

More than a Game

A Review of the Sport for Development Landscape in India

Context and objectives



Picture courtesy of Pro Sport Development

In 2014, Dasra released their "Power of Play" report, highlighting the transformative impact of sport on the development of youth in India. The report was a landmark publication on the scope of sport for development (S4D) in the country and was based on six months of research, which included an evaluation of 70 S4D organisations across the country.

Since then, the S4D landscape in India has grown rapidly. Many dedicated S4D organisations have been implementing programmes in different parts of the country, whereas several existing development organisations have adopted the use of sport as a tool to achieve their developmental goals, as part of existing as well as new initiatives. Moreover, the private sector, especially as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) objectives, have aligned some of their funding initiatives to support S4D programmes across the country.

The new National Education Policy launched in 2020 by the Government of India notes the pedagogical power that sport can possess and recommends the use of sport as a larger developmental tool for children and youth. The "Khelo India" scheme, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, focuses on increasing physical fitness of school children, promoting sport for women and enabling the participation of people with disabilities in sport. The scheme also has a vertical dedicated to sport for development and peace, where it has specifically recognised the ability of sport to discourage youth from falling prey to extremism and promote peace building efforts across the country. Moreover, the Government of India's Fit India movement aims to make fitness an integral part of our daily lives and seeks to make behavioural changes to inculcate a physically active lifestyle.

The S4D sector and associated programming in India has grown significantly in the past decade with efforts from a wide-variety of civil society actors. S4D programming in India has become cognisant of aligning with the goals of the UN Sustainability Agenda 2030, along with complementing several government initiatives and policies.

Given this background, in August 2021, UNESCO New Delhi and Pro Sport Development (PSD) launched a research study into S4D in India. The objective of this study is to understand the current landscape of the S4D sector in India and the scope for S4D programming in the country moving forward. Given the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the S4D sector around the world, the study aims to understand how S4D initiatives can be supported and sustained in India in the coming future.

The study aims to understand how S4D programming in India is enabling the United Nations' 2030 agenda for sustainable development and their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It identifies existing gaps and challenges within the sector, providing actionable recommendations for the growth, sustainability and large-scale impact of S4D programming in India.

This study complements UNESCO's recently launched sport-based flagship programme, Fit for Life, designed to accelerate recovery in a post-COVID-19 world, by supporting inclusive and integrated policymaking and enhancing the wellbeing of youth. The global programme is supported by partners worldwide and uses data-driven sport interventions to tackle crises of physical inactivity, mental health and growing inequality.

This study identifies the existing contribution of sport in India to outcomes relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion, which will allow UNESCO's Fit for Life programme to better coordinate efforts among diverse stakeholders across India in order to effectively utilise sport to fulfil its objectives.

Methodology

This mixed-methods research study incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods, using secondary and primary data sources. Below is an overview of the research tools and data analysis methods that were utilised for this study:

An initial literature review of existing research studies pertaining to the S4D sector in India and documentation of prominent S4D initiatives and programmes, including project reports, impact evaluations, documentaries and case studies, was conducted.

A survey was designed to understand the S4D sector in India in further detail, focusing on the thematic areas of work, types of S4D programmes and their alignment with the UN SDGs, the impact of S4D interventions, funding for S4D programmes as well as challenges and strategies for future success. The survey was sent out to an extensive network of organisations working in the S4D sector across the country. A total of 48 unique responses were received. *Please find the survey questionnaire in Appendix A*.

In-depth interviews were conducted with senior members of six S4D organisations in India. These interviews form the basis of the case studies presented in the study. The information from the interviews was supplemented by secondary data, such as organisational and project reports. These organisations were chosen from survey respondents to highlight diversity of the S4D sector in India, both thematically and geographically. The case studies give an in-depth understanding of how sport has played a key role in creating change and tackling specific developmental issues in India. *Please find the case study interview guide in Appendix B*.



Picture courtesy of Umoya Sports

What key development themes does S4D programming in India focus on?

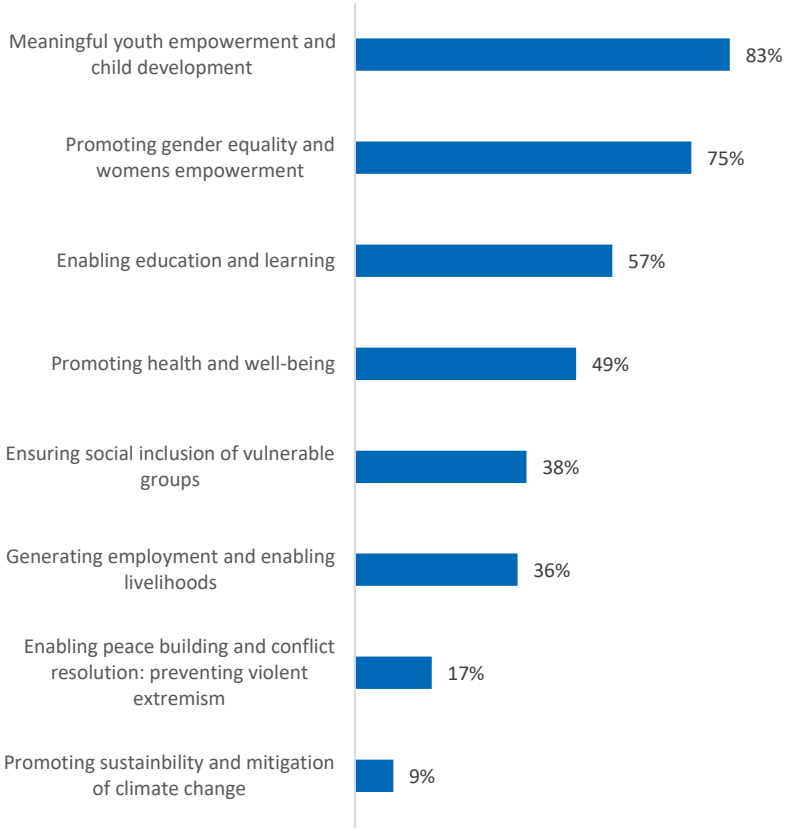


Figure 1: Thematic focus of S4D organisations in India (n=47)



As observed in Figure 1, the majority (83%) of organisations who participated in the research utilise their S4D programming for meaningful youth empowerment and child development, while 75% of them utilise sport for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

57% of respondent organisations stated that they focus on enabling education and learning outcomes through their S4D programmes, while 49% reported that they focus on promoting health and well-being through sport. Some of the other major developmental goals that the respondent organisations pursue via S4D programming include social inclusion of vulnerable groups (38%) and generating employment and enabling livelihoods (36%) .



