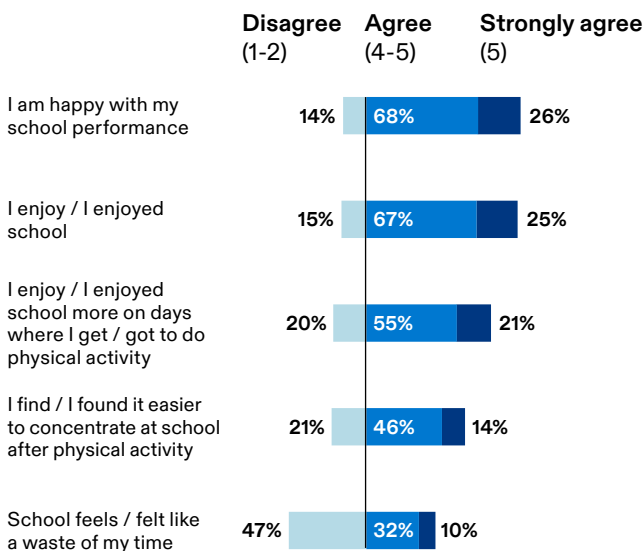
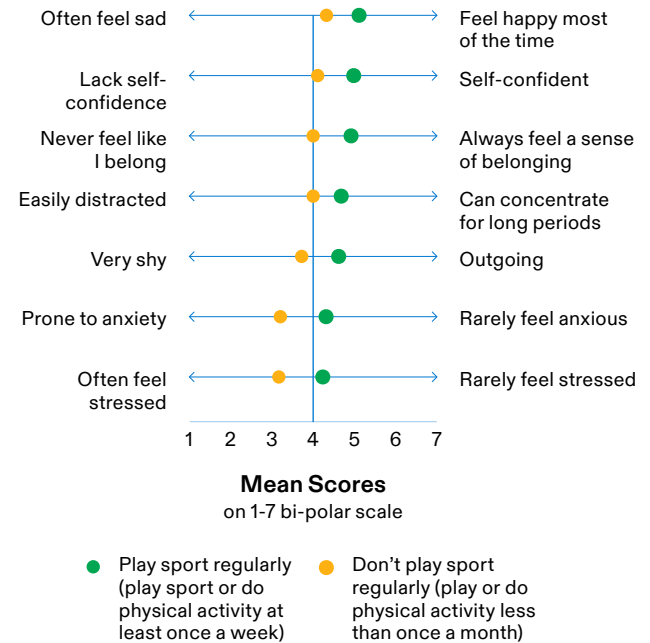


Figure 2 Young people who play sport regularly



Parents agree with the finding that activity levels influence school enjoyment and concentration, reporting that on a day when there is physical activity at school, their child enjoys school more (56%) and finds it easier to concentrate (51%).

The benefits are even clearer when comparing those young people who play sport or are physically active at least once a week with young people who are active less than once a month.

The more active group were more likely to report that they are happy with their school performance (70%) and enjoy school (68%), than those playing less than once a month (61% and 58% respectively). The active group was also more likely to find it easier to concentrate at school after physical activity (48%) than the less active group (29%).

Figure 4 – Attitudes towards education – physically active young people

In addition to studies quantifying the impact of sport on specific academic results^{viii}, there is evidence that through social participation in sport, young people develop “human capital”. This includes knowledge, teamwork and life skills which can generate employment opportunities and personal and professional advancement.^{ix}

Figure 4 Attitudes towards education – physically active young people

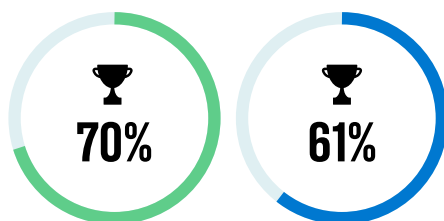
Q13A & Q13B. And finally, we want to ask you about your experience of school. Using the scale provided, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Agree
(4-5)

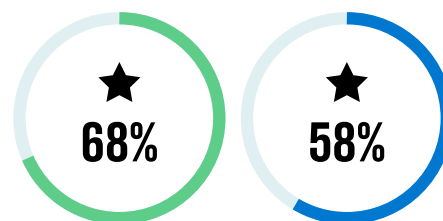
■ Physically active
(play sport or do physical activity at least once a week)

■ Not physically active
(play sport or do physical activity less than once a month)

