

URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

*A research report investigating the role of urban sports in
Developing European Values*



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1.0 Introduction

Sport has the power to transform lives. Mainstream sports are popular, but do not have appeal for all participants. Urban sports (BMX, skateboarding, inline skating, parkour, street fit and 3 on 3 basketball) are youth subcultural activities that have increased appeal to young people not interested in mainstream sports. The Sport 4 Values (S4V)¹ project aims to understand the benefits to young people taking part in urban sports and their motivations for doing so.

This report is a core part of the S4V project; it lies at the heart of the belief that participation in urban sports for young people can develop a series of values and skills as well as a range of psycho-social benefits.

Coaches, sport and youth development workers and non-governmental organisation (NGO) managers working in urban sports understand these benefits, but very little research and data exist on the benefits of urban sports on young people. Furthermore, few resources exist on how to develop values and a range of other positive benefits for young people through urban sport – this research and report is a first step to fill this knowledge gap.

Whilst some urban sports are individual in nature, the culture surrounding them include respect, solidarity, working together, freedom of expression and tolerance. These values not only support wider values, including European values, but also create feelings of social inclusion and cohesion within communities (both communities of place and communities of interest) and being part of a team – a cultural identity.

The benefit of sport is widely recognised² and through the S4V project the aim was to identify good practice, conduct research and disseminate them through a series of workshops, training and conferences for urban sports development.

1.1 The Sport 4 Values project

S4V is a European-wide project delivered between January 2019 December 2020 and involves municipality and community partners across the European Union. Through this research project we aim to understand the benefits of urban sports and how they can be used for the development of positive values amongst young people. The S4V project is an initiative funded by the European Commission under the call,

Promotion of European values through sport initiatives at the municipal level³

Based on the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union's fundamental values are:

- 1) Respect for human dignity
- 2) Human rights
- 3) Freedom
- 4) Democracy
- 5) Equality
- 6) The rule of law

These values unite all the member states and the main goal of the European Union (EU) is to defend these values in Europe and promote peace and the wellbeing of the citizens⁴.

¹ S4V website - <https://sport4values.eu/en/>

² Research and opinions on sport and values - [link](#)

³ Call details - https://ec.europa.eu/sport/calls/eac-s14-2018_en

⁴ Objectives of the European Union - <https://europarlamenti.info/en/values-and-objectives/objectives/>

Through the European Parliament these values are enshrined in law with the aim that the EU member states are pluralistic, nobody may be discriminated against; people must respect others and be tolerant; everybody must be treated fairly; minority rights must be respected; equality between men and women is promoted and responsibility must be shared.

By using the power of sport to transform lives, and especially urban sports, a range of benefits can be achieved with the S4V project focus on the promotion of (common) European values through urban sport.

Furthermore, urban sports often support a range of strategic priorities and activities delivered by municipalities and can be used to promote:

- Inclusion and integration
- Community cohesion
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Education and training

These priorities feed into youth, sport and community development work municipalities often deliver. Using an 'assets-based and sport for development' approach, municipalities can use the learning from this report in their own communities.

In the review of literature below, we will explore this asset-based approach further, highlighting the role of sport for values development and with a focus on the international dimension. It is also widely accepted that sport provides a universal framework for values and values development⁵ and this work explores this in detail.

1.2 Sport and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Some of the NGOs and resources mentioned in this report also reference Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in some way and so it was felt worthwhile to outline the origins and purpose of SDGs. In 2015 all United Nations members adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – an action plan for people, planet and prosperity⁶.

There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁷ which “...are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing – in a global partnership”. The approach for establishing these SDGs is about tackling issues such as poverty, alongside the need to “...improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests”.

The SDGs shown below in Image 1 provide a focus and framework for governments, NGOs, businesses and citizens to work towards and many of the resources and outcomes of organisations mentioned in this report are focussed on working toward these SDGs.

⁵ UNESCO sport and values advocacy infographic - <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246351>

⁶ UN Agenda for Sustainable Development - [link](#)

⁷ UN SDGs - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

Image 1 – United Nations Sustainable Development Goals



1.3 Report contents and deliverables

This report includes an outline methodology below of *how* the research project will be delivered and, in the Appendices, provides a detailed methodology. This outlines the resources needed, questions for interviews and survey, the methods for collecting data, the outputs and final deliverables.

There are three key main requirements to the research project, they are:

1. To identify motivations for participation and use of indoor and outdoor facilities among participants
2. To identify the possible social, personal, and psychological benefits and impacts associated with participating in urban sports
3. To identify the pro-social and the learning benefits (i.e. development of positive values) of participation in urban sports

This work is delivered as part of the S4V project and forms a key part in understanding how urban sports can be used to develop values. The resulting outputs or deliverables include a separate methodology, write up of the stakeholder interviews and participant focus groups and detailed analysis of the survey findings.

1.4 About the report authors

Tulba Consulting is a management consultancy working within the social and community enterprise sector, public services, the private sector and sport. We are based in the UK and Lithuania and have worked on a range of evaluations and research projects, delivered training and coaching, programme management and provided consultancy services for social and community enterprises.

Over the last 20 years we have worked across the European Union and near neighbours including Belarus, Algeria and Morocco and farther afield including South Korea and the Philippines. Clients have included international NGOs, charities and social enterprises, cultural organisations, local authorities and municipalities.

2.0 Summary of findings

2.1 Partner and stakeholder interviews

Three interviews were conducted with stakeholders and partners from the S4V project or working in in urban sports and 'sport for development' (SfD). Interviews were either face to face or via online video conference call using a loose interview template of 20 questions to manage the conversation (see Methodology in Appendix 1). Interviews took place between October and December 2019 and lasted typically around 1 hour and covered a range of topics.

Here we summarise the motivations for setting up the organisation and values the interviewees had seen or experienced working in urban sports. We are very grateful for the openness of interviewees in sharing their experiences and views.

The individuals and organisations interviewed were:

- Roberts Klēpis, Rave Team and park Liepāja, Latvia
- Emily V. Ronek, GAME Denmark
- Jonas Lyxen, Umeå Skatepark, Sweden

Summary of interviews

Throughout the interviews a series of themes emerged that resonated with the survey findings, focus group discussions and the experience of the author working within urban sports over the last 15 years. Both Rave Park and Umeå skatepark came into existence as a response to a lack of facilities with 'founders' building their own facilities, often outdoors.

The climate in northern Europe can be a challenge and groups often approach municipalities for support with an indoor facility. At this stage a divergence and tension can occur from a desire to maintain outdoor and / or informal activities, to indoor or purpose-built facilities and the need to set up a structure to engage with the municipality and manage a building and the challenges associated with that such as the ongoing overheads and business risks.

In the examples interviewed, the indoor parks came out of a need followed by a period of experimentation (trial and error), sometimes different groups of skaters and riders working together to secure facilities and often working in partnership with the municipality.

The age ranges varied from as young as 5 years old at Rave Park to GAME Playmakers in their early 20s and skaters in their 30s for Umeå skatepark. This shows the broad range of participants in urban sports and the mixing that can often take place between ages. Diversity in urban sports is a challenge with participation in parks and venues typically being unrepresentative in terms of young women and girls, ethnicity and disability participants.

GAME has inclusion as a core value and was established to engage underrepresented groups and, where funding has been provided from the municipality – working in partnership – underrepresented groups can be engaged and supported.

Key values identified

Throughout the conversations several themes came to the forefront. These centred around creativity and how participants expressed themselves through the lines (routes) taken through the ramps and tricks they chose. Linked to this – and evident from the widespread use of social media – is making videos and ‘edits’ of tricks. Photography is also an integral part with the of posting images alongside videos on social media profiles.

Key values from the discussions included the idea of self-discipline and resilience; planning, focusing and executing tricks and managing the risk of falling and hurting yourself. It is widely accepted that you will fall and maybe hurt yourself, but participants are seen to ‘just get up and get on with it’. One final value that came through in conversations was inclusivity and feelings of community – ‘being a part of something’.

Whilst the word ‘movement’ was not used during the interviews – those that are active in communities see the idea of spreading the benefits of urban sports through a movement or ‘scene’.

2.2 Participant survey

The majority of the 106 respondents to this question, 35% were BMXers and 29% skateboarders, followed next by scooter riders at 18%. Inline skaters, parkour / street fit participants and 3 on 3 basketball accounted for 4% of respondents. Thirty four percent (34%) were under 18 years of age and 46% were 19-29. Respondents were distributed throughout Europe and included most S4V partner countries / municipalities with concentrations in the UK around Corby, the home of Adrenaline Alley and Kaunas, Lithuania.

Respondents were motivated to participate because of friends and to have fun with 88% engaging weekly and a preference for indoor facilities (42%) followed by outdoor parks and venues (25%) and then ‘street’ (23%). Skateboarders preferred the ‘street scene’ in terms of steps, benches and rails and not being confined to a space. From the survey, BMX and scooter riders mostly preferred indoor parks and facilities to outdoor parks and street riding.

When asked about benefits participants got from urban sports, the top 4 were enjoyment / fun; meeting friends; physical activity / mental wellbeing and; interaction with others. The self-reported benefits therefore include social *and* health benefits (physical and mental). There were some differences identified by participants of the different urban sports, but the small sample sizes at this level (20-35 respondents per sport), could skew the results.

Happiness, being happy and excited appeared in nearly 50% of responses when participants were asked to describe how they felt when doing their sport. In terms of what they have learnt that they didn’t learn at school, the responses mapped very well onto the three themes (domains) of social, personal (development) and psychological:

- **Social** – 25% of responses with key statements suggesting improved social skills and communication with people, including from other countries and different ages and the idea that people can learn to ‘co-exist’ positively with others
- **Personal** – 43% of responses stated terms such as perseverance and being able to work at their own pace and developing communication skills
- **Psychological** – 22% stated things such as learning to develop resilience, improved self-confidence and overcoming fear of failure
- **Not applicable (NA)** – 10% of respondents saw urban sports as the best teacher for life and for physical skills development

There were a range of statements that supported each of the domains above and respondents were empathic about what they learned and got from urban sports that was not available to them whilst at school or college.

A total of 18 questions were developed that explored urban sports values that associated *with* and linked *to* European values. The results of the survey showed weighted averages that have a high degree of relevance / synergy between the feelings, behaviours and observations associated with urban sports. These were based on the average of scores from the 5-point Likert scale that showed that the values associated with urban sports was 4.1 (out of 5) and that respondents had experienced these feelings, demonstrated these behaviours or had observed them.

There was one question (number 19) that was a statement about conflicts and disagreements often taking place at parks and venues. The result showed that nearly 60% of respondents disagreed with this statement, that nearly 55% would try to stop conflicts taking place and that over a third (34%) saw people trying to solve problems and conflicts.

2.3 Focus groups

Two focus groups took place, one at Adrenaline Alley Corby (UK) and the other at Kaunas City Municipality offices (Lithuania). Fourteen participants took part across both focus groups with an age range between the ages of 12 years and 31 years, including two females, with 3 participants between 30 and 31 and all from a mix of sports including:

- BMX riders = 4
- Skateboarders = 4
- In-line skaters = 2
- Scooter riders = 3
- Adrenaline Alley member of staff = 1

The age ranges for the focus groups were intended to be between 10 to 29, but the views of the 3 older participants were relevant – including the member of staff at Adrenaline Alley.

Discussion in the focus group was centred on 4 questions linked to respect; looking out for each other / having someone's back; solving conflicts / problems; acceptance and being part of a community or movement.

Common themes came from both discussions including the prominence of unwritten rules and etiquette with these codes of conduct 'enforced' through positive peer pressure, role models, older rider and sometimes staff (linked to / working at parks).

Respect was a common theme with older and more accomplished riders receiving a lot of respect, but this respect being reciprocal – it was given back. Respect was shown through nods, fist-bumps (each person bumping their fists together), clearing the way for a rider or skater to complete their run or trick and with others reciprocating.

Role modelling came to light as a way of transmitting this culture and values with participants observing, reacting and modelling behaviours.

There was also a strong feeling of cultural identity and newcomers would often be welcomed with information about jumps, lines and local spots to visit being freely exchanged. The role of social media was also acknowledged. This allowed people to develop their creative skills, review footage from tricks in order to improve and also share directly with friends and more widely through platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.

SECTION 1

3.0 Background and context

This report, and the research it is based on, is a core component of the S4V project. It lies at the heart of the belief that participation in urban sports for young people can develop a series of values and skills alongside a range of psycho-social benefits. Those working with young people in urban sports understand these benefits, but very little research and data exist on the benefits of urban sports on young people.

Through the S4V partnership – 8 municipalities in 8 countries plus their NGO partners and including the Union of Baltic Cities (UBC) affiliated cities – have come together. More information can be found on the S4V website and below, in Image 2 we list the partners and a map representing European partners.

Image 2 – Location of Sport 4 Values Partners



1. Liepāja, Latvia
2. Umeå, Sweden
3. UBC (based in Gdańsk, Poland)
4. Sandanski, Bulgaria
5. Portimão, Portugal
6. Thermi, Greece
7. Larissa, Greece
8. Campobasso, Italy
9. Fažana, Croatia

Plus the UBC affiliated cities

3.1 Urban sport and European values

Identifying and mapping urban sports values against European values began at the first and second S4V partner meetings (Kaunas, Lithuania on 27th March 2019 and Sandanski, Bulgaria 19th June 2019).

The following table has been refined over time and shows what the partners have identified as the main values associated with participation in urban sports with these matched against the 6 European values⁸.

⁸ European values - https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/eu-in-brief_en

Table 1 – Urban sport values and European values

European values	Values achieved through urban sports
Respect for human dignity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect (INTERNAL) • Looking out for each other (EXTERNAL)
Human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect (INTERNAL)
Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open mindedness (INTERNAL) • Overcoming pain and fear (INTERNAL)
Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict resolution (EXTERNAL) • Problem solving (EXTERNAL) • Looking out for each other (EXTERNAL)
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration and equality (gender, age etc.) (EXTERNAL) • Community building/sense of belonging (you belong when you are equal to others) (EXTERNAL) • Open mindedness (INTERNAL)
The rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility (take responsibility for actions) (INTERNAL) • Discipline (equals freedom) (INTERNAL) • Codes of conduct / unwritten rules / etiquette (EXTERNAL)

The methodology in Appendix 1 describes in more detail the development of urban sport values and later on, in the discussion (7.0), we explore in more detail the research findings and compare these values with the GAME Empowerment Model (in 4.3 below).

