



FACT SHEET

Investments in sport systems that allow sport and education to be combined (aka dual career) can benefit society on **Economic, **S**Ocial and **L**ABour level.**

Avoid unemployment **E**CO **S**O C **L**AB

- Improve the support available to athletes, preventing early school leaving and increasing the number of athletes who continue to engage in education.
- Increase the number of athletes that are able to gain employment either during or following their sporting careers.
- Reduce the number of athletes in society that are reliant on unemployment funding for support or retraining.
- Increase the number of taxpayers in society, generating funding that can then be invested by governments.

Prevent health risks and enhance well-being **E**CO **S**O C **L**AB

- Reduce the number of athletes who face mental health challenges post-retirement, reducing the medical costs required to support individuals through mental health treatment.
- Reduce the number of athletes that take time off work for mental health sick-leave following retirement from their sport.
- Increase the expanded support networks athletes have access to, positively benefiting athletes' mental health.
- Reduce the occurrence of addictive behaviours that some athletes face following retirement from their sport and the impact they can have socially on families and the wider community.
- Increase the number of regular exercisers in society, reducing the strain on the medical services through a reduction in various health issues (i.e. obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure).

Upskill the labour market (workforce development) **E**CO **L**AB

- Increase the number of athletes who continue to engage in education and develop the skills required for their chosen profession.
- Upskill the labour market and increase the quality of the workforce.
- Develop athletes' vocational potential, utilising the capabilities developed through sport.
- Allow athletes to take ownership of the vocational path they wish to take, developing a passionate and hardworking workforce.





Inspire role modelling **ECO SOC**

- Spread the positive message of sport through families, children, and communities.
- Encourage more young people to participate in sport.
- Reduce levels of criminality and the strain on the emergency services, prison service, and justice system through engaging more young people in sport and physical activity.
- Provide more young people with the opportunity to be successful in a dual career and become role models themselves. This benefit then becomes a cyclical process, where the benefits are continuously fed back into society.

Promote positive nation branding **ECO**

- Develop positive ambassadors and national heroes within the county, increasing international recognition.
- Increase positive messages within the media, through shared stories of athletes' positive experiences in their sport and dual career.
- Reduce the potentially disastrous impacts that are caused by negative athlete experiences, such as a well-known athlete taking their own life or a high-profile court case. Consequently this reduces the negative branding that comes from these news stories.

Strengthen the sport sector **ECO LAB**

- Keep people in sport, helping to maintain and develop the professional workforce.
- Strengthen the sport sector which then feeds back into the cycle of benefits as presented above.





IN DETAIL

Athletes are more than just participants in their sport. Sporting careers are fleeting, with athletes competing at the highest level for an average of only 5-10 years. 90% of professional athletes will need to find full-time work following retirement from their athletic career, with the percentage of non-professional athletes naturally to be expected even higher. This emphasises the importance of systems where athletes can be supported to continue their education, personal development and/or employment alongside their elite sport participation.

Supporting athletes to combine their education and sporting aspirations not only has long term benefits for the individual but also has the potential to lead to major economic, social, and labour benefits. Due to the recognised benefits, Europe has embraced several policy actions to promote the dialogue between sport and education bodies in order to establish combined sport and education pathways for athletes.

Economic benefits

From an economic perspective, investment in dual career systems can:

- Increase the number of athletes that are able to gain employment and go on to contribute economically to society through paying taxes.
- Reduce the number of athletes who face mental health challenges post-retirement, reducing the medical costs required to support individuals through mental health treatment.
- Increase the number of regular exercisers in society, reducing the strain on the medical services.
- Increase the number of young people engaged in sport, reducing levels of criminality and the strain on the emergency services, prison service, and justice system.

Athletes have the potential to add more to society after athletic retirement than they can during their sporting careers. Investment in systems that allow sport and education to be combined will negate the necessity for larger investments to be made in the future, as athletes transition out of sport. An increase in the funding provided for talent systems will improve the support available to student-athletes, preventing early school leaving and increasing the number of athletes who continue to engage in education. Athletes who undertake education alongside their sport, develop numerous skills that can be positively transferred into the workplace (i.e. self-discipline, time management, perseverance, and the ability to focus). These athletes are, therefore, more prepared to enter a vocational career when they end their sports career. This increases the number of athletes that are able to gain employment either during or following their sporting careers. This reduces the number of athletes in society that are reliant on unemployment funding for support and retraining. Second, this helps to create a skilled and highly qualified workforce. An increase in the number individuals within





employment increases the number of taxpayers in society, generating funding that can then be invested by governments.

There is growing awareness of many of the challenges elite athletes face when transitioning to a new life or career. For some athletes, particularly those who have not continued education, this transition leads to personal crisis. This personal crisis may include challenges with their mental health (i.e. depression, anxiety, alcohol/substance abuse, eating disorders), particularly due to a loss of identity and the struggle to find a new purpose in life. In some cases, these struggles can lead to suicide. Increased investment in structures that will support athletes in balancing sport and education will help to reduce the number of athletes that face mental health challenges post-retirement. This will consequently reduce the medical costs required to support individuals through mental health treatment (i.e. in-patient treatment, therapies, support services). In addition, this will reduce the number of individuals taking time off work for sick-leave and will reduce the economic impact that this has on the labour market.

Elite athletes are advocates for healthy, active lifestyles, promoting a positive image of sport within communities. These athletes encourage positive behaviours in others, reducing inactivity and increasing the number of regular exercisers in society. Consequently, this reduces the risk of various health issues (i.e. obesity, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure), that may in turn reduce the strain on the medical system. A society with very few positive sporting role models is likely to have increased inactivity, leading to an increase in preventable medical issues and increased costs placed upon the national health care system. This can lead to huge strains upon the economy that could otherwise have been reduced through sufficient support for elite athletes. A second benefit of having sporting role models in society is the impact this can have on young people. Many young people are inspired by these role models and become involved within organised sport. By engaging in sporting activity, there is a reduction in the number of young people on the streets and as a result, a reduction in the amount of criminal activity. This reduces the strain on the emergency services, the prison service, and the justice system.

