

From First Move to National Policy:

The 2026 FIDE Global Chess in Schools Survey

Evidence from 100 Countries Across Five Continents

Prepared for
FIDE Chess in Education Commission
by
George Chitiyo, Ph.D.¹, & Rita Atkins²

August 2026

¹ Tennessee Technological University

² FIDE Chess in Education Commission

Disclaimer: Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Chess Federation (FIDE).

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	4
Executive Summary	5
Background and Context.....	6
Methodology	6
Comparison with the 2021 FIDE-ECU Survey	7
Results.....	10
Survey Respondents and Coverage.....	10
Program Scope and Participation.....	14
Instructor Qualifications and Training.....	16
How Formal Are Programs? A Four-Group Profile	18
Technology and Software Use	20
Written Curriculum For Chess Instruction	22
Integration Into Official School Curricula.....	23
Curriculum Endorsement	24
Who Leads and How Instruction Is Delivered.....	25
Funding for Chess Activities	27
Community Response to Chess in Schools and Chess Programs	28
Perceived Benefits of Chess Programs	29
Barriers to Expanding Chess in Schools.....	32
Support Most Needed From FIDE.....	35
Promotion of Girls’ Participation.....	36
Evaluation Systems.....	37
In Respondents’ Own Words.....	39
Interpretation and Recommendations	49
Recommendations for FIDE and National Federations	50
Conclusion	51
References.....	52
Appendix A: Country-Level Tables.....	53

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals that led to the development and completion of this report:

- Jerry Nash, FIDE Chess in Education Commission, for his strategic leadership and invaluable guidance throughout the project.
- Dr. Khanat Kassenov, Academy of Physical Education and Mass Sports, Kazakhstan, for his expertise and collaboration in instrument development.
- Dr. Angie Briggs and Maria Cristina Humita, Tennessee Technological University, for their support in survey development and translation, respectively.

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the 2026 International Chess Federation (FIDE) Global Chess in Schools Survey, an international assessment of chess education programs spanning 239 respondents in 100 countries across five continents. The survey builds on the 2021 FIDE-ECU survey and broadens its reach beyond Europe to capture a global picture of program structure, participation, instructor capacity, curriculum status, technology use, funding, and perceived benefits and barriers.

Respondents represented national chess federations (37%), schools (36%), chess-in-schools organizations (8%), and other chess-related organizations (19%). The survey instrument comprised 33 questions and was administered via the Qualtrics survey platform.

Key findings include the following:

- Instructor qualification requirements apply in 53.6% of responding programs, with the highest rate in Asia (65.3%).
- A written chess curriculum is in place for 42.9% of programs, led by Asia (49.3%) and the Americas (47.5%). Only 36% of programs report any integration into official school curricula (10% nationally, 26% in some regions), with Asia (42%) and the Americas (41.3%) showing the highest integration rates.
- Software is used by 64.7% of programs, led by the Americas (71.9%).
- Stakeholder response to chess programs is overwhelmingly favorable, with 76.8% reporting very positive reactions. However, formalization remains uneven: 31.9% of programs have both qualification requirements and a written curriculum, while 36.7% have neither, and 48.2% have no evaluation system.
- Most programs report promoting girls' participation: 33.8% with specific initiatives and 53.5% without specific initiatives, while 12.6% do not.
- The leading barriers to expansion are lack of funding (79%), lack of curriculum (67%), and lack of trained instructors (66.5%).
- The support most needed from FIDE is training and professional development (80.3%), funding and grants (73.7%), and teaching materials and curriculum (69.2%).

Background and Context

Chess education has attracted growing international attention as a pedagogical tool associated with cognitive, social, and emotional development. In 2021, FIDE and the European Chess Union (ECU) surveyed 196 respondents, predominantly in Europe, establishing baseline data on chess in schools. The 2026 Global Survey extends that work to all continents and updates the evidence base. The methodology section of this report compares the two surveys in more detail.

In comparison to 2021, the 2026 survey roughly triples school representation (36.0% vs 11.0%) and gives a more balanced stakeholder mix across a global sample.

Methodology

Survey Design and Instrument

The 2026 FIDE Global Chess in Schools Survey was administered through Qualtrics between October 2025 and June 2026. The instrument contained 33 items, organized into the following domains:

- Program scope and participation: numeric estimates of children engaged in chess activities, distinguishing school-day from after-school settings and types of instructors.
- Technology and software: whether software is used and which platforms.
- Instructor qualifications: whether formal qualifications are required.
- Curriculum and institutionalization: written curriculum availability, official endorsement, and curriculum integration.
- Funding, stakeholder response, and support needs.
- Benefits and barriers to the use of chess in schools, and girls' participation in chess programs.
- Open-ended items on program history, challenges, and successes.
- Assessment and evaluation systems.

Sampling and Recruitment

Respondents were individuals in leadership or program management roles at schools, national chess federations, chess-in-schools organizations, and other chess-related organizations worldwide. Recruitment occurred through FIDE networks and referrals from existing respondents. The analytic sample comprised 239 respondents from 100 countries across five continents. By affiliation, the sample was 37.0% national federations, 36.0% schools, 8.0% chess-in-schools organizations, and 19.0% other chess-related organizations; two respondents did not report an affiliation. Most respondents ($n = 202$, 84.5%) completed the full survey; 37 partial respondents answered only early items and were retained for the analyses of those items.

Data Screening and Cleaning

Data were checked for accuracy prior to analysis. Outlying numeric values were flagged, reviewed case by case, and corrected where the intended value was clear. Duplicate and resubmitted responses were reviewed manually, and country names and affiliations were standardized.

Respondents were asked what basis they used for the numeric estimates they provided. Most respondents (73.6%) relied on personal estimates, while 20.7% used official data. This pattern mirrors the 2021 survey, in which 53.5% of federations made their own estimates and a further 18.5% described their estimates as subjective, with only about 28% using official or research data. Reliance on estimation is, therefore, consistently common in the field, and participation figures throughout this report should be read as informed approximations rather than exact and accurate counts.

Comparison with the 2021 FIDE-ECU Survey

The present survey builds on the 2021 FIDE-ECU Chess in Schools Survey Report (Hall & Nash, 2021)³, the first attempt to describe chess in schools worldwide. The 2021 survey used a 17-item SurveyMonkey questionnaire, offered in English, Spanish, and Russian, and drew 196 responses from 152 countries; 42 federations did not respond. Its authors noted that the results did not meet the standards of a scientific study, since most respondents provided estimates. The 2026 survey expanded the instrument to 33 items added new domains (funding, benefits and barriers, support needs, girls' participation, data basis, and evaluation). Table 1 summarizes the two surveys.

Table 1. *Overview and Comparison of the 2021 FIDE-ECU Survey and the 2026 FIDE Global Survey*

Indicator	2021	2026
Total respondents	196	239
National federations	135 (68.9%)	88 (36.8%)
Chess-in-schools organizations	39 (19.9%)	19 (7.9%)
Public and private schools	22 (11.2%)	85 (35.6%)
Other organizations	—	45 (18.8%)
Countries represented	152	100
Children in chess activity	25,600,000 ^a	29,643,516
India	15,000,000	15,000,000
China	5,000,000	5,000,000 ^b
Rest of world	5,600,000	9,643,516 ^f
Classroom teachers	92,550	145,564 ^c
External coaches and instructors	145,690	22,586 ^c
Countries with teaching qualifications	78	69 ^d
Countries using software	98	70 ^d
Countries with a written curriculum	—	54
Programs promoting girls' participation	—	87.4% ^e

Note. *Figures are informed estimates rather than exact counts and reflect how many and which entities responded in each country and how each respondent estimated. Totals of children,*

³ Hall, J., & Nash, J. (2021). *FIDE-ECU chess in schools survey report*. International Chess Federation & European Chess Union. <https://chessineducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FIDE-ECU-Survey-Final-Report-rev.pdf>

teachers, and coaches for 2026 use one national estimate per country (the largest single-respondent figure), which matches the one-estimate-per-country basis of the 2021 totals. Values for 2021 are from Hall and Nash (2021); values for 2026 are computed from the 2026 FIDE Global Survey dataset. An em dash indicates an item that was not part of the 2021 survey.

a Abstract value from Hall and Nash (2021): India (15,000,000) plus China (5,000,000) plus the rest of the world (5,600,000). The report's Table 1 gives a more precise total of 25,373,339.

b China's 2026 estimate is held at its 2021 level of 5,000,000. Only two Chinese respondents took part in 2026 and a real decline in participation is implausible, so the figure is carried forward as at least unchanged. India and China are the only countries with a published per-country count in 2021, so China is the only figure corrected upward against 2021.

c Classroom teachers and external coaches are not directly comparable across years. The 2026 data show a shift toward classroom-teacher (school-based) delivery, so reported teacher numbers rise while external-coach numbers fall; both depend on the mix of respondents.

d Number of countries with at least one respondent reporting yes. The smaller 2026 counts partly reflect fewer countries responding in 2026 (100) than in 2021 (152) rather than a decline in provision.

e Share of respondents whose programs promote girls' participation, combining "yes, with specific initiatives" (67) and "yes, without specific initiatives" (106) against the 198 respondents who answered ($173/198 = 87.4\%$). The 2021 survey did not ask about girls' participation.

f Mongolia is included in 2026 at a reconstructed estimate of 25,000 children instead of 20,000,000. The latter would have been a data entry error, as this figure is larger than Mongolia's entire school-age population (about 1.25 million). Reading the entry as 500 schools with about 50 children each, gives 25,000, a plausible national figure.

Comparability caution. These totals are informed estimates, not a census, and are not strictly comparable across years. Each depends on which entities responded in a given country and how each estimated its own reach, so a change in a total between 2021 and 2026 reflects who responded at least as much as any real change in participation. A higher 2026 total is therefore not, on its own, evidence that more children are being served. Where per-country values were adjusted (China held at its 2021 level, Mongolia corrected as above), the change fixes an implausible value or a data-entry error rather than steering the totals toward a trend. The change the data support most directly is broader reach: more countries and all five continents are represented in 2026.

Several changes stand out between the two surveys. The responding base grew from 196 to 239, but the number of countries represented decreased from 152 to 100, so responses in 2026 are concentrated in fewer countries: 2.4 respondents per country, up from 1.3. The composition of those respondents also shifted. National federations, which supplied 68.9% of 2021 responses, account for 36.8% in 2026, while public and private schools rose from 11.2% to 35.6%. The 2026 survey therefore reflects school-level provision more directly than the federation-centered picture of 2021, which should be kept in mind when reading any change across the two years.

The estimated number of children in chess activity rose from about 25.6 million to about 29.6 million. India stayed steady at 15 million, and China's figure was held at its 2021 level of 5 million (see Note b), so the increase is carried almost entirely by the rest of the world, which nearly doubled from 5.6 million to 9.6 million. Part of that growth is geographic: 13 of the 20 countries new to the survey in 2026 are in Africa. Because these

totals depend on which entities responded in each country, this rise is better read as broader survey coverage than as a measured increase in the number of children served (see the notes to Table 1).

The instructional workforce shifted in character. Reported classroom teachers rose from 92,550 to 145,564, while reported external coaches fell from 145,690 to 22,586. The two categories are not strictly comparable across years, but together they suggest a move toward school-based delivery led by classroom teachers rather than visiting coaches. On program infrastructure, the share of respondents reporting a qualification requirement edged up from 50.5% to 53.6%, and 2026 measured two features the 2021 survey did not: a written curriculum, reported in 54 countries, and active promotion of girls' participation, reported by about 87% of the respondents.

Sample Composition

In the 2021 survey, there were 152 countries but only about 1.3 responses per country, nearly all from federations. The 2026 survey trades some country coverage for depth, averaging about 2.4 responses per country across four stakeholder types. This design might give a fuller within-country picture, albeit with a smaller country list.

The stakeholder mix changed considerably between surveys. The percentage of respondents from federations was 68.9% in 2021 and 37% in 2026, while schools roughly tripled, from 11.2% to 36%. Because of this shift, differences between 2021 and 2026 results may reflect who answered rather than real change over time.

Limitations

As in 2021, most participation figures rest on respondent estimates rather than official records. The sample is not a probability sample, so results describe the responding programs rather than all chess in schools activity worldwide. Countries with no respondents may include both countries with no activity and countries whose programs were simply not reached. Finally, cross-survey comparisons are indicative only, given the changes in instrument, platform, and sample composition described above.

Results

Survey Respondents and Coverage

Table 2 summarizes the overall reach of the survey in terms of countries represented and their continents.

Table 2. *Countries Represented in the Survey by Continent*

Continent	Countries
Africa (55 respondents; 26 countries)	Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe
Americas (64 respondents; 24 countries)	Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, Uruguay, US Virgin Islands
Asia (77 respondents; 24 countries)	Armenia, China, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam
Europe (41 respondents; 24 countries)	Albania, Andorra, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
Oceania (2 respondents; 2 countries)	New Zealand, Solomon Islands

The 239 respondents represent 100 countries across five continents. Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents by continent: Asia ($n = 77$), the Americas ($n = 64$), Africa ($n = 55$), Europe ($n = 41$), and Oceania ($n = 2$).