Reflective of the data collected on the thematic focus of S4D programming in India, 85% of respondents utilise sport to enable outcomes pertaining to SDG 5: Gender Equality (Figure 2). Moreover, connecting to the respondents' focus on youth empowerment and child development, 74% of organisations target SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being and SDG 4: Quality Education, through their S4D programming.

Almost half of the respondent organisations (46%) highlighted the use of S4D programming to target SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, while about a quarter of the respondents (26%) outlined the use of sport to enable SDG 8: Decent work and Economic Growth, linking to their use of S4D programming towards the thematic areas of social inclusion and employment and livelihoods, respectively.

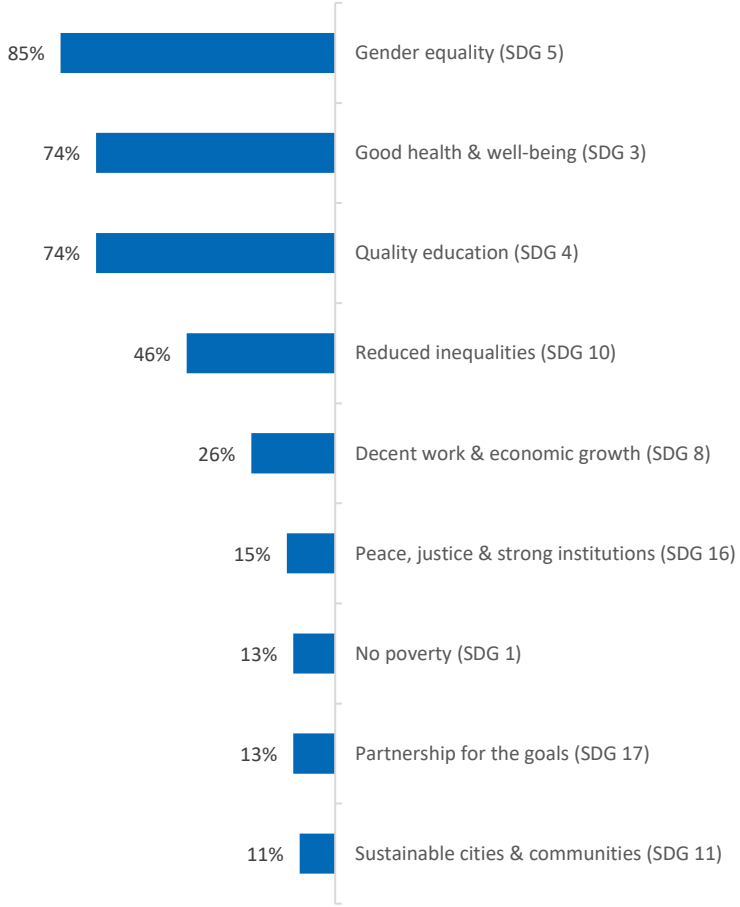


Figure 2: SDGs targeted by S4D organisations in India (n=46)

Case Study: Jungle Crows - Empowering youth through rugby

Jungle Crows
FOUNDATION

Founded in 2004, Jungle Crows started as an organisation which provided the children and youth of Kolkata space to play rugby and enjoy themselves. A few years after initiation, the founders realised the larger impact that sport can have on youth and began to incorporate developmental objectives into their programming.

Jungle Crows reaches out to underserved children and young people through rugby, enabling their education and employment. Along with facilitating rugby sessions, the organisation supports the education of children and youth through scholarships and other financial provisions.

Though rugby is a relatively unknown game among their target group, the organisation has found that this works to their advantage, since all participants start at the same footing and must focus and learn the game and techniques together. The organisation has found that the unique shape of the rugby ball makes children curious about the game and attracts them to their programme.

Working with children who come from economically and socially precarious backgrounds, Jungle Crows noted that the children often had to drop out of school at the ages of 14 or 15 years to support their families. By supporting them financially, the organisation found that children stayed on in school and succeeded in their education. Many of the children they have worked with have gone on to university, with financial support from Jungle Crows.

The organisation also works on building skills of the youth they work with. By partnering with skills providers who deliver quality training to the youth, participants of Jungle Crows' programmes have developed many different skills which have allowed them to gain meaningful employment. Partnering with corporations and other organisations that work with youth has provided many learning and professional development opportunities to the participants. Though financial sustainability has been an ongoing challenge, such partnerships have allowed the organisation to grow its scope.

"We once collaborated with an organisation that ran a gym in Bangalore and they needed more staff, so our participants started working at the gym. As a result, they learnt English, their academic performance improved, and they further developed their self-confidence."

– Paul Walsh, Managing Trustee, Jungle Crows

In the last 17 years, the organisation has been able to reach out to 30 different communities and over 2,500 children and youth in Kolkata and other parts of West Bengal and India. The organisation has trained some of its participants to become implementers and coaches, and these youth have gone on to become leaders and change-makers in their own communities.

For Jungle Crows and its participants, COVID-19 has dealt a devastating blow, with many of the youth having to drop out of school and start working to support their families financially. While the organisation tried to pivot its programming online, they found that their reach was uneven, since many of the participants did not have access to technology. Further, getting children to stay engaged in online sessions was much harder. With many of the participants now working, it has become difficult for the organisation to get them out to play – for them, recreation is not a priority anymore.

In the post-COVID world, staying relevant is the task at hand for Jungle Crows. The organisation hopes they can partner with corporates on CSR projects to continue their programming in a more effective manner.

Who are the organisations in India implementing S4D programmes?

As seen in Figure 3, close to one-third of the respondent organisations (32%) have been implementing their S4D programmes in India for over 10 years, while almost half (49%) of the organisations' S4D programmes have been operational for 2-10 years. Only 19% of the respondents' S4D programmes have been operational for less than two years.

