

# PANORAMA

Issue 1 - 2026



*Volume 2*  
**SCALING**



Building society through sport.

At a time when world events are dividing us and conventional solutions seem to have run their course, we are convinced that sport remains a largely untapped resource. Far beyond performance and competition, it can be a powerful tool for social transformation, a way to contribute to a more just and sustainable society, and one of the answers to the major challenges of our time.

This potential does not happen on its own. It requires clear intentions, well thought-out practices, and collective commitment: as many people as possible need to take ownership of it, beyond the boundaries of the world of sport.

This is the very raison d'être of Res Sportiva. Our stated mission is to accelerate the movement of social innovation through sport, by generating and sharing knowledge, highlighting inspiring practices, and fostering cooperation between organisations and countries. We believe that sports can make a difference—provided we truly give it the means to do so.

This study has been undertaken with the support of:



## A collective commitment to social innovation *through sport*

The very existence of Res Sportiva and this project would not be possible without the support of our **founding partners**





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# Foreword

The first volume of Res Sportiva's Panorama opens with a striking statistic. An overwhelming majority (90%) of the respondents to our survey are seeking to use physical activity and sport as a way of addressing socio-educational, environmental and health needs, other than purely sporting needs. This second volume goes further in the description of the way it is growing. Indeed, despite its relative newness, the movement of social innovation through sport is already scaling: over half of the organisations established more than four years ago are expanding their work into new areas to increase their impact on communities.

Over the past decade, scaling has gradually become a defining question in the social economy and international development sectors. In practical terms, it tests organisations' capacity to move beyond purely local delivery and reach more people with greater impact. Yet this is not an obligatory path: many work at a local scale, with modest means, drawing their strength precisely from their grassroots character. What matters, in the end, is not the scaling of the organisation but the scale of its impact on communities.

The scaling of the modern sports movement is long-standing and well documented<sup>1</sup>. Since the end of the 19th century, modern sport has gradually gone global from Europe, where the rules, institutions and competitions were formalised<sup>2</sup>. The movement has become an economy worth \$2.3 billion worldwide in 2026, and in all likelihood \$8.8 billion in 2050<sup>3</sup>. However, the ambition of facilitating access to sport remains unfulfilled, at a time when socially and economically-vulnerable communities do not benefit from such initiatives.

For those who view sport as a tool for social innovation, the idea of scaling is still relatively new, because the movement itself is young: most initiatives first emerged at the local level. Yet scaling is fast becoming a central concern. Social innovation through sport is now taking place across the world, and a growing body of impact studies makes it possible to learn from it. This raises several strategic questions. How can such successful innovations be publicised and shared, so as to meet real needs? How can organisations be made more robust, and lasting funding and partnerships be built? And, first and foremost, how can it influence public policy?

We are convinced that, if the scaling of social innovation through sport is to reach more people in a meaningful and systemic way, it will take much more than the growth of individual organisations. It is natural to read an organisation's expansion as a measure of its impact — yet scaling an organisation is not the same as scaling its impact. Methods, too, must spread. The stakeholders in these ecosystems — associations, sports federations, local authorities, businesses and foundations — need to cooperate on objectives and funding. Only then will sport's potential for social innovation truly come into its own.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Maguire, Katie Liston, Mark Falcous, *The Palgrave Handbook of Globalization and Sport*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Georges Vigarello, *Du jeu ancien au show sportif: la naissance d'un mythe*, Seuil, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> World Economic Forum, *Sports for People and Planet, Insight Report*, Janvier 2026.

# Introduction

Scaling is not a rite of passage that every organisation must undergo to increase its impact. Models built with and for local communities, close to where needs are felt, can bring about real change on their own. Yet such efforts often run up against a ceiling: to build their capacity, secure funding or carry weight in advocacy, they may need the backing of national and international organisations. This is true on every continent — and especially in Africa, Europe and Asia<sup>4</sup>. It is precisely here that scaling comes in: not to replace local action, but to strengthen and extend it.

At first sight, scaling in this context reflects the desire of people and organisations to mobilise more resources, so as to respond more fully and effectively to needs in the broadest sense — be they educational, social, economic, health-related or environmental<sup>5</sup>. But what kind of scaling do we mean? The scaling of an organisation? The scaling of methods and practices? Or the scaling of an entire sector as it opens up to new partnerships?

The most common scaling strategy involves rolling out initiatives and programmes in new villages, towns and areas, so as to reach more beneficiaries. This “scale-up” approach, which often relies on creating or mobilising local branches, makes considerable demands. It calls for new ways of working, the recruitment of new staff, and a rethinking of how skills are deployed and of the organisation's structure and legal standing. And it requires sustained — or at least regular — fundraising from public and private funders.

But scaling can take other forms. Some organisations may instead seek to change the nature of their activities, or to diversify the communities they reach.

Others, once their intervention model has stabilised, share their methods with fellow organisations — reaching more people without necessarily growing in size themselves. These strategies are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary: combining them can, in the right conditions, sustain over time both the quality and impact of these innovations and the economic model that supports them.

Developed with and for grassroots stakeholders and decision-makers, this Panorama sheds light on the strategies and models for scaling social innovation through sport. It explores in particular how those strategies can both take inspiration from and build on the scaling momentum of the sports movement, the development sector and the social economy sector. Above all, it asks how funders, public and private, can design mechanisms that do more to support this scaling. This second volume of Res Sportiva's Panorama therefore sets out to help readers make sense of these trends — and to play a part in shaping the movement's future.

<sup>4</sup> FICCI, Pro Sport Development PRIA, *Understanding the Sport for Development Sector in South and South East Asia*, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> See the methodology section for more precise definitions of scaling, p.6.

# Methodology



## 01

### A unique survey of 936 organisations using sport as a social and environmental lever

This Panorama draws on an international survey of 936 organisations across 81 countries, 90% of which use sport as a tool to address educational, social, environmental or health needs. The survey methodology, and the precautions taken in analysing the data, are set out in the introduction and appendix to the first volume, which focuses on the conditions and levers for social innovation through sport. This second volume builds on those findings to analyse how the movement's methods, organisations and funding can themselves be scaled.

## 03

### Adopting nuanced criteria to refer to the scaling of social innovation through sport and its distinctive features

The idea behind this volume of the Panorama is to question the appropriateness of scale-up as the ultimate aim of any organisation and the only route to scaling sport for impact. Indeed, many organisations and practitioners working around the world are aware of the situation of communities and local needs. In this context, increasing impact cannot be boiled down to a single approach based on duplication or geographical expansion. The sharing of practices and methods is also a desirable strategy, able to both strengthen local communities and get public policy to shift direction. Consequently, this Panorama focuses on analysing cooperation between stakeholders, and the emergence in several countries of networks and national coalitions aiming to foster interaction, share knowledge and enable mutual support.

## 02

### Adapting the concepts used to refer to scaling in the social economy and development sector

In the field of social economy, the academic literature distinguishes several scaling strategies<sup>6</sup>. Scale-up refers to organisational growth aimed at reaching more communities and areas, while cooperation and the sharing of methods — known as scaling across — can involve passing on the means to act to other organisations or individuals. Organisations may also choose to increase their impact by deepening their methods internally (scaling deep) or by extending their work to new target groups (scaling out). Developed in that field, all of these concepts can shed light on the forces at work in social innovation through sport, and are especially useful for examining the various organisational and economic models on which scaling rests. However, the sports movement — and, even more so, the field of social innovation through sport — has a number of distinctive features that call for adapting and supplementing the existing analytical frameworks.

<sup>6</sup>We are using here a typology developed in Pache, A.C, et Chalençon, G, « Changer d'échelle: vers une typologie des stratégies d'expansion géographique des entreprises sociales », *Revue internationale de l'économie sociale*, 2007, no 305, p. 32-48.