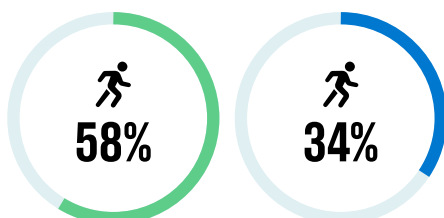
I am happy with school performance



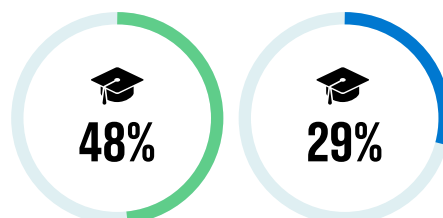
I enjoy / enjoyed school



I enjoy / enjoyed school more on days where I get / got to do physical activity



I find / found it easier to concentrate at school after physical activity



School feels / felt like a waste of my time

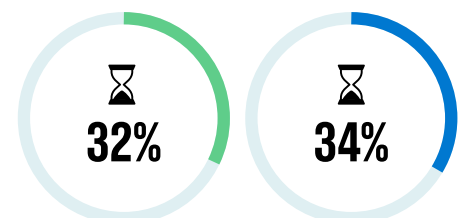
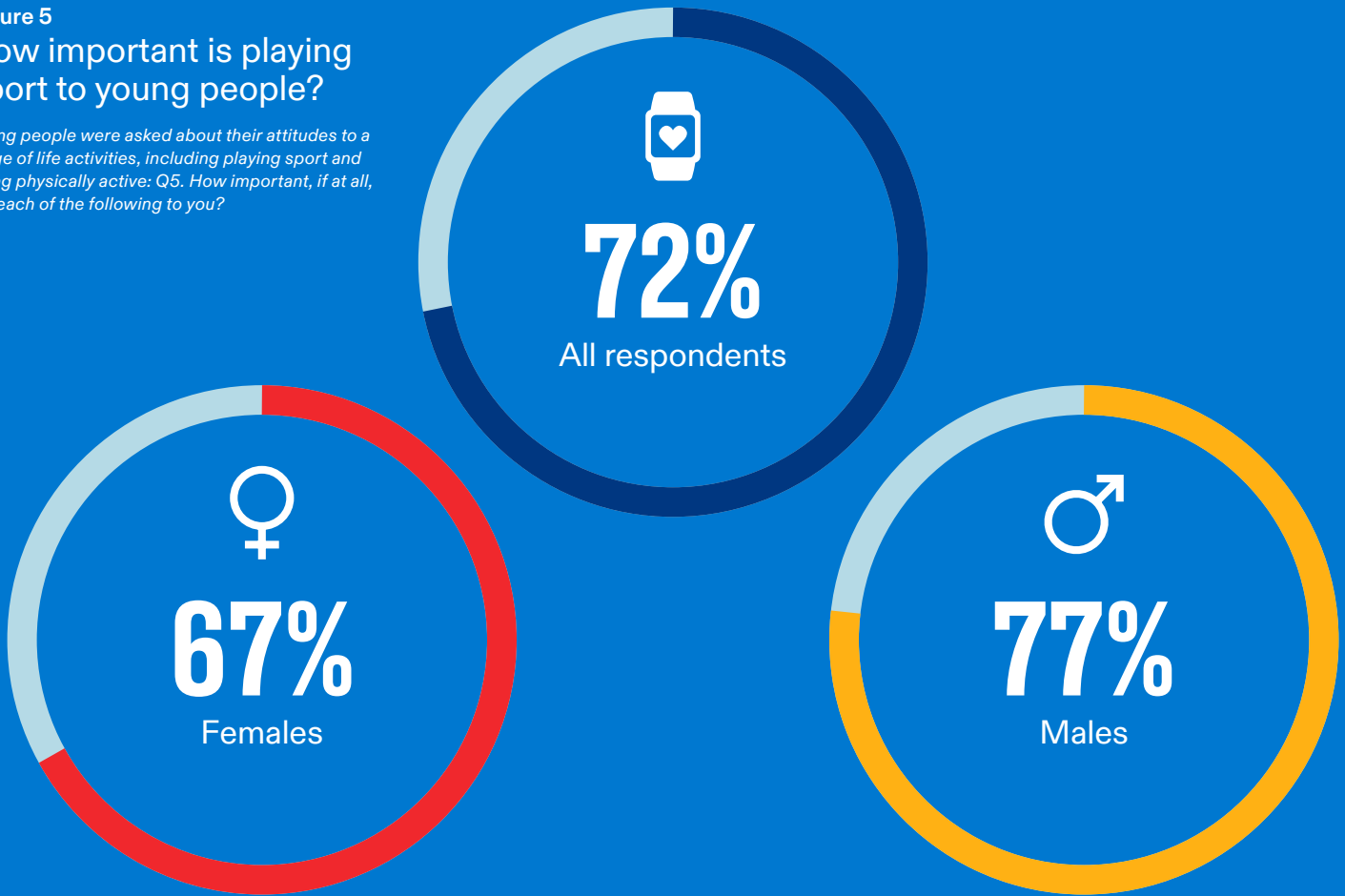


Figure 5 How important is playing sport to young people?

Young people were asked about their attitudes to a range of life activities, including playing sport and being physically active: Q5. How important, if at all, are each of the following to you?



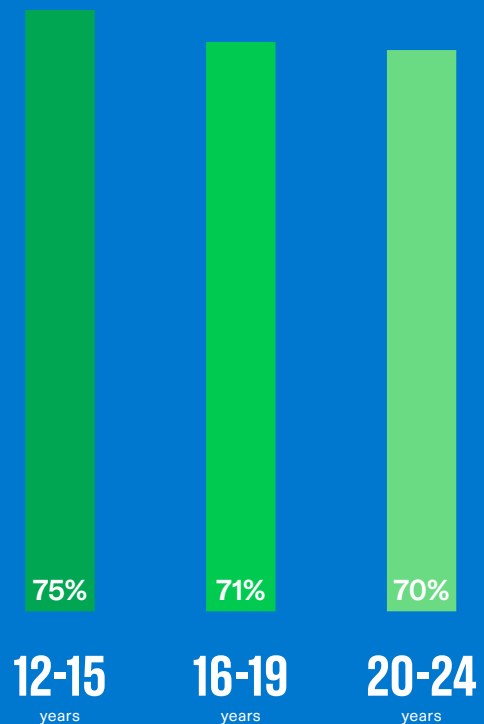
Importance ratings

Seventy-two per cent of young people think playing sport (for example, football, basketball, tennis, etc. but excluding Esports) is important. There are, however, marked demographic differences in attitude, including a general trend for fewer females than males to think that sport is important and for females to be less likely to consider sport very important. The perceived importance of sport also declines with age, with 70% of 20-24-year-olds reporting sport as important, compared with 75% of 12-15-year-olds.

Figure 5 – How important is playing sport to young people

When asked separately about physical activity (for example, going for a walk, going for a bike ride, going to the gym, etc.) 82% of young people think it is important, including 39% who think it is very important. While there are gender-based differences in strength of opinion (with males more likely to consider physical activity very important), combined importance scores are not significantly different between males and females overall. Further, in contrast to attitudes to sport, the perceived importance of physical activity does not decline as dramatically with age.