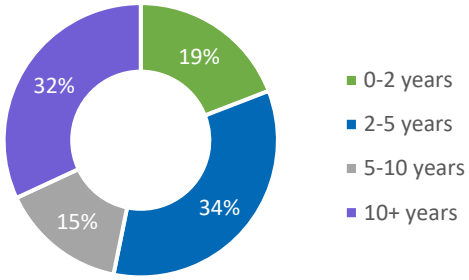


Figure 3: Length of time S4D organisations have been operating in India (n=47)

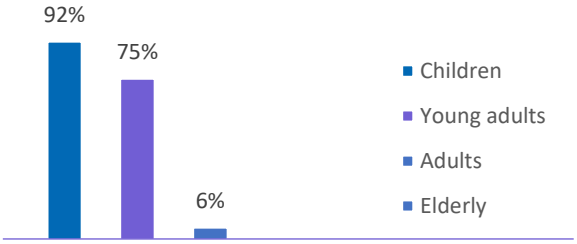


Figure 4: Target age groups for S4D organisations in India (n=47)

In line with global trends, the study found that organisations in India primarily utilise S4D programmes with children (92%), while a large majority (75%) also work with young adults (Figure 4). Notably, only 6% of respondents work with adults, while none of the respondents use sport to work with the elderly.

Reflective of the data relating to the key thematic areas of S4D programmes in India, 81% of the respondents noted that they work with women and girls through their programmes (Figure 5). 36% of the respondents stated that they work with scheduled and other backward castes, while 33% work with tribal groups. Interestingly, only 5% of respondents work with persons with disabilities through sport.

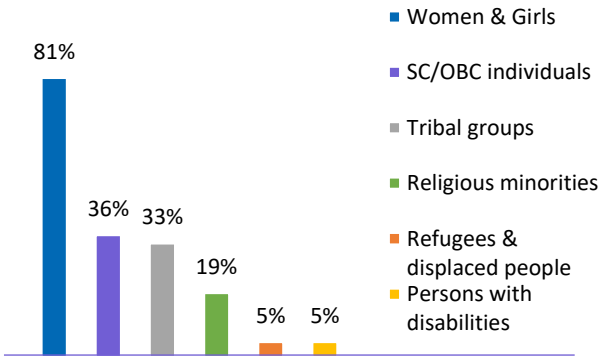


Figure 5: Minority groups targeted by S4D programmes in India (n=42)

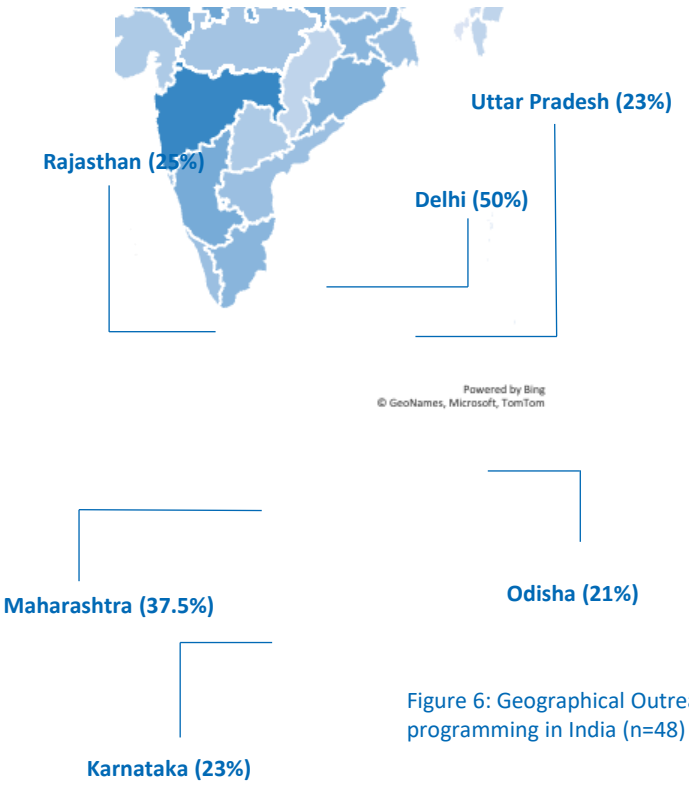


Figure 6: Geographical Outreach of S4D programming in India (n=48)

As seen in Figure 6, a large proportion (50%) of respondents run their S4D programmes in the nation's capital, Delhi. The other states in India where the majority of S4D programmes are implemented include Maharashtra (37.5%), Rajasthan (25%), Uttar Pradesh (23%) and Karnataka (23%).

Organisations across India implementing S4D programming do so among diverse geographies within the states they operate in – 37% of respondent organisatio ns stated that they work in rural regions, 34% stated they operate in semi-urban areas while 29% said that they work in urban areas.

Case Study: Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti - Tackling gender norms using football

One of the areas where sport is becoming an increasingly popular tool in bringing about change is in ending gender-based discrimination and promoting women's empowerment. With India ranking at 123 out of 189 countries in the Gender Development Index (GDI), gender-based discrimination is a widespread and pressing issue in the country. Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS) is a women-led, rights-based grassroots organisation that has been using sport as an instrument of change for the last seven years in the Ajmer district of Rajasthan.

MJAS' sport-based programme works with over 300 young girls and women, using football to help them build their confidence and self-sufficiency, in order to end the cycles of poverty and patriarchy. They chose an S4D intervention because it was a different way to help the participants exercise their freedom – an outdoor sport allowed them to leave the confines of their homes and claim those public spaces that usually belong to men and boys.

महिला जन अधिकार समिति

MAHILA JAN ADHIKAR SAMITI

Initially, MJAS considered using games like kho-kho or volleyball, since they are games that girls feel comfortable to play and are considered 'appropriate' for them. However, the organisation decided to use football to challenge the predominant categorisation of the sport as a boys' game.

"Sport is something that is outdoors and has mobility, physicality and negotiations with family inbuilt in it. This makes it very effective."

– Indira Pancholi, Founder, MJAS

MJAS has found that their S4D programme has had a stronger and larger impact on the young girls involved, in comparison to the other interventions led by the organisation. Some of these impacts include a strengthened ability to negotiate with families, improved academic scores, the ability to reclaim male-dominated public spaces and the confidence to voice dissent and disagreements. MJAS' football programme's ability to challenge social norms has allowed the intervention to be successful, leaving a lasting impact on the participants.

In addition to the benefits of the football programme, the organisation's prioritisation of certain strategies has led to community buy-in, allowing for the success of the intervention. These include engaging with significant stakeholders, including families, trainers and local sport authorities, to understand and address the specific challenges within the local contexts. MJAS strongly believes that partnerships with local organisations and institutions is integral to the success of such a programme. The organisation's commitment to gender sensitivity in their S4D programme has helped them deliver locally relevant and nuanced trainings using football.

