

Implementation practice, quality of service delivery and sustainable finance opportunities for Grassroots Sports
(to promote health, social inclusion and cohesion)

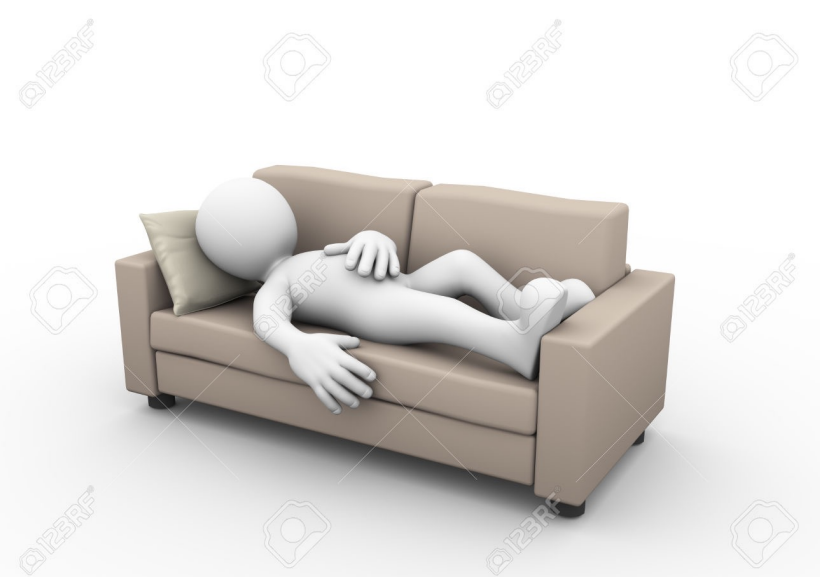
Research report, Christian Thibault et.al.
, 2021



GRASSROOTS SPORTS FOR EQUAL SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

