

# UTILIZING THE UNIQUE POWER OF SPORT TO BOOST THE FIGHT AGAINST CATASTROPIC CLIMATE CHANGE



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### PILOT PROJECT ON ATHLETE AND FAN ENGAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF 2017 FIS NORDIC WORLD SKI CHAMPIONSHIPS IN LAHTI, FINLAND

Project to build a common platform for encouraging sport fans  
to adopt environmentally responsible behavior in the support of fighting catastrophic climate change;  
across sports and countries, inside and outside the stadium  
*through*  
the development and dissemination of  
common guidelines for sport event organizers  
*with a particular focus on*  
developing mechanisms for enlisting sport celebrities  
and professional athletes to take prominent advocacy roles



The pilot project was carried out  
in partnership with  
Protect Our Winters (POW) Finland  
with the support of Lahti2017 and  
The Finnish Olympic Committee



# 1. Context and pilot project method



## 2017 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships

The 2017 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Lahti, Finland took place from 22 February 2017 to 5 March 2017. It brought together 700 professional athletes from 60 countries in 21 competitions. 250,000 fans went to the Championship along with 2,000 volunteers. 600 million fans watched the Championship on TV.

For further information, see:

- [Official Championship website](#)
- [Dedicated website of the International Ski Federation \(FIS\)](#)

## Global reference project

The global project is to build a common platform for encouraging sport fans to adopt environmentally responsible behavior in the support of fighting catastrophic climate change; across sports and countries, inside and outside the stadium, *through* the development and dissemination of common guidelines for sport event organizers, *with a particular focus on* developing mechanisms for enlisting sport celebrities and professional athletes to take prominent advocacy roles.

The project falls under the umbrella of the organization Global Crisis Information Network, led by Mr Tapio Kaninen. Global Project Lead is Mr Michael Pedersen, Founder of M INC. > change the game.

For further information about the project, see:

- [Project documentation](#)
- [Summary of Finnish sport community event in Helsinki, Finland](#)
- [Summary of COP20 side event in Lima, Peru](#)
- [Official website of Global Crisis Information Network](#)

For project inquiries, contact:

- [Michael Pedersen](#), Global Project Lead

## Pilot project partner

The pilot project was carried out in partnership with Protect Our Winters (POW) Finland. POW Finland is the national chapter of the global organization Protect Our Winters (POW). The organization was founded in the USA in 2007. It is a non-profit environmental organization, involving individuals in the global winter sport community. POW's goal is to bring awareness to and fight against climate change by means of community based projects, advocacy and educational initiatives.

For further information, see:

- [Official website of Protect Our Winters \(POW\) Finland](#) (in Finnish)
- [Official website of Protect Our Winters \(POW\)](#) (in English)

For project inquiries, contact:

- [Teemu Kalliojärvi](#), Pilot Project Lead

## Pilot project method

The 2017 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Lahti, Finland offered an opportunity to start pilot testing methods for athlete and fan engagement in the context of the global reference project.

Professional athletes participating at Lahti2017 were offered an opportunity to give video statements, focused on why it is important to care about climate change and how people can easily help fighting climate change in terms of changing specific behaviors. The video recording took place in the athlete village prior to the start of competitions. Statements given by athletes were subsequently reviewed, cut and put together in a 45-second edited video statement. When selecting aspects of statements to include in the edited video statement, emphasis was put on bringing together the most powerful voices and on ensuring diversity of voices in terms of gender, nationality and messages. Statements from a total of seven different athletes were selected. Three of the athletes were women and four were men. Three were from Finland, two from Sweden and two from the United States.

For further information, see:

- Appendixes 1-3 for an account of selected messages from each of the selected athletes
- [Edited 45-second video message](#)

44 random fans visiting Protect Our Winters (POW) Finland's stand at Lahti2017 were asked to view the edited video statement and subsequently to fill in a short questionnaire to measure what they thought of it. The questionnaire was designed to provide adequate data for drawing conclusions on the effectiveness of the statement and the extent to which the effectiveness varied across fan demographics, i.e. age, gender, nationality and whether they skied themselves or not.

For further information, see:

- Appendix 4 for demographics of fans engaging in the testing



## 2. Main pilot project findings and suggested next steps



### Main pilot project findings

The pilot project at 2017 FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Lahti, Finland generated two main findings:

- 1) Professional athletes in skiing are able and willing to give powerful video statements to their fans about climate change - across nationality, gender and disciplines.
- 2) Skiing fans are very receptive to climate change statements from professional athletes in skiing - across age, gender, nationality and whether they ski themselves or not.