3.2 Definition of urban sports

The S4V project defines urban sports broadly as youth sub-cultural sporting activities – and to date – the S4V project has focused mainly on ‘wheeled’ sports such as BMX and skateboarding. Parkour / street fit and 3 on 3 basketball are also considered urban sports with one S4V community partner representing street fit and GAME Denmark representing an NGO delivering SfD through street sports, indoor facilities and skateboarding.

It is also considered that these activities have increased appeal to young people not interested in mainstream sports such as ‘full team’ sports such as soccer, hockey and basketball. Furthermore, these sports are often delivered through a professionalised and institutionalised system, often with paid coaches and in managed facilities.

It must be noted that this is not a challenge to mainstream sports but recognising that sometimes young people ‘not in the mainstream of society’ prefer alternative activities and sports that are themselves not in the mainstream.

3.3 Definition of youth and young people

Youth is defined by the United Nations (UN) as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years⁹. They recognise that the definition changes, “*especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings; however, the definition that uses 15-24 age cohort as youth fairly serves its statistical purposes for assessing the needs of the young people and providing guidelines for youth development*”.

⁹ UN definition of youth (PDF) - <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

The benefits of sport and urban sports are understood to extend to young people in general – with many urban sports venues providing access, services, projects and activities for children as young as 5 years. Through this project we want to understand the motivations, benefits and impacts on young people and the development of values.

The starting point for this research is to understand the current research and data, and specifically on the benefits and impact of urban sports in a range of domains. These are explored in the review of current literature below which also identifies various resources.

4.0 Review of literature and resources

This review of literature and resources takes a broad approach and covers recent research, reports, websites and toolkits, with a focus on the field of ‘urban sports for development’. This is based on the definition of urban sports above, but it is understood however, that research in this area is limited.

The scope of this review therefore includes ‘sport for development’ (SfD) approaches as well as the use of sport for the development of values within young people. By SfD we refer to the use of sport for personal, social and community development, particularly amongst youth.

4.1 Sport for development

While sports are seen as a key tool for development and peace¹⁰, and its role in sustainable development recognised¹¹, very little research exists in the role of urban sports for development. There are many sports for development organisations operating at local, national and global as well as thematic areas, Table 2 below provides just a small sample.

Table 2 – Sports for Development organisations

Level / theme	Organisation / website
Local and national	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vilnius Social Club (LT) – using football for community development in Vilnius, Lithuania. https://www.vilniussocialclub.lt/en/about-us/• Street League (UK) – ‘sport for employment’ and youth work using football and dance fitness to engage, develop skills and improve employability. Operates in communities throughout the UK. https://www.streetleague.co.uk/• Sported (UK) – an NGO with members using sport for education / employability (getting ready for work), development of health and wellbeing, tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, inequality in sports and developing community cohesion. Sported work in the UK. https://sported.org.uk/about-us/
International and global	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laureus Sport for Good – using sport to end violence, discrimination and disadvantage through education, employability, promotion of peace. Operate globally. https://www.laureus.com/

¹⁰ International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, 6 April - <https://www.un.org/en/events/sportday/>

¹¹ Sport and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1027531>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoops 4 Hope – providing equipment, facilities and education support to young people throughout South Africa and Mozambique. Have projects in Angola, Zimbabwe, Lithuania, Canada and the United States. http://hoopsafrica.org/ • Skateistan – this NGO combines skateboarding with creative and arts-based education. Their focus is on groups who are often excluded from sports and educational opportunities, especially girls, children living with disabilities and those from low-income backgrounds. They operate in Afghanistan, Cambodia and South Africa. https://skateistan.org/ • Skatepal – working with local people in Palestine and international volunteers Skatepal teach skate classes, build skateparks and provide equipment. The aim is to enable skaters to empower themselves and inspire the next generation of Palestinian youth. http://www.skatepal.co.uk/ • GAME Denmark (DK) – a global NGO founded in 2002 that uses 3 on 3 basketball, skateboarding, parkour and street fit for development through street ‘Game zones’ and GAME Houses (see 4.3 for more information). GAME operates globally including Europe, Jordan, Somaliland, Lebanon and Ghana. http://gamedenmark.org/
Women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women Win – Women and girl’s empowerment through sport operating in Asia, Africa, Middle East, North and South America. http://www.womenwin.org/homepage • Moving the Goalposts (Kenya) – a girl’s football for development organisation founded in 2002 mobilising girls and young women in football leagues and tournaments, leadership development, peer education on sexual reproductive health and rights, advocacy within communities and cooperation with parents and stakeholders, and educational support and economic empowerment. Operate exclusively in Kilifi, Kenya. https://www.mtgk.org/
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indiability Foundation (India) – “...operates in partnership with the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, and uses sport as a social vaccine to create Disability Confidence between disabled and non-disabled Indian society”. They operate in India. http://www.indiability.org/

These charities, social enterprises and NGOs use SfD approaches to engage young people and to use the power of sport to transform lives. Some have also developed a range of toolkits and resources that are publicly available¹²⁻¹³⁻¹⁴, but there are fewer resources and information for the development of young people through urban sport.

¹² SFD toolkit - <https://www.sport-for-development.com/>

¹³ UNICEF Sport for Development platform - <https://www.unicef.org/topics/sport-development>

¹⁴ Sport for Development platform - <https://www.sportanddev.org/en>

Sport for development research

Research on freestyle scooter-riders was carried out and published in 2016 by Johnson and Oates looking at personal skills learning of young people in skateparks¹⁵. This research is of interest because Johnson and Oates noted that skateparks where “young people’s personal skill development occurs with a high degree of apparent autonomy and a relative lack of adult intervention” (*op cit*). These themes have emerged consistently throughout discussions with S4V partners, stakeholders and survey respondents and focus groups participants.

Johnson and Oates acknowledge the scarcity of research – particularly on free-style scooter riders (although research on urban sports is rare) – and that scooter riding is an expanding new sport¹⁶. Their research was on 8 to 17-year olds of mixed abilities and included structured interviews with 23 participants.

Analysis of research

Their analysis showed that the learning that took place involved self-conscious decisions (intent) towards mastery of a set of skills and tricks. This learning was self-motivated and aimed at mastering a set of skills in their “own trajectory” i.e. at their own pace.

Young people’s learning and development involved several components:

- A high degree of control over their learning – parks and venues allowing for observation and passive learning
- The use of active learning – searching out videos on YouTube or face-to-face interaction, feedback and positive from peers. The authors also note theories about ‘effective scaffolding found in more formal learning contexts’ and the benefits for learning and development
- The benefits of competition as an ‘important learning and community cohesion function’
- Learning lessons from failure and the progression this provides i.e. ‘learning the hard way’. The authors also stated “Having a space where they could make mistakes ‘without getting hurt too much’ was also considered to be supportive of learning”
- Learning and progression through videoing tricks and reflection

Other aspects include the ‘transferability’ of being able to ‘read the environment’ – the observation of how others move and the flow of a park – and these being transferable to other parks (NB: this could also possibly include other contexts and improve self-awareness). The progression of different sizes of ramps, jumps and boxes allowed for learning and development and social spaces to congregate provided space for feedback, the sharing of tips and reflection.

Implications for learning and development through urban sports

The Johnson and Oates research showed a range of implications for those working in urban sport development and the learning young people can get. These include:

- Young people recognising the difference between learning in schools and the informal learning that takes place in skate parks

¹⁵ ‘A study of freestyle scooter-riders learning in the skate park’, Johnson and Oates (2016), Cambridge Assessment

¹⁶ It has to be noted however, that scooter riding is likely to be non-existent as an urban sport in some European countries

- Young operating – despite this informal setting – in a rule bound environment with a culture of ‘high rule compliance’. It is worth noting here that these rules are unwritten and form ‘codes of conduct’
- Respect was evident for high-skilled riders and they often served as role models and offered feedback. The concept of role modelling was developed by Bandura¹⁷ and is worth exploring in another study as this is not within the scope of this research.
- Mixed ages operated together in spaces, but often in terms of social groups (friendship circles) with mixing between groups and often with deference (respect)
- The management of spaces and those participating shape the culture for learning and development of young people (see Bandura, 1977)
- Peer feedback was an important part of learning (and could be extended by providing training to young people to become more effective leaders and trainers)
- Caution was raised by the authors with educators and institutions seeking to engage with young people in these contexts because their non-formal and institutionalised culture is part of the attraction to young people

It must be noted that this study was conducted with free-style scooter riders that were relatively young. Skateboarding, BMX and inline have been around for decades with street skateboarding originating in the early to mid-1970s. Conducting the same research with other disciplines – and older age participants – may elicit different responses.

To date, very little research exists in the role of urban sports for the development of values. GAME Denmark have an ‘empowerment model’ through enhancing these basic life skills through sports of children and young people, this is explored later in 4.3.

4.2 Sport for values development

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) have provided a web platform and range of resources for those working in ‘Values Education through sport’¹⁸. They have produced this resource because they understand the value of education in addressing 21st century challenges and “...the role of values and social skills in tackling global challenges, such as inactivity, obesity, unemployment, and conflict”.

This is at the core of SDG4 on ‘quality education’ “...which advocates for inclusive lifelong learning opportunities and innovative content delivery”. The role of sport is important as they recognise that it can be used to teach values such as:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| • Fairness | • Inclusion |
| • Team building | • Perseverance |
| • Equality | • Respect |
| • Disciple | |

By providing a ‘universal framework’ for learning values, sport can contribute to the development of ‘soft skills needed for responsible citizenship’. These values resonate with the European values and urban sport values discussed elsewhere in this report and can also be found in an advocacy infographic produced by UNESCO¹⁹.

The UNESCO approach is also based on ‘delivery in the classroom’ (formal education) and the transfer into the community by community organisations.

¹⁷ Bandura – Social Learning Theory - [link](#)

¹⁸ UNESCO web platform - [link](#)

¹⁹ UNESCO advocacy infographic - https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246351_eng

It is supported up by a range of resources including an animated video (sub-titled in French), bi-lingual photo book²⁰⁻²¹ and the advocacy infographic mentioned previously.

4.3 GAME Empowerment Model

GAME is a global NGO founded in Denmark in 2002²² that has a well-developed methodology for the delivery of urban sports activity including 3 on 3 basketball, skateboarding, parkour and street fit. GAME's mission and vision are set out below:

GAME's mission is to create lasting social change through youth-led street sports and culture

GAME's vision is that each and every child and youth should have access to sports and culture

To achieve its mission and vision GAME delivers activities at GAME zones and GAME houses. The 'zones' are street and asphalt spaces for the delivery of activities in residential areas with the 'houses' dedicated indoor spaces for delivery of a range of activities and services.

GAME also has a clear focus on supporting the UNs Sustainable Development Goals with GAME focusing on the following SDGs:

Goal 3 – Good Health & Well Being
Goal 5 – Gender Equality
Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities

Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities
Goal 16 – Peace, Justice & Strong Institution's
Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

These GAME SDGs above are taken from page 21 of their 2018 annual report²³ and are supported by evidence to show how the GAME methodology provides a range of benefits to young people and the communities they live in.

The GAME Empowerment Model also "...aims to empower children and youth by enhancing their basic life skills through sports". In this context GAME uses the World Health Organisations' (WHO) definition for life skills,

*"Life skills mean the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life"*²⁴

Life skills refer to psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills – and when developed through sport – can help young people develop the following:

- Improved ability to make informed decisions
- Solve problems
- Think critically and creatively
- Communicate effectively
- Build healthy relationships
- Empathise with others
- Cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner

²⁰ UNESCO video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4mhtXPVAI0&feature=youtu.be>

²¹ UNESCO photo book - <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244344>

²² GAME Denmark website - <http://gamedenmark.org/>

²³ GAME 2018 Annual Report - [link](#)

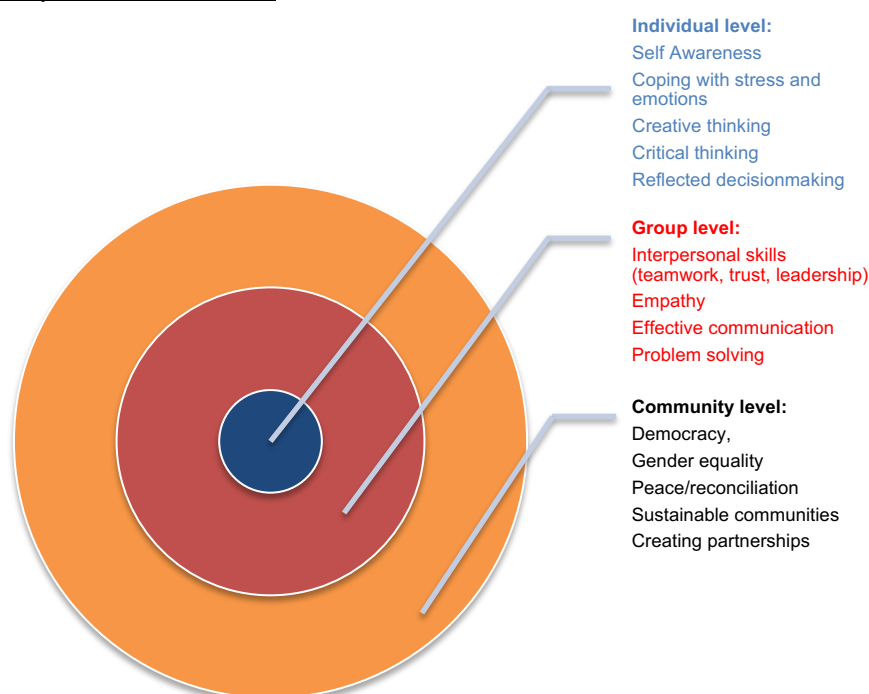
²⁴ UN definition of life skills - <https://unevoc.unesco.org/go.php?q=TVETipedia+Glossary+A-Z&id=444>

What is interesting to note is that the development of life skills may be directed toward personal actions (**INTERNAL**) or actions toward others (**EXTERNAL**) which is relevant to the identification of internal and external values discussed in the methodology of this report (Appendix 1) and outlined in Table 1. Furthermore, the WHO definition goes on to state that 'life skills' may be "*applied to actions that alter the surrounding environment to make it conducive to health*".

