

COMMUNITY SPORTS COMMITTEE

Report on the Study on Sport for All – the Participation Patterns of Hong Kong People in Physical Activities

Purpose

This paper reports to the Community Sports Committee (CSC) the findings and recommendations of the Study on Sport for All – the Participation Patterns of Hong Kong People in Physical Activities (the Study).

Background

2. Various government organisations and related bodies have all along committed to providing diversified community sports services for the public and encouraging active participation in sports activities across different sectors of the community to promote the culture of Sport for All. These services have been introduced for years and it is now an opportune time to put in place a systematic and objective mechanism to gauge the level of public participation in sports for assessing the effectiveness of the relevant work. In August 2006, the CSC endorsed six major strategies for the development of community sports. One of the strategies was to develop indicators to measure the effectiveness of strategies for promoting community sports. Specifically, it was hoped that through conducting a large scale survey, data such as the extent and frequency of public participation in sports would be collected to measure objectively the extent of Sport for All in the community so as to facilitate an effective assessment of the effectiveness of all the work implemented for promoting community sports. The findings would also be used as reference for formulating future strategies for further development of community sports. The Working Group on the Formulation of Indicators for Measuring the Effectiveness of Sport for All (the Working Group) was then formed under the CSC to deal with the task.

3. At its meeting on 8 June 2007, the CSC endorsed the proposal on the Study submitted by the Working Group. The Study was conducted in two phases, i.e. a literature review and a questionnaire survey. In September 2007, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) commissioned the Department of Sports Science and Physical Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (the Consultant) through an open tender exercise to undertake the literature review, design and co-ordinate the questionnaire survey and prepare a consolidated report. The literature review was completed in January 2008. The Working Group reported the results of the literature review and submitted a proposal on the questionnaire survey to

the CSC on 20 February 2008. The results and proposal were unanimously endorsed by Members. The LCSD then commissioned the Consumer Search Hong Kong Ltd in April 2008 through another open tender exercise to conduct the questionnaire survey. The survey was conducted from 22 May to 10 July (phase one) and 2 September to 19 October (phase two) in the form of a household interview survey. Upon completion of the survey, the Consultant conducted an in-depth analysis of the data collected and submitted a report to the Working Group on 27 November. Thereafter, the Working Group had a series of discussions with the Consultant regarding the findings and recommendations of the Study. The final study report submitted by the Consultant consists of three parts: results of the literature review; main findings of the questionnaire survey; and recommendations based on the findings of the Study. The summary of the Study is set out at the annex for Members' reference.

Results of Literature Review

4. To understand the trend and development of Sport for All, apart from Hong Kong, the Consultant studied documents collected from ten countries/economies/cities (the studied areas), namely Canada, the European Union, the UK, the USA, Australia, China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The purpose was to provide reference for establishing the definition of Sport for All and a set of indicators for measuring the effectiveness of Sport for All. The Working Group submitted the results of the literature review to the CSC on 20 February 2008. Upon consolidation of Members' views and subsequent amendments, the key results of the literature review are summarised as follows:

(a) Main Focus on Sport for All Policies Adopted in the Studied Areas

The literature review shows that all the studied areas recognise the importance and benefits of Sport for All to the community as well as individuals. As each studied area has its own cultural background and needs, each puts different emphasis on the promotion of Sport for All. For example, the European Union values the improvement of health and relations among Member States while the UK and the USA aim at solving the obesity problem. For China, Sport for All is to improve health of her people. For Japan, it is to improve the quality of its people's life. Therefore, each has its own focus regarding the Sport for All policy.

(b) Sport for All and its Definition

Although each studied area has its own interpretation and definition of Sport for All, most of them recognise that health maintenance and improvement could be achieved through regular participation in physical activities. Most of the stakeholders for promoting Sport for All in the studied areas note that education systems and school environments are effective channels to promote participation in physical activities and sports

among children and youngsters. With reference to the Sport for All policies of the studied areas and the CSC's views, the definition of Sport for All proposed in the report of the literature review is as follows:

“Sport for All” refers to creating opportunities and favourable environment through the collaboration of stakeholders and government support to enable everyone, regardless of gender, age, ability, socio-economic status or ethnicity to participate freely in physical activities and sport.