Figure 5 cont.



2.2 PARTICIPATION RATES

Despite the well-documented benefits of sport and active recreation on health and well-being, and despite the majority of young people reporting that it is important, physical inactivity remains a major issue.

A recent study pooled data from 143 countries to create a global overview of physical activity among adolescents. It showed that more than 4 in 5 school-going adolescents aged 11 to 17 were insufficiently physically active in 2016.^{xii} The same study reported that the prevalence of sufficient physical activity during the previous 15 years had declined for boys and was unchanged for girls.

The current research is consistent with this evidence. While the recommended minimum activity levels differ across the countries surveyed, the survey data make clear that levels of engagement with sport and physical activity remain insufficient.^{xiii}

Eighteen per cent of young people report playing sport for 5 or more hours a week. There is a significant difference between males

(20%) and females (15%) and between young people from high-income households (22%) and low-income households (14%).

However, higher numbers of young people are participating in sport at some level. Sixty-six per cent report playing sport at least once a week, including 48% who report playing more than once a week. The study demonstrates that participation decreases with age; and that this trend is more pronounced for females.

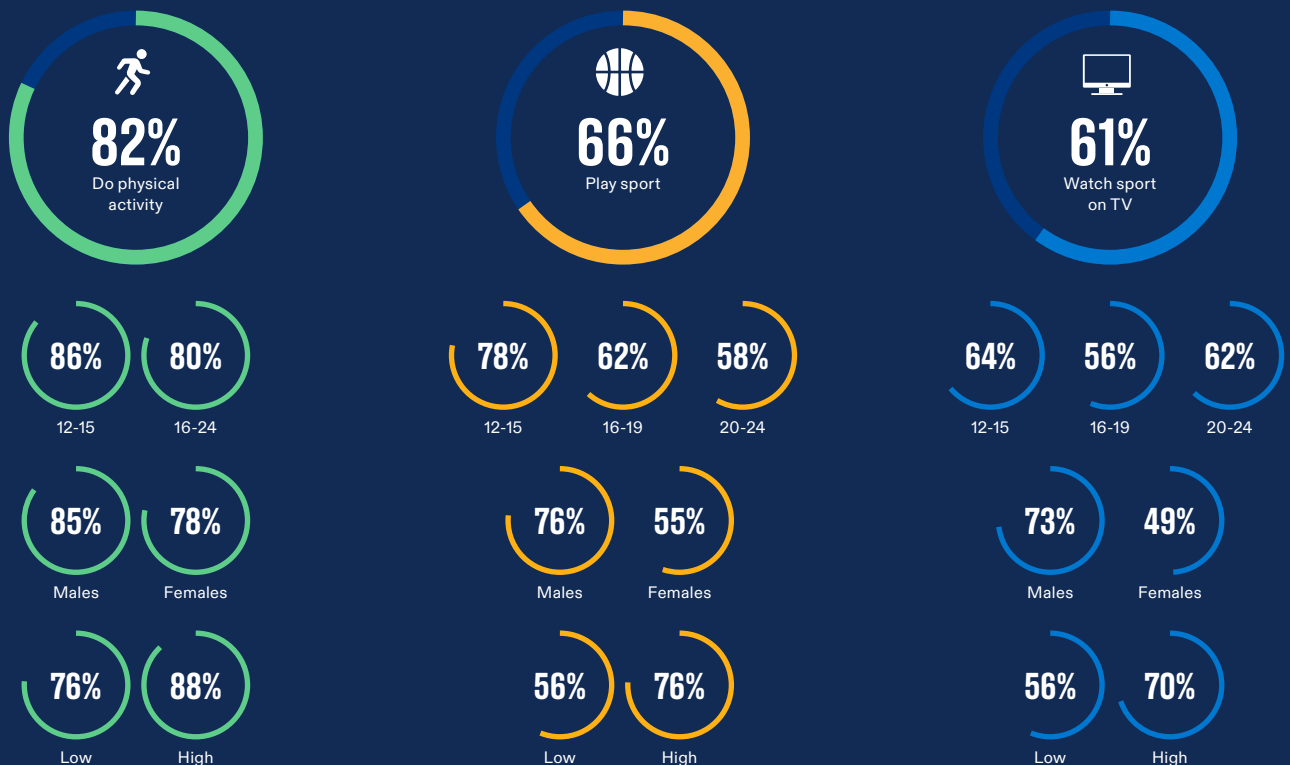
Figure 6 - Sport habits: frequency - significant differences by key groups

Participation rates are higher for physical activity, possibly reflecting that physical activity can be incidental in nature. Eighty-two per cent of young people are physically active at least once a week, including 66% who are active more than once a week.

There is no gender differential in young people who are playing sport once a week. However, a higher frequency (more than once a week) females have significantly lower participation rates than males. This same pattern is seen in physical activity.

Figure 6
Sport habits: frequency - significant differences by key groups

Q2A. How frequently, if at all, do you typically do each of the following activities related to sport & gaming?



Young people have a variety of ways in which they can engage with sport, including online and virtual options, and an even greater range of leisure-time activities. The survey provides a picture of the broad sports and leisure habits of young people by asking about their sports, gaming and media consumption. Unsurprisingly, the top three activities young people report doing at least once a week are using social media, watching YouTube, and TV programmes and films. More than half of those surveyed are watching sport on TV and playing active video games at least once a week.