This supports the 'community level' dimension outlined in the GAME empowerment model which seeks to break down life skills development into a peer-to-peer context for effective delivery – see Image 3.

The community level dimension is also combined with development at the *individual* level and the *group* level (**INTERNAL** and **EXTERNAL**). By developing life skills on these two levels, children and youth are enabled and empowered to be active citizens – this leads them to be co-creators of peaceful, equal and democratic communities – on the community level.

Image 3 – GAME Empowerment Model



In the discussion of this report we will identify and discuss the similarities between the GAME empowerment model and the urban sports and European values table (Table 1). This will include comparison between the internal and external values and individual and group level psycho-social competencies and interpersonal skills described above.

4.4 Summary of the review of literature and resources

From desktop analysis what is clear is that there are many organisations, charities, social enterprises and NGOs working in the field of sport for development. They all use the power of sport to transform lives and communities and very much see sport as a force for good being able to achieve a range of outcomes. More recently SDGs have been used as a way of focussing attention and resources and many SfD organisations are working towards and supporting a range of SDGs.

In terms of specific research on the value of urban sports – there are many examples and anecdotes of the benefits²⁵⁻²⁶, but very little in the way of empirical research. The study by Johnson and Oates (2016) focuses on a narrow cohort of free-style scooter riders and identified that young people's learning and development involved several components and research identified key implications for learning and development through urban sports.

The current lack of data and information of the role in urban sports for development and use as a tool for developing (positive) values supports the need to this research and any future work in this field. This will be discussed later on in this report.

²⁵ Nae danger: Urban sports are health and fitness winners for kids (Daily Record newspaper) - [link](#)

²⁶ 11 Reasons Why Riding BMX Will Make You a Better Person (Tyson Jones-Peni, 2018) - [link](#)

SECTION 2

5.0 Research methodology

The methodology in Appendix 1 contains a detailed outline for the stakeholder and partner interviews, participant survey and focus group sessions. After the stakeholder interviews and initial analysis of the survey, a template for the structure of the focus groups was created, this can be found in Appendix 2.

This outlines the questions that will be asked during the hour-long session as well as supplemental or follow-on questions to elicit deeper responses to gain better insights. It must be noted that the questions for the focus group was only finalised after analysis of the initial survey findings with some of the finding shared with focus group members to help frame questions.

The methodology shown in Appendix 1 was also updated with the 28 survey questions were placed into categories showing motivations, benefits and how the urban sports values matched or supported European values. The headings used for the survey questions were:

- **General questions** – sport / activity they participate, how often and where (indoor / outdoor / street)
- Their **motivation** or **inspiration** to get involved
- **Benefits** they get, these are classified under the following dimensions:
 - Social
 - Personal
 - Psychological
- **Learning** and **skills** development
- **Common European Values**
- **Validation** – age and location (town / city)

These headings provided a useful framework to breakdown and understand the survey results and to map them onto the main aims of the research. For information, the main aims of the research were to:

1. To identify motivations for participation and use of indoor and outdoor facilities among participants
2. To identify the possible social, personal, and psychological benefits and impacts associated with participating in urban sports
3. To identify the pro-social and the learning benefits (i.e. development of positive values) of participation in urban sports

The survey also began with general questions about their preferred sports, where respondents liked to practice – and how often – with 2 questions to validate responses (age and location). Respondents were also asked to submit their name and email address if they wanted to be included in the prize draw incentive so that they can be contacted if they had won.

5.1 Common European Values

A series of questions were developed that mapped alongside each of the 6 European values. There were 18 questions in total that explored how participants felt, their behaviours and what they observed. The table mapping the questions to the European values can be found in Appendix 3.

5.2 Data collection, incentives and GDPR

The online tool Survey Monkey was used to collect and analyse some data with further analysis using Power BI by Microsoft and Excel. These applications were also used to create the charts and graphs in 6.0 Results.

Participants were also provided with an incentive to complete the survey. This was the equivalent of a £30 voucher to be redeemed at Skatehut UK²⁷, a UK-based online store, with up to £10 of postage costs available. This would cover the costs of delivery to anywhere within the EU for most items available on the online store and to be eligible, participants would have to submit their email address. All personal data for the incentive were collected according to GDPR guidance²⁸.

6.0 Research findings

Interviews were carried out with key partners and stakeholders face to face and also using online video conference software – the results are shown in 6.1 below. The write up of the interviews is based on the interview notes with key themes drawn out with supplemental questions as necessary and follows broadly the following structure:

- Motivations for setting up the project or NGO
- People involved
- Funding
- Partnerships and relationship with municipalities
- Target groups
- Location of activities
- Services / facilities provided

The final set of questions focused on the values interviewees had seen or experienced themselves whilst involved in urban sport. This included their view on the top 3 values in their opinion and a question seeking to better understand 'internal' and 'external' values. Presenting the responses of the interviews this way reflects the free-flowing nature of the interviews whilst – covering the necessary questions – and following up with supplemental questions where necessary. These interviews were also used to refine the final survey that was sent to participants of urban sports – 6.2 provides a summary of the results of the survey.

An initial 'first-cut' of the survey was also analysed and used to develop the questions for the participant focus groups. The aim of the focus group was to carry out a 'deep dive' on the emerging themes and gain a better understanding of motivations, benefits and impacts of participation in urban sports for young people. The focus groups took place in Corby (UK) on 26th January 2020 and Kaunas (Lithuania) on 1st February – the results are shown in 6.3 below.

6.1 Partner and stakeholder interviews

Roberts Klēpis – Rave Team Park, Liepāja Latvia

Like many 'rider-led' facilities Roberts and Kalvis wanted a facility to ride during the winter months. In Roberts' own words, the first specific reason was to, "grow as an individual" – he and his family saw taking on the park as a way to develop.

²⁷ Incentive voucher provider, Skatehut UK - www.skatehut.co.uk

²⁸ EC GDPR - https://ec.europa.eu/info/priorities/justice-and-fundamental-rights/data-protection/2018-reform-eu-data-protection-rules/eu-data-protection-rules_en

Run as an NGO (Society) with support from the municipality, the 'barriers to entry' for young people is low; it is an affordable venue to access for young people. The target age group is between 5 to 17-years and Rave Team work closely with the sports office within the Department for Education and primarily focus their activities in Liepāja, a town of nearly 70,000 people.

When asked, *"what are the kinds of values you have seen / experienced working with young people?"* Roberts stated that it was the *"sense of belonging – being accepted"*. Roberts observes that in the park riders, *"have a chance to do whatever trick and everyone says that's awesome"*.

Despite riders and skaters being from different backgrounds and sports – they are united at the park because they have one collective interest: to ride / skate / scoot / train.

Respect and freedom came up in the interview and the idea that BMX (and urban sports) are different because of the feelings of freedom participants get. This is understood in terms of feeling no limitations in the park and a link to 'creativity', another word that came up regularly. In this context urban sports are seen as creative environments both in terms of:

- Expression i.e. visualising 'lines' (routes around the park and includes the combination of jumps and tricks) and;
- Multi-media and creating video edits of tricks and photography to share via social media or directly with friends

Of the top 3 values / benefits Roberts was asked to have seen or experienced, these were:

1. **Open mindedness / creativity**
2. **Self-discipline** – to push oneself to do the tricks (even if they are nervous about it)
3. **The sense of belonging** – different individuals united by one common goal

Throughout the review of literature, interviews and discussions, respect has featured many times and will be explored further in this report and discussion in 7.0.

Emily V. Ronek – GAME Denmark

GAME is an NGO founded in 2002 in Denmark and operating in Ghana, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malta, and Somaliland (see 4.3 above). It began when co-founder Simon Prahm was working for the largest basketball club in Copenhagen and noticed it was not particularly ethnically diverse and so decided to change this. Having secured funding from the municipality to get young men into the club it was apparent that the institutional nature and culture within the club was also a barrier for continued participation for these young men.

After a period of experimentation, 'taking basketball to the doorstep' and adopting a peer-led model, GAME was born. The model relies on philanthropic donors and funding from municipalities for GAME zones in the community (through Playmakers) and GAME houses for delivery of indoor sessions. They work with local partner organisations to deliver the GAME houses, Playmakers programme and GAME zones.

GAME has 4 values, these are:

- **Innovative** – *Initiating cycles of enduring change*
- **Inclusive** – *Encouraging and engaging broadly*
- **Informally professional** – *Timely grassroots competence*
- **Sustainable** – *Long-term local and global focus*

It was interesting to note that, when discussing European and urban sports values, inclusion and the informal nature (freedom) were regular themes. These resonate with GAME's values it is also interesting to note that the 'informally professional' value, is one of being non-institutional and yet professionally run. This theme – balancing a well-managed facility in a way that is informal – featured in the focus groups and will be discussed later in this report.

Feelings of ownership also featured in the conversation – the idea of a 'community' – which linked to inclusion and the idea that 'you are a GAMER first' and it's that which connected you to other people. This, again, is supported by discussions and findings elsewhere in this report about the idea of belonging to something; a group and identity.

The top 3 values observed by Emily were

- 1) **Inclusion** – young people not fitting into the 'organised structure' but feeling liked they belonged: *"You as a human have an obligation to help people feeling included"*
- 2) **Community** – building up (your) community as well as being a role model; that you have a role (teamwork)
- 3) **Problem solving conflict resolution** – GAMERs needing to find creative way to solve problems or issues

It was also interesting to note the correlation between GAME's empowerment model and operation at an individual, group and community level and the European and urban sports values matrix and internal and external values (see 4.3 Image 2). This will be explored more fully in the discussion.

Jonas Lyxen, Umeå Skatepark Sweden

As with Rave Park, the motivation for setting up the indoor skatepark was because of the long winters and poor weather for skateboarding. Jonas and his team had previously used youth centres, but these were temporary, and they needed a dedicated and permanent park. As with many BMX and skateparks, they approached the municipality for support, who in turn suggested that they 'get organised' and come back when they did. They have subsequently received significant help from the municipality including support with rent and grants to run activities for 'target groups'.

Set up as an association, the skatepark has a board, chairperson, secretary and finance lead that are all appointed at an Annual General Meeting (AGM). They also have a fee structure that members use to gain access the park, but there are no staff; the park operates entirely with volunteers.

There is also closer 'partnership' work with the municipality as new demographics have moved into the city with many agencies reaching out to them to provide activities for these new groups, including refugees and asylum seekers. There is also a major public campaign called Change the Game aimed at contributing *"...to long-term sustainable social development by improving physical literacy among children and young people"*²⁹.

The scale of activities under this campaign are significant and visible with free taster sessions, conferences and support for NGOs.

During the conversation of values that have been observed, the conversation was typical: teaching participants *"to just don't give up... do it 100 times, 200 times, a week, a year and you do it with the risk of hurting yourself. It forces people to go at it"*. Inclusivity came up during the conversation and it was acknowledged that the skate scene was 'quite closed' until people proved themselves.

²⁹ Change the Game, Umeå Sweden - <https://change-the-game.se/en/about-the-project/>

'Looking out for each other, supporting each other and pushing each other' was mentioned as well as sharing feedback and supporting each other and giving tips and suggestions on how to improve. This resonated with the findings of the Johnson and Oates study in the review of literature (see 4.1).

Creativity was another feature of the conversations and the statement that *"A lot of skateboarders are creative – music, art or other stuff – there are some many lines, styles, tricks that fosters your creativity when riding a park"*. This view again was shared by Roberts at Rave Park.

When asked about the top values, most of them centered on resilience and accepting pain from falls and injury, self-encouragement; telling yourself that you pull-off a particular trick.

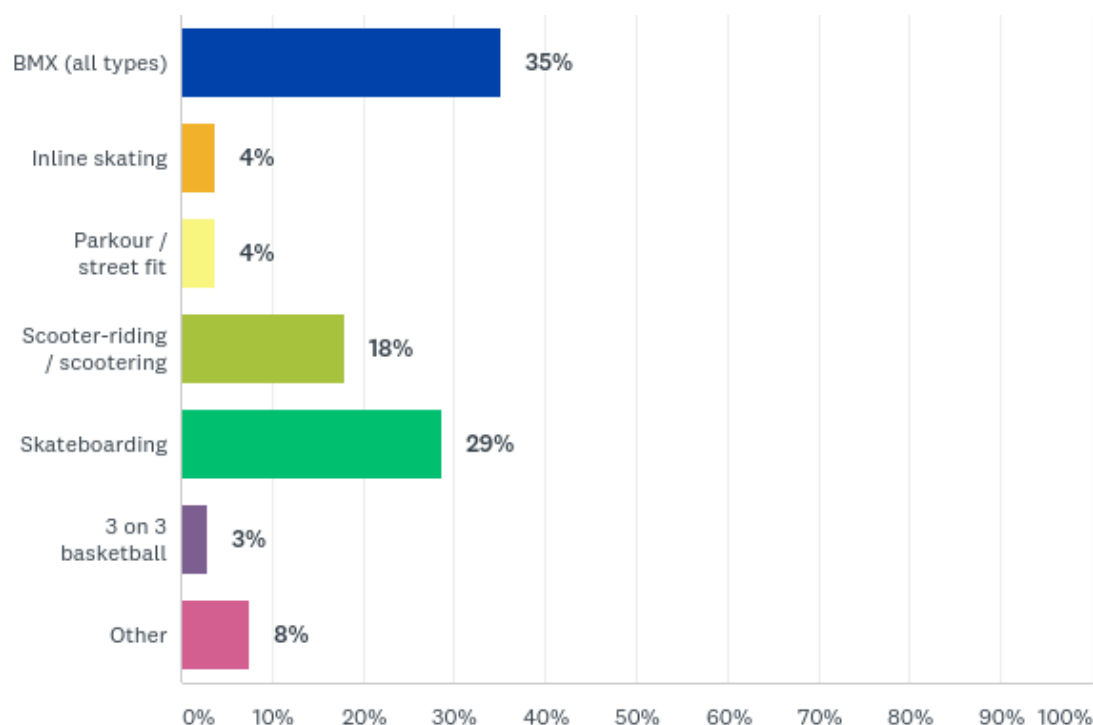
6.2 Participant survey

A total of 106 people completed the survey taking on average 6 minutes each to complete, no survey was abandoned and 78 respondents submitting their emails to be entered into the prize draw. Below we list each question in turn and provide a range of charts, tables, graphs and images to represent the data. Quantitative analysis was also carried out between different groups (participants of various urban sports) and results shown for any significant trends or findings.