The report of the literature review reveals that in most of the studied areas, the term “Sport” in Sport for All generally refers to any physical activities that consume energy, including sports and daily activities. As the Study also aims at analysing the data of public participation in sports for assessing the effectiveness of the work on Sport for All done by sports organisations, therefore, data on participation in both physical activities and sports were collected.

(c) Measurement of the Extent of Sport for All

In general, data in the following two areas are the major concerns of studies on the extent of Sport for All: whether the public has participated in physical activities; and then the frequency and intensity of such participation. These data are used for calculating the percentage of population that meets the relevant indicators of physical activities. It is therefore necessary to collect the following data for measuring the extent of Sport for All:

- (i) data on respondents' participation in physical activities (including sports); and
- (ii) the percentage of respondents that meets the relevant indicators of physical activities.

(d) Indicators for Measuring Participation in Physical Activities/Sports

The studied areas generally agree that the extent of participation in physical activities is an important indicator for measuring the effectiveness of the promotion of Sport for All. Measurable indicators have therefore been formulated to give stakeholders in the community a clear direction regarding the common target of Sport for All. The information collected show that despite the indicators used in the studied areas are not identical, most adopt the indicator that the minimum amount of physical activities for health maintenance is “participation in physical activities of moderate or vigorous intensity at least three days a week with at least 30 minutes per day”. China, the UK and Taiwan are among the countries/areas which adopt this as basic indicator. Other researches also show that cumulative

of 30 minutes of physical activities/sports of moderate or vigorous intensity are beneficial to health. Therefore the consultant proposed that Hong Kong adopt “participation in physical activities of moderate or vigorous intensity for at least three days a week with an accumulation of at least 30 minutes a day (each bout should last at least ten minutes)” as the indicator (baseline indicator). Since the minimum amount of physical activities for health maintenance differs among age groups, many overseas health organisations and authorities propose to set different indicators for different age groups. Therefore, apart from the baseline indicator, the Study also made reference to the indicators of the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and US Centre for Disease Control (USCDC)/US Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) (US indicators). The authorities had set three indicators for three different age groups, namely those aged 7 to 12, 13 to 19, and 20 or above, these indicators are listed as follows:

- (i) children (aged 7 to 12): to engage in five days a week of at least 60 minutes (accumulated) of age-appropriate and developmental appropriate physical activities (recommended to be of moderate to vigorous intensity);
- (ii) youngsters (aged 13 to 19): to engage in at least three days a week of physical activities that last at least 20 minutes at a time that require moderate to vigorous intensity of exertion;
- (iii) adults (aged 20 or above): to engage in moderately intense physical activities for at least five times a week and for at least 30 minutes (accumulated) per day.

(e) Modal for Promotion of Sport for All

Hong Kong can draw special reference from the policies for the promotion of Sport for All of various studied areas (Australia, the UK, Canada, South Korea and Singapore in particular). On top of participation in physical activities, these areas put greater emphasis on the importance of “education” and “service”. “Education” can improve individual cognition, attitude and skills in respect of participation in physical activities, while “service”, i.e. the provision of leisure facilities and programmes, can encourage public participation. Besides, indirect participation in physical activities, including being sports volunteers and sports attendees, should also not be neglected. To sum up the above, the integrated structure model of promoting Sport for All is:-



Main Findings and Analysis of the Questionnaire Survey

5. To facilitate collection of comprehensive data on the participation patterns of Hong Kong People in physical activities, the questionnaire survey adopted a random sampling method in choosing households for the face-to-face interviews. A household member aged seven or above was selected from each sampled household by the Kish Grid Method for the interview. As data from different age groups would be collected, the questionnaire was specially designed for respondents of different age groups. To avoid possible seasonal differences in participation patterns in physical activities, the survey was conducted in two phases, i.e. May and September, to collect the data of participation patterns in physical activities and sports in colder period (January to March) and warmer period (June to August). A total of 5 091 respondents aged seven or above (collectively referred to as Hong Kong citizens hereinafter) were successfully interviewed. The information and data collected in the questionnaire survey have been collated and analysed with the main findings summarised below.