Figure 7 – Sport, gaming and media habits: frequency

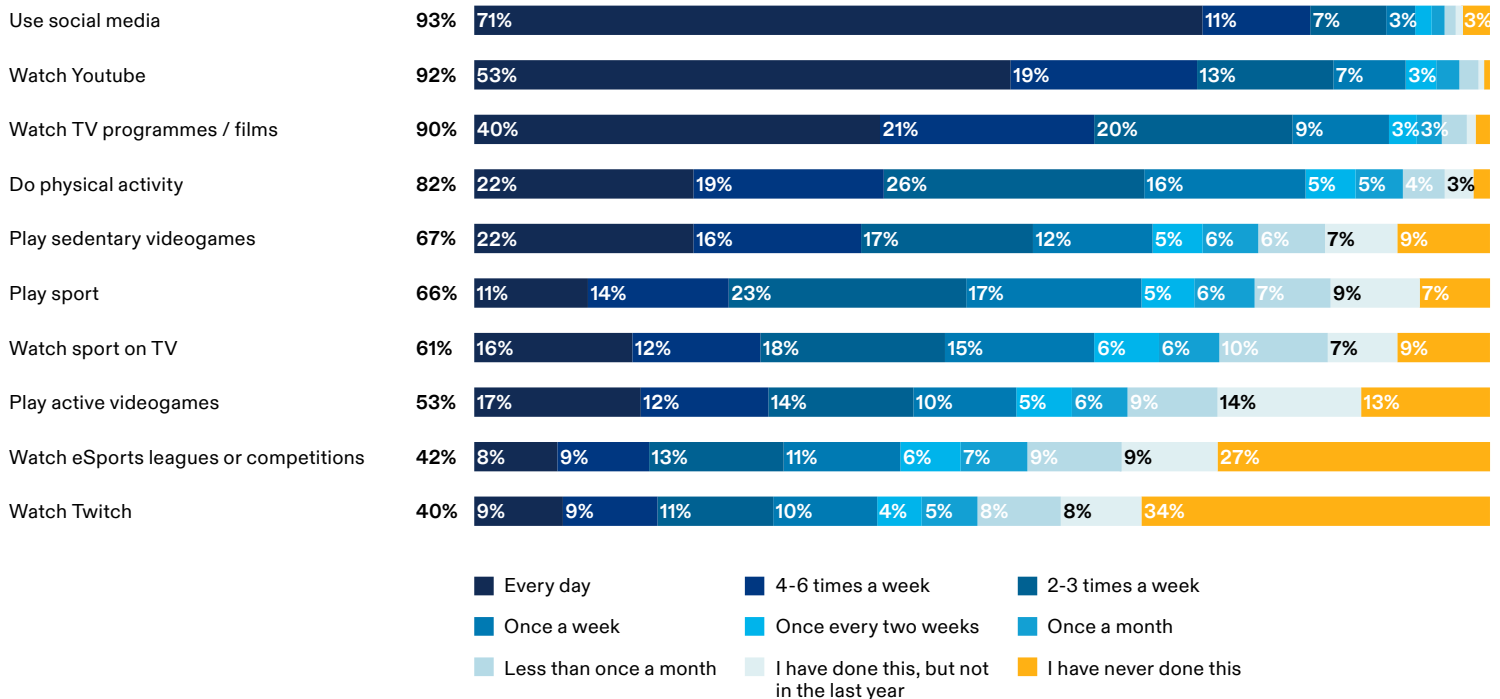
In summary, despite the crowded field of options on which to spend their leisure time, the majority of young people report participating in sport and physical activity, albeit at levels that are insufficient.

Significantly, and as already reported, 72% of them think sport is important. The opportunity to increase activity levels in this population is clear. The data also point to sub-groups that require targeted attention, given that participation reduces with age and is lower for females and for young people from low-income households.

In addition to suggesting potential cohorts as the focus of policy development and intervention, the study also shows that the vast majority of young people who are active do so by playing sport. Of the combined group who played sport and/or were physically active in the last year, 87% of them played sport. This is also true for young people who are active at least once a week. Within this group, over three-quarters (76%) play sport. This suggests that leveraging increased participation in sport is likely to have the most impact on overall activity levels.

Figure 7 Sport, gaming and media habits: frequency

Q2A. How frequently, if at all, do you typically do each of the following activities related to sport & gaming? Q2B. How frequently, if at all, do you typically do each of the following media related activities?



2.3 WHY IS PARTICIPATION LOW?

Barriers

While the survey data provide no clear explanation of why participation is not higher, when young people are asked about the barriers that prevent them from being more physically active, two-thirds of young people (67%) reported that having other responsibilities is a barrier (applying to them either “a lot” or “a little”). Lack of time and difficulties caused by the weather are the next most frequently reported barriers, but are reported by only 56% and 55% of respondents respectively.

Figure 8 – Young People: Barriers to doing physical activity / playing sport

Concerns

In addition to rating the barriers to participation, young people were also asked what concerns prevented them from playing sport more, or at all.

No one concern stood out, but around half of respondents are concerned a little or a lot about playing sport with people they did not know (53%), or on their own (50%). Similar percentages are worried about others’ judgements (49%) or say they don’t think they are fit enough (49%).

Figure 9 – Young People: Concerns about doing physical activity / playing sport

Figure 8

Young People: Barriers to doing physical activity / playing sport

Q9A. Which, if any, of the following barriers prevent you from being more physically active / playing sport more, or at all?

	This applies to me A LOT	NET Applies (a bit or a lot)
I have other responsibilities	27%	67%
I don't have enough time	19%	56%
The weather sometimes makes it difficult	18%	55%
There is limited opportunity where I live	16%	45%
I don't have the right equipment	15%	43%
It's difficult for me to get to sport facilities	14%	39%
I / my family can't afford to pay for it	13%	38%
Due to physical health reasons	13%	35%
I do not know how to get involved	12%	38%
It is not that important to my family	12%	35%
Due to mental health reasons	12%	33%
It is not fun	11%	33%

Figure 9:

Young People: Concerns about doing physical activity / playing sport

Q9B. Which, if any, of the following concerns prevent you from being more physically active / playing sport more, or at all?

