



Evaluation Report

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
Evaluation Division

Sports Visitor Program

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
DCG	District Communications Group
DoS	Department of State
ECA	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
FY	Fiscal Year
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), through its Sports Diplomacy Division, coordinates four primary programs that use sports as a vehicle to engage critical youth audiences, and promote cross-cultural learning and mutual understanding between Americans and people in other parts of the world. One of these programs is the Sports Visitor Program.

The Sports Visitor Program brings non-elite youth athletes, coaches, and administrators to the United States for a fast-paced, two-week exchange program. These sports-themed programs offer participants, chosen by U.S. Embassies from all regions of the world, the opportunity to interact with Americans and experience American society, culture and values firsthand. All programs include sessions on Sports in the United States from grassroots community level sports up to the Olympics, Paralympics, and professional leagues, as well as background and legacies of movements that had an impact on sports in America such as the Civil Rights Movement, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Sports Visitor Program is administered by FHI360. Through open competition in FY 2017, FHI was awarded a cooperative agreement to implement the program beginning in calendar year 2018 and subsequently was awarded renewals for FY 2018 and FY 2019.

This evaluation was conducted to better understand how the Sports Visitor Program achieves its stated goals. To this end, a variety of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were utilized, including:

- Analysis of FHI360's monitoring pre-, post-, and 6-month follow-up surveys from FY 2017 and FY 2018 completed by the Evaluation Division.
- In-depth interviews with U.S. Embassy staff, conducted by the Evaluation Division. Sixteen U.S. Embassy Staff in 11 countries were interviewed, representing all six Department of State (DoS) geographical regions.
- An additional alumni survey administered by the Evaluation Division to all program alumni that participated in the Sports Visitors program from 2018 to February 2020, which had a 43 percent response rate.
- In-depth interviews with program alumni, conducted by the District Communications Group. Twenty-seven alumni from 14 countries were interviewed, representing all six DoS geographical regions and nine unique Sports Visitor exchanges.

The main findings from this evaluation were as follows:

- Overall, the Sports Visitors Program is well-run, well-regarded and highly impactful, as reported by participants. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and painted a

picture of the experience as one that benefited alumni both personally and professionally in meaningful and lasting ways.

- The program’s implementing partner, FHI360, received high marks from alumni and U.S. Embassy staff, with many respondents stressing how supported they felt by organizing staff during the program. Additionally, many respondents shared that they continue to be in touch with FHI’s team and receive ongoing encouragement and support from those relationships.
- While respondents expressed the program was well organized, many mentioned their time in the United States was too short and their schedules were too full. They asked for more downtime between sessions and to more evenly distribute the time spent playing sports throughout the program, rather than concentrating activities “on the field” and time in the classroom in distinct weeks. Most importantly, they requested more opportunities to engage with American athletes, coaches, and youth during program sessions.
- For U.S. Embassies, the Sports Visitor Program successfully provides the flexibility needed for Embassies to use the program to meet their specific strategic goals. Embassies also maintain strong alumni engagement, especially in supporting alumni action plans by providing financial support or attending alumni-organized events.
- Participants repeatedly cited the impact of their exchange in the United States to seeing a new way of playing, coaching, teaching, and communicating. They explained that being able to witness American sports and coaching culture opened their eyes to a new worldview. They were also surprised and impressed by the discipline, open-mindedness, positivity, teamwork, inclusivity, and sense of fun in American sports culture.
- Youth respondents generally pointed to the relationships they made in the United States as their favorite part of the program, while coaches and administrators most often cited the cultural visits they participated in as the most memorable experience. Visits to places like civil rights museums or public schools in less privileged urban centers made a lasting impression on participants and provided them with a deeper and more nuanced understanding of America.
- Participants cited increased confidence, better communication, and leadership skills as their greatest take-aways from the program. While both youth and coaches and administrators did learn new technical skills and techniques, they emphasized that the program improved their abilities to organize, plan and manage themselves. They were also able to use soft skills like improved communication, negotiation, and public speaking to improve their performance and effectiveness upon their return to their home countries.

- The majority of adult alumni both completed their action plans and used them as the catalyst for ongoing sports-related programs in their home community. However, those few who reported struggling to fulfil their original goals cited delays due COVID, insufficient financial support, or simply being unable to complete their plans on their own due to lacking institutional or personal support.
- One area where the program may not have fully met its intended objectives was in increasing understanding of the United States and promoting cross-cultural and mutual understanding. Although there were opportunities for cultural activities, participants explained that there was very little time outside of the program to meet or interact with Americans and that they did not have the opportunity to do so within the program. Many participants spent most of their time with other participants from their country and expressed interest in having more time to meet and interact with Americans, especially for the coaches and administrators.
- Alumni engagement is generally strong, but is mainly driven by informal communication among alumni themselves, mainly via group chats on WhatsApp. While some alumni continue to be in touch with the U.S. Embassy and with FHI360 program organizers, many alumni share that they would appreciate additional support in the form of boosting existing networks, providing follow-up trainings, and sharing information on possible funding sources or other resources.

Based on these findings, the evaluation offers the following recommendations for the Sports Visitor Program:

1. A review of the curriculum should be considered, including providing more advanced material and hands-on content.
2. Consider expanding program focus area to include entrepreneurship and additional emphasis on the administrative side of sport.
3. There should be more time allocated to cultural exchange with Americans – this was consistent throughout each program and was emphasized as the biggest gap in the program by a majority of respondents.
4. Formally build action planning into the youth program.
5. The program is well-run and organized, and program administrators should continue their current approach. However, a few adjustments to the program would improve participants' experience:

- Providing more information to host families about the youth they are hosting to alleviate mix-ups that cause participants stress.
 - Encouraging all U.S. Embassies to hold pre-departure orientations to allow participants to meet and get to know one another before traveling to the United States.
 - Increasing the program's inclusiveness, including making programs more accessible for persons with disabilities, adding programs focused on boys, and expanding the youth age range to include slightly older participants.
 - Expanding the program length beyond the current three weeks, which would allow additional for requested cultural activities.
 - Having more interpreters present for some of the larger groups of participants.
 - Building more time into the schedule to allow Muslim participants time to pray.
 - Spread sports activities across the schedule and not concentrate them in the first week.
6. Alumni are interested in additional follow-up resources, chances for networking, and ongoing training or support. While there are some ongoing support and resources offered to program alumni, these should be made more accessible.
- Offering additional online resources to reach alumni not based in capital cities.
 - Consider ways to make online engagement more accessible, including: providing internet credit to alumni to participate in trainings and offering programming during the day when alumni can access internet at their place of work.
 - Providing additional information on small grants available through the program.
7. One of the issues the Evaluation Division faced in analysing FHI360's monitoring survey data was a lack of standardization across responses. To avoid these issues in similar future analysis, the survey standardization steps are recommended.
8. A longitudinal study with the same program participants may be beneficial to better understand program outcomes in the long term. It may also be worthwhile, at some

point, to attempt to study the possible spill over or multiplier effects of the program in alumni's home communities.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), through its Sports Diplomacy Division, coordinates four primary programs that use sports as a vehicle to engage critical youth audiences, and promote cross-cultural learning and mutual understanding between Americans and people in other parts of the world. One of these programs is the Sports Visitor Program.

The Sports Visitor Program brings non-elite youth athletes, coaches, and administrators to the United States for a fast-paced, two-week exchange program.¹ These sports-themed programs offer participants, chosen by U.S. Embassies from all regions of the world, the opportunity to interact with Americans and experience American society, culture and values firsthand. All programs include sessions on grassroots community-level sports up to the Olympics, Paralympics, and professional leagues, as well as background and legacies of movements that had an impact on sports in America such as the Civil Rights Movement, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Sports Visitor Program is delivered in two tracks for distinct audiences: coaches and/or administrators of youth sports teams and organizations, and non-elite youth athletes. Particularly for the programs for coaches and administrators, special emphasis is placed on developing action plans that participants will implement upon returning to their communities and organizations. The program is administered by FHI360. Through open competition in FY 2017, FHI was awarded a cooperative agreement to implement the program beginning in calendar year 2018 and subsequently was awarded renewals for FY 2018 and FY 2019

¹ This report will reference “participants” as a general term for all youth, coach, and administrator participants of the Sports Visitor program. Additionally, the report will as various times mention “youth” and “coach and administrator” participants separately.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND DESIGN

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation was to: (1) determine whether the Sports Visitor Program is meeting its goals and (2) provide evidence to inform future programmatic decision-making by ECA's Sports Diplomacy Division, who will be the primary user of the evaluation results.

The evaluation covered participants and U.S. Embassies involved in the Sports Visitor Program from 2018 to February 2020. This period included 24 programs with 451 program participants from 40 different countries.

The evaluation was primarily conducted by the ECA Evaluation Division, with support from the District Communications Group (DCG).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Are the goals outlined in the FY 2017 NOFO and FY 2018-FY 2019 renewal solicitations being accomplished?
 - a. How has the program impacted the youth participants? What do they do when they go back home?
 - b. Are action plans implemented by coaches? If yes, what are the results of these projects? If not, what are the barriers?
2. What program areas need improvement?
 - a. How can the program be better designed and implemented in future years?
 - b. Are there programming elements that should be dropped/altered/added?
 - i. What are the successful elements of the current design and how can these be expanded upon?
 - ii. Are participants satisfied with the program design and content? What else would they like to have experienced or learned?
 - c. Are U.S. Missions satisfied with the program? How can the program better support U.S. Mission engagement with participants?
3. Is there a better process for monitoring the program?
 - a. Are the program's goals realistic?
 - b. Do these goals align with program activities?

DATA COLLECTION

MONITORING SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

The Evaluation Division conducted a comprehensive analysis of survey data collected by FHI360 from the FY 2017 and FY 2018 Sport Visitor Program cohorts using Qualtrics.² These data include pre-, post- and 6-month follow-up survey data for participants of the Sports Visitor Program. For analysis, the Evaluation Division combined all individual surveys into a single “master” dataset. Once complete, the pre-survey dataset represented response rates of 69 percent, the post-survey dataset 59 percent, and the 6-month follow-up survey dataset 15 percent.

U.S. EMBASSY INTERVIEWS

The Evaluation Division interviewed 16 U.S. Embassy staff in 11 in-depth interviews from June 22, 2020 to July 8, 2020.³ Interview participants were a mix of Locally Employed Staff and Foreign Service Officers in 11 countries with all six Department of State (DoS) geographic regions represented, based on selection of participating U.S. Embassies with input from ECA’s Sports Diplomacy Division. These U.S. Embassies were purposively selected to capture the best practices of staff highly engaged with the Sports Visitor program. Interviews were conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams and lasted about 30-45 minutes.

ALUMNI SURVEY

An additional survey was administered by the Evaluation Division to all program alumni that participated in the Sports Visitors program from 2018 to February 2020. Furthermore, this alumni survey was used to allow alumni to opt-into in-depth interviews and indicate their comfort level interviewing in English and alternative language preference. The survey was administered through Qualtrics from September 1, 2020 to September 25, 2020, closing with a 43 percent response rate.

To ensure comprehension for participants with limited English-language proficiency, the survey was translated into 11 languages.⁴ The survey was initially distributed via email by FHI360, with a reminder sent after two weeks through a variety of channels (email, WhatsApp, social media, etc.). To help boost responses, relevant U.S. Embassies were asked to contact their alumni to encourage them to take the survey.

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

DCG was commissioned to carry out in-depth interviews with program alumni to provide qualitative context to the existing quantitative data. From September 21, 2020 to October 8, 2020, DCG’s evaluation team completed a total of 27 interviews. Interview participants were selected based on convenience sampling drawn from the alumni survey respondents who volunteered for an interview and contacted via email. Interview participants were a mix of

² See Annex B for a summary of all data collection methods.

³ Data collection instruments are provided in Annex A.

⁴ The alumni survey was translated into the following languages: Arabic, Burmese, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Russian, Spanish, and Thai.

coaches and administrators (18), youth (7), and chaperones (2) of youth programs from 14 countries and nine different programs, with all six DoS geographic regions included in the evaluation.

More than half of those who completed the Evaluation Division's alumni survey opted in to being considered for a phone interview. From that group, 69 percent of respondents agreed to be interviewed.⁵ While the majority of the interviews took place in English (whenever respondents self-reported high comfort levels with English language), 13 were conducted via a professional interpreter. Interviews took place over WhatsApp audio call⁶ and, with only a few exceptions, connectivity was good. In the three instances where a bad connection made the conversation challenging or the respondent was not available for a phone discussion, DCG sent written follow-up questions via email (those instances are counted among the 27 completed interviews). On average, the interviews conducted in English lasted 45 minutes while the interviews conducted via an interpreter lasted 75 minutes.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

While the evaluation was completed without significant challenges, there are a few factors that possibly influenced the overall findings.

MONITORING SURVEY DATA

The monitoring survey data FHI360 provided for the evaluation did not have consistent data points between FY 2017 data and FY 2018 data as FHI360 had updated the survey questions between cohorts. The data also came in separate files for each country, survey type (pre-, post-, follow-up), and fiscal year. Significant effort was put into combining these data into a master file for pre, post and follow up. The Evaluation Division had to map questions first between FY 2017 and FY 2018 for each survey, then questions were mapped between pre-, post-, and follow up. There were some data or analysis not included due to the following issues:

- A survey question was unique to only a limited number of data sets and there were not enough overall responses to reasonably include in the analysis.
- The survey questions matched, but a different response option was used between surveys (5-point likert scale vs 10-point rating scale). The Evaluation Division aligned response options where possible but there were some instances where this was not possible.

⁵ Out of the 70 people that the evaluation team reached out to, 48 responded to requests for interviews. Among that group, a diverse sample of alumni were chosen to best represent the overall universe of program alumni.

⁶ WhatsApp is a massively popular messaging app that lets users text, chat, and share media, including voice messages and video, with individuals or groups. This app was used because it was accessible to the greatest number of alumni and is a secure, familiar, user-friendly platform.

- Open ended response was not in English. The evaluation did not build in the time or funding to include translation of these responses.
- Only the pre-survey contained demographic information such as age and gender identity which created limits on what demographic subsets could be analyzed.

LONGITUDINAL COMPARISON

Although the monitoring survey data included unique identifiers, the level of non-response for the question and lack of consistent responses between surveys resulted in the Evaluation Division being unable to adequately match respondents between the pre-, post-, and follow up surveys. Therefore, any reported changes in variables between data collection points are based only on aggregate responses.

