

ANNUAL SURVEY 2021



sportanddev 2021 survey results

The International Platform on Sport and Development (sportanddev) has conducted its 2021 annual survey. This helps us improve our work, better serve our users and gain insights into the future of sport and development. The results are illuminating across the following key areas:

1. The diversity of the sportanddev audience (demographics)
2. How the community utilises the sportanddev platform (use)
3. Views on the sportanddev platform (value)
4. How sportanddev can improve its offering (recommendations)
5. Views on the sport and development field (broader insights)

1. About survey participants

Questions about respondents help us get an idea of our community's demographics. Overall, 100 people responded to the 2021 survey. Just under 54% identified as male (down from 57% in 2020) and over 45% identified as female (up from 43% in 2020). Respondents were fairly evenly spread across the age groups, with 31% of respondents aged 31-40, 25% aged 21-30 and 26% aged 41-50.

As in previous years, the highest number of respondents were based in Europe (28%), followed by Asia (19%), sub-Saharan Africa (17%) and North America (12%). There was an increase in respondents from Oceania (12%, up from 9% in 2020). 6% of visitors were from Latin America and the Caribbean, with 6% identifying as other. These figures suggest great geographical diversity, and we aim to encourage and improve upon this trend, especially as we seek to launch sportanddev in other global languages.

The largest number of respondents were working in the sports sector (40%) and for implementing NGOs (43%). The rest of the responses further reflected the diversity of our target audience. Over 25% of respondents identified as a researcher, volunteer and/or coach, with 19% from a sport federation.

The following proportion of respondents identified as/with: athletes/players (20%), practitioners (20%), the private sector (16%), donor organisations (12%), government (10%), development agencies (10%), the media (6%), students (4%) and other (8%). Many participants affiliated with more than one group, and we recognise that there is significant overlap across categories.

NB: The survey was available in English (no. of respondents = 91) and French (no. of respondents = 9). In the future, sportanddev would like to make the survey and analysis available in more languages.

2. How do users utilise sportanddev?

Over 37% of respondents access the sportanddev website at least once a week – of these respondents, 9% access daily, 3% access 4 or more times per week, 10% access 2-3 times per week and 15% once a week. The news and commentary articles and sportanddev.org newsletter remain our most used services, while the [massive open online course](#) has also attracted many users. Jobs, new opportunities, the events calendar, social media pages and the toolkit section are also popular with users.

Over 47% of respondents read the newsletter fortnightly (i.e. every time it is released) and 64% of respondents follow sportanddev on Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and/or Twitter.

- *83% of respondents have used information on sportanddev in their projects or programmes*

- 52% of respondents have attended an event after reading about it on sportanddev
- 24% of respondents have posted a job opportunity, event, article or publication on sportanddev
- 22% of respondents have formed a partnership after reading about that organisation on sportanddev

3. How do users view and value sportanddev?

Respondents provided valuable feedback which reinforces the status of the sportanddev platform as the leading information source, networking hub and advocacy space for sport and development:

- 86% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that they feel more informed about developments in the sector because of sportanddev
- 78% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that sportanddev is the leading source of information on sport and development
- Over 76% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that sportanddev has helped them and/or their organisation in their own work

Users also indicated that the platform plays a pivotal role in strengthening the overall field. This is crucial given the need to better strengthen the value proposition of the sport and development sector:

- Over 79% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that sportanddev has been important in helping the sport and development sector grow
- Over 70% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that sportanddev has helped bring voices from the field into higher level policy discussions
- 77% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that sportanddev has been important in helping the sport and development sector gain credibility
- 89% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that they trust the integrity and impartiality of sportanddev

Results also show that users see sportanddev as well positioned to play a greater coordination, leadership and advocacy role in sport and development:

- 96% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that would like to see sportanddev grow and provide more services to its users and stakeholders
- 80% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that sportanddev is well placed to coordinate the diverse range of actors in the sport and development field
- 84% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that sportanddev can help bridge the gap that exists between policy and practice in sport and development
- Over 86% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that they would like to see sportanddev take an even greater leadership position in sport and development
- Over 93% of users strongly or mostly agree that they would like to see sportanddev play a greater advocacy role in the sport and development field

NB: Respondents could select responses from five options: strongly agree – mostly agree – don't know – mostly disagree – strongly disagree. The numbers that strongly or mostly agree exclude those that strongly or mostly disagree AND those that selected 'don't know'. In most cases, the number who disagreed with the statements was low, with 'don't know' being selected more frequently.

Open-ended responses

In addition to answering multiple choice questions (as illustrated above), we also asked users to provide an open-ended response to the question: **What do you think sportanddev does best?**

Users felt sportanddev performs well in sharing information (including latest news and developments) and providing knowledge to both experienced professionals and newcomers in sport and development. Users emphasised the platform's importance in advocacy and communication, in terms of creating awareness of sport as a tool for development and peace.