	This applies to me A LOT	NET Applies (a bit or a lot)
I don't like doing it with strangers	21%	53%
I'm worried about others' judgement	19%	49%
I don't enjoy competing against others	18%	46%
I don't like doing it on my own	17%	50%
I am worried about verbal abuse	17%	42%
I don't think I am fit enough	17%	49%
I am worried about physical attacks	14%	39%
I am concerned about COVID-19	13%	34%



3 INFLUENCING THE ATTITUDES AND PRIORITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

3.1 GUIDANCE, ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

The important role parents play in sport participation has been demonstrated repeatedly in literature.^{xiv} Parental and family support consistently appears in the list of the most important factors associated with participation by young people. This is so for the general population and has also been identified in research considering participation by young people with physical and psychiatric disability. In fact, depleted parental reserves is cited as a barrier to sports participation for these groups.^{xv}

Within the current survey, when asked about barriers parents thought prevented their child being more active, the most significant barrier cited was that the child had other responsibilities, with the parent not having enough time also mentioned by many (applying a lot or a little).

Figure 10 – Parents: Barriers to doing physical activity / playing sport

Figure 10: Parents: Barriers to doing physical activity / playing sport

Q8A. Which, if any, of the following barriers do you think prevent your child from being more physically active / playing sport more, or at all?

	This applies to me A LOT	NET Applies (a bit or a lot)
They have responsibilities	18%	62%
I don't have enough time	14%	50%
Due to the cost of it	13%	45%
The weather sometimes makes it difficult	13%	52%
They don't have enough time	12%	51%
They do not find it fun	12%	35%
There is limited opportunity where we live	11%	40%
It's difficult to get to sports facilities	10%	32%
Due to physical health reasons	9%	28%
They don't have the right equipment	8%	32%
Due to mental health reasons	8%	24%
It's not that important to me	7%	27%
Unsure about how to get involved	7%	27%





Although it was not among the headline barriers reported by young people, over a third said that their participation in sport is not that important to their families and that this was a barrier to them being (more) active. This is reinforced in the data about parental priorities.

One quarter (25%) of parents reported that their child being physically active was a top priority for them, a much smaller proportion than those who think education (58%) and learning new things (36%) are a top priority.

Only seventeen per cent reported that playing sport was a top priority, the second lowest in the list of parental priorities.

Figure 11 - General attitudes: parent's priorities

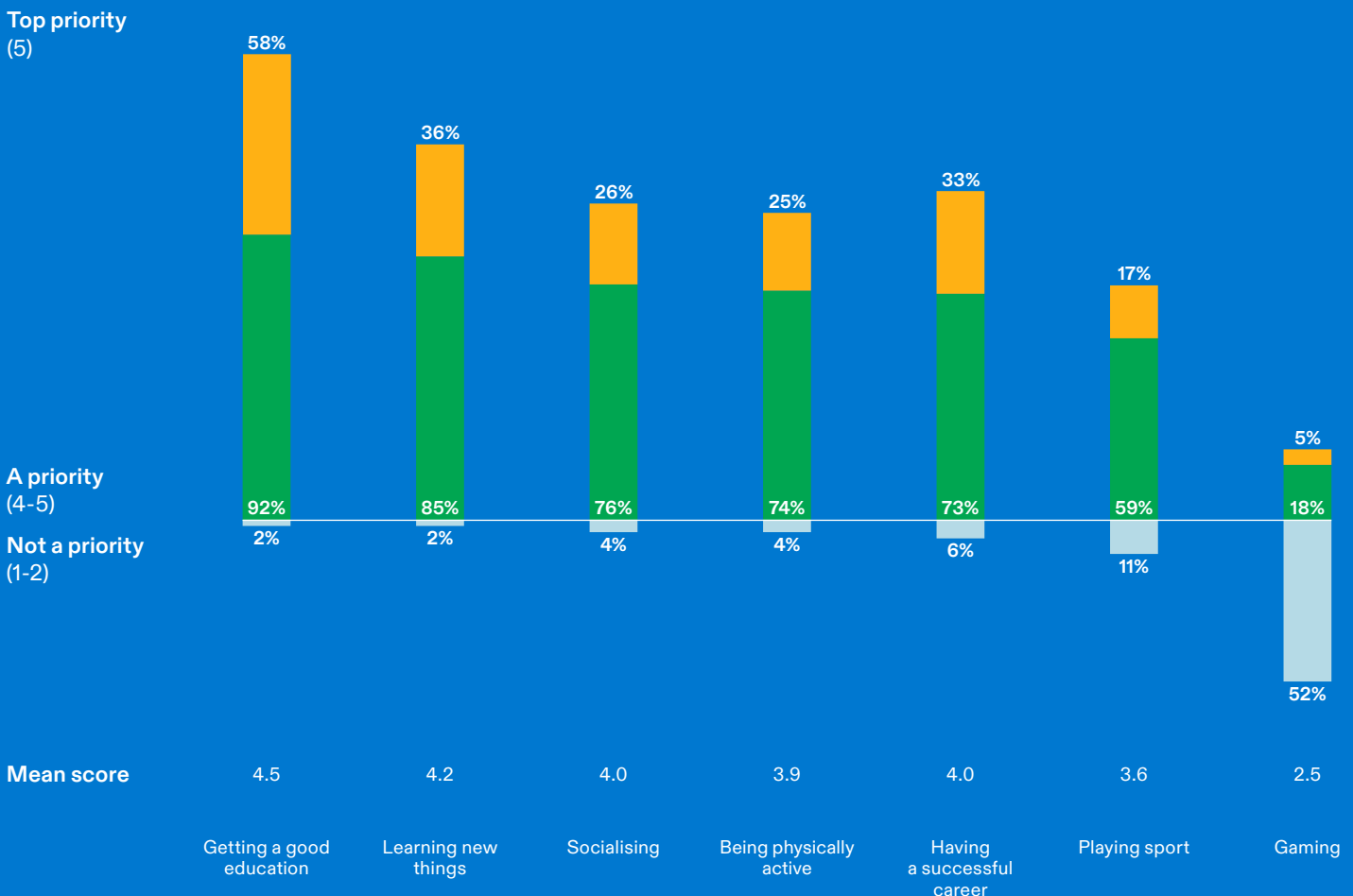
What is important to parents is clear. They want their children to get a good education.