Figure 1. Survey Respondents by Continent

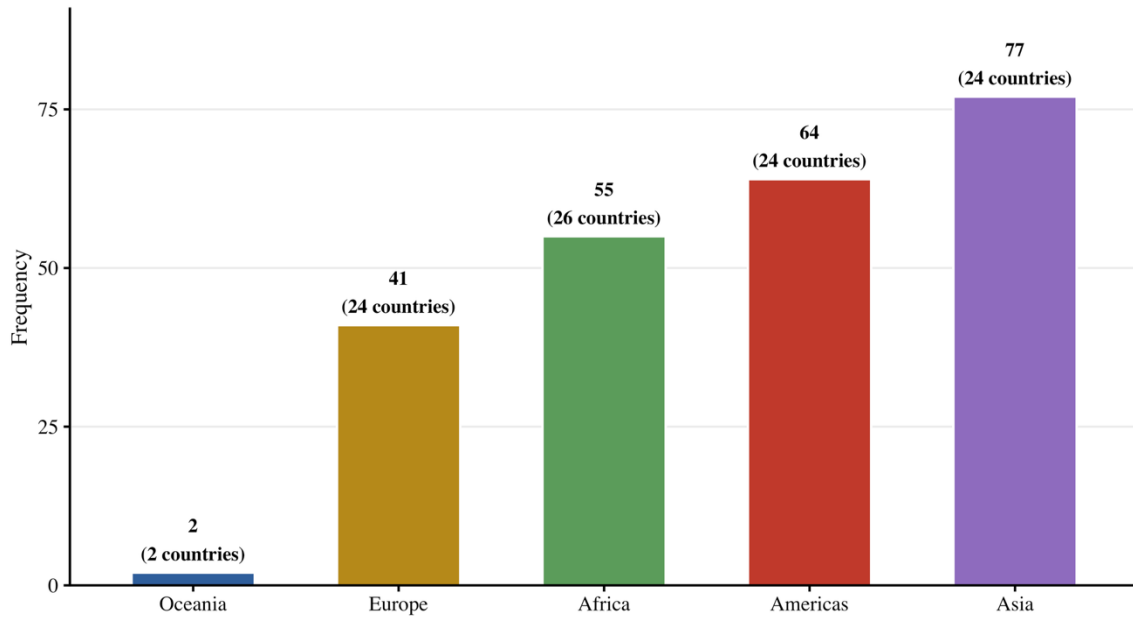


Table 3 crosses affiliation type with continent, and Figures 2 and 3 show the affiliation mix and the twenty countries contributing the most respondents.

Table 3. Affiliation Type by Continent

Continent	National Federation	School	CiSO	Other
Africa	23 (41.8%)	16 (29.1%)	9 (16.4%)	7 (12.7%)
Americas	22 (35.5%)	24 (38.7%)	3 (4.8%)	13 (21.0%)
Asia	20 (26.0%)	32 (41.6%)	5 (6.5%)	20 (26.0%)
Europe	22 (53.7%)	12 (29.3%)	2 (4.9%)	5 (12.2%)
Oceania	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	0	0

Note. Row percentages sum to 100% within each continent. CiSO = Chess-in-Schools Organization. Two respondents (both in the Americas) did not report an affiliation and are excluded.

Figure 2. *Respondents by Affiliation Type (N = 237)*

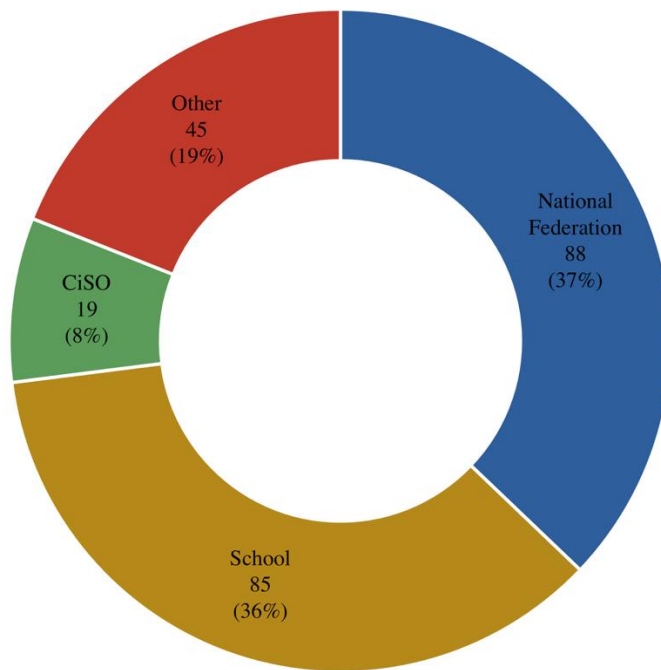
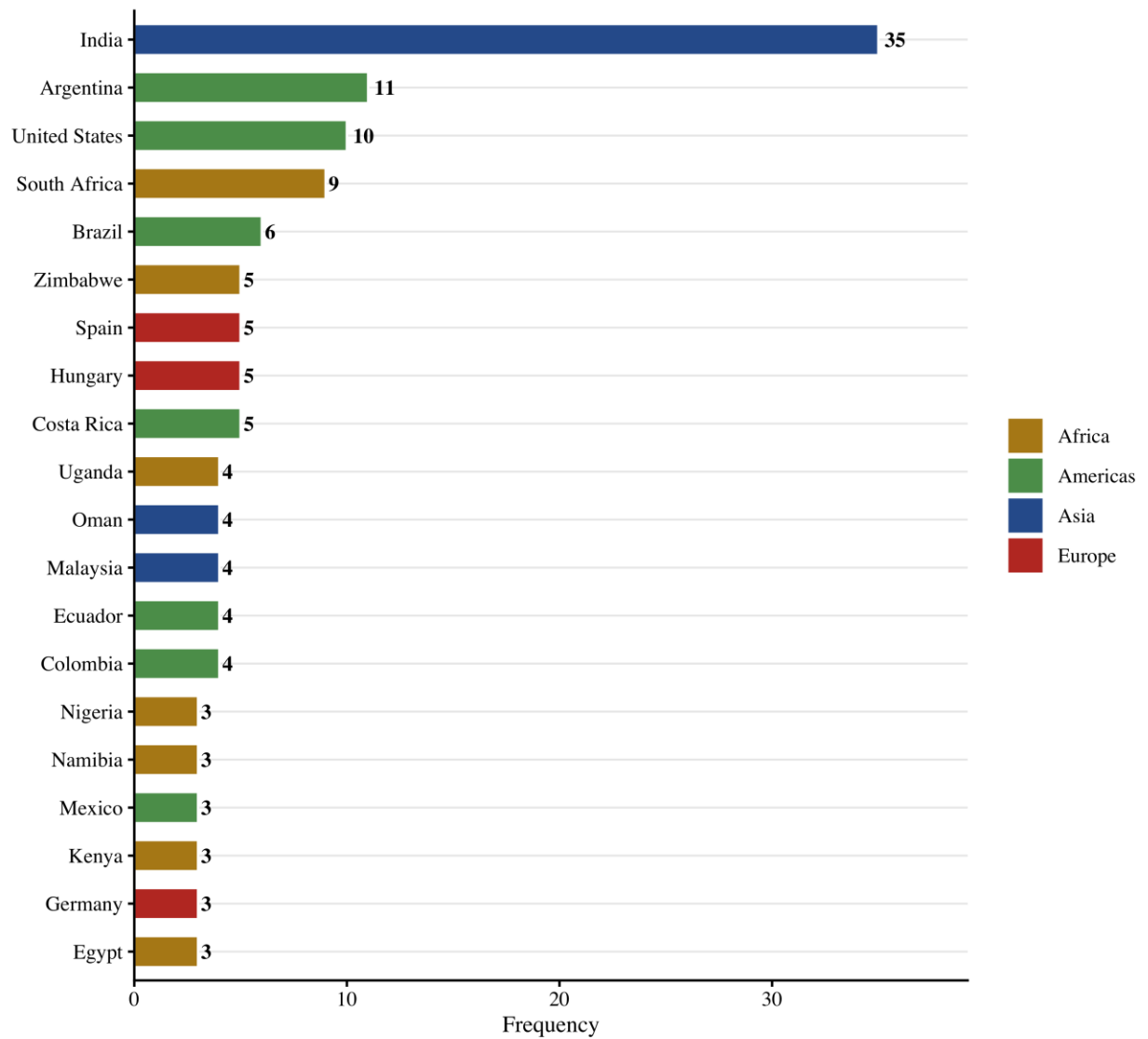


Figure 3. Top 20 Countries by Respondent Count



Program Scope and Participation

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for the numeric estimates. The survey questions were: *How many children participate in chess activities through your organization? How many instructors are involved, distinguishing classroom teachers and external coaches?*

Table 4. *Descriptive Statistics for Numeric Estimates*

Variable	Count of who responded	Median	Mean	Max
Total children in chess activities	170	1,000	178,438	15,000,000
Children (school day)	122	165	97,629	10,000,000
Children (after-school)	145	80	57,765	5,000,000
Classroom teachers	203	3	730	100,000
External coaches/instructors	205	3	138	5,000
<i>Note. The median may be the preferred summary statistic given that all the variables are skewed to the right.</i>				

Distributions are heavily right-skewed because a small number of very large national programs coexist with many small school-level programs. Medians are therefore the preferred averages. Table 5 shows totals by continent for each numeric estimate.

Table 5. *Totals by Continent for Numeric Estimates*

Variable	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania
Classroom teachers	2,102.5 (48)	7,39 (60)	126,129 (61)	12,519 (32)	3.0 (2)
External coaches/instructors	3,152.5 (48)	11,990 (60)	8,269 (63)	4,889.5 (32)	20 (2)
Total children in chess activities	1,018,176 (33)	2,143,890 (49)	21,465,632 (57)	5,696,356 (29)	10,400 (2)
Children (school day)	53,820 (21)	576,628 (39)	11,161,546.5 (39)	118,738.5 (23)	—
Children (after-school)	459,655 (26)	1,300,718.5 (48)	6,415,456 (41)	200,021 (29)	20 (1)
<i>Note. Cells show sum (n valid). Continent totals are driven by a few large national programs rather than by typical country values. India alone accounts for 35 of the 239 respondents (14.6%), so the Asia column in particular should not be read as typical of the continent. Number of respondents is shown in parentheses.</i>					

In What Settings Do Chess Activities Take Place?

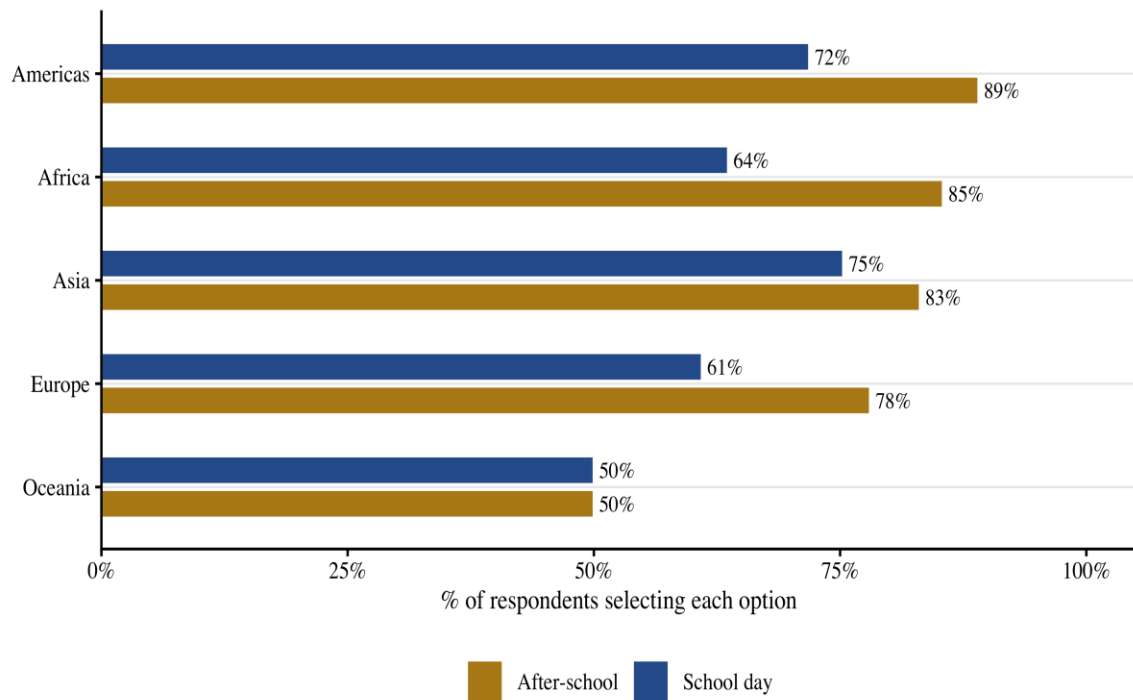
After-school clubs and programs are the most common setting (84.1% of the full sample), while 69% report chess during the school day; 57.7% operate in both settings and 4.6% selected neither (Table 6). Figure 4 shows the pattern by continent.

Table 6. *Chess Activity Setting (Respondents Selecting Each Option)*

Setting	Count	% of <i>N</i> = 239
During the school day	165	69.0%
After-school club/program	201	84.1%
Both settings selected	138	57.7%
Neither selected	11	4.6%

Note. Respondents could select both options simultaneously. Percentages do not sum to 100%.

Figure 4. *Chess Activity Setting by Continent*



Note. Multi-select item; percentages within each continent do not sum to 100%.

Instructor Qualifications and Training

Survey questions: *Are instructors required to have specific qualifications? Describe the qualifications needed and how training is provided.*

A slim majority of programs (125 of 233 who answered; 53.6%) require specific instructor qualifications (Figure 5). As Table 7 and Figure 6 show, the requirement is most common in Asia (65.3%) and least common in Africa (47.3%) and the Americas (48.4%); Europe stands at 52.5%, and neither Oceania respondent ($n = 2$) indicated a qualifications requirement.