Question 1 – What sport do you do?

From the survey, most respondents participated in BMXing (35%) followed by skateboarding (29%) and scooter riding (18%). A combined 11% of respondents took part in parkour, inline skating and 3 on 3 basketball and 8% of respondents selected 'other'. The results are shown in Chart 1, below.

Chart 1 – What sport do you do?



Question 2 – What motivated or inspired you to get involved in your sport?

Below we have created a 'word cloud' for the responses to this question, with the largest / most prominent words representing the most popular responses. The results showed that, by far, the greatest motivation and inspiration for get involved was friends followed by fun (23% and 8%).



When looking at individual responses, there were several key statements that went beyond friends and fun shown above, these were:

"The way it looked and then the way it felt. Tricks looked incredible but the feeling was cherry on top. The community was also big part since now we are friends for life"

"Independence; endless possibilities; makes me be(come) myself; sense of life; for real (at first): my cousin, rollin' down the street in front of the house I grew up in - fast a.f. Freedom"

"The beautiful culture of the sport from the 80s and 90s. The colours, sounds, art and the people. It was the perfect individual/solo sport for me to get into"

As well as having facilities nearby, many respondents also cited role models such as Nygel Sylvester and Rodney Mullen and Tony Hawk computer games^{30_31_32}.

Question 3 – How often do you engage in your sport?

The overwhelming majority of the 101 respondents to this question (88%) selected at least once a week / every week, with 6% taking part every month. When analysing the results by disciplines (BMX / skateboard / in-line etc) there was very little difference between them – all respondents were very active, going almost every week.

Question 4 – Which [facilities] do you prefer best?

When asked about preferences for facilities, or where they preferred to practice, 101 people responded to this question with the majority (nearly 42%), stating indoor facilities as their preferred location, nearly 25% preferred outdoor parks and facilities and 23% opted for street.

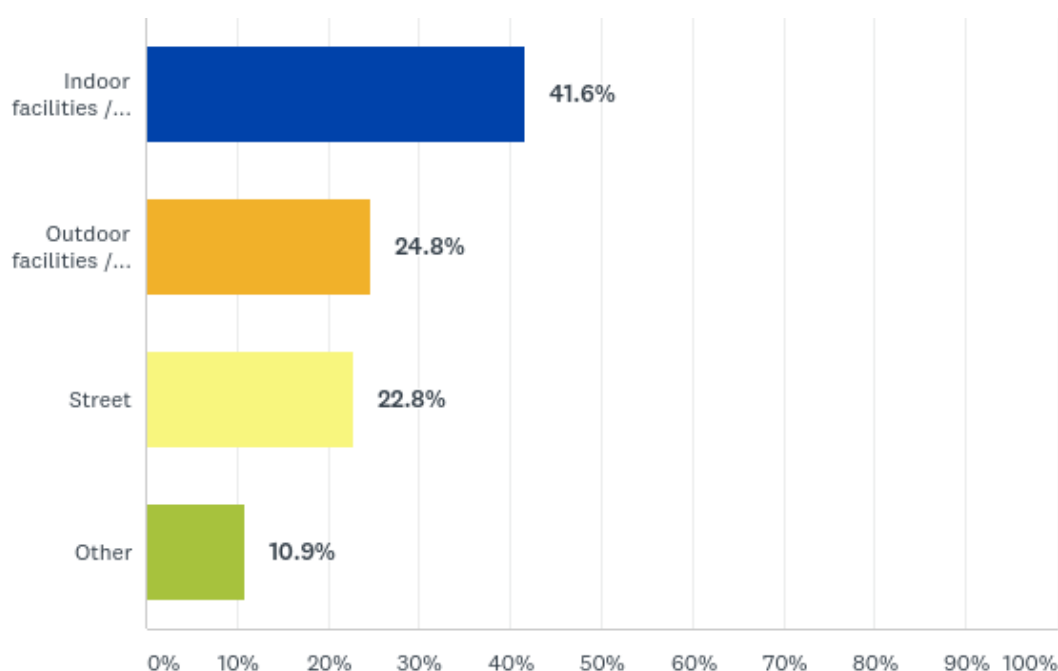
Eleven percent (11%) selected 'other' with respondents stating that they preferred a mixture of indoor and outdoor facilities which was largely dependent on the weather. Of the 11 responses to this question, 5 were BMX riders and the rest a combination of scootering, street fit and 3 on 3 basketball. The responses can be seen in Chart 2.

³⁰ Nygel Sylvester - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigel_Sylvester

³¹ Rodney Mullen - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodney_Mullen

³² Tony Hawk - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Hawk

Chart 2 – Which [facilities] do you prefer best?



When looking at differences between the disciplines – of the 35 BMX respondents to this question – 40% preferred indoor facilities, 37% outdoor facilities, 14% preferring a mixture of locations and 9% street. This is contrasted by skateboarders – of the 30 that responded to this question – only 14% preferred indoor facilities with street skating overwhelmingly the favourite location (52%) followed by outdoor facilities and parks (34%).

Scooter riders presented an even clearer picture with 79% of 19 respondents selecting indoor facilities. Five percent (2 respondents) selecting outdoor or street and 11% (2 respondents) selecting other. There were 4 inline skater respondents to this question with 2 preferring indoor facilities and 2 preferring street.

It has to be noted that this is small sample, but anecdotally different disciplines have different preferences, and these are often shaped by what is available. This is explored later in the discussion.

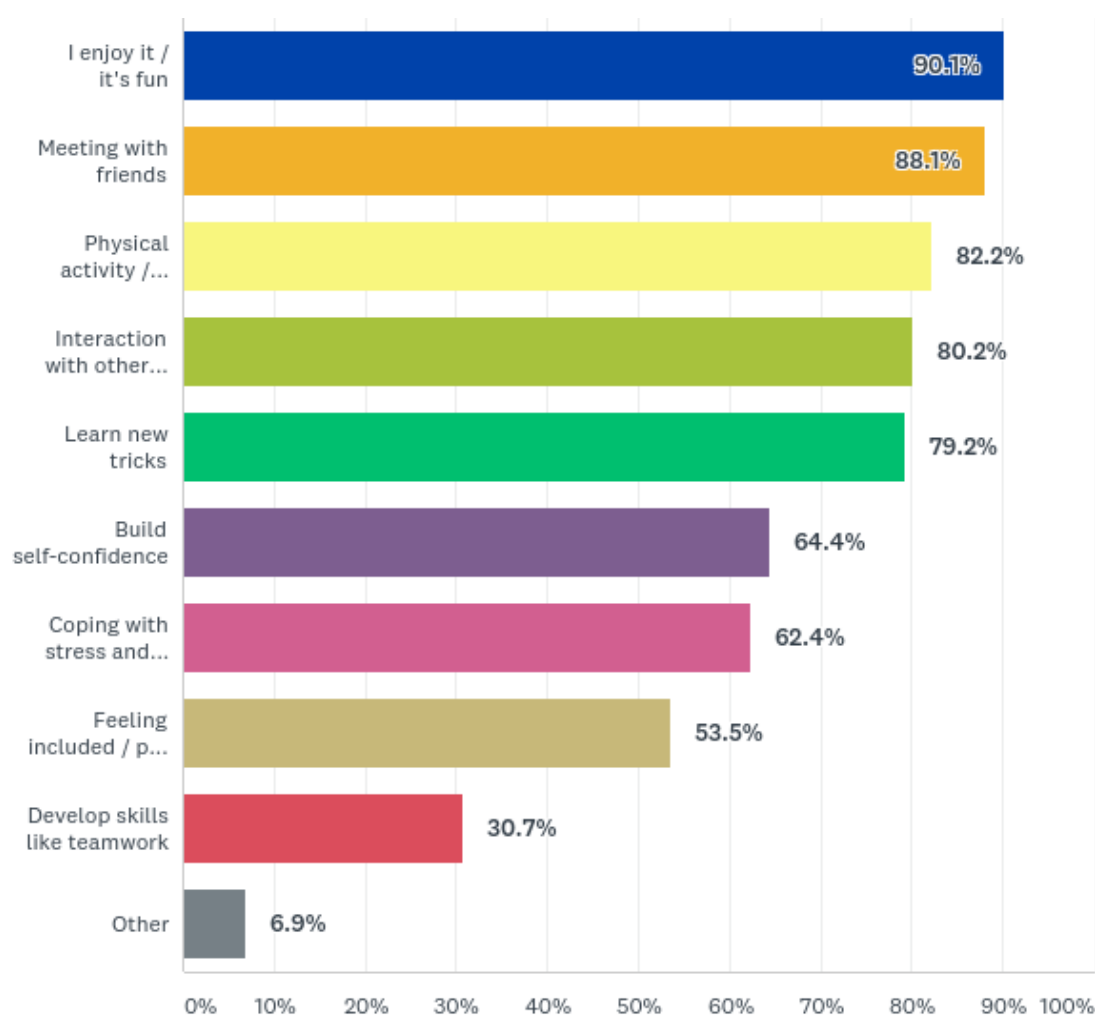
Question 5 – What benefits do you get from doing your sport?

For this question, respondents could choose all the responses that applied to them with a total of 101 responses. Ninety percent selected 'I enjoy it / it's fun' which is consistent with question 2 about motivations and inspiration for participating in urban sports.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) also selected meeting with friends, followed by 82% for 'physical activity / health benefits' and 80% selecting for 'interaction with other people / meet people'.

Chart 3 below shows the range of questions and responses, including the least popular benefit / reason being to 'develop skills like teamwork' (31% of respondents). 'Other' responses included 'self-realisation, lifestyle', developing a passion into a career, being away from roads and traffic and 'spending time with kids'.

Chart 3 – Benefits from participation



When looking at differences between sports the responses are fairly consistent between the sports in terms of the benefits to participants with some outliers. It must also be noted that the sample for 3 on 3 basketball was 3 respondents, inline, parkour / street fit was 4 and that BMX and skateboarders were around a third of respondents each.

We explore each response to this question in more detail below:

Meeting with friends – the small sample for 3 on 3 basketball and inline (3 and 4 respondents) showed 100% stating this as a benefit for them. Next was scooter at 94% and skateboarding.

Learning new tricks – inline and scooter riding were 100% committed in their responses that this was a benefit with skateboarding at 87%.

Building self-confidence – this was the case for 75% of BMXers and parkour participants perhaps representing the extreme nature of the big jumps and leaps.

Interaction with others – 86% of BMXers and 83% of skateboarders stated this was a benefit for them.

For physical activity / wellbeing – 100% of 3 on 3 basketball, inline and other sports participants stated this a benefit followed by scooter at 88% and notable skateboard at the bottom with 73%.

Enjoyment and fun – this was the case for 100% of 3 on 3 basketball and inline skaters with 97% of skateboarders choosing this, 50% of parkour participants selected this.

Feeling included / part of something – with the exception of participants that selected other, scooter riders scored this highly with 65% of respondents stating this was a benefit for them.

Developing skills like teamwork – no 3 on 3 participants selected this, the highest at 41%, was scooter riders with BMX next at 39%. Only 20% of skateboarders felt that they got any benefit through participation to develop skills like teamwork.

Coping with stress and emotions – 100% (4) inline skaters stated this as a benefit with skateboarders rating highly at 67%.

Other responses – only 3% of respondents stated other benefits. Below are a sample of the benefits respondents said they got from participating in their sport:

“It has helped me succeed in life, learning that failure is only temporary when learning tricks, same goes with life” – BMXer

“All of the above plus the spiritual aspect of keeping myself calm and learning a lot about myself too” – BMXer

“Self-realization, lifestyle” – Skateboarder

“Developed my passion for the sport into a career” – BMXer

“Totally relaxing in the park enjoying no other noise (Car Traffic), no dust (from Traffic and the garbage ALL around), open and beautiful skies, having a good skate Session with a handful good people - the best. My 'living room'” – Skateboarder

Question 6 – What words would you use to describe how you feel when you visit a park / venue?

The word cloud below shows the responses from 102 people with ‘happy’ and ‘excited’ accounting for 24% and 20% of words. The word ‘Happiness’ also appeared in nearly 4% of the words followed by free.

better thrill new amazing Relaxed friends Excited motivated
happy Freedom feel home Free park Hyped Happiness nice

Key statements made by respondents for this question include:

“This is a place where I can express myself in creative movement. There is no couches, there is friends who always supports you when you are working on tricks for hours.”

“Very happy that my son is making new friends and developing great social skills”

Excitement, happiness and freedom were common and popular themes:

■ *"I feel excited and eager to try or just do the tricks I want"*

■ *"Happy and free to forget about the day to day things in life"*

■ *"freedom, no pain no gain, let's do it"*

For others it was about teamwork and belonging to something:

■ *"Part of a team"*

■ *"Feeling like at home, where I belong to"*

Question 7 - Do you feel that you have learned things in these places that you don't learn at school / college / elsewhere?

This was a 2-part question with 94% of respondents selecting yes, 5% no (5 people) and one respondent selecting other and going on to say that they felt they had learned a "better understanding of younger people".

Question 8 – If yes, what are they, can you describe them in your own words?

The second part asked people to describe what they had learned that they didn't learn in a formal education setting. These statements were analysed and mapped onto the three main benefits (dimensions) previously outlined in 5.0 Research Methodology (social, personal and psychological). Table 3 below shows the percentage breakdown between the themes and a selection of some of the key statements that represent each theme from the 88 respondents.