Since the programme is implemented at the grassroots, the organisation has had to face many logistical and socio-cultural barriers. The major logistical issue is that of access to football grounds and sports equipment – the lack of quality infrastructure and equipment often disrupts the execution of the programme. Given the local socio-cultural context, MJAS has found that girls often express reservations to join the sports-based programme, due to the lack of female trainers. The organisation realises that in order to make participants feel more comfortable, more female trainers are required, who can then also serve as role models for them. The programme has also faced backlash from parents and elders in the villages, who feel that girls should not engage in sport. These patriarchal norms and values limit the success of the intervention, reflected in the program's inability to maintain girls' long-term participation, especially after the age of 16 years.

Despite the challenges, MJAS has been able to transform the lives of many of its participants and have begun to see a change in the community as well. The organisation has found that many of the participants have been empowered by the support system and network that the S4D programme has given them access to. The programme has also seen many participants become local leaders and coaches for other girls in their communities, with several going on to participate in state and national level tournaments.

What are the sports utilised by S4D programmes across India?

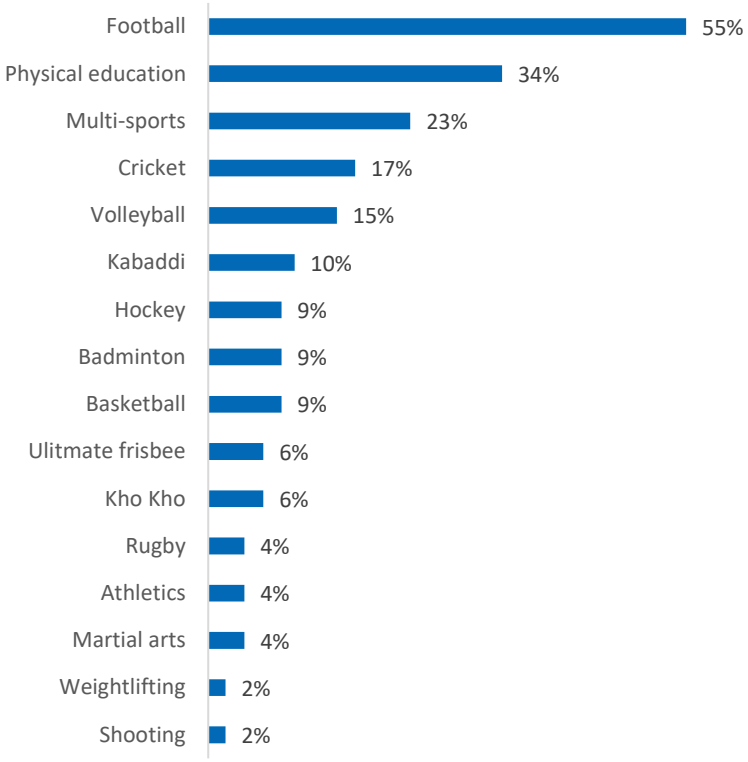


Figure 7: Sports utilised by S4D programming in India (n=47)



As shown in Figure 7, football is by far the most popular sport for S4D programmes in India, with 55% of respondent organisations using it in their programming. Interestingly, the next two disciplines most popular among respondent organisations are not single sports but emphasise general physical education (34%) and multi-sports approaches (23%).

Some of the other popular sporting disciplines used by respondent organisations within their S4D programming include cricket, volleyball, kabaddi, hockey, badminton, basketball, frisbee, kho-kho and rugby.



Picture courtesy of Dream a Dream



Picture courtesy of Jungle Crows

How do organisations fund their S4D programmes?

Only a small percentage of respondent organisations (13%) rely solely on foreign funding for their S4D programming, in contrast to the 47% of organisations that receive their funds purely from local donors (Figure 9). 40% of respondent organisations receive funding for their S4D programmes from a mix of local and foreign sources.

As seen in Figure 8, the majority of S4D funding in India is sourced from the private sector, including CSR (60%), along with institutional grants (58%). Other significant sources of revenue include individual donations (48%) and crowdfunding campaigns (38%), with government grants (8%) being the lowest source of income.

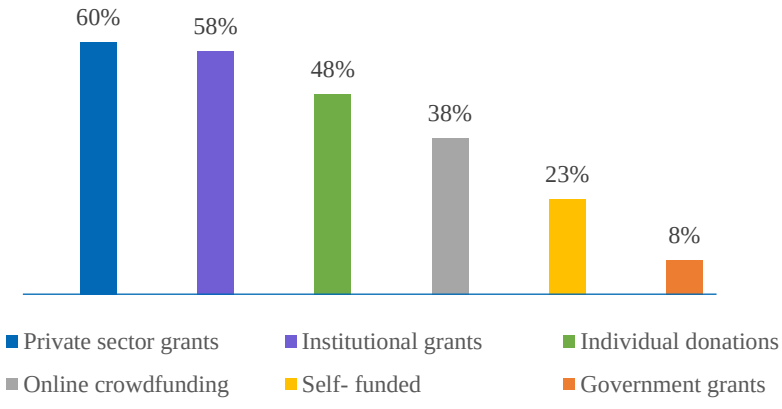


Figure 8: Types of funding received by S4D programmes in India (n=48)

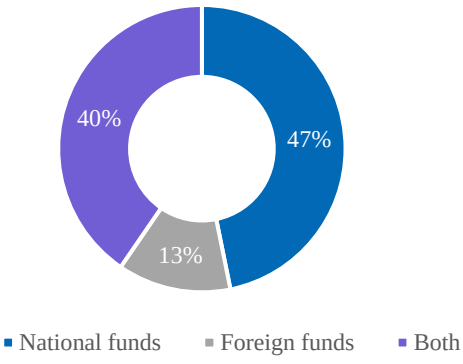


Figure 9: Sources of funding received by S4D programmes in India (n=47)

Case Study: Slum Soccer - Creating change, one goal at a time



In India, many developmental issues stem from the fact that large swathes of the population live in poverty and lead precarious lives. Based in Nagpur, Maharashtra, Slum Soccer is an S4D organisation which uses football to bring about change in the lives of the marginalised, with programmes running in Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu.

Founded in 2002, the organisation's work illustrates how football can be used to achieve many different developmental objectives. The organisation works in both rural and urban areas, primarily with disadvantaged children from marginalised backgrounds. The organisation chose football for its easy access – the sport only requires a large open ground and a ball for people to participate.