Figure 5. *Instructor Qualification Requirement ($n = 233$)*

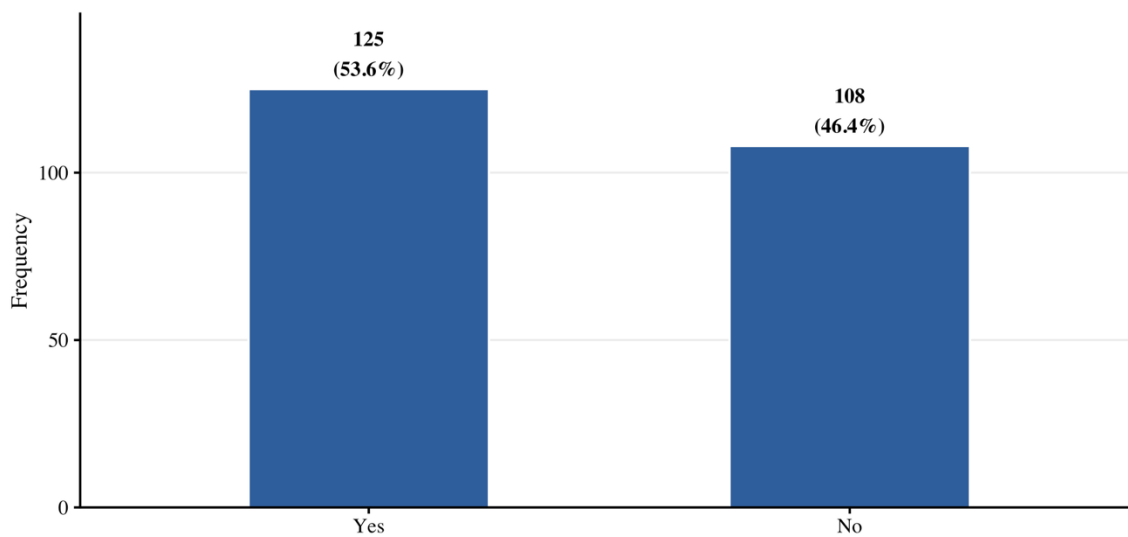


Table 7. Instructor Qualifications Required by Continent

Continent	Yes	No
Africa	26 (47.3%)	29 (52.7%)
Americas	31 (48.4%)	33 (51.6%)
Asia	47 (65.3%)	25 (34.7%)
Europe	21 (52.5%)	19 (47.5%)
Oceania	0	2 (100.0%)

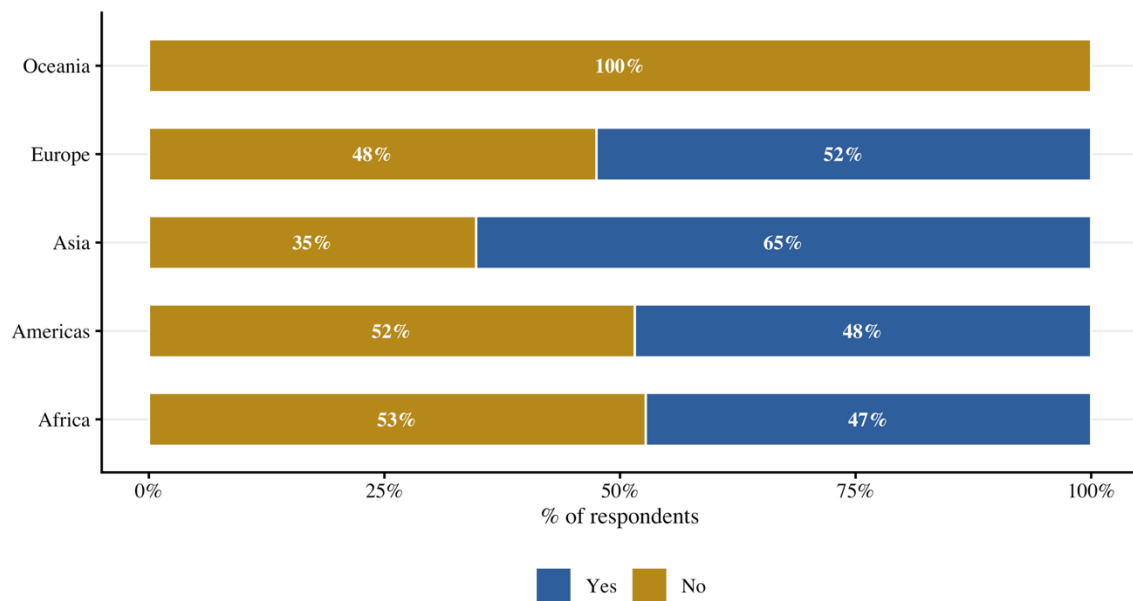
Figure 6. Instructor Qualification Requirement by Continent

Table 8 shows the pattern by affiliation type. Respondents' verbatim descriptions of qualification systems range from FIDE School Instructor certification to informal reliance on strong players. A full country-level breakdown appears in Appendix Table A1.

Table 8. Instructor Qualifications Required by Affiliation Type

Affiliation Type	Yes	No
National Federation	46 (53.5%)	40 (46.5%)
School	43 (51.8%)	40 (48.2%)
CiSO	10 (52.6%)	9 (47.4%)
Other	24 (55.8%)	19 (44.2%)

How Formal Are Programs? A Four-Group Profile

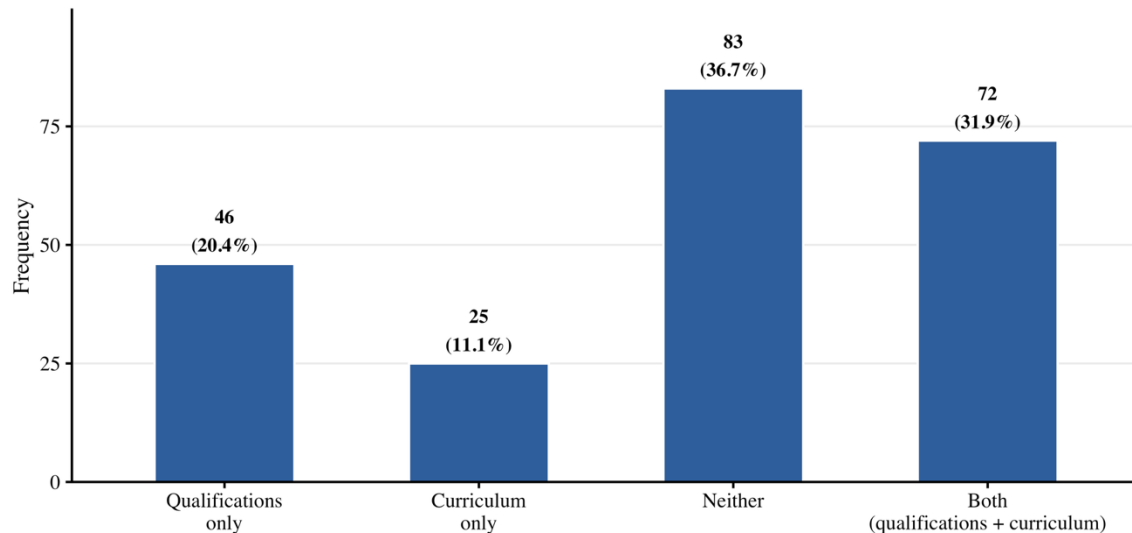
Combining qualification requirements with written curriculum status yields a four-group formalization profile (Table 9, Figure 7).

Table 9. *Four-Group Formalization Profile*

Formalization Profile	<i>n</i>	Valid %	Total %
Both (qualifications + curriculum)	72	31.9%	30.1%
Qualifications only	46	20.4%	19.2%
Curriculum only	25	11.1%	10.5%
Neither	83	36.7%	34.7%

Note. Valid % based on respondents who answered both items (n = 226). Total % based on N = 239. Both = requires qualifications AND has written curriculum; Neither = requires neither.

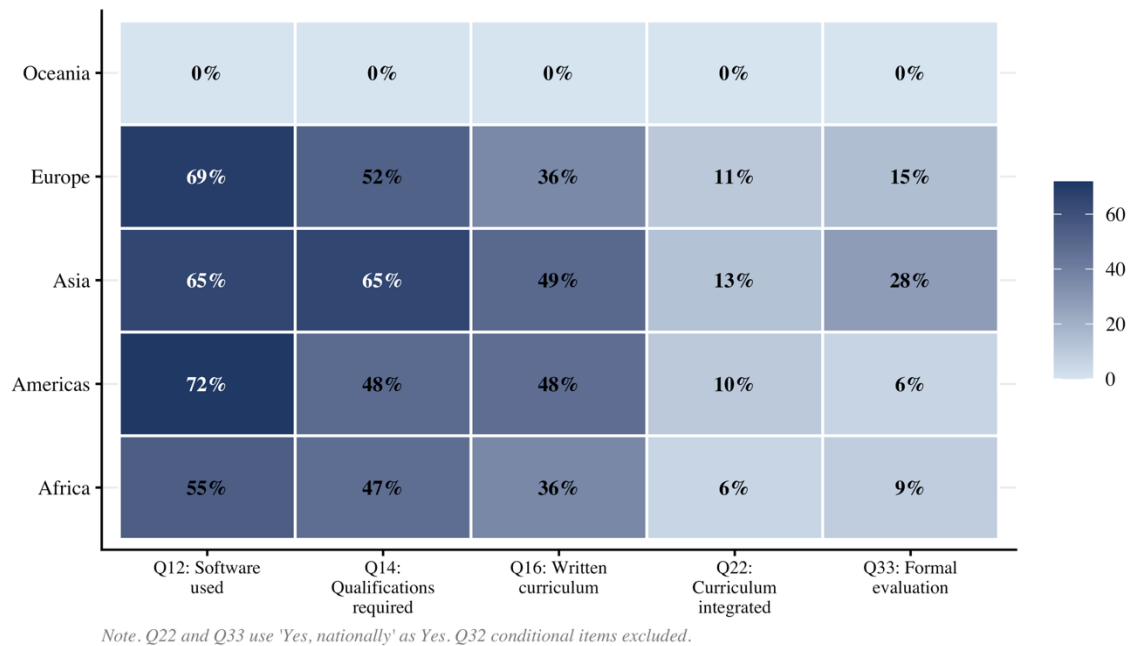
Figure 7. *Formalization Profile (n = 226)*



Only 31.9% of programs have both formal elements in place, while 36.7% have neither, highlighting how much of global chess education operates informally. Table 10 breaks the profile down by continent, and Figure 8 presents a three-indicator formalization heatmap.

Table 10. Formalization Profile by Continent

Continent	Both	Qualifications only	Curriculum only	Neither
Africa	15 (27.3%)	11 (20.0%)	5 (9.1%)	24 (43.6%)
Americas	20 (32.8%)	8 (13.1%)	9 (14.8%)	24 (39.3%)
Asia	28 (40.6%)	16 (23.2%)	6 (8.7%)	19 (27.5%)
Europe	9 (23.1%)	11 (28.2%)	5 (12.8%)	14 (35.9%)
Oceania	0	0	0	2 (100.0%)

Figure 8. Heatmap Showing Formalization Indicators by Continent

The heatmap (Figure 8) places the three formalization indicators side by side for each continent. The findings show the following:

- First, software use is the most widely adopted indicator on every continent, while a written curriculum is consistently the least common; the gap is widest in Europe, where 69.2% of programs use software but only 35.9% have a written curriculum.
- Second, no single region leads across the board: Asia has the highest qualification (65.3%) and written curriculum (49.3%) rates, but the Americas lead on software use (71.9%).
- Africa records the lowest software adoption (54.5%), and the two Oceania respondents report none of the three indicators.
- Overall, the heatmap suggests that technology adoption is running ahead of pedagogical formalization: on every continent, programs are at least as likely to

use software as to require instructor qualifications, and clearly more likely to use software than to maintain a written curriculum.

Technology and Software Use

Survey questions: *Is software used in teaching chess? Which software platforms are used?*

Software use is widespread across the globe. Nearly two-thirds (64.7%; 152 of 235) use software in teaching chess (Figure 9). Table 11 shows use by continent. The Americas lead (71.9%), followed by Europe (69.2%), Asia (65.3%), and Africa (54.5%); neither Oceania respondent reported software use. Table 12 lists the platforms respondents named. Country-level detail appears in Appendix Table A2.

