



ACCESS

Achieving Circularity in Cities through
Environmental Sustainability of Sports

PARTNERSHIPS ACTIVATION TO VEHICLE ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES IN FANS' DAILY LIVES

Sponsorships for a change



The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 of the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations is about creating partnerships for sustainability. Sustainability partnerships involve 2 or more organizations/companies teaming up for mutual benefits related to sustainability goals. Partnerships are a valuable tool to drive change toward sustainability and decarbonisation, as they bring together diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise from multiple stakeholders.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

Below we describe two cases of successful partnerships that promote pro-environmental attitudes among fans in the sport sector:

1) The University of Colorado Boulder Athletic Department is increasing its leadership in sports sustainability through several new projects that encourage environmentally friendly behaviours among fans. In partnership with PepsiCo, the Colorado Buffaloes launched the “Bring Your Bottle Back to Life” campaign. As part of the program, free T-shirts made from recycled plastic fibers (rPET) are distributed to the crowd at the Folsom Field stadium in Boulder, Colorado, after every Buffaloes touchdown or three-pointer the Buffs score. A communication campaign runs in parallel asking fans to bring their empty bottles to the specific recycling station located at the stadium, instead of throwing it away in the garbage bin, so that new T-shirts can be created from recycled bottles. This partnership activation was made possible by Pepsi Recycling, whose mission is to increase recycling rates of its beverage containers.

The choice of distributing T-shirts made of recycled plastic originated from the observation that fans are more inclined to recycle at games and in their daily lives if they can clearly see the results: therefore, instead of simply telling fans which materials are recyclable and where to recycle them, PepsiCo and the Buffs show them that through recycling, new life can be given to waste materials (in this case in the form of T-shirts). Their goal was not only to increase recycling rates, but to create a connection in fans’ minds between the act of recycling and the result of recycling, in order to more effectively influence their environmental behavior.

2) Since 2015 the Swedish Floorball Federation has worked together with the Swedish recycling company Pantamera (which literally means “recycle more”). The aim of the cooperation is to influence the environmental attitude and behaviours of children and young people in order to increase the recycling rate of beverage packaging (metal cans and PET bottles) in Sweden. Returpack Ltd, the company behind the Pantamera brand, manages a return system and is responsible for collecting all deposit packaging from collection points and transporting them to their sorting facility. To pay for the collection, the company collects a packaging fee from the producers per package.

Floorball was chosen as partner because of the target group profile: a large proportion of the over 120,000 licensed players are children and young people. Furthermore, it is the “first sport” for many children. Advertising and fun activities and a competition to get floorball clubs to join the deposit system were created.

Since 2015 Sweden’s floorball clubs have collected 3,5 million cans and bottles and 242 floorball teams are connected to the developed refund concept. The average annual increase since 2015 is 18% more packaging and 19% collection points.





CHALLENGE

This practice addresses the importance of promoting pro-environmental behaviours among sport fans and the sport community in general to reduce climate change and promote sustainability. There are various ways to do so; in this specific case we analyse the importance of partnerships in encouraging pro-environmental sustainability initiatives in sport that involve fans and influence their environmental attitude.

Organizations are increasingly expected to join forces with other organizations and companies, both public and private, to address social and environmental problems. The sustainable sponsorship market is set to grow in sport since young generations are responsive to initiatives taken by the brands, clubs, and athletes they follow. Thus, more and more brands are seeking “purpose-driven partnerships”. Building partnerships amplifies the environmental messages that the sport industry directs to supporters and more effectively influence fans’ environmental behaviour.

RESULTS

Sustainable sponsorship in sport can be a powerful combination. Partnership for sustainability create a positive environmental impact as not only it promotes the sustainability efforts of the organization/company, but it also encourages behavioural change among sport supporters.

At the same time, sustainable sponsorship increases brand awareness, engagement and return on investment for the sponsors, that exploit the sport’s popularity and reach.

REPLICABILITY POTENTIAL

Considering that sustainability is becoming a ‘top priority’ for many partnership and sponsorship activations also in the sport sector, and that the sustainable sponsorship market is growing in sport since young generations are increasingly responsive to initiatives taken by the brands, clubs, and athletes they follow, the replicability of this practice is high.



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This factsheet is a part of a larger collection of good practices available on the project's website

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The **ACCESS project** is one of the latest European projects which explores and challenges environmental sustainability and environmental management in sports. Co-funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, ACCESS is looking at narrowing the gaps between the current environmental performances of sport organisations, their strategies, and practices on one side and strategies and targets of their respective cities or regions with the overall objective – making these sport organisations a reference point for sustainability in sports in their countries and turning them into replicators of solutions for achieving it.



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