Through football, Slum Soccer has been able to reach the homeless and other marginalised sections of society to help resolve complex issues that exist in these communities. In its almost two-decade long journey, the organisation has run programmes on diverse themes, including social inclusion, gender equality, HIV/AIDS and disability, and worked with 51,052 youth (40% of them being girls).

"The accessibility and ease offered by football made it an easy game – only a ball is required to play. This has also helped us view football beyond just the game; we started realising how football can be used for various development-oriented objectives."

- Abhijeet Barse, Chief Executive Officer, Slum Soccer

While the organisation initially used a one-size-fits-all approach, where football was used to tackle multiple development objectives, in 2005 the organisation began designing outcome-defined programmes to ensure clarity in execution. Football, however, remained a constant and is used across their different programmes. For example, in their Edu-Kick programme, Slum Soccer uses football to teach math and financial literacy to young children. Similarly, other projects use football in creative and unique ways to meet their desired outcomes. By using football in these ways, the organisation aims to create novel experiences for children, promoting a healthy learning environment.

Slum Soccer has had to deal with their fair share of challenges. The organisation found that the environment in the early-2000s was generally unsupportive of S4D initiatives, and financial sustainability was a grave concern. Using football in India was another challenge, since most people wanted to play cricket instead. Finally, the organisation found it challenging to get girls to participate in their sports programmes, as many of their families harboured reservations over their clothes and mobility.

However, the organisation's perseverance, international partnerships and a model of local ownership allowed them to succeed. The organisation gained recognition in 2006 when their participants represented India at the Homeless World Cup.

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the on-ground implementation of Slum Soccer's programmes over the last two years. The organisation is working on reviving their programming and changing their strategy to grow in a post-pandemic world.

As they continue their work, Slum Soccer is working to extend the impact of their programmes to different populations. For example, to make their interventions more inclusive, the organisation re-designed their programmes and are now working with deaf children using football. Slum Soccer has also ventured into building awareness around LGBTQ+ rights through football. Moreover, the organisation believes that mental health and wellbeing is an important area of development that is gaining recognition, and S4D programmes must pivot themselves to contribute to this area.

What are the challenges faced by S4D organisations in India?

The findings from the study discovered that the major challenges faced by S4D programmes in India revolve around funding, the existing sporting culture that promotes performance over participation, the lack of collaboration from both within and outside the sector, as well as a distinct lack of research within the S4D sector in India, in particular identifying evidence of sport as an enabler of development outcomes, specifically in the unique and local contexts across the country.



73% of respondent organisations feel like more could be done to promote policies that encourage participation and inclusion in sports, rather than prioritising performance in elite sports



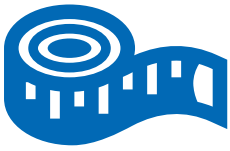
80% of the respondent organisations believe that a lack of research, advocacy and clarity on the use of sport for development in the public domain hinders their ability to implement S4D programmes.



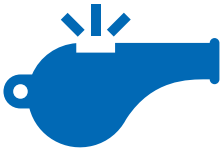
77% of the respondent organisations feel that garnering support from the corporate sector as well as other relevant stakeholders is a difficult challenge for them to overcome.



74% of the respondent organisations believe that funding or budgetary constraints are a major issue for their S4D programmes, severely restricting their ability to deliver programmes. Interestingly, 50% of the organisations selected this as a 'very relevant' challenge.



66% of the respondent organisations agreed that an inability to measure impact as well as document and advocate for their S4D programmes is a challenge.



60% of the respondent organisations stated that a lack of qualified professionals makes it difficult to implement their S4D programmes in India.

While S4D organisations in India deal with several obstacles, there are some areas which have proved to be not as challenging. 55% of organisations noted that it was not difficult to design S4D programmes and 62% of organisations claimed that delivering on-ground programmes was not a difficulty for them.

Case Study: Umoya Sports - A blueprint for inclusion

Umoya Sports is a Delhi-based S4D organisation, started in 2017 by Aditya KV, a Teach for India fellow, who combined his personal journey with education and passion for sports to work with children with disabilities. *Umoya* means 'spirit' in Zulu, and spirit is indeed a driving value for the organisation.

Umoya Sports leverages the power of sport to build an inclusive society and create equal opportunities in sports for children with disabilities. In India, where people with disabilities are often stigmatised and made invisible, the work being done by Umoya Sports is highly relevant. Recognising that sport and education are not separate but are key components for the holistic development of children, Umoya Sports uses a sport and play-based education programme to aid in the development of children with disabilities.

UMOYA SPORTS

PLAY BEYOND BARRIERS

"Many children with intellectual disabilities are non-verbal, so they can't talk for themselves. I wanted to create that ecosystem through sports wherein all children come onto that podium, get on the platform and get that equal opportunity"

- Aditya KV, Founder, Umoya Sports

After discovering that limited opportunities existed in sport for children with disabilities in India, Umoya Sports piloted their programme in 2017, focusing on children with intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders. Umoya Sports uses a variety of physical activities and sports in their work, including football, basketball, yoga, athletics and traditional games.

The main challenge that the organisation has had to contend with has been the mindset of parents and community members. Many people tend to either have low expectations of children with disabilities or are too protective of them. Thus, parents are often apprehensive to send their children to a sports-based programme, fearing that they would get injured or may not be able to participate. Further, the organisation has found a lack of inclusive and accessible facilities and a lack of qualified coaches and facilitators has challenged their ability to deliver a sports-based programme for children with disabilities.

Umoya Sports' 'three C' philosophy prioritises curriculum, coach and culture to build a child-centric and inclusive program. Through their sports-based programme that works with 250 children with disabilities, many of the participating children have been able to build important life and social skills and develop cognitive awareness. The organisation has also noted a change in the mindset of parents and other stakeholders, like teachers and community members. Seeing children playing and enjoying themselves has garnered a lot of support and belief in the programme.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Umoya Sports were able to pivot all their programmes to online platforms, using this as an opportunity to expand their work to other parts of India. By reaching out to a wider audience, the organisation has been able to work with teachers and parents in different parts of the country to equip them with the right skills to work with children with disabilities.

Umoya Sports' vision is that every child with a disability in India has an opportunity to play and live their life, just like all other children. In order to scale up and reach a larger audience, Umoya Sports believes in collaborating with community and institutional partners, such as schools and educational institutes.

What impact has COVID-19 had on the S4D sector in India?