01

A movement that is already very committed to working with a larger number of populations and territories.

A large number of organisations are already growing in order to reach more towns and villages.

CLOSE TO  
**50** %  
OF THE ORGANISATIONS  
ALREADY WORK IN MORE THAN  
ONE TOWN OR VILLAGE

OVER  
**16**  
ORGANISATIONS  
WORK IN OVER 100 TOWNS  
AND VILLAGES

**TRENDS**

A significant proportion of the social innovation through sport movement organisations emerged at the turn of the 21st century<sup>7</sup>. We could regard them as still being experimental in their operating methods and their stories and still highly localised in the way they conceive responses to the needs of communities. However, this Panorama sheds light on another aspect of this movement: over half of the social innovation through sport organisations are scaling up in new areas. What are the hard facts and the root causes of this dynamic?

This scale-up approach operates on at least two levels. On the one hand, almost a quarter of organisations have expanded into just one other town or village: these are either scaling up only within a very local area, or are still in the early stages of doing so. On the other hand, only a handful expand across a great many areas — just 2% report being present in over 100, and only 31 (4%) in over 50. If we set aside this last group, organisations operate, on average, in around seven towns or villages.

Among the 31 organisations that scale up most widely, two broad patterns can be distinguished. Some run all or most of their activities within a single country (Chance to Shine in the United Kingdom, Léo Lagrange and Sport dans la Ville in France, Sportzvillage in India, among others).



India is particularly well represented here, with six organisations working exclusively within their home country.

By contrast, other high-profile organisations in the sector (Fight for Peace<sup>8</sup>, Lovefutbol, among others) operate across several countries and continents. In this respect, this kind of scale-up is markedly international in scope: a relatively large share of organisations are present in at least two countries (20% of all respondents). Although their profiles vary, most have an annual budget of at least €1 million. One of them, Special Olympics, stands out as a clear exception, given the sheer extent of its reach: more than 20,000 towns and cities reported across over 200 countries<sup>9</sup>.



**DISCUSSION**

The scaling of the social innovation through sport scale-up does not come as a real surprise, as many of the organisations that answered the survey have been operating for over 4 or 10 years<sup>10</sup>. Other studies show that organisations start to plan an initiative scale-up strategy once they have been operating, trialling and modelling solutions for three to five years<sup>11</sup>.

The extent of the scale-up is actually rooted in economic rationale. Organisations here can seek to scale up to meet the expectations of funding bodies in terms of beneficiary numbers, or to find private funding opportunities elsewhere, particularly in areas or geographical regions with fragile economic models. More specifically, the experts we met during our interviews emphasized that the decision to scale up is both a fundraising strategy and an economic strategy based on making funding profitable and securing the long-term future of the initiatives.

In this context, the organisations that scale up the most are headquartered in the US, UK, France, Australia, Italy, Germany and Spain, in other words, in countries in what was known as the “Global North,” with significant private capital and the support of development aid. India and Brazil are outliers, and attest to the growing momentum of these two ecosystems for over 20 years.

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**Social innovation in the socio-sport sector logically leads to scaling. This is made necessary by the fragile nature of the economic models involved and the volatile nature of public and private funding, which forces organisations to make profitable investment for innovation.**  
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*Sanoussi Diarra, Impact social par le sport.*

<sup>7</sup> Simon Darnell, Russell Field et Bruce Kidd, *The History and Politics of sport-for-development, Activists, Ideologues and Reformers*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2019.  
<sup>8</sup> <https://fightforpeace.net/about-us/>  
<sup>9</sup> Inoue, C., Forneris, T., « The role of Special Olympics in promoting social inclusion: An examination of stakeholder perceptions », *Journal of Sport for Development, Sport and Development*, vol.3, issue 5, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> 75% of the survey's sample organisations have been operating for over four years, and 56% have been in existence for over 10 years. See Res Sportiva's Panorama, volume 1.  
<sup>11</sup> It is not surprising that 50% of the sample run initiatives in more than one town or village.

# Sharing methods: supplementing scale-up or an alternative strategy?

OVER  
**50** %  
OF THE ORGANISATIONS  
SHARE  
THEIR METHODS

OVER  
**70** %  
OF THE ORGANISATIONS ARE  
DIVERSIFYING THEIR INITIATIVES  
TO TARGET NEW GROUPS

## TRENDS

Organisational growth is no longer regarded as the only way to scale method. For instance, a large swathe of the organisations highlighted that they are looking to improve the quality of their initiatives for beneficiaries (known as scaling deep), while other organisations are trialling initiatives with new target groups (scaling out)<sup>12</sup>.

Our survey also identified that over half of the organisations involved in social innovation through sport aim to share methods (scale across). This type of scaling can take very different forms depending on the context. Organisations may specifically share and exchange knowledge about target groups, issues and practices, particularly at events that are specially arranged as part of funding programmes<sup>13</sup>. Other organisations standardise an educational and/or teaching approach with a view to conveying it. In practice, these different strategies tend to be inextricably linked: indeed, the successful dissemination of methods is basically reliant on how they are received, and the sharing organisations' ability to understand the distinctive characteristics of the target groups.

Overall, it is important to note that the sharing of methods (scale across) may be pursued either as a complementary strategy to organisational growth (scale up), or as an alternative pathway to it.

<sup>12</sup> Several organisations also emphasise their efforts to improve the quality and depth of their interventions for beneficiaries ("scale deep"), either alongside a replication strategy or in support of an existing expansion process. This is particularly evident among organisations operating in the international development sector, many of which already maintain extensive local networks. In such cases, sport-based programmes are used to strengthen and enhance existing forms of support and impact among populations already being served. This is notably illustrated by the work of the Naandi Foundation in India, which is featured as a case study in the first volume of this Panorama.

<sup>13</sup> David Bough, Emmanuel Rivat, Claire Verdier. "Évaluation des programmes 'Sport et Développement' et 'Impact International' pilotés par la Guilde et soutenus par l'AFD". *Format Ex Post*. N°103, 2024.



## EXAMPLES

Gingando De La Paz develop for example the sharing methods as a complementary strategy to scaling up. The organisation develops a "social capoeira" approach, designed to be both an inclusive, welcoming and safe "social space", and a sport<sup>14</sup>. The organisation aims to convey psychosocial skills through a teaching method that blends body work, cultural rituals and discussion time. The scaling of this method is based on training local representatives – educators and community stakeholders – via immersion

and co-development methods, enabling contextualised adoption of the method in local areas. The organisation rolls out this approach in Brazil, Haiti and DR Congo. *Fútbol Más* in Chile is another organisation that develops this strategy. Founded in 2008, this organisation delivers a social innovation through sport model aiming to develop young people's life skills, and leverages the involvement of young people and beneficiaries in the design and rollout of the initiatives.

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*Our priority is to establish ourselves in new countries and regions, but our development is not solely based on our mere presence; it is also based on building other people's capacity to have a lasting impact in these communities.*

Virginia Abara, Fútbol Mas

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While some organisations see this model as a complement to scaling up, others deliberately choose to focus solely on sharing their methods and practices. PLAY International, an international NGO whose core mission is to develop and share methods, is a case in point. Since the 2010s, it has worked to turn the educational dimension of its projects and programmes into a transferable model, so as to pass on its expertise to other organisations and to teachers, mainly in primary schools. It was through a pilot project in several schools in the Paris region that PLAY developed its Playdagogy method<sup>15</sup>, built around awareness-raising themes such as nutrition, gender equality and shifting perceptions of disability. In doing so, it also showed that the social innovation it had pioneered in Bolivia, Burundi and Haiti could be just as relevant in France. Methods spread in other ways too — for instance through Waves for Change, which uses surfing in South Africa, and Solution Riposte, which uses fencing in France. Both feature as case studies in this Panorama.