REPRESENTATION

Achieving representation from each of the program countries proved difficult for both the alumni survey and alumni interviews. The Evaluation Division worked with FHI360 and Embassy staff to increase response rates in underrepresented countries with additional outreach, which proved effective in the Middle East North Africa.⁷ However, ultimately the alumni survey had over representation in Africa and the Western Hemisphere; and underrepresentation in Europe and Eurasia. Ultimately 32 of the 40 countries which participated in the Sports Visitor Program were represented in the survey.

The alumni interviews faced a similar struggle with representation due to a combination of three factors: participants from all countries did not opt in to be interviewed, potential interviewees failed to include contact information when opting in; or they were not responsive to multiple English- and vernacular-language email interview invitations after opting in to the interviews via the online survey.

Additional follow-up requests were made to participants in certain regions (in particular Middle East and North Africa, South and Central Asia, and Europe and Eurasia), but despite efforts to ensure the completed interviews were representative of the overall pool of Sports Visitors alumni, those regions and certain programs are underrepresented. While participants in the Sports Visitor Program have hailed from 40 countries, the evaluation interviewed alumni from 14 of those.

While we were able to interview alumni from nine out of the 24 programs, some of the programs were not included for the reasons above. In particular, there was an underrepresentation of the Sports Visitor Programs that focus on adaptive sports for people with disabilities.

⁷ Near Eastern Affairs Region (NEA)

RESPONSE ERROR

The evaluation team identified several inaccuracies between Alumni Survey responses (from which the interview candidates were drawn) and official program records – several respondents misreported their programs, as well as their youth or coach/administrator status. While we cannot say for sure why these inconsistencies occurred, it is possible certain questions were not clear or translations of program names were not correct/understood. These inaccuracies led to more coaches and administrators being interviewed because several of them were mislabelled as youth participants in the data set. Two chaperones for youth groups were also included in interviews after being surveyed as youth and/or coaches.

RESPONDENT BIAS

It is likely that those alumni who agreed to participate in the alumni survey and interviews may have been more comfortable talking about their participation in the program, partly because they had an overall positive and impactful experience that they were excited to share. During the interviews, there was some indication that other respondents who the interviewees travelled with may not have all been as enthusiastic about their experiences and may have found some of the program elements more challenging. Respondent bias, however, was mitigated by triangulating the qualitative findings with the survey data. It does not negate what the respondents shared in their interviews.

TRANSLATION

About half of the interviews were conducted with an interpreter, which added a layer of complexity for some interviews. DCG was able to employ services of one interpreter for almost all of the Spanish and French-language interviews, which provided some continuity. However, if time and the global public health environment had allowed, face-to-face, native language interviews would have been preferable to phone interviews conducted via interpreter. However, DCG's maintenance of moderator continuity for all interviews provides a holistic picture of the program for reporting purposes and proved to be a workable time- and cost-effective solution.

ALUMNI INTERVIEW TIMELINE

There was less than two months to complete alumni interviews. Due to this short timeframe, only alumni who could be reached and were available to be interviewed within the three weeks allotted for interviews were included in the study. While the original goal was for the evaluators to interview up to 40 respondents, 27 interviews were completed.

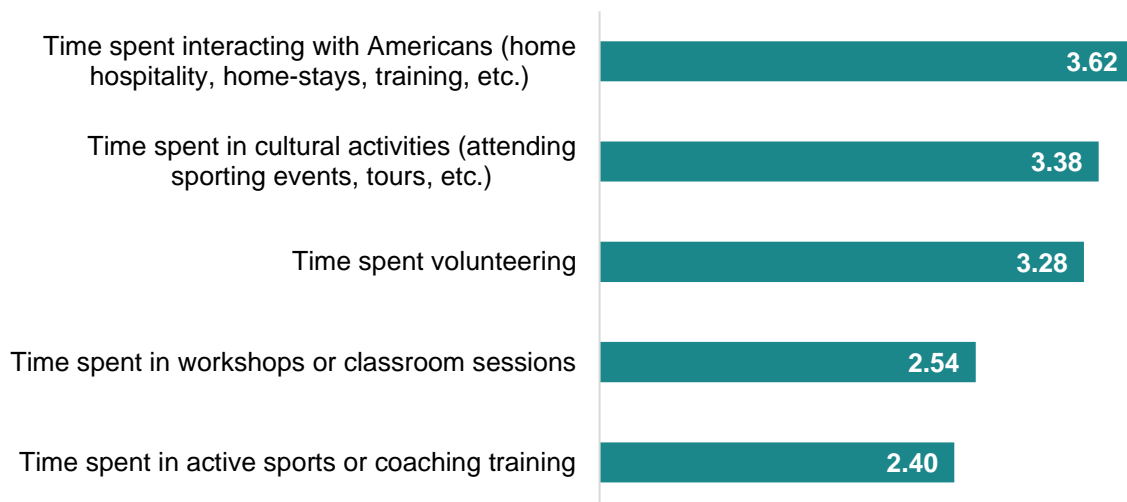
EVIDENCE AND FINDINGS

PROGRAM CONTENT

The Sports Visitor Program typically lasts about two weeks and involves activities in one or more American cities that are selected for their relevance to the sport focused on in each program. Additionally, the program hosts both single-country cohorts and multiple-country cohorts. For FY 2017 and FY 2018, 73 percent of programs included visiting multiple cities, while 36 percent of programs included participants from multiple countries. Activities included participating in workshops, clinics and camps; visiting schools and sports-related nongovernmental organizations; attending professional, collegiate and high school sporting events, and experiencing American culture through visits to U.S. historical sites. In addition, 68 percent of participants had opportunities to experience either a host family or home hospitality component.

According to a survey conducted of Sports Visitor alumni, respondents ranked interacting with Americans as the most impactful program component (3.62 out of 5)⁸, closely followed by cultural activities (3.38 out of 5) and volunteering (3.28 out of 5). The two lowest-ranked program components were workshops or classroom sessions (2.54 out of 5) and sports or coaching training (2.40 out of 5).

Thinking about your Sports Visitor experience, in your opinion, please rank the following program components from most (5) to least (1) impactful to you.



* Shows average ranking across all responses.

⁸ Program components were ranked 1 through 5, with 1 being the lowest ranking (i.e. the worst) available and 5 being the highest (i.e. the best).

HIGHLIGHTED PROGRAM CONTENT

In both the alumni survey and the interviews, the activities not directly sports-related were often named as the most valuable to participants. **Program organizers do a good job of providing a mix of activities and connecting them to the overall lessons of the program.** Participants appreciated how the overall program is “interconnected” and how the themes overlap as “each part reinforces the whole.” In particular, the cultural experiences and the outings that focus on U.S. history provided an enriching glimpse into American life and added depth to the program.

The biggest impact was the two elementary schools we visited in Chicago – one school was in an affluent middle class neighbourhood and then we went to a school in a very poor, majority Black community and that brought home the understanding that there is not all roses or positive in the U.S. and there are challenges the U.S. is working through as well. We enjoyed these contrasting activities instead of going to all great places. And talking with the students and teachers at the poorer school was one of the most beneficial parts of the program. (South Korea, GirlsPlay2, Coach)

The best part for me was learning about the history of American sports and how it relates to the real history of the U.S. Going to visit the African American museum, learning about Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks. Understanding the struggle that Black Americans have had, also in sports. That was amazing to me and inspiring to me. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

When asked about their favorite or most memorable aspect of the program, youth athletes most often mentioned cultural exchange and building relationships with the other Sports Visitor participants. They appreciated meeting people from other parts of the world and getting to know them and learn about their culture.

The part I liked best is that we got to meet people from other places. Spain, Albania, I am still in touch with them on social media. My connection is getting wider, I'm glad that I met them and got to know them, people from all over. (Belgium, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

When we were out in the city, we would meet Americans and have an opportunity to interact with them, which was good. (Costa Rica, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

U.S. Embassy staff reflected that the Sports Visitor Program successfully provides the flexibility needed for Embassies to use the program to meet their specific goals.

Specifically, Embassies use the program to advance women’s empowerment, facilitate engagement with underprivileged or hard to reach populations, continue engagement with English language students, promote the rights of people with disabilities, and counter disinformation.

Most sport is geared toward young men; the Sports Visitor program shows everyone that girls/women can contribute and thrive in these programs as well. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

[We] have Sports Visitors ... because it is a natural way to reach out to people, especially youth. Sports like soccer and basketball are big in Indonesia. They can use it to reach remote and underprivileged areas. [It is an] opportunity to bring them to the United States. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

BALANCING LEARNING AND APPLICATION

While the overall level of teaching and the content covered was comprehensive and well-received, some of the coaches and sports administrators, in particular those from Latin American countries, thought the actual level of instruction received during some of the technical workshops could have been more advanced. This was especially the case for the workshops and instruction related to adaptive sports and coaching people with disabilities. Since they are all professionals working in the field of adapted sports, they entered the program with relatively high levels of understanding of the theoretical concepts being covered and wished material went deeper than just the basics.

We are already working professionally as coaches and in sports administration. Some of the trainings were aimed more at a beginning level. More depth and detail on some of the topics would have been welcomed. There was not really enough time but if we could have gone more into the theoretical basis for the teaching and then had more hands-on application of those concepts, that would have been valuable. I would've appreciated more information specifically about working with people with impairments, like about working with the blind. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

Participants also expressed that they would have preferred to have had more hands-on practice and application of what they had been taught in the classroom and on the sports field. Coaches and administrators, particularly in the Enhancing the Paralympic Movement program, mentioned that it would have been valuable for them to be able to have more time to witness adaptive sports coaching and to have been able to apply those skills themselves.

What was missing was the practical portion – how to replicate such activities when we return home. We needed to better understand what exactly to do, how to do it. We needed more practice and practical instruction to help us reach more people when we return home. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

The survey results demonstrated that time spent in active sports or coaching training was the least impactful. A few reasons for this were noted in the interviews. Specifically, youth athletes noted they would have liked more time on the field to play sports overall, but also wanted this time to be spread across the program. A lot of learning, cooperation, and

teamwork took place during drills and they would have preferred more time for that. Several youth athletes in the Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment and Youth ESL Camp programs felt that the breakdown of classroom learning versus on-the-field learning was not ideal in that most of the training opportunities to play soccer happened during the first week and there was little time on the field during the second week of the program. Even for experienced athletes like themselves, playing and exercising every single day at that level was exhausting, especially for those that were playing outside in the summer heat.

The first week was all training [exercising]. That's the way the program is organized – the second week was all the workshops and teachings in the classroom. Every single day training [exercising] was too much, too tiring. Even for us. It was hot and we were tired. They should spread it out, two days training, two days' workshop. We didn't have any physical activity in the second half, and we needed it. (Costa Rica, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

The program was nice but there was not a lot of soccer involved in the first week. We only played a little in the evening. A lot of the girls wanted to play more soccer than attend all the sessions and when we played soccer, there were more sessions instead of free playing. Also, our visit to the Julie Foudy Foundation was an uptight experience because we really did not have any downtime. We woke up at like 8 and went to sleep at 10. But we appreciated this experience after it was over because we realized we had learned a lot. (Nepal, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

This sentiment was also expressed by U.S. Embassy Staff, who stated they felt their alumni wanted a better balance between sports practice and classroom trainings. Embassy staff interviewed expressed that there could be adjustments made to the training content, including greater focus on how to use sport to help youth, the administrative side of sports, and entrepreneurship.

Would also like to see more entrepreneurial skills embedded in the program— something more tangible that they [youth participants] could take away from the program to improve their lives. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE AND MEET AMERICANS

Many participants would have liked more time to explore the United States in a less structured or formal way, including more time for cultural exchange, especially with Americans. The programs that touched on the civil rights movement and provided opportunities to visit American schools were well-received.

Participants generally shared they had very little time to interact with Americans or have organic cultural experiences because they were too busy in the program. This was often mentioned in interviews when participants were asked what they might change about the program and was reiterated again when they were asked if their participation in the program

affected their view of America or Americans in any way. Many participants explained they did not have the opportunity to interact with Americans enough to have had their expectations challenged or their mind-sets changed.

We met people from other Latin American countries. We occasionally talked to Americans out in the street but otherwise in the program itself, we were always with other Latins. In terms of an improvement, I would have liked to interact with Americans to practice English. We just spoke Spanish all the time. (Costa Rica, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

We really were mostly to ourselves and we did not venture out when we were by ourselves because we did not want to get lost. Myself and one of the other participants went with their friend to a pancake shop and we met some Americans there. We also discussed that we also wanted to visit other places – we were in New Jersey. We also went to Philadelphia for a sports match but it was cancelled due to weather or something. (Nepal, Youth Soccer and Women’s Empowerment, Youth)

However, youth athletes generally enjoyed the time spent with their host families.

We had the possibility to do many opportunities with our host family – we would go to the playground and everything. It really felt like we were a family. My host family was Jamaican and they knew about the Haitian culture. It was like we’d already met. My English was not very good at the time, so it was a good opportunity for me to have full immersion and be challenged in speaking English. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

It was new for me. It was a new culture that we had heard about but to actually live it out was amazing. It was good. I enjoyed living with the American people in the society. We tried to live with them, eat with them and visit their markets. (Morocco, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)⁹

CONTENT CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

When considering adding or reducing certain program components, it is important to note that **participants often mentioned the schedule was too full and they were very busy.** This was especially true for coaches/administrators and participants from Asian countries who experienced initial jetlag, but was also mentioned by the majority of other youth participants as well.

⁹ The interview respondent self-reported their country, program and participation type. While their self-reported program is inaccurate, which program they were in does not have an effect on the information they shared, therefore their data has been included.