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on society and the S4D sector has been no different. As shown in Figure 10, the majority of the respondent organisations (89%) felt that COVID-19 made it difficult to implement S4D programmes, given the nature of delivering sports, along with reduced access to funding (68%) and difficulties in accessing and connecting with programme participants (66%).

Some of the other impacts of the pandemic highlighted by respondents include difficulty in showcasing results of S4D programmes (45%), as delivery has been irregular and children have been unable to come together on the pitch, as well as challenges in retaining staff (36%), given the uncertainty of lockdowns and budgetary constraints.

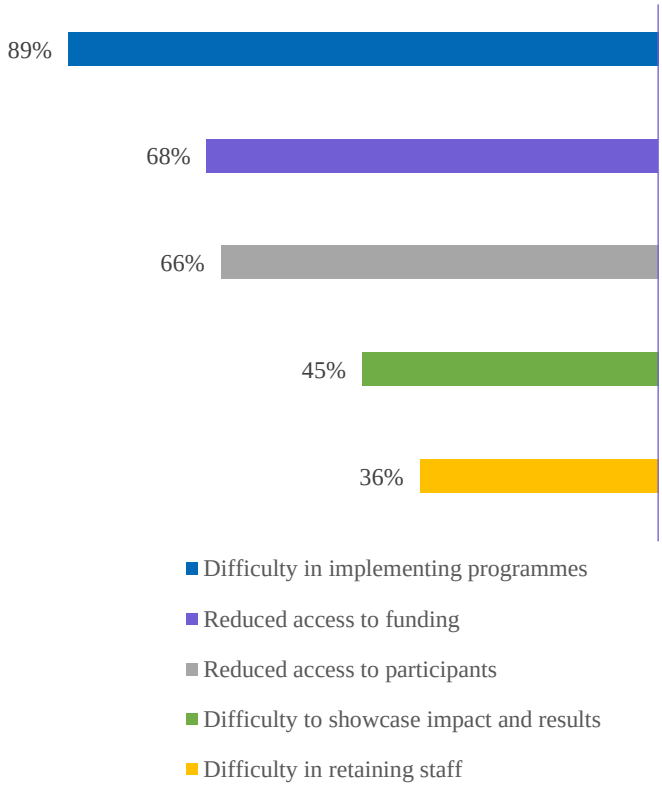


Figure 10: Impact of COVID-19 on S4D programmes in India (n=47)

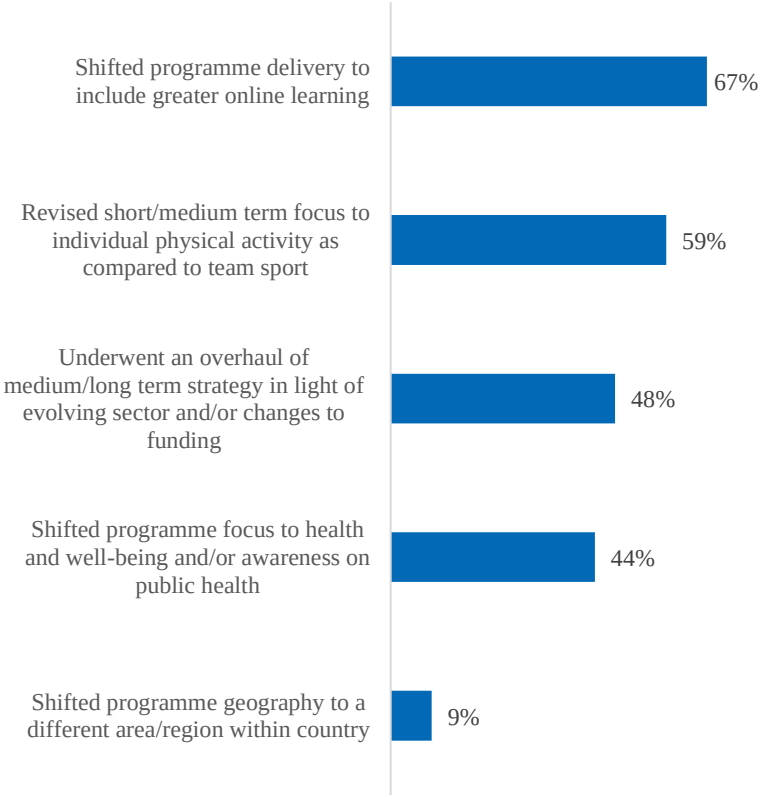


Figure 11: Changes to approaches to programming, due to COVID-19 (n=46)

In order to navigate and deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in an effective manner, 67% of the respondent organisations included greater online learning as part of their S4D programme delivery (Figure 11). 59% of the organisations revised their short to medium-term S4D delivery strategy to focus more on individual activity rather than team-based activities.

Interestingly, 48% of the organisations decided to overhaul their medium to long-term S4D programming strategy to adapt to the evolving sector, including the changes in funding patterns. In direct response to the effects of the pandemic, 44% of respondent organisations altered their S4D programmes to focus more on health and wellbeing, as well as public health awareness.

Case Study: Dream a Dream - Empowering a new generation

Started in 1999, Dream a Dream is a Bengaluru-based organisation which works to empower young people from vulnerable backgrounds to overcome adversity. Through their interactions and conversations with their young beneficiaries, the organisation realised the desire young people had to engage in sport and the power of sport to motivate and engage them in the organisation's programmes.

Since the organisation focuses on education and career building, they use sport to create a holistic learning experience, where activities are designed to achieve life skills outcomes like active listening, teamwork, overcoming difficulties, problem solving, taking initiatives, and managing conflict. Dream a Dream believes that sport has the power to challenge social norms, bring young people from diverse backgrounds together and provide an opportunity for them to participate in a positive learning environment.

"When you are truly transformed at your 'being', you cannot go back to who you were. We truly believe that sport can be used to develop life skills among young people and focus on the long-term success of individuals, which will help them thrive."

- Anirban Chakraborty, Senior Manager Fundraising & Employee Engagement, Dream a Dream

As part of their After School Life Skills programme, Dream a Dream uses football as a medium to teach life skills to children and youth. Focusing on SDG 4, Quality Education, the programme empowers participants using a creative life skills approach. The organisation wanted to use a cost-effective team sport which could reach out to a large number of participants, and hence chose football.