SOCIAL benefits

From a social perspective, investment in dual career systems can:

- Fulfil the moral obligation to support individuals outside of sport.
- Reduce the strain on families and communities caused by addiction or mental health challenges.
- Reduce the likelihood of divorce and the impact this can have on families, children, and communities.
- Spread the positive message of sport through families and communities.
- Encourage more young people to participate in sport and become a role model themselves.
- Develop positive ambassadors for the country, increasing international recognition.





- Increase positive messages within the media.

From a social perspective, there is a duty of care to help sportsmen/sportswomen develop as a people, as well as athletes. Every young person should be given the opportunity to develop their education and other interests alongside their sporting pursuits. These young athletes should be able to enjoy a more well-rounded approach to life, with sport as one component of a multi-component being. Governments should fulfil the moral obligation of investing in sport systems that allow sport and education to be combined.

The personal crisis some athletes face following retirement from sport can lead to challenges with addiction (i.e. alcoholism or gambling). The increased rates of predisposition to addictive behaviour has noticeable impacts on families, as well as the wider community in which that individual lives. Increased investment in talent structures will reduce the likelihood of athletes facing this personal crisis, consequently reducing the occurrence of addictive behaviours and the impact they can have socially on a community. This can help athletes have a positive integration into society following their sporting career. By engaging in a supportive talent system, athletes develop expanded support networks. These support networks (i.e. lifestyle support, psychology support, peer groups in and outside of sport) can help to benefit athletes' mental health. The development of these positive relationships can help to prevent the personal crisis that has the potential to impact negatively upon the relationship's athletes' have with those they are closest to (i.e. partner, parents, children).

As mentioned previously, many athletes are prominent role models who are leaders in society. These role models help to create a society where young people have individuals to look up to. Many youth athletes admire successful and highly skilled athletes with commitment and work ethic, but also aspired to live a balanced life where sport does not exhaust their lives and identities. Therefore, many young people are inspired by their athletic role models who are also successful within other spheres of life and strive to follow the same path. These young people who participate in sport have the opportunity to be successful and become role models themselves. This social benefit then becomes a cyclical process, where the benefits are continuously fed back into society. These sporting role models help to create a whole community of individuals who are inspired to be fit and healthy. The positive messages of sport are then spread through families and can positively impact generation to generation.

Many successful athletes, particularly those who have engaged in education, have the opportunity to be ambassadors and national heroes within their country. If athletes have had positive experiences, they are more likely to generate positive rather than negative media. These athletes will be great ambassadors for the country, sharing positive success stories and portraying the country in a good light. If athletes have had negative experiences, this can lead to potentially disastrous impacts such as high-profile athletes taking their own life or high-profile court cases around cases of athlete abuse. Recent cases such as these have shown the negative social benefits this can have on both sport communities and on society as a whole.





LABour benefits

From a labour perspective, investment in dual career systems can:

- Upskill the labour market and increase the quality of the workforce.
- Develop athletes' vocational potential, utilising the capabilities developed through sport.
- Allow athletes to take ownership of the vocational path they choose to take.
- Strengthen the sport sector which then feeds back into the cycle of dual career benefits.

From a labour perspective, sport provides a pathway for social mobility and is a tool that can empower under-represented groups. Engagement in high-level sport and having access to the necessary support systems, can provide athletes with the opportunity to go to university, including groups of individuals who wouldn't have otherwise gone. This is a result of sporting bursaries and scholarships, creating opportunities that otherwise wouldn't have been possible for these individuals. By increasing inclusion within the higher education sector, these athletes can positively feed into the labour market following retirement from their sport. Athletes have a number of capabilities developed through their sporting career that can be successfully transferred to the workplace. These skills may include organisational skills, adaptability, dedication and perseverance, self-motivation, the ability to perform under pressure, and the ability to set and work towards achieving goals. By engaging in a dual career, athletes have the opportunity to reach their vocational potential and translate the skills developed through sport into the workplace.

As mentioned previously, if athletes are supported to engage in sport and education, this increases the number of skilled people in vocational roles and increases the overall quality of the workforce. It is a common misconception that the majority of athletes will have a desire to work within the sport sector following retirement from their sporting career. In fact, around 70% of athletes want to work in a sector outside of sport. Many athletes are high achievers, with vocational aspirations that sit outside of the sporting domain. For example, if an athlete has the potential and desire to become a highly skilled doctor, teacher, or engineer, it would be a loss to the labour market to not identify or utilise this potential. If systems aren't providing adequate provision for athletes to balance education/personal development alongside their sport, it is possible that individuals could slip through the system and miss out opportunities to train in highly skilled professions (i.e. not following the required programme of study to be able to train as a doctor). Highly skilled jobs, such as the above, lead to higher salaries for these individuals. A result of higher salaries is the increased taxes that these individuals will pay that can then be reinvested by governments.

Athletes who are well educated will have a variety of opportunities for employment following retirement from their sporting career. These individuals will, therefore, have ownership of the path they choose to take. This will lead to individuals in the workforce who are passionate about their chosen route and likely to have greater contribution to the field. Individuals who have had positive experiences





throughout their dual career may be motivated to work within sport. This helps to strengthen the sport sector and support future cohorts of elite athletes coming through the system over time. If these athletes are supported through investment in systems that allow sport and education to be combined, they will then feed back into the system, having a positive impact on the labour market, on the economy, and socially in communities.

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