<sup>14</sup> <https://gingandopelapaz.org>

<sup>15</sup> Website <https://www.play-international.org/nous-decouvrir/pedagogies>

## DISCUSSION

or the organisations that adopt method sharing as a fully-fledged scale across strategy, organisational growth is not the main way of meeting local needs, given the diversity of existing solutions and organisations, and the difficulty involved in managing them sustainably. As an advocate of this strategy emphasizes:

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*We have always sought ways of increasing the impact of our work without necessarily making the organisation grow as such. Basically, we have always wanted to support more children. However, you have to add a unit of cost for each unit of scale-up growth. Increasing our organisation's size does not necessarily mean having a bigger impact.*

Tim Conibear, Wave for Change

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While scaling across methods offers numerous advantages, it also raises several challenges. All shared resources must be underpinned by a rigorous process of reflection and knowledge consolidation, and designed in such a way as to remain adaptable to local contexts. Obstacles do, indeed, exist. On the one hand, the dissemination of methods may come up against disparities in training levels among coaches, educators and teachers across different territories and organisations. On the other hand, there is a risk that the implementation of methods and activities may decline or even cease altogether in the absence of ongoing support from the organisation disseminating the methodology and/or following the withdrawal of funding.

The success of this approach depends upon the lasting engagement of the "recipient" partners. The choice of organisational and economic models is also a crucial lever. This is precisely what the following case study, devoted to Waves for Change, together with the subsequent chapters of this Panorama, seeks to decipher.

# WAVES FOR CHANGE, PROGRAMME TAKE 5

2 100 EDUCATORS TRAINED

83% OF THE SAMPLE OF COACHES ASSESSED HAD SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED THEIR SKILLS BECAUSE OF THE TRAINING AND SUPPORT PROVIDED

84 000

YOUNG PARTICIPANTS, OVER HALF OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SAMPLE, SHOWED IMPROVEMENTS IN TERMS OF REGULATING EMOTIONS AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

## BACKGROUND

Take 5 was initially launched in a context of major social inequality and high levels of youth exposure to violence in South Africa. Mental health needs are significant in these environments, while specialised resources remain limited. The programme implements a proven surf therapy approach<sup>16</sup>, and is now being rolled out in the Western Cape region and abroad.

## TARGET GROUPS

The programme's priority target is educators (coaches, teachers, social or community workers) who benefit from trainer training or methodology training.

The indirect beneficiaries are young people mostly aged 11-14 who live in low and middle-income countries. These target groups have to contend with mental health issues and a high level of significant social difficulties<sup>17</sup>.

## THE PROJECT

The project enables educators to acquire the practical skills that they need to arrange fun sessions based on physical activity and play. These sessions aim to increase children's engagement and improve their psychosocial skills. Waves for Change trains and supports public and humanitarian stakeholders in order to incorporate the Take 5 model into sports and physical activity programmes on a wider scale.

## THE ECOSYSTEM

Rollout of Take 5 draws on two types of partners:

- **Public stakeholders**, particularly ministries of education or sport, enabling large-scale rollout in education systems (the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, Western Cape).
- **NGOs**, often organised into national coalitions, with UNICEF playing a key role in South Sudan, Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia and Rwanda.



## INITIATIVES

The Take Five intervention model is based on a training and monitoring mechanism. The mechanism focuses on trainers (25 hours of in-person training and monthly remote monitoring) who themselves train practitioners (15 hours of in-person training and monthly remote monitoring).

The facilitators are trained in nine key helping skills and to deliver a simple and replicable five-step routine enabling them to arrange sessions with five stages:<sup>18</sup> an energizer, a check-in to see how everyone is feeling, a breathing exercise, a fun physical activity, and a check-out to see how participants now feel.

## INNOVATION

From a strategic standpoint, innovation takes the form of coordination with existing mechanisms, both in terms of public policy and projects run by organisations. The intention is to optimise and increase the impact of existing mechanisms, rather than create new ones.

From a methodology perspective, innovation is found in the robustness and simplicity of the teaching method, in terms of both the approach of the educator and the session content for the young people.

## PROGRAMME OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

In 2025, 2,100 educators and 84,000 young people took part in the Take 5 Programme. A study conducted in conjunction with the South African Department of Sport, Arts and Culture showed that 83% of the sample of educators assessed significantly improved their skills because of the training and support provided<sup>19</sup>. This study also highlighted that over half of the young people showed improvements in terms of regulating their emotions and social relationships<sup>20</sup>. Case studies in Somalia and South Sudan have similar findings, as well as an increase in young people's levels of resilience after three months in the programme<sup>21</sup>. Finally, the rollout of the Take 5 Programme also helps increase young people's level of involvement in activities<sup>22</sup>.

## SCALING

The scaling objective of the Take 5 Programme by 2030 is to develop a network of partners able to reach around 3 million children in several key countries (South Africa, Ethiopia, Malawi, Rwanda and Kenya) by sustainably incorporating the model into national education frameworks. The strategy is based on a rollout of the training and supervision model, enabling partner organisations to gradually take ownership of the mechanism, tailor their budgets to pay educators and fund educator supervision, before ensuring the sustainability of the programme themselves after two to three years. The long-term ambition is that Take 5 becomes an open model that is widely available and incorporated into existing systems, thus facilitating a systemic transformation of the sector.



<sup>16</sup> Lopes, J.T. (2015). "Adapted Surfing as a Tool to Promote Inclusion and Rising Disability Awareness in Portugal". *Sport and Disability, Sport and Health*, vol.3, issue.5. Thandi Davies, Jamie Marshall, Nicola van der Merwe, Paula Yarrow, Tim Conibear, Crick Lund, Implementation outcomes of the waves for change community-based task-shared prevention intervention for adolescent mental health in South Africa, Cambridge Prisms: *Global Mental Health*, 2025

<sup>17</sup> Source Take 5 Deck, mars 2026

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Tim Conibear conducted by David Blough, March 2026.

<sup>19</sup> Nicci Van Der Merwe, Lee Nicholson, Paula Yarrow, Jeff DeCelles, Jamie Marshall, (2006). "Evaluating implementation and preliminary outcomes of the Take 5 Model to build competent workforces capable of optimising afterschool physical activity to promote the wellbeing and resilience of violence exposed children and adolescents across the Cape Town Metro". *Global Journal of Community Practice*.

<sup>20</sup> Marshall, J., Ferrier, B., Ward, P.B., & Martindale, R. (2020). "I feel happy when I surf because it takes stress from my mind": An Initial Exploration of Program Theory within Waves for Change Surf Therapy in Post-Conflict Liberia. *Journal of Sport for Development*.

<sup>21</sup> Take 5 Capacity Statement, March 2026.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Tim Conibear conducted by David Blough, March 2026.

A person wearing a blue jumpsuit is performing a handstand on a dark surface. The person's body is inverted, with their feet pointing towards the top of the frame. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of the jumpsuit and the person's legs. The background is dark and indistinct.

# 02

Scaling models: organisational strengths and limits.

# Four scaling models of social innovation through sport.

## TRENDS

Organisations engaged in scaling face a recurring tension: how to grow their activities while preserving the quality of the methods and of the potential for impact on which their original model was founded. The interviews conducted with experts and grassroots organisations for this Panorama point in particular to three major risks associated with such growth — for organisations and individuals alike.



### Three major risks associated with scaling

- **A drop in initiative quality and impact**, when monitoring of rollout in local branches becomes difficult, worsening operating conditions and adherence to the original model.
- **A shift away from the social and environmental objectives**, as the initial objectives can be sidelined when the available funding directs strategic choices towards developing a sports discipline<sup>23</sup>.
- **Governance tensions**, when disagreements about strategic choices and economic models can pit the central organisation against its branches, with potentially significant legal implications.

