

PARTICIPATING IN ARTS, SPORTS, AND SOCIETY (PASS) RESEARCH PROJECT: FINAL REPORT

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Abstract

Participating in Arts, Sports, and Society (PASS) Research is a part of the PASS project. The PASS project is an 18-month project that aims to address barriers that contribute to low participation of racialized youth in recreation and organized sports, preventing their full social participation in society and decreasing their sense of belonging in the community. The purpose of the PASS Research is to identify those barriers via developing recommendations to policy-makers to lower those barriers. To do so, a sequential mixed-method design was employed in the study. Nine competitive first and second-generation athletes, five parents, and nine sports organizations professionals were interviewed using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. An online survey instrument was developed for sports and cultural organizations based on the qualitative findings. Through our categorical aggregation, three main themes were identified in the interview data: (a) barriers to sport participation, (b) barriers to inclusive sport programs, and (c) strategies to address barriers. Our qualitative findings, especially the ones from the interviews with athlete youth with racialized backgrounds and parents of such youth, clearly indicated that these groups of people experience racially charged discrimination and micro-aggression in their everyday sport experiences in Alberta. Then we integrated insights from both qualitative and quantitative results, to elaborate on major barriers experienced by the different stakeholders and potential solutions to those barriers (i.e., recommended practices). It was done while consulting the existing research literature and drawing upon practical insights within AHC. The following practical recommendations were suggested from the discussion of structural barriers, racism, capacity building, and intersectoral connections in sports engagement for racialized newcomer youth:

1. Explore how diverse each sport organization/field is in terms of race and ethnicity, immigrant status, and other factors, where racism and micro-aggression exist, and what successful cases of inclusion exist, by conducting further research.
2. Set clear, time-bound, and specific policies related to anti-racism and EDI with clear outcomes and accountability.
3. Provide funding and support for creating champion positions for anti-racism and EDI work, for diversifying board members and staff, and for providing continuous training in this area.
4. Create opportunities for BPOC immigrant communities, sport organizations, settlement agencies, and other partner organizations to connect with one another.
5. Provide more funding and options at the competitive levels of sports with clear, inclusive criteria for different funding and eligibility.
6. Make sport-related information and resources accessible in multiple languages and in user-friendly ways.

Acknowledgments

The project was funded by the Government of Canada, the Canadian Heritage Anti-Racism Action Plan. The authors would like to thank all the research participants,

including athlete youth, parents of such youth, and sport organization professionals, for their insights.

About Action for Healthy Communities and PASS project

This project was led by Action for Healthy Communities (AHC), Edmonton, Alberta. AHC is a dynamic, community-based agency for people of all ages and backgrounds and provides settlement and capacity-building services to improve their lives and communities through a unique community-building process, including support, mentoring, and training. AHC supports underserved and marginalized communities in Edmonton and small centers across Alberta toward the creation of an inclusive society and addresses the barriers for the equity deserving groups to fully participate in society through direct client services and unique projects.

One of those projects is PASS (Participating in Arts, Sports, and Society). It was initiated to address the systemic barriers to the racialized new immigrant communities' participation in sports activities which is an essential piece of social integration. This project scope includes a research project, sector conversation, promoting equity, diversity and inclusion policy, and creating opportunities for the affected communities to participate in sports. Within the project, AHC organizes different activities, programs, and events to lower barriers that racialized newcomer youth face in sports participation. One of the main components of the PASS project is the PASS Research.

Introduction

Immigration plays an increasingly critical role in the shaping of Canada's population. The 2021 Census data from the Statistics Canada (2022) showed that 23.0% of the Canadian population were or had been newcomer immigrants. The federal government's 2022-2025 Immigration Levels Plan forecasted that Canada will welcome up to 465,000 new immigrants in 2023, 485,000

in 2024, and 500,000 in 2025 (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, 2022). These demographic trends have had, and will continue to have, substantial impacts on the Canadian sports landscape. Immigrants to Canada come with histories of sports and inventories of skills and knowledge different from non-immigrants. Thus, in order to best support immigrants, just like all Canadians, it

is vital to take an individualized approach to enhance their own level of physical literacy through quality and stage-appropriate sport experiences.

Regardless of participation levels, it is the responsibility of all sports and physical activity leaders to ensure that the system is accessible to immigrants, as well (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2014). Thus, sports and settlement organizations as well as other relevant institutions like schools must gain a greater understanding of the unique circumstances that prevent some immigrants from fully participating in sport and physical activities (Sport for Life, 2018).

One of those unique circumstances is the need to feel belonging in their community in Canada. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms formally recognized multiculturalism as a foundational element of the Canadian Constitution. The Charter allows different ethnic groups to enjoy full Canadian citizenship rights and calls for the promotion of integration of immigrants and their social integration into the Canadian national fabric. Studies suggest that sport participation is one of the effective ways to promote the social integration of immigrants (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2010; Doidge et al., 2020). For example, participation in sport programs and physical activities increase a sense of belonging and inclusion for immigrant youth (e.g., Tirone et al., 2010).

However, as immigrants integrate into Canadian society, they face a number of barriers to various daily activities including sports (e.g., Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Rich et al., 2015; Barrick et al., 2021). Simultaneously, with an increasing number of, and increasingly diverse, immigrants arriving in Canada, sports organizations have experienced challenges in effectively engaging

with immigrants within their programs (e.g., Forde et al., 2015; Frisby, 2011). Research also shows that due to different intersectional barriers, immigrants to Canada have not been fully and equally participating in sports and recreation (Allan, 2023). Thus, Action for Healthy Communities (AHC) initiated the current research project, within the broader program called Participating in Arts, Sports, and Society (PASS) funded by the Canadian Heritage Anti-Racism Action Plan. The current study's purpose was to explore barriers racialized immigrant youth experience in their sport participation in Alberta, identify barriers Albertan sport organizations encounter in providing inclusive sport programs, and develop recommendations to address these issues.

This study focused on Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, partly because AHC is located in this province. The 2021 national census data revealed that immigrants consisted of a greater proportion of the Alberta's population, that is, 23% (N = 193,175), which was a 2% increase from the 2016 census data (Frew, 2022). The two largest groups of immigrants in Alberta are from the Philippines and India, with also rapidly increasing Black immigrant communities (e.g., those from Nigeria; Frew, 2022). We believe that contextualized research in each locality is important, as each province has different make-ups and trends regarding immigrants, as exemplified by Brown et al.'s (2021) work in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In this study and report, we use the word "immigrant" consistently. Unless otherwise is specified, by immigrants, we generally refer to 1st, 1.5¹, and 2nd generations of immigrants regardless of their resident status in Canada (e.g., non-permanent resident, permanent resident). We avoided the term "newcomer" as the Canadian government typically limits this status to those

1 By 1.5 generation immigrants, we mean those who arrived in Canada before or during their early teenage.

within the first five years of their arrival. We avoided the expression “New Canadian” as it can conflate the issues of residence and citizenship. In terms of race and ethnicity, we used the terms “racialized” and “Black and Person of Colour or BPOC” were used interchangeably. Notably, Indigenous peoples are missing, as we did not use a more common framework of Black, Indigenous, and Person of Colour (BIPOC). We did not include Indigenous peoples in this study because Indigenous peoples have quite

different histories and relationships with the existing Canadian sport system than recent immigrants. Our choice of not to include Indigenous peoples here does not mean that their experiences are any less important; in contrast, we believe that Indigenous peoples in Alberta deserve research projects solely focused on them. Lastly, sport in this study and the report includes both competitive and recreational sports, although an emphasis was on the competitive side by focusing on athlete youth.

Literature Review

Sport Participation and Settlement Process

Existing research suggests that people’s racial and ethnic backgrounds can meaningfully shape sport and recreation experiences, while significant differences have been reported in sport and recreation participation preferences across racial and ethnic minority groups (Stodolska, 2015; Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004; Taylor & Doherty, 2005; Taylor & Toohey, 1996). Additionally, it has been well documented that members of racialized communities are among the most disadvantaged groups in terms of opportunities for sport and recreation participation (Cherng et al., 2014; Verma & Darby, 2022). This challenging situation persists for immigrants, although among researchers there is a wide acknowledgement, policy makers, and sport administrators that sport participation can enrich the lives of immigrants and can help their settlement process (Agergaard, 2018). Recreation and sport participation can also facilitate the integration of immigrant into their host society through serving as opportunities to build and expand social networks, learn language, obtain employment skills, and become more

adapted to their host country in general (Agergaard, 2018; Frisby, 2011; Rich et al., 2015; Tirone, 2010). Sport and recreation participation can also contribute to immigrants’ health and wellbeing, social inclusion, and sense of community (Rich et al., 2015). However, immigrants’ sport participation rates are significantly lower than those of the general Canadian population (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2014). While immigrants report different participation barriers, previous studies have also explored the challenges faced by sport and recreation administrators in meeting diverse needs of immigrants (Forde et al., 2015; Frisby, 2011; Tirone et al., 2010).

In Canada, a wide range of support services are provided to immigrants by settlement agencies that are public, for-profit, and non-profit organizations, such as government departments, service clubs, and churches (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Tirone et al., 2010). However, previous research identified gaps in the types of services they offered including some critical areas, such as education, social services, as well as sports and recreation (Reitz & Banerjee, 2006). For example, Omidvar and Richmond

(2003) argued that although there are overlapped and abundant support available to newly landed immigrants in their early settlement phase, little attention has been given to long-term needs of immigrants. This is problematic, Omidvar and Richmond noted, because settlement and integration take place over a long period of time. Some research shows that sports and recreation are amongst the most critical settings in which immigrants can gain a sense of belonging and social support in their host communities, experience physically active lifestyles, and share their heritage cultural practices with new friends (Doherty & Taylor, 2007).

Other sport scholars point out that the implementation of integration is neo-assimilationist in nature, which requires minority members to figure out by themselves how to fit into mainstream activities offered in their new host countries (Forde et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2007). Henry et al. (2007) categorized policies adopted by sport administrators targeting immigrants and ethnic minorities into five different types, three of which expected minority groups to assimilate into organizations that resist accommodating them, while the other two types actively supported individuals' autonomy in a multicultural society. Regardless of these important issues raised, there has generally been a limited understanding of both the constraints faced by immigrants as they try to enter into sport and other recreation milieus in Canada and the challenges faced by sport service providers as they attempt to address the needs of diverse groups of immigrants. Below, we further review existing research on known factors.

Financial Constraints and Time Shortage

Immigrant families encounter financial difficulties as they can often only find low-paid precarious jobs or even experience certain periods of unemployment, which makes

sport and recreation unaffordable to them especially given increasing costs of these activities (Campbell et al., 2016; Mensah, 2010; Taylor & Doherty, 2005). To overcome the financial challenges, immigrants attend language classes and employment training programs, which then leaves them with little time to participate in sport and recreation activities (Curtin et al., 2016; Stodolska, 2015; Tirone et al., 2010).

Distance, Accessibility, and Transportation

Previous studies also found that greater distance from sport and recreation facilities make them inaccessible to immigrants, especially when immigrants do not own their private vehicle or facilities are not easily accessible via public transit (Tirone, 2010; Tirone et al., 2010).

Cultural Differences and Language Barriers

Cultural and language differences are also among other barriers that hinder immigrant families from sport participation (e.g., Doherty & Taylor, 2007). For example, sport clubs' websites and guides often (unintentionally) exclude immigrants from accessing important information about sport and recreation opportunities due to differences in service delivery systems between their origin and host societies as well as language barriers (Barrick et al., 2021).

Racism and Discrimination

Research has also shown racism, discrimination, and ethnocentrism manifest in sport environments, which leads immigrants to have negative sport experiences and disengage from sports (Suto, 2013; Tirone, 2010). Studies have found that lack of communication skills and language barriers can exacerbate these already hostile situations (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Stodolska, 2015).

Different Views of Sports

Researchers have observed that immigrants in North America view sport programs offered in their host society as being more goal-oriented, individualistic, and egotistical than what they experienced in their home countries, making them uncomfortable to take part in mainstream sports (Curtin et al., 2016; Stodolska, 2015; Tirone et al., 2010). Furthermore, their limited experiences with structured sport programs in their home countries make making it harder for immigrants to adapt to sport systems in their host society, such as program registration and facility booking (Stodolska, 2015).

Double-Edged Roles of Ethno-Cultural Groups

Ethno-cultural communities, such as ethnic sport clubs and cultural community centres, play important roles in facilitating safe and culturally relevant sport experiences for immigrants, especially because many of them obtain information about sport and recreation opportunities from their ethno-cultural networks (Tirone, 2010; Tirone et al., 2010). That being said, research also shows that ethno-cultural groups act as both a facilitator and barrier for immigrants' sport participation (Golob & Giles, 2011). In fact, some ethno-cultural groups pressure immigrants to maintain their cultural (heritage) activities instead of exploring mainstream sports and recreation activities in the wider host society (Curtin et al., 2016; Tirone & Pedlar, 2005). This might result in narrower social networks especially among immigrants in their early settlement stage and can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness as well as a reduced sense of belonging to their local community (Curtin et al., 2016; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009).

Sport Administrators' Lack of Knowledge

There appears to be a disconnect between how most sport administrators communicate

sport-related information and how immigrants seek information on sport and recreation opportunities (Stodolska, 2015; Tirone et al., 2010). Although sport administrators are often expected to offer equitable programs for all people, mainstream sport organizations often lack in preparedness for providing socially inclusive and welcoming opportunities for immigrants (Forde et al., 2015; Golob & Giles, 2011; Stodolska, 2015; Tirone et al., 2010). For example, Frisby (2011) reported that sport administrators in Canada, especially in smaller municipal recreation centres, tend to prioritize Euro-Canadian activities in their offerings despite Canada's shifting population.

Immigration in Canada

Immigration has been an integral part of history, culture, and uniqueness of Canada as a settler colonial nation (Guo & Guo, 2015). Years after years, Canada's population has become more culturally diverse owing to large numbers of immigrants arriving in the nation. In 2021, Canada granted a record-breaking number of 405,000 individuals with a new permanent resident status (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, 2021). Immigration to Canada has also gained widespread national and international media attention during global crises (Tyyskä et al., 2017). For instance, 40,081 Syrian refugees arrived in Canada between 2015 to 2017, 27,670 Afghan refugees moved to Canada in 2021, and most recently, Canada welcomed many Ukrainians in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, all contributing to Canada's global reputation as a major immigrant-hosting nation (Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada, 2021).

Multiculturalism in Canada

As Bloemraad et al. (2008) explains, multiculturalism can take different forms across Western nations, from demographic descriptors and ideologies of celebrating diversity

to well-established government policies and specific political standards for governing diverse societies. In the Canadian context, multiculturalism can be understood as a demographic reality, a political ideology, or a government policy structuring a competitive process to recognize and accommodate cultural, ethnic, and racial minorities (Bloemraad et al., 2008; Mensah, 2010). Based on the federal government's policy in 1971, following recommendations by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, all Canadians can observe their cultural backgrounds without discrimination, where minority groups can gain access to funding from various federal ministries (Mackey, 2002). It is also worth mentioning that depending on the immigration category, different terms are used for referring to immigrants (e.g., immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker).

Sports for Immigrants in Canada

In Canada, a variety of local, provincial, and national organizations work together to organize and deliver sport opportunities (Thibault & Harvey, 2013). At the national level, the Government of Canada administers federal sport policies and provides financial support and grants to several National Multisport Service Organizations (e.g., Canadian Olympic Committee, Special Olympics Canada, and Sport for Life) and National Sport Organizations (e.g., Hockey Canada, Swimming Canada) in each sport category. Lower in hierarchy, Provincial and

Territorial Sport Organizations represent the interests of different sports, such as Ontario Curling Council, while several multisport organizations delivery programs of multiple sports. Finally, at the local level, public and private entities including community sport clubs, municipal recreation departments, and educational institutions offer high performance and grassroots sport opportunities in each community. Additionally, at each level, a number of supplementary partners, such as non-governmental organizations and private companies, help better structure the sports system (Thibault & Harvey, 2013).