6. On Sports Participation -

(a) Sports Participation Rates

In the three specified months (i.e. January to March 2008 or June to August 2008), 65.5% of Hong Kong citizens indicated that they participated in sports for at least once. The participation rates of different age groups varied (95.6% for aged 7 to 12, 84.5% for aged 13 to 19, 67.2% for aged 20 to 39, 58.8% for aged 40 to 59, 53.3% for aged 60 or above). Among them, 41.2% (27.0% of Hong Kong citizens)

participated in sports at least three times a week, and 80.4% (52.6% of Hong Kong citizens) at least once a week.

- (b) Comparison with Previous Relevant Studies on Sports Participation Rates
Comparing with the surveys conducted by the former Sports Development Board from 1996 to 2001 on sports participation of Hong Kong people aged 15 or above, the Study indicated a large increase in sports participation rate in the previous three months of people aged 15 or above, an increase from 48% in 2001 to 63.1% in 2008 (this Study). This might be attributed to the active promotion of Sport for All by various major partner organisations in the past years, as well as the Beijing Olympics held this year which might have aroused people's enthusiasm and interests in sports participation.
- (c) Sports Most Often Participated in
The data indicate that among those Hong Kong citizens who participated in sports in the three specified months, the top three most popular sports were jogging (13.8%), swimming (13.2%) and badminton (10.1%). The most popular sports were swimming for children aged 7 to 12 (19.8%), basketball for youngsters aged 13 to 19 (23.2%), swimming and jogging for adults aged 20 to 39 (15.6%), jogging for adults aged 40 to 59 (15.3%), and fitness exercise/stretching for the elderly aged 60 or above (24.6%).
- (d) Sports Venues Mainly Used
The data indicate that among Hong Kong citizens who participated in sports in the three specified months, more than half (60.6%) used mainly the leisure facilities of the LCSD or other government departments. Most of the activities were organised by themselves/friends (85.6%), followed by schools/the school sector (9.4%) and the LCSD (5.0%).
- (e) Sports Companions
Among Hong Kong citizens who participated in sports in the three specified months, about half (46.9%) usually played sports with friends/neighbours, 40.8% played sports alone and 13.1% with classmates. Children aged 7 to 12 usually played sports with their parents (47.8%); youngsters aged 13 to 19 (64.4%) and adults aged 20 to 39 (58.3%) most often played sports with friends/neighbours; while adults aged 40 to 59 (51.8%) and the elderly aged 60 or above (62.9%) usually played sports alone.
- (f) Sports Participation Time
The data indicate that Hong Kong citizens who participated in physical activities in the three specified months usually participated in sports in the morning (35.3%), then in the evening (27.6%) and in the afternoon (20.2%) in weekdays. If classified by age groups, most children (50.6%) and youngsters (44.6%) participated in sports in the afternoon, while adults

aged 20 to 39 did so in the evening (50.2%), and adults aged 40 to 59 (41.5%) and the elderly aged 60 or above (75.6%) usually did so in the morning.

(g) Sports Most Desired to Learn

The first three sports which Hong Kong citizens most desired to learn were swimming (14.7%), Tai Chi (10.3%) and badminton (8.8%). Those aged 7 to 59 wanted to learn swimming most, while the elderly aged 60 or above wanted to learn Tai Chi most (20.6%).

(h) Main Considerations for Learning a Sport

The first three considerations for Hong Kong citizens to choose a sport to learn were “interest” (40.7%), “keeping fit/health” (21.3%) and “time available” (11.6%). Facilities (4.8%) and cost (2.9%) did not seem to be primary considerations. Those aged 7 to 59 indicated that “interest” was the primary consideration for sports participation (43.1%) while elderly aged 60 or above rated “keeping fit/health” their primary consideration and “interest” came as secondary (19.6%).