Figure 9. *Software Use in Teaching Chess (n = 235)*

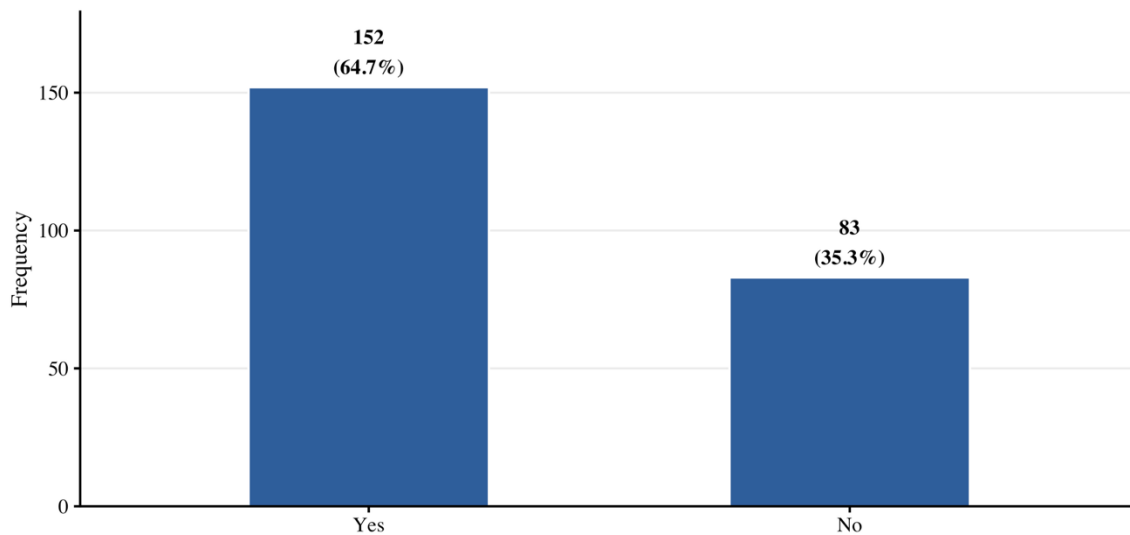


Table 11. *Software Use by Continent*

Continent	Yes	No
Africa	30 (54.5%)	25 (45.5%)
Americas	46 (71.9%)	18 (28.1%)
Asia	49 (65.3%)	26 (34.7%)
Europe	27 (69.2%)	12 (30.8%)
Oceania	0	2 (100.0%)

Table 12. *Software Platforms Named by Respondents*

Platform	Number of Times Mentioned
Lichess	54
Chess.com	31
ChessBase	28
ChessKid	20
Logiqboard	7
Chess Tutor	4
Fritz	3
Lucas Chess	3
Chess	2
Fritz Und Fertig	2
Little Fritz	2
PowerPoint	2
Abchess	1
<i>Note. n = 138 respondents named at least one platform. Counts reflect mentions, not unique respondents.</i>	

After consolidating naming variants, Lichess is the most frequently mentioned platform (54 mentions), followed by Chess.com (31), ChessBase (28), and ChessKid (20). The diversity of the remaining list suggests educators choose tools based on cost, language support, and pedagogical fit rather than a single standard.

Written Curriculum For Chess Instruction

Survey question: *Is there a written curriculum in place for chess instruction?*

Fewer than half of the programs (97 of 226 who answered; 42.9%) operate with a written curriculum (Figure 10). By continent (Table 13), written curricula are most common in Asia (49.3%) and the Americas (47.5%), and least common in Europe (35.9%) and Africa (36.4%). By affiliation, written curricula are most common among chess-in-schools organizations (55.6%) and least common among schools (35.0%). Country-level detail appears in Appendix Table A3.

Figure 10. *Written Curriculum in Place (n = 226)*

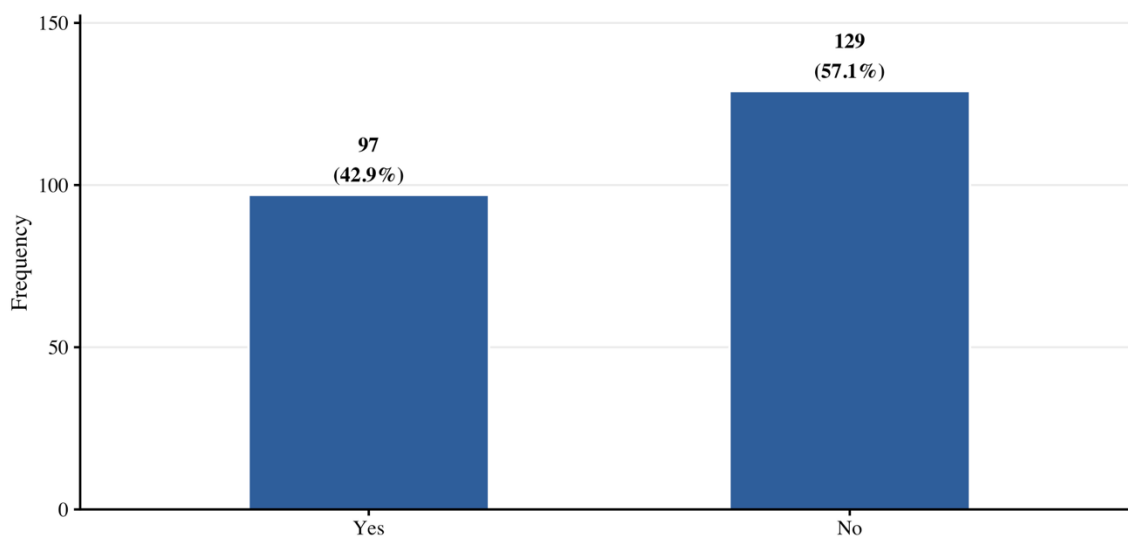


Table 13. *Written Curriculum in Place by Continent*

Continent	Yes	No
Africa	20 (36.4%)	35 (63.6%)
Americas	29 (47.5%)	32 (52.5%)
Asia	34 (49.3%)	35 (50.7%)
Europe	14 (35.9%)	25 (64.1%)
Oceania	0	2 (100.0%)

Integration Into Official School Curricula

Survey question: *Is chess integrated into the official school curriculum?*

Integration remains the exception: 10% of programs report national integration and 26% report integration in some regions, while 63.9% report none (Figure 11). Any-integration rates are highest in Asia (42.0%) and the Americas (41.3%), followed by Europe (34.2%) and Africa (25.0%) (Table 14, Figure 12).

Figure 11. *Integration Into Official School Curriculum (n = 219)*

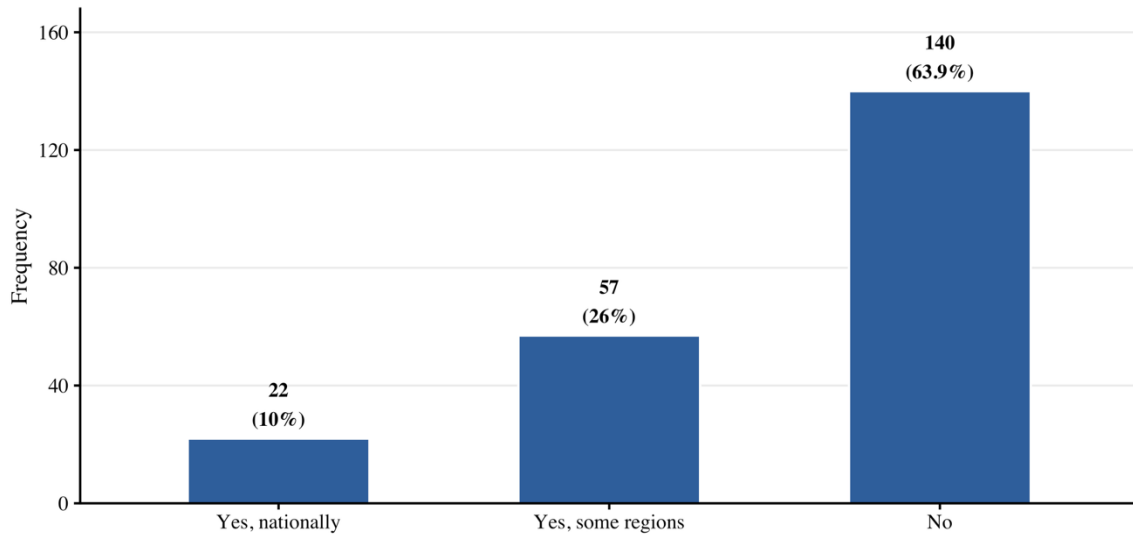
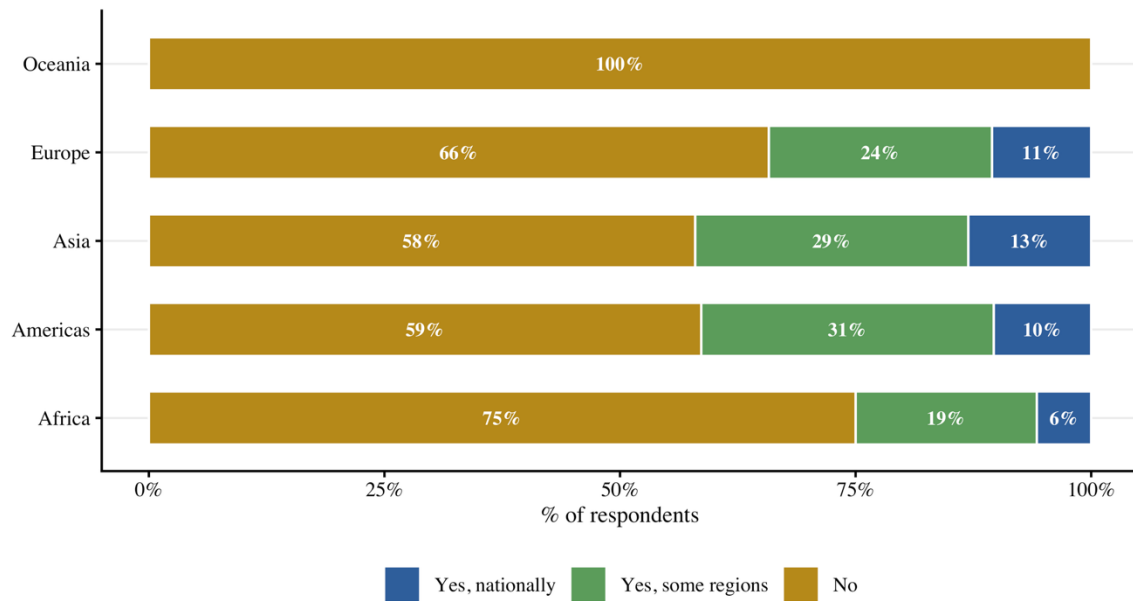


Table 14. *Curriculum Integration by Continent*

Continent	Yes, nationally	Yes, some regions	No
Africa	3 (5.8%)	10 (19.2%)	39 (75.0%)
Americas	6 (10.3%)	18 (31.0%)	34 (58.6%)
Asia	9 (13.0%)	20 (29.0%)	40 (58.0%)
Europe	4 (10.5%)	9 (23.7%)	25 (65.8%)
Oceania	0	0	2 (100.0%)

Figure 12 shows that “no integration” is the most common response on every continent, and even the highest rate of national integration (in Asia) stays under 13%.

Figure 12. *Curriculum Integration by Continent*



Note. The total for each stacked bar equals 100%.

Curriculum Endorsement

Survey questions (asked of programs with a written curriculum): *Is the curriculum endorsed by the Ministry of Education? Is it endorsed by the national federation or a CiSO?*

Among programs with a written curriculum, 40.2% report ministry endorsement and 52.2% report federation or CiSO endorsement (Table 15). Endorsement from within the chess community is thus about 12 percentage points more common than endorsement from education authorities. Country-level endorsement rates appear in Appendix Table A4.

Table 15. *Curriculum Endorsement: Ministry and Federation/CiSO*

Endorsement source	Yes, <i>n</i> (%)	No, <i>n</i> (%)	Valid <i>n</i>
Ministry of Education	35 (40.2%)	52 (59.8%)	87
Federation or CiSO	47 (52.2%)	43 (47.8%)	90

Note. Both endorsement items are conditional on a written curriculum being in place ($n = 97$). The valid n differs by item because not every respondent answered both questions: 87 answered the Ministry of Education item and 90 answered the Federation or CiSO item. Each percentage is calculated on its own item's valid n , not on the full 97.

Who Leads and How Instruction Is Delivered

Survey questions: *Who leads chess instruction? How is chess instruction typically delivered?*

Instruction is most often shared. Slightly more than half (53%) of programs use both teachers and visiting coaches, 26% rely on teachers only, and 21% on visiting coaches only (Table 16, Figure 13). Table 17 shows the pattern by continent.

Table 16. *Who Leads Chess Instruction?*

Response	<i>n</i>	Valid %	Total %
Teachers only	57	26.0%	23.8%
Visiting coaches only	46	21.0%	19.2%
Both	116	53.0%	48.5%
<i>Note.</i> Valid % based on <i>n</i> = 219. Total % based on <i>N</i> = 239.			

Figure 13. *Who Leads Chess Instruction (n = 219)*

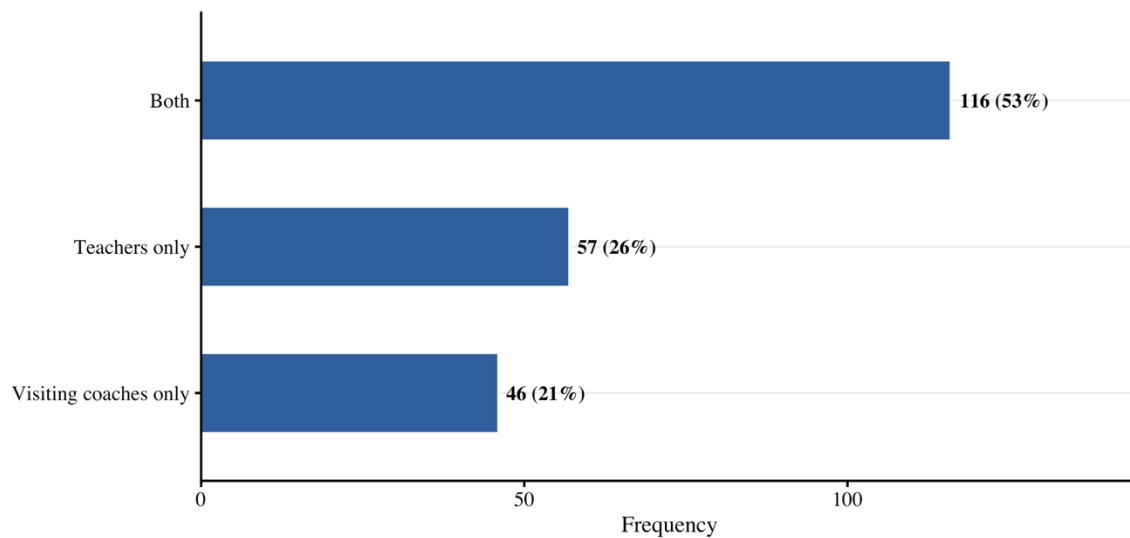


Table 17. Who Leads Instruction by Continent

Continent	Teachers only	Visiting coaches only	Both
Africa	7 (13.7%)	13 (25.5%)	31 (60.8%)
Americas	18 (31.0%)	11 (19.0%)	29 (50.0%)
Asia	16 (23.5%)	18 (26.5%)	34 (50.0%)
Europe	15 (37.5%)	4 (10.0%)	21 (52.5%)
Oceania	1 (50.0%)	0	1 (50.0%)

Delivery is predominantly extracurricular: 46.8% of programs delivering chess only outside the regular timetable, 39.4% use both classroom and extracurricular delivery, and 13.8% are classroom-only (Table 18). Figure 14 shows delivery by continent.