The studied organisations did not follow the same pathway in response to these challenges. The literature review and the qualitative interviews conducted highlight four distinct scaling models, which differ depending on the degree of management centralisation, the type of institutional arrangements, and trade-offs made between growth and quality.

## DISCUSSION

The Naandi Foundation in India, for instance, rolls out sports programmes in several of the country’s regions, making use of pre-existing local branches<sup>24</sup>. In this centralised model, a single organisation can set up its own local branches in locations or other countries in order to roll out one or more programmes. This model is predominant in the development sector in which large education and health NGOs have had local branches for many years.

In the licence model, the scaling strategy involves granting a licence or accreditation to national organisations. This model is typically used by sports unions or federations. The organisation becomes the association’s national office in its country in the case of Special Olympics. The national



organisation can in turn identify and licence a regional or local organisation to roll out its initiatives in the country<sup>25</sup>. This accreditation provides access to significant advantages, such as the option of using the Special Olympics branding, access to programme content, and funding. Specifically, new members can benefit from grants provided by the Christmas Records Trust.

In the franchise model, the parent organisation will sign an agreement with the local or national organisations so that they roll out a programme or projects. The parent organisation notably provides project methodology and funding, in exchange for a licence fee. Very few organisations of this kind were identified in this Panorama. This model is regularly used in the social economy. However, according to our survey, it is less prevalent in the social innovation through sport sector, notably because of the lack of a dedicated market for methods. However, recent research shows that non-profit organisations may adopt practices inspired by social entrepreneurship, particularly in certain countries such as Brazil<sup>26</sup>.

In the case of the last, so-called “flexible” model, an organisation shares its method under a support framework<sup>27</sup>, although the framework is more open and funded than the franchise model. In the flexible model, the parent organisation supports local or national organisations so that they roll out a method or a programme. The parent organisation provides its teaching and educational know-how, just like Waves for Change with Take 5, and like Fútbol Más, PLAY International and other organisations. The model is often reliant on funds from a public funding body or patron.



## TABLE - COMPARISON OF THE FOUR MODELS

	Organisation	Governance	Legal status
Centralised model	The organisation rolls out a project in newly created local branches	The local branches are managed by the parent organisation	Development or sport and development NGO’s
Licensed model	The parent organisation sets up a membership system	The branches are separate legal entities	Often federations or sports organisations
Franchise model	Third-party organisations finance the adaptation and implementation of a project methodology	The local organisations are separate legal entities	Often social enterprises
Flexible model	Associations disseminate an educational and/or teaching method through formal engagements	The local branches or organisations are separate legal entities	Often local associations

<sup>23</sup> A mechanism described in AFD, « Evaluation des programmes sport et développement et Impact 2024 International », op.cit.  
<sup>24</sup> See Panorama Volume 1.

<sup>25</sup> Interview conducted by David Blough with Shruti Meta, Special Olympics Asia-Pacific Region  
<sup>26</sup> In Brazil, the growth and replication of large organisations through practices and models derived from social entrepreneurship has emerged as a means of adapting both to austerity policies and to the social needs generated by such policies. This dynamic may, however, give rise to tensions with more reform-oriented local associations. Barbara Schusteck de Almeida, Billy Graeff, and Nadyne Venturini Trindade, “Sport and Development in Brazil: Lessons from Multiple Sport Mega-Event Hosting and Sporting Programmes in Disadvantaged Communities”, in Cem Tinaz and Brendon Knott (eds.), *Sport and Development in Emerging Nations*, London, Routledge, 2021, pp. 21–23.

<sup>27</sup> This model differs from the “dissemination” model, which is based on the open-source (i.e., free) sharing of methods. We will not be describing this model in the report. In the dissemination model, the economic model is more uncertain, and quality control of the innovation is primarily ensured by a community.  
<sup>28</sup> The centralised, franchise and flexible models originating from social economy research are never compared and contrasted with the licence model because this research does not look at cases of organisations from the sport movement or using sport as a driver of social innovation. Pache, A.C., et Chalencón, G., « Changer d’échelle: vers une typologie des stratégies d’expansion géographique des entreprises sociales », *Revue internationale de l’économie sociale*, 2007, no 305, p. 3248

# The organisational and human challenges of scaling.

## TRENDS

Scaling is a complex process, through which organizations and people are put at risk. This Panorama does not attempt to offer a definitive answer to the question of the best scaling model. Nevertheless, we have identified that one of the issues for the social innovation through sport movement is fostering knowledge building and method dissemination, moving towards more centralised and licensed models, as developed by the development movement and sports federations.

The following comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of the four scaling models offers tangible and practical learnings for the social innovation through sport movement.



## EXAMPLES

The centralised model offers several advantages for organisations pursuing scale-up within a single territory. It allows projects and programmes to be implemented fairly consistently, drawing in particular on in-house monitoring and oversight processes. It also offers a clear profile to institutional and financial partners. The model does, however, carry certain risks: limited adaptation to local contexts, uneven ownership of projects by local partners and high management costs.

The strength of the licensed model is that it gives local or national branches greater autonomy in rolling out projects and activities, so that they can adapt to local needs. It relies heavily on volunteers, which allows it to operate relatively frugally, while drawing on additional funding to offset the limits of volunteer commitment over time and in certain geographic areas. This model does, however, require a governance structure that makes it easy for local branches to take part, as well as substantial work to capture and share learning.

The flexible model is found both in the sport-for-development sector and in the sports industry. Its advantage is that it is light on resources, since it focuses mainly on how a method is shared (with in-person training strongly recommended to complement remote support). The main challenge lies in the transferability of its pedagogy: its success depends as much on the ability of the disseminating organisation to formalise and support the method as on that of the receiving organisation to identify the people and resources needed to implement it.

The franchise model has several disadvantages that may explain why there is little take-up to date in the movement. Quality control is also important in the franchise model, although it is covered by a contract. In a franchise model, the local organisation has to raise the funds itself to fund its membership of the scale-up programme and its access to the solution; this works less well in countries with less local funding and/or where volunteering levels remain low.

## DISCUSSION

Beyond the question of organisational models, other key dimensions involved in successful scaling, such as leadership and human decision-making. An “innovator” is not necessarily able to “successfully scale” his innovation. The ability of leaders to undertake this work hinges on their ability to surround themselves with the right people and recruit effectively<sup>29</sup>. In other words, regardless of the chosen model, leadership and human resources are crucial cross-cutting challenges.

In fact, most leaders of organisations and social entrepreneurs have little or no training in scaling challenges and methods. They are subjected to growing pressure in terms of governance and the economic model.

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*Scaling raises a lot of issues: it produces new financial, administrative and operational challenges. It also challenges governance and HR management, particularly in terms of training and leadership. The process may also negatively impact some organisations and put their long-term future at risk.*

*Ludovic Dau, Peace and Sport*

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Pro Sport Development (PSD) in India trialled and combined different scaling models before stabilising its own method. The organisation firstly tried to scale up its programmes using a franchise model, via the “sale” of a programme including a curriculum of activities, monitoring and evaluation tools, and training workshops to support upskilling the partner in programme delivery. The organisation has now adopted a centralised model but has maintained a culture of sharing and upskilling partners drawing on their experience of the franchise model. As the PSD case shows, choosing a scaling model does not involve implementing a ready-made formula. It is more of a learning process.



They can quickly become overwhelmed by the rising number of tasks (representing the organisation, facilitating governance, operational management), which causes stress, isolation and exhaustion. It is often good practice to recruit someone tasked with scaling. Recruiting a local person with the necessary skills can prove challenging. In these different models, the use of paid employees is important, but the importance and role played by volunteers should not be underestimated.

In response to these challenges, working together and investing in training are real drivers for changing scale, particularly for method sharing. This is particularly the case for the Solution Riposte Programme in France, whose case study follows.