Respondents also felt the platform excelled in providing space for partnerships, networking, and connecting or convening diverse groups. They also identified the importance of providing a voice for actors, projects and best practices in the field, especially grassroots initiatives who might otherwise not be able to share their achievements and learn from others. Users noted the advantage of having a 'one stop shop' or 'single platform' to coordinate news, resources and actors. Open access to toolkits and learning materials were highlighted as positive in providing education and learning materials.

"sportanddev is known to be (the) sole platform dedicated to sport and development globally. It provides an open and free sharing platform for a diverse stakeholders group from this field which contributes to building much needed awareness as well as credibility to the sport and development field." (survey respondent)

4. Recommendations

Respondents provided valuable feedback on how sportanddev can improve. This included the following key themes:

- Improved website with better accessibility, functionality, visual appeal, user experience and interactivity. This includes content in other languages (e.g. Spanish). On this note, sportanddev has launched a process and campaign to upgrade the current site, including above features.
- Support for communities of practice (e.g. by region and/or thematic area) in sport and development, including the ability to host groups and capacity building initiatives
- Greater use of technology (e.g. more multimedia content) and hosting of webinars
- More information about grants and funding resources/opportunities
- More toolkits, resources and other learning materials (on this note, sportanddev has created an open access [online course on sport and sustainable development](#), in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Australian government, with over 5,000 learners joining).
- Increase collaboration between practitioners, academics and policymakers – bridge the gap between theory/policy and practice that continues to exist in sport and development
- Greater profiling and coordination of regional networks and the work they are doing
- Feature content from a greater diversity of actors, including marginalised individuals and groups (such as people with disabilities and refugees) and those from the Global South

Topics and trends

We asked respondents to provide feedback on what issues the platform should cover in an article series. The following topics were among the suggestions:

- Greater coverage of issues related to access, inclusion, equity and intersectionality
- Greater focus on the role of sport in the economy and how to engage national actors
- Sport and the environment, including climate change and how sport can respond
- Gender and equity in sport, including women in sport and the inclusion of vulnerable groups
- Fundraising advice and approaches, including grants, partnerships and job opportunities
- Guidance on advocating for the widespread use of sport in development priorities
- Integrity and transparency in sport, including issues of governance and safeguarding
- Guidance on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), including impact measurement and research

5. Views on the sport and development field

We asked survey respondents to comment on the sport and development field. Despite the challenges facing sport and development, which have been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic, 95% of respondents were 'very or mostly positive' about the future of sport and development. However, respondents did identify specific challenges and opportunities for the field given the current crisis.

Challenges included:

- Reduced funding and opportunities for sport for development as resources are constrained or diverted due to the COVID pandemic, with sport often not seen as a priority
- Due to these challenges, organisations are often in survival mode rather than pursuing long term planning, strategy and research. Some believe the sector has therefore lost momentum
- The pandemic has worsened inequities, including access to sport and physical activity
- Growing divide and inequities within sport for development between bigger, established organisations with greater access to resources and smaller organisations with less access
- Practical challenges of running projects in-person due to social distancing, closure of institutions (e.g. schools), limited availability of coaches/volunteers and the difficulties of adapting to other forms of delivery, recognising the digital divide that continues to exist
- Increased social issues, including child abuse, gender-based violence, alcoholism etc. that have impacted communities and present a challenge to sport for development programmes.
- Linked to the above, women and girls have been profoundly affected by the pandemic and there is a risk that recent gains made in relation to gender equity in sport may be reversed.

- The sport and development sector has grown but it is still very niche. There remains a lack of understanding among those in mainstream development, including government and business.

The psychosocial benefits of sport have been highlighted through the COVID pandemic and I believe sport will be viewed as an important tool for societal development in upcoming years. However, the quality of coaching interaction and a move away from focusing on high performance sports and sports entertainment will be challenges to tackle for the sector in the upcoming years. (Survey respondent)

Opportunities included:

- An opportunity to innovate delivery, for example using a blended approach to implementing programmes – both online and offline (where possible) – to expand access and reach
- Build bridges virtually through enhanced online collaboration and knowledge sharing
- This may be an opportunity to advocate for reshaping the sport and development sector, to be more accessible, equitable and inclusive. This includes greater priority and resources being dedicated to grassroots sport, and sport and development initiatives, and not just elite sport
- Align sport and development policies and programmes with urgent global needs enabling them to be part of the relief, response and recovery efforts, thus enhancing their sustainability
- Linked to the above, sport and development has shown that it can be an important part of the COVID response, including its contribution to physical and mental health.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. We are community driven and your feedback is important to us. While we are not able to promise to implement all suggestions made – some are dependent on financial resources – we take all suggestions seriously and will carry out as many as possible. To provide feedback throughout the year, please email info@sportanddev.org.