The Canadian Sport Policy 2012 positions inclusivity as a core policy principle and mandates sport organizations to offer an accessible introduction to competitive sport, recreational sport, and sport for development opportunities for all Canadians. For example, *The Canadian Sport Policy 2012* outlines “that both the number and diversity of Canadians participating in sport will increase over the timeframe of 2012–2022” (p. 8), where immigrants represent one source of such diversity. As a result of the policy, some sport organizations in Canada have shifted their attention to develop policies and programs that are more relevant to immigrants (Gosai et al., 2018). However, despite such an emphasis on inclusivity and social development opportunities, limited attention has been given to the policy and programming implications for involving immigrants in mainstream sports (Frisby, 2011).

Method

In this study, we employed a mixed-methods research approach, specifically an exploratory sequential design, in which the first qualitative study was followed by the second quantitative study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). We built on pragmatism as the

underlying philosophical framework of the study (Biesta, 2010; Kono, 2018). Pragmatism eschews the ontological debate regarding the reality of nature in social sciences (e.g., objective, single reality vs. subjective, multiple realities) by identifying the interaction, or

experience, between a researcher and a phenomenon of interest as the most foundational aspect of research (Kono, 2018). Pragmatist studies are triggered by an inquirer's experience of a potential "problem" which calls for a solution (Biesta, 2010; Kono, 2018). Our study was initiated by the non-profit organization, AHC, where many observed that racialized immigrant youth experience a myriad of barriers in their sport experiences, and some professionals themselves were racialized immigrants. Pragmatist researchers also emphasize the value of contexts, as contextualized knowledge and solutions have a better chance to effectively address an issue (Kono, 2018). This is why our study focused on the local context of Alberta, Canada.

The exploratory sequential mixed methods design was adopted originally to identify key barriers and solutions and then to test the generalizability (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). However, the sample size of organizations in the second quantitative phase turned out to be much smaller than expected, which is noted as a study limitation. Research ethics approval was obtained for this project from the University of Alberta (Pro00120000).

Qualitative Study

The purpose of the first qualitative study was to: (a) explore main barriers that athlete youth with a racialized immigrant background and their parents experience in sports, (b) explore main barriers that sport organizations face in providing more inclusive sport programs, and (c) identify potential solutions to address such barriers. To do so, we conducted semi-structured interviews with athlete youth with a racialized immigrant background who had competitive sport experiences in Alberta, their parents, and sport professionals at different levels (e.g., Provincial Sport Organization, sports clubs, and municipal sports) who worked in Alberta.

Data Collection

Qualitative researchers "seek to solicit an individual's feelings, experience or knowledge(s) through interviewing" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 82). Consequently, semi-structured online (Zoom) interviews were used to explore interviewees' experiences, ideas, and recommendations regarding their sport experiences. An interview guide was created for each of the three participant groups — athlete youth with a racialized immigrant background, parents of such youth, and sport organization professionals — based on our literature review, which provided consistency and basic structure (Patton, 2002). However, interview conversations were free to deviate and explore related topics closely and thoroughly. Interview participants were asked about their individual experiences, and thus, the questions were designed to be flexible to adjust to each situation (Markula & Silk, 2011). The first author of this report conducted all interviews with athlete youth and parents, but one, as well as the ones with several sport organization professionals, while the rest of the interviews with one athlete and professionals were conducted by another staff member at AHC. All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of participants. The average lengths of interviews were: 37 minutes for athlete youth, 24 minutes for parents, and 34 minutes for sport organization professionals.

Recruitment and Participants

Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007), more specifically criterion-based sampling, was used (Patton, 2002) to identify potential interviewees. The selection criteria for athlete youth were:

- Based on Feltz's (2001) definition of youth sports, participants must have had experiences in formal, competitive sport participation "which [had] designated coaches, organized practices, and

scheduled competitions” around their ages “between the ages of 7 and 18 years” (p. 16674-16675). Thus, these interviewees could be either current or retired athletes.

- They must have had their youth sport experience in the City of Edmonton. They must be either first or second generations of immigrants, wherein first generations refer to those who are foreign born. They must be of racialized backgrounds according to the categorization of “visible minority” by the Government of Canada (i.e., South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese).
- Interviewees must have had the capacity to understand the significance of the research and the implications of the risk and benefits to themselves. Age limits were not set in congruence with the research ethics regulation in Canada called TCPS 2 Section 3.

The criteria for parents of athlete youth:

- They must have been first-generation immigrants (foreign born) who identified as a person of racialized background in accordance with the categorization of “visible minority” by the Government of Canada (i.e., South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese).
- They must have had a child(ren) who was or had been a youth athlete as defined above.
- Their child(ren) must have had competitive youth sport experiences in the City of Edmonton.

The criteria for sports organization professionals were that they must have been currently managers, coaches, or administrative staff at a for-profit or not-for-profit

organization operating youth sport services in the City of Edmonton.

The PASS study information and poster was disseminated widely in Edmonton and more broadly in Alberta via social media channels, mailing lists of the AHC, Edmonton Sport Council, InMotion Network, and the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation student groups. We interviewed nine athlete youth, five parents, and nine sports organization professionals of different levels. Athletes and parent participants of the study were compensated \$20 gift cards for sharing their perspectives. Participants’ characteristics are reported in the Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Data Analysis

Interview recordings were transcribed by the NVivo automatic transcribing tool. After that, all the transcripts were reviewed for accuracy prior to data analysis. Stake’s (1995) categorical aggregation method was used to analyze the data. This method allows a researcher to identify common themes in the data that provide meaningful insights related to their research purposes. It is a form of thematic inductive analysis through which key themes are identified based on pattern recognition (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014) such as how frequently certain topics, or codes, are mentioned. Similar codes across different transcripts were grouped and key themes and interpretations were identified in the context of our research purposes. The inductive process meant that we identified patterns in the data without forcing them to fit into a pre-existing theoretical framework (Patton, 2015; Shipway et al., 2016). All themes, including ones that were infrequently mentioned, were subject to this interpretive process because they could potentially yield valuable insights into the way participants saw barriers in sport participation or provision. The first author of this report was the main analysis, while the third author aided in the

Table 1: Characteristics of Athlete Youth Interviewees

ID	Age	Primary sport	Other sports	Years in sport	Generation	Sex	Country of origin
1	21	Track & field	Rugby, olympic weightlifting, soccer	10	2	F	Liberia
2	24	Soccer	Olympic weightlifting	10	2	M	China
3	18	Gymnastics	—	10	1	F	Kyrgyzstan
4	16	Soccer	Basketball	4	1	M	Syria
5	21	Rugby	Swimming, figure skating	7	2	F	Iran
6	21	Cheerleading	—	6	1	F	Kyrgyzstan
7	18	Track & field	Basketball, rugby, soccer	6	2	F	Nigeria
8	22	Track & field	Cheerleading, gymnastics, rugby, soccer	9	2	F	Jamaica
9	24	Volleyball	Basketball, track & field	10	2	F	Ghana

Table 2: Characteristics of Parent Interviewees

ID	Child's sports	Child's years in sports	Sex	Race/ethnic background
1	Cheerleading	6	F	Asian (country not specified)
2	Basketball, volleyball	7	F	African (country not specified)
3	Soccer, basketball	8	M	South Sudan
4	Hockey, swimming, rugby	9	F	Iran
5	Volleyball, basketball, track & field	12	F	Ghana

Table 3: Characteristics of Sport Organization Professional Interviewees

ID	Level	Sex	Race background	Sport type
1	Club	M	BPOC	Outdoor
2	Club	M	White	Indoor
3	Municipal	F	White	Indoor
4	Provincial	F	White	Indoor
5	Provincial	F	White	Multi-sport
6	Municipal	F	White	Indoor
7	Club	M	BPOC	Indoor
8	Provincial	F	White	Indoor
9	Provincial	M	White	Multi-sport

analysis for several transcripts. The second author acted as a peer auditor of the analyses and interpretation process.

Quantitative Study

The second quantitative phase in this overall mixed-methods study was originally aimed at examining the generalizability of the qualitative findings from the first study. We planned to do so by conducting online surveys with cultural organizations and sport organizations. However, the sample sizes of participating organizations in the quantitative study turned out to be much smaller. Originally, we targeted approximately 50-60 organizations, although our final sample size was 25. While recognizing this as a study limitation, we still describe the quantitative study phase and report the findings, because the survey results still help confirm or disconfirm our qualitative findings, the new insights from cultural organizations further contextualize our findings, and the quantitative findings would increase the chance of our recommendations being effective. We deemed keeping the quantitative phase because of these reasons as consistent with our pragmatist approach to mixed-methods research (Kono, 2018).

Instruments and Data Collection

Following the logic of the exploratory sequential mixed-methods study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), we developed our online survey instruments based on the qualitative findings. After identifying major themes from initial interviews, the first author created survey questions regarding barriers that members of racialized immigrants experience in sports and barriers that sport organizations encounter, as well as potential solutions mentioned by the interviewees. These questions were asked in a multiple-choice format. We also asked a few organizational demographic questions (e.g., types of services cultural organizations provided, level of sport

organizations). The initial questions were reviewed by the second author for better clarity in questions and answer options, conciseness of questions and answer options, as well as meaningful differentiation across sections and questions.

After four iterations of survey revision, the second author transferred the developed surveys to the Qualtrics platform. Note that there were two separate online surveys: one for cultural organizations and the other for sport organizations. They had different questions. The first page of each survey described research ethics issues. Because some of the questions and potential answers were sensitive in nature (e.g., discrimination report system within a sport organization), we chose to make our surveys anonymous without collecting any information on direct identifiers (e.g., organization name). The median response times were 445 and 677 second, respectively, for cultural and sport organization respondents.

Recruitment and Samples

In contrast with the qualitative study in which units of analysis were individuals (i.e., youth, parents, and professionals), the current quantitative study focused on organizations as units of analysis. Our inclusion criteria for the survey study were as follows:

- Cultural organization: Administrative staff or volunteers of a cultural organization (typically focused on a certain ethnic group, national group, regional group) in Edmonton, Alberta.
- Sport organization: Managers, coaches, or administrative staff of an organization (either for-profit or not-for-profit) providing sport services in Edmonton, Alberta.

Note that we intentionally included “volunteers” from cultural organizations, considering that many of these organizations are run by all volunteers (no paid positions).

We used three main modes of respondent recruitment. First, we contacted cultural and sport organizations known to AHC through its previous programs and collaborations. We contacted organizations that indicated their interest in future contacts from AHC. We sent an email with a brief description of the study, an overview of main questions asked in the survey, and an anonymous survey link. For this mode of recruitment, we followed up with potential respondents via email and telephone multiple times to increase our sample sizes. Second, we circulated a recruitment flier as part of Edmonton Sport Council's newsletter, which was distributed to approximately 900 sport organizations in Edmonton. Third, we also asked staff from the organizations who indicated their willingness to complete the survey (e.g., in a response email) to share the study information with any other organizations that they thought might qualify to participate. In each of the recruitment methods, we asked potential participants to have someone from their organization who had a broader organizational level perspective (e.g., upper-level managers, senior volunteers) complete the survey.

Although we kept the online surveys open and continued to recruit and follow up from November 2022 to February 2023, we received 13 and 12 responses from cultural and sport organizations, respectively (N = 25). During this period of time, we received 36 and 21 responses for the respective surveys; however, based on lack of responses and location information, we determined that 23 and 9 responses, respectively, were generated by bots. Considering the small sample sizes, our quantitative findings should not be used for generalization, but for further contextualization of the overall findings and our recommendations. Tables 4 and 5 below summarize the organizational characteristics of our samples.

Data Analysis

Given the sample sizes in our quantitative study, we used simple, descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentage, as well as data visualization (e.g., graphs and charts) to analyze our online survey data. All analyses were conducted in Excel.

Table 4: Characteristics of Cultural Organizations (N = 13)

		n (%)
Type services offered	Settlement and integration	8 (61.5)
	Cultural activities	7 (53.8)
	Other (e.g., wellness, English, faith)	6 (46.2)
Group served	Ethnicity, nation, and region-specific (e.g., Chinese)	8 (61.5)
	All immigrant/newcomers	3 (23.1)
	Diverse (e.g., Indigenous, older adults)	1 (7.7)
	Missing	1 (7.7)
Membership size	99 or fewer	6 (46.2)
	100-149	3 (23.1)
	150 or more	4 (30.8)

Table 5: Characteristics of Sport Organizations (N = 12)

		n (%)
Sport types offered*	Indoor, individual (e.g., swimming)	6 (50.0)
	Winter sports (e.g., skiing)	5 (41.7)
	Team sports (e.g., soccer)	4 (33.3)
	Non-winter outdoor (e.g., hiking)	3 (25.0)

* Multiple answers were possible. Only activity categories were presented for the sake of anonymity.

Results

Qualitative Results

Through our categorical aggregation, we identified three main themes in the interview data: (a) barriers to sport participation, (b) barriers to inclusive sport programs, and (c) strategies to address barriers.

Barriers to Sport Participation

Our interviewees, especially athlete youth and parents, identified many barriers they experienced within their sport experiences in Alberta. Among them, we found that the following sub-themes were prevalent and influential: racial discrimination, financial barriers, transportation constraints, language barriers, time constraints, access to information and resources, and residency status constraints.

Racial Discrimination. Unfortunately, both youth athlete and parent interviewees mentioned instances of racial discriminations in youth sport contexts, which negatively impacted their sport experiences. An example of racial discrimination was described by Athlete 2:

“Especially in the heat of games when things are getting pretty rough. I’ve heard things

like slurs relating to my heritage or my race, though that would be the most, I guess, the ones that send up the most, the easiest ones to kind of remember.”

– Athlete 2

A parent described a case of discrimination as follow:

“I would go to the change room, and I would say, ‘Good morning’. And then he (the coach) would say, we Canadians, we don’t say ‘good morning’, we just say ‘morn-ing’. I think it wasn’t a necessary thing to say, as if that you just want to pick on somebody, right? That but more things other than good morning.”

– Parent 4

Both athletes and parents recalled comments they received from local White parents and coaches about stereotypes they had towards racialized athletes and how overgeneralized thoughts and assumptions can negatively impact them (Athletes 2, 8, and 9). An athlete described their experience as:

“They call me by my last name. They say ‘[wrong Asian name]’, it’s not true. It’s ‘[correct name]’. But anyway, they say, Oh,

'[wrong Asian name]', ... Why don't you count [passes]? You should be good at math. Just things like that which are not very like malicious. It's just kind of poking fun at those kinds of stereotypes, I think.'

– Athlete 2

Another athlete shared their negative experiences with discrimination as follow:

"I'd say the worst one was probably cheer, like there was not a lot of diversity at all. So it felt like not very welcoming because like people usually have a bias and go towards people they are familiar with and they look like ... So, yeah, I kind of felt more left out there than all of them, honestly... I felt like I was outside of the group, even though I was a part of the team. Like, they would kind of form cliques, and it's like you weren't a part of any of them, no matter how hard you tried to be a part of them."

– Athlete 9

Athlete 8 shared an example of how their coach did not treat athletes of colour the same as White athletes. She was frustrated when a White man in the team who was highly ranked in Canada had an emotional outburst and yelled to everyone for no apparent reason because he was upset. The coach did not respond at all to him. She suspected that if it was a Black man, it would have been a problem. She continued,

"I'm going to fit every stereotype. Guys are going to be upset because I can't control my emotions. But here's this athlete, White athlete who can't control his emotions and you're not going to do anything."

– Athlete 8

In fact, some interviewees discussed how varsity coaches reacted, or did not react, to discrimination against racialized athletes (Athletes 5, 8, and 9). These respondents pointed out the fact that coaches of varsity athletics team were all White and that it was very rare to see athletes of colour in

the teams. They also felt that selection processes to the teams were unfair and based on race of athletes. For example:

"I felt like [the coach] had micro-aggressions against me. And he just did not like me for whatever reason and... Then finding out that the team was made, I didn't make it and the whole team is made up of only White women, like really made me feel like, OK, I just don't belong here like this from the start, I didn't belong. And then after seeing like when I come to go to my club rugby during the summer season, there are a lot of those [varsity] players also play with me in club and I just don't feel like I belong anymore because it's like I'm just a person who didn't make the team and they all made the team."