As for the latter, it is particularly noteworthy that skiing fans self-assessed that they felt much more motivated to change some of their habits in support of the fight against climate change after having watched the 45-second edited video statement of professional athletes in skiing (8.12 on average on a scale from 1-10).

Despite of the very high average, the test data also indicated demographic variations in fan motivations to change behavior:

- 31-40 year old fans were the most motivated to change behavior (8.40 on average), whereas 21-30 year old fans were the least motivated to change behavior (7.83 on average).
- Female fans were more motivated to change behavior (8.32 on average) than male fans (7.83 on average).
- Fans of other nationalities than Finnish (8.16 on average) were slightly more motivated to change behavior than fans of Finnish nationality (7.83 on average).

→ Fans skiing themselves (8.14 on average) were slightly more motivated to change behavior than fans not skiing themselves (8.00 on average).

When asked the open-ended question what they liked the most about the video statement, 51 per cent of the fans independently of each other highlighted the fact that professional athletes were giving the statement. Some of these fans also emphasized that professional athletes are important roles models, that they were showing their passion for the issue, that they formed an international mix and that they were top athletes. At the same time, 19 per cent highlighted the fact that the video message suggestions for individual actions were good. 14 per cent highlighted the fact that it was a positive message.

Last but not least, when asked the open-ended question which advice they liked the most in terms of what everyone could do to change behavior in support of the fight against climate change, 28 per cent of the fans individually highlighted the use of public transportation. At the same time, 16 per cent of the fans highlighted recycling, while another 16 per cent highlighted saving energy. Last but not least, 19 per cent of the fans actually highlighted the point that small streams make a big river, although it was more a point for action than an actual advice.

### Suggested next steps

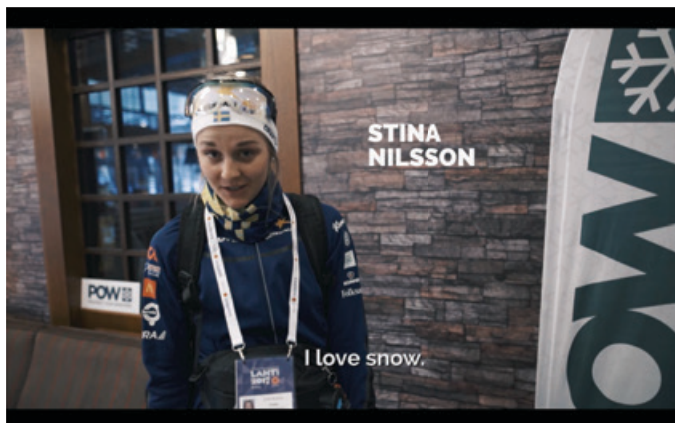
Based on the experience gathered in the pilot project, it would be valuable to do more extensive testing of the 45-second edited video statement of professional athletes in skiing with skiing fans around the world - be it on social media and at additional ski events.

Similarly, it would be valuable to further fine-tune approaches and insights by carrying out similar pilot projects at other international level sport events.

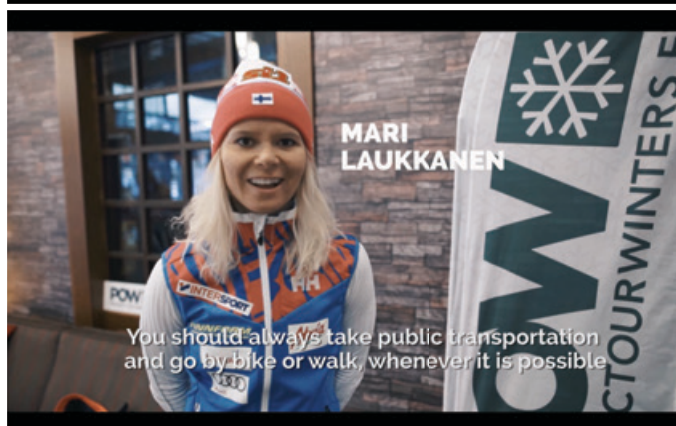




**Appendix 1: Athlete messages selected for the edited video statement to fans, focused on why it is important to care about climate change (screen prints from the video)**



**Appendix 2:** Athlete messages selected for the edited video statement to fans, focused on how anyone can change behavior in support of the fight against climate change (screen prints from the video)