The time difference was a big challenge. One day I woke up really late and had to rush to get ready. Also, talking with my family because they did not have roaming data. I was only able to call them when I had WIFI, which was every morning and at night when everything was over. (Guatemala, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

I think one thing that could change was the order of events. There is a 10-hour time difference from [South] Korea to Chicago, so we were very jet lagged when we first arrived. When we first came to town, we did more relaxing activities like seeing an NBA game and doing a rope course, so I think having activities the first two days that help people from other countries get over the jet lag. (South Korea, GirlsPlay2, Coach)

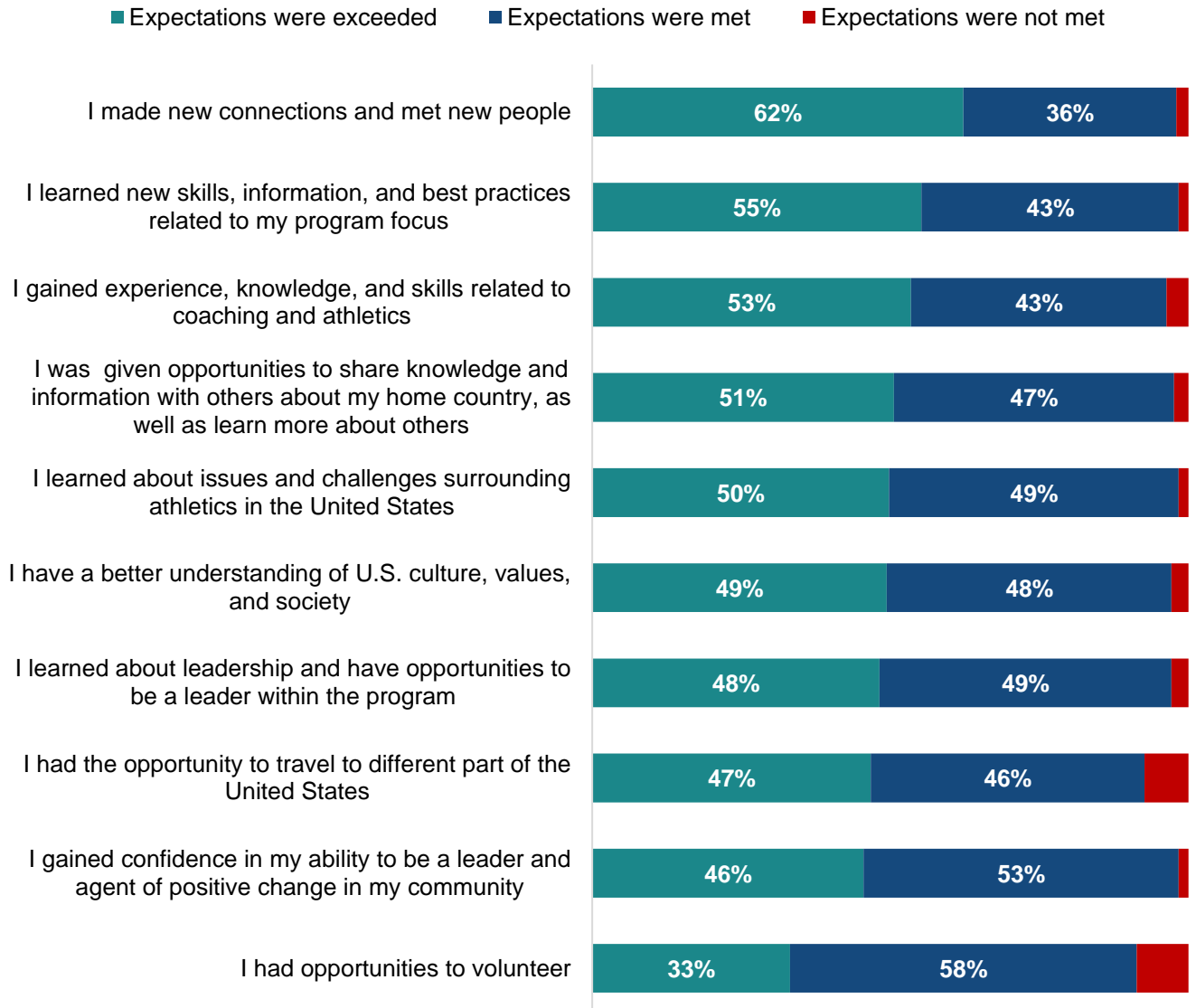
When asked, participants expressed a desire to expand the length of the program if possible. A majority of both youth and coach and administrator participants would have welcomed spending a longer time in the United States. They explain that this would have allowed them more time to digest the teachings and practice what they had learned as well as have more unstructured time, especially to meet and interact with their American counterparts. Most say they would have welcomed participating in a three to four-week program. The only exception to the request for the longer program time came from participants in Korea who explain that they would not have been able to leave their work for more than two weeks.

I would add more time, obviously. There is not enough time for all the amount of information but the time that I spent there and what I learned – the value of the education was immeasurable. I think a practical aspect of the portion is missing in terms of teaching us how to generate, create and implement programs. For example, recreational activities, games and sports – things that can help us involve more youth and adults in sports. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

We had a lot of activities. We went to Gillette Stadium; we watched two games at the stadium, and we went to visit the town, the mall, universities, learned how to apply for a scholarship and we even had a session about that. Yeah, we visited many places actually. We also went to the beach and played volleyball. We had something to do every day. We need to stay for more days. I felt it was too short. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

Despite requests for additional program content, according to post-program survey data, a vast majority of participants have their expectations for the program met or exceeded in all areas. Program areas with the highest rate of expectations not being met were having opportunities to travel to different parts of the United States (7 percent) and having opportunities to volunteer (9 percent); all other categories were at 4 percent or less.

Were the following expectations from your exchange met?

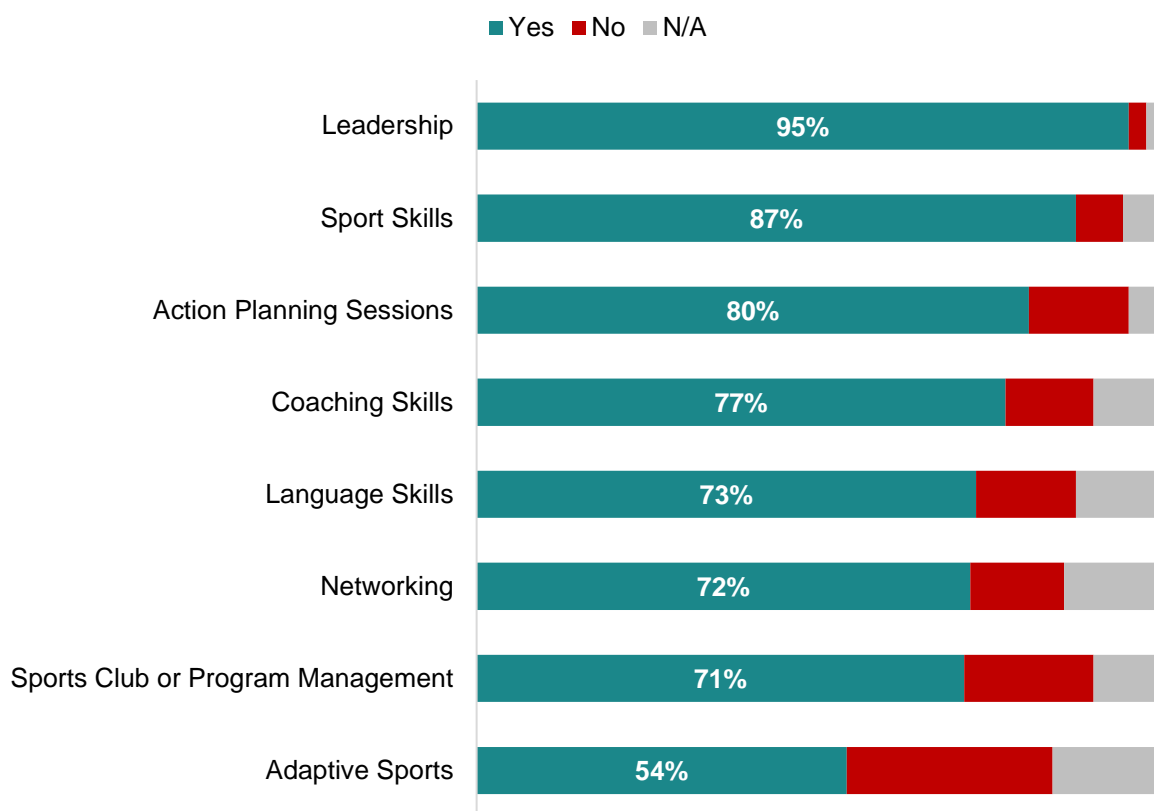


PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES

SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND USE

The program provided opportunities for skill development, with a majority of alumni survey respondents indicating they have been able to use the skills they gained during the program once they returned home. As a result of their participation in the Sports Visitor program, participants strongly believed the experience helped them improve their abilities as coaches, administrators, and athletes while also significantly impacting their personal growth.

Have you been able to use the skills or knowledge from any of the following program activities since returning home?



* N/A indicates that the skill was not part of the respondent's program.

Interpersonal Skills. Throughout the interviews, participants spoke about a host of positive attributes and skills they developed because of their time in the program. Among those most commonly mentioned are conflict resolution, resilience, patience, and improved communication skills. Acquiring these skills made alumni better and more effective coaches and teachers, and demonstrated the importance of a more interactive and empowering style of teaching and coaching.

We discovered a whole new method of teaching. This interactive style where we are always in conversation with our students. It's a conversation between us in the classroom. People share their history, their stories – it brings the subject matter to life. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

I learned a lot also about conflict-resolution and how to get along with people from different backgrounds and different perspectives. We also learned about it in a formal way in the classroom, like about communication styles, about restorative justice, self-care – there were so many empowering workshops. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

Sports Skills. Eighty-seven percent of youth alumni respondents indicated the program improved their sports skills, helping them become better players and allowing them to share those skills with others once they returned home.

I have been able to use the sports skills in pick up games that I play every evening with my fellow Iringa Men's Basketball team...Through the game of basketball, I have been able to meet and share different ideas with different people both in Tanzania and outside the country. (Tanzania, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

I personally started playing badminton too. (Nepal, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

[I improved] sports skills: To keep a healthy lifestyle, doing various sports, exercises and sharing these exercises with children from several communities. (Costa Rica, Youth Soccer and ESL Camp, Youth)

Action Planning. Eighty percent have been able to use skills from action planning sessions and 71 percent have been able to use skills learned from sports club/program management sessions. Specifically, coaches and administrators learned about management and administration that proved to be valuable upon their return home. The sessions that covered finances, fundraising, and budgeting were especially important in equipping them with the knowledge and skillsets necessary to complete their action plans.

What they taught me still lingers in my life. The best thing, the most important thing I learned was public speaking. Those sessions really helped me speak with confidence. But I also learned how to write proposals to use for fundraising. In my line of work, this is very helpful. We learned a lot of about sponsorships and just general sports administration. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Participation in Sport, Coach)

A lot of things have changed because this visit has allowed me to understand many things. One thing is that the world of sports is a vector for development and leadership - it allows for a community to develop itself. I have prepared an education training as part of my action plan. We have trained a federation, affiliated clubs, and national associations; we reached out to about 40 people who are going to end up impacting others. (Niger, Focused on the Future: A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

Coaching Skills. Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated they have been able to use the coaching skills they gained during the program. Specifically, coaches and administrators appreciated the focus on teaching and coaching “the whole person,” instead of a narrow focus on training them as athletes. Through the program they realized that making strong personal connections with their students or athletes was critical and that only by understanding each of them as individuals with their own unique strengths and challenges would they be able to unlock their full potential.

Americans really pay attention to what's happening on the pitch as well as off the pitch. They coach the whole person, not just the athlete. (Indonesia, Training and Coaching Methodology, Coach)¹⁰

The athlete is considered first. Everything is done for the athlete in the United States. The whole person matters to them and they care about their well-being. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Participation in Sport, Coach)

English Language Skills. Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated they have been able to use the language skills they gained during the program once they returned home, including sharing these skills with others. This was particularly true of youth participating in ESL camps.

I have been able also to teach to a few young athletes the importance in the use of the English language. (Guatemala, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

In language skills, the practice, although it was only two weeks in the English language environment, helped me to gain confidence in myself and of course ultimately in my first job in an environment that required speaking English. (Costa Rica, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

Unrealized Skills. Where skills were unable to be utilized, survey respondents indicated a number of different reasons for why this was the case, including: lack of opportunity to use the skill (41 percent), the skill was not relevant to them (25 percent), and COVID-19 (22 percent). Interviews further noted that lack of resources hindered ability to utilize newly developed skills.

Most of the activities mentioned above were not possible for me to do them because of the lock-down hence movement was restricted...most clubs and program were suspended until the lock-down is lifted. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Student Participation in Sport, Coach)

I haven't been able to attend any adaptive sports in Tanzania. The location that I am found at offers no adaptive sports programs. (Tanzania, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

¹⁰ The interview respondent self-reported their country, program and participation type. While their self-reported program is inaccurate, which program they were in does not have an effect on the information they shared, therefore their data has been included.

Unfortunately, so far I have not been able to share my training skills with anyone and after the program I have not dedicated myself so much to the sports part. Similarly with adapted sports, although the experience was very enriching, I have not met anyone with whom I can share the experience. Finally, with regard to the management of sports programs or clubs, as I mentioned before, I have not been totally linked to sports, so up to now I have not been able to develop a project of that nature. (Costa Rica, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

CONFIDENCE AND ATTITUDE

The coaches and administrators also felt they are now better equipped to be partners, parents, friends, bosses, teachers, and employees because of their improved communication skills and their adoption of a more tolerant and open-minded attitude; **this new way of coaching and leading positively impacted their personal and professional lives.**

It changed in me a lot of ideas. I gave more importance to values like leadership, how to empower and encourage kids, make a stronger team. I see a difference [in how they respond]. Especially when you ask more of students, give them responsibility, show them you think they can do it. Then they also believe in themselves. (Morocco, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment Program, Coach)¹¹

I also learned to speak to young players in different ways because we exchanged our sports skills among each other. How we do things in our country were different from other countries. So, we took things from other countries and learned how to apply it to our game. I also learned it is really important to give kids energy – if you are excited, they will get excited. So, we learned we have to match our energy. (Nepal, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

Youth participants also emphasized how the program led to improved communication skills, especially for the female youth athletes (particularly those from countries where gender equity is a concern) who shared they gained confidence to speak up and use their own voice at home, with friends and at school. They often shared they used to be “shy” but now they are less nervous to speak their mind or speak up for themselves. While they were initially worried about how their newfound outspokenness might be perceived by their family and friends, they found that generally people were supportive of them, even if they were surprised at first. Meeting their sports role models and being pushed outside of their own comfort zone during their time in the United States empowered them, gave them greater confidence, and increased their self-esteem.

¹¹ The interview respondent self-reported their country, program and participation type. While their self-reported program is inaccurate, which program they were in does not have an effect on the information they shared, therefore their data has been included.

