



Annual Impact Report 2025/26

Southeast Asia Sport and Youth Crime Prevention (SYCP) Initiative

Initiated by



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Executive Summary

In July 2024, on the eve of the Paris Olympic Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Agence française de développement (AFD) convened an unprecedented global summit on sport, youth and sustainable development.

Leaders from governments, development banks, the Olympic Movement and civil society came together to endorse the Paris Agreement for Sport and Sustainable Development (Sport4SD), a strong commitment to using sport as a lever for education, health, inclusion and community resilience.

Building on this momentum, the IOC hosted the Olympism365 Summit in June 2025. More than 300 organisations renewed their commitment to placing sport at the service of society and confirmed new investments and partnerships. The Summit reinforced the need to embed sport within wider systems that support youth crime prevention, recognising that meaningful and sustained impact requires coordinated action across education, justice, health, social services, communities and the sport sector.

It is from this global mandate that the **Southeast Asia Sport and Youth Crime Prevention (SYCP) Initiative** emerges. Prior to the SYCP Initiative, sport-based youth crime prevention activity across Southeast Asia was largely fragmented, delivered through isolated projects with limited coordination, shared standards or evidence to inform policy and investment. SYCP was established to address this gap, translating the ambitions of the Paris Sport4SD and Olympism365 summits into coordinated regional action through a consortium model coordinated by the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice (AoS).

In its first year, the SYCP Initiative confirmed over €1m investment in 11 grantees across four pilot countries – Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam - all using sport strategically to prevent youth violence and crime, building safer and more resilient communities.

Alongside grant investment, the Initiative strengthened national and regional networks, launched a leadership development programme and convened more than 130 leaders at the Inaugural Southeast Asia Sport and Youth Crime Prevention Conference. Held in the lead-up to the 33rd Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) the Conference catalysed key commitments, including progress towards regional co-financing mechanisms and a partnership with the SEA Games Federation to align the SYCP Initiative with community legacy.



The Case for Action

Southeast Asia stands at a crossroads. More than 213 million young people are aged 15 to 34, which represents the largest cohort of youth in the region's history¹. This represents a powerful demographic advantage for the region - provided that young people can grow up safe, included and connected to opportunity. If not, the human, social and economic costs will be profound.

Evidence is clear that violence and youth crime carry significant and lasting economic consequences. Crime-related harm places sustained pressure on justice and health systems, undermines productivity and investor confidence, and weakens social cohesion. Studies in comparable regions estimate these costs at around 3–4% of GDP², with impacts compounding over time. For rapidly developing economies, failing to invest early can lock communities into cycles of harm that are far more expensive, and far harder to reverse.

At the same time, risks facing young people are becoming more complex and interconnected. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights the convergence of violence, cyber-enabled exploitation, drug use and trafficking, organised crime, inequality and rapid social change across Southeast Asia. These pressures disproportionately affect children and young people and overwhelm systems that are designed to respond only after harm has occurred.³

The conclusion is increasingly shared across policy and practice: enforcement alone is not enough. While policing and prosecution remain essential, sustainable safety depends on prevention, early intervention and resilience-building, delivered through coordinated action across sectors and communities. Prevention-first approaches consistently deliver stronger outcomes at lower long-term cost.

However, this shift requires moving beyond fragmented initiatives toward coordinated, systems-level action – supported by evidence to guide investment and policy development. This aligns with ASEAN priorities, including the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint⁴, which frames youth safety and crime prevention as shared social challenges rather than standalone justice issues.

The choice is clear: invest early and collectively in prevention and systems-change or continue absorbing the escalating human and economic costs of inaction.

¹https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/First-ASEAN-Youth-Development-Index.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

²Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (2017). *The Costs of Crime and Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington, DC: IDB. Estimates suggest crime and violence impose economic costs equivalent to approximately 3.5% of GDP in the region.

³https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2025/XAPXP7_Regional_Programme_for_Southeast_Asia_and_the_Pacific_20222026_Final_to_publish.pdf

⁴<https://asean.org/book/asean-socio-cultural-community-blueprint-2025/>

Why Sport and Crime Prevention? What the evidence tells us

Sport can play a distinctive and cost-effective role in youth crime prevention because it can engage young people at scale, create safe and structured environments, and build trusted relationships over time. Delivered regularly in community and custodial settings, sport can provide continuity and consistency - protective factors that many young people at risk of harm or offending do not experience elsewhere.

Sport alone does not prevent crime. However, when used intentionally and alongside services such as mentoring, education, health and life-skills support, sport provides a powerful and accessible entry point for engaging young people at risk and strengthening the protective factors that support their desistance from crime.