Table 18. How is Chess Instruction Typically Delivered?

Response	<i>n</i>	Valid %	Total %
Classroom only	30	13.8%	12.6%
Extracurricular only	102	46.8%	42.7%
Both	86	39.4%	36.0%

Note. Valid % based on n = 218. Total % based on N = 239.

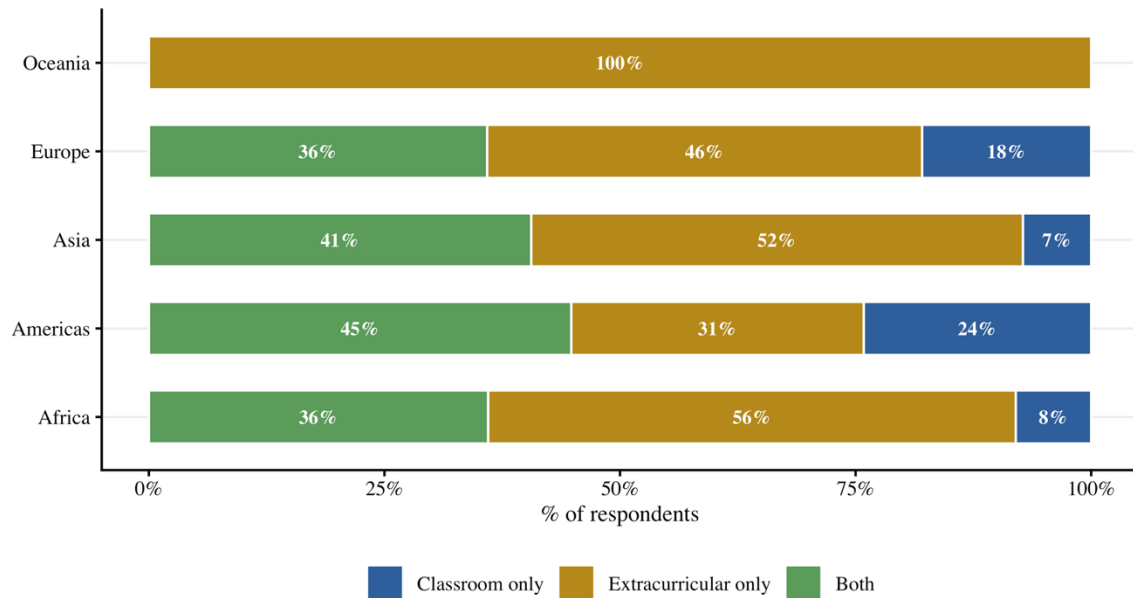
Figure 14. Delivery Mode by Continent

Table 19 is a crosstabulation of leadership with delivery mode. Programs that combine teachers and visiting coaches are the most likely to deliver chess in both settings (49.1%, versus 26.3% of teacher-only and 32.6% of coach-only programs), while classroom-only delivery is uncommon under every leadership model (10.9% to 19.3%).

Table 19. *Who Leads Instruction by Delivery Mode*

Who leads	Classroom only	Extracurricular only	Both
Teachers only	11 (19.3%)	31 (54.4%)	15 (26.3%)
Visiting coaches only	5 (10.9%)	26 (56.5%)	15 (32.6%)
Both	14 (12.3%)	44 (38.6%)	56 (49.1%)

Funding for Chess Activities

Survey question: *Who funds most chess activities in schools?*

Funding is fragmented. Parents are the single most common primary source (31.8%), followed by a combination of sources (23.5%), other arrangements (22.6%), government (13.8%), and sponsors (8.3%) (Table 20, Figure 15). Table 21 shows funding sources by continent.

Table 20. *Who Funds Most Chess Activities in Schools?*

Funding Source	<i>n</i>	Valid %	Total %
Government	30	13.8%	12.6%
Parents	69	31.8%	28.9%
Sponsors	18	8.3%	7.5%
Combination	51	23.5%	21.3%
Other	49	22.6%	20.5%
<i>Note. Valid % based on n = 217. Total % based on N = 239.</i>			

Figure 15. *Primary Funding Source (n = 217)*

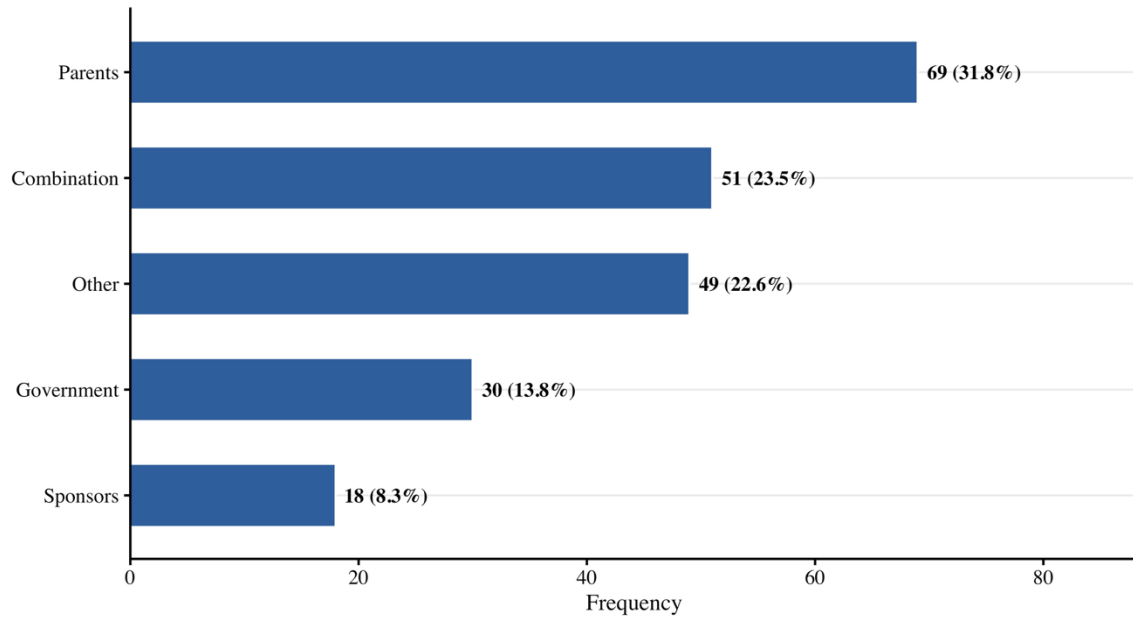


Table 21. *Primary Funding Source by Continent*

Continent	Government	Parents	Sponsors	Combination	Other
Africa	1 (2.0%)	23 (45.1%)	4 (7.8%)	8 (15.7%)	15 (29.4%)
Americas	11 (19.0%)	19 (32.8%)	3 (5.2%)	17 (29.3%)	8 (13.8%)
Asia	10 (14.9%)	13 (19.4%)	11 (16.4%)	15 (22.4%)	18 (26.9%)
Europe	8 (20.5%)	13 (33.3%)	0	10 (25.6%)	8 (20.5%)
Oceania	0	1 (50.0%)	0	1 (50.0%)	0

Community Response to Chess in Schools and Chess Programs

Survey question: *How have stakeholders (parents, teachers, school leaders) responded to chess programs?*

As shown in Table 22, stakeholder reception of chess programs is quite favorable, with 76.8% of respondents reporting very positive responses and only 1.0% reporting negative responses. The pattern holds on every continent: very positive responses range from 71.1% in Africa to 86.1% in Europe, with only a couple of negative responses across the entire sample, and both Oceania respondents were neutral.

Table 22. *Stakeholder Response to Chess Programs*

Response	<i>n</i>	Valid %	Total %
Very positive	152	76.8%	63.6%
Neutral	34	17.2%	14.2%
Negative	2	1.0%	0.8%
Other	10	5.1%	4.2%
<i>Note. Valid % based on n = 198. Total % based on N = 239.</i>			

Perceived Benefits of Chess Programs

Survey question: *What are the main benefits of chess for students?*

Among the $n = 198$ respondents who answered, academic performance was the most frequently selected benefit (88.4%), followed by critical thinking (76.3%), social skills (71.7%), and emotional regulation (71.2%) (Table 23, Figure 16). All four benefits were selected by more than 70% of respondents, suggesting that practitioners see chess as contributing to development broadly rather than to academics alone.

Table 23. *Main Benefits of Chess For Students*

Benefit	<i>n</i> selected	% of respondents
Academic performance	175	88.4%
Critical thinking	151	76.3%
Social skills	142	71.7%
Emotional regulation	141	71.2%
Other	23	11.6%
<i>Note. Multi-select; percentages do not sum to 100%. Base = 198 respondents who selected at least one option.</i>		

Figure 16. Main Benefits of Chess For Students (n = 198)

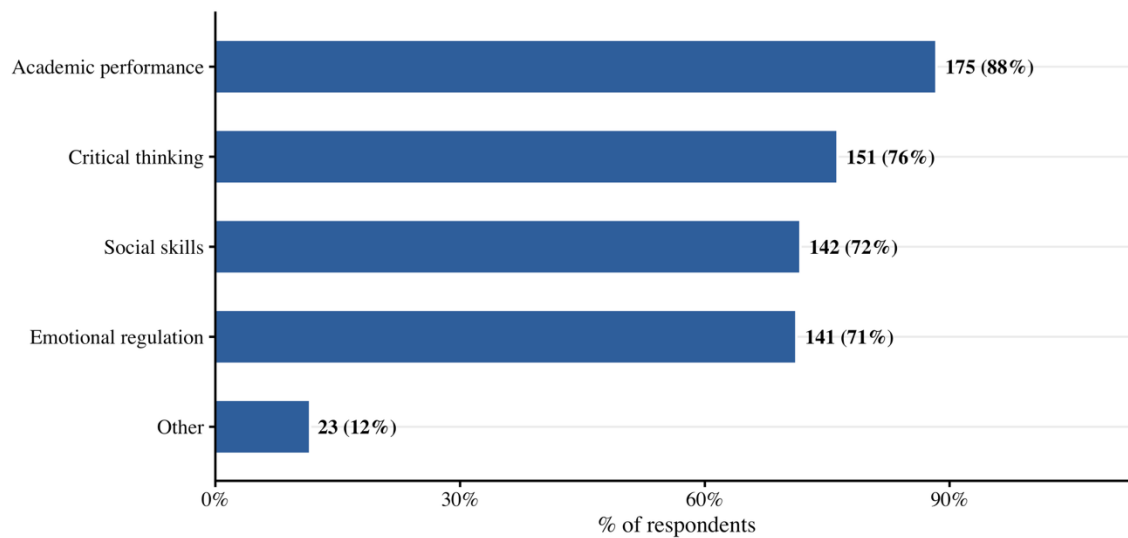


Table 24 breaks each benefit down by continent, revealing several patterns worth noting.

Table 24. Benefits of Chess by Continent (% selecting each option)

Benefit	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania
Critical thinking	69%	56%	66%	61%	50%
Academic performance	73%	69%	73%	80%	100%
Social skills	60%	59%	56%	66%	50%
Emotional regulation	60%	59%	53%	68%	50%
Other	16%	5%	12%	5%	0%

Note. Multi-select item. Values show % of respondents per continent selecting each option. Percentages are based on all respondents in each continent, including those who did not answer the item.

- First, academic performance is the top-ranked benefit in every region: 73% in Africa, 69% in the Americas, 73% in Asia, 80% in Europe, and 100% in Oceania (both respondents). The consistency of this result across very different education systems suggests that the academic case for chess resonates globally and can potentially anchor advocacy efforts everywhere.
- Second, critical thinking shows some regional variation, from 56% in the Americas to 69% in Africa, with Asia at 66% and Europe at 61%. African and Asian respondents place relatively greater emphasis on chess as cognitive training.
- Third, Europe places comparatively greater weight on the social-emotional benefits: social skills (66%) and emotional regulation (68%) are both highest in

Europe. This is consistent with the longer-standing framing of chess in European education policy as a tool for whole-child development.

- Fourth, the “other” category is largest in Africa (16%) and Asia (12%), possibly suggesting respondents in these regions perceive additional benefits, such as discipline or community engagement, beyond the listed options. Oceania percentages rest on two respondents and should not be generalized.

The benefits data show global convergence on the value of chess, with regional differences of emphasis rather than disagreement. This convergence is a strategic asset: the same program can credibly be promoted on academic grounds to ministries, on cognitive grounds to funders, and on social-emotional grounds to parents and school leaders.