7. **On Participation of Physical Activities -**

(a) Physical Activities Level

According to the data analysis of the questionnaire survey, and when make reference to the “baseline indicator” of physical activities level (i.e. participating in moderate or vigorous physical activities for at least 30 minutes accumulated a day and at least three days a week), 48.6% of Hong Kong citizens meet the level of the “baseline indicator” (including attending PE lessons). This also means that more than half of Hong Kong citizens do not reach the standard. Among them, 25.6% only did 30 minutes of low intensity physical activities in a week on average in the past three months, while 3.1% did less than 30 minutes of low intensity physical activities in a week on average in the past three months. The amount of physical activities of these people was seriously inadequate. Classified by age groups, 76.6% of children, 68.1% of youngsters and 44.2% of adults reached the standard of the baseline indicator and can be regarded as active participants of physical activities. Of those who did not meet the standard, 5.9% of children, 11.6% of youngsters and 32.3% of adults could be regarded as inactive participants.

When adopting the “American indicator” which bases on age groups, 33.3% of Hong Kong citizens reached the standard (including attending PE lessons), while the inactive percentage was as high as 29.4%. Classified by age groups, the rates of active participants were 34.1% for children, 71.3% for youngsters and 29.1% for adults, while the rates of inactive participants are 20.2% for children, 10.3% for youngsters and 32.3% for adults.

(b) Primary Reasons for and Barriers to Participate in Physical Activities

The primary reasons for Hong Kong citizens to take initiative in participating in physical activities included “keeping fit/health” (35.9%), “interest” (12.9%) and “physical activities/sports is a habit in daily life” (11.6%). Respondents aged 7 to 12 (30.0%) and those aged 13 to 19 (26.9%) took initiative in participating physical activities primarily because of “interest”, while the primary reason for those aged 20 to 39 (32.5%), 40 to 59 (42.8%) and 60 or above (47.5%) was “keeping fit/health”.

The primary reasons for not taking initiative in participating in physical activities included “no spare time due to work/study” (30.7%), “tiredness” (17.5%) and “laziness” (14.6%). Statistics shows that the primary reason for respondents aged 7 to 59 not taking initiative was “no spare time due to work/study”, while that for those aged 60 or above was “health reasons”.

(c) Recognition of Appropriate Physical Activities Level

More than half of Hong Kong citizens (57.4%), especially the younger ones aged 7 to 12 (72.0%) or the elderly aged 60 or above (77.7%) considered that they had sufficient or very sufficient amount of physical activities. Findings also show that more than half of the respondents aged 13 to 59 considered that they had sufficient amount of physical activities. However, if respondents in the three age groups were evaluated using the two aforementioned indicators, many of them failed to meet the recommended amount of physical activities. For example, only 44.2% and 29.1% of those aged 20 or above met the recommendations of “baseline indicator” and “American indicator” respectively. Hence, quite a large portion of the respondents still failed to meet the recommended level of the physical activities. There is a significant gap between self-evaluation and objective assessment.

(d) Suggestions on Further Promotion of Sport for All

The majority of Hong Kong citizens aged 13 or above thought that “strengthening media publicity” (42.1%) and “increasing community sports facilities” (25.7%) could help promote Sport for All. Other suggestions included “providing more sports training classes” (19.4%), “strengthening physical education in schools” (18.2%), etc.

(e) Sports Facilities Most Desired to be Added

48.8% of Hong Kong citizens aged 13 or above considered the current sports facilities in Hong Kong sufficient while 39.1% of them thought the otherwise. Overall speaking, according to those who considered sports facilities in Hong Kong insufficient, the most insufficient ones were “badminton courts” (24.5%), followed by “swimming pools” (21.0%) and “sports centres” (19.5%). The sports facilities most desired to be added identical to the ones that they considered most insufficient. Respondents

aged 13 to 59 wanted badminton courts to be added the most, while those aged 60 or above desired for more sitting-out areas with sports facilities.

- (f) Comparison between Hong Kong citizens with Different Active Levels
Comparing the active and inactive Hong Kong citizens, there were differences in their sports partners, recognition of physical activities level, reasons for and barriers to participation in physical activities. People regarded as inactive spent more time on television/computer and less time on walking. They preferred to participate in sports alone and most often did fitness exercises/stretching with relatively low intensity. Conversely, active people spent less time sitting and more time walking. Fewer of them smoked. The findings also showed that adults who were slightly more active have higher academic qualifications and family income.