– Athlete 5

Athlete 8 felt that her coach was racist because they would not treat White athletes and athletes of colour equally:

"[The coach told us], 'You guys are essentially spending too much time together and you guys need to hang out with other people on the team' and like insinuating that we

"I felt like [the coach] had micro-aggressions against me. And he just did not like me for whatever reason and... Then finding out that the team was made, I didn't make it and the whole team is made up of only White women, like really made me feel like, OK, I just don't belong here like this from the start, I didn't belong."

“When I first started playing soccer, like I joined my school team, I didn’t know how to speak English. So, I mostly didn’t speak to anyone and when I joined the community, actually it was like a team they already had people, but like I was like an extra person. I was like on the bench all the time.”

were isolating ourselves. But to us, we’re like, [the coach] never said that to anyone else on the team. There are other players on the team that are White that would also hang out together all the time. [The coach] never said anything like that to them. So like things like that that you kind of notice and you’re just like, that’s not really OK.”

– Athlete 8

Athletes identified profound negative impacts racial discrimination had on the lives and well-being of them and other athletes of colour. For example:

“So that contributed to a lot of bad mental health, like it contributed to bad grades like it completely changed me. I think as a person and towards the end of my last like, my third year, I was just like, I don’t know if I can do this anymore. Like I was so burnt out from the sport I genuinely hated it like I did not even want to look at it, and I ended the sport.”

– Athlete 9

Financial Barriers. Both parents and athletes stressed financial burdens sport participation added to their households, especially when they first arrived in Canada (Athletes 2, 7, and 8, as well as Parents 1, 2, and 5). The costs included, but were not limited to, training fees, gym memberships, coaching fees, and travel expenses for competitions. Athlete 7 talked about obstacles towards engaging in competitive sports for newcomers: *“It is really expensive when you first come. That’s why it took about two years to three years before I actually joined the competitive sports team.”* Some other parents (Parents 1 & 2) mentioned that their children’s participation in sports caused more burden, such as extra work and extra learning. For example:

“The competitions, they were outside of Canada, a lot of money and as an immigrant, I had to work really hard or organize like a much wider, I guess like joined fundraising campaign and, you know, raise more money because for us, for immigrants, when you’re trying to kind a survive, it’s a bit hard.”

– Parent 1

Also noteworthy was that many immigrants lacked the information about available financial options and supports related to sport programs, which exacerbated the financial barriers.

Transportation Constraints. Both parents and athletes indicated that transportation and lack thereof was a barrier because it took time for immigrants to own a car and even if they have a car, one car and one parent could not drive their children to multiple sport activities across a city, as parents often had multiple jobs and ended up having to prioritize which child to drive to which activity (Athletes 2 and 7, as well as Parent 1, 2, and 5). For instance, Athlete 7 commented, *“But the first year, you know, transportation is because even if your parents do have a car, they are most likely*

working or with your siblings.” Athlete 2 talked about the necessity to have transportation means in order to be able to participate not only in practices, but also in regular games.

Language Barriers. As immigrants in Canada, language was a major obstacle for both parents and athletes. Perceived and actual lack of English skills added more pressure to athletes until they became familiar with their teammates and sport’s technical language. Athlete 4 came to Canada as a refugee and shared their story of being excluded from playing games because they did not speak English well:

“When I first started playing soccer, like I joined my school team, I didn’t know how to speak English. So, I mostly didn’t speak to anyone and when I joined the community, actually it was like a team they already had people, but like I was like an extra person. I was like on the bench all the time.”

– Athlete 4

Parent 1 explained how language was a barrier for their family when they tried to engage their children in sports in Canada:

“I guess language, initially, like because it’s not our first language. It’s not even our second one English, it’s our third language. And my children, they were part of ESL initially and they joined like regular classes later. So I would think the language barrier would be to include myself because I didn’t have a good understanding of all those [sport] rules or requirements. So language for sure!”

– Parent 1

Time Constraints. Our interviewees also identified lack of free time for, or time constraints to, sport participation, which was interconnected with other factors, such as transportation issues, parents’ employment, and financial conditions. For example:

“Transportation itself is a huge barrier. You can go to St. Albert one day and then you could go to Sherwood Park the next day and the travel and the cost of that itself is a lot and being able to be on time and show up to all these certain things.”

– Athlete 2

The time crunch of immigrant parents also stemmed from other problems, such as having several jobs. For instance, Athlete 2 observed, *“[Some immigrant parents] have a good, stable nine-to-five job and they can go right to practice after. So no problems there or versus another parent who works evening shifts ... and they can’t afford to coach their kid.”* Parent 1 explained how they had been working all the time, which meant that they did not have time to spend with their children:

“I had to take several jobs to be sustainable, like support my family instead of maybe going with my child for trails. But it was a survival mode, and I had to do what I had to do and earn money at that time.”

– Parent 1

Access to Information and Resources.

Immigrant parents reported that finding the information on how to enroll their children to different sport activities, how to register for different programs and leagues, and

Many immigrants lacked the information about available financial options and supports related to sport programs, which exacerbated the financial barriers.

“...often times the very high-performing athletes to do like medal or sometimes you can’t join teams because they don’t have [permanent resident or citizen status]. And I find it very, very like, frustrating because they’re trying to represent the country or the province. And it’s like, and they’re the ones who are discriminating against these athletes.”

generally how to navigate the Canadian sports system was extremely challenging for them (Parents 3 and 5). Athlete 7 also said how he struggled to find a club:

“But even if you just search up the basketball clubs, for example, in Edmonton, information wise, it is a little tough ... It can be quite challenging to navigate because ... you don’t even know each club, different clubs ...”

– Athlete 7

Parent 5 shared their experience where their daughter was “accidentally” introduced to the sport:

“There was a reason why I was able to know about the club was playing in junior high, somebody saw that she was good... I didn’t even do a club back home in Africa, right. I didn’t even know about the club.”

– Parent 5

Many immigrants are not familiar with some of Canadian sports, especially winter sports. For instance, Parent 1 succinctly summarized: “Not everyone knows what cheerleading is.”

From a sport program provider’s perspective, Sport Organization Professional 4 remembered their interaction with some immigrants regarding curling:

“Sometimes the person that I was speaking to didn’t know what curling was. And if that was the case, then that’s sort of as far as it went right? That they didn’t recognize what I was talking about.”

Other sport organization professionals also noted that immigrant families struggled with finding information about sports programs:

“I would say the administrative barriers to just finding us on the website. I have so many families like we did this event for kids sport back in the fall and a bunch of families said to me, ‘Oh, we had no idea there were [name of the sport is hidden] clubs in the city,’ and I thought, Oh, I’m surprised they don’t Google it or something?”

– Sport Organization Professional 3

Residency Status Constraints. Many athletes were concerned about limitations to competing in Canadian championships and competitions due to their temporary immigration status. In some cases, they lamented how disheartening it was to train hard only to realize that they were not treated equally as local athletes:

“Yes, I did not mention that because I didn’t guess I was there a lot of athletes who get that problem, especially immigrant athletes and very often times the very high-performing athletes to do like medal or sometimes you can’t join teams because they don’t have [permanent resident or citizen status]. And I find it very, very like,

frustrating because they're trying to represent the country or the province. And it's like, and they're the ones who are discriminating against these athletes. That is, yeah, that is a problem. That is one of the problems I would say [my sport] has."

– Athlete 7

In another example, an athlete explained how their residential status negatively impacted them:

"Yes, because I wasn't Canadian or we did not have our permanent residency. But like my parents were paying for all the tuitions. Like for the fees for [the national sport organization], right? Everything. They're paying everything. I was training the same amount of hours as everybody else as like my friends. And so we just felt what was the word? We get them feel good not to be like at least judged by the judges, you know, competitions to know where you stand. Mm-Hmm. Not necessarily like be ranked with everybody else just to see where you are."

– Athlete 3

The athlete shared their experience being discriminated by their teammates because of their immigration status, to the point where they decided to quit the high-performance sport career:

"Because I was in Canada doing [my sport] for five years, I am pretty sure like competing at National and stuff, and that was all like discouraging to keep going. You know, like you're not getting judged, what's the point? You know, if you don't know what was done, it's like being left out. Hmm. And then that I think, I am pretty sure I like to stress about it all caused me to have migraines and stuff. And so, I had to quit the sport."

– Athlete 3

A sport organization professional also confirmed that technical rules of their sport did not allow non-Canadians to compete at national-level competitions:

"Naturally, they have some restrictions around that [participation at competitions]. You can compete in what we call a con-course. So outside of the competition, so they would set someone who is a permanent resident or you're on a visa of some sort. They could participate in the competition, but they would not be ranked with the Canadian athletes as those rankings are used for a national team. But they're generally there... And so they can participate but can't be ranked within the country, obviously."

– Sport Organization Professional 8

Barriers to Inclusive Sport Programs

Many interviewees, especially those from sport organization, identified the barriers towards providing inclusive sport programs, including lack of connections with racialized communities, time and financial constraints, lack of higher-level representation, language barriers, and transportation issues, among others.

Lack of Connections with Racialized Communities. Our respondents believed that racialized immigrant communities were somehow disconnected from the mainstream sport system in Canada and to some extent lived in their own silos, making it difficult to create partnerships with them. For example:

"I think the biggest barrier is understanding how they get connected. Where do they get the information? How do we connect to them? That's a piece that I think could be improved upon..."

“It’s not a lack of wanting. It’s a lack of [time and money], how do we do it if we’re very limited in time, capacity and money, how do we do it if we’re very limited in time, capacity and money?”

“[Immigrant] communities to many extents, live in their own silos, ... we don’t know people from the African community. So we really have to go into those communities or find a way to just say, ‘hi, how can we partner with you or offer you something?’”

– Sport Organization Professional 6

Sport Organization Professional 9 recognized one of the main ways to connect to racialized communities as to providing information about sports resources.

“I think the biggest barrier is understanding how they get connected. Where do they get the information? How do we connect to them? That’s a piece that I think could be improved upon, because when you come to a new country, I think one of the easiest things to integrate into a sport. I think from a newcomer or any of the marginalized communities, just getting access to the information is probably the biggest challenge.”

– Sport Organization Professional 9

Time and Financial Constraints. Sport Organization Professional 8 mentioned lack of time and funding as the intersectional barriers when they tried to provide more inclusive programs: *“It’s not a lack of wanting. It’s a lack of [time and money], how do we do it if we’re very limited in time, capacity and money?”*

Sport Organization Professional 3 talked about how people had to increase their financial commitments as they moved from recreational programs to competitive ones in their sport:

“... at the recreational level, our sport is quite accessible ... But as soon as you want to get to the competitive level, you’re now looking at equipment, you’re looking at these expensive body suits. And as you go up the levels, those things become more and more expensive.”

– Sport Organization Professional 3

Lack of Higher-Level Representation. Respondents also observed that there was little to no diverse representation in decision-making positions in their sport organizations. For instance, Sport Organizational Professional 1 stated, *“So, the biggest barrier is for people [boards and employees of sport organizations] to understand first that those [BPOC] people are welcome to be on higher position.”*

Another sport organization professional said that the board members and administrators in their sport organization did not represent their members in term of race and ethnicity:

“Well, they [sport organizations] have a lot of participants, like at the participant level that are from different backgrounds and nationalities, but they’re coaching and administration is not, so that the organization really is not represented through the top of their organization through their participants.”

– Sport Organization Professional 5

Language Barriers. Sport organization professionals recognized language barriers as major roadblocks to more inclusive sport programs. However, they also share that their sport organizations lacked in the capacities to address this challenge:

"... Do the translation of our, you know, our registration form or even the information about the date. And that wasn't always easy to find or when we would actually call the cultural association ... So it's a language barrier, and it was a big one for us."

– Sport Organization Professional 4

Language barriers also meant that simple things such as "helmet sized, getting equipment, getting ready to get on ice" took a considerably longer time for immigrant participants. Thus, language barriers added more complexity for sports organization professionals.

Transportation Constraints. Sport organization professionals reported about many administrative barriers related to organizing transportation across the city:

"So any families, for example, who live on the north end of Edmonton and don't have a lot of transportation, they probably won't send their kids to our programs because it's just the traffic or the busing or the train just isn't convenient for them. So, I mean, one of my huge goals is to be able to have these more accessible programs offered all over the city so that families and Clearview can just walk their kids there after school instead of having to get them to a track in the middle of the city."

– Sport Organization Professional 3

Sport Organization Professional 4 recognized that they did not currently address the transportation piece of their programming.

Strategies to Address Barriers

Lastly, all groups of interviewees — athlete youth, parents, and professionals — provided us with various suggestions regarding strategies to address the aforementioned barriers to make sports in Alberta more inclusive. These suggestions were deeply rooted in their lived experiences or professional experiences.

"So I think, yeah, that's probably like the first step, actually, like acknowledging what the racialized athletes have to say. Exploring that, asking them for their opinions and stuff like that."

Below, we specifically discuss the sub-themes of: diversity, capacity building, enforcing equality, intersectoral connections, reducing costs, reconceptualising sports in Canada, and raising public awareness.

Diversity. Several athlete youth shared their understanding that most of the Canadian sports are White-dominated and that they wish *"there were more people that look like me"* (Athlete 8). Both athletes (Athletes 1 and 3) and parents (Parent 5) talked about the need to diversify the decision-making positions within sports organizations that include board members, directors, and managers, as doing so would likely help racialized immigrant athletes feel welcomed and included. In Canada, most not-for-profit sport clubs are run by parents of athletes. However, some parents (Parents 2 & 5) shared that they were never invited to the boards of their children's sport clubs. Athlete 1 underscored the importance of including voices of BPOC athletes in sport organization's different activities and programming:

"So I think, yeah, that's probably like the first step, actually, like acknowledging what the racialized athletes have to say. Exploring that, asking them for their opinions and stuff like that. And I guess, yeah, from there, like exploring those hierarchies and power dynamics because I know they're in every sport, you know, and I feel like for a lot of like

“When we looked at our board, to be honest, it was a lot of older gentlemen, not very much female representation, absolutely no representation from any other, was all White. And that’s not the way. If we want our sport to be a reflection of our society, then we need to start at the top.”

sport organizations, it’s like, so it’s like older white men like at the top making the decisions and maybe from there trying to like change some of that too, because they’re going to have a certain view on things. And if you don’t have the perspective of other people like things are not really going to change. I think those are probably the main two things.”

– Athlete 1

Parent 5 talked about the fact that Black people were underrepresented in their children’s sport:

“So it’s important because when there are more Black people, more Asian or any other ethnicity in their society or in a group of other people, it feels more comfortable to come join. You know, because they have somebody they can relate to. But when you go to those times, we went to a big tournament in Toronto. I’m telling you my son was the only person there was Black. Then I was like, wow.”

– Parent 5

Sport Organization Professional 1 hoped that their organization would change its policies

to increase diversity in its board members and staff:

“When we looked at our board, to be honest, it was a lot of older gentlemen, not very much female representation, absolutely no representation from any other, was all White. And that’s not the way. If we want our sport to be a reflection of our society, then we need to start at the top. So we wanted to make sure that our board had some policies in place to make that happen, as well as our staff makeup.”

– Sport Organization Professional 1

Capacity Building. Sport organization professionals emphasized the value of capacity building in terms of cultural training of their coaches and staff members:

“...in terms of leadership and coaches, I think understanding the cultural sensitivity ... and understanding their own privilege, understanding the challenges of the groups that we want to welcome”

– Sport Organization Professional 8

Sport Organization Professional 2 believed that hiring coaching staff with diverse cultural backgrounds would be an asset to coaching immigrant children and youth because they would have knowledge of cultural differences and languages. Similar ideas were mentioned by athletes and parents, as well:

“[Have] coaches that know what they’re doing, so they care about all the players’ emotions. They don’t discriminate anyone. Because when you don’t care, you don’t care...Players lose confidence, they start like they don’t want to play [sport] anymore. They want to quit.”

— Athlete 4

Sport Organization Professionals 1 and 7 suggested having a specific position in the club that would work on building relationships with racialized communities and

visiting cultural communities because they seemed to lack that capacity. Similarly, Sport Organization Professional 3 even suggested the position of “cultural liaison,” who would know several different languages and help creating a comfortable, welcoming environment for members.