LIKKUKAA – SPORTS FOR ALL





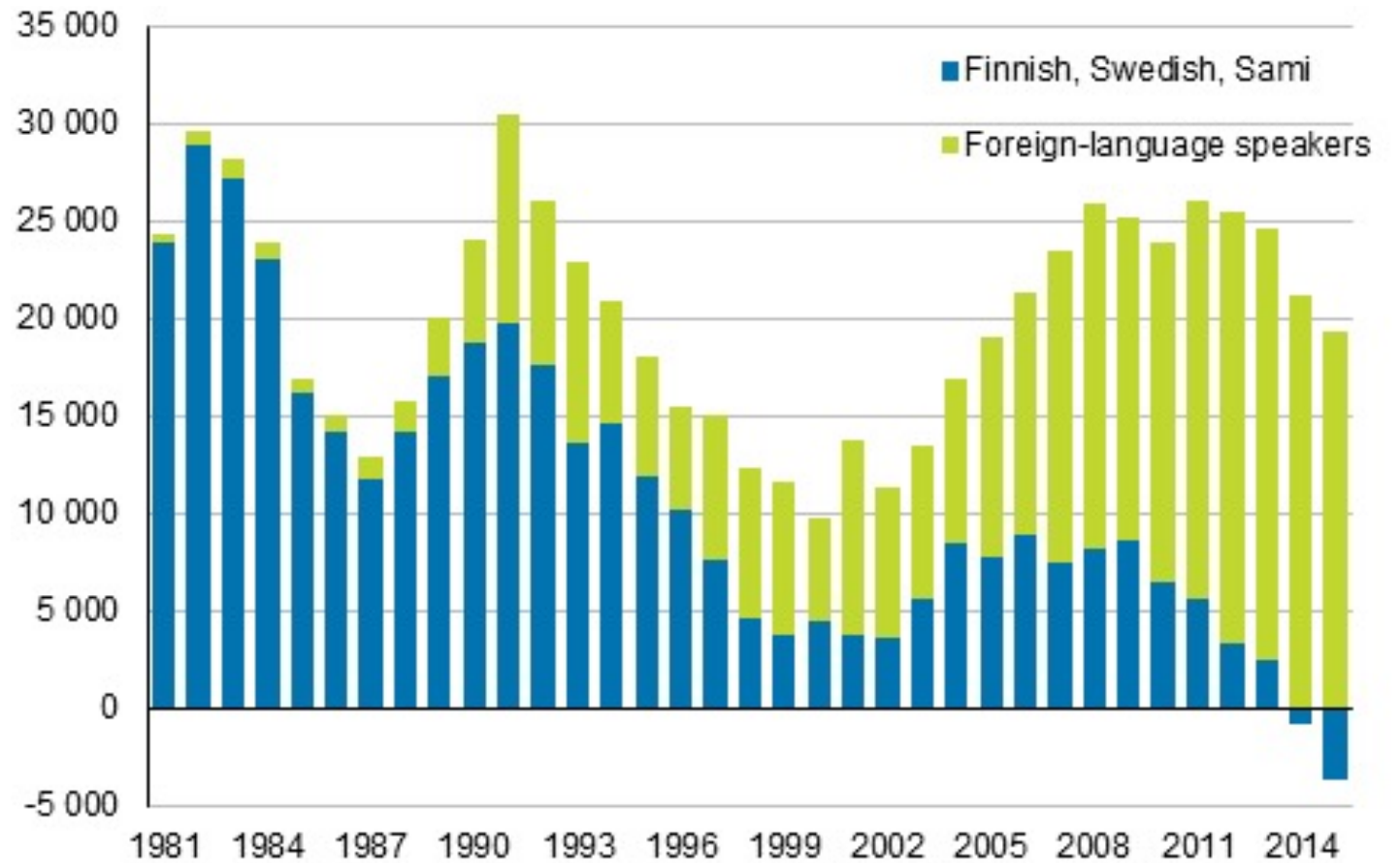
Background

- The **European Commission** received a report (Baumann and Cardoso 2016) of its high level group stating that although the **enormous benefits of grassroots sport**, defined as regular physical activities for social and health reasons are well known, *(in order to promote public social cohesion, to prevent crime and to achieve substantial savings in the public health sector)* no large scale and sustainable **concept** has been developed.
- President of Finland, **Sauli Niinistö** has repeatedly and most recently on August 24th 2016 expressed his concern about the *lack of social cohesion in Finland*.

Topic of interest and research questions

- *The topic of the research is sports as a promoter of health, social inclusion and social cohesion and how effective concepts can be developed and marketed.*
- Q1: What is the level of satisfaction with services and opportunities provided in grassroots sport and what is the level of understanding with decision makers?
- Q2: How can the best practices in Grassroots Sports be promoted on a large scale and what have been the obstacles for implementing effective Grassroots Sports programs at a large scale?
- Q3: How can (a) marketable concept(s) be developed to gain sustainable financing for promoting social cohesion through sports?

Population growth, Finland



Aims and objectives

- to identify existing service quality, obstacles and possibilities for a sustainable grassroots sport concept on the large scale
- To explore the benefits and obstacles to sustainable, inclusive and integrative grassroots sports
- To develop concepts and identify agents to implement grassroots sports on large scale

Data, resources and methodology

- Secondary data was used in order to confirm the findings in the interviews and surveys
- As the data from the different resources is corresponding, it was possible to make reliable conclusions.
- The research has been supported by qualified volunteers and Liikkukaa – Sports For All.

Data analyzes

- ***Quantitative and secondary data:***

Descriptive statistics (percentages, means and distributions) were used to investigate RQ1. (Saunders M. and Lewis P. Doing research for business & management 2012 p. 168.)

- Quantitative and secondary data has been used in order to validate primary and qualitative data.

Qualitative interview data:

A qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data (Saunders M. and Lewis P. 2012 Doing research in management & business p. 187).

- coding and using categories for the analyses has supported the comparability of the results.

Data analyses

- Analyses of interviews and qualitative survey by coding the answers and addressing to relevant categories and subcategories:
- 1) Obstacles and challenges, 2) minorities, 3) electronic tools and private enterprise, 4) possibilities, 5) sustainability, 6) recommendations, 7) representation, 8) social cohesion, 9) health, 10) projects and concepts, 11) facilities, 12) quality and standards.
- Sub-categories filtered into 3 main categories: Motivation, Structures and Resources.