I changed a lot. I used to be shy but after I came back, I was more confident. I could speak up in front of people in a way that I could not before. Now I'm always the first to volunteer and raise my hand. I feel like I can be a leader. (Tanzania, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

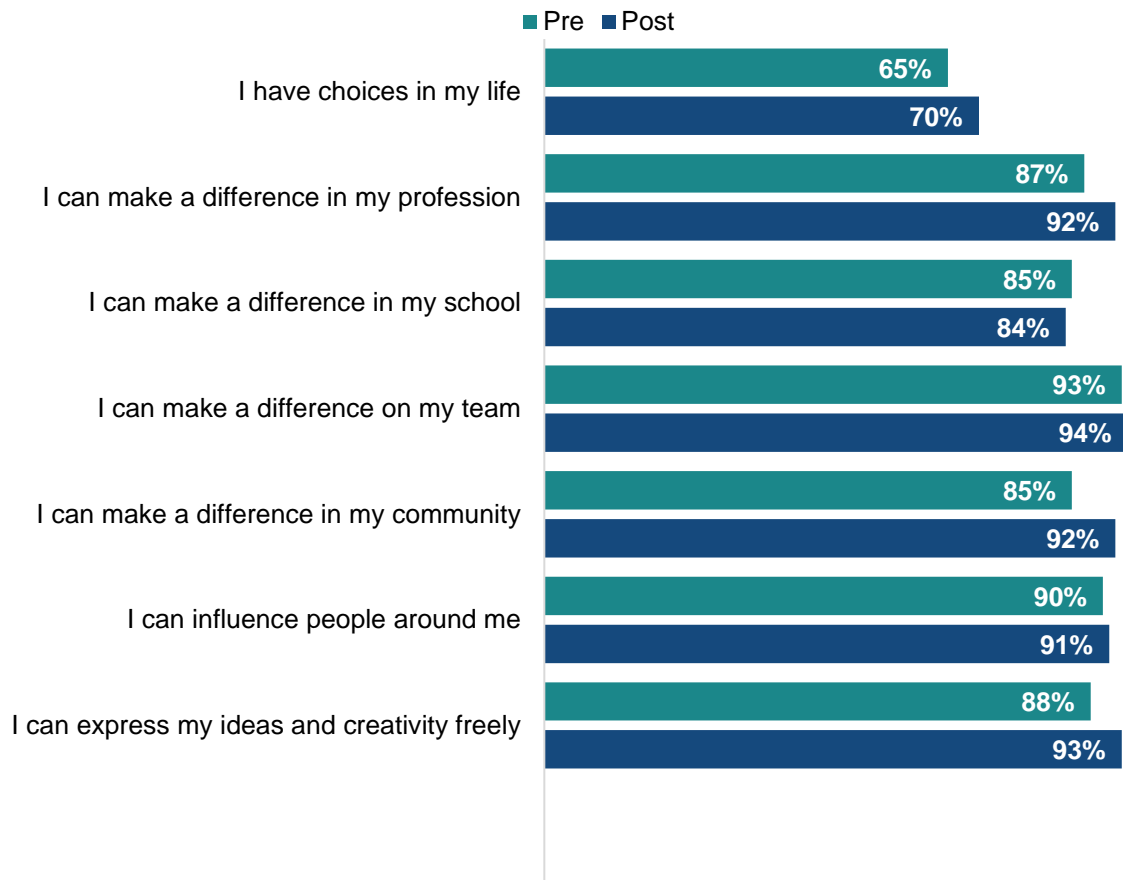
I was shy before but not after. I learned to stand up for what I believe in. It challenged me, being in this program, living with a host family. I really had to do so many new things and that gave me more confidence in myself. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

Being in Mexico, it was hard to get started because I was a woman and because of my age. Going to the U.S. was a dream come true because it has given me more passion to do what I am doing back in my country. They encouraged me to keep going. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

I was really outspoken around my family, and if it is a serious matter in Nepali culture young people are not allowed to speak. So, I thought I would get scolded by speaking up about matters but when I spoke up, they did not scold me but thought about my suggestions and what I said to them. (Nepal, Women's Empowerment, Youth)

Coaches, administrators and youth denoted high levels of self-confidence in a number of areas on the pre-survey, but there were still at least slight improvements in nearly all areas following the program for each group. **Coaches and administrators saw the biggest improvement in feeling like they had choices in life and could express their ideas and creativity freely. Youth saw the biggest improvement in making a difference in their community and in expressing their ideas and creativity freely.**

Self Confidence (All Participants)

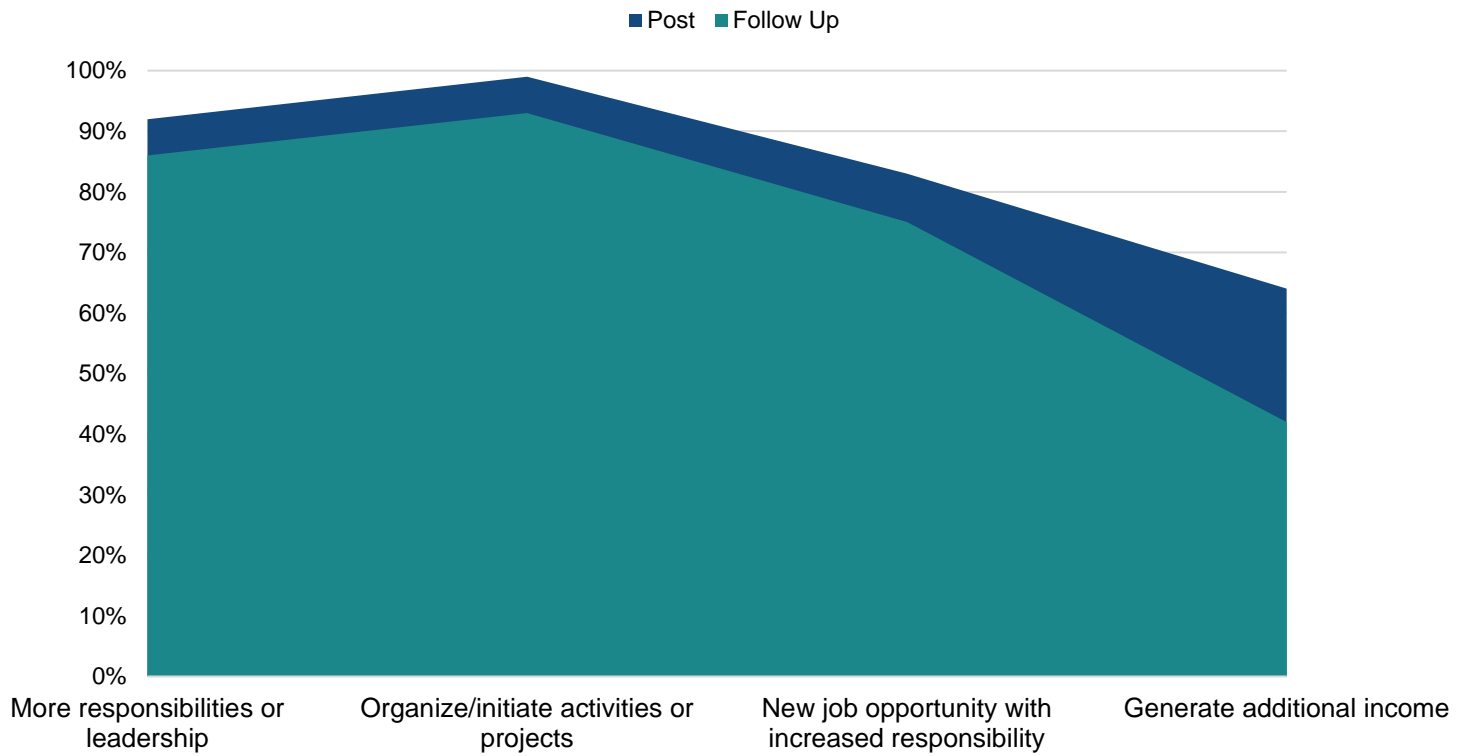


CHANGES IN PROFESSION

Coaches, administrators, and youth shared in the monitoring post-survey what career changes they believed they would be able to make as a result of their program participation. In the follow-up survey, they reported what they were actually able to achieve in the six months following their program.

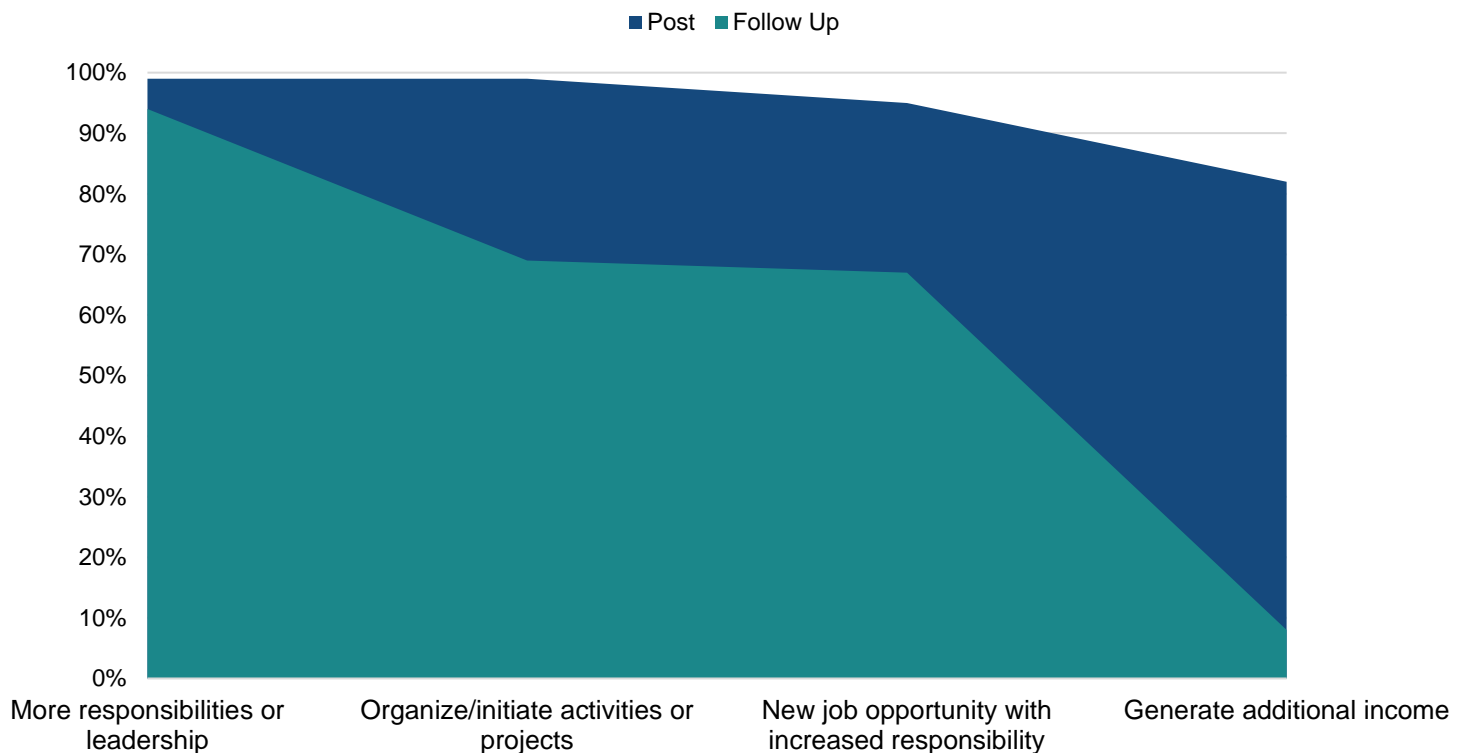
For coaches and administrators, their expectations aligned closely with what they were able to accomplish. The biggest gap between expectation and action was in “increase income”.

Professional Accomplishments: Coaches



Youth participants on average had higher expectations in the post-survey than what they reported in the follow up survey. The gap was especially large in terms of generating more income with 82 percent of youth expecting to achieve a higher income and only 8 percent succeeding at the six-month mark. The larger gaps are likely due to the youth's age and work status since youth participants are more likely to still be in school.

Professional Accomplishments: Youth



COACHING STYLE

Coaches and administrators noted the American leadership style centered around a more positive and less disciplinary approach with a more egalitarian focus on open communication; the Americans' positivity and encouragement was a radical shift from the more hierarchical and punitive style employed in their home countries. **Upon returning home, they were able to try the communication approaches they witnessed in the United States, which proved to be effective because they led to strong bonds among teammates, colleagues, and peers.**

Everyone [in America] is just positive, even while they are giving negative feedback, they give it in a positive way. I am implementing that now back home, even back here in my family. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Student Participation in Sport, Coach)

One thing is I don't let anybody hit or yell at a kid now. We learned about child development. Just how I interact with children is completely different now. We don't just say stop – we show them how to continue. We work with parents as well. We realized that coaching is not just about elite athletes but about creating good people, to create a better society. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

Participation in the program also motivated coaches and administrators to be the best people they could be in their personal lives in order to serve as role models for their students. The

program encouraged them to model the qualities and skills they valued and wanted to pass on to their students, which in turn led to increased personal growth upon their return home.

What really stands out for me is that you have to be a good person in order to be a good coach. Where we can have success is in forming kids to be good people. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

I got to experience a lot of things, not only learning how to coach in the soccer community but also how to help students learn social issues and how to have a healthy lifestyle. I am passing those things on in Indonesia. (Indonesia, Using Sport to Create Community Change, Coach)¹²

One of the major takeaways participants shared about their time in the program was remembering and affirming the joy and fun of sport, and how keeping the game fun for athletes improved players' overall performance. Coaches and administrators were also impressed by how positive and affirming the American teaching and coaching style is and how effective they found that to be in practice.

In [South] Korea, coaching is very direct, like do this and do that. We are results driven. But we met a lot of people in the United States who make sports fun for kids and they taught us to critique kids in a positive way not a negative way. (South Korea, GirlsPlay2, Coach)

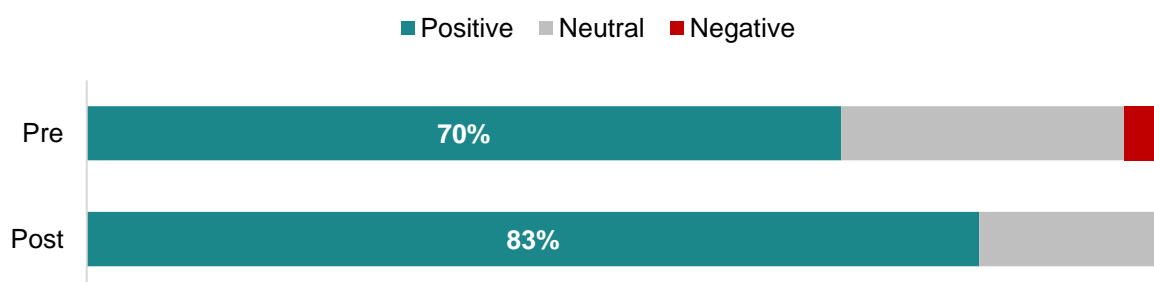
It was a good reminder of how playing can be and should be fun! And that keeping things playful and not so serious does not mean we are not training seriously. (Guatemala, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND WORLDVIEW SHIFT

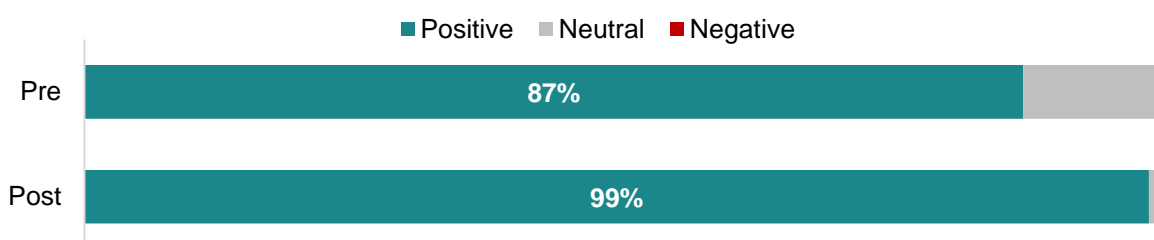
The cultural experiences helped participants gain a better understanding of the United States. Prior to the Sports Visitor program, 87 percent of participants had positive views of the American people and 70 percent had positive views of the United States Government. Following the program, favorability for both increased to 99 percent and 83 percent respectively.