Enforcing Equality. Athletes 3 and 5 requested that sport organizations, especially coaches, judges, and other staff members, treat everyone equally regardless of their immigration and/or racial backgrounds. It was a simple request; yet, they understood that there was a long way to actualize it:

“... to treat everybody the same. Mm-Hmm. So treat the people who are from here and newcomers all the same way because if you are paying the membership fees right for [the national sport organization], you’re paying for training for everything.”

– Athlete 3

Inter-Sectoral Connections. Sport organization professionals noted that often sport clubs were created based on existing social networks of people with a shared cultural background who speak the same language. Sport Organizational Professional 2, for instance, stated that local sports clubs often did not accommodate immigrants because they would not be able to provide a “feeling home” environment for immigrants with different cultural backgrounds from theirs. Another professional recognized that there was lack of outreach from sport organizations to immigrant communities and families, whereas they seemed to be cognizant of settlement agencies’ existence:

“... sport not connecting with the centers where a new immigrant family would connect with and not making meaningful connections with those organizations to say, ‘Hey, we’re here and we want you to come’ ... Yeah. So that’s lacking”

– Sport Organization Professional 8

Reducing Costs. As the lack of money was a major barrier for immigrant youth and their parents, not surprisingly, our interviewees identified reducing costs of sport participation as an important solution. As a former refugee themselves, Athlete 4 noted that immigrants with this particular background are particularly less likely to spend money on children’s sports due to their limited resources. In such a case, decreasing training fees among things would help them engage in sports programs. Athlete 2 suggested:

“...if there are ways or policies that can address financial barriers just to give the kids more chances to play. I think that would be the biggest thing.”

“... our sport system in general does not focus on creating a place for all. It focuses on creating a place for some who are elite.”

At the same time, Sport Organization Professional 6 also recognized that they must reduce costs for immigrants.

Re-Conceptualizing Sports in Canada. Some sport organization professionals pointed out that the sport system in Canada required major re-structuring, and that re-imagination of the sport system is needed to become truly inclusive:

“... our sport system in general does not focus on creating a place for all. It focuses on creating a place for some who are elite.”

– Sport Organization Professional 8

Sport Organization Professional 2 talked about the need for having or creating sports clubs with cultural components that could help immigrant children and youth to better integrate into Canadian society via sports programs:

"But we [sport club] focus on sports and cultural aspects linking the two aspects, and I think it's very important. But I think that people [PSO] did not recognize this. So, if they would recognize this, maybe that would help us to proceed and move forward."

– Sport Organization Professional 2

Raising Public Awareness. Youth, parent, and professional interviewees all highlighted that there was a need to talk more about barriers in sports via different channels. For example, Athlete 1 was part of the video campaign about racism in sports. She wanted to become involved in more of such activities. Athlete 2 stated that greater awareness of existing barriers and racism would help create a more welcoming and inclusive space for immigrants. Athlete 5 explained why awareness is important:

"But I wish I could bring attention to this issue to like someone higher up, like an administrator. But I also feel like there's almost not enough. It wouldn't be enough to make a change. But as I think you are bringing awareness to the fact that this happens to people in the [sport is hidden] community or just like sports in general, I think it would be nice because I feel like sports is very political, like the way that they choose people based on who they want is not based on like skill at all. Awareness on that, I think, would be the most beneficial. And maybe they'd actually focus on helping those people who have been discriminated against or in the sport."

– Athlete 5

Athlete 3 stressed the importance of raising students' awareness on anti-racism at the school level:

"I think there just should be something like you talk about racism and stuff. Because also, I know most of the times kids learn from parents, right? And I think schools need to provide. What's the word then? Like, they should just like talk about racism, at least, you know, so that the kids would at least have a wider perspective on things and not just the parents or the peers."

– Athlete 3

Parent 5 echoed Athlete 3's idea about educating students about racism and anti-racism at schools. Sport Organizations Professional 8 also agreed that they had to intentionally raise awareness on creating diversity in their sport:

"I think these kinds of conversations are new where conversations to be having to shine a light on creating more diversity. So, once we start having them and building more awareness and more focus on creating diversity, I think we'll be able to do that will then support improving in those leadership positions. So I don't know what to define that as, but progress that hasn't been made yet. Maybe that's a barrier."

– Sport Organization Professional 8

Quantitative results

Cultural Organizations

Organizing BPOC Programs and Events.

When asked if their organization organized teams, programs, or events related to sports and physical activities for BPOC community members (Figure 1), 92% of the cultural organizations reported that they did so. Of those that offered some BPOC programs, 50% offered events such as sport tournaments and tryout events, 17% ran regular sport programs such as soccer and basketball, and 67% provided other types of programs, including social events with sport games, sport programs for specific age ranges, sport programs specifically for Black

Figure 1: Organizing BPOC Programs and Events

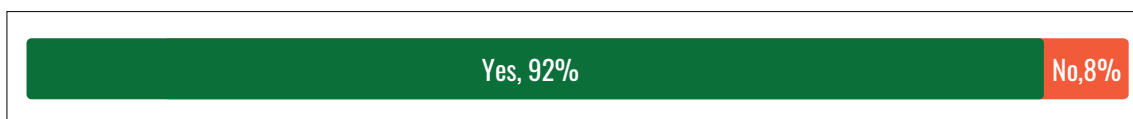
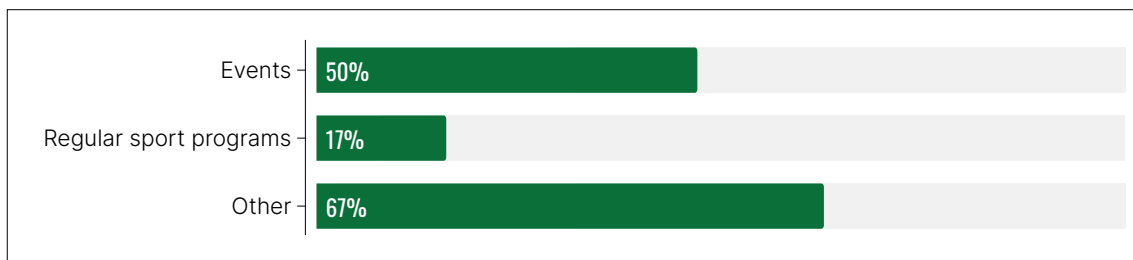


Figure 2: Programs and Events for BPOC Members



communities, and other sociocultural events and activities (Figure 2).

Barriers to Organizing Programs and Events for BPOC Members. In response to the question about barriers that cultural organizations faced when trying to organize teams, programs, or events for BPOC community members (Figure 3), 100% of our respondents specified lack of funding as their main barrier. This was followed by lack of time and capacity, such as not having a designated specialist (67% each) as well as lack of information about available resources and lack of transportation among community members (58% each). Further, 50% of the respondents reported language barriers experienced by community members and lack of BPOC-friendly sport organizations, respectively. Cultural or religious barriers, such as norms against co-ed programs, were identified by 33% of the respondents, while only 17% selected lack of interests among members. Other reported barriers (17%) were: lack of cultural humility training by local organization staff, lack of understanding about the barriers faced by BPOC newcomers and immigrants, and lack of full-time staff to organize such events (i.e., organization is mostly led by volunteer board members).

Encouraging Sport Participation Among BPOC Immigrants. When asked whether cultural organizations had taken any particular actions to encourage sport participation among BPOC immigrants (Figure 4), 67% reported to have taken such actions before. Among those that had encouraged sport participation of BPOC immigrants, 88% organized sport programs and events, including online sport instructions, soccer and basketball tournaments, dance programs, and annual sport events (Figure 5). In addition, 75% engaged in outreach activities, such as organizing group activities in areas closer to most members with easy transit access, hosting events for families with children to connect with one another while enjoying a sporting activity, and inviting their members to various events throughout a year. A few other organizations attempted to encourage their members to volunteer to teach sports to others in order to bring them a sense of ownership of those programs.

Barriers to Encouraging BPOC Immigrants. Cultural organizations were asked about the barriers that they encountered when trying to encourage sport participation among BPOC immigrants (Figure 6). Lack of funding was reported by 85% of our

respondents, followed by 62% identifying lack of capacity. Almost half of the respondents indicated lack of time to organize and lack of transportation among community members were their barriers (46% each).

This was followed by 38% reporting lack of information about available resources, 31% specifying language barriers experienced by community members, and another 31% indicating cultural or religious constraints.

Figure 3: Barriers to Organizing Programs and Events for BPOC Members

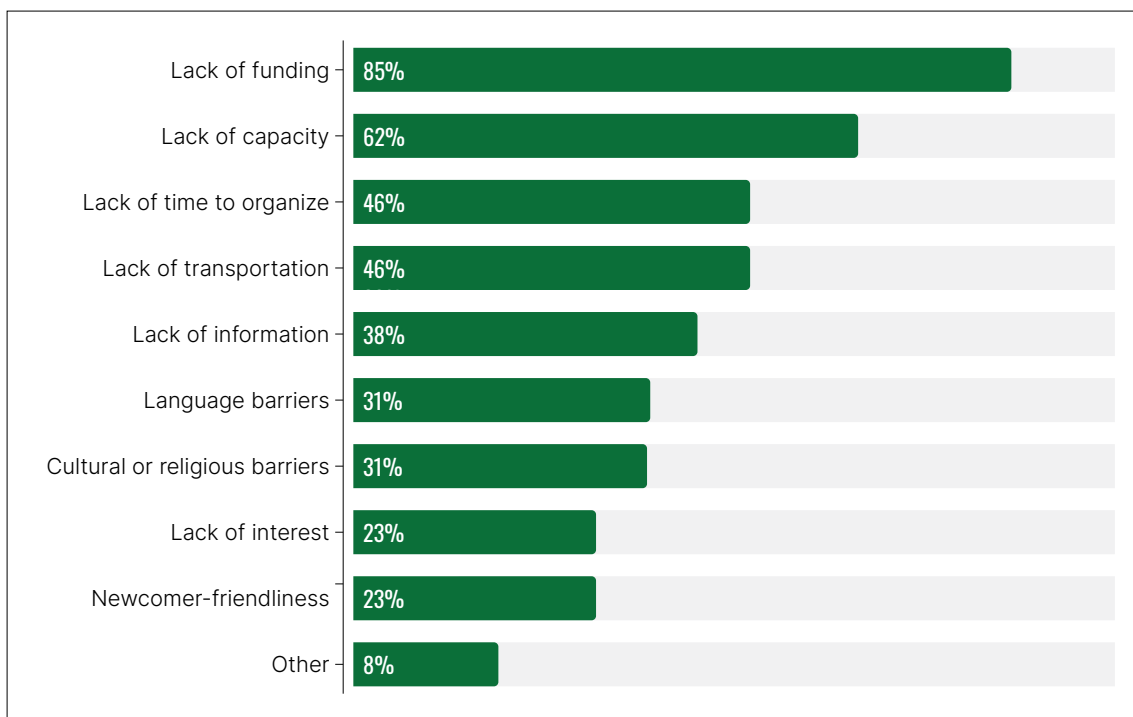


Figure 4: Efforts to Encourage Sport Participation by BPOC Immigrants



Figure 5: Efforts to Encourage BPOC Immigrants

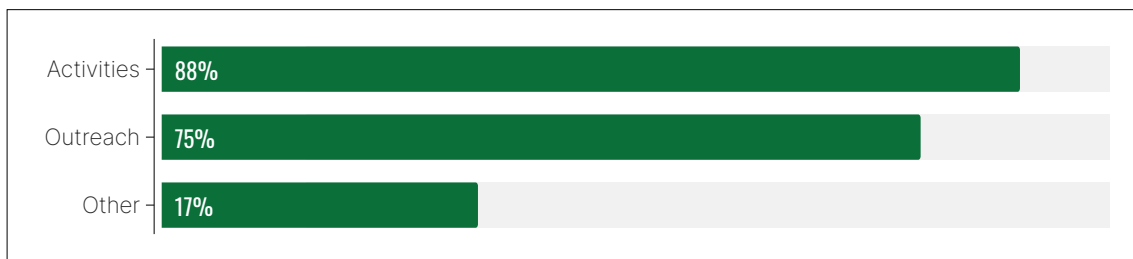
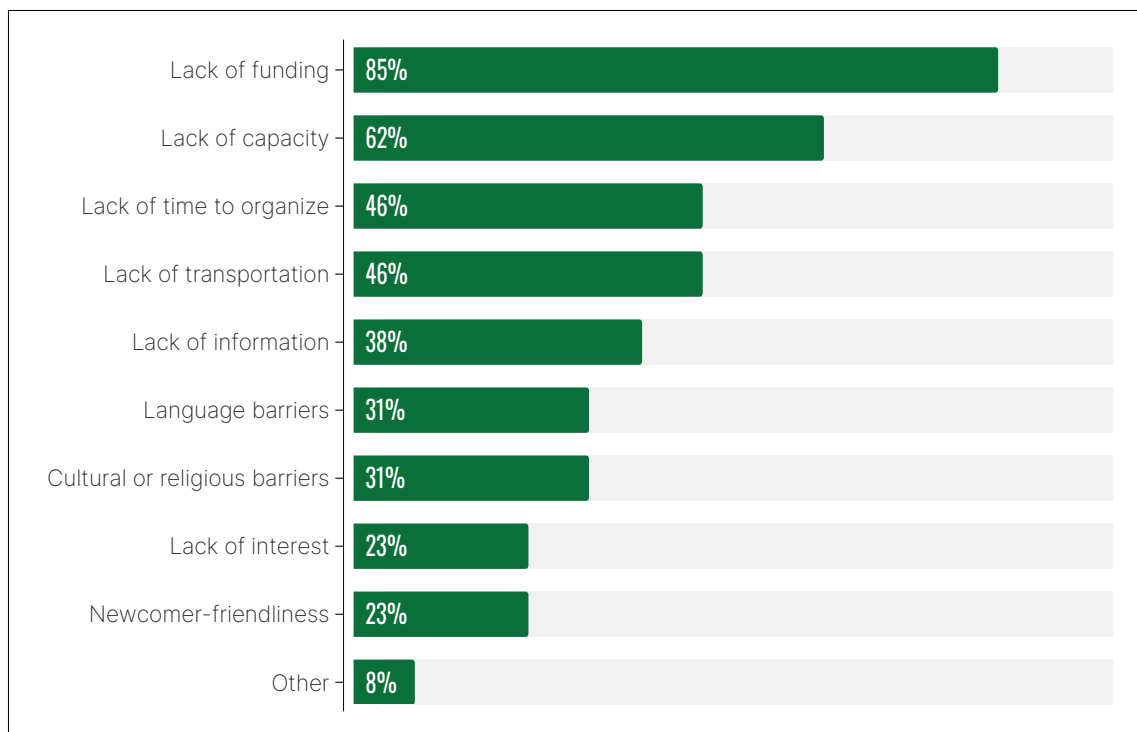


Figure 6: Barriers to Encouraging BPOC Immigrants



Did only 23% select lack of interest among immigrants themselves and lack of BPOC/newcomer-friendly sport organizations, respectively.

Suggestions to Sport Organizations, Governments, and Settlement Services. When asked about suggestions for sport organizations in order to promote sport participation among BPOC immigrant youth (Figure 7), 100% of the cultural organization respondents recommended providing more information on sport resources. This was closely followed by 85% suggesting offering funding and discounts for BPOC communities, doing outreach with BPOC communities, organizing different events such as tryouts for immigrants, and networking with BPOC community representatives. Addressing immigration-related problems, such as eliminating citizenship and permanent residency requirements to compete, was chosen by 69%. Further, 54%

identified using clear and consistent definitions of newcomers (e.g., up to 5 years after arrival) as a helpful strategy.

The cultural organization respondents were also asked to provide other suggestions to the governments (Figure 8), where 67% recommended offering funding for sport programs for BPOC immigrants and providing information on sport resources, respectively. Connecting sport organizations with BPOC communities was supported by 50% of our respondents.