<sup>29</sup> Scale Changer, Scalomètre, Rapport. 2025.

130 CLUBS

4 SCALING IN FOUR COUNTRIES (BELGIUM, CANADA, SWITZERLAND, ITALY)



BACKGROUND

*Solution Riposte* is involved in the development of sport-health practices in France and addresses the specific needs of people who are in remission from cancer, particularly women who have undergone aggressive treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and hormone therapy).

TARGET GROUPS

The programme primarily targets women in remission from cancer in France. The coaches are a second key group. They are specially trained and play a pivotal role in supporting the women, both technically and emotionally. Their role goes beyond that of a classic coach, and incorporates active listening, kindness and adaptation.

THE PROJECT

Launched in the early 2010s, the *Solution Riposte* programme seeks to adapt fencing to the medical constraints and specific needs of women in remission from cancer. It is based on a structured framework of recommendations, while allowing coaches leeway to implement the recommendations as they see best.

The project draws on the idea that tailored physical activity can help reduce the side effects of treatment and help with physical and mental healing.

THE ECOSYSTEM

*Solution Riposte* makes use of an ecosystem that combines coaches and medical practitioners. An informal coordination group brings together volunteer coaches and a support team comprising a psychologist, doctors and a physiotherapist, making use of communications tools, such as WhatsApp. A medical advisory board formed in 2016 is also part of the mechanism. Ten doctors, some of whom are university lecturers, sit on the board and are involved in approving the practices and the development of research work.

INNOVATION

The organisation adapts fencing to the women’s medical and social needs. The choice of sabre, with participants parrying using a high arm position, illustrates the importance of tailoring sports activities to the participants’ individual physical constraints to keep them safe (no use of the tip on the back of the foil and the épée) while retaining the sport’s physical and mental benefits. The nature of activities has evolved over time. With a sabre, women can also now practise in some clubs traditional fencing, artistic fencing, fitness fencing, or lightsaber fencing. Separate sessions for the programme’s participants and for competitive fencers, as well as integration with adult beginners, demonstrate the importance of adapting the sport’s logistics to maximise accessibility and therapeutic effectiveness, while keeping participants safe and at ease.

The organisation also offers structured support and dedicated human resources. The existence of a support network (psychologist, doctors and physiotherapist) accessible via WhatsApp, even with limited financial resources, emphasizes the importance of professional and easily-accessible support. This keeps the participants safe and increases programme effectiveness.

SCALING

The project is now running in 130 fencing clubs throughout France. The organisation is also involved in an Erasmus programme to share the method with clubs in Italy and Romania. Scaling across the method towards new clubs is the main strategy deployed.

The coaches receive intensive training to gain an understanding of cancer, cancer treatments and the tailored coaching method. They are free to adapt the method, while following the recommendations. This combination of training and independence fosters creativity and innovation when rolling out sports activities.

In this case, scaling across is a two-stage process. Clubs sign up to a charter following the training process. Such scaling organisational model is therefore flexible, based on a non-contractual commitment, which instead takes the form of membership of the *Solution Riposte* network and consequently adherence to a set of principles and values.

OUTCOMES

The programme’s outcomes have been the subject of several pieces of academic research<sup>30</sup>. The programme has a multidimensional approach: it focuses on mobility, balance, restoring hand movements, and bolstering self-confidence and self-image. It shows that sport can be used as a holistic rehabilitation method, combining physical health and psycho-social support.

*“Riposte is a tailored and effective programme enabling breast cancer survivors to be physically active. Although larger-scale validation is still needed, its global rollout and replication potential has been established”.*

<sup>30</sup> Omourou et al. (2022). “Adapted Fencing for Patients With Invasive Breast Cancer: the RIPOSTE Pilot randomized Controlled Trial”, *Frontiers of Sport* ; Hasnaoui et al., (2024). « Evaluating the feasibility and acceptability of an adapted fencing intervention in breast cancer surgery post operative care: the RIPOSTE pilot randomized trial”, *Frontiers in Oncology*.

<sup>31</sup> Hasnaoui et al., *Ibid.*

A wooden abacus board with a red grid and wooden pieces is placed on a green and black woven mat. The board is tilted, and the pieces are arranged in a pattern. The background is a close-up of the woven mat.

# 03

Scaling of networks and of cooperation between grassroots stakeholders.

# The rise of new networks and *organised coalitions*.

## TRENDS

Social innovation through sport stakeholders in numerous countries share the same analysis: they feel that the movement remains fragmented, underfunded, and insufficiently recognised by the public authorities and the general public. Three structural tensions are holding back its development:

### Three challenges for the development of social innovation through sport

- **An approach to replication that uses up energy.** In the absence of shared mapping of existing initiatives and practices, project developers regularly create their own structures and mechanisms, without any knowledge of tried-and-tested solutions. There are still not enough ecosystem assessments, and stakeholder strategies are still all too rarely systemic.
- **Growth that can become a risk factor.** The race to develop as an organisation, sometimes promoted by short-term funding rationale, weakens organisations and negatively impacts the mental health of their leaders and teams. The growth of an organisation does not guarantee increased impact, as several leading researchers have reiterated.
- **Access to funding remains a constraint.** The organisations struggle to convince institutional funding bodies and patrons about sport's specific value as a driver of social action in an environment in which some sectors do better. This relative invisibility leads to zero growth of the resources available for the whole movement.



The organisations struggle to convince institutional funding bodies and patrons about sport's specific value as a driver of social action in an environment in which some sectors do better. This relative invisibility leads to zero growth of the resources available for the whole movement.

awarding of funding, and raise the general public's awareness via a campaign to coincide with 6 April (the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace), during which access to sport is free and open to all.

<sup>34</sup> REMS étant l'acronyme de Rede Esporte pela Mundaça Social, soit réseau sport pour la transformation sociale, <https://rems.org.br/>  
<sup>35</sup> Pour une présentation de la genèse, des objectifs et de la dynamique de ce réseau voir: Barbara Schausteck de Almeida, Billy Graef, et Nadyne Venturini Trindade, « Sport and Development in Brazil. Lessons from multiple sport mega-event hosting and sporting programmes in disadvantaged communities », dans Cem Tinaz et Brendon Knott, Sport and Development in Emerging Nations, London Routledge, 2021, pp.21-23.



In Europe, networks have been formed in Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and Belgium. The German network - *S4D Netzwerk Deutschland*<sup>33</sup> - was founded during the COVID pandemic to enable organisations in the sector to discuss shared issues. The network was formally created a few years later in order to raise the profile of the organisations, foster knowledge sharing between members, and develop advocacy targeting public institutions. *S4D Netzwerk* arranges themed events, particularly on impact assessment, and has launched a newsletter that is shared with over 500 organisations in Germany.

In France, *Impact Social par le Sport* (ISS) is an umbrella organisation for 12 socio-sports organisations<sup>34</sup>. ISS has opted to support organisational scale-up through cooperation and cross-fertilisation, by seeking to pool members' expertise and methods to reduce the cost of investment in innovation. The organisation is endeavouring to play a leading role in structuring the sector and to give rise to new socio-sports initiatives. Sector structuring takes the form of creating activity and practices reference frameworks, notably to increase the recognition of socio-sports educators, and improve their training and skills in the process. ISS is working with the profession to create additional certification validated by *France Compétence*, the country's national vocational training and apprenticeship funding and regulatory authority. It also arranges socio-sports annual colloquium and training days, the fourth of which took place in 2026.