Table 3 – Breakdown of responses and key statements grouped by theme

Theme (percentage)	Key statements from participants
Social (25%)	<p><i>"Social skills, talking to people who I don't know, meeting people from different countries" – Scooter rider</i></p> <p><i>"How to interact with people of all ages, ability levels and special needs! We're all there for the same reason no egos just fun!" – BMXer</i></p> <p><i>"In a skatepark people manage to coexist without being bad, in any kind. Everybody is there for the same reason. Visiting a good place, having a good time together, just having fun at skating (of cruisin', smashin' tricks or fighting for reaching new goals doesn't matter; all of that in a limited place. Cleaning and taking care of the local park is also Part of this...." – Skateboarder</i></p>
Personal (43%)	<p><i>"Trying new things and keep going until it's done but doing it at my own pace and setting my own goal" – BMXer</i></p> <p><i>"I learned one lesson which I am using all the time. If you really want to reach your goal you always have to give all yourself and never give up. All things in life is like a learning new trick" – BMXer</i></p> <p><i>"Learn to communicate and share ideas" – Skateboarder</i></p>

Psychological (22%)	<p><i>"Built self-confidence, overcame my fears. most important thing which I gained from riding BMX - I have learned to work with myself, my mental state and abilities. also, it felt like meditation. I forget everything when I ride my bike (when I used to)" – BMXer</i></p> <p><i>"Not to be afraid of failure. Understand my fears and step over them. Get to know better my bodie how its working and what I can do with it and how to make it more healthy" – Parkour / street fit participant</i></p> <p><i>"You learn to synchronize your mind and your body to achieve what you envisions before you do something" – Inline skater</i></p>
Not Applicable – unable to attribute response to category (10%)	<p><i>"Life is a best teacher" – BMXer</i></p> <p><i>"Flexibility; Balancing; Upper body strength" – Cross fit / street fit participant</i></p> <p><i>"I can think about triks" – BMXer</i></p>

You can all the responses in Appendix 4.

Urban sports and European values – questions

Next follows a series of 18 questions and responses that are aimed at understanding the benefits and impacts of young people involved in urban sports. These questions are mapped onto the European values to show the relation between them and the values, these can also be found in Appendix 3.

A question or statement was made, and respondents asked to rate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from:

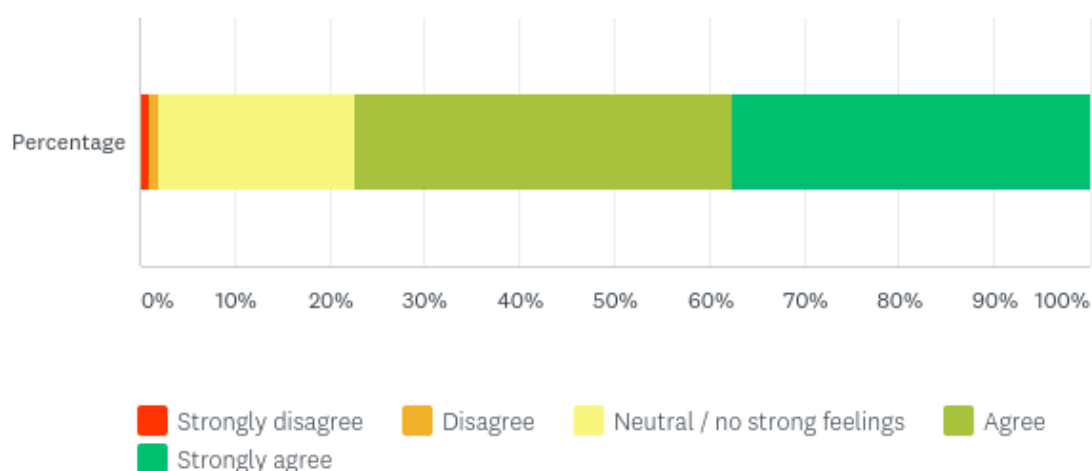
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral / no strong feelings
- Agree
- Strongly agree

These ratings are shown in a horizontal stacked bar with colours representing the response type i.e. **strongly disagree in red** through to **strongly agree in green**. This will appear as a 'heat map' with less favourable responses in red moving through to orange and yellow for neutral responses, and into light green and dark green for favourable and more favourable responses.

The number of responses for each statement on the scale are also shown below each bar chart showing the percentage and weighted average. This includes the number of responses per score on the 5-point scale and its average. At the end of these series of 18 questions we also show the weighted average of each question in a table to provide an overview of all of the responses.

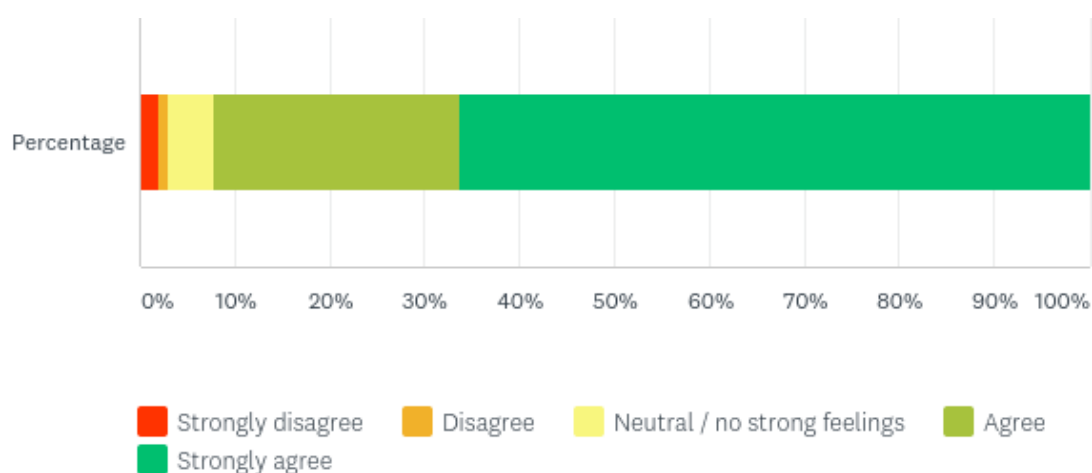
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 9 – I feel respected when I am at parks and venues



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	1.0%	20.8%	39.6%	37.6%	101	4.12
	1	1	21	40	38		

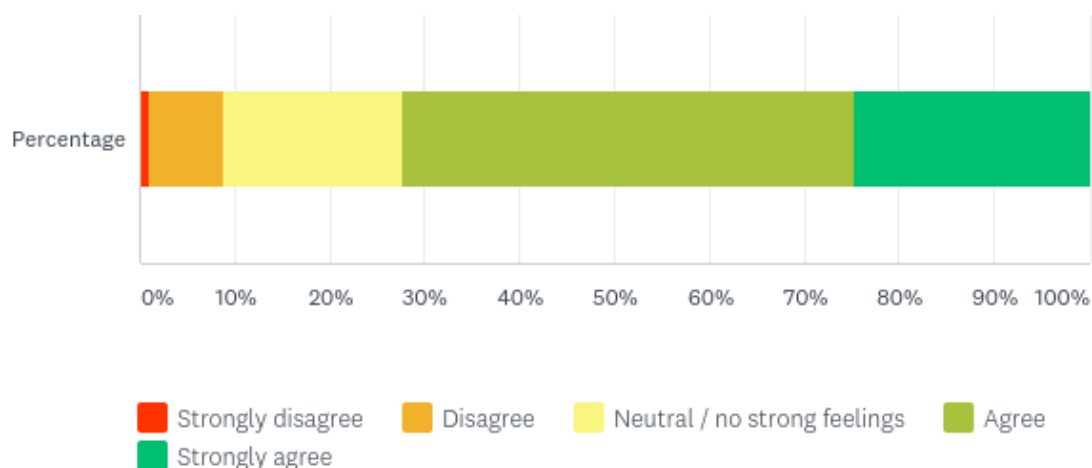
Question 10 – I like to show respect to other participants



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	2.0%	1.0%	5.0%	25.7%	66.3%	101	4.53
	2	1	5	26	67		

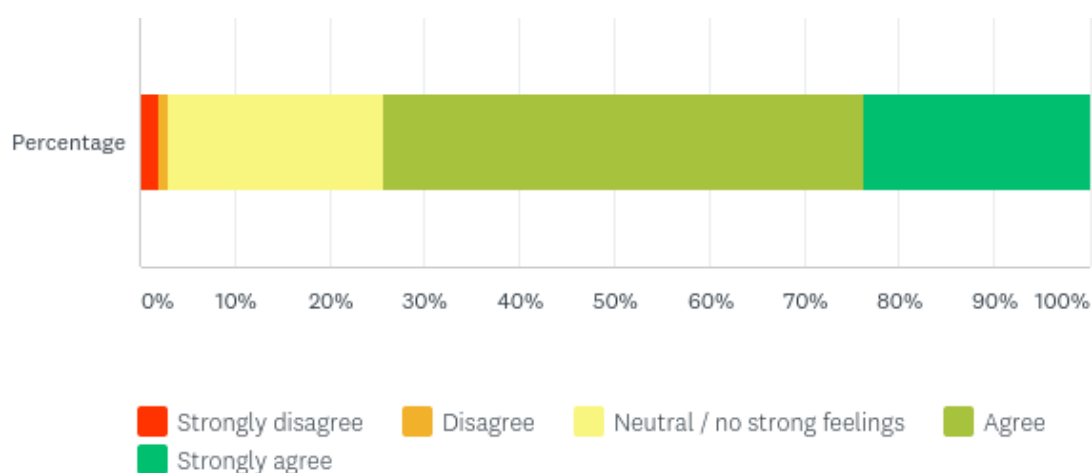
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 11 – I see others showing respect a lot



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	7.9%	18.8%	47.5%	24.8%	101	3.87
	1	8	19	48	25		

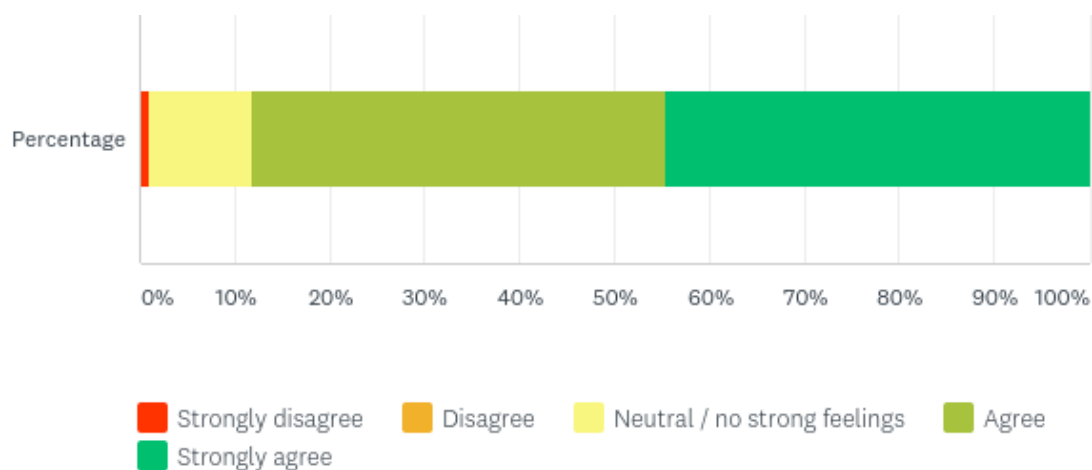
Question 12 – I feel that others look out for me / have my back



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	2.0%	1.0%	22.8%	50.5%	23.8%	101	3.93
	2	1	23	51	24		

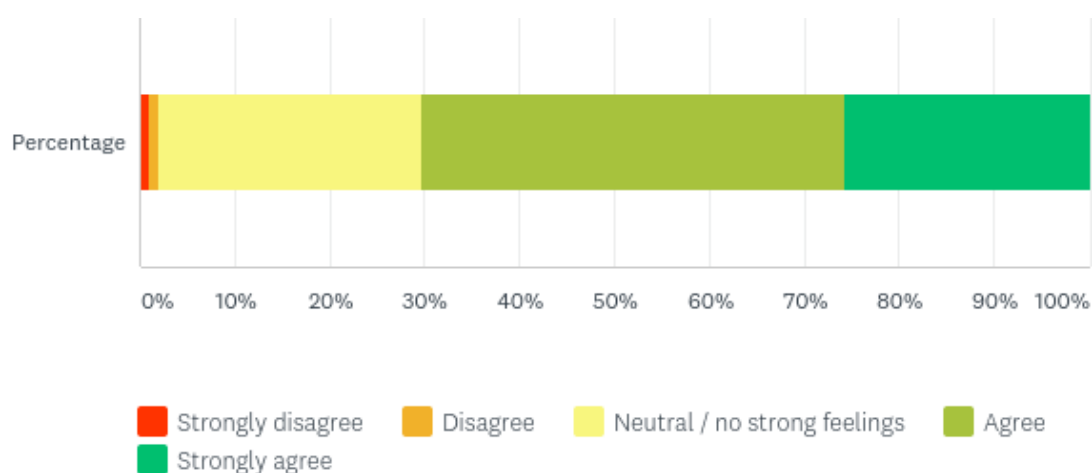
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 13 – I like to look out for others / make sure they are OK



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	0.0%	10.9%	43.6%	44.6%	101	4.31
	1	0	11	44	45		

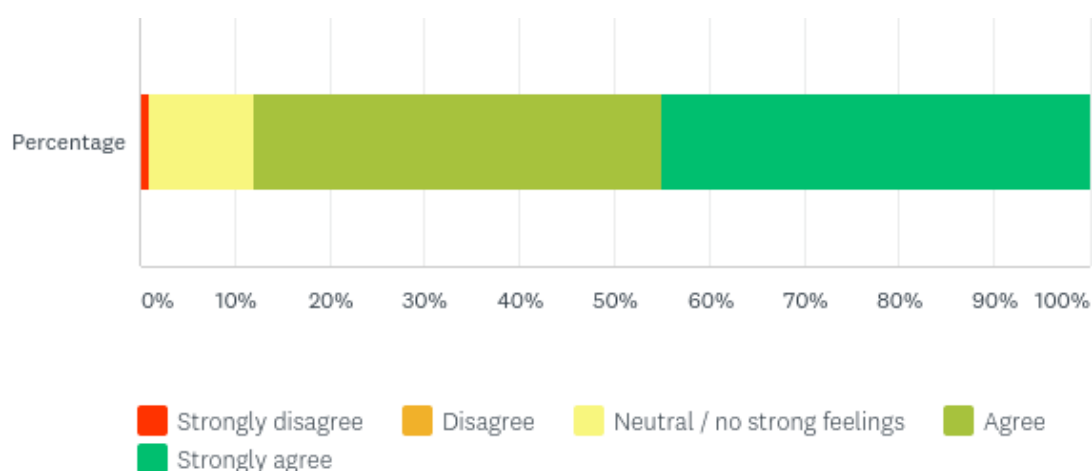
Question 14 – I see others watching out for each other a lot