Suggestions

8. Based on the above findings, the Consultant has made the following suggestions –

- (a) Participation of Stakeholders
All studied areas unanimously agree that support must be enlisted from all stakeholders in society, including the government, non-governmental organisations, the National Sports Associations, district sports organisations, schools, etc., for the promotion of Sport for All. Concerted efforts should be made to provide members from different strata of society with opportunities to participate in physical activities and sports. **It is suggested that the findings and recommendations of the Study be introduced to different stakeholders in society with a view to enlisting their support in the future development of community sports.**
- (b) Promotion of Physical Activities
According to most studied areas, the word “sport” in Sport for All refers to physical activities, while physical activities include sports and activities of daily life. Therefore, in the promotion of Sport for All, members of the public should be encouraged to participate in physical activities, instead of focusing on sports participation alone. **It is suggested that more promotional messages and information on physical activities participation be conveyed to members of the public.**
- (c) Physical Activity Indicators
In the Study, two different indicators of physical activities participation have been adopted to analyse physical activities participation of Hong Kong people. One is the “baseline indicator” which is used by more studied areas and the other is “US indicator” recommended for people of different ages by USCDC/USDHHS. It is found that more than half of

the respondents (51.4%) whose amount of physical activities currently does not meet the standard of the baseline indicator. To promote Sport for All should encourage more people to participate in physical activities regularly, **it is suggested that the more attainable and encouraging indicator suitable for all age groups (i.e. baseline indicator) be adopted as the starting point to promote physical activities participation in Hong Kong. Inactive and slightly active people are recommended to participate in moderate or vigorous activities at least 30 minutes accumulated a day and three days a week. Adoption of a more attainable indicator can help encourage members of the public with insufficient physical activities to participate in more physical activities.**

(d) Mode for Promotion of Sport for All

Considering the suggested promotion mode, Sport for All should be promoted from three aspects, namely participation, education and service. Participation includes direct and indirect participation in physical activities or sports; education aims to improve people's attitude to and skills in physical activities or sports through promotion and education, while service refers to the provision of facilities and training programmes. To encourage wider and more frequent participation in physical activities or sports, **it is suggested that, apart from continuing to provide leisure facilities and organise recreation and sports programmes, the advantages of regular participation in sports be promoted through various channels and information on ways to participate in physical activities or sports be disseminated. Moreover, members of the public should be encouraged to participate in sports events as spectators or volunteers such as cheering team members. Education on various ways to participate in sports should also be further enhanced. As the survey only focuses on direct participation of sports, it is suggested that other aspects related to Sport for All could be considered as subjects of future studies.**

(e) Sports Most Often Participated in and Most Desired to Learn

The findings showed that the sports most often participated in were swimming for children, basketball for youngsters, jogging and swimming for adults aged 20 to 59, and fitness exercise/stretching for the elderly. The sports most desired to learn were swimming for children and adults aged 59 or below, and Tai Chi for the elderly. **It is suggested that more such activities be organised to cater for the needs of different age groups.**

(f) The Use of Leisure Facilities

The findings show that 60.6% of Hong Kong citizens participated in sports activities in the leisure facilities of the LCSD or other government departments. **It is suggested that the stakeholders provide more**

diversified sports facilities for the public.

(g) Sports Partners and Sports Participation Time

Children as well as adults aged 39 or below had the habit of participating in sports activities with partners, while the majority of adults aged 40 or above and the elderly participated in sports activities alone. Hence, the time for doing sports activities vary among different age groups. **It is suggested that diversified activities of different combinations should be provided for different age groups. For example, more parent-child activities should be organised for joint participation of parents and children, and more team-based activities for youngsters. In addition, more sports/physical activities for individual participation should be introduced to the middle-aged and the elderly.**

(h) Primary Considerations for Learning a Sport

The findings reveal that the primary considerations for participating in a sport were “interest” for youngsters respondents and “keeping fit/health” for the elderly. **It is suggested that various types of recreation and sports programmes be organised to cater for the needs of different people. More diversified and novel activities should also be organised to attract youngsters. Moreover, more recreation and sports programmes suitable for seniors should be introduced to the elderly.**