Finally, in response to the similar question asking about suggestions for settlement services (Figure 9), 100% of our cultural organization respondents believed that facilitating networking between sport organization staff and BPOC community leaders was crucial to promote sport participation among BPOC immigrant youth. Addressing transportation problems was recommended

Figure 7: Suggestions to Sport Organizations

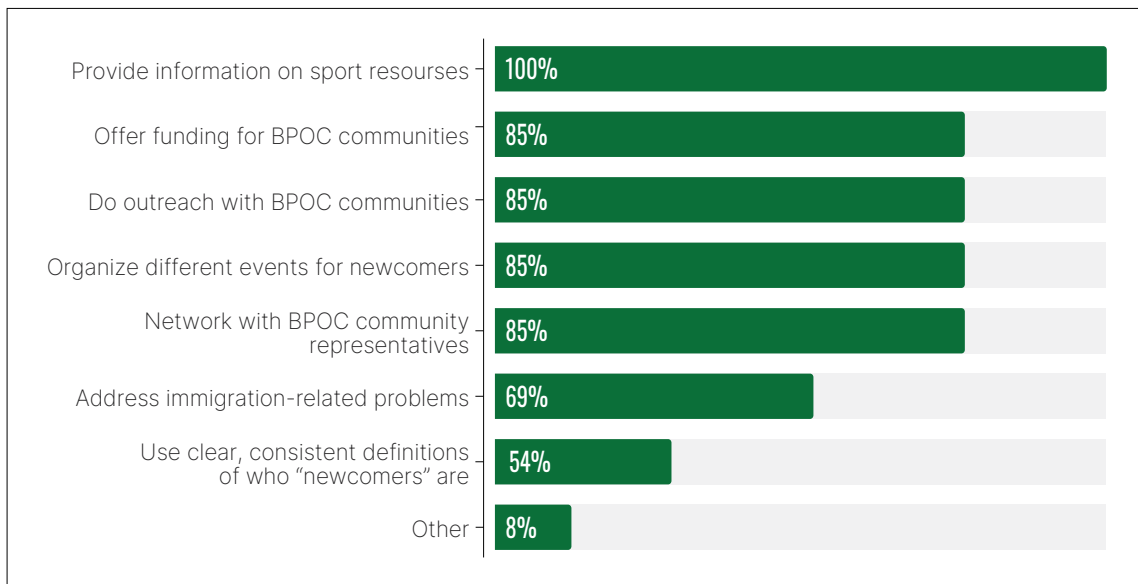


Figure 8: Suggestions to Governments

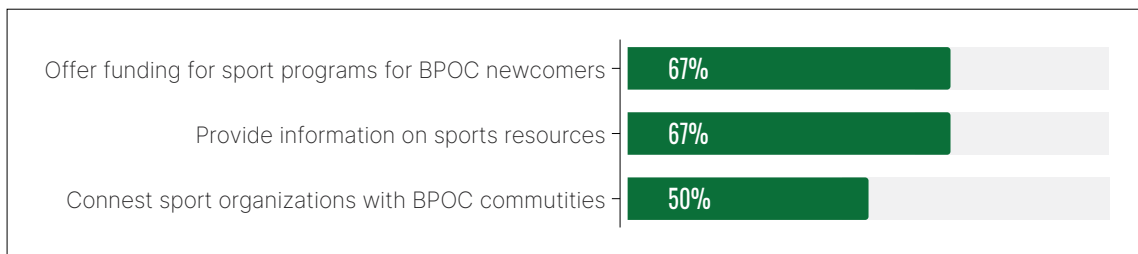
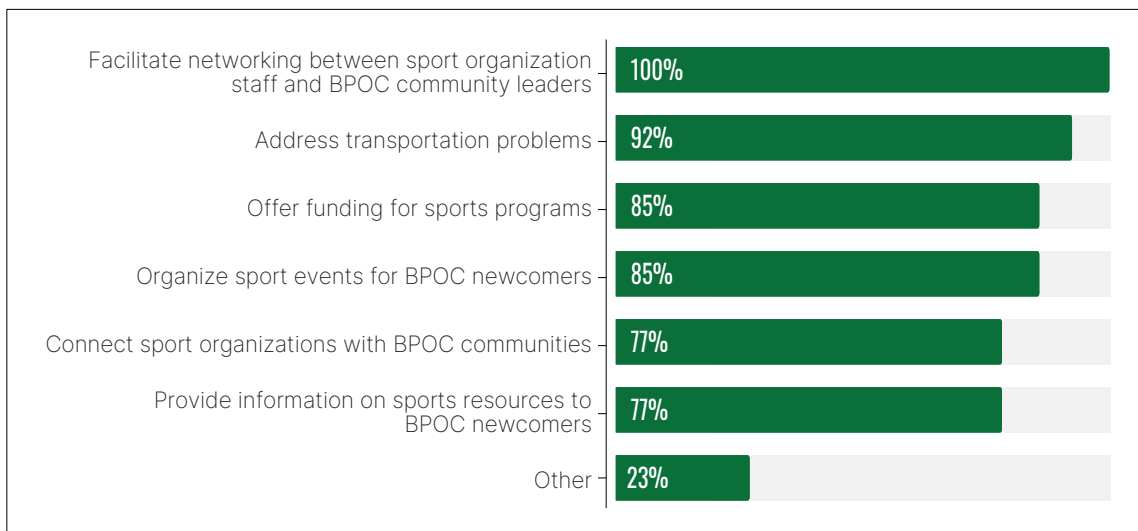


Figure 9: Suggestions to Settlement Services



by 92%, followed by 85% suggesting more funding for sport programs and organizing sport events for BPOC newcomers, respectively. Moreover, 77% also suggested connecting sport organizations with BPOC communities and providing information on sport resources to BPOC immigrants, respectively. Among other suggestions (23%) were informing BPOC communities about the existence of settlement programs and better connecting newcomers to required resources.

Sport Organizations

Racial and Ethnic Background Information Collection. When asked about whether sport organizations collected the racial and ethnic background information from their youth athlete members (Figure 10), only 17% responded affirmatively. For these sport organizations, the motivation to collect such information was to promote diversity and inclusion. Among the sport organizations that did not collect any information about racial and ethnic backgrounds of their youth

Figure 10: Reasons for Not Collecting Racial and Ethnic Information from Youth Athlete Members

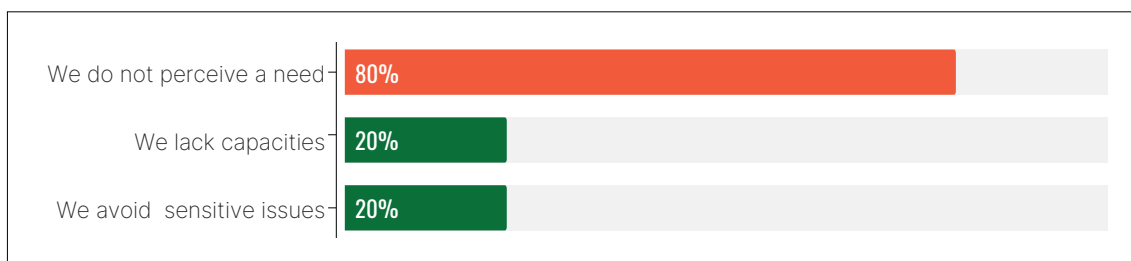


Figure 11: Collecting Racial and Ethnic Background Information from Board Members or Employees



athlete members (83%), 80% did not perceive any need for such information, while 20% lacked capacities, such as shortage of staff, and simply avoided sensitive issues

We also asked our sport organization sample whether they collected the information on racial and ethnic backgrounds from their board members or employees (Figure 11). Similar to the results for youth athlete members, only 25% indicated that they did so, mainly to meet requirements from their funders. The vast majority (75%) did not collect such information primarily because

they did not perceive a need to do so (78%; Figure 12). A few organizations also reported that they did not want to engage in tokenism, or that they did not formally collect information but were aware of and actively hired diverse staff.

The fact that many sport organizations did not collect the information on racial and ethnic backgrounds of their board members and employees was contrasting the next finding that 92% perceived the need for more diversity in the demographics of board members and employees (Figure 13). Did

Figure 12: Reasons for Not Collecting Racial and Ethnic Background Information from Board Members or Employees

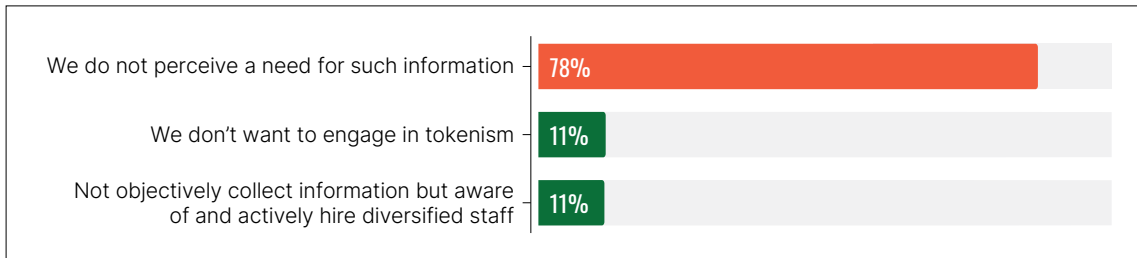


Figure 13: Need for More Diversity in the Demographics of Board Members and Employee

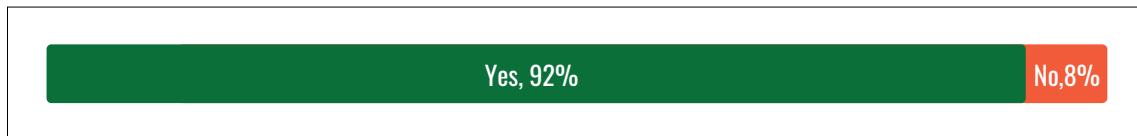
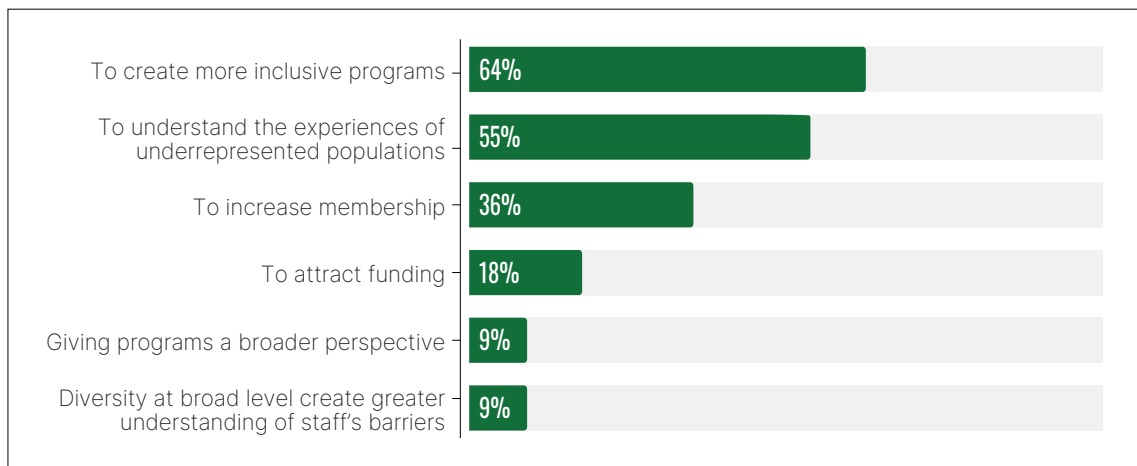


Figure 14: Reasons for the Importance of Diversity Among Board Members and Employees



only one organization (8%) indicate there was no need for them to further diversify, as they felt that they were already racially and ethnically diverse.

Reasons for the Importance of Diversity Among Board Members and Employees.

When asked about why they thought it was important to diversify their board members and employees (Figure 14), the most frequently mentioned answer was “to create more inclusive programs” (64%),

followed by “to understand the experiences of underrepresented populations” (55%). Moreover, 36% linked greater diversity among board members and employees to an increase in membership, with 18% valued diversity to attract more funding. One organization (9%) believed increasing diversity among board members and employees can give programs a broader perspective, and another (9%) associated it with the need to gain greater understanding of staffs’ barriers.

Figure 15: Barriers to Diversifying Board Members and Employees

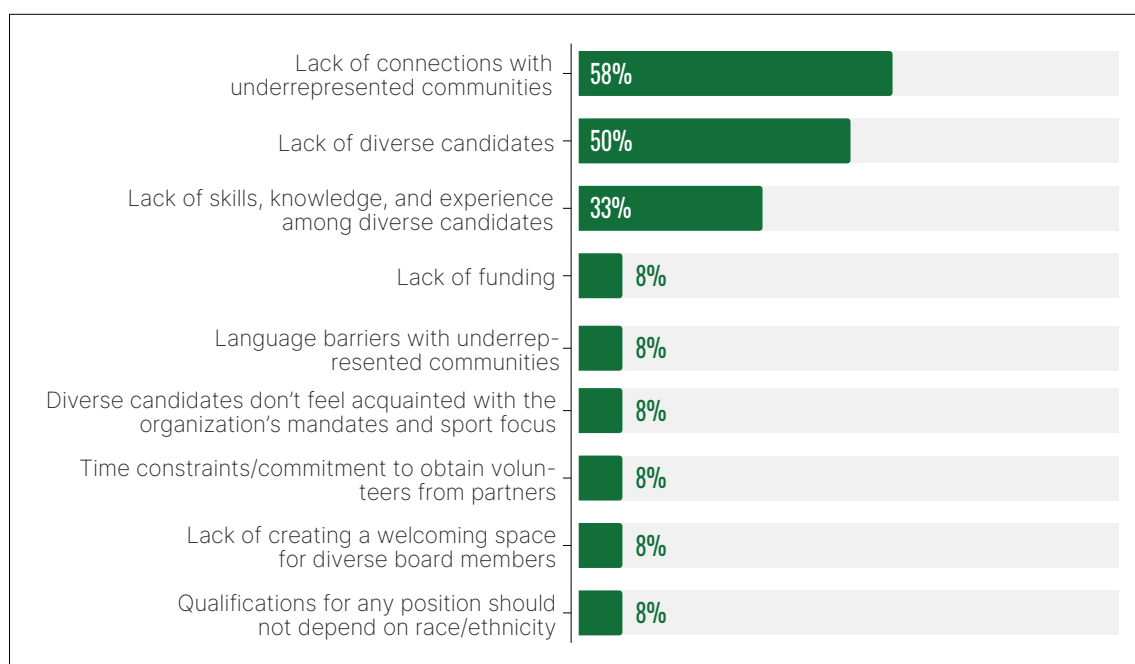


Figure 16: Actions Taken to Diversify Board Members and Employees



Barriers to Diversifying Board Members and Employees. We asked sport organization respondents about what barriers they experienced in diversifying their board members and employees (Figure 15). The most frequently reported barrier was the lack of connections with underrepresented communities (58%), while the close second (50%) was lack of diverse candidates. Related to this latter barrier, 33% also perceived lack of skills, knowledge, and experience among diverse candidates. Other barriers included: lack of funding, language barriers with underrepresented communities, lack of familiarity among diverse candidates about the organization's mandates and sport focus, time constraints and commitment to obtain volunteers from

parents, lack of a welcoming space for diverse board members, and a belief that qualifications for any position should not depend on race/ethnicity (8% each).

Actions Taken to Diversify Members and Employees. When asked whether their sport organizations had taken any actions to diversify their board members and employees in terms of race and ethnicity (Figure 16), 30% said that they did so. As shown in Figure 17, 67% of the organizations that took actions for diversification engaged in outreach to underrepresented communities, solicited candidates of diverse backgrounds, and sought funding for promoting diversity. One organization created positions specific to inclusion and diversity.