Evidence highlights three ways sport contributes to prevention:



Primary prevention:

creating safe spaces, positive social environments and constructive alternatives to harmful activities.



Secondary prevention:

engaging young people who are at heightened risk due to exclusion, vulnerability or exposure to harm.



Tertiary prevention:

supporting rehabilitation, reintegration and desistance for those already in contact with the justice system.

Across these levels, sport can help address well-established risk factors associated with youth crime, including poor social and life skills, negative peer influences, disengagement from education or employment, and poor mental wellbeing. It is also widely recognised as an effective way to engage young people who are less likely to participate in traditional education, welfare or rehabilitative services.

Crucially, the evidence shows that quality and relationships matter more than the activity itself. Sport-based prevention is most effective when delivered by trusted, trained leaders who understand young peoples lived realities, prioritise social development alongside physical activity, and are embedded within wider systems of support. Sustained over time, these relationships provide the consistency and stability required for meaningful change.

The challenge, therefore, is not whether sport can contribute to youth crime prevention, but how this evidence is translated into coordinated, scalable and system-wide action.

SYCP Overview and Approach

The SYCP Initiative builds safer and more resilient communities across Southeast Asia by strengthening the conditions that enable sport-based youth crime prevention to work effectively and at scale.

Rooted in systems thinking and collective action, the SYCP Initiative recognises that sustainable youth crime prevention cannot be delivered by any single organisation or sector alone. Lasting impact requires coordinated effort across community delivery, policy, safeguarding, evidence and regional cooperation - combining locally-led action with shared infrastructure and standards.

In response to the challenges outlined in previous sections, the SYCP Initiative provides a coherent, prevention-led delivery model that aligns investment, reduces fragmentation, and translates evidence and policy into practice.



The SYCP Ecosystem

The SYCP Initiative operates across six interconnected layers of its eco-system:

A

Governance: clear accountability, shared standards and transparency to manage risk and ensure quality.

B

Consortium: leadership and alignment of partners around a shared vision, Theory of Change and collective impact framework.

C

Regional and national networks: coordination, policy alignment and knowledge exchange across countries and sectors.

D

Leadership and workforce development: capacity building in safeguarding, partnerships, evidence use and systems thinking to support youth crime prevention

E

Young people: access to safer, higher-quality and more inclusive prevention programmes that strengthen protective factors.

F

Communities: longer-term resilience and safety achieved through sustained collaboration, not isolated interventions.

Together, these layers enable SYCP to move beyond pilots and projects, supporting durable systems change that reduces risk, improves outcomes and maximises the return on investment.

Governance, Partners and Delivery

The SYCP Initiative is underpinned by robust governance, a collective action approach and clear delivery roles. This provided assurance to governments, multilaterals and investors that prevention is being delivered with integrity, accountability and strategic coherence.

Advisory & Steering Group (ASG):

The ASG provides strategic oversight, alignment with international and regional priorities, and guidance on governance, safeguarding and sustainability. Members include:

- Agence française de développement
- ASEAN Foundation
- Department of Physical Education (Thailand)
- International Olympic Committee
- Olympic Council of Asia
- Philippines Sports Commission
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- The Sports Authority of Vietnam

The Technical Working Group (TWG)

The TWG supports the technical delivery of the SYCP Initiative, providing guidance on policy and practice alignment, leadership and workforce development, and learning to ensure quality and consistency across countries.

- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

The consortium and Operational Working Group (OWG)

The SYCP consortium brings together complementary expertise across grant management, monitoring and evaluation, training and research:

- Agence française de développement
- AoS - Delivery Lead
- International Olympic Committee
- Laureus Sport for Good Foundation - Grant Management Partner
- UPSHOT - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Partner
- Modervale Consulting - Training Partner
- University of Bath – Independent Evaluation Partner

Governance, Partners and Delivery

Local Leadership: Funded projects and organisations

More than €1 million euros has been confirmed to support the following projects:

Lao PDR

- Building a Safer Future through Sport for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (CHIA)
- Promoting Youth Inclusion and Resilience through Sport (Gender Development Association)

Philippines

- Beyond the Game: Sport as a tool for Youth Protection, Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (ACTION)
- Empowering Youth through Sport: A Collective Impact Project to Prevent Crime and Promote Peace (University of San Jose-Recoletos)
- Pass It Back: Building Safer Communities through Rugby (Philippine Rugby Football Union)
- More Than a Game: Holistic Mentoring for Safer Communities (Fairplay for All Foundation)