¹² The interview respondent self-reported their country, program and participation type. While their self-reported program is inaccurate, which program they were in does not have an effect on the information they shared, therefore their data has been included.

Views of the United States Government



Views of the American People



Participants also noted Americans' willingness to help others. They experienced the cultural value of Americans' commitment to community service in the nature of their work with youth and marginalized communities, such as those with disabilities, as well as in their informal daily interactions. Americans' generosity and helpfulness were surprising to them and contradicted their preconceptions.

The best thing I got out of the program was the willingness of the people to help other people. The program was a platform for people to help each other. It took my heart. And it inspired me. My takeaway is to be helpful and to help others that might need my help. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Participation in Sport, Coach)

When I interacted with Americans, I saw how people are motivated by [and] committed to community service. This inspired me and has had a big impact on me. (Morocco, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Coach)¹³

Without exception, respondents shared that their experience in the program led to a shift in their overall worldview, both in their personal lives and in their coaching and management styles. This shifted perspective was in part the result of being able to witness American style of coaching, teaching, and playing sports. They found the professionalism, discipline, organization, encouragement, and positivity of the American sports culture inspiring and a marked difference to their home countries.

¹³ The interview respondent self-reported their country, program and participation type. While their self-reported program is inaccurate, which program they were in does not have an effect on the information they shared, therefore their data has been included.

The greatest impact on me was just seeing new perspectives. And these personal relationships we developed, just being treated as equals, with respect. It gave us all such encouragement, motivation. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

It was the two best weeks of my life. I learned a lot, interacted with people, made contacts with many people who helped me to have a better life of my own. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Student Participation in Sports, Coach)

My vision is completely transformed. Now I share these things with passion and that's why they are receptive, I think. There is a change in me, and these are things I really want to share here. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

I'm 52 years old. I've changed a lot, even at my age. In my own home even. Kids follow me around now. I'm a completely different person. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

It was an incredible experience. A dream come true. It affected the way I think, the way I coach. I'm a different person, my life is changed. How to manage problems in my life, how to be a leader, how to treat athletes – they taught us as people, not just as coaches. I apply all these lessons to my whole life, also my personal life. My communication style, my parenting style, everything. I changed my outlook on life. It was all good. (Morocco, Using Sport to Create Community Change, Coach)

Youth participants shared that the experience imparted personal growth and greater understanding of the world and their place in it. The theme of sports as a tool to empower youth to be their best selves came up often throughout the interviews.

The program changed my life path. I now want to continue working with girls. I want to do what I can to help them, to reach their potential. I want to make networks with people, especially women so I can help lead them down a good path. (Nepal, Women's Empowerment, Youth)

I learned to deal with people with all different opinions. Not everyone will agree but we can try to create compromise, try to find a connection. It taught me to be open-minded. That will help me to grown personally and professionally in my life. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

Alumni explained that the way the program focuses on sports in terms of gender equity and adaptive sports for people with disabilities helped them develop a more tolerant and inclusive worldview. They also noted that the program helped them to make connections with those with different opinions.

I learned about various topics, both sports and cultural, leadership and gender equity. I learned that through sports we can know more about others, we can support each other and support others. (Guatemala, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

They taught me how to teach values and character using sport. I learned about gender equity and about team building. It was all very important and very different than what we learn in Indonesia. (Indonesia, Using Sport to Create Community Change, Coach)¹⁴

In some cases, participants discussed how the training they received in the United States went against cultural norms in their home countries, so this was a radical shift when applied in their own communities. However, they remained committed to the approaches and values they witnessed during the program.

In [South] Korea it's strict but I have become more tolerant, more lenient with standards. I am more understanding – with adults, with children, everyone. I am also more generous in my praise, more encouraging. I took that from my time in the program. (South Korea, Girls Play2, Coach)

I was shy before the program but when I returned home, I was not shy anymore – I learned to give my opinions on things. I also learned about gender issues because here in my country, when woman are playing soccer they are considered in a different way and now I can encourage other young women playing sports to be comfortable with what they were doing. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The program also reinforced both youth and adult participants' commitment to use sports for social change. Their experience in the program affirmed their understanding of how sports can be a vehicle to transform the world around them, especially in terms of creating a more inclusive and equal society, and how they can use their newfound skills to improve their own communities.

We were on a coaching program, but we returned as people who can change the world. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

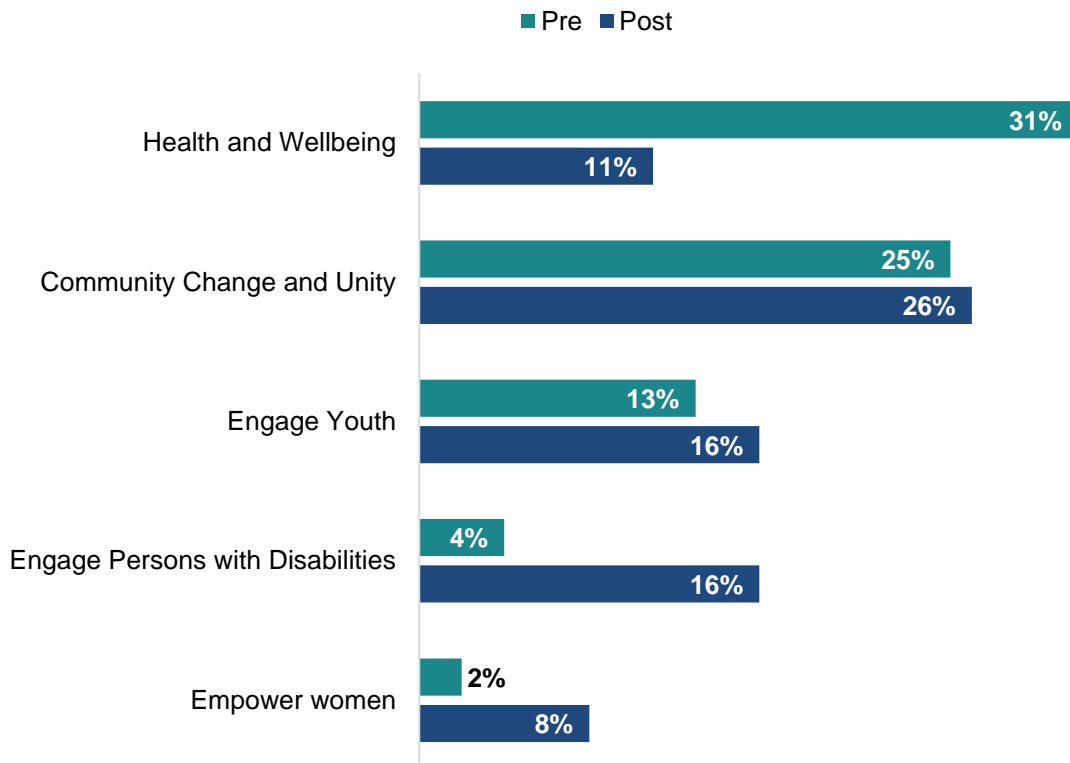
I have become outspoken about many issues because communication was so important during our matches. If you are not communicating with one another, how do you know what's going on and how to solve it? So, whether it is with my family or friendship circle, I have started talking about things. (Nepal, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

¹⁴ The interview respondent self-reported their country, program and participation type. While their self-reported program is inaccurate, which program they were in does not have an effect on the information they shared, therefore their data has been included.

It was life changing. I spoke a lot about the trainings, but it was really the spark at these visits to organizations that support the rights for people with disabilities that really ignited in me a new commitment. This all motivated me greatly. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

According to the monitoring data, respondents' views on the role of sports in the community changed. Prior to the program, respondents most often cited health and wellbeing, community change and unity and engaging youth as the role of sports in society. However, in the monitoring post-survey, community change and unity was still frequently mentioned, but engaging persons with disabilities and youth were the next most cited roles. Using sports to empower women also increased significantly from pre-survey to the post-survey.

The Role of Sports in the Community



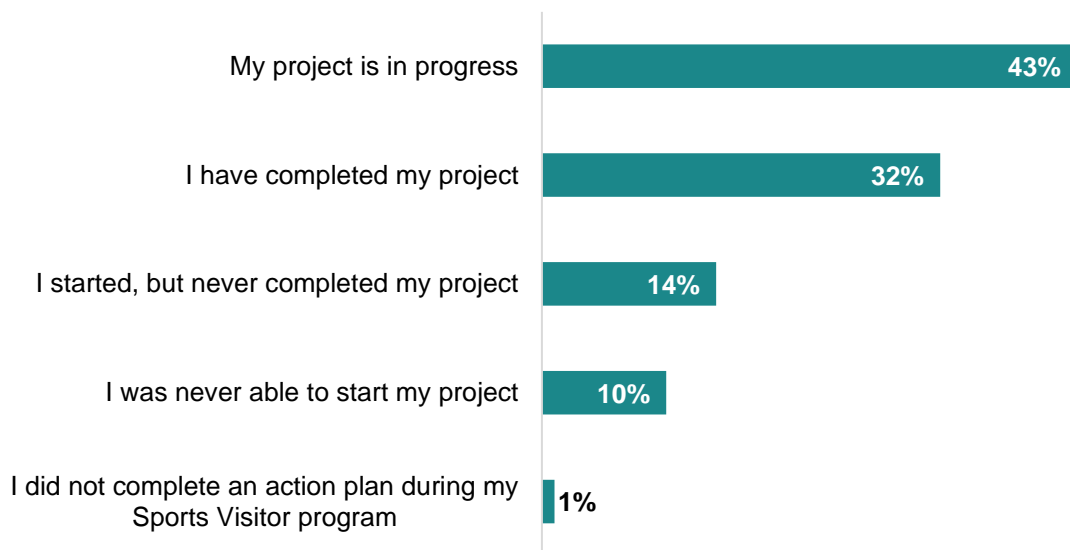
We had a couple of workshops and it made me realize that a lot of people use sport as the solution to solve problems, like equality for men and women, violence, assault... I understand now that it isn't just a hobby. (Belgium, Youth Soccer and ESL, Youth)

My view and understanding of promoting disability rights has changed. My community will benefit so much and introducing wheelchair basketball is a plus as we will use it to promote rights of people living with disabilities. (Zambia, Promoting Disability Rights and Inclusion, Coach)

The increased responses identifying the role of sports to engage persons with disabilities and to empower women are mostly concentrated in the programs that are designed to target those topics. For programs focused on disability rights, 13 percent of respondents mentioned engaging persons with disability in the pre-survey, which increased to 45 percent post-survey. Conversely, programs that were not focused on disability right increased from 0 percent in the pre-survey to 2 percent in the post-survey. The role of sports in empowering women did not see as big of a difference, but for programs with a woman empowerment focus, mentions increased from 5 percent to 17 percent of respondents. For other programs, they increased from 1 percent to 5 percent.

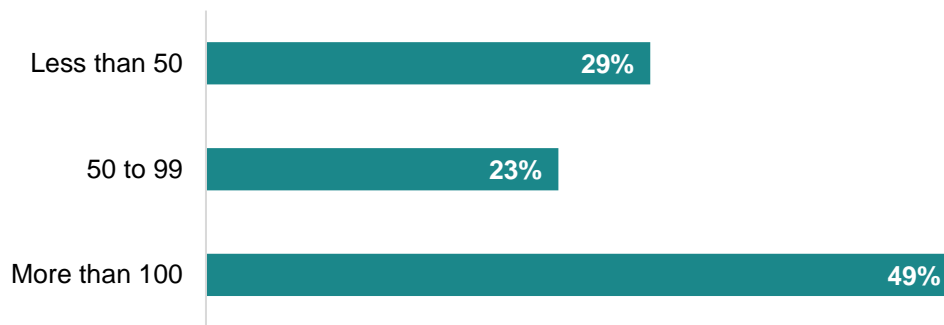
Alumni shared about their experiences implementing their action plans. These plans are designed by coaches and administrators during the exchange to implement when they return home. The majority of interviewees both completed their action plan projects and used them as the catalyst for ongoing sports-related community programs. According to the alumni survey, 32 percent of alumni have completed their action plan project while 43 percent reported their project was in progress.

Have you implemented the project you designed during your Sports Visitor program?



Coaches and administrators have completed successful follow-up projects including one-off events or workshops, such as train-the-trainer sessions or sports tournaments among marginalized communities. Others have been able to sustain longer-term sports outreach programs using volunteers or community fundraising, while some have even launched independent civil society organizations to continue their work. According to alumni survey responses, projects ranged from reaching less than 50 people, to more than 100 people, with almost half of alumni projects (49 percent) reaching more than 100 people.

How many individuals did your project reach?



Upon our return home we created the Global Society of Sports. It's great as a collective global society of sports. Unfortunately, this year we have been affected by the pandemic. But FHI gave us more examples of programs to implement in Mexico and we are doing so. For example, sports and movement programs for people with vision impairment, on using sign language, and classes for seniors... Now we have 20 more sports and activities in one year – swimming, rowing, karate, table tennis. It has been so great because next year we are going to have this big event. The relationship between the U.S. and Mexican sports are growing... And this is so great because I can show what I learned now and build off what I learned before. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

In Cambodia, we don't have sports in public schools. But we were able to make this program, we just finished the season. We train the trainers, the coaches, and then they go back and bring it to their own communities. My team and I went to train ten female and ten male coaches from all over. (Cambodia, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

Several alumni that were able to successfully complete their follow-up projects were able to directly apply what they learned about budgeting, finance and fundraising to complete their projects. **This aligns with 87 percent of alumni survey respondents sharing that their action planning sessions during the program helped them complete their project.** Over 96 percent of respondents shared that leadership training components were helpful in their project implementation along with networking (87 percent), sport skills (83 percent), coaching skills (82 percent), sports program management (81 percent), adaptive sports (74 percent), cultural activities (71 percent), and language skills (58 percent).