Beyond the listed options, 22 respondents (9.2%) wrote in an additional benefit that the standard checklist did not capture.

Cognitive, Academic, And Character Gains. Most of these responses describe cognitive and academic gains: critical thinking, concentration, strategic planning, decision-making, and, among students older than 12, lateral thinking and systems thinking. Several respondents linked these skills directly to school performance, with one reporting that their own internal measurement showed a real, measurable improvement in students' mathematics scores, and another noting that chess specifically helps slow learners keep pace with their classmates. Closely related are responses describing personal traits and character, including confidence, a "winning mentality," patience, discipline, and creativity, along with broader soft skills such as time management, visualization, and professional behavior that respondents see carrying over into how students conduct themselves outside of chess.

Behavior And Effects Beyond Chess. A smaller number of responses described behavior and conduct directly, including one respondent's belief that chess programs are helping reduce youth violence in their country, and another's report that teachers observed genuine behavioral improvement in students who had previously been difficult to manage in class. Other responses point to effects that carry over into other activities: chess-playing students were said to perform better in other sports and to be more willing to try new sports in the first place, along with stronger communication skills as a further spillover effect.

Connection And Opportunity. Some responses highlighted social connection, describing tournaments as a venue where students meet and build relationships with players of different ages, often in new places they would not otherwise visit, broadening their social world beyond their own school or grade level. The remaining responses pointed to money and career opportunities, including scholarships tied to chess achievement and broader employment and career prospects that participation can open up, or simply described chess as fun and engaging, a reason for students to feel a sense of success and to stay actively involved at school.

Barriers to Expanding Chess in Schools

Survey question: *What are the biggest barriers to expanding chess in schools?*

Among the $n = 200$ respondents who answered, lack of funding dominates (79.0%), followed by lack of curriculum (67.0%), lack of trained instructors (66.5%), and low institutional support (41.0%) (Table 25, Figure 17). Table 26 shows each barrier by continent.

Table 25. *Biggest Barriers to Expanding Chess in Schools*

Barrier	n selected	% of respondents
Lack of funding	158	79.0%
Lack of curriculum	134	67.0%
Lack of trained instructors	133	66.5%
Low institutional support	82	41.0%
Other	17	8.5%
<i>Note. Multi-select; percentages do not sum to 100%. Base = 200 respondents.</i>		

Figure 17. *Biggest Barriers to Expanding Chess in Schools ($n = 200$)*

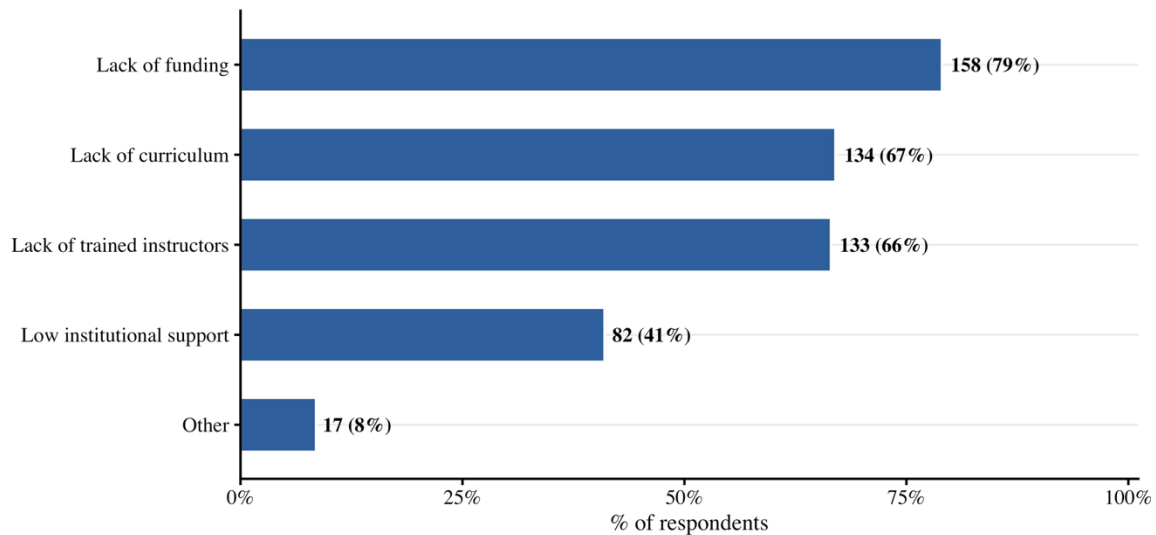


Table 26. Barriers to Expansion by Continent

Barrier	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania
Lack of funding	71%	64%	58%	78%	50%
Lack of trained instructors	51%	56%	60%	54%	50%
Lack of curriculum	62%	50%	53%	61%	100%
Low institutional support	36%	33%	39%	27%	0%
Other	13%	5%	4%	10%	0%
<i>Note. Multi-select item. Percentages are based on all respondents in each continent, including those who did not answer the item.</i>					

Lack of Funding (79.0%)

Funding is the most cited barrier overall, most often in Europe (78%) and Africa (71%), followed by the Americas (64%) and Asia (58%). The prominence of funding in Europe, despite its mature chess infrastructure, indicates that even established programs operate without secure budget lines. The funding data explain why: parents are the most common primary funding source (31.8%) and government funding is rare (13.8%), leaving programs dependent on households and ad hoc arrangements. This funding model constrains access for lower-income students and makes programs vulnerable to single points of failure.

Lack of Curriculum (67.0%)

Curriculum shortages rank second overall and top the list in Oceania (100%, both respondents); Africa (62%) and Europe (61%) follow, with Asia at 53% and the Americas at 50%. This barrier connects directly to the finding that only 42.9% of programs have a written curriculum, and to the finding that 69.2% of respondents want teaching materials and curriculum support from FIDE. The demand is for ready-to-use, adaptable, and translated materials rather than for each program to develop its own.

Lack of Trained Instructors (66.5%)

Instructor shortages are cited by two-thirds of respondents and are the most evenly distributed barrier across regions: Asia (60%), the Americas (56%), Europe (54%), Africa (51%), and Oceania (50%). Combined with the finding that nearly half of programs do not require instructor qualifications, the data point to a global training gap.

Respondents' verbatim descriptions of qualification systems show the range of current practice, from FIDE School Instructor certification to informal reliance on strong players without pedagogical preparation.

Training and professional development is also the single most requested form of FIDE support (80.3%), making this the clearest priority in the entire survey.

Low Institutional Support (41.0%)

Of the four barriers, low institutional support is mentioned least often. Even so, about two in five programs report it. This barrier is reported most often in Asia (39%) and Africa

(36%), and least often in Europe (27%). The endorsement data point in the same direction: even among programs with a written curriculum, only 40.2% have ministry endorsement.

Beyond the listed options, 17 respondents (7.1%) wrote in an additional barrier under the “other” response. Most of these responses point to funding and staffing shortages: a lack of boards, electronic equipment, and instructional materials, insufficient funding to train and support instructors, and a shortage of trained, willing volunteers, along with gaps in curriculum and formal teacher training structures. Several respondents also cited time as a constraint, describing learners with little free time and teachers stretched thin by heavy workloads and competing school activities. The rest point to weak institutional support: limited backing from ministries of education, negative attitudes among some administrators, difficulty securing formal federation recognition, low awareness of chess's educational value among teachers, limited parental involvement, and, in one case, a political and social environment that discourages chess from being played publicly.

Support Most Needed From FIDE

Respondents were asked what support they most needed from FIDE. The support priorities mirror the barriers: training and professional development (80.3%), funding and grants (73.7%), and teaching materials and curriculum (69.2%) lead, followed by recognition and awards (56.1%) and policy advocacy (40.9%) (Table 27, Figure 18). Table 28 shows priorities by continent.

Table 27. *Support Most Needed From FIDE*

Support Type	<i>n</i> selected	% of respondents
Training & professional development	159	80.3%
Funding & grants	146	73.7%
Teaching materials & curriculum	137	69.2%
Recognition & awards	111	56.1%
Policy advocacy	81	40.9%
Other	33	16.7%
<i>Note. Multi-select; percentages do not sum to 100%. Base = 198 respondents.</i>		

Figure 18. *Support Most Needed From FIDE (n = 198)*

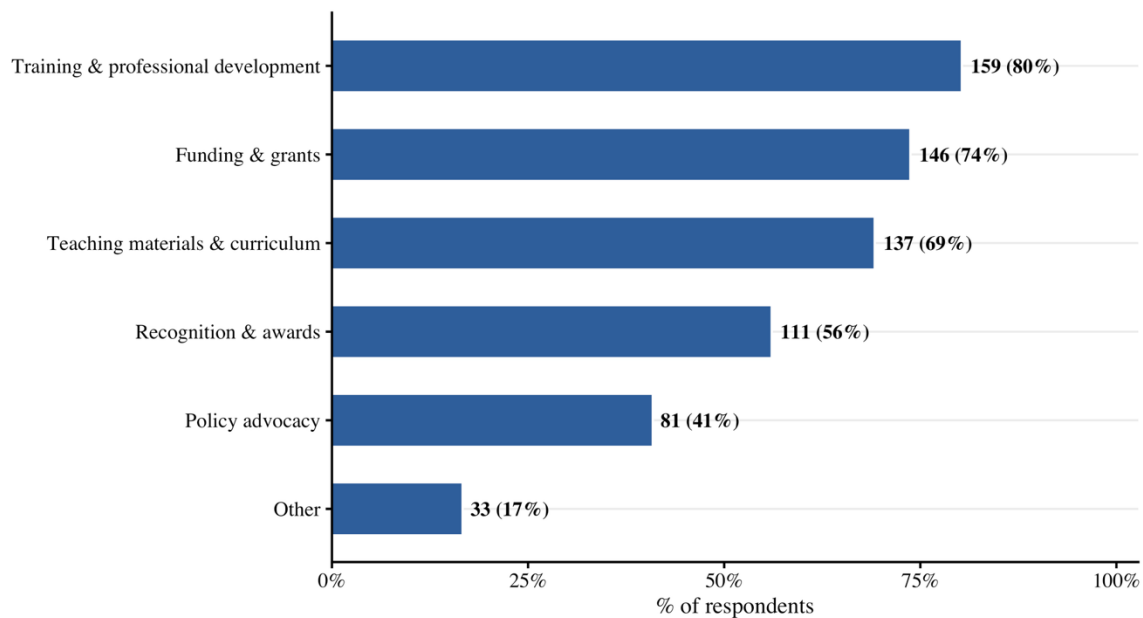


Table 28. FIDE Support Needed by Continent (% selecting each option)

Support Type	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania
Training & professional development	73%	72%	57%	68%	50%
Teaching materials & curriculum	56%	58%	64%	46%	50%
Funding & grants	65%	62%	57%	59%	100%
Policy advocacy	33%	41%	31%	32%	0%
Recognition & awards	53%	52%	40%	44%	0%
Other	11%	8%	21%	15%	0%
<i>Note. Multi-select item. Percentages are based on all respondents in each continent, including those who did not answer the item.</i>					

Promotion of Girls' Participation

Survey question: *Do chess programs actively promote girls' participation?*

Most programs report promoting girls' participation: 33.8% with specific initiatives and 53.5% without specific initiatives, while 12.6% do not (Table 29). Table 30 shows the pattern by continent.

Table 29. Do Chess Programs Actively Promote Girls' Participation?

Response	<i>n</i>	Valid %	Total %
Yes, with specific initiatives	67	33.8%	28.0%
Yes, without specific initiatives	106	53.5%	44.4%
No	25	12.6%	10.5%
<i>Note. Valid % based on n = 198. Total % based on N = 239.</i>			

Table 30. Girls' Participation Promotion by Continent

Continent	Yes, with specific initiatives	Yes, without specific initiatives	No
Africa	19 (42.2%)	24 (53.3%)	2 (4.4%)
Americas	16 (31.4%)	28 (54.9%)	7 (13.7%)
Asia	23 (35.4%)	33 (50.8%)	9 (13.8%)
Europe	9 (25.7%)	19 (54.3%)	7 (20.0%)
Oceania	0	2 (100.0%)	0

Evaluation Systems

Survey question: *Is there a system to evaluate the impact of chess programs?*

Evaluation is the weakest link in program infrastructure: only 15.4% of programs produce formal evaluation reports, 36.4% rely on informal feedback, and 48.2% have no evaluation system (Table 31). Tables 32 through 34 show that evaluation practice tracks integration and formalization: 26.7% of programs with formal evaluation reports are nationally integrated, compared with 2.1% of programs with no evaluation system, and formal reporting rises from 4.1% of fully informal programs to 27.6% of programs with both qualification requirements and a written curriculum.