Other dynamics are also emerging at the transnational level. Some organisations, such as Women Win<sup>35</sup>, undertake collective action on a specific facet of social innovation through sport, in this particular case, gender equality in and through sport. Other networks seek to bring together stakeholders involved in a given sport, such as Common Goal in football, and Goodpush in the skateboarding sector. This social skateboarding knowledge-sharing network was founded in 2018, and has a database of over 1,000 projects worldwide. The alliance focuses on access to funding for project developers and upskilling them, particularly about impact assessment<sup>36</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

The presence of one or more key funding bodies is an important factor when setting up these sorts of networks and coalitions. The REMS network was launched, with the support of Nike, in the wake of the 2016 Rio Olympics. ISS in France, meanwhile, benefited from the support of France's Ministry of Sport, the national agency *France Travail*, and the *Société Générale* Foundation. This funding is important for securing the long-term future of the networks, as it enables them to organise their governance, facilitate communities, and produce resources that are of use to the sector.

The scale of these networks and coalitions also hinges on the dynamics of local organisational involvement. In Chile, for instance, most sports organisations solely focus on the competitive aspect of sport. In a broader sense, the sector is hampered in Latin America by a lack of public policies or regional funding that would enable these networks to be formed.

In this context, the growing role of technology and AI in network facilitation, information sharing and strategic management, constitutes a watershed moment for the sector. If AI becomes indispensable for analysis, advocacy and management, it also raises major ethical challenges, particularly with regard to data justice, the quality of the data being generated, increased competition between stakeholders, and inequalities of access, necessitating the development of critical skills and the adoption of responsible and inclusive principles of governance<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Sport for Development Network, <https://s4d-netzwerk.de/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://sport-inclusion.fr/impact-social-par-le-sport/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.womenwin.org/>

<sup>36</sup> Interview conducted by David Blough with Rhianon Bader, Goodpush Director.

<sup>37</sup> Interview conducted by Talia Kaufmann with Lindsay Hayhurst.

# Scaling in public policies.

**37%**  
OF THE ORGANISATIONS UNDERTAKE  
ADVOCACY TO BRING ABOUT  
PUBLIC POLICY CHANGE

## TRENDS

The Panorama shows that 37% of the organisations undertake advocacy<sup>38</sup> to bring about public policy change. The figure is low if we consider that there is still a way to go before social innovation through sport is recognised and has a high profile with regard to other sports stories and representations, such as sports performance, the sports economy or major international competitions.

These organisations seek either to prefigure or to improve public sport policies, both within schools and beyond, as well as during extracurricular time and within sports clubs. Others aim to influence and transform social, health, or even penal policies. Advocacy priorities vary depending on the objectives pursued and the national contexts in which they operate.

Over the past decade, a growing number of academics have therefore suggested that sport and development organisations should get more actively involved in advocacy work, while endeavouring to map the practices, challenges and needs identified<sup>39</sup>.

Far from seeking to be exhaustive on this topic, this Panorama stresses that this influence is nevertheless particularly noticeable at the national and international levels on a specific subject: child protection and prevention of violence against children.

<sup>38</sup> Advocacy in this case refers to very diverse practices, ranging from document production (studies, white papers and so on) to running communication campaigns in conjunction with the grassroots.

<sup>39</sup> Moustaka L., Carney, L., Petry, K., "Sport for Development and policy advocacy: mapping the field", Current Issues in Sport Science (CISS), vol.9, n°4, 2024.



## EXAMPLES

The social innovation through sport movement has been particularly focused on the issue of safeguarding right from the outset. There has been a focus on safeguarding in the English-speaking world for a long time, and it has taken the form of publication of practical handbooks, kits and recommendations on standards in this area<sup>40</sup>. A handful of examples illustrate the depth of awareness and the action being taken on this issue.

In Asia, Rugby Oceania, just like World Rugby's other regional entities, has identified that there are major gaps in the Pacific Region's safeguarding policies. Fiji has recently approved policies on safeguarding, and combatting gender-based violence and harassment at work, and guidelines are being drawn up for affiliated provincial unions and schools. The development of these practices is drawing on the support of World Rugby and various development banks (Australia, New Zealand and France).

In the Middle East, Palestine Sports For Life seeks to influence local policies in different ways<sup>41</sup>. The organisation is seeking to expand its initiatives into new communities, schools and municipal structures while influencing local policy. The aim is to develop child safeguarding protocols and institutionalise sport as a tool for development and psycho-social support in the education system and sports clubs.

The current context of child abuse scandals around the world aids this recognition. Media coverage of sexual abuse cases, people gradually starting to speak out, and the creation of a reporting mechanism also help to develop collaboration between long-standing stakeholders in the sports movement and specialised stakeholders in the social innovation through sport sector.

## DISCUSSION

The issue of children's rights constitutes an example of successful advocacy. Could it inspire advocacy work on other issues? Generally, the public authorities, the sports movement and professional clubs are more attentive to the messages conveyed by the social innovation through sport movement than they were around 15 years ago.

However, some experts from very diverse national contexts tend to paint a rather negative picture of the situation and focus on three main stumbling blocks:

- On the one hand, political decision-makers may tend to make formal undertakings, but they are not followed up by announcements of tangible resources for the issue. Public policy therefore lacks coherence and continuity over time.
- On the other hand, sports federations tend to utilise the tale of social impact for promotional aims and the development of sports disciplines or the sport. Marketing can be more important than a genuine social commitment.
- Finally, even when political representatives and federations make commitments, there may be a significant amount of resistance when attempting to get grassroots operational teams to take action.

Often, the issue of recognition and influence of sport for social innovation initiatives is very much contingent upon consolidation of its funding. In Brazil, the REMS coalition has therefore helped to ensure that the federal funding law (Lei de Incentivo ao Esporte) becomes permanent and is actively working to get the National Sports Plan (Plano Nacional do Esporte) to incorporate and recognise the role and importance of the organisations that utilise sport as a driver for social change.

<sup>40</sup> African Union Sport Council, "Safeguarding in Sport and Sport and Development (S4D) contexts in Africa. A practitioner's guide from Policy to Action". Implemented with the support of GIZ and Sport and Development. 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Interview conducted by Claire Smaghe with Linda Majaj, Palestine Sport 4 Life, March 2026

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***In India, the sport and development sector is playing a full part in the dissemination of good practice. It has helped progress to be made on key issues such as safeguarding, both in competitive sport and the education sector.***

*Suheil Tandon, Pro Sport Development*

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In this context, the creation of meeting spaces and institutional discussion forums, particularly at the international level, is facilitating recognition of the issue in some countries. For example, the Safe in Sport network, run by UNICEF and focusing on child safeguarding in sport, now brings together over 200 organisations around the world<sup>42</sup>. In particular, the network helps to formalise recommendations for governments and sports federations<sup>43</sup>.



The levers needed to overcome this resistance are not numerous but do exist. The following case study focusing on the commitment made by the Fédération Française de Football (FFF) illustrates this shift in approach.

<sup>42</sup> <https://safeinsport.org/>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

# FOCUS ON FOOTBALL



**43%**  
OF THE PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS  
USE FOOTBALL AS A DRIVER  
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

## ■ BACKGROUND

According to FIFA's last global Big Count, 265 million people worldwide are actively involved in football<sup>44</sup>. Football is the most heavily used sport by the social innovation through sport movement around the world, just ahead of multi-sport approaches. Some sports federations, such as the French Football Federation (FFF), are also working to support their affiliated clubs in addressing issues related to inclusion and safe participation conditions. The aim is to offer a safe sport for as many people as possible, with a focus on the sport's positive and negative external impacts on the environment and society. For federations, there are two issues at stake: driving change in the clubs, while drawing inspiration from the best practice developed by the self-same clubs.

## ■ LE PROJET

France's leading sports federation, the FFF currently has 11,500 member clubs, 22 leagues and 93 districts. It brings together 2.4 million registered members, of whom 250,000 are women, and every year hosts 1.3 million minors, and its local foothold makes the FFF a unique local stakeholder. 95% of the French population lives under 3km from a football pitch<sup>45</sup>.