While most of the alumni interviewed had at least started or completed their action plans, a few have struggled to achieve their original goals. According to the alumni survey about 10 percent of respondents did not start their action plan project, while 14 percent started but were not able to complete theirs. The survey also identified reasons alumni have been unable to complete their follow-on projects as: lack of funding (20 percent), lack of community support (11 percent), and lack of time (8 percent) as challenges in implementing their project.

In the interviews they also discussed delays due to COVID and simply being unable to complete their plans on their own and not having institutional or personal support as additional reasons.

I do find that it is not easy to start such an organization in [South] Korea. Maybe it is because I do not have the experience. But I receive a newsletter from the Embassy and FHI 360 and I do see they make an effort to be encouraging, but this cannot be done by one person's effort. I am eager to get started but am not sure how. (South Korea, GirlsPlay2, Coach)

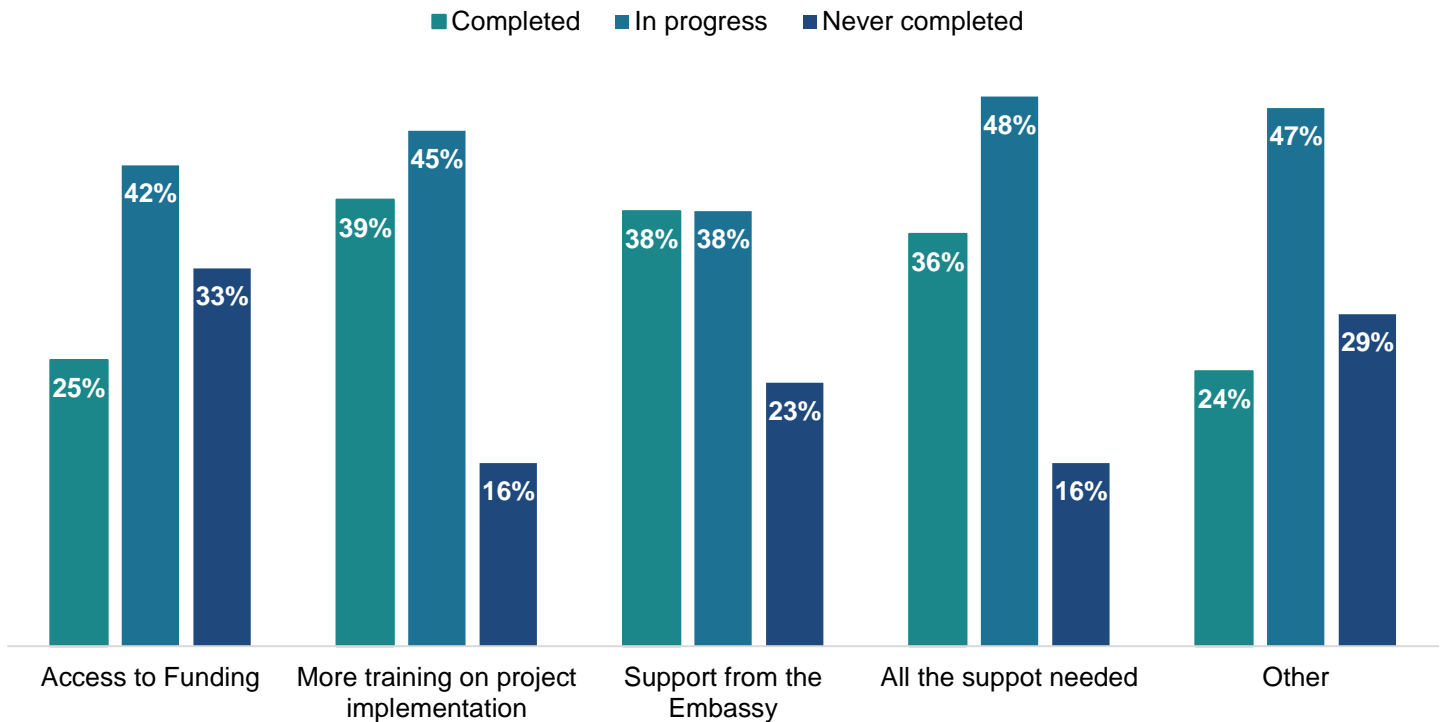
My action plan involves getting training and tournaments to get kids to play in the capital, but we need to get the authorities involved in order for this to happen. I have been making requests to receive funds to put this in place, but nothing has happened. However, we did receive some funds from the U.S. and that helped me pay for a few things, so we started our efforts. But we have to start training early in the morning and stop training early because of issues of safety and security. Also, there were delays because of COVID but we are now able to start doing things again. Here in Niger we have many challenges, but we persist. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

We got some funding from the FHI 360 and we collect a fee from members in our community. The grant was a one-time thing, so most of the money we had was from our own fundraising. There are a lot of things we can practice and put in action what we learned, but when it comes to fundraising, we are still confused about how to do it. (Indonesia, Using Sport to Create Community Change, Coach)¹⁵

When asked how successful projects overcame these challenges, alumni survey respondents reported community support most often as a factor. They also mentioned networking with potential funders or stakeholders, fundraising, scheduling or timing adjustments, and just pure determination. Respondents also reported access to funding, more project management training and Embassy support as resources that could help project succeed.

¹⁵ The interview respondent self-reported their country, program and participation type. While their self-reported program is inaccurate, which program they were in does not have an effect on the information they shared, therefore their data has been included.

Requested Resources for Action Plan Projects



While designing and implementing an action plan was only a requirement of the coach and administrator programs, some of the youth participants also returned to their home countries and either contributed to civil society efforts related to sports or even started their own organizations. According to the monitoring follow-up survey, there was a high number of youth reporting volunteering in their community (91 percent), while 83 percent initiated new activities and projects, 78 percent reported assuming a leadership position in their community, and 40 percent established a new organization.

I didn't get any funds or grants when I came home but they gave us \$300 for our expenses in the program and I was able to save \$250. I used that money to register my organization at home and then used the rest of it to buy balls and equipment. I serve as a mentor for 8,000 children in the camps here. I started the Unique Stars Foundation. I started this foundation after my time in the States to help positively impact youth, especially vulnerable and low-income kids in my community. This foundation uses youth sports as a tool to combat things like drug abuse and sexual harassment in communities. I teach them soccer and organize moral lessons to ensure kids are able to do well in school. I was craving knowledge to start something like my foundation. I saw the way they ran programs at Soccer Without Borders and decided to use what I learned to help kids in my community. I used to be a street kid and the program inspired me to use my experience to help others. (Nigeria, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Feedback on the organization of the program was generally positive, with participants emphasizing that the program was well-run and that there were few issues in terms of program implementation. Coaches and sports administrators especially found the program to be very well-organized and highly professional, and this level of professionalism and care left an impression on them.

We were well-taken care of. In terms of lodging, food, everything. It was all so well planned and organized. The level of training was excellent but also the mix of other activities as well. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

Participants, especially youth athletes, mentioned various FHI360 staff members that they had a strong connection with, often noting they felt staff went out of their way to care for them. A few specific FHI staff were mentioned by several youth participants as staff members that helped them during their time in the United States and are still in contact with since returning to their home countries.

[FHI staff], they were the best. They were like our parents. They really looked after us and took care of us. It was so well organized. (Nigeria, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

At one point, I lost my bag with my passport in it and everything. I was nervous that [...] would be upset but he was very patient and talked me through it. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

To be more frank with you, [...] who was supervising us in this program had a positive impact on my personality and I learned a lot from him. Honestly, he is a great example of a wise leader and he became my role model in this aspect. (Morocco, Using Sport to Create Community Change, Coach)

U.S. Embassy staff echoed the sentiment of the program being well-run. They overwhelmingly felt that working with both FHI 360 and the ECA Sports Diplomacy Division was a “smooth process”, that both parties were “really helpful, very responsive.”

[We] had great engagement from both the ECA program staff and FHI 360. The events seemed to be relevant and well done. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

I think that the whole process is really smooth, at least from our side. In general, whenever we've done it, the process has been really smooth. Even for the participants, they find it really easy. No complaints. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

LOGISTICS

During alumni interviews, some participants noted they had to do a great deal of walking during activities or cultural visits. While program participants are generally in good shape,

many of them mentioned the long distances that they were being asked to walk left them tired and sometimes too depleted to give their full energy and attention to the next activity at hand. A few noted that perhaps getting to use public transportation at such times would provide an interesting glimpse into American daily life that they would have welcomed.

We really had to do a lot of walking in the city. We were all tired a lot. Sometimes I would tell someone how far we had walked and even they would be shocked we had walked so far. It would help if we could have taken a bus instead. (Haiti, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

There were also some issues that came up with youth that participated in home stay visits. Overall, participants obtained substantial benefits the home stays, though several participants reported some mix-ups in terms of communication that caused them stress. For one participant, she ended up with a different family than originally assigned. For another, the host family was told the student assigned to them was from a different country than they were from. Also, since the home stays were relatively short, participants preferred to be assigned to a host family with another Sports Visitor participant, instead of being on their own.

Finally, some participants mentioned that having more interpreters present would have allowed them to be more independent and interactive. Particularly those who were not comfortable speaking English said they struggled with only two interpreters responsible for translating for the whole group.

INCLUSIVITY

U.S. Embassy staff explained in interviews how the Sports Visitor Program allows them to work with populations in their country that they otherwise would not be able to reach. This included women, underprivileged youth, and people with disabilities.

When we saw it existed, we were very excited because we did not have programs that involved sports. It helps us target underprivileged youth and is very popular with this group. They see other programs as designed for elite. Sports Visitor is by far the only one they like and apply to. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

The program provides access to programming for those with disabilities. It's an opportunity to show how the Americans with Disabilities Act is being enforced and how the U.S. is helping those with disabilities, specifically athletes. It helps participants look at ways we can use what they learned to push access with all here. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

Some U.S. Embassy staff shared challenges in recruiting diverse participants. They offered recommendations to address these challenges, including making programs more accessible for persons with disabilities, adding programs focused on boys (in addition to

current programs focused on girls), and expanding the youth age range to include slightly older participants.

I would like to see us push for better accommodations for people with all different kinds of disabilities. With deaf athletes, they had to know American Sign Language, otherwise we also have to send interpreters. [There should be] fully available funding for reasonable accommodations. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

The high rate of violent extremism indicates that they need to intervene more with boys. Also boys tend to struggle more with issues like substance abuse. Some boys have noted their exclusion from the programs and said, 'what about us?' (U.S. Embassy Staff)

It would have been easier if ECA was less strict with their requirements, especially around...the age group [for youth programs]. It would be better if they were able to send older girls. They [youth participants] understand why ECA has chosen that particular age group, but local culture makes it hard. An older group might be able to come back and share their information better, and stay in touch with posts better. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

A few participants from Muslim countries, such as Niger and Indonesia, noted that the schedule did not permit them time to do their prayers. They requested that time be built into subsequent programs for Muslim participants. This sentiment was echoed by Embassy staff, who had heard the complaint from their alumni.

There was no time for prayer, so we all had to do all our prayers at night. It was a full schedule and there was just no time all day to pray. We raised it to the organizers, but they could not accommodate us. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

CONNECTIONS

One of the clear benefits of the program is the relationships alumni built with other program participants. Coaches and administrators generally seemed to be mostly in touch with alumni peers from their own countries. Youth alumni are in touch with other alumni from around the world, although many of them are in touch with people from their own geographic region. **The main method alumni use to stay in touch with one another is through WhatsApp chats and, to a lesser extent, Facebook.** While there is little use of email or phone calls, alumni from certain countries have tried to meet up in person since returning home. Internet access and connectivity issues affect these efforts to some extent, especially for alumni in less developed countries and especially those who live in more

remote geographic regions outside capital cities. Many of these alumni, both among the youth and adult groups, only have access to the internet at their schools or places of work.

We are in touch with other alumni from Nepal, from our group, but also from Ukraine, Cambodia, India. We talk on WhatsApp with one another, we have our own group. It's good to keep up our connections with each other, we motivate each other and give support. (Nepal, Youth Soccer and Women's Empowerment, Youth)

There are mixed responses in terms of alumni's direct connection to the Embassy.

Some have not been in touch with the Embassy at all since their return, while others say they are in touch on a personal basis or informally.

Alumni that report being in touch with the Embassy note being pleased and encouraged when the Embassy highlights their efforts on their social media pages. These social media posts serve a reciprocal benefit of the Embassy boosting alumni initiatives while sharing information on beneficial U.S. programming serving the communities. While COVID made it difficult for Embassy representatives to attend many of the in-person events that alumni organized, the interviews reiterate how valuable such ongoing engagement with the Embassy can be for alumni.

The U.S. Embassy was invited to attend our event but due to COVID measures, they were unable to attend. But throughout the tournament, I was able to send them images thanks to a coordinator they have who passed [the pictures] along. At the end of the tournament, the U.S. Embassy even put my event on their Facebook page. They shared that they were proud of what I had done after returning home from the program. (Niger, A New Class of Coaches for Niger, Coach)

Additionally, some alumni report that they stay informed about events and training opportunities offered through the Embassy. However, because of a lack of internet connectivity and time zone challenges, no alumni interviewed reported being able to participate in any Embassy virtual workshops or seminars.

Yes, it is very good that they are doing these webinars but unfortunately, as I have been discussing with alumni in Zimbabwe, no one has participated in any because we are faced with the challenge of 1) time difference and 2) access to the internet. Most of the guys can only access internet at work. When they are back home, they do not have access to internet and most of the webinars are scheduled when we are home. They should try to ensure that the webinars are scheduled during our office hours or the Embassy could provide [internet/phone] credit for those participating in the webinar. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Student Participation in Sport, Coach)

A majority of Embassy staff reported that they stay in contact with their alumni. Additionally, they are aware of the projects their alumni are implementing, with most

providing some form of assistance – either in the form of small grants or, for those Embassies unable to provide such grant funding, attending alumni-organized events.