There is long-standing evidence that demonstrates the positive relationship between sport and educational, career and life outcomes. The current survey also makes that clear. As previously reported, young people who are physically active are more likely to be happy with their school performance and to enjoy or have enjoyed school more than those who are inactive.

The apparent disconnect between parents' ambitions for their children's education (and career) and the priority they ascribe to sport and physical activity suggests that the benefits sport can generate in these areas are not well known. There is therefore an opportunity to help parents, educators and employers understand the vital role their support and encouragement plays, and to develop and deliver information that communicates the full range of benefits associated with sport and physical activity.

Figure 11: General attitudes: parents' priorities

Q3. How much of a priority to you are each of the following in relation to your child's well-being and development? Please use the scale provided.



3.2 PERSONAL ATTITUDE – CONNECTING WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE THINK AND FEEL ABOUT SPORT

There is a clear link between how important young people think sport is, how they feel about it and the extent to which they participate. For example, among those who do not perceive playing sport as being important, the majority (62%) are negative about playing sport. In contrast, 82% of those who believe playing sport is important are also positive about it. Eighty-two per cent of people who feel positive about sport play at least once a week, compared with 27% who are negative about sport.

Seven in 10 young people think sport is important and 8 in 10 think physical activity is important. At an emotional level, 71% of young people feel positive (rather than negative or neutral) about sport, with just over half expressing a stronger sentiment, saying that they love physical activity/playing sport. Positivity towards sport and physical activity is considerably stronger among males (78%) than females (64%).

The survey data reinforce potential health and physical benefits as key reasons that young people play sport. However, having fun is equally important to them. (See Figure 1.)

Fun and enjoyment³ are consistent motivators for sport, regardless of age or stage of the life course, and multiple studies have found that when young people stop having fun playing sport, they are

likely to stop participating. The subset of young people in the current survey who said they don't like sport also said that a major barrier for them is that sport is not fun.

Eighty-nine per cent of respondents reported that having fun was a reason they play sport, with 56% saying this applies to them a lot – the highest-ranking reason. The propensity to cite “having fun” as a driver of participation decreases with age, with the older groups more likely than their younger counterparts to be playing sport more for its impact on their physical, mental and emotional health. However, as the reasons young people play sport change with age, so does the participation rate, with 58% of 20–24-year-olds playing sport at least once a week, compared with 78% of 12–15-year-olds.

The concerns expressed by young people about participating in sport more (or at all) provide an insight into what stops them having fun. They were concerned, a little or a lot about doing it with strangers, or on their own, and about the judgement of others, and not being fit enough. Each of these issues is more of a concern for the group of young people who feel negatively about sport.

The research suggests that increasing enjoyment by addressing these concerns may be key in enhancing how positive young people feel about sport, influencing the relative priority of sport in their lives and, in turn, the extent to which they participate.

³ Research carried out in Sweden, Geidne and Quennerstedt (2021) shed light on what is meant by 'fun and enjoyment': namely that they are related to doing meaningful activities with friends in a well-organised, challenging and supportive environment.

4 THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL ISSUES

The disruption of COVID-19 and the growing challenges of the cost of living and climate change are having notable impacts on young people. About a third reported that they are playing less sport due to global issues, with the cost of living the most significant reason at 37%.

Figure 12 - Young People: Global challenges impacting sport levels

4.1 COST OF LIVING

The cost of living is emerging as a significant barrier to sports participation. Thirty-seven per cent of young people are playing less sport (including 14% who are playing a lot less) due to the cost of living. Females are disproportionately affected, with 38% participating less, compared to 35% of males.

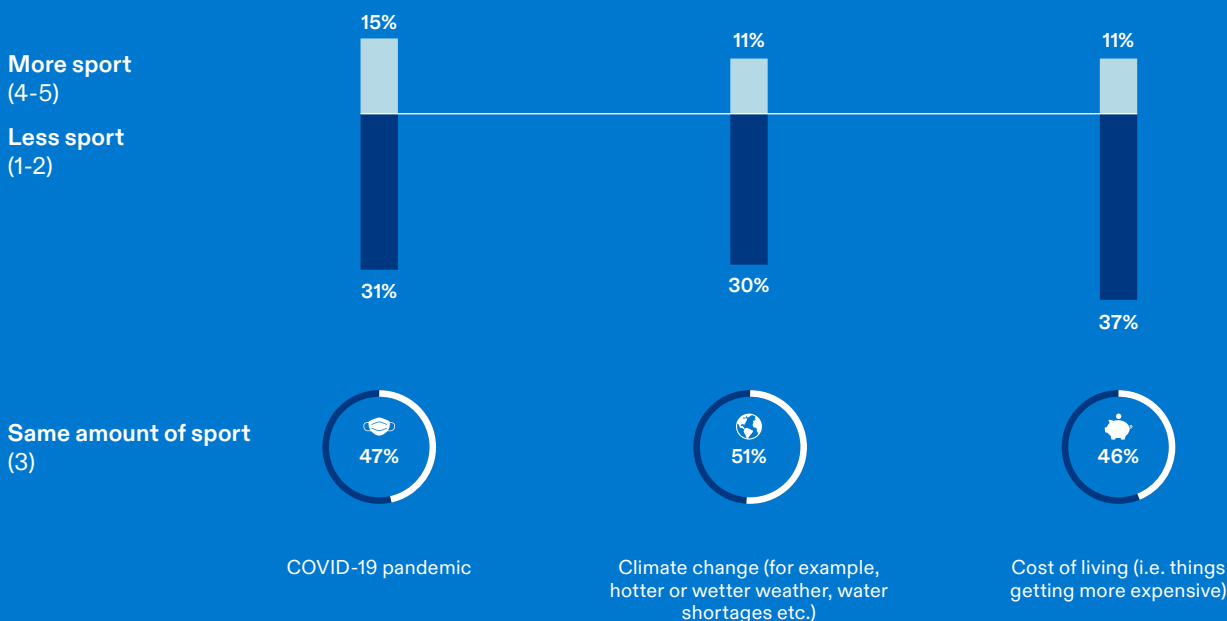
The survey indicated that young people participating in sport as part of an educational curriculum are protected from the decrease in participation due to cost of living (34%), as are young people participating as part of an organised team (30%).