Table 31. *Is There a System to Evaluate The Impact of Chess Programs?*

Response	<i>n</i>	Valid %	Total %
Yes, formal evaluation reports	30	15.4%	12.6%
Yes, informal feedback only	71	36.4%	29.7%
No evaluation system	94	48.2%	39.3%
<i>Note. Valid % based on n = 195. Total % based on N = 239.</i>			

Table 32. *Evaluation System by Continent*

Continent	Yes, formal evaluation reports	Yes, informal feedback only	No evaluation system
Africa	4 (8.9%)	18 (40.0%)	23 (51.1%)
Americas	3 (6.0%)	24 (48.0%)	23 (46.0%)
Asia	18 (28.1%)	17 (26.6%)	29 (45.3%)
Europe	5 (14.7%)	12 (35.3%)	17 (50.0%)
Oceania	0	0	2 (100.0%)

Table 33. *Evaluation System × Curriculum Integration*

Evaluation System	Yes, nationally	Yes, some regions	No
Yes, formal evaluation reports	8 (26.7%)	8 (26.7%)	14 (46.7%)
Yes, informal feedback only	8 (11.3%)	23 (32.4%)	40 (56.3%)
No evaluation system	2 (2.1%)	20 (21.3%)	72 (76.6%)

Table 34. *Evaluation System × Formalization Profile*

Formalization Profile	Yes, formal evaluation reports	Yes, informal feedback only	No evaluation system
Both	16 (27.6%)	19 (32.8%)	23 (39.7%)
Qualifications only	7 (17.5%)	14 (35.0%)	19 (47.5%)
Curriculum only	3 (14.3%)	9 (42.9%)	9 (42.9%)
Neither	3 (4.1%)	28 (37.8%)	43 (58.1%)

In Respondents' Own Words

Three open-ended questions invited respondents to describe, in their own words, how their programs developed, what they have achieved, and what stands in their way. This section organizes those voices into three complementary lenses. The first traces the journey every program travels, so that readers anywhere in the world can locate their own position and see what the next stage requires. The second describes what success looks like when it arrives. The third names the obstacles that recur on every continent and pairs each obstacle with a place in the data where it has already been overcome.⁴

The Development Journey: From First Move to National Policy

Read together, the development accounts describe programs at very different points along a single road. The specific stories differ, but the milestones recur in the same order: a first club before a training course, a training course before a national calendar, a national calendar before a budget line. Four stages emerge from that regularity, distinguished by one underlying property: how far a program has shifted from depending on particular people to depending on institutions.

The framework is inductive. The stages were not imposed on the data; they were read out of respondents' own accounts and then used to place each country at the stage its respondents described. Of the 100 countries in the survey, 86 gave descriptions detailed enough to classify. Two cautions apply. The stages are not a ranking of merit: a one-teacher club in its first year and a ministry-funded national program are different points on the same road, and the first is often the harder achievement. Nor is progression inevitable. Benin describes a program that reached a standstill after early momentum, and the ladder runs in both directions.

Figure 19 sets out the four stages, the share of classified countries at each, and what moves a program from one stage to the next. Table 35 gives the full defining features and lists every country at every stage.

⁴ Quotations have been lightly edited for spelling and grammar; meaning has been preserved throughout.

Figure 19. *The Four-Stage Framework of Chess Program Development*

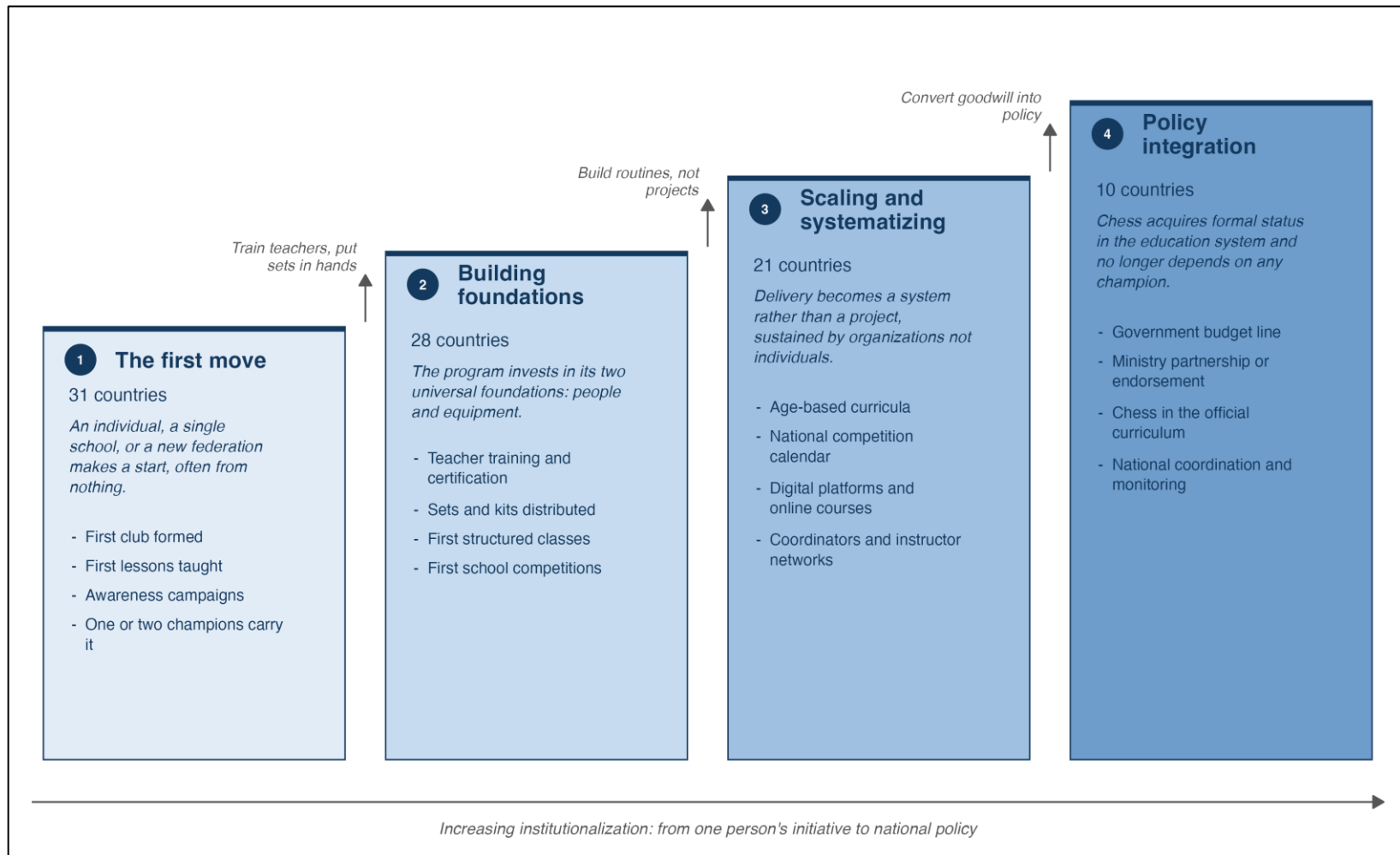


Table 35. The Four-Stage Framework at a Glance

Stage	Defining features and markers	Countries at this stage
1. The first move (31 countries)	An individual teacher, a single school, or a newly founded federation makes a start, often from nothing. Typical markers: a first club is formed, first lessons are taught, awareness campaigns begin, or a launch is still being planned. Activity depends on one or a few committed champions; there are no formal structures, trained instructor corps, or dedicated resources yet.	Algeria, Angola, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Croatia, Dominican Republic, DR Congo, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, Iraq, Jamaica, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Niger, Paraguay, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Vietnam
2. Building foundations (28 countries)	The program invests in its two universal foundations: people and equipment. Typical markers: teacher training and certification courses begin, chess sets and kits are distributed to schools, the first structured classes with assessment appear, and first school competitions are organized. Reach grows, but delivery is still project-based and vulnerable to the loss of key individuals or funding.	Albania*, Bahamas*, Barbados, Benin, Bermuda*, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala*, Guyana, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mongolia*, Morocco*, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan*, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Singapore*, South Africa*, South Korea, Tunisia, US Virgin Islands, Zimbabwe
3. Scaling and systematizing (21 countries)	Delivery becomes a system rather than a project. Typical markers: structured or age-based curricula, regular regional and national school competitions, digital platforms and online teacher courses, provincial coordinators, and networks of certified instructors. The program is sustained by organizations and routines rather than by individuals, but still lacks formal government status.	Argentina, Costa Rica*, Cyprus, Estonia, France*, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Oman, San Marino, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom*, United States
4. Policy integration (10 countries)	Chess acquires formal status in the education system. Typical markers: a dedicated government budget line, a formal ministry partnership or endorsement, chess as a mandatory or elective subject in the official curriculum, accredited teacher courses, and national coordination and monitoring. The program no longer depends on any single champion.	Andorra, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan*, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Romania, Spain*, Turkey, Uruguay

Note. Classification is based on respondents' own open-ended descriptions of how their programs developed, supplemented by their reported achievements where those descriptions were brief. Where multiple respondents from the same country described different stages, the country is placed at the most advanced stage described. One country (Morocco) gave a response too brief to classify and is omitted; Solomon Islands described only challenges and is not classified. The remaining unclassified countries did

not provide open-ended descriptions detailed enough to place. Stage placement reflects what respondents reported (except where marked with an asterisk); it is not an independent audit of national policy.

**Country has been re-classified based on knowledge of the country's chess program activities by FIDE officials.*

Stage 1: The first move. A substantial share of the global movement is powered by individual initiative. Burkina Faso captures the starting point:

"The Federation was founded in June 2024; before that there was nothing. In 2024-2025 we brought training to ten educational centers, of which eight sent teams to the national final."

-Burkina Faso

Others begin at a single school:

"I have formed and spearheaded a chess club at my school."

-Bahamas

"Not much, just introduced it in my school."

-Botswana

Stage 2: Building foundations. The second stage is defined by two investments that appear together on every continent: training teachers and putting equipment in children's hands. Egypt describes FIDE-affiliated teacher certification courses, free chess sets distributed to schools, and instructors assigned to follow up, and Argentina pairs instructor training with provincial coordination:

"An educational chess coordinator in each province."

-Argentina

The survey's largest-scale example of the equipment strategy comes from India, whose kit program helped power its climb to Stage 3:

"With the help of sponsors, we have been presenting tournament-class chess kits to government schools in our state of Tamil Nadu. Started in 2022, we have presented 12,048 kits as of 10 November 2025, spread across about 1,250 schools."

-India

Oman, now sustaining a Stage 3 system, shows what a fully supported foundation looks like: free courses, free tournaments, free materials, free chess sets, free ChessKid accounts, and

"A team of chess players and pedagogues who help the teachers anytime they need."
-Oman

Stage 3: Scaling and systematizing. Programs at the third stage shift from delivering lessons to building systems. Sweden anchors its school program in two national competitions and teacher courses offered online several times a year, and Turkey reports growth

"Through elective school courses, nationwide school tournaments, teacher training initiatives, and increased use of online learning platforms."
-Turkey

The United Arab Emirates describes age-based curricula, specialist instructors, and inter-school tournaments that position chess as

"Both an educational enrichment tool and a structured learning activity aligned with school objectives."
-United Arab Emirates

Stage 4: Policy integration. A small but instructive group of countries has crossed into formal policy. Uruguay describes a standing public policy program, Chess for Coexistence, in which every participating teacher receives a complete teaching kit, a training course, a year-round specialized pedagogical advisor, and fully financed student activities. Albania reports a dedicated government budget for a five-city pilot that makes chess the third sport in the national School Sports Teams Programme, alongside volleyball and basketball. Georgia has gone furthest:

"Chess has become a mandatory subject in Georgian schools in the first and second grades since 2022."
-Georgia

The ladder runs in both directions. Benin offers a caution about slipping backward:

"We made great efforts teaching chess, but we have come to a standstill. It became difficult to renew equipment as it deteriorated, and we could no longer maintain the initial motivation of parents."
-Benin

Sustaining a program, not launching it, is the harder problem.

What Success Looks Like: Five Dimensions of Achievement

Reported achievements fall into five dimensions. Together they suggest a balanced scorecard against which any program, at any stage, can measure itself.

Learning outcomes. The most frequently claimed achievement is improved academic performance.

“Students have gone from marks such as 8/20 to 19/20-20/20.”

-Trinidad and Tobago

“Three cities confirmed that students who had been engaged in chess-in-schools projects scored high grades in the national exam, and most are girls.”

-Ethiopia

“Notable gains in literacy and improvement in mathematics.”

-Argentina

Wellbeing and school climate. A quieter but recurring theme is behavioral and emotional change, reported by two Argentine respondents and a Guyanese teacher:

“School violence, bullying, and conflict situations among students have decreased.”

-Argentina

“An improvement in children’s management of anxiety.”

-Argentina

“Students with no interest are now enthusiastic about chess; the stigma of chess being boring and hard is slowly fading.”

-Guyana

Scale and reach. Several countries report reach that would have seemed implausible a decade ago. Oman counts 5,000 teachers trained, 614 partnerships with educational institutions, and 784 active teachers in every county of the country; Kosovo reports 16 primary schools and 1,125 students in the program’s first phase.

“Chess is now in one in four primary schools, with 17,500 students playing at least one friendly match against other schools.”

-Ireland

“In Bremen, every kid in grade 2 plays chess.”

-Germany

Institutional recognition. Formal recognition converts goodwill into durability. Bermuda reports 22 certified School Instructors, joint integration with the Department of Education, and

“\$20,000 placed in the Bermuda education budget for chess.”

-Bermuda

Costa Rica and the United States both report FIDE Gold School Awards; the American school, the first in the country to receive the honor, leveraged the attention to establish a middle-school chess elective.

Inclusion and equity. Some of the most striking achievements concern who chess reaches.

“Introducing chess to ghetto kids, most of whom cannot afford formal school; chess has become their alternative to formal education.”

-Uganda

“One of India’s first girls-led, community-based chess education programs, enrolling more than 80 girls and using a girls-teaching-girls model to normalize female leadership.”

-India

“ChessConnect has launched clubs where none existed and helped integrate different nationalities living in the country.”

-Estonia

One further finding deserves attention precisely because it is not an achievement. Several respondents answered with candor rather than claims:

“No research was conducted.”

-Croatia

“We have no monitoring methods in this respect.”

-Hungary

“No control study has been carried out comparing students who do not receive chess.”