## ■ SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT POLICY

To rise to this challenge, the FFF launched an ambitious social engagement policy in 2023, with three main focus areas: the creation of a Social Engagement Division (13 employees), an action plan revolving around four themed areas, and a dedicated annual budget of €6 million

### FOCUS AREA 01

Combat all forms of **violence and discrimination**.

### FOCUS AREA 02

Support initiatives to **foster the development of citizenship, social and professional integration, and inclusion**.

### FOCUS AREA 03

The rollout of initiatives enabling football in France to address the **environmental challenges** that it is facing.

### FOCUS AREA 04

Increase **diversity and female participation** in football

The rollout of this policy can also draw on the content of the Federal Education Programme. The programme provides tools and methods used by over 3,500 clubs. **The FFF makes use of associations, such as Kabubu and Little Miss Soccer, to roll out this plan. These associations specifically develop tailored methods to facilitate access to football for socially-vulnerable communities.**

## ■ OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The FFF's statistics, cross-checked with an annual survey of 8,000 clubs (or members), have highlighted several trends. Generally, **clubs that run engagement initiatives tend to better retain their members than the clubs that do not run this sort of initiative (+6%)**.

In terms of inclusion, a real change of practices has occurred. While hurdles still exist, particularly in terms of recognition, treatment of and support for female participants<sup>46</sup>, tangible progress has been observed over the past few years. For example, 2,500 women's sections have been set up to encourage the participation of women and teenage girls<sup>47</sup>. The content of the Federal Education Programme, which already provides the tools used by over 3,500 clubs, is currently being revised in order to include teaching resources on combating sexism and gender stereotypes. Finally, the launch of *Foot Impact*, a social impact monitoring unit, should contribute to the analysis of football's social impact.

## ■ SCALING

The impact of this federal policy will be measured in 2026. However, the rollout of the plan is coming up against two major challenges: some clubs' reluctance to tackle non-football topics, and the extremely diverse nature of the resources available to clubs to implement these initiatives.

<sup>44</sup> Source: Fifa Big Count, 2006. <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/556219f9dc8ea7b4/original/mzid0qmguxkcmruvema-pdf.pdf>  
<sup>45</sup> Fédération Française de Football et Fondation, *Panorama Sociétal du Football*, 2025.  
<sup>46</sup> Cécile Ottogalli-Mazzacavallo, Virginie Nicaise, Guillaume Bodet, Aurélie Epron, *Étude d'impact et héritage sociaux de la Coupe du Monde féminine FIFA France 2019, 2020*.  
<sup>47</sup> *Panorama sociétal du Football*, Fondation du Football, Fédération française de football, 2025.



# 04

Scaling the movement's funding:  
trends, challenges and limitations.

# Private funding: the main driver of scaling.

OVER  
**50%**

OF THE FUNDING BODIES SUPPORT THE SCALING OF SPORT AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION, WHETHER IT TAKES THE FORM OF SCALE-UP OR METHOD SHARING

**41%**

THINK THAT PRIVATE FUNDING HAS BEEN THE DECIDING FACTOR FOR SCALE-UP, COMPARED WITH 19% FOR PUBLIC FUNDING, 10% FOR IGA (INCOME-GENERATING ACTIVITIES), AND 28% FOR A BLEND OF THESE RESOURCES.

## TRENDS

While the first Res Sportiva Panorama highlighted the diversity and robustness of the financing ecosystem supporting social innovation through sport, it is also the case about scaling sport<sup>48</sup> as a tool of social innovation. More than 50% of the funding bodies report supporting organisations engaged in scaling processes.

The number of funders supporting either the expansion of projects into new territories (scale-up) or the dissemination of methods (scale-across) is broadly comparable; however, funding allocated to supporting replication and scaling appears to be significantly higher in financial terms.

According to the grassroots organisations, the main driver for the development of solutions in new towns and villages is private funding (41%), followed by public funding (19%), IGA (10%), or a blend of these different resources (28%). Generally, the economic scale-up model relies heavily on the involvement of private stakeholders (foundations, businesses, federations and development banks). By contrast, although often presented as an alternative to grants or project-based funding, income-generating

activities are generally perceived by practitioners as a complementary source of revenue rather than a genuine driver of growth.

Despite such figures, the potential for further support to scaling processes may not increase in the future. Among funders who do not currently support scaling, only around 16% indicate that they plan to adopt such strategies in the future. Moreover, support for scaling may experience significant fluctuations in the coming years.



<sup>48</sup> Out of 183 respondents who help grassroots organisations through funding or support, 147 said that they are seeking to achieve non-sports objectives.

## EXAMPLES

Since the early 2000s, the scale-up of sports organisations has been significantly supported by development aid, development banks, and to some extent by decentralised cooperation. Partnerships have been forged based on aid and diplomatic influence rationale. However, there has been a real drop in development aid, including in sport.

Nevertheless, the social innovation through sport movement can draw on several sources of resilience. First, the sector includes committed funders with budgets of over €3 million, present across several continents and countries — the UK (the Laureus Foundation), the US and India (Tata).

Corporate foundations also play an important part, in some cases for more than 20 years (Fondation Decathlon, Fondation Lacoste), with others entering the field more recently (the Adidas Foundation). Finally, the growth of funding is further strengthened as international sports organisations begin to set up foundations of their own.

**" The sports federations are reacting. UEFA, FIFA, FIBA, ITTF and World Taekwondo are setting up their own foundations. They are doing so in order to work directly with civil society and communities, without going through the national federations. It's a major step forward.**

Jean Jérôme Perrin, CEO Peace and Sport

## DISCUSSION

For now, a note of caution should be sounded when attempting to interpret the trends. On the one hand, the corporate sector has remained stable and has not stepped up its efforts to fill the funding gaps caused by the drop in foreign aid. On the other hand, new companies and foundations are also adopting a critical stance on scaling, which is understood to mean organisational scale-up. As underlined by a foundation<sup>56</sup>:

**" We prioritise initiative quality and sustainability rather than a predetermined scale-up strategy, as this is felt to be very context-dependent, and does not therefore constitute a core selection criterion. The Adidas Foundation actively promotes co-funding and co-design approaches.**

Julian Roessler, Fondation Adidas

Overall, support for scaling sport as a tool for social innovation may be entering a new phase. After a period focused on fostering the emergence of new initiatives and supporting replication through development aid, the question of whether the frontline organisations and funders can cooperate with one another is crucial for the future.



# Co-funding: a future lever for the sector?

# 45%

OF THE PRIVATE FUNDING BODIES HAVE ALREADY CO-FUNDED, OUT OF THOSE SUPPORTING ACCESS TO SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, OR SPORT AS A DRIVER OF SOCIAL INNOVATION.

# 50%

OF PRIVATE FUNDERS REPORT BEING INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS.

## TENDANCE

At a time when development aid is declining sharply worldwide, under what conditions can public and private funders develop coordinated co-funding models?

This Panorama offers a nuanced reading of these trends. Among private stakeholders (foundations and endowment funds, federations and companies)<sup>49</sup>, 45% are already co-funding — a sign of genuine maturity in this respect. Among the rest, however, appetite for it remains limited: only 16% see co-funding as a goal. There are also major regional disparities: more co-funding, and fewer needs, in Europe than in Africa<sup>50</sup>. Much advocacy work remains to be done to demonstrate the relevance and value of co-funding.



When asked which types of organisations are most involved in co-funding, the fifty or so private stakeholders surveyed who report using this model primarily cite other private stakeholders (67%) and public stakeholders (65%), and, to a lesser extent, public development banks (20%) — that is, 9% of the private stakeholders among the 124 organisations surveyed in total. To better understand the potential for co-funding to develop worldwide, private stakeholders were also asked about their partnership preferences.