Unsurprisingly but concerningly, there are some groups for whom the cost of living is having a major impact. Forty-four per cent of people aged 20 to 24 are less active due to cost pressures. More than half (54%) of the group who indicated that they or their family cannot afford to pay for sports participation as a barrier, are now playing less sport because of the cost of living. And among those who indicated that they have other responsibilities that take priority, 41% said they play less sport now because of the cost of living.

These findings suggest that the cost of participation is an underlying issue, exacerbated by current increases in the cost of living.

Figure 12:
Young People: Global challenges impacting sport levels

Q10. Sometimes, global issues can influence the amount of sport that people play. Do you think any of the following global issues are currently influencing the amount of sport you play? Using the scale below, please indicate whether each is influencing you, and if so, how.



4.2 COVID-19

The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had a variety of health, education and economic impacts in all countries. The current survey explored its impact on young people's participation in sport. While the public health emergency caused by COVID-19 officially ended in May 2023, the research demonstrated that the impact of the pandemic is ongoing.

The impact of COVID-19 on youth sport and physical activity is still being understood. There is some evidence of a move to less organised, less formally programmed sport during the pandemic^{xvi}, while the absence of community sport appeared to reinforce its core values of connectedness, and social, mental and physical health.^{xvii}

Overall, thirty-one per cent of young people report playing less sport now due to COVID-19. Fourteen per cent are playing a lot less, and 17% are playing slightly less. This extent of reduced participation suggests a level of behavioural change that may be difficult to reverse.

When asked how concerned/anxious they were about the spread of COVID-19, 13% of young people in the current survey said a lot. While this is a relatively low proportion and other issues were more likely to be of concern, it underlines both the challenge and importance of interventions to address the impact of the pandemic on participation levels.

4.3 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change and weather are also making sports participation difficult. Thirty per cent of young people are playing less sport due to climate change. The picture is geographically very diverse, with climate change rated the top global challenge in Indonesia and Nigeria.

Again, 20–24-year-olds are the age cohort most impacted by climate change (36%), while those who play sport in an educational setting (28%) or in an organised team (24%) are experiencing significantly lower levels of disruption. The lessened impact on these latter two groups appears to be reflected in parental views, where 24% of parents report that climate change is having a negative influence on their child's level of activity.

Forty per cent of those who say the weather can make it difficult say they are playing less sport due to climate change, and 42% of those who indicated it is difficult to get to sports facilities, are playing less sport because of climate change.

In addition to some barriers being exacerbated, climate change is also eroding factors that support participation. Eight in 10 young people say being outdoors is a reason they play sport, with two in five saying this applied to them a lot. Almost one-third (32%) of this group say they play less sport now due to climate change.



CONCLUSION

The findings in this study offer valuable insights into contemporary trends in youth sports participation and also provide guidance for the next phase of this project which, through a series of expert workshops and identification of relevant case studies and good practices, will inform a Catalyst for Change report.

The objective of the Catalyst report is to identify opportunities to inform IOC/Allianz programmes; to demonstrate where the efforts of the communities supporting sport and young people are most likely to maintain or promote inclusion and participation; and to influence future policy, strategy and programme design across government, businesses and the not-for-profit sector.

There is much that can be achieved. Despite the fact that almost three-quarters of young people think sport is important or very important, participation rates remain insufficient. Positively, the study identifies several influencing factors that can be taken forward.

The results confirm, for example, that young people and parents are aware of the health benefits associated with playing sport. However, the other benefits, such as those related to learning, appear not to be fully understood. This is particularly important given that the literature is clear that the role of parents is central in encouraging and supporting sports participation.

The relatively low priority parents ascribe to sport in the current survey suggests an opportunity to highlight the links between sport, well-being and life outcomes more generally to that audience, as well as to educators and employers who also have roles to play.

In addition to identifying that other responsibilities were a barrier to playing sport more, or at all, the young people surveyed provided a picture of what they thought about sport and what concerns prevented them playing more, or at all. These findings point to the importance of providing a range of types of sporting experiences and acknowledging that the social and enjoyment aspects of participation are important to young people. Whilst not emphasised in this report, the emerging interest in Esports among young people suggests that the relationship between Esports and sports participation is a topic for further discussion in the next phase of the project.

Importantly, the study indicates that efforts to address the long-standing issue of insufficient physical activity now need to consider and respond to the impacts of the cost of living trends and the COVID-19 pandemic. While the underlying economic, geopolitical and health drivers are likely to be time-limited, the behaviours around sports participation may become entrenched, with long-lasting effects on levels of engagement with sport and physical activity.

The research reveals that the impact of climate change is also now being reported as a factor in reduced participation rates, and responses to the current survey indicated that in some countries it has become the top-rated global challenge influencing sports participation.

It will be important to gather further insights on what would make a difference locally, and to engage stakeholders in immediate and long-term action to ameliorate the impact these global challenges are having on sport.



Finally, the current research reinforces that there are demographic profiles that make some young people more at risk from insufficient physical activity. There are consistent findings that females, young people from low-income households and people aged 20 to 24 have lower participation rates than their counterparts. Each initiative seeking to lift participation rates overall needs to ensure these groups are a focus.