Figure 17: Specific Actions Taken to Diversify Board Members and Employees

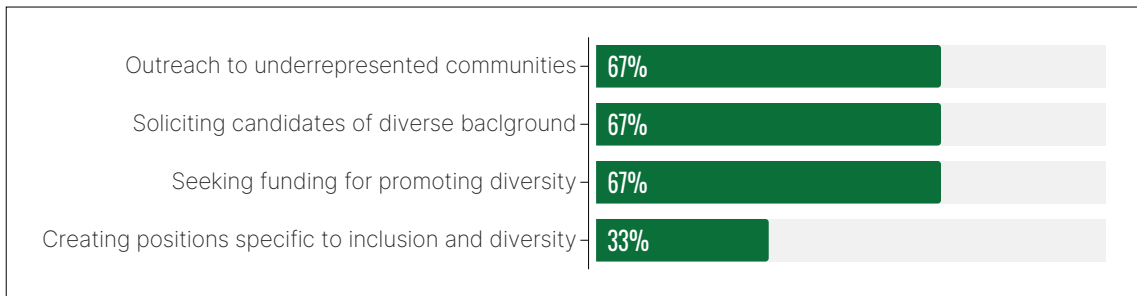


Figure 18: Reasons for Not Taking Actions to Diversify Board Members and Employees

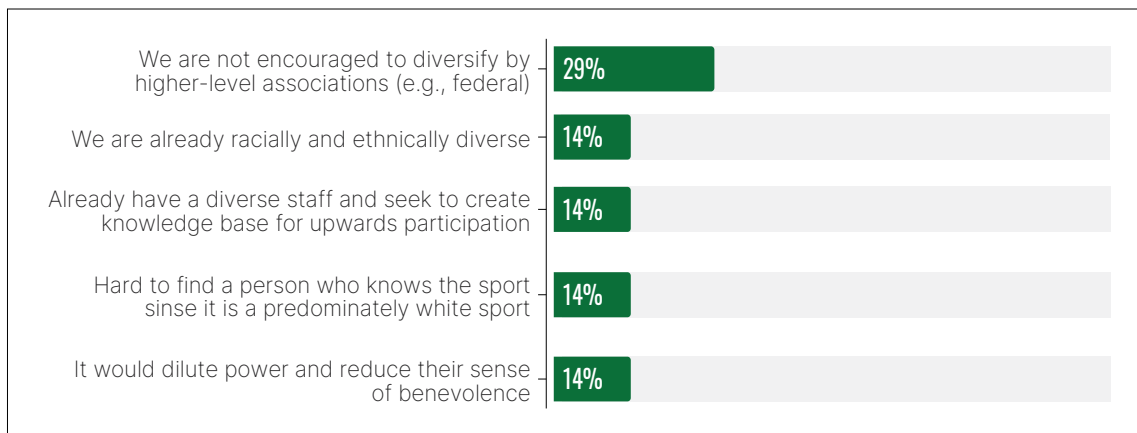
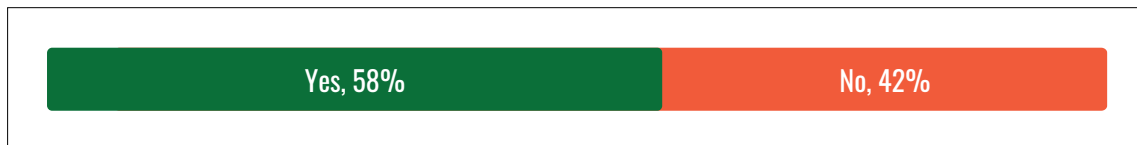


Figure 19: Existing Connections with BPOC Communities



Of the sport organizations that had not taken actions to diversify their board members and employees, 29% cited not being encouraged to diversify by higher-level associations (e.g., National Sport Organizations) as their reason for their inaction (Figure 18). Other reasons for not taking actions for diversification included: a belief that they were already racially and ethnically diverse, an idea that their organization “already had diverse staff and seek to create knowledge based for upwards

participation,” the difficulty in finding a person of a different racial and/or ethnic background who knew a predominantly White sport, and an idea that such diversification “would dilute [BPOC people’s] power and reduce their sense of benevolence” (14% each).

Connections to BPOC Communities. In response to our question about whether sport organizations had existing connections with BPOC communities (Figure 19),

58% answered affirmatively. Of these organizations with existing relationships, 86% reported that their connections were driven by their need to promote diversity and inclusion as well as to increase their membership, respectively (Figure 20). Except for these dominant motivations, 14% of our respondents also cited their need to meet requirements from funders and to “create a space where the community sees themselves represented in the industry.” Among the sport organizations that had not connected to BPOC communities, the reasons for the lack of relationships included: lack of capacity, including not

having multilingual staff and enough space (40%), lack of funding in general (20%) and lack of funding specifically “to get connected or to get volunteers on board for such connections” (20%); (Figure 21).

Existing Connections with Cultural Organizations. In our survey, 42% of sport organization respondents reported to have connections with cultural organizations (Figure 22), including but not limited to Africa Centre, Fort Saskatchewan Multicultural Association, Action for Healthy Communities (AHC), and Ukrainian Community.

Figure 20: Reasons for Connecting to BPOC Communities

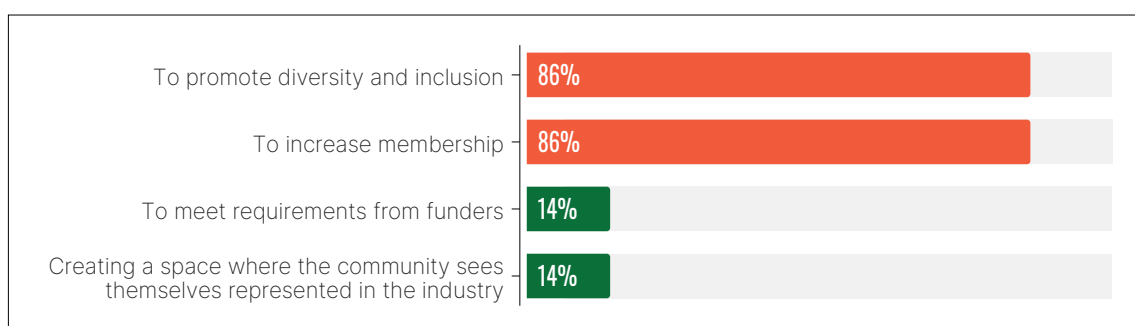


Figure 21: Reasons for Not Connecting to BPOC Communities

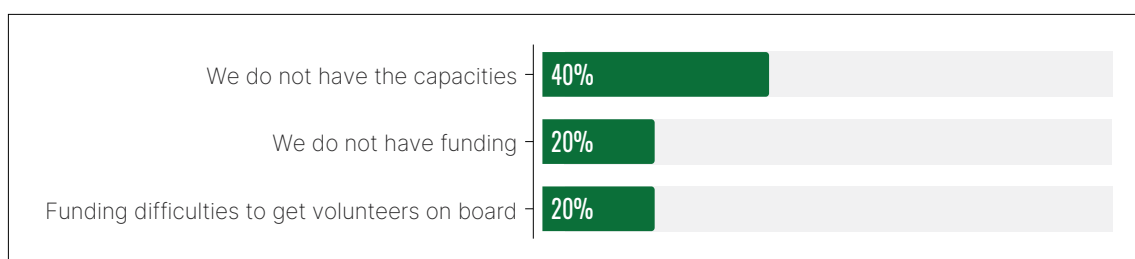


Figure 22: Existing Connections with Cultural Organizations

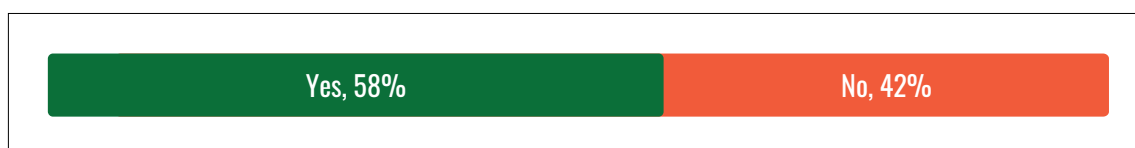


Figure 23: Barriers to Engaging with BPOC Communities

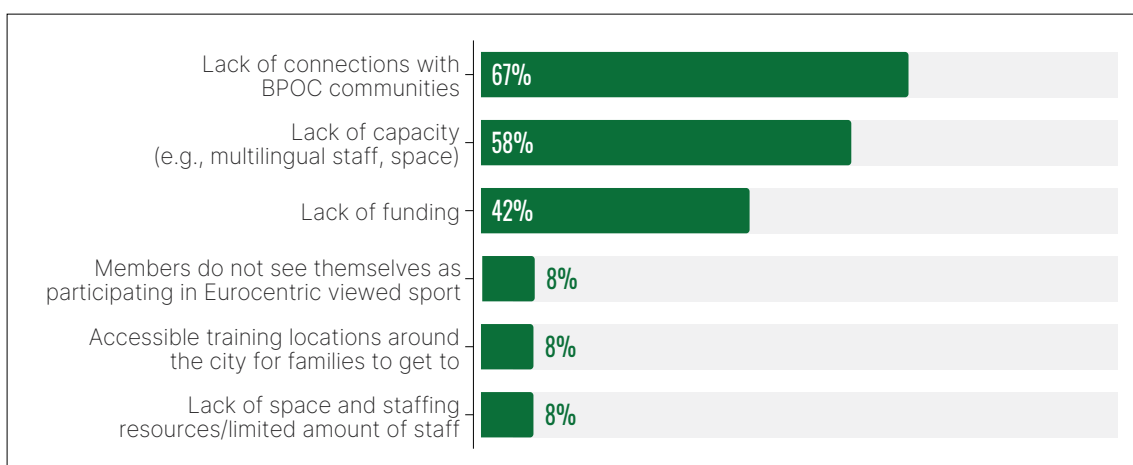
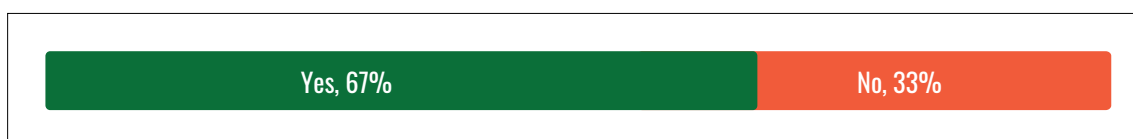


Figure 24: Perceived Low Participation in Sports among BPOC Communities



Barriers to Engaging with BPOC Communities. When asked about barriers to engaging with members of BPOC communities (Figure 23), our sport organization respondents most frequently mentioned lack of connections with BPOC communities (67%), followed by lack of capacity including multicultural staff and space (58%) and lack of funding (42%). One organization (8%) also referred to: “members [not seeing] themselves as participants in a Eurocentric sport,” lack of “accessible training locations around the city for families,” and “lack of space and staffing resources, such as limited number of staff,” respectively.

Perceived Low Participation in Sports among BPOC Communities. Sport organizations were asked whether they perceived low participation in their sport by BPOC community members (Figure 24). The majority (67%) recognized this pattern. When probed about what might be causing such low participation (Figure 25), 100% of

the organizations that observed this pattern cited transportation issues and lack of information about available resources, respectively. Also frequently mentioned were lack of financial means and lack of experience in organized sports among BPOC community members (75% each). Further, 50% identified language barriers experienced BPOC individuals, while 38% also recognized time constraints within BPOC communities. Other mentioned reasons (13%) included: overwhelmingly cold winters depending on where BPOC individuals are from, and a perceived tendency that BPOC members might not see themselves represented in winter sports beyond recreational and introductory levels.

Of the sport organizations that did not perceive low sport participation among BPOC communities, 50% attributed this positive trend to financial support they provided with BPOC communities and tryout events they organized for the communities (Figure 26).

Figure 25: Reasons for Low Participation in Sports Among BPOC Communities

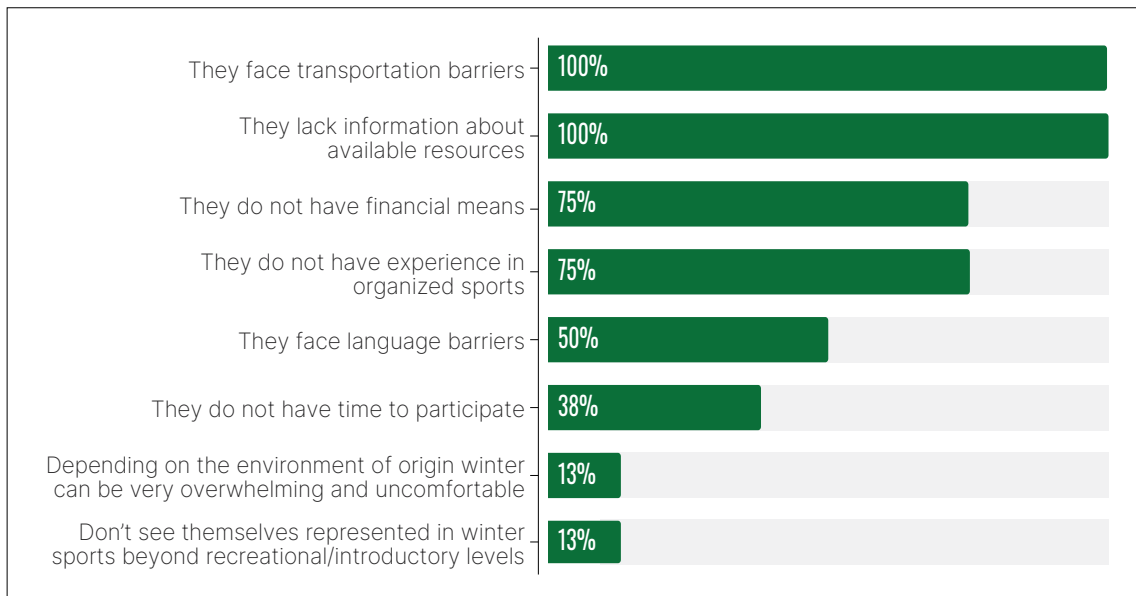
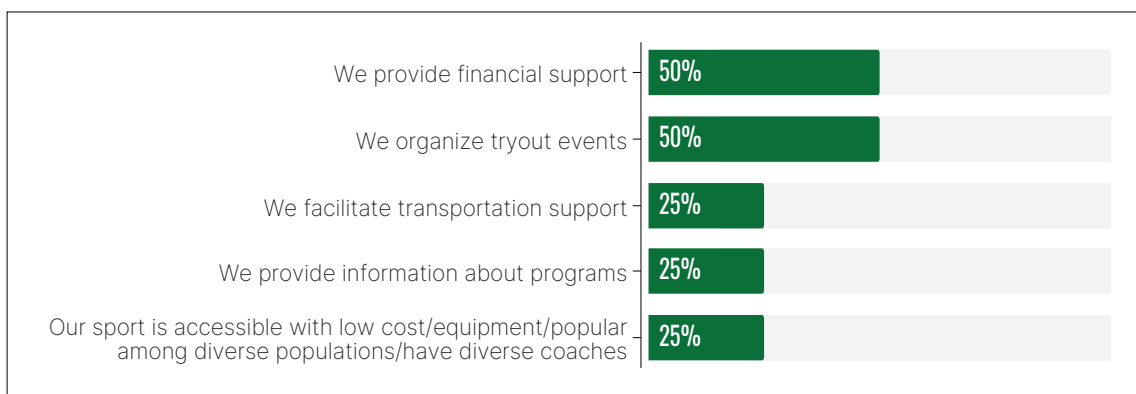


Figure 26: Reasons for Not Perceiving Low Sport Participation within BPOC Communities



A few organizations (25%) also mentioned their transportation support, the information about their programs, as well as the facts that “their sports were financially accessible” that “their sports were popular among diverse populations,” and that “they had diverse coaches.”