Dream a Dream believes that while focusing on academic education and achievements is critical, the long-term success of an individual rests on one's social and emotional wellbeing and their ability to creatively respond to challenges. The organisation's S4D programme has helped boost the confidence levels and increase the leadership skills of the children and youth they work with, finding that participants have improved their interactions with peers and are more focused, attentive, and willing to listen to instructions.

The organisation attributes this success to their facilitators, who play an important role as empathetic adults in the lives of the young people they work with. Facilitators at Dream a Dream are trained in their life skills approach and age-appropriate curriculum, which integrates life skills learning with football and physical activity. The programme consists of both structured and unstructured sessions, with the latter allowing facilitators to be innovative, try their own ideas and be flexible and sensitive to the needs of the group they are working with.

COVID-19 has presented several challenges to the organisation's S4D work. While they have tried to continue engaging with participants by facilitating sessions online and using their life skills assessment tool virtually, it has not been an easy shift. However, the organisation has found ways to adapt to the situation, focusing on the emotional wellbeing of their participants, many of whom have had to deal with loss and trauma during the pandemic. Dream a Dream states that there is a need to better recognise sport within the relief, response and recovery efforts, especially in a post-pandemic world, where sport should be designed to cater to young people's socio-emotional needs.

Today, Dream a Dream reaches out to 10,000 young people a year through their two innovation labs – After School Life Skills Programme and Career Connect Programme – and have trained over 35,000 educators from six states. They have impacted over 1.5 million children through strategic partnerships with state governments in Delhi, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Karnataka and Jharkhand. They are recognised in the sector as a thought leader for their nuanced understanding of adversity and life skills, a powerful and unique facilitative child-centric approach, a strong research foundation and strategic partnerships. The organisation recognises that a lot more needs to be done to overcome the systemic and structural barriers preventing all children from thriving. Going forward, they are looking to move beyond equipping children with life skills for survival to promoting thriving as the purpose of education, through their S4D programming.

Where do organisations see themselves in the future?

In response to future growth strategies for their S4D programming, as seen in Figure 12, 83% of respondent organisations are targeting greater sustainable funding. 'Sustainability' is key for organisations when it comes to funding, with only 13% of organisations stating that their aim is to increase their overall turnover.

63% of respondent organisations stated that they envision increasing the scale of their S4D programmes, whereas 54% of the organisations aim to expand their programmes to new geographies and locations.

A large section of the respondent organisations (46%) intend to diversify the thematic focus of their S4D programmes, including targeting a larger number of SDGs and tackling varied development issues through sport.

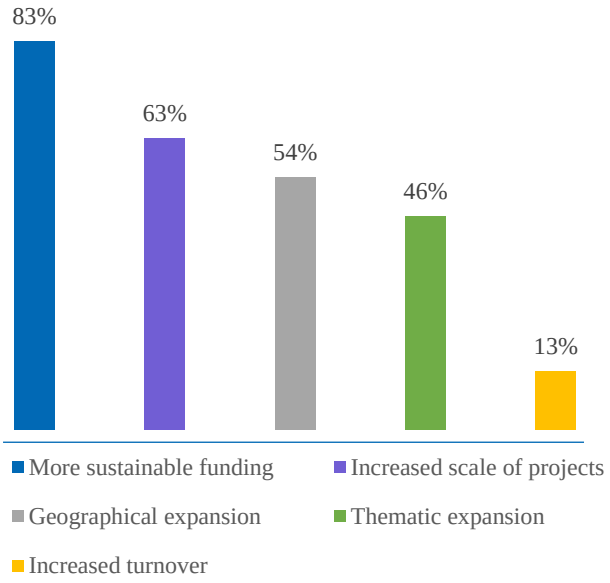
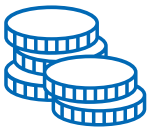


Figure 12: How S4D organisations in India aim to grow over the next 5 years (n=48)

What do they need to get there?



89% of respondent organisations believe that better funding strategies and greater avenues for funding is a key future strategy to help their organisations scale their S4D interventions in India.



87% of respondent organisations require more support and recognition from the government at local and national levels for their S4D programmes.



87% of respondent organisations believe that greater collaboration within the S4D sector and with relevant stakeholders from NGOs, the corporate sector and sports industry can help their S4D programmes achieve their desired goals.



86% of respondent organisations agree that better training programmes for facilitators and staff will be important to help their organisations succeed.



79% of respondent organisations stated that creating and implementing standardised tools for measurement and evaluation of S4D programmes will benefit the future growth of the sector.

Case Study: Dakshin Foundation - A new and sustainable approach

One of the most pressing issues facing the youth of today is climate change. Founded in 2008, Dakshin Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation based in Bengaluru, which aims to inform and advocate for conservation and environmental sustainability, while promoting community wellbeing and social justice.

Dakshin's geographic focus is on India's coastal, marine and island systems, where they carry out applied environmental research and cross-sectoral interventions for positive outcomes for people and the environment.

Since early 2020, as part of their 'Community Wellbeing and Environment' initiative, Dakshin has been developing a sports-based initiative to provide youth from coastal villages in Odisha and the Andaman Islands with an outlet to nurture their physical talents and empower them to take on leadership in their communities, develop life skills, promote awareness about gender, and facilitate education.

The organisation aims to develop a programme that is not only effective and able to achieve its targets, but is also participatory in nature and understands the local needs of the youth at each location. Sustainability is a priority, and they plan to develop a model that builds capacity and empowers youth to take charge of their communities, to make them more sustainable and advocate for environmental awareness.

"We have always felt that the youth and children in coastal areas have been losing interest in the coast and the environment as a space, and don't understand what the importance of it is. Many of them are migrating to cities. Sport is popular amongst youth and Dakshin felt that it would be an ideal way to engage them."

– Kanishk Srinivasan, Research Assistant, Dakshin Foundation

Though the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the implementation of the programme, Dakshin has used this time to conduct research for the two locations they aim to start the programme in. Their research has indicated that there is a strong culture of football and volleyball in both locations, and the organisation plans to implement their programme using the two sports.

However, Dakshin also wants to introduce ultimate frisbee into their programme, due to the sport's collaborative nature, which promotes mixed-gender participation. Further, the self-refereeing aspect of the game enables the development of sporting spirit, which makes it an ideal medium to achieve their programme's objectives. Dakshin has also used their research to determine how they can incorporate other outdoor oriented sports and physical activities such as surfing, diving, climbing and hiking, which they believe would allow for participants to engage with the outdoors and their natural environments.