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	1.0%	27.7%	44.6%	25.7%	101	3.93
	1	1	28	45	26		

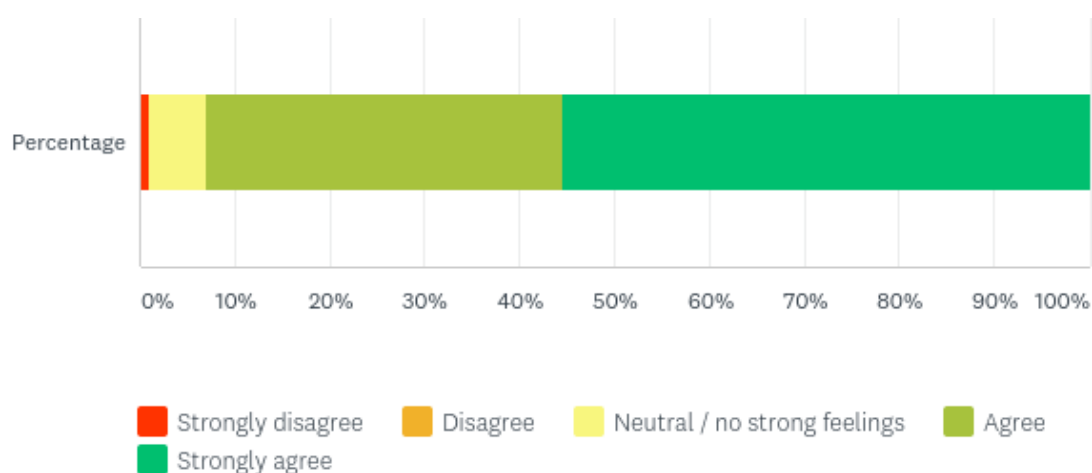
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 15 – I feel accepted for who I am



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	0.0%	11.0%	43.0%	45.0%	100	4.31
	1	0	11	43	45		

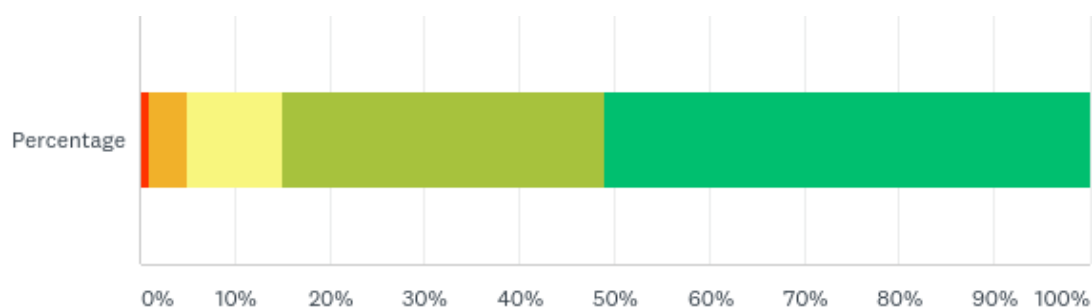
Question 16 – I accept others for who they are



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	0.0%	5.9%	37.6%	55.4%	101	4.47
	1	0	6	38	56		

URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

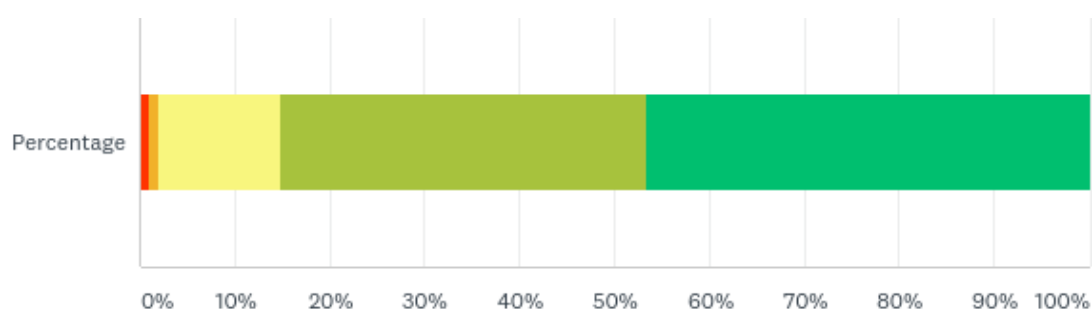
Question 17 – When I ride / skate / play regularly have to face my fears and accept that I might get hurt



■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neutral / no strong feelings
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly agree

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	4.0%	10.0%	34.0%	51.0%	100	4.30
	1	4	10	34	51		

Question 18 – I often see others overcoming the pain barrier and facing their fears

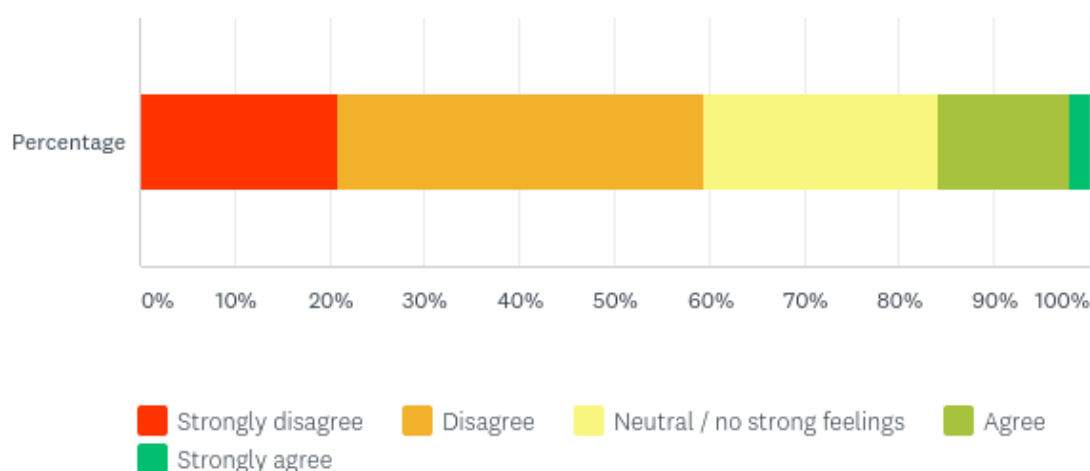


■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neutral / no strong feelings
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly agree

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	1.0%	12.9%	38.6%	46.5%	101	4.29
	1	1	13	39	47		

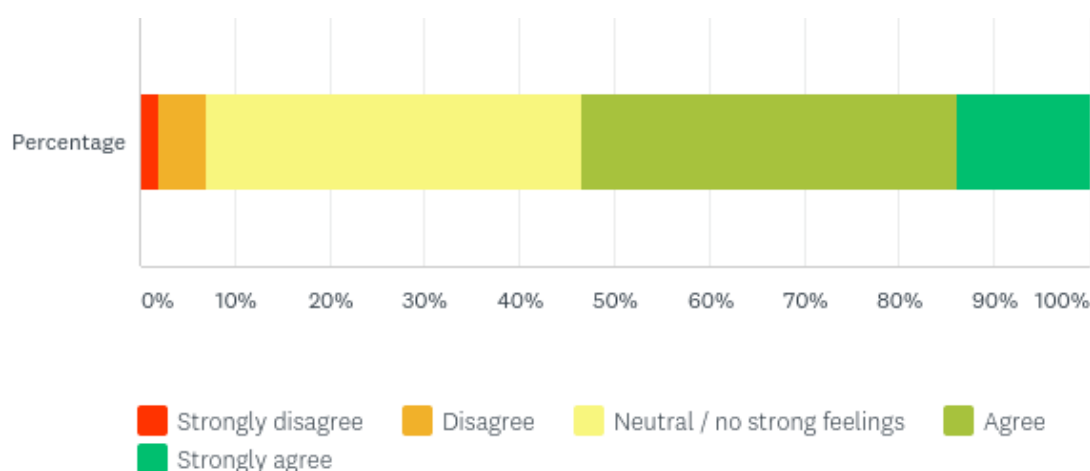
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 19 – Conflicts / disagreements often take place at parks and venues



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	20.8%	38.6%	24.8%	13.9%	2.0%	101	2.38
	21	39	25	14	2		

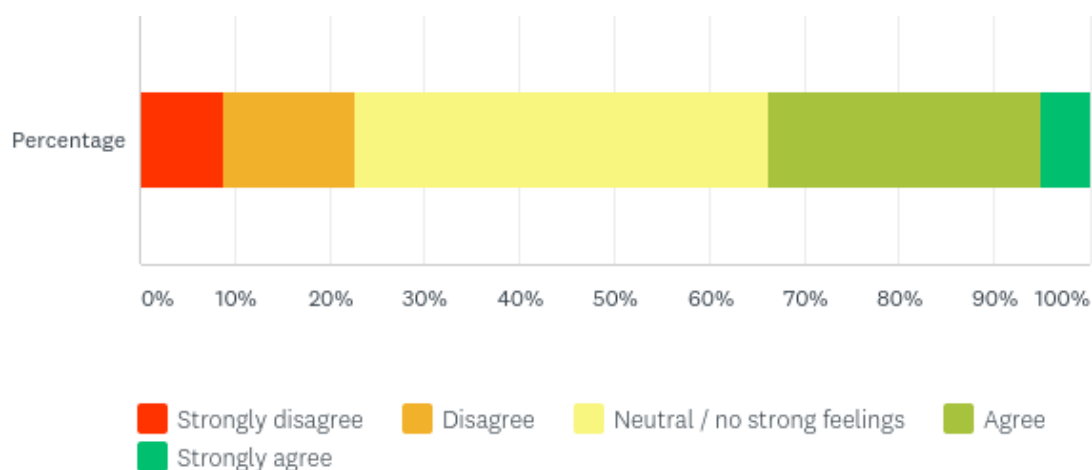
Question 20 – If I see conflicts / disagreements taking place I try to help solve the problem



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	2.0%	5.0%	39.6%	39.6%	13.9%	101	3.58
	2	5	40	40	14		

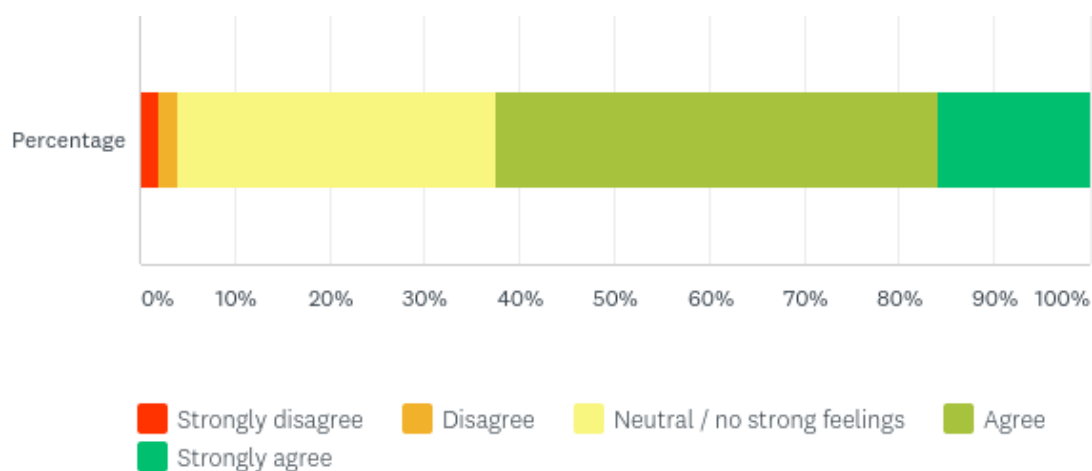
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 21 – I often see people trying to sort out conflicts / solve problems between them



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	8.9%	13.9%	43.6%	28.7%	5.0%	101	3.07
	9	14	44	29	5		

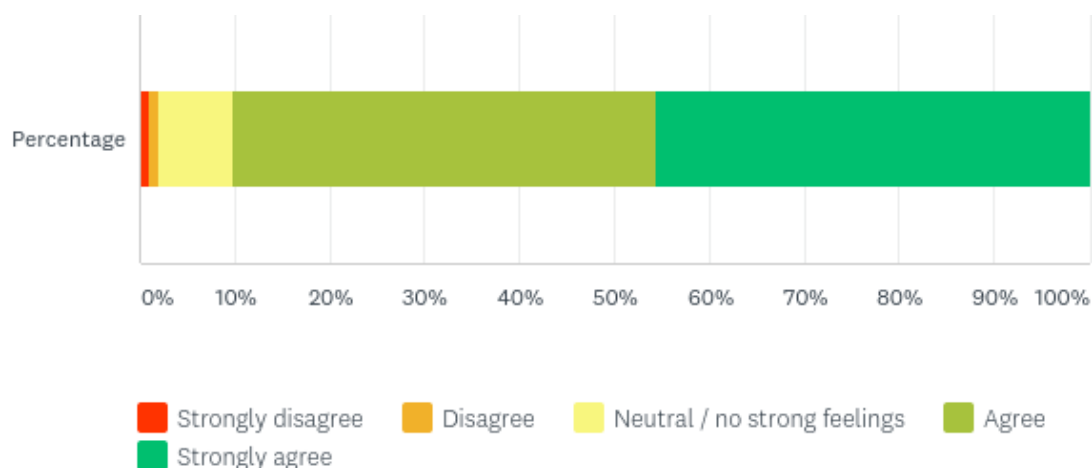
Question 22 – When I go to the park / venue I am involved in what's going on regardless of who I am