Support Needed to Address Barriers to Sport Participation by BPOC Immigrant Youth. When asked about what support the sport organizations needed to address

barriers BPOC immigrant youth faced in their sport (Figure 27), 100% of our respondents mentioned both additional funding and additional sport facilities, such as gyms, pools, and stadiums. In addition, 83% referred to the help from other organizations to connect them with BPOC communities would help, training of board members and employees in diversity and inclusion, and the help for creating a welcoming environment for BPOC immigrants, respectively. Also, 75% believed that it would be helpful to have

Figure 27: Support Needed to Address Barriers to Sport Participation by BPOC Immigrant Youth

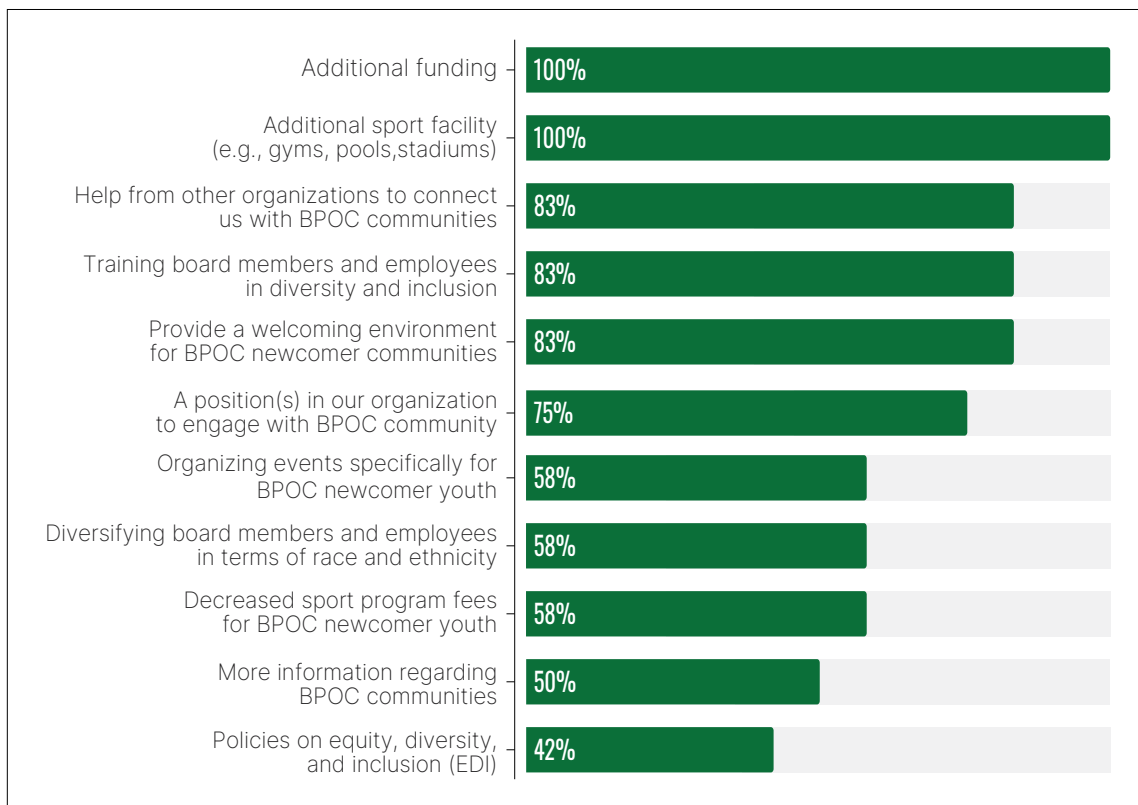


Figure 28: Existence of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

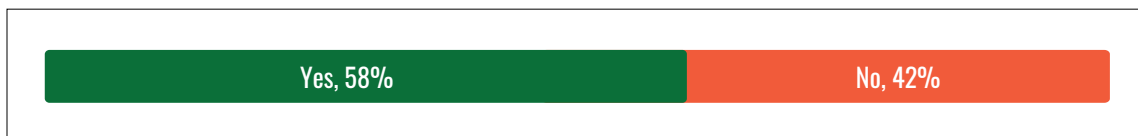
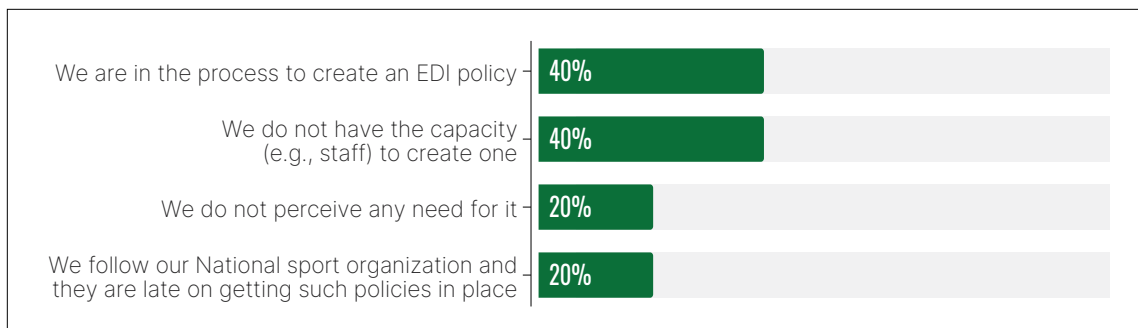


Figure 29: Reasons for Not Having an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



a position(s) in their organization to engage with BPOC communities. Other types of helpful support included: organizing events specifically for BPOC immigrant youth (58%), diversifying board members and employees in terms of race and ethnicity (58%), reducing sport program fees for BPOC immigrant youth (58%), greater public awareness about barriers experienced by BPOC members (50%), more information regarding BPOC communities (42%), and developing policies on equity, diversity, and inclusion (42%).

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. One of our survey questions asked whether sport organizations had a policy about equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). In response to this question, 58% indicated that they had this type of policy in place (Figure 28).

Of the organization without an EDI policy, 40% were in the process of creating one and another 40% did not have the capacity to create one (Figure 29). In addition, 20% did not perceive any need for an EDI policy, while another 20% was waiting for their national sport organization to create an EDI policy which would trickle down to the provincial level.

A System to Report Discrimination Cases. When asked if sport organizations had a system to report discrimination cases, 83% reported to have one (Figure 30). Of the sport organizations that did not have such a report system, 50% suggested that they did not perceive any need for the system, while another 50% indicated that they had never had such cases (Figure 31).

Figure 30: Existence of a System to Report Discrimination Case

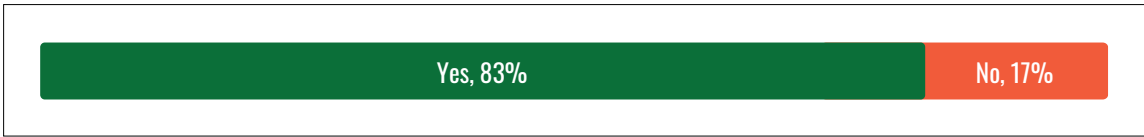
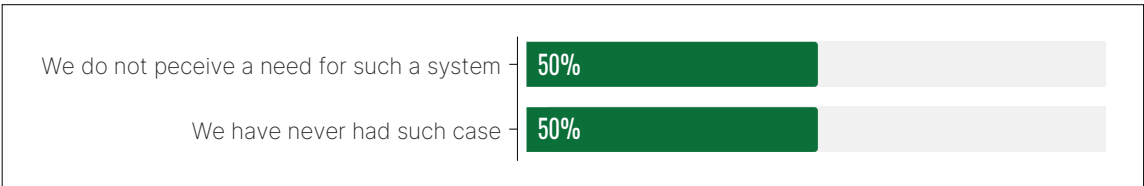


Figure 31: Reasons for Not Having a System to Report Discrimination Cases



Discussion

The purpose of this PASS research project was to identify: (a) the barriers that racialized immigrant youth face in their sport participation, (b) the barriers that sport organizations encounter in providing more inclusive sport programs, and (c) policy and practice recommendations to reduce such barriers, within the context of Alberta, Canada. In this Discussion section, we integrate insights from both qualitative and quantitative results, which is called meta-inference in mixed-methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017), to elaborate on major barriers experienced by the different stakeholders and potential solutions to those barriers (i.e., recommended practices). We do so while consulting the existing research literature and drawing upon practical insights within AHC.

From Racism to Just Policies and Greater Diversity

Our qualitative findings, especially the ones from the interviews with athlete youth with racialized backgrounds and parents of such youth, clearly indicated that these groups of people experience racially charged discrimination and micro-aggression in their everyday sport experiences in Alberta. Examples of these included stereotyping based on racial/ethnic groups, unequal treatments of youth between White and BPOC groups, and even outright racial slurs. It was interesting to note that there was a noticeable lack of mention of such cases sport organization interviewees. Partially, this might have been because the sport professionals who participated in our interview study worked on these issues within their organizations and fields of sport, so that they observed fewer cases of racism. However, considering other studies that also identified similar racism in sports (e.g., Brown et al., 2021; Doherty & Taylor, 2007),

it is likely that the awareness of racism in sports is lacking even among sport professionals. This is a critical issue because our qualitative findings also suggested that sport-related racism not only make sport experiences of immigrant youth and parents negative, but also have profound detrimental impacts on overall lives of youth (e.g., mental health issues).

To address racism within sports in Alberta, we maintain that the first step is to establish clear policies regarding racism and EDI in each organization and club. Our quantitative results (see Figure 28) indicated that quite a few sport organizations and clubs in the province have not developed their EDI policies, which was also recommended by Brown et al. (2021) in their case of Winnipeg. Through our survey results, we also learned that sport organizations and clubs which did not have EDI policies also faced issues, such as shortage of capacities and lack of direction from their national organizations. This means that provincial and local sport organizations and clubs need to work with their staff, members, and other constituents (e.g., parents, funders) to communicate the need for national-level initiatives regarding EDI. Sport organizations and clubs can also form partnerships with settlement agencies and universities to develop effective anti-racism and EDI policies. As of this writing, Sport Canada is in the process of developing the next edition of the Canadian Sport Policy, and in this effort, “advancing equity and anti-racism in the cultural, heritage and sport sectors” is a key priority (Kay et al., 2022, para. 22).

In such efforts to establish EDI and anti-racism policies, sport organizations and clubs in Alberta must be aware of the issues in existing EDI policies within sport fields. For example, Peers et al. (in press) analyzed

EDI policies across 143 National Sport Organizations in Canada. Although the researchers recognized the value of creating more EDI policies, they also found two persistent issues: (a) reproducing the status quo and (b) reproducing excludable Other. Sport-related EDI policies often reproduced the status quo by “alleging inclusivity,” that is, including extremely broad inclusion statements (e.g., “We welcome members of all backgrounds...”), which lacked in acknowledging existing EDI issues and simultaneously guarded organizations against fundamental changes (Peers et al., in press). This latter point also meant that National Sport Organizations’ EDI policies often lacked accountability measures, especially beyond a few exceptional cases related to gender equality (Peers et al., in press). Peers et al. further noted that sport-related EDI policies also reproduced excludable Other, by erasing certain equity-denied groups: “When it came to actionable policies, in every single case, race was either entirely dropped from the list, or was reduced to attempt to diversify representation or punish explicitly racist individuals. Combating systemic racism, instead, was never a consideration” (p. 10). Lastly, National Sport Organizations often also engaged in “hedging,” which involved delimiting the scope of inclusion with limitations, qualifications, exceptions, and/or conditions (Peers et al., in press). Hence, sport organizations and clubs in Alberta must be vigilant about whether EDI policies set by their national bodies have these problems, and if they find the issues, they should work with members of their organizations and wider communities as well as other partners (e.g., settlement agency practitioners, university researchers) to call for more just EDI policies.

Creating anti-racism and EDI policies is an important step toward reducing and eliminating racism; however, policies without actions and accountability would have only limited effects, if at all. Thus, we call

We call sport organizations and clubs in Alberta to translate their anti-racism and EDI policies into specific, measurable, and time-bound actions to combat existing racism in sports in the province.

sport organizations and clubs in Alberta to translate their anti-racism and EDI policies into specific, measurable, and time-bound actions to combat existing racism in sports in the province. One of the first key actions may be to conduct research and assessments regarding how diverse each organization/club is at different levels (e.g., members, staff, board members) and broad surveys of racial issues within. This recommendation is based on our quantitative findings that the vast majority of sport organizations did not collect information regarding racial/ethnic backgrounds of their members, staff, and board members (Figures 10 to 12). This type of assessment can be conducted in collaboration with university researchers to ensure rigor and transparency.

Also crucial would be to create a position that is responsible for EDI and anti-racism issues within an organization and club, largely because many sport organizations also reported a lack of capacities (Figure 27). This means that the adoption of EDI policies at the national level should accompany associated funding from national organizations and governments to create EDI positions within the province. Practitioners in such EDI and anti-racism positions must provide anti-racism education within

It is critical to enhance diversity within sport organizations by recruiting and hiring athlete members, staff, and board members with racialized backgrounds.

their specific sport context for different stakeholders, including youth, parents, staff, coaches, and volunteers, as well as board members (Brown et al., 2021). Exemplars of such education exist. At the national level, in 2022 the Coaching Association of Canada introduced an eLearning module to provide information and guidance with coaches, so that they can better support and advocate for racialized sport participants (Coaching Association of Canada, 2023). Locally, one of the PASS project activities offered by AHC was Anti-Racism in Sport training/workshop which was delivered to different sports teams, sports academies, and general high school students. The content of this training program includes the history of racism in Canadian sport, how racism impacts athletes, as well as how to be anti-racist and an active ally in sport. Sport professionals in charge of anti-racism and EDI should utilize these existing programs through partnership and/or create one's own program, depending on available capacities.

Last but not least, to reduce and eliminate racism and to create an environment in which athletes of colour can thrive, it is critical to enhance diversity within sport organizations by recruiting and hiring athlete members, staff, and board members with racialized backgrounds. Lack of diversity in sports is not news. The special report series by CBC, entitled *Sidelined*, reported many cases in which key positions in sports

(e.g., head coach) are disproportionately occupied by White individuals (Heroux & Strashin, 2020). One report examined 400 top athletic positions at 56 Canadian universities, and found only 10% were occupied by a Black, Indigenous, or a person of colour. In their study of Australian sport club leaders, Spaaij et al. (2020) discovered that club leaders used six different types of discursive practices of resistance, which slowed leadership diversification. The practices included: (a) colour-blind discourses (e.g., "We are inclusive"), (b) moral-boundary work (e.g., "Candidates of colour lack in experience and qualifications"), (c) in-group essentialism (e.g., "This is how things are done here"), (d) denial/silencing (e.g., Accusing of using the "race card"), (e) self-victimization (e.g., "We don't have money"), and (f) bodily inscription (e.g., Othering racialized groups).

Our readers would quickly noticed that a few of our sport organization survey respondents in Alberta also employed similar rhetoric to justify (or even negate) their lack of diversity. In the context of U.S. college sports, Cooper et al.'s (2020) literature review found similar issues, while also identifying the evidence that greater diversity within sport organizations is linked to: (a) more innovative and creative problem-solving, (b) enhanced productivity and job performance; (c) increased connections with more diverse, talented candidates; and (d) better retention of competent workers. Although we take a position that inclusion has its intrinsic value (Peers et al., in press), sport organizations and clubs should also be aware of these organizational outcomes of greater diversity.

When connections with racialized communities are limited, it would be worth considering the athlete activist model proposed by Mac Intosh and Martin (2018). Their high school leadership program combined an experiential learning model and positive youth development principles

with an emphasis on racism and inclusion. Athletes who completed their 10-week program reported that they increased understanding of race, racism, micro-aggression, diversity, and cultural competence, among other things. Such youth development programs can be offered for athlete youth in Alberta, both those with and without racialized backgrounds, who then can serve their sport fields and organizations as the next generations of coaches, staff, and board members with better understanding of anti-racism and EDI.

Structural Barriers

In addition to racism, we also observed that BPOC immigrants in Alberta experienced a myriad of structural barriers in their lives that constrained them or their children from participating in sports. These constraints included lack of money, transportation issues, lack of free time, language barriers, and information access issues. The constraints observed here are consistent with those reported in extant studies of immigrants in North America (e.g., Barrick et al., 2021; Curtin et al., 2016; Stodolska, 2015; Taylor & Doherty, 2005; Tirone et al., 2010). Although these past studies were based on either interviews or surveys with immigrants themselves, a unique contribution of the PASS study is that the effects of these barriers were confirmed from the perspectives of cultural organizations (Figure 6). Cultural organizations that support sports and other recreational lives of immigrants in Alberta also appear to experience similar structural constraints in facilitating sports among members of their communities. Thus, these constraints do not only operate at the individual level, but also have influences at the institutional and group levels, as well (e.g., Browne et al., 2016). Furthermore, our quantitative results indicated that sport organizations in Alberta are aware of these issues BPOC community members face. Thus, strategies to raise awareness of these barriers are unlikely to be effective.

At the heart of many structural barriers are financial issues (e.g., Brown et al., 2021; Doherty & Taylor, 2007). To address the systematic nature of financial challenges, we suggest that more focused funding from governments at the different levels (e.g., federal, provincial, and municipal) to support sport participation of BPOC immigrants is necessary. In the following sub-section, we identify specific areas of funding to facilitate capacity building. Here, what is important to note is that we should not subscribe to the “we-all-lack-funding” discourse that undermines the challenges that BPOC immigrants experience. Although financial problems are experienced across racial/ethnic groups, the key here is the fact that racialized immigrants disproportionately suffer from this systemic issue.