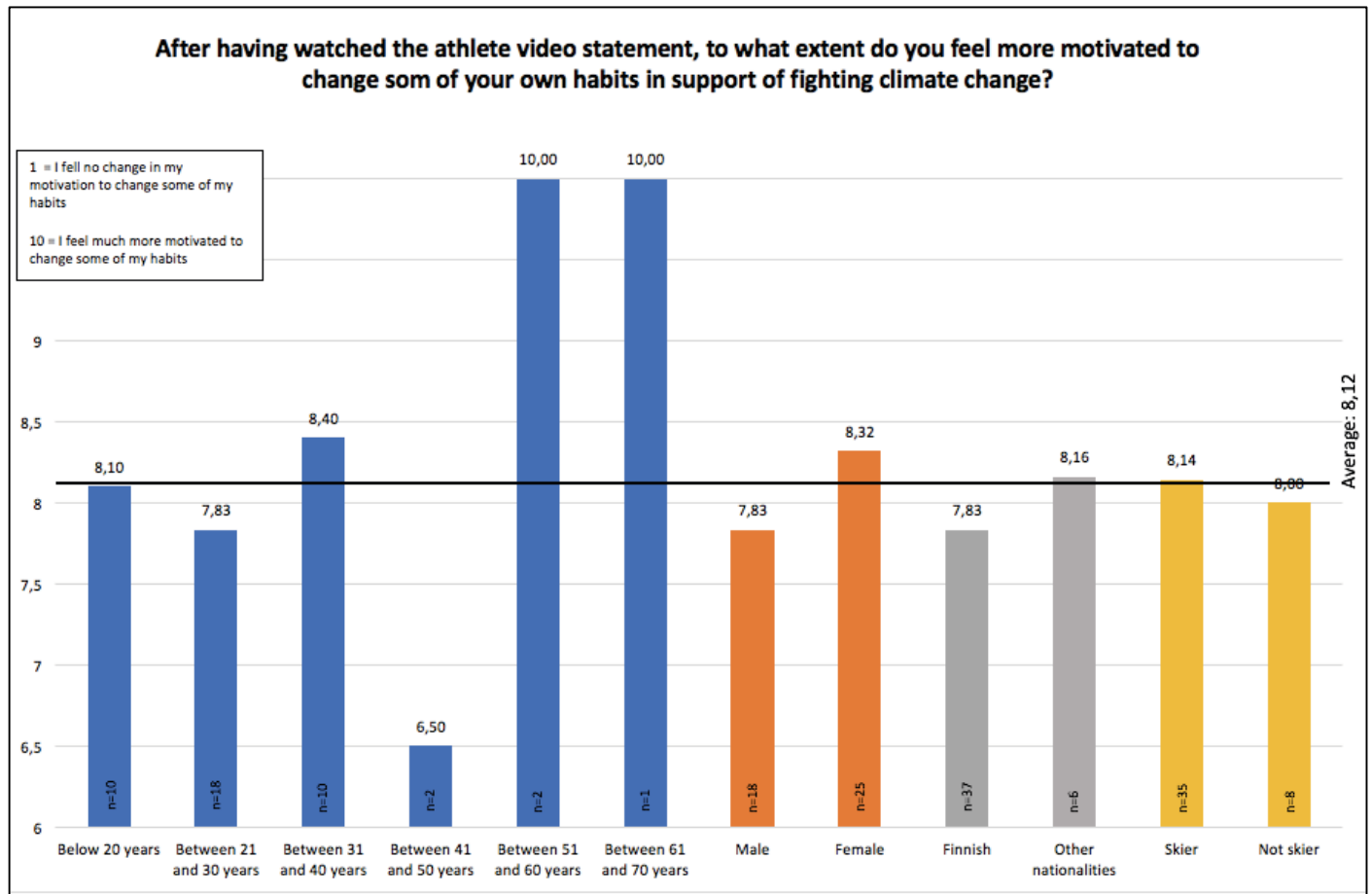




**Appendix 3:** Athlete messages selected for the edited video statement to fans, focused on why individual action in support of the fight against climate change matters (screen prints from the video)



**Appendix 4: Consolidated self-assessed motivational shift of fans to change some of their habits in support of the fight against climate change after having watched the edited athlete video statement**



Out of 44 responses, 43 were used for the consolidation of results. The one left out was incomplete.

Given the very low number of respondents over the age of 41 years, observations on age groups' consolidated self-assessments have been limited to the age groups up until 40 years only.