Validity and reliability

- Data which had been **repeated by several interviewees and validated by the survey results and secondary data.**
- **Survey participants had been randomized** and the research structure followed Saunders M. and Lewis P. 'Doing research in business & management' (2012).
- Same results have been found by **previous research:** (Elling A., De Knop P. and Knoppers A., 2001) as well as (Warburton D., Whitney C., Shannon N., Bredin S., 2006) and (Slofstra P., 2013)
- Same results as **governmental expert groups:** (*ETNO thesis on young peoples leisure activities, 2014*) and (Baumann W. and Cardoso C., 2016. Report to Commissioner Tibor Navracsics , 'Grassroots Sport - Shaping Europe')

Meeting aims and objectives

- The research was able to identify existing service quality, obstacles and possibilities for a sustainable grassroots sport concept on the large scale and to make recommendations in order to promote public social cohesion, to prevent crime and to achieve substantial savings in the public health sector through grassroots sport.

Data, resources and methodology: Survey

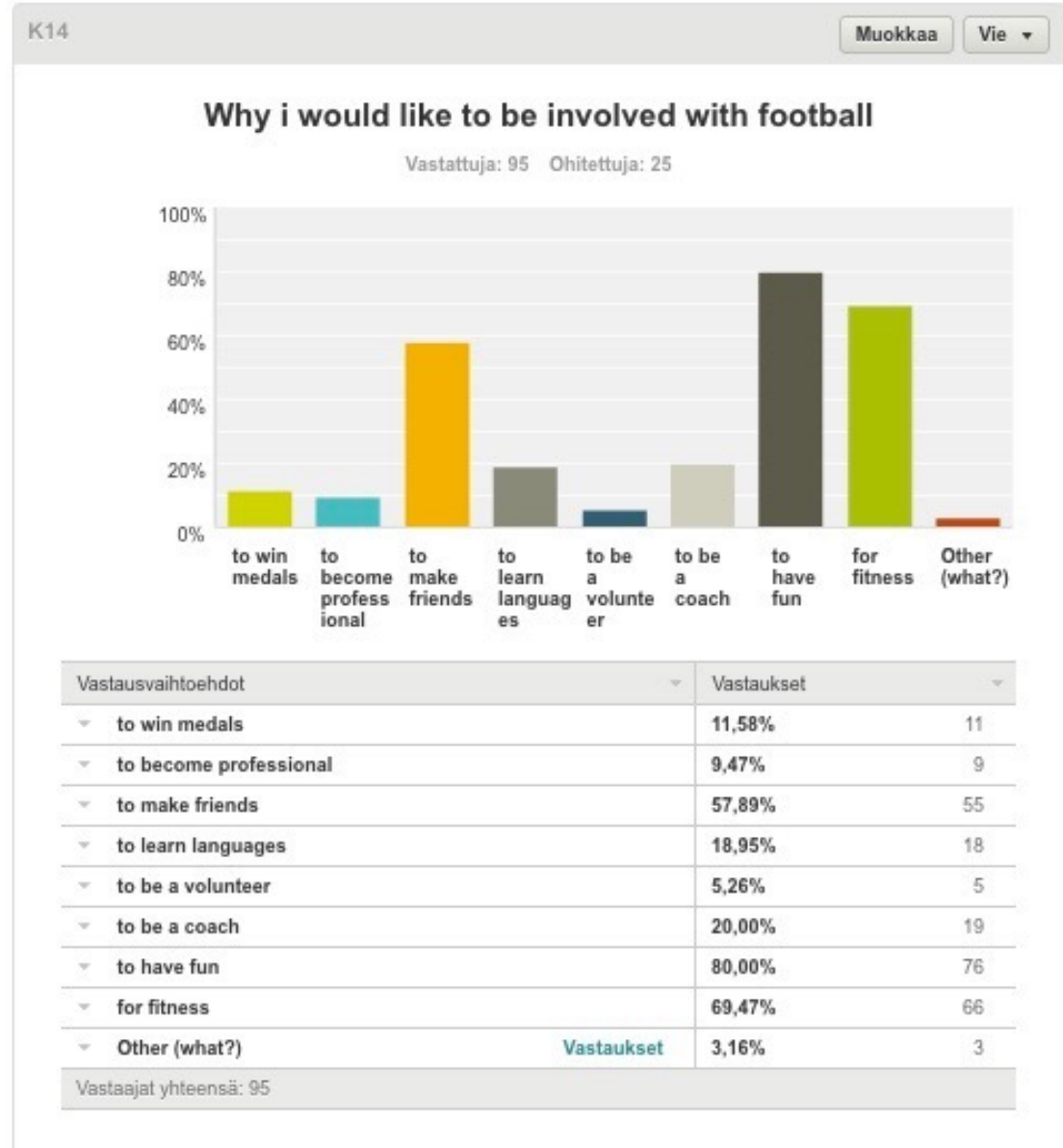
- Structured online survey focusing on customer satisfaction, 120 participants, 16 (*yes/no, open-ended and multiple choice*) questions:
 - -Expectations
 - - Level of satisfaction
 - - Customers suggestions for improvement
 - - Customers attitude towards competing suppliers
 - - Customers motives and attitude towards the product/service
- *Survey focusing on football, leaving space to comment on other sports, some results rather un-expected*