Thailand

- Play Well - Play Strong (PlayBook Foundation)
- Play for Peace on the Field of Hope (Thailand Hockey Association)
- Play for Change: Strengthening Youth and Preventing Violence through Sport (Kenan Foundation Asia)

Vietnam

- Building a Healthier Tomorrow: Sports Initiative for Adolescent Wellbeing (IRD VN)
- Maximise the Power of Football to prevent Youth from becoming involved in Violence and Crime (Football for All in Vietnam)

Impact to Date

Year One of the SYCP Initiative focused on building the conditions for sustainable impact. While participant-level outcomes will emerge in 2026, Year One has already delivered measurable and meaningful change at system, leadership and cross-sector levels.

The SYCP Initiative has begun establishing the foundations of a regional prevention infrastructure, contributing to improved coordination, reduced fragmentation and increased confidence among governments, delivery partners and investors to engage in prevention-led, collective action.

Key Outputs (2025)

Deliverable One:

Shared Theory of Change and Collective Impact Framework

The SYCP Initiative **co-designed a regional Theory of Change (ToC) and Collective Impact Framework**, creating a shared foundation for youth crime prevention across the region.

Launched in June 2025 and aligned with Olympism365, UNODC standards, the Olympic Council of Asia and ASEAN priorities, the process engaged **59 professionals across 10 countries from sport, justice, health, youth development and civil society**. The framework directly informed the SYCP call for grants, ensuring funded projects aligned with evidence-informed prevention principles from the outset.

A second phase, completed in December 2025, **strengthened the framework's focus on systems change**, clarifying the roles of governance, leadership, networks and learning in sustaining impact and enabling scale.

Deliverable Two:

National Networks and Cross-Sector Collaboration

The SYCP Initiative **established national-level networks and relationships** to support coordinated, cross-sector approaches to youth crime prevention.

Across three phases of engagement in 2025, the Initiative **attended and presented at 59 meetings and events, reaching a total of 613 stakeholders** to maintain momentum and reinforce national ownership, including in response to changes in government and staffing.

Impact to Date

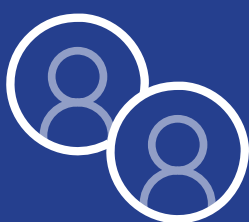
Key outcomes included:



Philippines National Network Meeting, chaired by Edward Hayco, Commissioner at the Philippines Sports Commission, **convening 23 professionals from 10 organisations** including the Departments of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Education, the National Olympic Committee and civil society partners, establishing a formal cross-sector platform for coordination and collaboration.



Thailand National Network Meeting, convened with AFD, **brings together 19 professionals from 10 organisations** including the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, SAT, Ministry of Justice, Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ), Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) and other key national stakeholders such as representatives of the IOC Member Thailand and the Mae Fah Luang Foundation (a global leader on alternative development) - strengthening alignment between sport, justice and prevention priorities at a national level.



Continued ministerial engagement in Lao PDR and Vietnam, with National Networks scheduled or in development for 2026.

Together, these engagements laid the groundwork for durable national coordination mechanisms and sustained cross-sector collaboration.

Impact to Date

Deliverable Three:

Proof-of-Concept Grant Investment

The SYCP Initiative translated strategy into action by **investing in a first cohort of proof-of-concept grants** to test how sport can contribute to youth crime prevention safely and at scale.

Following a competitive process aligned with the SYCP Theory of Change, safeguarding and due-diligence standards, **over €1 million was committed to 11 projects** across four countries. Collectively, these projects are expected to reach **more than 82,000 young people** over 18 months, based on delivery plans submitted through the SYCP grant process. Outcomes data will begin to be reported from 2026 as implementation progresses.

Each grant operates as a learning and demonstration site, generating insight to inform future policy, practice and investment decisions while supporting locally led innovation.

Deliverable Four:

Training, Capacity Building and Community of Practice

The SYCP Initiative invested in mechanisms to strengthen leadership capability, workforce development and peer learning as core enablers of prevention-led systems change.

In 2025:

- **26 leaders participated in a regional capacity-building** programme focused on safeguarding, systems thinking, partnership working and evidence-informed prevention.
- **The Inaugural Southeast Asia Sport and Youth Crime Prevention Conference**, delivered with UNODC, **convened 137 leaders** from governments, Olympic and sport bodies, UN agencies, development finance institutions, academia, youth leaders and civil society.
- **A regional Community of Practice was launched** in November to support ongoing learning, collaboration and exchange across Southeast Asia.