-Andorra

This honesty corroborates the finding that 48.2% of programs have no evaluation system, and it marks the boundary between what the field believes and what it can currently prove.

The Common Walls: Six Recurring Challenges, and Where They Have Been Breached

Whatever their starting point, respondents describe the same challenges. Six of these show up on every continent. But none of them are unsolvable. For each one, the survey includes at least one program that found a way past it. Matching each problem with a real example of a solution turns this from a list of complaints into a roadmap.

Money. Funding is the wall mentioned most often and most painfully. Egypt's account is the most powerful in the survey. With roughly 15 million primary students, class sizes of 50 or more, and ministerial approval already secured, the respondent writes:

"We have a great dream to use chess to help a whole generation grow, but this dream is stuck because of a lack of money and the huge number of students we need to reach."

-Egypt

"We have the official plan and ministerial approval, but we are painfully stuck at the starting line because the essential funding is missing."

-Egypt

The wall also stands in wealthy systems and small ones alike:

"I teach chess lessons, but I don't get paid for them."

-Finland

"Find the necessary funding for implementation, as well as convince the educational community of its usefulness and possible benefits."

-Andorra

"Lack of financial support, travel costs, equipment, lack of support from schools."

-Solomon Islands

Where it has been breached: Albania secured a dedicated government budget by attaching chess to an existing national school sports program; Bermuda converted advocacy into a \$20,000 line in the national education budget; Uruguay's program finances teacher kits, advisors, and even transportation and meals for participating children.

People. The instructor shortage is the most evenly distributed challenge in the dataset. Argentina names both the need and the goal: teacher training and a National Educational Chess Law.

“Good chess players are not always good teachers, and good teachers do not always have enough chess knowledge.”

-Israel

“Teachers are usually overloaded; if they want to earn a reasonable salary, they take on many classes.”

-Latvia

“Programs often depend on one person to run them.”

-United States

Where it has been breached: Oman has trained 5,000 teachers, most of whom are not chess players, and supports them with an on-call team of players and pedagogues; Romania offers its first accredited teacher course free of charge; Bermuda built a 22-instructor certified corps on a small island.

Time. Even willing schools struggle to find room in the timetable. A Costa Rican teacher has only 40 minutes per week; Georgia’s respondent cites one hour per week.

“Time is the biggest concern; allotting time amidst subject teaching is difficult.”

-India

Where it has been breached: Georgia resolved the timetable question at the policy level by making chess a mandatory subject in grades 1 and 2; the American Gold School converted media recognition into a scheduled middle-school elective.

Materials. Equipment scarcity is most acute in lower-income settings but not confined to them:

“No trainers and no chessboards.”

-India

“No equipment.”

-Botswana

“Limited chess sets, inadequate finance for logistics.”

-Kenya

“Limited chess equipment.”

-United Kingdom

Albania adds a procedural dimension: even where budgets exist,

“The complexity of public procurement procedures and the limited availability of FIDE-approved materials on the local market.”

-Albania

Where it has been breached: sponsor-funded distribution at scale in Tamil Nadu (12,048 kits to about 1,250 schools); donated sets through Gift of Chess in Bermuda (400 sets); Latvia’s federation supplying equipment and chess books to proactive schools.

Minds. Perception is a wall of its own (among parents, teachers, society, and sometimes the ministry itself).

“Parents consider it a time-killing game and a gambling game, so they refuse to let the children play.”

-Ethiopia

“Convince parents that chess contributes to their child’s development.”

-Benin

“Chess is seen as not useful/important.”

-New Zealand

“It is a struggle to get teachers involved, as they see it as more work.”

-Trinidad and Tobago

“New initiatives are often difficult for society to accept, and trust is built gradually over time.”

-Armenia

“Lack of endorsement from the Ministry of Education.”

-China

Where it has been breached: evidence changes minds. Ethiopia’s own report that chess-playing students, most of them girls, scored high grades in national exams is the kind of result that reframes the game for parents, and the Maldives now reports:

“Many parents think children should learn chess, which is very good for their growth.”

-Maldives

Distance. Finally, geography and language quietly determine who gets access. An Indian respondent describes the practical difficulty of transporting village students to tournaments.

“Not every learner can read or write in English.”

-Namibia

“Uneven access to resources between urban and rural schools.”

-Kyrgyzstan

Where it has been breached: India’s girls-led program runs online workshops reaching students across different states; Sweden’s yes2chess competition is played online; Kyrgyzstan itself reports growing use of online platforms to reach schools its coaches cannot.

A Shared Global Story

Programs begin with an individual’s first move; they grow by training teachers and distributing equipment; they mature by building curricula, competitions, and digital systems; and a few cross into national policy. Everywhere in the world, chess programs run into the same problems: not enough money, people, time, equipment, support, or reach. But the survey shows that somewhere, every one of these problems has already been solved — Albania found government funding, Oman trained 5,000 teachers, Georgia made chess part of the official school schedule. So, FIDE's job isn't to invent new solutions. It involves taking what is already working in one country and help other countries copy it.

Interpretation and Recommendations

Six themes emerge from the 2026 data. First, chess education is genuinely global, but formalization is uneven: 31.9% of programs have both qualification requirements and a written curriculum, while 36.7% have neither.

Second, geographic patterns are mixed rather than Europe-led: Asia shows the highest qualification requirement (65.3%) and integration (42.0%) rates, the Americas lead software adoption (71.9%), and Europe reports the highest funding pressure (78%) alongside the strongest emphasis on social-emotional benefits.

Third, the instructor pipeline is the system-wide bottleneck, cited as a barrier by 66.5% of respondents and named as the top support need (80.3%).

Fourth, funding models are fragile, resting primarily on parents (31.8%) rather than governments (13.8%).

Fifth, evaluation capacity lags well behind: 48.2% of programs have no evaluation system in place at all, which weakens the case for the institutional support the field needs.

Sixth, the trajectory since 2021 is one of growth on a broadened base. Estimated participation rose from about 25.6 million to about 29.6 million, with the increase falling almost entirely outside India and China, and 13 of the 20 countries new to the survey are in Africa. This total is not a census and depends on which entities responded, so it is best treated as evidence of wider reach rather than a precise count of children served. At the same time, the evidence base shifted from mainly federations to schools, as national federations fell from 68.9% to 36.8% of respondents while schools rose from 11.2% to 35.6%, so the 2026 picture likely reflects on-the-ground provision more directly. This trajectory argues for directing support toward emerging regions rather than only the largest programs, and it frames the gaps identified above as a case of provision scaling ahead of the systems meant to support it.

Recommendations for FIDE and National Federations

- Prioritize instructor training globally; scale multilingual, low-cost training and certification pathways, especially in Africa, the Americas, and Asia, where qualification requirements are least common.
- Publish open-license model curricula with translation and localization support, addressing the 67% of respondents citing curriculum shortages and the 69.2% requesting materials from FIDE.
- Encourage programs to develop and implement simple, standard evaluations so that even programs without formal systems (48.2%) can generate credible evidence of impact.
- Target policy advocacy where integration momentum already exists, using Asia (42% any integration) and the Americas (41.3%) as reference cases for ministries elsewhere.
- Leverage the near-universal academic-benefit consensus (88.4% overall; top benefit on every continent) as the common anchor for advocacy, tailored regionally toward cognitive framing in Africa and Asia, and social-emotional framing in Europe.
- Strengthen girls' participation by converting general encouragement (53.5% without specific initiatives) into structured initiatives, sharing models from the 33.8% of programs that have them.
- Repeat the survey on a regular cycle with strengthened administrative data collection so that trend estimates rest less on personal estimates (73.6%).

Conclusion

The 2026 FIDE Global Chess in Schools Survey gives a picture of chess in schools around the world. Its 239 respondents in 100 countries describe programs that reach children in every region. The response from stakeholders is very positive, and respondents value chess for much the same reasons everywhere: academic, cognitive, social, and emotional development.

Compared with the 2021 baseline, the field is growing. Estimated participation is higher, the growth sits outside the two largest national programs, and the evidence base now reaches schools directly rather than mainly federations. That growth, however, has outpaced the systems meant to support it: curriculum, instructor qualification, and evaluation remain uneven, as the results above show. The direction of travel is upward, but the numbers rest largely on informed estimates (73.6% of 2026 figures), so they are best read as directional rather than exact.

The same data show what holds these programs back. Most run without secure funding, without a written or endorsed curriculum, without any required qualification for instructors, and without a way to measure results. The barriers respondents identified are the same things they ask FIDE for: training, materials, and funding.

Set against the four-stage framework, most countries are near the start of the road. Of the 86 countries whose stage could be identified, 36 are still making their first move and 12 have reached policy integration.

What needs to happen next is clear, and the evidence for it is in this report: build the instructor pipeline, establish adaptable curricula, make funding steady, standardize evaluation, and turn widespread goodwill into a settled place in school systems. This report also sets the baseline for measuring that progress.

References

Hall, J., & Nash, J. (2021). *FIDE-ECU chess in schools survey report*. International Chess Federation & European Chess Union. <https://chessineducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FIDE-ECU-Survey-Final-Report-rev.pdf>

Appendix A: Country-Level Tables

The following tables group countries by their survey responses on key program indicators. Countries with mixed responses are marked with an asterisk (*).

Table A1. Countries by Instructor Qualification Requirement

Status	Countries
Qualifications required (69 countries)	Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola*, Argentina*, Armenia, Bermuda, Bolivia, Brazil*, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, China, Colombia*, Costa Rica*, Croatia*, Czech Republic, Ecuador*, Egypt*, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guatemala, Guyana*, Hungary*, India*, Indonesia, Iraq*, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Kosovo, Latvia, Libya, Malaysia*, Mali, Mexico*, Moldova, Mongolia*, Morocco, Mozambique*, Namibia*, Niger, Nigeria*, North Macedonia, Oman*, Pakistan*, Paraguay, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal*, Serbia, South Africa*, South Korea, Spain*, Sri Lanka*, Suriname, Tunisia, Turkey*, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom*, United States*, Uruguay, Vietnam, Zimbabwe*
Qualifications not required (30 countries)	Bahamas, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, DR Congo, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritania, New Zealand, Romania, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, US Virgin Islands
<i>Note. Required = at least one respondent from the country reported that instructor qualifications are required. Countries marked with an asterisk (*) had mixed responses (other respondents from the same country reported no requirement). Based on the 99 countries with at least one response to this item.</i>	

Table A2. Countries by Software Use

Status	Countries
Software used (70 countries)	Algeria, Andorra, Argentina*, Armenia, Bahamas*, Barbados*, Bermuda, Bolivia*, Brazil*, Burundi, Cameroon, China, Colombia*, Costa Rica*, Croatia*, Cyprus, Czech Republic, DR Congo, Ecuador*, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana*, Hungary*, Iceland, India*, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan*, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia*, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique*, Namibia*, Nigeria*, North Macedonia, Oman*, Paraguay, Philippines*, Puerto Rico, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, South Africa*, South Korea, Spain*, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey*, Uganda*, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom*, United States*, Uruguay, Vietnam, Zimbabwe*
Software not used (30 countries)	Albania, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, France, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Moldova, New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Portugal, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, US Virgin Islands
<i>Note. Software used = at least one respondent from the country reported using software in teaching chess. Countries marked with an asterisk (*) had mixed responses (respondents from the same country answered differently). Based on the 100 countries with at least one response to this item.</i>	

Table A3. Countries by Written Curriculum Status

Status	Countries
Written curriculum in place (54 countries)	Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola*, Argentina*, Armenia, Bahamas*, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil*, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia*, Costa Rica*, Croatia*, Dominican Republic, Ecuador*, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany*, Guatemala, Guyana*, Hungary*, Iceland, India*, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Japan*, Kenya*, Kosovo, Libya, Malaysia*, Mali, Mexico*, Mozambique*, Nigeria*, North Macedonia, Oman*, Paraguay, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal*, South Africa*, South Korea, Spain*, Sri Lanka*, Tunisia*, Turkey*, United Arab Emirates, United States*, Uruguay, Zimbabwe*
No written curriculum (44 countries)	Barbados, Bermuda, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cyprus, Czech Republic, DR Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Malawi, Maldives, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, US Virgin Islands, Uganda, United Kingdom, Vietnam
<i>Note. Written curriculum in place = at least one respondent from the country reported a written curriculum. Countries marked with an asterisk (*) had mixed responses (respondents from the same country answered differently). Based on the 98 countries with at least one response to this item.</i>	

Table A4. Countries by Curriculum Endorsement

Status	Countries
Ministry endorsement (27 countries)	Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Bolivia*, Brazil*, Croatia, Ecuador*, Georgia, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary*, India*, Kenya, Kosovo, Mali, North Macedonia, Oman, Paraguay, Romania, Senegal, South Korea*, Spain*, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Uruguay
No ministry endorsement (26 countries)	Algeria, Bahamas, Benin, Cameroon, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United States, Zimbabwe
Federation/CiSO endorsement (39 countries)	Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Bahamas, Bolivia*, Brazil*, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica*, Croatia, Ecuador*, Georgia, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary*, Iceland, India*, Indonesia, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Kosovo, Malaysia, Mali, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Oman, Paraguay, Romania, Senegal, Spain*, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Arab Emirates*, Uruguay, Zimbabwe
No federation/CiSO endorsement (14 countries)	Benin, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, South Korea, Tunisia, United States
<i>Note. Endorsement = at least one respondent from the country reported the endorsement. Countries marked with an asterisk (*) had mixed responses (respondents from the same country answered differently). Conditional on a written curriculum being in place; based on the 53 countries with at least one response to these items.</i>	