Data and findings: Survey

- participants over the age of 20 (except 4) and 67.5% of them live in the Finnish capital region.
- 62.2% male, 37.8% female.
- 60.5% of the responders play football weekly or at least sometimes. 19.3% are not interested in football, 20.2% prefer other sports and hobbies, ice hockey

Data and findings: Survey/Motivation

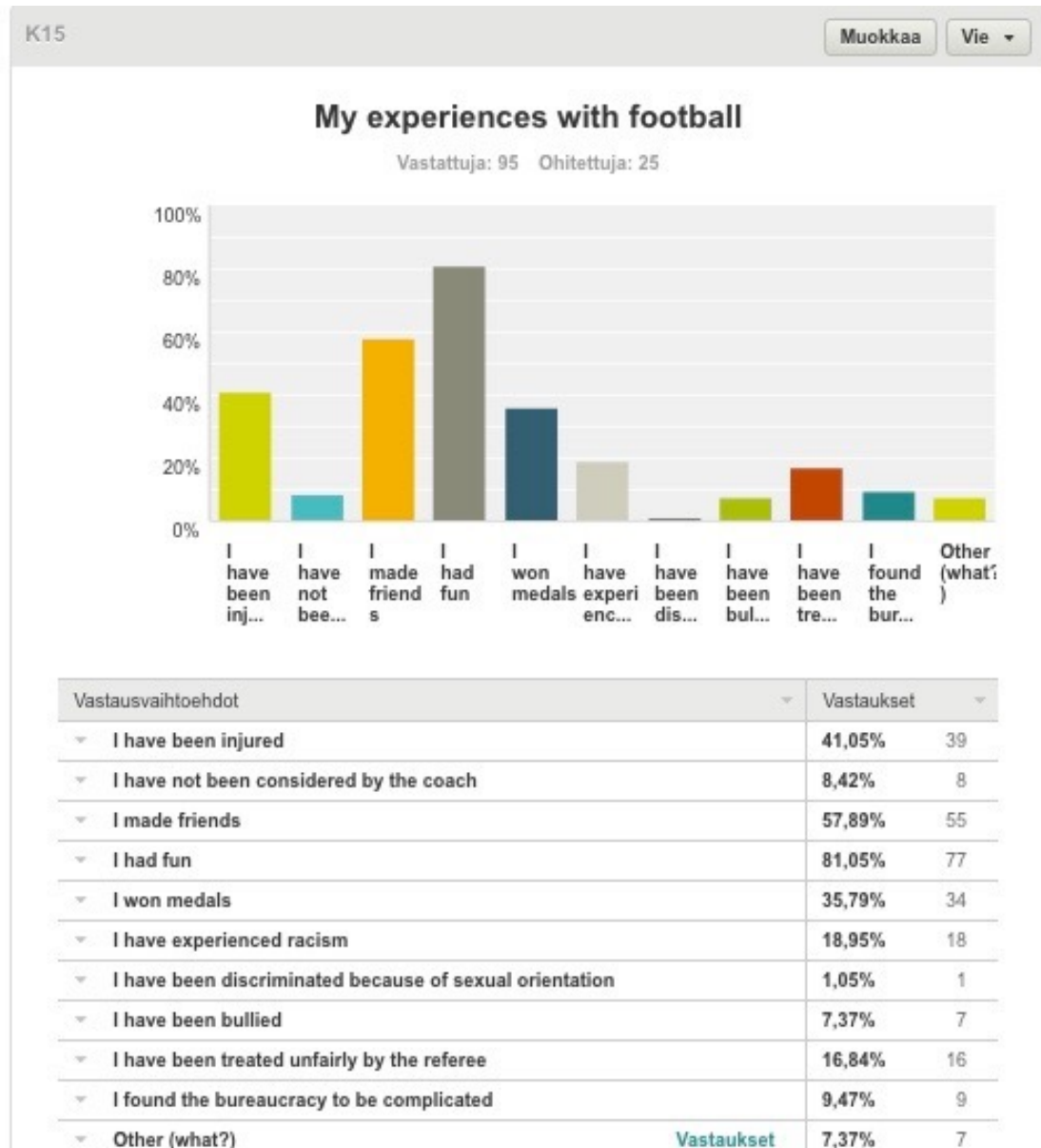
- The 3 main reasons for playing football are:
- to have fun (80%)
- to increase or maintain fitness (69,47)
- to make friends (57,89%)
- to be a coach (20%)
- learning languages (18,95%).
- only 5,26% are ready to volunteer!!!