During their research, Dakshin has come across many challenges that could hinder their programme's implementation. Since they do not have any prior experience in S4D, Dakshin has found it challenging to design a programme from scratch. Further, they do not currently have any coaches or human resources that are trained to deliver sports-based programmes. The research has also shown that many community members are reluctant to send their children, especially girls, to attend such sports-based programmes. The community does not see the value in sport or recreational activity, preferring that youth focus on their studies or work. However, given that the organisation has been working with these communities for over a decade and are thus familiar with the key stakeholders, Dakshin believes that they can overcome this initial challenge and gain the community's support for the programme.

The organisation hopes to be able to initiate the programme starting in late 2021 or early 2022. While they will start the implementation of the programme in Odisha and Andaman, Dakshin plans to expand to their S4D programme to coastal spaces in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Goa in the future.

Future recommendations



Long-term sustainable funding

Securing funding, particularly sustainable and long-term funding, is a major challenge and stumbling block for S4D programmes in India. Evident from the data collected by the research study and aligning with a key priority of UNESCO's 'Fit for Life' programme, **securing sustainable and reliable funding that can enable S4D programmes to achieve their long-term goals and outcomes is essential moving forward.**

- **Public sector funding into S4D programming in India needs to be scaled-up.** As per the respondents part of this study, only 8% have received funding for S4D programmes from the government. It is essential that public sector funds are unlocked for S4D interventions and utilised to their full potential. In order to do so, the S4D sector in India needs to scale-up advocacy with government agencies at the national, state and local levels, as well as better align their programming with various government policies and development schemes currently available.

- **It is vital that organisations running S4D programmes in India align their outcomes and objectives to private sector donors and CSR funding.** A sizeable amount of domestic funding from the private sector goes towards developmental outcomes in health, education and gender. As illustrated in this report, S4D programmes in India are already contributing towards these outcomes, yet have had limited success in leveraging these funds. Given the steady decline in foreign funding across India, securing domestic funding, including CSR and private sector funding, is more viable.

- As we slowly emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, a large part of development funding is and will continue to be available for public health outcomes, especially relating to physical wellbeing, mental health and equitable access to healthcare. **It is important that organisations are able to use this opportunity to position the important role that sport can play in achieving public health outcomes, in order to scale-up funding for S4D towards better health and wellbeing.**

Greater advocacy



There is a clear need to scale-up the advocacy efforts, of individual organisations and the sector collectively, to showcase the important role of S4D in India. Advocacy efforts need to highlight the influential and wide-ranging impact that sport can have on developmental outcomes, especially in enhancing wellbeing and promoting inclusion and equality. Moreover, there is a need to showcase the impact of S4D programmes being delivered in remote and rural areas, away from the spotlight of India's urban metros.

- **In-depth research into S4D interventions across India, which is participatory and contextualised within local settings**, will not only develop better informed programmes for the communities they serve but also showcase the impact of indigenous interventions to key decision makers. This recommendation aligns with UNESCO's 'Fit for Life' initiative, which highlights the need for strengthened data on strategies for and the impact of sport to enhance wellbeing, inclusion, equality, and resilience, in order to improve coordinated policymaking.

- **Standardised and robust assessment and evaluation tools, supported by quality documentation**, pertaining to S4D programmes in India will allow the sector to effectively measure and showcase the impact of S4D initiatives to a wide-ranging audience.

- **Lobbying at national, regional and local levels** can raise awareness about the concept and importance of S4D among potential donors in the private and public sectors as well as policymakers.

- **Better alignment of existing S4D initiatives with national policies and schemes, such as the new National Education Policy and Khelo India, and global initiatives and charters, such as UNESCO's 'Fit for Life' and the United Nation's SDGs,** will garner the interest and support of the public and private sectors as well as institutional donors.

Future recommendations



Increased collaboration within and beyond the sector

There is an urgent need for organisations implementing S4D programmes in India to enhance collaborative efforts within the S4D sector, as well as beyond, in order to scale-up the reach and impact of the sector. One of the key challenges highlighted in this report is that of effective collaboration within the S4D sector, as well as with private, public and other non-profit stakeholders. UNESCO's 'Fit for Life' programme highlights the importance of strengthened governance and coordination among various actors and key stakeholders.

- Given that India is a diverse country with several regional differences, it is key that **S4D programmes collaborate with locally-based organisations in order to upskill local human resources and knowledge networks to create more sustainable programmes**, instead of scaling-up S4D programmes in new locations independently.

- **Knowledge sharing and collaboration to enhance best practices between current and/or prospective S4D stakeholders in India is critical to ensure further innovation and better strategic planning within the sector.** This is particularly relevant in relation to designing S4D interventions, as enhanced knowledge sharing will help new entrants within the sector to avoid going through a resource intensive exercise to develop programmes from scratch or attempt to reinvent the wheel.

- **Greater collaboration between organisations working at the grassroots and those at national levels is paramount in order to scale the reach of S4D programmes to communities on the ground**. There are a number of smaller organisations at the grassroots doing impactful work while operating with limited funds; collaboration and partnerships with large-scale and donor organisations can help further accentuate and accelerate the work being done at the grassroots.

Training of facilitators and trainers



While India has a young workforce and the potential to develop a large pool of trainers and facilitators for the S4D sector, there is currently a shortage of qualified and experienced personnel who have the skill set to work in S4D programming. **Better training programmes for S4D personnel as well as greater opportunities for women to join the S4D sector as trainers and in other roles will be vital for the future growth of the sector in the country.**

- S4D is a cross-sectoral practice and therefore **there is a need to develop standardised knowledge resources and capacity building programmes for S4D coaches and facilitators that equip them with the unique skillset required to implement S4D programmes**. These trainings and resources should provide facilitators with the skills to conduct sport-based programmes that promote values of equality, inclusion and participation, while also providing in-depth knowledge on social issues and child protection.

- **Training programmes and resources must be produced in different regional languages and promote sensitivity towards working with minority groups**. UNESCO's 'Fit for life' flagship prioritises enhanced context-specific capacity building programmes for facilitators, which is relevant in the Indian context.

- **S4D organisations must provide opportunities and pathways for promising programme participants to take up roles within the organisation**. This will allow for homegrown talent, with a strong knowledge of the programme, its objectives and values, as well as the needs of the community, to become facilitators and trainers. Opportunities such as this can also incentivise active participation in the programme and provide further upskilling and employment opportunities to several individuals.

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