Together, these activities have established the foundations for stronger regional leadership, professional capability, cross-sector connectivity, and international partnerships.

Impact to Date

Deliverable Five:

Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Shared Measurement

The SYCP Initiative **established a shared Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework** to underpin accountability, learning and evidence-informed decision-making.

Individual MEL plans were developed for all funded projects, supported by:

- a shared indicator set aligned to the SYCP Theory of Change;
- common safeguarding, data protection and reporting standards; and
- flexibility for local adaptation.

Development of a collective impact dashboard commenced, providing the basis for real-time insight, learning and policy engagement from 2026 onward.



Impact to Date

Deliverable Six:

Communications, Advocacy and Policy Engagement

Strategic communications and advocacy translated evidence and convening into concrete policy, investment and institutional commitments at national and regional levels, including:

- **Influenced regional policy dialogue:** SYCP was presented at the 16th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Sports, strengthening regional dialogue on the role of sport in youth crime prevention and informing the development of the ASEAN Work Plan on Sport (2026–2030).
- **Secured SEA Games legacy alignment:** The SEA Games Federation confirmed that the SYCP Initiative will form part of the community legacy of the SEA Games, supporting continuity and learning for future host countries and communities.
- **Catalysed national system commitments (Philippines):**
 - The Philippines Sports Commission committed to integrating sport-based youth crime prevention into grassroots coaching pathways, with the ambition to reach approximately 18,000 coaches over the next three years.
 - The Philippines Department of Justice pledged to pilot a programme addressing violence against women and girls, aligned with the SYCP MEL framework, with potential pathways to inform future policy and legislative action.
- **Advanced regional investment pathways:** Agence française de développement (Thailand Country Office and Regional Team) will provide support to explore innovative investment models and co-financing pathways, contributing to a regional investment roadmap to support the growth and sustainability of the SYCP Initiative.
- **Mobilised global technical support:** The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime committed to supporting leadership development and capacity building within the SYCP Initiative.

Together, these outcomes illustrate how strategic advocacy and convening can contribute to political commitment, co-investment readiness and policy-relevant action in support of prevention-led approaches.

Impact to Date

Early Outcomes: Systems, Leadership and Networks



While Year One focused on the foundations for long-term impact, the SYCP Initiative has already contributed to several important early outcomes at system, leadership and network levels:

- **Stronger cross-sector alignment around prevention:** Conference outcomes and consultations consolidated shared understanding across sectors that youth crime prevention requires whole-system approaches; sport is most effective when intentional, safeguarded and connected to wider services; and prevention must address root causes.
- **Formal commitments with scale potential:** National and regional commitments secured through the SYCP Initiative represent enabling conditions for scale e.g. shifts in policy intent, investment readiness and cross-sector collaboration.
- **A functioning regional Community of Practice:** The SYCP Initiative has established an active platform for peer learning, shared language around prevention and collective problem-solving across borders.

Early Impact Signals



While it is too early to evidence changes in youth behaviour or crime rates, Year One has generated credible early impact signals that indicate progress toward longer-term systems change, including:

- Emerging shifts in institutional practice as sport authorities and justice departments begin aligning programmes and data systems with youth crime prevention objectives;
- Increased investment readiness enabled by shared frameworks, indicators and governance arrangements that reduce risk and increase confidence for funders and policymakers; and
- Growing momentum for replication reflected in interest from ASEAN bodies, SEA Games structures and national agencies in adapting and adopting the SYCP model.

Together, these signals indicate that the SYCP Initiative is influencing how systems think, plan and invest in prevention — a necessary precursor to measurable, population-level outcomes in the years ahead.

Learning and Adaptation

Learning from Year One has played a critical role in shaping how the SYCP Initiative will be delivered and strengthened going forward. Several consistent insights emerged, informing how SYCP will scale responsibly and embed sport-based youth crime prevention within existing systems.

Readiness and demand shape where scale is most effective

Progress accelerated where there was clear demand, leadership interest and openness to sport-based youth crime prevention approaches. In these contexts, networks formed early, engagement was strong, and opportunities to integrate SYCP Initiative into existing policy and delivery systems emerged sooner.

In other contexts, additional time was required to build shared understanding of how sport-based approaches align with national priorities and existing services. This reinforced the importance of sequencing engagement carefully and allowing space for dialogue, trust-building and contextual alignment, especially when it relates to regional, national and cultural norms and specificities.

Adaptation:

The SYCP Initiative will prioritise scaling where readiness and demand are strongest, while using evidence and learning to support wider engagement over time.