Most favour co-funding with other private stakeholders (50%), ahead of public stakeholders (30%) and development banks (9%) which, though essential when it comes to investment, appear less attractive in this respect. On this point, some foundations stress that cooperation and co-funding with development banks can be hampered by various factors: the large funding amounts expected; a cumbersome approach to contracting; and reporting requirements that leave private stakeholders in an unequal position when steering the partnership.

## DISCUSSION

The obstacles to more cooperation between funding bodies are well documented. Public and private funders often operate in silos, whether in terms of funding volumes, timelines, or funding requirements (thematic priorities, application formats, indicators), due to divergent priorities related to image, communication, or diplomatic influence. Yet, co-financing is a genuine lever for scaling sport as a tool for social innovation:

In France's case, for instance, the concept of "coalitions" bringing together foundations and endowment funds to champion causes is a subject of increasing interest in the fields of education, health and gender. In these often experimental coalitions, the selection of their objectives and mode of governance are the first stages that can take several years to complete, and do not always result in co-funding actually happening.

*"The impact of social innovation can be increased by multi-stakeholder partnerships and co-funding. This enables more resources to be harnessed, new approaches to be trialled, and sport for social impact project sustainability to be improved."*

Mark Lewis,  
Social Impact Manager ITTF Foundation

To date, social impact contracts remain the main mechanism of cooperation for sharing development funding risks. This mechanism is based on payment for results. The public stakeholders only fund the projects once the outcomes have been achieved and verified, thus reducing their exposure to investment risk. Social impact bonds in the sport sector have not been yet often implemented. Ecosystem stakeholder interest mapping and a feasibility assessment are the first challenge to overcome for this type of solution. This Panorama makes a contribution in this aspect. Out of 126 private stakeholders (federations, foundations and endowment funds, companies) surveyed about the question, over 50% said that they were interested in developing social impact contracts (n=63). Some 29 of them had already tried out the mechanism. Despite the limitations sometimes observed, only 4% of the organisations, out of those who had tried the model, feel that social impact contracts are not an appropriate tool. Specifically, there is interest in the model in the US, Europe, India, Africa (particularly Senegal), and France. Finally, 29 organisations said that they did not know about the mechanism, which attests that better information and communication is required.

Surveying and sharing models is a first key stage if we are to move forward together along the pathway of public-private co-funding. At the international level, the Coalition for Sustainable Development through Sport brings together some 20 members, including several development banks, such as AFD, and international organisations, like UNESCO. Launched in 2020, the members of this alliance are working specifically on creating new shared financial instruments, such as a shared investment fund.

<sup>49</sup> We considered that public stakeholders are by definition organisations with co-funding experience because of their involvement in public interest matters.

<sup>50</sup> These practices vary greatly for funding bodies supporting access to physical activity or sport, or sport as a driver of social innovation. Of the 40 organisations that answered the survey in France, 28 have already co-funded, and two felt that it was a need. On the other hand, across Africa, out of the 56 organisations that responded to the survey, 17 have already co-funded, and 15 felt that it was an aim and a need. We retained the figure of 42% on the basis of the hypothesis that trends in France are similar to trends in Europe.

<sup>51</sup> UNESCO, Investissement à Impact dans le Sport, SHS/SPR/F4L/2023/II REV

<sup>52</sup> Social investors play a pivotal role in this scenario: by covering the upfront capital needed for delivery, they stop this risk being transferred to the service providers, thus making for a potential win-win model for all three parties. In return, they benefit from mixed returns, multilateral partnerships and transparent CSR and ESG compliance.



# Conclusion

At a time when the cuts in public funding facing many stakeholders are inevitably shortening strategic horizons, organisations working in social innovation through sport are showing both resilience and inventiveness. They can also draw on the sector's long-standing funders, on corporate foundations from the sports industry, and on federations. **The conclusion of this study is therefore built around one central message: cooperation matters — for practitioners and funders alike.**

This report stresses that **organisational growth is neither the only lever for meeting the needs of local and national communities**, nor the main one. The movement's scaling strategy cannot rest solely on the emergence of a few champions of sport for development and peace. There is another route: one in which grassroots organisations share and spread their methods (scaling across) to the traditional sports movement, the development sector and the social economy — fields willing to deepen their impact in turn (scaling deep).

In this respect, the needs are immense. **A growing number of organisations in the sports sector are also keen to develop their own social innovation practices** and build their capacity in this area. A case in point is the way grassroots organisations share their practices on child safeguarding and participant safety with sports federations: it shows the strength and relevance of methods being passed on by those who have tested them in the field — to the sports sector and the development sector, which already operate at scale.

To sustain this momentum towards cooperation, there is considerable potential for funders to work together. The study found that 45% of them are already involved in co-funding. Choosing to co-fund is far from neutral: it makes it possible to align resources and effort not only behind projects, but behind the methods that work. That share is encouraging, but it must be set against another: only 16% of private funders currently see co-funding as a goal. There is still a long way to go before these agendas begin to converge.

**This study's conclusion points to a second guiding principle: the challenge of widening the circle beyond those already convinced.** Developing robust support programmes for these skills-transfer models and their financial structuring would help accelerate connections between the development movement and organised sports. If a knowledge-generation and knowledge-sharing dimension were added, such a mechanism would allow experiences, practices and solutions to keep circulating — unleashing sport's potential for social innovation and helping embed it in public policy.

# Recommendations

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We are putting forward some initial recommendations aiming to support the scaling of sport as a tool for social innovation in order to more effectively address sport access needs, and social, educational, environmental and health needs. These recommendations are aimed at sector public and private funding bodies in order to shed light on funding issues, and at grassroots stakeholders in order to develop pitches and advocacy on these topics.



## Recommendation 1 Promote and strengthen the associative model as the main driver of scaling

### Why?

Association status is the longstanding model and the best fit with the values and workings of the sports movement. Associations utilise volunteering and local partnerships, and work in highly-local contexts. The Panorama shows that organisations engaged in scaling processes worldwide are overwhelmingly based on the non-profit association model. Conversely, it highlights why the social enterprise model – which remains marginal in this field – is not particularly conducive to the development of income-generating activities. However, in certain national contexts, associations may adopt funding practices inspired by social entrepreneurship in order to complement or offset public and private financing.

### How?

Promote and support the role of volunteering and collaborative governance methods as funding eligibility criteria.

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## Recommendation 2 Recognise and further strengthen funding for projects that aim to share methods and skills with the sports and development movement

### Why?

The Panorama shows that organisations are focusing equally on method and practices-sharing strategies as they are on scale-up strategies. However, financial resources are much more focused on supporting scale-up.

### How?

Develop and promote calls for projects that prioritise the exchange and transfer of methods between organisations in different geographical areas (Africa, Europe, Asia and South America) and the strengthening of this method-sharing economic model (stemming from open source and from the franchise model).

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## Recommendation 3 Foster, deploy and pool training projects aimed at educators to supplement and transform the teaching of sport in the education system using an approach based on life skills or psychosocial skills

### Why?

The Panorama highlights the idea that the concept of education enables social change to be envisaged in a multi-dimensional way (school education, health education, gender education, education about climate change and environmental issues), particularly when it is designed in a holistic manner (life skills and psychosocial skills).

### How?

The Panorama shows that in some countries, social innovation through sport comes before a refresh or development of public education policy at the local or national level. This change is made possible by training educators as well as staff working in after-school or extracurricular clubs.



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**Authors:**  
Emmanuel Rivat, David Blough

**Translation:**  
Gillian Eaton

**Design:**  
Elodie Bonnefoi, agence Seenk

**Proofreaders:**  
Ludovic Dau, Alexia Vanlaere, Philipp Muller-Wirth, Alexis Saillard, Renaud Mazoyer

**Analyse quantitative des données:**  
Angèle le Prigent, Associate researcher at the Arènes laboratory (UMR 6051)

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