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	2.0%	2.0%	33.7%	46.5%	15.8%	101	3.72
	2	2	34	47	16		

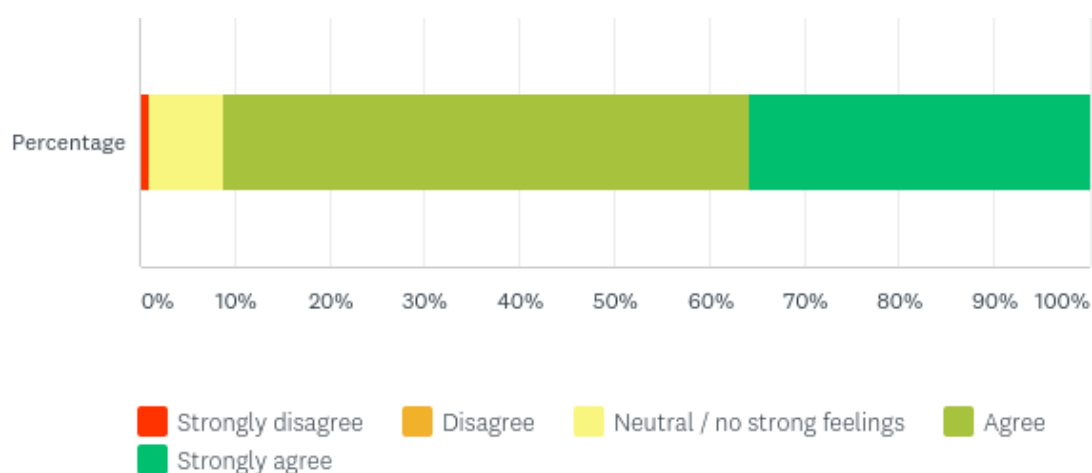
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 23 – I feel part of something, a community or movement



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	1.0%	7.9%	44.6%	45.5%	101	4.33
	1	1	8	45	46		

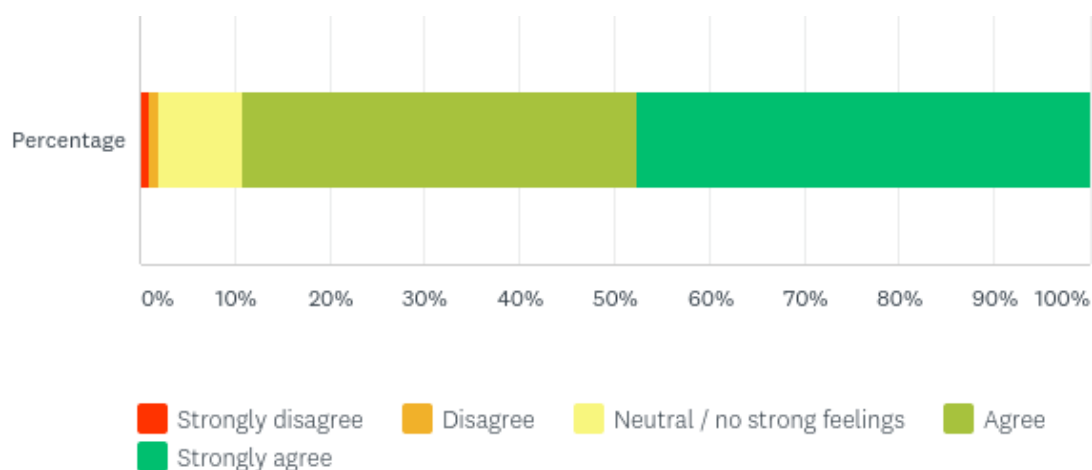
Question 24 – When I mess up, I take responsibility for my mistake or mistakes



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	0.0%	7.9%	55.4%	35.6%	101	4.25
	1	0	8	56	36		

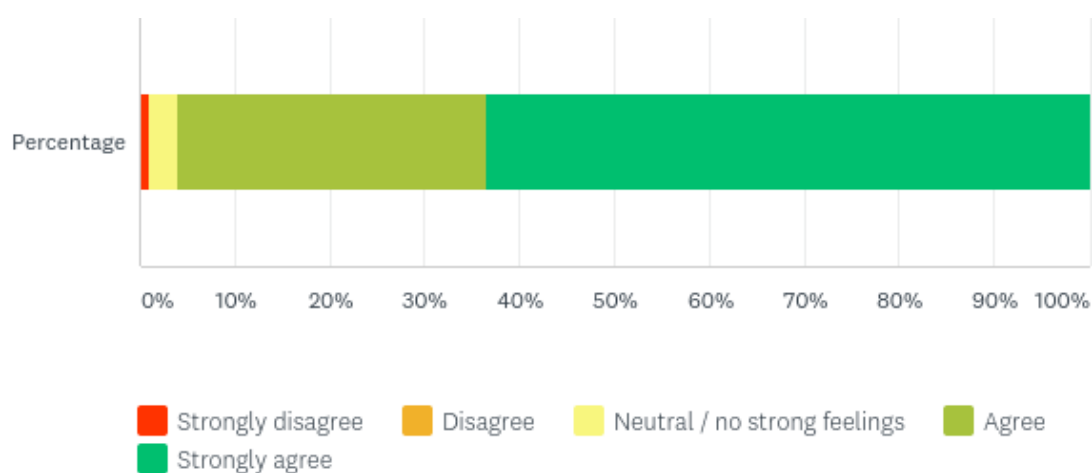
URBAN SPORT AND VALUES

Question 25 – To do well / pull a move or trick, you have to have some discipline – it helps you improve



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	1.0%	8.9%	41.6%	47.5%	101	4.34
	1	1	9	42	48		

Question 26 – I understand that there are various ‘unwritten rules’



	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL / NO STRONG FEELINGS	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Percentage	1.0%	0.0%	3.0%	32.7%	63.4%	101	4.57
	1	0	3	33	64		

Average weighted scores for questions relating to European values

To draw together this series of questions on European values, Table 4 below shows the weighted averages (scores) for each of the questions. The weighted average is taken from the right-hand 'WEIGHTED AVERAGE' column of the tables above. This shows the number and percentage of total respondents as well as the averages of the scores based on the relative weight (number of responses to each question).

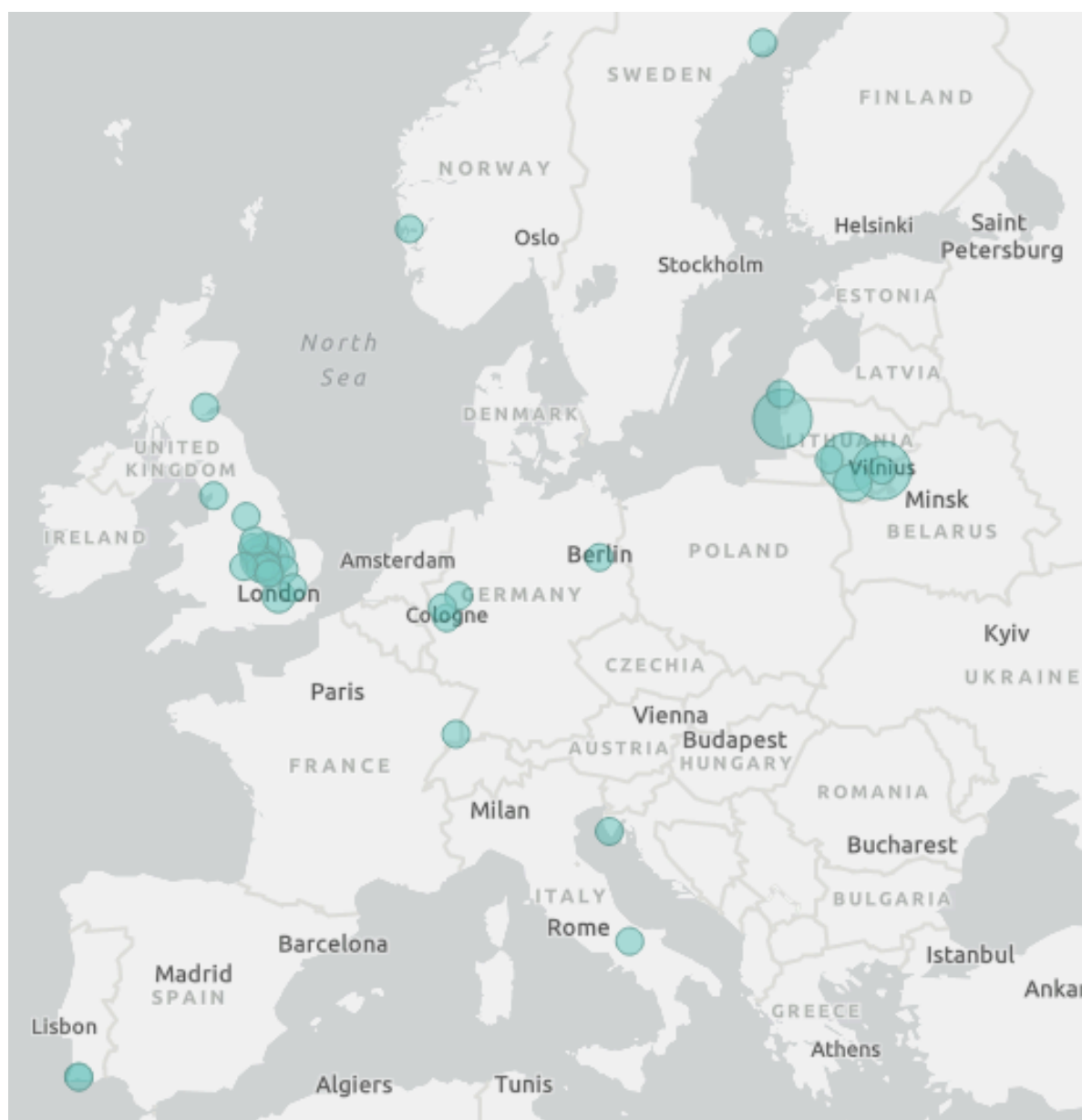
Table 4 plots them on the scale of 1 to 5 to represent the Likert scale rating and shows respondents showing positive feelings that mirror or support European values.

Table 4 – Weighted averages from the Likert scale

Question	Score	1	2	3	4	5
"I feel respected when I'm at parks and venues"	4.12				•	
"I like to show respect to other participants"	4.53				•	
"I see others showing respect a lot in parks and venues"	3.87			•		
"I feel that others look out for me / have my back"	3.93			•		
"I like to look out for others / make sure they are OK"	4.31				•	
"I see others watching out for each other a lot"	3.93			•		
"I feel accepted for who I am"	4.31				•	
"I accept others for who they are"	4.47				•	
"When I ride / skate / play I regularly have to face my fear and accept that I might get hurt"	4.3				•	
"I often see others overcoming the pain barrier and facing their fears"	4.29				•	
"Conflicts / disagreements often take place at parks and venues"	2.38		•			
"If I see conflicts / disagreements taking place I try to help solve the problem"	3.58			•		
"I often see people trying to sort out conflicts / solve problems between them"	3.07		•			
"When I go to the park / venue I am involved in what's going on regardless of who I am"	3.72			•		
"I feel a part of something, a community or movement"	4.33				•	
"When I mess up, I take responsibility for my mistake or mistakes"	4.25				•	
"To do well / pull a move or trick, you have to have some discipline – it helps you to improve"	4.34				•	
"I understand that riding / skating / playing in parks and venues needs you to understand various 'unwritten rules' like when it is your turn next to go"	4.57					•

Question 19 about conflicts and disagreements taking place at parks and venues asked respondents whether they'd often seen them. Here we see the weighted average of 2.38 that showed they had taken place, but respondents rated their responses positively to trying to sort these conflicts and disagreements out, or that they often see people trying to solve problems between them.

Image 4 – Locations of respondents



6.3 Participant focus groups

Two focus groups took place, the first on 26th January 2020 in Corby (UK) and second on 1st February in Kaunas (Lithuania) with urban sports participants. The participants were a self-selecting group and volunteered their time willing and all were actively engaged in the discussions.

Four questions were presented to the participants under 4 headings and, inevitably, the discussion would sometimes venture into the other heading areas. When this occurred, the interviewer would acknowledge this, allow the discussion to continue and then bring back the discussion to the main questions.

The write up of the focus groups below are also combined and structured under themes that emerged throughout the discussions. Where there are differences between the focus groups these are highlighted.

Respect

The question was framed around if they felt respected and how visible 'respect' was in venues and how they witnessed this / what they saw or experienced. Across both focus groups participants stated that one-way respect was shown was by cheering and congratulating others for successfully completing a trick. This was universal across ages and disciplines with participants often going out of their way to show respect, acknowledge the trick and say well done, often through a 'fist pump' or nod.

Participants would also show respect by clearing the way or the ramp if they could see a rider about to do a trick or start a run; they would let others know someone was coming through. Clearly there is a safety aspect to this, but it was felt that this also showed respect to others and people would dutifully comply and give space.

It was felt that people would feel respected because they were a 'member of the club' and so you were part of that crowd because of your interest in the sport or that this was your local park or spot. One focus group member stated that, as a beginner, they were welcomed and that managed facilities (with a good culture) helped people feel welcomed and respected. It was unanimous among this focus group that, having participated in other sports, that urban sports were unique in terms of this open and respectful culture.

When participants unintentionally 'dropped in' on others (jumped the queue before their turn) or snaked (weaved in front of others) they showed respect by nodding, raising their hand (accepting culpability) as a way of apologising.

Unwritten rules and etiquette were mentioned with the focus groups saying that you only really learned through observation and being told when you shouldn't have done something. But again, this was usually done in a respectful way and not by shouting.

Observing older (and more experienced) riders both in terms of conduct but also to get ideas for tricks and lines occurred in the discussion and – while there was deference for older riders – it was felt people could learn from them as well.

The term 'veteran' came up in the discussion mainly with skateboarders and – given the 'street focused nature in terms of origin in the 1970s and also in the survey finding – respect was shown to these veterans of the local scene. In both focus groups the idea of a role model featured strongly with younger or less experienced participants looking up to and modelling behaviours of older and more advanced riders and skaters.