Leadership capability and shared language are critical for effective prevention

Year One highlighted uneven understanding of what effective sport-based youth crime prevention looks like in practice, and how it differs from, while complementing, youth development, safeguarding and broader “safe sport” agendas.

Leaders and practitioners welcomed support to:

- articulate how sport-based approaches contribute to youth crime prevention outcomes (primary, secondary or tertiary models);
- distinguish intentional prevention models from general participation, safeguarding or safe-sport activity; and
- position sport-based prevention coherently within national policy and service frameworks.

Adaptation:

SYCP will strengthen leadership development and technical support to build shared understanding, clarify language and reinforce sports role as a legitimate and complementary prevention tool within wider public systems.

The Cost of Doing Nothing

The costs of violence and youth crime extend far beyond immediate harm. In East Asia and the Pacific, the economic burden of violence against children has been estimated at 1–3% of regional GDP, reflecting losses to productivity and pressure on health, welfare and justice systems⁵.

Globally, violence is estimated to cost 11% of world GDP.⁶ These figures do not capture the long-term costs associated with youth offending, incarceration and social exclusion.

Evidence from multiple regions is clear: early prevention consistently outperforms reactive responses. Community-based and youth development programmes frequently deliver benefit–cost ratios of US \$5–8 saved for every US \$1 invested⁷, reducing demand and pressures on policing, courts and custodial systems while strengthening social cohesion and long-term resilience.

Through the systems-based approach outlined in Section Four, SYCP provides a practical mechanism to shift this trajectory strengthening leadership and generating shared evidence to guide policy and investment. In doing so, the SYCP model enables governments to redirect a proportion of future enforcement, welfare and custodial costs into structured, evidence-led prevention.

The evidence increasingly points toward the value of investing in prevention-first approaches that reduce long-term costs, strengthen resilience and enable young people and communities to thrive.

⁵<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4682665>

⁶<https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Economic-Value-of-Peace-2018.pdf>

⁷<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7987799/?utm>

Growing the SYCP Initiative: Opportunities for collaboration

The SYCP Initiative is designed to scale through coordinated national action and shared regional infrastructure. Growth is achieved not by expanding individual projects, but by strengthening the conditions and level of public awareness that allow sport-based youth crime prevention to be embedded, sustained and taken to scale within and across countries.

Learning from the Initiative has reinforced the importance of cross-sector collaboration at every level of delivery. Effective sport-based youth crime prevention requires coordinated engagement between sport and non-sport stakeholders, including justice, education, health, youth development and community sectors. This applies both within the consortium and across national and regional engagement and implementation, ensuring that programmes are embedded within wider prevention systems rather than delivered in isolation.

A core principle of the SYCP model is that national delivery and regional coordination are mutually reinforcing. Investment in one without the other limits impact and increases risk. Nationally-led programmes require regional standards, learning and evidence to mature responsibly; regional platforms only deliver value when anchored in real national leadership, policy alignment, action plans and delivery systems.



Growing the SYCP Initiative: Opportunities for collaboration

How collaborators engage

The SYCP Initiative welcomes governments, development partners, philanthropic organisations and corporate sponsors to engage at different entry points and levels of investment, aligned to mandate, readiness and capacity. Partners may prioritise national delivery, regional coordination, or thematic areas such as grant programmes, leadership development or events - but all engagement sits within a single, integrated system.

In practice:

- Governments engaging with SYCP receive support to strengthen national coordination, governance and capacity for sport-based youth crime prevention, while aligning with regional standards, policy and evidence frameworks.
- Regional, national and thematic partners co-invest in shared infrastructure, including grant programmes, learning platforms, leadership development, monitoring and evaluation, and innovation that underpins quality, reduces duplication and supports growth across countries.

This approach allows flexibility in how partners engage, while maintaining coherence in what is being built.

The SYCP Initiative acts as the enabling platform that connects and aligns delivery and regional infrastructure. Scale is not achieved through investment in any single element alone, but through deliberate, coordinated support across both - ensuring growth strengthens systems rather than creating parallel structures.

SYCP operates as a catalytic regional platform that supports and strengthens national and ASEAN-led systems, rather than creating parallel delivery structures.

Building on its first year of delivery and learning, the SYCP Initiative is now entering a focused period of platform consolidation and readiness. With core funding in place through to July 2027, the priority for 2026–27 is to strengthen governance, shared standards, evidence and system integration across pilot countries, while working with partners to shape future national and regional investment pathways. This focus on readiness and coherence positions the Initiative for sustainable scale and co-investment beyond the current funding period.



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