We like to support [alumni] - for the minority we can support with funds...They like to reach out and tell us what they're doing/how they're doing. We also have an alumni coordinator. She keeps tabs on what they're doing. Provides alumni with info on opportunities...Unfortunate that we can't help all of them to get off the ground. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

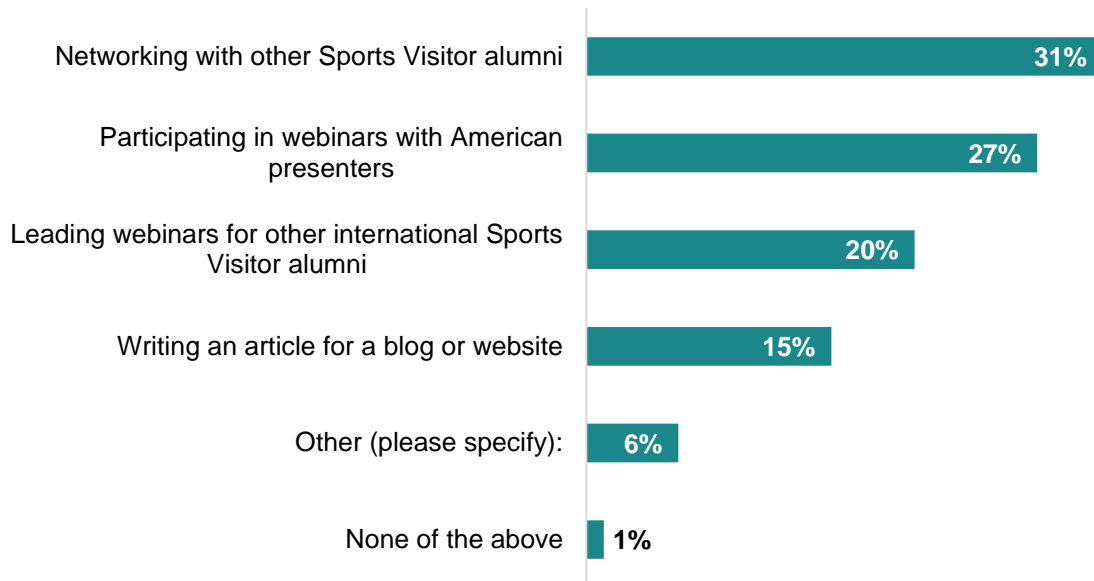
Embassy staff was able to go to several of the [project's] events....They saw that there was a big change in the girls, their leadership and what they could do. Community members commented on how much the girls changed. (U.S. Embassy Staff)

RESOURCES

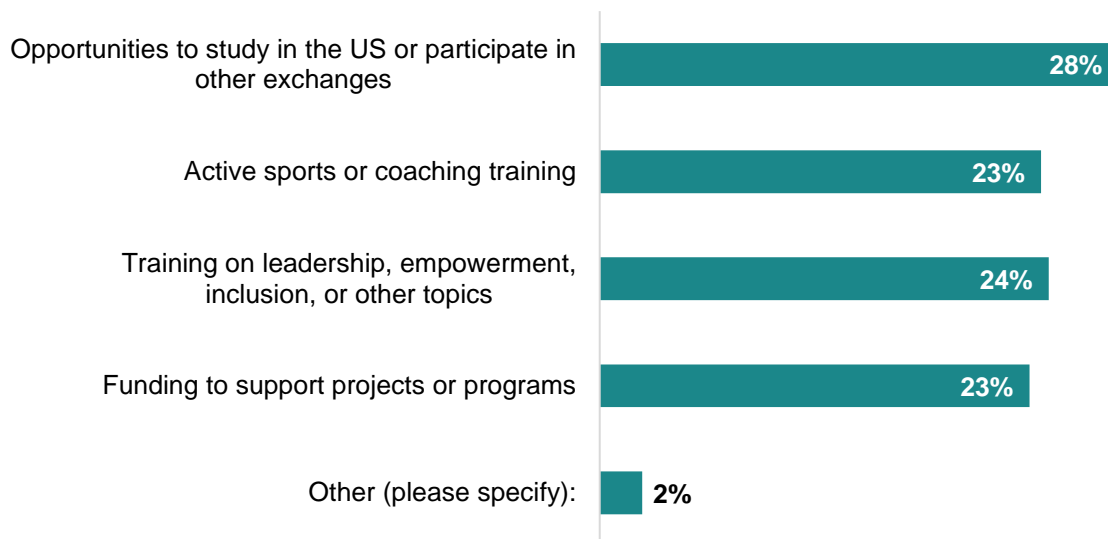
Alumni generally ask that further efforts are made to continue to support them in their learning and their efforts to give back to their communities. While the benefits of their participation in the program were immense, they stress that ongoing support from the program would facilitate their continued efforts to improve themselves and their communities.

In terms of specific activities and resources, additional trainings and professional support were most commonly requested. While alumni had diverse suggestions as to what sort of follow-up programming they would like to see, from additional support of how to work with particular athletes with disabilities, to further administrative training on fundraising and budgeting, the overall message was that they were eager for whatever additional continued learning could be made available to them. Alumni also note that just continuing to stay connected to both the Embassy as well as their fellow alumni is of great value to them, personally and professionally.

What alumni activities would you be interested in? *Please select all that apply.*



What resources would you like to have access to as a Sports Visitor alum? *Please select all that apply.*



Additionally, 31 percent indicated additional networking with their fellow Sports Visitor alumni, with in-depth interviews expanding this sentiment with a desire to access to the global network of sports professionals. While some alumni mention the need for follow-up financial support in the form of small grants or loans (including 23 percent from the survey) some ask for in-kind donations like sports equipment or access to sports facilities.

I feel the Embassy should follow-up [after] maybe six months to a year to check on alumni progress. For example, alumni can be invited back to the Embassy to discuss how they are doing and how far they have left to go. I would like more webinars where alumni from different countries can discuss how things are going with a coach from the U.S. who is teaching on a particular session. Any way we can continue the learning will be valuable as we will pass that on in our own teachings as well. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Student Participation in Sport, Coach)

If the American Embassy can help us keep up the connections [and] also allow us to share our experiences, even virtually. We would like more consistent contact, like connections [to] alumni from different years, from different programs, different countries even. We could have a platform online to post our projects, get feedback, support. Like a database, with resources, workshops, videos. A site where we can share, learn and connect. These resources will just help us to continue the effect of the program. (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

In speaking about how ECA and FHI360 could support Embassy efforts at maintaining relationships with their program alumni, about half of Embassy staff stated the need for additional funding for alumni to pursue follow-on projects. Beyond that, there were a variety of suggestions, which included trainings for alumni on how to develop follow-on projects, assistance in maintaining alumni records (which would help support sustained contact), and having ECA play a more direct role in helping alumni maintain contact with partner organizations they had worked with in the United States.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings show that the Sports Visitor Program not only meets its stated objectives but has an impact on its participants well-beyond those goals. With the emphasis on alumni action plans, there are self-sustaining institutional and organizational legacies of the program in alumni's home countries. As such, the evaluation indicates that the Sports Visitors Program is a worthwhile investment.

The goals of the program include¹⁶:

- Increase and deepen understanding of U.S. society, culture, and history, and dispel stereotypes;
- Promote cross-cultural and mutual understanding, and an appreciation for diversity, between American and international participants;
- Cultivate leadership and develop capacity for participants to build stable communities and strong civil society institutions in the United States and abroad;
- Engage priority audiences, including at-risk youth, women, minorities, people with disabilities, and non-English speakers.

The program strives to include diverse individuals from a variety of backgrounds and marginalized communities like women, people with disabilities, and varying socio-economic conditions. The program's intentional focus on women in sports and adaptive and inclusive sports makes this program a natural fit for members of communities that would otherwise not be reached by Embassy programming. While the goal to engage priority audiences is being met, accomplishments under this goal could be enhanced if aspects of the program were made more accessible to participants such as interpreters for deaf participants, travel and lodging accommodations and scheduled breaks that align with prayer times.

Data indicated unequivocally that participants developed skills that strengthened their abilities and commitments to support and bolster their own communities. In fact, the program's focus on action plans encouraged many of the coaches to put their passion to action upon returning to their home countries. Small grants that support alumni in launching such programs serve as a critical lifeline in communities and among alumni who lack resources.

Some participants, especially people of color, were surprised at how open and tolerant Americans seemed to be towards them because they were concerned about racism and possible acts of violence against them from Americans. However, they were happily surprised to have been treated well by everyone within the program and the Americans they

¹⁶ As stated in the 2020 NOFO. Similar goals are stated in the FY 2017 NOFO: a) Showcase and enhance American expertise, leadership, and lessons learned in the sporting arena, from community-based recreational youth play to professional levels; b) Increase and deepen understanding of U.S. society, culture, and history, and dispel stereotypes; c) Promote cross-cultural and mutual understanding, and appreciation for diversity, between U.S. peers and communities and program participants; d) Cultivate leadership and develop capacity for participants to build stable communities in the U.S. and abroad; and e) Address U.S. foreign policy goals.

encountered, indicating that the program is making progress toward increasing understanding of the United States and dispelling stereotypes.

I had an idea that maybe they [Americans] are racist or maybe they don't like people from other countries, like black people or something like that. Because I am also not European, because I also have brown skin. But when I got there, they were really open minded, and they were open and kind to me. It really changed my opinion about them, about Americans. (Belgium, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

It was a positive experience. Socially – this is one of the most important experiences that I had because my understanding of the U.S. and the perception of the U.S. had completely changed after the program. Before I visited, America was like a movie to me (what is portrayed in movies). But after the visit I realized that Americans are not as aggressive, ruthless, or causing problems like I thought. Now, I feel totally the opposite – [they are] loving, caring, considerate. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Student Participation in Sport, Coach)

While there was great progress made toward the goal of “promoting cross-cultural and mutual understanding, and appreciation for diversity, between American and international participants,” achievement of this goal was still somewhat limited. Many participants, especially in the youth programs, made strong and lasting relationships with other participants in their program from either their own region (which was mainly the case among participants from Latin America) or with those from other parts of the world. While these relationships were valuable to participants and contributed to “cross-cultural and mutual understanding,” similar connections were not formed between participants and Americans.

The social side was lacking. It was mainly business. We didn't have a chance to interact with Americans so I can't say that I know too much about them. We stayed mainly with our own group. (Zimbabwe, Improving Student Participation in Sport, Coach)

I would have liked the opportunity to interact with Americans – both for cultural exchange and also to practice my English. We were always with other Latin Americans so we always spoke Spanish. Maybe for future programs we could meet a local sports team and play and interact with other athletes. (Costa Rica, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

Many participants expressed the desire to interact more with Americans – often stating that it would have further increased their understanding of Americans and America. Also, because the program schedule was so full that even if they felt comfortable trying to reach out to meet Americans on their own, they would not have had time to do so.

Unfortunately, I did not really make friends. Perhaps because the program was structured for mainly business. We interacted with the community, but I feel the time was limited because the time was dedicated to lectures. I think the program was congested because it was morning to evening that you had to go through a schedule of activities which for me was too much. I think it would be better if the program went from morning to lunch, and then after lunch people could go explore and learn more about America. (Zimbabwe, Improving University Student Participation in Sport, Coach)

I would have liked more opportunity to interact with Americans – both for cultural exchange and also to practice my English. (Costa Rica, Youth ESL Camp, Youth)

I would like to be able to see if there is a way to create a link or connection with high schools in the U.S. with high schools in Mexico to keep this cultural exchange going. Cultural exchange is the best part! (Mexico, Enhancing the Paralympic Movement, Coach)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Relatively small adjustments to the program schedule and more emphasis on offering continuing resources and engagement would serve to help participants achieve their long-term goals as well as serve Embassy and program strategic goals. In addition to providing online resources, continuing to offer additional small grants programs to support ongoing alumni programming may be something to also consider.

CONTENT

1. A review of the curriculum should be considered:
 - The level of teaching of theoretical materials was too basic for some participants, especially those from Latin America. Program administrators should consider including more advanced material into at least some of the programs.
 - Participants generally asked for more practical and hands-on content. This includes more time on the sports field coaching and playing, and also more opportunities for participants to learn practical applications of the theoretical concepts taught in the classroom.
2. Consider expanding program focus areas to include: entrepreneurship and additional emphasis on the administrative side of sport.
3. There should be more time allocated to cultural exchange with Americans – this was consistent throughout each program and was emphasized as the biggest gap in the program by a majority of respondents. One suggestion participants mentioned multiple times was the need for athletes and coaches to meet with their American counterparts for time on the field and to interact informally.
4. Formally build action planning into the youth program. Many youth participants are initiating community projects once they return home, even though action plans are not a formal part of their program. Helping them prepare while in the United States would strengthen these projects.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

5. The program is well-run and organized, with participants generally feeling well cared for by the program staff. Program administrators should continue their current approach, which is clearly focused on meeting the needs of each participant in the most holistic and enriching way possible. However, a few adjustments to the program would improve participants' experience. These adjustments include:

- Providing more information to host families about the youth they are hosting to alleviate mix-ups that cause participants stress.
- Encouraging all U.S. Embassies to hold pre-departure orientations to allow participants to meet and get to know one another before traveling to the United States. In countries where this did not happen, such as South Korea, participants suggested that having gotten to know each other prior to the program would have been beneficial.
- Increasing the program's inclusiveness, including making programs more accessible for persons with disabilities, adding programs focused on boys (in addition to current programs focused on girls), and expanding the youth age range to include slightly older participants.
- Expanding the program length beyond the current three weeks, which would allow additional for requested cultural activities.
- Having more interpreters present for some of the larger groups of participants. Many participants felt they could have been more independent if there were more than two interpreters responsible for translating for the whole group.
- Building more time into the schedule to allow Muslim participants time to pray.
- Spread sports activities across the schedule and not concentrate them in the first week.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

6. Alumni are well-connected to each other post-program both personally and professionally, indicating FHI360 is successfully keeping alumni connected, however, alumni communication and connection to U.S. Embassies is much less consistent. Alumni are interested in additional follow-up resources, chances for networking, and ongoing training or support. While some ongoing support and resources are offered to program alumni, these should be made more accessible.
 - Participants who are not based in capital cities are limited in their ability to stay connected to U.S. Embassies. Offering additional resources online such as additional instruction, virtual networking events, information about possible grants, or any sort of online connections would be valuable for these individuals. Embassies would still need to consider how to expand this opportunity to alumni with limited internet or computer access.

- Because of the cost of streaming video and time differences, none of the alumni interviewed have been able to take advantage of online programs (i.e. webinars) offered by Embassies, despite their interest. U.S. Embassies should consider participants' time zones and provide internet credit to alumni to participate in trainings. Alternatively, Embassies should consider options to connect with alumni when they have access to internet, such as offering programming during the day when alumni can access internet at their place of work. ECA and FHI360 should consider providing funds to Embassies to assist.
- The evaluation uncovered that not all the coaches and sports administrators had the same access to obtaining grants to support their follow-up projects. At a minimum, additional information on the availability for small grants provided though the program should be offered to alumni. Many participants are not able to continue efforts related to their action plans because of a lack of resources.