For example, large-scale research has shown that compared with non-immigrants, immigrants in Canada tend to work in more precarious jobs that pay less with minimal security and stability, which often requires them to hold multiple jobs to support their family and (e.g., Hira-Friesen, 2018; Tossutti, 2013). Of course, it is not only governments that are responsible for the financial issues; all levels of sport organizations—especially those at the national level – must channel part of their funding to support sport participation by BPOC immigrants. Such funding

Although financial problems are experienced across racial/ethnic groups, the key here is the fact that racialized immigrants disproportionately suffer from this systemic issue.

initiatives should be aligned with their EDI principles and policies with clear justifications and standards, transparent reporting, and specific timelines and target goals. Although there is no magic number for the “right” amount of funding to be channeled for BPOC immigrants, the recent statistics showing that 23% of those living in Canada are immigrants can be a yardstick for funding considerations (Statistics Canada, 2022). Is roughly 23% of a national sport organization’s funding dedicated to immigrant sport? Do sport organizations at all levels have strategic plans that reflect a projected increase in immigrants (e.g., 29-34% by 2041; Statistics Canada, 2022)?

Deeply connected to financial challenges are transportation issues. Our qualitative finding of transportation barriers is in line with past studies suggesting that many sport facilities are not accessible via public transits, which becomes major barriers when the inaccessibility is compounded by lack of personal vehicles among immigrants (e.g., Brown et al., 2021; Tirone et al., 2010). Our results revealed even more complicated pictures of transportation to sport. Even if a BPOC immigrant family owns a private vehicle, they may have one car per household, where both parents work at several different jobs and multiple children want to participate in sport activities across a city or town. We must also consider the severe winter in Alberta. When the outside temperature is -50 Celsius, walking to a sport facility or even waiting for a bus that comes every 30 minutes may not be an option. This means that better public transits, and funding for them, are important parts of social infrastructure for immigrants’ daily lives, including their sport lives.

Also noteworthy is the environmental justice aspect of public transportation availability across different neighbourhoods, especially impoverished neighbourhoods with higher percentages of immigrant residents. For example, Amar and Teeluckinh’s

(2015) study of Toronto found that many immigrants had to live far away from transit hubs because housing near transits are more expensive. It would be important to examine whether the same tendency exists in Alberta (e.g., the City of Edmonton) and how it impacts BPOC immigrants’ sport lives among other daily activities. When cities and towns develop and change their transit paths, especially their bus routes, they must be aware of these environmental justice issues. It would be problematic to base their rerouting decisions solely on the profitability of routes. We also recommend that sport organizations and clubs be mindful of the accessibility of sport facilities they choose based on available public transits.

The documented tendency of immigrants to work in multiple precarious jobs (e.g., Hira-Friesen, 2018; Tossutti, 2013) means that their discretionary time is highly limited due to long, unpredictable work hours along with long commuting time. This time crunch issue is related to a common stereotype that immigrants—especially BPOC immigrants—are “lazy, tardy, and not punctual” (e.g., Konitzer et al., 2019). Such stereotypes may not reflect the reality of racialized immigrants’ lives; many immigrant youth would show up at sport practices and games if they could, and many immigrant parents would volunteer their time to support local sport teams and clubs if they could. It is possible that the shortage of free time among BPOC immigrants is producing and reproducing these negative stereotypes against them, which creates a divide between BPOC immigrant communities and other communities. Compared to other barriers such as transportation, the awareness of the time-related barrier BPOC immigrants face was low among sport organization professionals (38% in Figure 25). Thus, this may be the topic that BPOC communities can better communicate with members of a wider society including sport service providers. Because the lack of time is a structural issue rooted in work conditions, its solutions must

be structural, as well. We believe that the continued, and enhanced, efforts by governments and settlement agencies around occupational training of immigrants will help them find a career job, which will reduce their need to work in multiple jobs and subsequently increase their discretionary time.

One major roadblock not only to sport participation but also to career pursuit is language barriers, which was mentioned by our immigrant youth and parent interviewees. Our finding corroborates past studies of immigrants in Canada that also found language barriers as a key constraint to their sport and recreation participation (e.g., Barrick et al., 2021; Doherty & Taylor, 2007). There are many support systems to help immigrants improve their language skills, including free or subsidized language programs offered by many settlement agencies, such as AHC. In Canada, there is the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, which is free for those with the permanent resident status or refugees. However, one might suspect that there may be arguably greater needs among those without the permanent resident status to enhance their language skills.

Governments and settlement agencies will need to continue to monitor each other's offering to fill in the gaps. Considering the other structural barriers we discovered (e.g., precarious jobs, time crunch), it is vital to offer language learning programs in flexible ways (e.g., online asynchronous) when it is possible. We also suggest that sport-related topics be addressed in language programs, which will help immigrants understand how central sport culture is in Canadian society. Despite the language barriers, it is also important to note that many sport activities serve as the "universal languages" (e.g., soccer) that transcend linguistic differences people have. Moreover, existing research has shown that sport programs can be the opportunities for immigrants to improve their language skills (e.g., Rich et al., 2015). Thus,

sport organizations and clubs can design programs to capitalize on this learning aspect of sport-based interaction and seek extra funding geared toward immigrant settlement from governments and foundations.

The last structural barrier our findings highlighted is the lack of information and information access issues. This issue is also closely related to the aforementioned language barriers, as many of our immigrant parent and youth interviewees shared that they did not even know some of the names of activities (e.g., cheerleading, curling). The information issues were echoed by sport organization professionals as well, both in our interview and survey results. All of our survey respondents considered the lack of information about available resources as the key barrier BPOC immigrants face (Figure 25).

Professional interviewees shared their experiences in which they realized they made incorrect assumptions about immigrants' access to relevant information. If some immigrants do not even know English names of sports or sport service systems in Canada, the "just-Google-it" attitude from sport service providers would not be helpful. Sport service providers in Alberta must recognize that sports are highly "cultured." This means that people develop unique languages (e.g., jargons) to talk about sports, develop unique systems to provide sport services (e.g., school vs. club sports), and none of these things are universal across cultures. It is vital to provide basic information related to available sport programs in accessible fashions. We encourage the use of simple language without sport jargons, translation into multiple languages when possible, and circulation of the information with BPOC immigrant communities. For translation and information sharing, sport organizations can work closely with settlement agencies that have these capacities and connections. Lastly, we believe that there is value in establishing an online hub for all sport programs available in Alberta

that can be easily filtered by region, eligibility, competitiveness, and cost, among other factors. This type of resource will make an overwhelming amount of information much more accessible and can benefit not only BPOC immigrants, but all Albertan families.

Capacity Building and Inter-Sectoral Connections

Both of our qualitative and quantitative results converged on the point that sport organizations in Alberta also negotiate a myriad of barriers to providing more inclusive sport programs. We found that sport organizations faced limitations related to both “hard” and “soft” sides of capacities. In terms of the “hard” side of capacities, our professional interviewees underscored lack of funding, time, transportation support, and language aids, while the sport organization survey respondents identified funding, staff, and space as their structural constraints (Figure 23). On the “soft” side of capacities, both interviewees and survey respondents from sport organizations specified the lack of connections with BPOC communities as the main issue, which was also found to be the most prevalent barrier to diversifying sport organizations’ staff and board members. Hence, we propose that some of the funding toward immigrant settlement and diversification of sport participants be allocated to building connections between sport organizations, racialized immigrant communities, and other relevant stakeholders (e.g., settlement agencies). Cultural organizations in our survey study also appear to welcome such connection building and outreach (Figure 7). Such funding can help sport organizations address both funding and connection issues.

With increasing attention to EDI within the sport industry, we suspect that governments and other funders will allocate more funding to tackling EDI and anti-racism issues within sports. Such funding should focus on, in addition to connection building,

facilitating sport organizations to develop EDI policies with clear accountability, hire EDI and anti-racism focused personnel, provide increased transportation support, and expand/modify their facility with clear EDI purposes (e.g., pools with curtains so that Muslim women can swim; increase in multi-purpose grounds for different types of sport offering such as cricket and baseball). We also echo Brown et al.’s (2021) position that sport organizations should not just wait for extra government funding to work toward greater diversity in sport participants. Instead, creative solutions to the structural barriers should be explored in collaboration with BPOC communities, settlement agencies, and other stakeholders.

One main pathway to such creative solutions may be through enhanced inter-sectoral partnerships. Two main partners we highlight here are: settlement agencies and universities. For instance, we discussed the importance of creating EDI policies with clear accountability and specific goals. Both settlement agencies and universities offer various EDI and anti-racism workshops, of which sport organization professionals can take advantage in order to develop more effective policies. Settlement agencies and universities also offer EDI and anti-racism training that sport organization professionals can also utilize. When EDI-focused and anti-racism funding is increased, sport organizations have to win grants through competitive adjudication processes. Sport organizations can benefit from collaborating with university researchers and settlement agency staff who have extensive experiences in grant writing. All of these suggestions also mean that it is important for non-sport organizations, such as settlement agencies and universities, to share the information regarding their resources with sport organizations and reach out to them to seek collaborations.

Lastly, sport organizations are also encouraged to look within their own organizations

and clubs to identify existing champions of anti-racism and EDI work. This suggestion is based on the fact that both qualitative and quantitative findings of ours indicated some sport organizations in Alberta have already spearheaded these lines of work. Our suggestion here is in congruence with Forde et al. (2015), who interviewed managers of a community sport and recreation program that won an excellence award for their work to facilitate social inclusion of immigrants in Canada. Further, we recommend that sport organizations clearly recognize their staff's EDI and anti-racism work as formal parts of their portfolios, as often such work is deemed as extra "volunteer" tasks. Equally important is not to "dump" all EDI and anti-racism tasks on a few staff members of colour that sport organizations might have. The fact that someone has a racialized background does not mean that they are supposed to engage in this line of work. Sport organizations and clubs should also listen to their existing champions to explore different types of support they need to be successful in their work. Such support includes identifying and training many allies for the EDI and anti-racism work, especially given that these lines of work are notoriously emotionally draining.

Cultural Changes and System-Level Changes

We have discussed most of our findings so far and suggested many practical changes we can make to create more inclusive sport opportunities in Alberta. Although we believe that these practices are important starting points, there is also a more fundamental issue that might be causing the array of issues we observed in the PASS studies: there is some level of assumption that immigrants are included into the existing, albeit modified, Canadian systems of sports while non-immigrants act as the hosts to include immigrants. In their study, Forde et al. (2015) observed a similar power imbalance, which they called the assimilation

model of Canadian sports. Members of social minority groups including immigrants are, to a certain degree, expected to fit into the existing sport provision model. Instead, through the PASS project, we came to believe that there is a possibility of pursuing and realizing what we call the co-creation model of sports in Alberta. In the co-creation model, we envision that members of all relevant parties, including BPOC communities, sport organizations, and settlement agencies, would sit together on the zero basis to genuinely explore what programs might be possible to better serve wider groups without agendas, without preoccupations about existing frameworks. In the co-creation model, people from different backgrounds would meet not to accommodate one another, but to genuinely learn from each other. In the co-creation model, greater diversity in Alberta is considered as an opportunity to re-imagine sports rather than as a burden. We are hopeful that we can pursue the co-creation model someday, because through the interviews, we learned that, despite all the challenges and hardships BPOC immigrant youth and parents went through, many of them continued to engage in sports and love sports. We also learned that many sport organization representatives in Alberta want greater diversity and intrinsically value inclusion (Figures 13 and 14). We believe that there is enough evidence to remain hopeful for the better future of sports in Alberta. And there is great value to begin with the place of hope in working with daunting tasks of addressing racism.

Yet, hope without a plan and strategy is powerless. To pursue the co-creation model, it is crucial that sport organizations at different levels (e.g., national, provincial, and municipal) partner with members of BPOC communities in their EDI and anti-racism policy-making and program development. In so doing, partnership must be done respectfully and patiently. It should not be treated as a "box to be checked off" by any

party. In inviting BPOC community members, we encourage sport organizations to be aware of diversity within BPOC communities and consider the intersectionality between race/ethnicity and other diversity factors, such as gender, socio-economic status, age, sexuality, and disability. We suggest that sport organizations and BPOC community members to meet proactively outside of the situations where either side has to be defensive (e.g., BPOC community members reporting discrimination cases to a sport organization). It is unlikely that an encounter in such situations leads to genuine trustworthy partnerships. They should be able to harness sports' potentials to create positive environments and facilitate socialization. Moreover, BPOC immigrant

youth who are or were athletes can be the key intermediaries between the two worlds of sport and BPOC communities. They have rich lived experiences in both worlds. We strongly encourage both sport organizations and BPOC communities to invest in not only their athletic development, but also their professional development by supporting their learning of leadership, cooperation and communication skills, self-confidence, and problem-solving, all of which can be improved through sport experiences. Such practices will empower (former) athlete youth with racialized immigrant backgrounds to become successful staff and managers in sport organizations and clubs (Olliff, 2008). This way, we can change the face of Albert sports from the inside.

Conclusion

The PASS research project examined the barriers faced by athlete youth and parents with racialized immigrant backgrounds and by sport professionals in their sport experiences in Alberta, Canada. Our mixed method findings suggested that racism, along with other structural and social barriers, exist in Alberta sports for immigrants. However, our results also showed that there are many points of agreement between immigrants and sport professionals in terms of where the issues lie and what should be done to address the problems in order to seek the more inclusive future of sports in Alberta.

Recommendations

In addition to many practice recommendations we discussed in the Discussion section, we here list five major recommendations that pertain mostly to national sport organizations and the federal government.

1. Explore how diverse each sport organization/field is in terms of race and ethnicity, immigrant status, and other factors, where racism and micro-aggression exist, and what successful cases of inclusion exist, by conducting further research.
2. Set clear, time-bound, and specific policies related to anti-racism and EDI with clear outcomes and accountability.
3. Provide funding and support for creating champion positions for anti-racism and EDI work, for diversifying board members and staff, and for providing continuous training in this area.
4. Create opportunities for BPOC immigrant communities, sport organizations, settlement agencies, and other partner organizations to connect with one another.

5. Provide more funding and options at the competitive levels of sports with clear, inclusive criteria for different funding and eligibility.
6. Make sport-related information and resources accessible in multiple languages and in user-friendly ways.

Limitations

Although PASS was a community-based research project, it is important to clearly describe key limitations of the study, so that readers can interpret our findings with the awareness of nuances and contexts. First, as previously mentioned, the survey-based quantitative phase suffered from the unexpectedly small sample size (N = 25 organizations in total). Thus, the generalizability of our findings should be carefully examined through future research within and outside of Alberta. Second, it should be noted that many of our interviewees and presumably survey respondents resided or worked in the City of Edmonton, Alberta. Because Edmonton is a large city, our findings might not capture unique tensions and opportunities in small towns within rural contexts. Third, as we initially clarified, the PASS research project did not involve Indigenous people's perspectives due to our lack of capacities and relationships.

Next Steps

While it is vital to work on translating the above recommendations into practice, we also hope that research on racism, diversity, and inclusion of immigrants in Alberta's sports will continue. We consider the PASS research project as a starting point rather than any end point. We strongly suggest that university researchers and sport organizations in Alberta to collaborate to conduct a large-scale survey study to assess the diversity within Alberta's sport at different levels (e.g., athletes at different

levels, coaches, staff, and board members), prevalence of racism, and existing anti-racism work. Such large-scale surveys can be repeated periodically (e.g., every five years) to monitor progress in this area. It is valuable to conduct small-scale studies that focus on rural areas of Alberta, as well. Clearly important is to conduct research with Indigenous communities in Alberta regarding their experiences of and perspectives on racism and other issues in sports. Such research will need to be conducted by researchers and practitioners who have strong relationships with Indigenous communities. They must invite Indigenous leaders from the very beginning of such research projects to reflect their perspectives on research goals and expected outcomes. Lastly, as we implement the suggestions from the current PASS research study and engage more with anti-racism work in Alberta's sports, it will be vital to conduct research and rigorous evaluations around it to critically examine what initiatives work and do not work, and why.

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