Data and findings: Survey/Satisfaction

- fun (80% to 81,05%) and making friends (57,89% to 57,89) have been achieved slightly over the expectations.

- An interesting fact is that while only 11.58% expected to win medals, 35,79% of the responders had actually received



Data and findings: Survey/Challenges

- 96.5% of the responders play football during summers, but only 42.7% at winter.
- The biggest concern in football is the high amount of injuries. 41.05% of the responders have been injured in football. In the commentary sections the poor condition of the fields and facilities is repeatedly blamed for injuries.
- The availability and condition of facilities has also been a major concern for the interviewees and had been mentioned repeatedly.
- **Responders comment:** *“Hate the fact there is limited grass pitches also the 3G pitches should be watered before playing a game as when it is dry there is the risk of burns and I dislocated my shoulder as the dry rubber gripped body when I was tackled”*
- *“You forget all your problems and get in a better condition when playing football. That's what i like. As a pastime hobby amongst friends, it would be nicer to have more smaller fields for playing football.”*
- *“Football brings people of all race together but I dislike difficulty of playing space in Finland.”*

Data and findings: Survey/Challenges

Structures

- When it comes to organized football, as concerning mostly clubs, federations and municipalities, the situation is complex.
- Several factors can be seen as challenging. Organized football is partly seen as being too competitive or serious 30.23% and/or to bureaucratic 9.47%.
- While 35% of the responders play football in a club, 53.75% play outside organized football.
- It has been remarked to be somewhat difficult to find footballing opportunities (25.2 %) and that families have not found what they needed (31.6%).