EVALUATION

7. One of the issues the Evaluation Division faced in analyzing FHI360's monitoring survey data was a lack of standardization across responses. To avoid these issues in similar future analysis, the following survey standardization steps are recommended:
 - Ensure consistency in survey questions between program years, including standardizing questions to ECA's MODE Framework and having consistent response scales.
 - Utilize standard question formats wherever applicable. For example: drop-box for selecting "Home Country" instead of allowing free-text entry.
8. A longitudinal study¹⁷ with the same program participants may be beneficial to better understand program impact in the long term. With the emphasis on train-the-trainer programming as well as action plans involving the creation of community programs, there may be a significant multiplier effect of the Sports Visitor program. A longitudinal study could help uncover the Sports Visitor Program's possible spill over and/or multiplier effects in alumni's home communities.

¹⁷ Broadly stated, longitudinal studies entail multiple follow-up measurements on a sample of individuals, including their achievement, performance, behavior, and/or attitudes, over a period of time with logically-spaced observation points. The purpose of longitudinal research studies is to gather and analyze on growth, change, and development over time. The result is a more detailed and "real-time" view of how change occurs over time and how it may be linked to a program intervention.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

ALUMNI SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The ECA Evaluation Division, in coordination with the Sports Diplomacy Division and FHI360, is currently undertaking an evaluation of the Sports Visitor Program. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether the Sports Visitor Program is meeting its goals and improve future programming. This is an opportunity for you to share your stories and ideas for how the Sports Visitor Program can improve (or even expand!) its programming.

Taking part in this survey is completely voluntary and your answers will be completely anonymous. The survey is estimated to take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

We ask that you complete this survey by **[DEADLINE]**.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact **[EMAIL]**.

By clicking “Yes” you confirm that you have read the above consent information and agree to voluntarily participate in this survey.

- Yes - take me to the survey
- No - end the survey now **[survey ends]**

Are you under 18 years of age?

- Yes – continue to parental consent
- No – continue to survey

If you are under 18 years of age, please ask your parent or guardian if you have permission to take this survey. **Did your parent agree?**

- Yes
- No **[survey ends]**
- Unsure

Demographics

1. Home Country: [drop-down list]
2. Age: [drop-down list]

3. Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Non-binary

4. Which Sports Visitor exchange did you attend? [drop-down list]

Program Components

5. Thinking about your Sports Visitor experience, in your opinion, please rank the following program components from most (5) to least (1) impactful to you.

	Ranking
Time spent in active sports or coaching training	
Time spent in workshops or classroom sessions	
Time spent volunteering	
Time spent in cultural activities (attending sporting events, tours, etc.)	
Time spent interacting with Americans (home hospitality, homestays, training, cultural activities, etc.)	
Other (please specify):	

Participant Outcomes

[show Q6-8 *only* for youth participants (determine based on Q4)]

6. Have you been able to use the skills or knowledge from any of the following program activities since returning home?

	YES	NO	N/A – This was not part of my program
Sport Skills			
Coaching Skills			
Networking			
Leadership			
Adaptive Sports			
Cultural Activities			
Language Skills			

Sports Club or Program Management			
Action Planning Sessions			

[show Q7 if respondent answers YES to one or more response options in Q6]

7. How have you been able to use what you learned during your Sports Visitor program?

[show Q8 if respondent answers NO to one or more response options in Q6]

8. Please tell us why you have been unable to use certain skills or knowledge. [open-ended]

Action Plan Follow-Up

[show Q9-15 only for coach/administrator participants (determine based on Q4)]

9. Have you implemented the project you designed during your Sports Visitor program?

- a. I have completed my project
- b. My project is in progress [skip to Q11]
- c. I started, but never completed my project [skip to Q14]
- d. I was never able to start my project [skip to Q14]
- e. I did not complete an action plan during my Sports Visitor program [skip to Q15]

10. How many individuals did your project reach?

- a. Less than 50
- b. 50 to 99
- c. More than 100

11. Did any of the following program components give you the skills or knowledge you needed to implement your action plan?

	YES	NO	N/A – This was not part of my program
Sport Skills			
Coaching Skills			
Networking			
Leadership			
Adaptive Sports			
Cultural Activities			
Language Skills			

Sports Club or Program Management			
Action Planning Sessions			

12. Did you face any challenges in implementing your action plan? *Please select all that apply.*

- a. I faced no challenges [**skip to Q15**]
- b. Lack of funding
- c. Lack of community support
- d. Lack of time to commit to your project
- e. Other (please specify):

13. How did you overcome the challenges you faced? [open-ended] [**skip to Q15**]

14. Why were you unable to implement your action plan? *Please select all that apply.*

- a. Lack of funding
- b. Lack of community support
- c. Lack of time to commit to your project
- d. Other (please specify):

15. What support would you need from ECA, the U.S. Embassy or Consulate, or FHI 360 in order to implement your action plan? *Please select all that apply.*

- a. I had all the support I needed
- b. Access to funding
- c. Support from the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in my country
- d. More training on project implementation during program
- e. Other (please specify):

[**show Q16 only if respondent selects c/d/e in Q9**]

16. Have you been able to use the skills or knowledge from any of the following program activities since returning home?

	YES	NO	N/A – This was not part of my program
Sport Skills			
Coaching Skills			
Networking			
Leadership			
Adaptive Sports			
Cultural Activities			
Language Skills			

Sports Club or Program Management			
Action Planning Sessions			

Alumni Engagement

17. What alumni activities would you be interested in? *Please select all that apply.*
- Participating in webinars with American presenters
 - Leading webinars for other international Sports Visitor alumni
 - Writing an article for a blog or website
 - Networking with other Sports Visitor alumni
 - Other (please specify):
 - None of the above
18. What resources would you like to have access to as a Sports Visitor alum? *Please select all that apply.*
- Active sports or coaching training
 - Training on leadership, empowerment, inclusion, or other topics
 - Funding to support projects or programs
 - Opportunities to study in the US or participate in other exchanges
 - Other (please specify):
 - None of the above

Interview Opt-In

19. In addition to the survey, we will be conducting interviews to gain further insight into the Sports Visitor experience. Would you be willing to participate in an interview regarding your participation in the Sports Visitor Program?
- Yes
 - No [**survey ends**]
20. Are you under 18 years of age?
- Yes – continue to parental consent
 - No [**skip to Q22**]
21. If you are under 18 years of age, please ask your parent or guardian if you have permission to participate in an interview. **Did your parent agree?**
- Yes
 - No [**survey ends**]
 - Unsure

22. Please provide your contact information so we can schedule an interview:

Name:

Email:

Other contact if preferred (WhatsApp, Viber, etc.):

23. What is your comfort level conversing in English?

- a. Very comfortable [skip to Q25]
- b. Somewhat comfortable
- c. Not at all comfortable

24. What language *other than English* would you be most comfortable conversing in?

- a. Arabic
- b. Burmese
- c. French
- d. Hindi
- e. Indonesian
- f. Khmer
- g. Korean
- h. Laotian
- i. Russian
- j. Spanish
- k. Thai
- l. Other (please specify):

25. All interviews will be conducted remotely. What technology do you have reliable access to? *Select all that apply.*

- a. Phone
- b. WhatsApp
- c. Viber
- d. Microsoft Teams
- e. Zoom
- f. Skype
- g. Other (please specify):

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR U.S. EMBASSIES

INTRODUCTION:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to investigate how Posts engage with the Sports Visitors Program and make recommendations for how the program can be better designed and implemented in future years. I am with ECA's Evaluation Division, working on behalf of the Sports Visitors program office to conduct this evaluation.

Protocol: After conducting interviews with a select number of Posts, we will write a report for the Sports Visitors program office. The notes we take during these interviews will be kept personal and confidential and will not be shared outside of the Evaluation Division.

If there is anything you would like to remain off the record (not for the report), please let me know. Your name will never be associated with the remarks that you make today without first obtaining your permission. We may reach out to you for further comment or elaboration after we finish conducting all our interviews.

Estimated Time: We should need between 30-45 minutes for this discussion.

Further Questions: Feel free to ask me any questions now or at any point during the interview. You can also reach me directly if you think of questions later on.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. What is your role at the post?
2. Why does your Post choose to work with the Sports Visitors program? Is the program used to help achieve certain Post goals?
3. Could you walk me through the process of how your Post engages with the Sports Visitors program?
4. Are there components of the program that you would either enhance or reduce to make the program better fit your Post's goals?
5. Do you receive adequate support from ECA in implementing the program on your end? What support do you need from ECA to better engage with your Sports visitors participants?
6. What challenges do you face working with the Sports Visitors program?

7. Is your post still in contact with Sports Visitors program alumni? If so, how?
8. Do you know of any youth or coach alumni that have implemented projects based on their program experience? Do you have any sense of how effective these alumni programs are?
9. Does your post have any involvement with these alumni projects?
10. How might ECA better support post's efforts at maintaining relationships with Sports Visitors program alumni?
11. What one change might you make to increase the effectiveness, appeal and success of the Sports Visitors program?
12. Is there anything that we missed? Do you have any other comments or advice that we should have asked about but didn't?

Thank you so much for your participation!

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ALUMNI

Introduction (4 minutes)

Introduction of interviewer and participant

- Explanation of purpose of interview: We are from an independent team doing research about the Sports Visitor program that you participated in. We invited you to talk about your experience in the program. Your opinions and ideas will help the program better serve your community in the future.
- Interpretation and connectivity check: Can you understand me okay with the interpreter? Please tell me if anything is unclear or confusing.
- Explanation of use of contributions and recording: We are audio-taping this conversation to remind us what you said later when we write a report, but your personal identity will never be shared. We will conduct interviews with several participants like you and a report will be written based on what we learn during all these discussions. We may use what you say in the report, but nothing you say will be associated with your name, so please speak freely and openly.
- Explanation of the “rules” of the discussion:
 - There are no right and wrong answers – negative feedback is as important as positive.
 - Be as specific as possible with real-life examples whenever possible.
 - Please be sure you are on your own and in a quiet space, free of distractions for the next hour.

Warm-up and Introduction (approx. 5 minutes)

Aim: Introduce participant, their sports journey, and why they were interested in the Sports Visitors Program

- First of all, what sport do you play/coach?
- When did you start playing/coaching? What role does it play in your life?
- How did you hear about the Sport Visitors program? Why did you want to participate?
- When did you visit the United States?

Experience with the Sports Visitors Program Overall (approx. 10 minutes)

Aim: Understanding of overall experience with program

- Now I want to ask you a few questions about your experience with the Sports Visitors Program. Would you say it was a positive experience or negative experience for you overall? Why?
- What did you learn about while you were there? (*probe for: on sports, fitness, health, leadership, teamwork, learning about the United States, gender equality, volunteering, education opportunities, etc.*)
- What was the best part of the program? (*probe for: friendships made, what was learned, getting to come to the United States, skills obtained, sports experience, etc.*)
 - Can you give me a real-life example or story about your favorite experience? (Capture what program activity(ies) this included)
- What was the worst part, or the most difficult part, of your time in the program? (*probe for: issues with program administration, missing home/family, culture shock, food, language barriers, housing, disability access [only if mentioned by participant], etc.*)
- How did you spend most of your time in the United States? Do you think there was a good mix of activities/topics? (*probe for: sports or coaching training, workshops or classroom, volunteering, cultural activities, interacting with Americans, site visits, visiting American homes, etc.*)
 - Was there anything you wished that you were able to do or learn more about during your time in the United States?
 - Anything you wished there was less of in the program?
- Was the United States different than you expected? If so, how? What was the most surprising thing about the United States? How are sports different in the United States than in your country?
- Did your time in the United States change your views on the United States or American people in any way? How so?

Impact of Sports Visitors Program on Participant Since Return to Home Country (approx. 10 minutes)

Aim: Understand lasting impact of their participation in the program

- What have you been up to since you completed the program? (*probe for action plans, applying for grants, follow-up programming, education, etc.*)
- **FOR COACHES ONLY:** Did you develop an action plan? If yes, have you implemented it? What has been the result of your projects? If not, what have been the barriers? (*specific assistance in project implantation, funding sources, in kind donations, size of the project, time period of the project*)
 - If you weren't able to implement your action plan, were there assistance or resources that could be provided that would have helped you implement your program?
- Did participating in the Sports Visitors Program have a lasting effect on your life? If so, how?
- What skills or subjects did you learn about during the program that you've been able to apply since you've come back home? (*probe for: Sport Skills, Coaching Skills, Networking, Leadership, Adaptive Sports, Cultural Activities, Language Skills, Sports Club or Program Management, action planning*)
 - Are there skills that would have been useful that you did not learn as part of the program?
- Beyond just the skills you learned, did you experience any personal growth as a result of your time in the United States or this program? Can you describe that change? (*probe: growth in self-confidence or inter-personal skills*)
- Would you recommend the program to others? If so, how would you describe it to them?

Experience with Alumni Outreach (approx. 5 minutes)

Aim: Understand attitudes and opinions on the United States after their experience in the Sports Visitors Program

- Have you participated in any activities with the Embassy or other program alumni since your return home? (*probe for: sports leagues, social media groups, mentoring other participants, webinars, writing an article for a blog/website, networking with other alumni, etc.*)

- Are there any follow-up activities or resources you would like to see? (*probe for: sports or coaching training; training on leadership, empowerment, inclusion, or other topics; more funding to support projects, opportunities to study in the United States or participate in other exchanges, etc.*)
- Anything else you would like to share with you about what it's like to be a Sports Visitor program alumni?

Wrap-up (approx. 1 minute)

Aim: To elicit open feedback to potentially raise points of importance for participants that were not addressed earlier in the discussion

Is there anything I missed that you would like to tell me about, either positive or negative?
Any other final comments?

Thank you so much for your participation!

ANNEX B: DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY

DATA COLLECTION	AF	EAP	EUR	NEA	SCA	WHA	TOTAL
Pre-Survey Monitoring Data	41 (13%)	70 (23%)	75 (24%)	26 (8%)	46 (15%)	51 (17%)	309
Post-Survey Monitoring Data	33 (13%)	74 (28%)	42 (16%)	13 (5%)	51 (20%)	47 (18%)	260
Follow up Survey Monitoring Data	4 (6%)	20 (30%)	14 (21%)	6 (9%)	15 (23%)	7 (11%)	66
U.S Embassy Interviews	3 (19%)	6 (3%)	2 (13%)	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	16
Alumni Survey	33 (17%)	44 (23%)	28 (15%)	20 (10%)	26 (13%)	42 (22%)	193
Alumni Interviews	8 (30%)	6 (22%)	1 (4%)	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	9 (33%)	27



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