(i) Physical Activities Level

With reference to the baseline indicator, 76.6% of children, 68.1% of youngsters and 44.2% of adults met the standards. However, with reference to the American indicator, only 34.1% of children, 71.3% of youngsters and 29.1% of adults met the standards. **It is suggested that the stakeholders in the community continue promoting Sport for All and encourage more people of different active levels to participate in physical activities to raise their physical activities level and attain physical fitness.**

(j) Recognition of Physical Activities Level

The findings show that, among the three age groups, most respondents do not reach the recommended standard of physical activities level. Overall speaking, only 48.6% of them meet the standard of the baseline indicator. However, most respondents (57.4%) thought they had adequate or very adequate amount of physical activities. If the American indicator was adopted, the condition of failing to meet the standards would be worse. It reflected that their recognition of the physical activities level was inadequate. **It is suggested that the baseline indicator be extensively publicised to enable members of the public to self assess their physical activities level.**

(k) Facilities Most Desired to be Added

The findings show that badminton courts, swimming pools and sports centres were the sports facilities most desired to be added. People aged 13 to 59 wanted badminton courts to be added the most, while those aged 60 or above desired for more sitting-out areas with sports facilities. **It is suggested that stakeholders should make reference to the public's opinions when planning to construct new sports facilities.**

(l) Providing More Opportunities for Sports Participation According to Needs of Different Targets

The common reasons for not participating in physical activities/sports were “too busy” and “tired”. The inactive group spent more time on television and computers. **It is suggested that simple physical activities/sports that can be done at home or workplaces be designed for this group.**

In the long run, more opportunities should be provided for different sectors of the community to allow them more leisure time and space to participate in physical activities/sports. For example, for the working population, it is suggested that enterprises of different size be encouraged to implement five-day week to enable their staff to have more leisure time. The enterprises should also make good use of their working environments and consider adding suitable facilities or equipment in their companies or workplaces to motivate their staff to participate in physical activities/sports. The education authorities should also maximise the use of school resources and through various means encourage students to participate in more physical activities/sports to make doing so a habit.

Taking into account the similarities and differences of the policies on Sport for All of the studied areas, the promotion of Sport for All should specifically aims at three levels of sport population groups. The first level is to let those who do not do exercises be aware of the enjoyment and importance of participation in sports and to prompt them to start participating in sports. The second level is to encourage those who do a low level of physical activities to cultivate the habit of doing exercises regularly. The third level is to encourage those who always do exercises to keep up the habit for improving their physical fitness and enjoying the fun of exercises. **It is suggested that different physical activities/sports strategies be tailor-made for the above three types of sports population groups.**

(m) Disseminating the Message of Participation in Physical Activities through Different Publicity Channels

According to the findings of the questionnaire survey, media publicity should be strengthened to arouse public awareness on the importance of

participation in physical activities/sports. **It is suggested that APIs on promoting the benefits and importance of participation in physical activities/sports be produced and broadcast in prime time slots on television, roadshows and radio. Moreover, simple and easy-to-remember slogans should be drawn up to publicise the benefits of participation in physical activities/sports. Furthermore, publicity posters should be posted at the spots with high pedestrian flow, e.g. MTR stations, bus stops, minibuses and entrances of public estates.**

(n) Studying the Participation Patterns in Physical Activities on a Regular Basis

In order to gauge the sports participation rate for assessing the extent of Sport for All with a view to strengthening or adjusting the publicity strategies as appropriate, **it is suggested that a survey on the participation patterns of Hong Kong people in physical activities be conducted every five years.**

With reference to the integrated structure model of promoting Sport for All, **it is suggested that relevant studies relating to physical activities be conducted.** Topics may include the relationship between participation in physical activities and quality of life, the participation level and trend of sports volunteers and sports spectators, etc.

Conclusion and Way Forward

9. The Study provides comprehensive and constructive data and information on promoting Sport for All. Members are invited to give their views. A task force group will be formed under the new term of CSC to formulate strategies and specific work plans to further promote Sport for All in accordance with the recommendations of the consultancy report and to set priorities and schedules for follow-ups.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to provide their valuable comments on the findings and recommendations of the consultancy report.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
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