The IOC and Allianz are already addressing a number of the challenges highlighted in the findings through key initiatives of each organization and their partnership aimed at ensuring more people benefit from participating in sport and Olympism. Through its Olympism365 strategy, aimed at strengthening the role of sport as an important enabler of the SDGs, the IOC is delivering programmes that promote safe inclusive, and sustainable sport to impact people's lives in areas like health and well-being, education, employment, equality, inclusion, crime prevention, peace and safety.

Allianz's MoveNow programme aims to strengthen the role of sport in society to create a healthier environment for young people and improve their confidence in tomorrow. Through the MoveNow programme, Allianz has committed to delivering various initiatives including youth camps, sports activities and digital events, aimed at people of the next generation across the globe, in the upcoming months until the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024 and beyond.

Building on the learnings from these existing efforts and the findings of this research initiative, the IOC in partnership with Allianz, will produce a Catalyst for Change report, highlighting the key issues and priorities for policy, practice, partnerships and future research needs.



ABOUT THE PARTNERS



International Olympic Committee

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is a not-for-profit, civil, non-government, international organisation which is committed to building a better world through sport. It redistributes more than 90 per cent of its income to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of USD 4.2 million goes to help athletes and sports organisations at all levels around the world.

OLYMPISM 365

Olympism365 is the IOC's strategy aimed at strengthening the role of sport as an important enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is the focus of Recommendation 10 of Olympic Agenda 2020+5.

It is underpinned by innovative partnerships between the IOC and stakeholders from across various sectors, including NGOs, government departments, development banks, UN agencies, programme delivery organisations and private sector.

The themes and priority areas for Olympism365 set out the social impact areas that will be the focus for the IOC's collaboration, investment and interventions through the strategy. They also provide a common narrative to articulate the contribution that sport and Olympism in society can make to the SDGs: Sport, Health and Active Communities; Sport, Equality and Inclusive Communities; Sport, Education and Livelihoods; and Sport, Peace and Safe Communities.

Through sport and social change programmes, people and institutional capacity building, policy advocacy and the creation of learning communities to support knowledge sharing, Olympism365 is supporting more people from more diverse backgrounds to benefit from sports and Olympism every day, everywhere.

The principles of solidarity, safeguarding, sustainability, equality and inclusion and human rights are embedded across all of Olympism365's priority areas and delivery mechanisms.





move now

The Allianz Group is one of the world's leading insurers and asset managers with more than 122 million* private and corporate customers in more than 70 countries. Allianz customers benefit from a broad range of personal and corporate insurance services, ranging from property, life and health insurance to assistance services to credit insurance and global business insurance. Allianz is one of the world's largest investors, managing around EUR 717 billion** on behalf of its insurance customers. Furthermore, its asset managers PIMCO and Allianz Global Investors manage about EUR 1.7 trillion** of third-party assets. Thanks to its systematic integration of ecological and social criteria in our business processes and investment decisions, it is among the leaders in the insurance industry in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. In 2022, over 159,000 employees achieved total revenues of EUR 152.7 billion and an operating profit of EUR 14.2 billion for the group***.

As part of the IOC and IPC partnership the MoveNow programme was founded to contribute to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 3 (Health and wellbeing). The mission of the MoveNow programme is to prepare the next generation now. To move their body, mind and soul. The focus is to get the next generation (those aged 6-32 years) back into sport.

The MoveNow programme consists of a net of initiatives to bring youth back to sports and promoting social values amongst the next generation, by empowering them through physical activity, mental stimulation, and emotional well-being, Allianz helps young people around the world to realise their full potential and build a healthier, prosperous future.

* Including non-consolidated entities with Allianz customers.

** As of 31 March, 2023.

*** As reported – not adjusted to reflect the application of IFRS 9 and IFRS 17.



ENDNOTES

- i See World Health Organization (2022). *Physical activity fact sheet*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>
- ii United Nations (2015), *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1, paragraph 37*, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/291/89/PDF/N1529189.pdf?OpenElement>
- iii Respondents were recruited online. They were invited to answer the survey as they are part of an online panel of survey respondents. For the young people's survey, underage respondents were targeted through their parents, with the invitation being sent to parents/guardians of children aged 12-18. The targeting of those parents was done by using information obtained when panellists signed up to the panel and during regular updates to their background/profiling information, with this also being verified at the start of survey. Parents were asked to answer a few screening questions before allowing their child to complete the rest of the survey by themselves. Those aged 19-24 were targeted directly and answered the screening questions themselves. The parents' survey also targeted parents/guardians of children aged 12-18, but the questions were all answered by the parents themselves. Fieldwork was conducted between May and June 2023.
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- x Jackson, M. O. (2011). An overview of social networks and economic applications. *Handbook of Social Economics*, 1, 511-585.
- xi Rees, D. I., & Sabia, J. J. (2010). Sports participation and academic performance: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Economics of Education Review*, 29(5), 751-759.
- xii Guthold, R., Stevens, G. A., Riley, L. M., & Bull, F. C. (2020). Global trends in insufficient physical activity among adolescents: a pooled analysis of 298 population-based surveys with 1·6 million participants. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(1), 23-35.
- xiii World Health Organization (2022). *Physical activity fact sheet*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>
- xiv For example, Neely, K. C., & Holt, N. L. (2014). Parents' Perspectives on the Benefits of Sport Participation for Young Children. *The Sport Psychologist*, 28(3), 255-268.
- xv Hickingbotham, M. R., Wong, C. J., & Bowling, A. B. (2021). Barriers and facilitators to physical education, sport, and physical activity program participation among children and adolescents with psychiatric disorders: a systematic review. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, 11(9), 1739-1750.
- xvi Teare, G., & Taks, M. (2021). Exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth sport and physical activity participation trends. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1744.
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