Looking out for each other / having someone's back

This question to the focus group was again framed through how they felt and what they observed. One participant was emphatic about watching out for younger riders at their local indoor park and this was partly because of how he had been 'bought up', but also the positive culture at the park. This resonated with other members of the focus group with them providing the example of bullying and that they would intervene because they were once a beginner or new to a park.

When at outdoor parks and street skating participants, would watch out for each other in terms of road traffic (some street skating tricks sometimes involve having to 'roll off' onto a footpath or road) and so looking out for someone in this event was essential.

The same was the case if troublemakers came along with one of the focus groups talking about an issue with gangs carrying knives and robbing skaters and riders, and so they would watch out for each other or even intervene if someone was being robbed on the street.

Skateboarding has a long street riding culture and skateboarders have often been seen as 'misfits' or 'outcasts' and this feeling of being a 'sub-culture' along with being targeted by street criminals or seen by authorities as trouble makers appears to reinforce this cultural identity and the need to 'have someone's back'. This is supported by skate movies and documentaries from the 1970s to the current day made by various filmmakers that seem to bear this out³³⁻³⁴⁻

³⁵

Conflicts and problem solving

The question to this theme was framed mainly through the observations of focus groups participants. From the conversation that followed it was stated that conflicts rarely take place and they had rarely witnessed any conflicts (the participants were very active at indoor and outdoor venues).

Conflicts had taken place and one of the focus group members stated that 'in the old days' conflicts took place between skateboarders and scooter riders.

When exploring this in the discussion, it was felt this was due to the recent phenomenon (within the last 10 years) of scooter riding and many parks and venues experiencing significant numbers of scooter riders. That the issue stemmed from the lack of experience of knowing how to ride parks and compounded by new riders also not understanding how the other disciplines rode parks.

When mixed friendship groups of skaters and scooter riders participated together it was felt that these scooter riders "were the coolest" because they could see both perspectives as both groups rode / skated parks very differently. Furthermore, older professional riders such as Ryan Williams and Dakota Shuetz were elevating the discipline to new heights and gaining significant respect for the discipline which resulted in scooter riding being taken more seriously.

The issue of parents getting involved – because they didn't understand park etiquette or culture and taking objection to their child being talked to by other riders (usually to explain that's how to not ride a park) – has led to some conflicts. It was stated that if this happened, that a parent was arguing with a rider or skater, the group would go over, calm things down and try to explain to the parent what's going on.

Acceptance and being part of something – a community or movement

The questions for this theme were framed around how people felt, their involvement and feeling part of something. Across both focus groups there were similarities with one older member working at Adrenaline Alley saying that, "*When the younger kids that come to me – even if they have pressure from school – they say that when they come here, there is no pressure. Those issues at school or home are left behind*".

Not only was the (indoor) park seen as a safe place, participants wanted to keep it that way – that there was a strong culture, and this acted as a form of 'positive peer pressure'.

³³ Dog Town and the Z-Boys - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogtown_and_Z-Boys

³⁴ Spike Jonze - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spike_Jonze

³⁵ Minding the Gap - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minding_the_Gap

It was also stated that the mixing of ages was a positive thing generally and – issues of ability aside – people understood (and respected) the fact that they were a beginner once, that statement was made by a professional BMX rider.

Comments such as the following reinforce the idea of a community,

■ *“Nobody understands this sport, people on the outside”*

■ *“You are allowed to be different’, not one judges even if you have old bike”*

■ *“I look at this as home, as family, it’s a relationship you invest in”*

This also included the acceptance of disability with wheelchair participants and people with non-visible disabilities such as learning difficulties being included (NB: no disabled, WCMX or adaptive skateboard participants were involved in the focus groups)

This notion of ‘family’ came up in the Kaunas focus group with participants stating that if they turn up at another city, they feel immediately included; sometimes people would come up to them and say hello.

7.0 Discussion

The Sport 4 Values project aims to understand the benefits to young people taking part in urban sports and their motivations for doing so. This research is a core part of the project and has looked at the following areas:

- To develop a **general understanding of sport participation**, how often participants did their sport and preferred locations (indoor, outdoor and street settings)
- The **motivations** or **inspiration** to get involved in urban sports
- **Benefits** participants gained and classified under the following dimensions:
 - **Social**
 - **Personal**
 - **Psychological**
- The practical **learning** and **skills** not accessed or developed in schools
- The **European values** observed including behaviours

Through the process of developing values associated with urban sports and mapping them onto European values, it also became clear that some of these values were internal and external – that they were lived or were behaviours that were observed. These were identified and discussed in S4V partner meetings and outlined previously in 3.1 and shown in Table 1.

We also found there was a synergy between the urban sports values and the GAME empowerment model in 4.3. This shows three levels of values and skills at the:

- **Individual level** (e.g. self-awareness, coping with stress and emotions, critical thinking)
- **Group level** (e.g. interpersonal skills, empathy, problem solving)
- **Community level** (e.g. Democracy, gender equality, peace / reconciliation)

By developing these values and life skills, children and youth are enabled and empowered to be active citizens. Through the GAME theory of change this eventually leads them to being co-creators of peaceful, equal and democratic communities at the community level.

7.1 Survey respondents

The majority of respondents (64%) were BMXers and skateboarders and concentration of respondents from the UK and Lithuania. Further analysis of where survey respondents came from could be carried out, but the data would not be representative of the urban sports profiles in each of those countries i.e. the sample is too small to get an idea of the preferences for which sports in those countries.

When looking at the types of facilities, respondents preferred indoor facilities followed by outdoor facilities – with a bias for BMX and scooter riders preferring indoor parks and, conversely, skateboarders preferring outdoor parks. This perhaps reflects the tendency for most outdoor parks to be skate parks with flat surfaces, rails and steps and – because there are often limited facilities – skateboarders preferring street skating. This could be attributed to the ‘street nature’ of skateboarding with the seminal documentary film *Dog Town* and the *Z-Boys* neatly summarising its origins.

BMX riders – and to a lesser, extent scooter riders – prefer bigger jumps and ramps and therefore these tend to be indoor parks that are mostly privately run or managed by NGOs and social enterprises. These include venues such as Adrenaline Alley in Corby, UK and Rave Park Liepāja, Latvia with these parks having their origins as BMX parks.

There is also a case for greater investment from municipalities into BMX and skate parks because 67% of responses preferred indoor (managed) and outdoor parks. Greater access to these parks may also reduce the likelihood of street skating and the tensions this sometimes causes between municipalities and residents and skaters.

Parkour, street fit and 3 on 3 basketball were around 4% of respondents which is likely to reflect the bias towards ‘wheeled’ urban sports of the S4V project, but there is a need for these facilities, and often in close proximity to indoor and outdoor (often municipality) facilities. In many cases already these facilities are ‘co-located’ in local municipality parks and provides ‘an offer’ to families with mixed-ages and interests of children; skateparks, parkour and street fit equipment and 3 on 3 basketball courts in one location.

Where they do exist as NGOs, they provide an alternative form to ‘traditional’ gym membership with community, team building / camaraderie and respect being common features. Further research could focus on this type of urban sports and to better understand the appeal to those that may not feel confident attending a gym on their own, who are self-conscious or prefer the outdoor street fit and urban nature of this sport.

Respondents to the survey were also overwhelmingly inspired because of friends and motivated to have fun and with 4 main benefits that centred on social motivations and the desires for physical activity, these were:

1. Enjoyment / fun
2. Meeting friends
3. Physical activity / mental wellbeing
4. Interaction with others

This was also borne out in the focus group discussions with the sense of community and being part of a ‘family’ with strong social connections and feelings of inclusion and mutual support across and between sports and ages.

Participation created joy and happiness and it was clear that urban sports also provided opportunities for stress release and managing emotions.

Comments and observations about younger participants stating that they 'left problems from school or home outside the park' were prominent. These benefits and outcomes are even more relevant in today's society where isolation, loneliness and poor mental health are increasingly prevalent. The benefits therefore extend beyond skills development, fun or developing values.

7.2 Urban sports and European values

The S4V project involves municipality and community partners across the European Union with the aim to understand the benefits of urban sports and how they can be used for the development of positive values amongst young people. The project and this research are funded by the European Commission under the call,

Promotion of European values through sport initiatives at the municipal level

Through this research we have mapped urban sports values onto the European Union's fundamental values, which are:

- 1) Respect for human dignity
- 2) Human rights
- 3) Freedom
- 4) Democracy
- 5) Equality
- 6) The rule of law

Eighteen questions were developed that explored values associated with European values and focused on feelings, behaviours and observations. The results show a degree of relevance / synergy between these feelings, behaviours and observed behaviours *and* European values.

There were overlaps within and between the urban sport and European values, with two main urban sports values featuring regularly in statements and focus group discussions that mirrored European values, these are:

- **Respect**

European value = Respect for Human Dignity

This encompassed a respect for each other, their right to ride, skate, participate and be there; respect for their individual achievements.

- **Open mindedness and accepting others**

European value = Freedom

Freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and to do what you want; accepting (and welcoming) others regardless of their background.

This degree of overlap shows coherence between the values of urban sports and those of the European with potential to develop facilities and programmes to develop and enhance these values and secure other benefits for participation in urban sports.

8.0 Conclusion

This report and the research it is based on aims to understand the benefits to young people taking part in urban sports, their motivations for doing so and how urban sport can be used to develop pro-social behaviours and values linked to European values.

From interviews with partners, the participant surveys and focus group discussions, it is clear that urban sports provide a range of benefits for young people. Further research and development of resources and toolkits will enable those working in sport, youth and community development – including those in education, youth work and sport for development – to develop positive values associated with urban sports. This point is explored later in 8.1 of this section.

Urban sports therefore present a unique opportunity to use the ‘power of sport’ as a force for good – building on existing tools and methods developed for soccer, basketball and elsewhere – and focused on marginalised and excluded young people not interested in mainstream or institutionalised and organised sports.

The values experienced and observed within urban sports include respect and being open minded and accepting others, which directly support European values. But there are other benefits as well: fun and enjoyment, the social aspect (being with *and* making new friends) and the physical health and mental wellbeing benefits of participation.

Urban sport also develops resilience in young people; participants are making decisions about risk constantly when in the park about the chances of falling and getting hurt. What is common among all those interviewed was that they just accepted this; they got up, dusted themselves off and got on with it. What is less understood are the feelings of self-realisation, self-actualisation and wider benefits such as confidence.

The benefits of urban sports therefore extend beyond just skills development, fun or developing values or even as positive diversionary activities for young people. The benefits are many and greater investment is needed in a range of facilities as well as training and resources for those working with young people in youth, community and sports development.

8.1 Recommendations

Developing urban sports as a tool for engagement, developing personal, social and psychological attributes and the benefits that come from urban sports should be a priority. This also creates the possibility to develop positive values that are already enshrined within the culture of urban sports that also support wider European values.

This can be achieved simply by investing in infrastructure such as outdoor facilities, but great potential exists for leveraging the benefits of managed indoor parks and venues. A balance needs to be struck between independent (non state-controlled facilities) that have flexibility to generate and reinvest income, innovate and be responsive to this dynamic urban sports culture.

We are not starting from scratch. Good practice already exists within the S4V partnership with partners at different stages of development and openly sharing their experiences and expertise throughout the partnership. Ways should be identified to build on this work for the future and incorporating the resources, tools and methods that currently exist.

This could include analysis, assimilation and piloting of new resources and frameworks and understanding the status of each municipality partner, leading to the development of action plans, training and support on topics such as:

- Community engagement
- Network and asset mapping (what currently exists?)
- How to set up an NGO or social enterprise (legal structures, finance etc)
- Stakeholder mapping and management
- Piloting and evaluating frameworks, tools and resources

Local authorities and municipalities can also play a role in making land and buildings available (through long leases and reduced rents) and supporting NGOs and sport for development organisations alongside their youth provision to carry out community, sport and youth development activities. This could be in and around these facilities and in working in partnership with urban sports providers.

Whilst co-location of services and youth provision with urban sports activity maybe desirable, thought needs to be given so that participants feel that these activities do not feel institutionalised.

8.2 Further research

Further research, building on this report and other work (Johnson and Oates, 2016) will help to better understand how urban sports – and the culture around it – can be used to develop psycho-social skills and values. This work could lead to the production of toolkits for use by professionals in youth work, NGOs and sport for development.

Furthermore, detailed work – including focus groups – can be used to develop a clearer understanding between urban sport values and European values and what activities could be delivered to enhance and develop these. Existing practice such as the GAME empowerment model provides a way, as does understanding the link behind emotions, thoughts and behaviours and the positive power of observation (by youth) of role models and how these can be harnessed and developed.

Whilst urban sports have been shown to encompass and develop positive values that support European values. There are other benefits such as social inclusion, psychological benefits (confidence and resilience) and physical health and mental wellbeing benefits. This includes all urban sports (wheeled as well as parkour / street fit and 3 on 3 basketball) and their potential to get young people moving and contribute to physical health benefits of participation.

Specific research looking at the role of urban sports looking at the psychological and mental health benefits, as well as resilience, will help to make the case for greater investment in these types of facilities. This could also include a developing a deeper understanding of the different models of delivery, the implications for financing and investment and their future sustainability and ability to work with other local community, NGO and municipality providers.

Urban sports and the culture associated with it are positive youth ‘sub-cultural’ activities that have increased appeal to young people not interested in ‘mainstream sports’. Providing facilities and professional support through a non-institutionalised system can provide many benefits to young people, their circle of peers and wider community.

That is the hope of the Sport 4 Values project and partners.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Kaunas City Municipality for commissioning this research and to the Sport 4 Value partners who have helped shaped and develop the programme and this research. The 3 partners and stakeholders – Jonas Lyxen from Umeå Skatepark Sweden, Emily V. Ronek from GAME Denmark and Roberts Klēpis from Rave Park Liepāja, Latvia deserve special mention.

Acknowledgment and thanks go to the 106 respondents of the survey and the participants of the focus groups; without them we would not have had the first-hand empirical data to have completed this report.

Finally, Val from the UK was the winner of the prize draw incentive to complete the survey and many thanks to her for taking the time to complete the survey and to Skatehut.co.uk for providing the £40 voucher.

Phil Tulba
February 2020



“It gives me a social life outside of school where I am included”



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