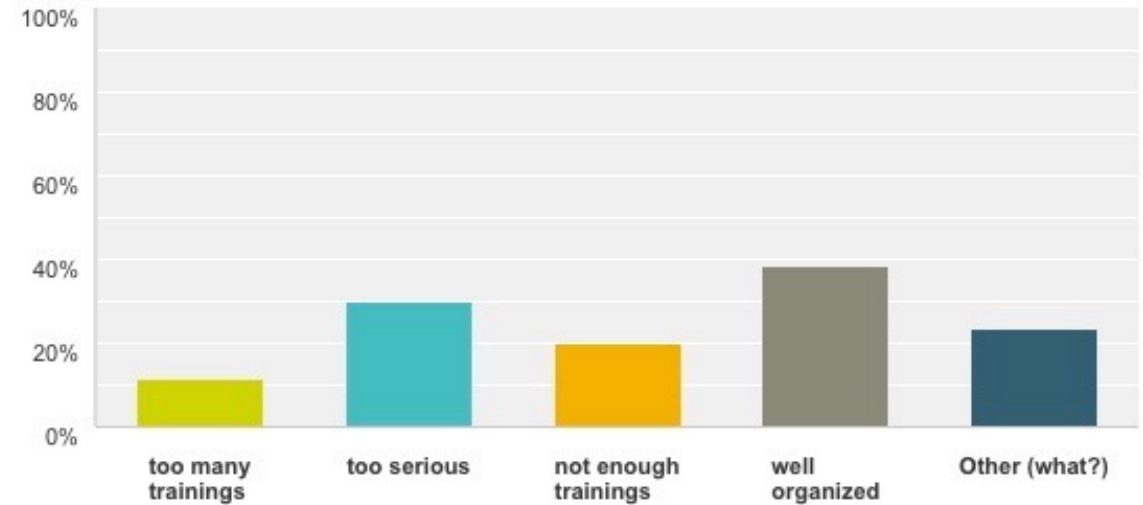
K13

Muokkaa

Vie ▾

Playing in a club

Vastattuja: 86 Ohitettuja: 34



Vastausvaihtoehdot	Vastaukset	
▼ too many trainings	11,63%	10
▼ too serious	30,23%	26
▼ not enough trainings	19,77%	17
▼ well organized	38,37%	33
▼ Other (what?)	Vastaukset 23,26%	20

Data and findings: Survey/Challenges

- **Minorities and social cohesion**
-
- Next to the high amount of injuries, the experience of racism has been the second biggest challenge (18,95%). We had asked if at least one of the parents had been born outside Finland and 22.5 % of the non EU citizens and 27.3% of the not Finnish but EU citizens had experienced racism. As this is the only growing group within the Finnish population, it will be crucial for the future of Finnish football to eradicate racism.
- **Responders comments:**
-
- *“We need more referees and linesmen at all levels so referee is not alone. We need control mechanisms to punish racism ..”*
- *“..my experience of racism was not directed to me, but to a team mate.”*
-
- Similar problems have been found in bullying, being treated unfairly by referees and not being considered by a coach.
-
- **Responders comment:** *“What I like is the exercising, meeting new people. What I don't like is as it is a competitive sports people easily manifest their ugly side.”*

Data and findings: Survey/Opportunities

- **Electronic tools and private enterprise**
-
- Some comments said that games have been organized through facebook, others have organized football through the work place or simply with friends.
-
- **Responders comment:** “ *(I play football through a) Facebook group for women to find others to play with (we agree date and time weekly)*”
- “*Buy online at SportsDirect better choice cheaper and better quality*”

Data and findings: Survey/Costs

- While 42.3% of the responders tell that they would be able to spend 20-50€ monthly on football only 23.3% are actually spending this much. Anyway, only 12.3% are being able to spend more than the Finnish ministry of education recommended maximum of 50€ monthly (TULaviisi 2013, Seuratuki ja 50€), while the actual cost to participate in organized football is 80–250€ monthly.
-
- In the open commentary section some responders replied that organized football is expensive, but 41.86% of the responders said they could spend more than 20€ monthly for playing football.
-
- ***Responders comment:***
- *“In Finland playing football in a club is expensive, specially if ur parents have little income”*

Data, resources and methodology: Interviews

- Semi-structured interviews with 8 representatives in responsibility on the governmental, ministerial, municipal, federation and organizational director level responsible for relevant areas
- The themes of the interviews have been:
 - Cooperation and coordination
 - Good practices
 - Minority participation
 - Service quality
 - Challenges and achievements
 - Sustainability

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS, agency/structures

- not possible to mix health and social oriented sports with elite-sports or competitive sports. “They are like fire and water”
- Grassroots Sport should have their own organisations and be supported through the health and social structures rather than the sports sector
- Sports representatives do not have a strong voice in the cross-sectional dialog
- most important target groups do not have a voice within sports
- work should be done cross-sectional.

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS, agency/structures

- Minorities and migrants are almost not participating in leadership and planning at all
- one interviewee could identify one person who's father had been born in another country in a sub-committee of their organisation
- One interviewee suggested that minority representatives could possibly found in specific committees for minorities own issues
- In migrant self organised organisations almost all of the decision makers and participants being migrants.
- One interviewee said that migrants are a heterogeneous group and should be represented better on all levels.
- benefits are well known, but results of prevention are not as tangible as medals

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS, Facilities

- Almost all of the interviewees stressed the importance of sports facilities (without even being asked about it).
- Sufficient amount needed, easy to reach in safe environment.
- Elite sports is over-using public facilities, leaving little space for grassroots sport.
- Free-to-use outdoor facilities in nature and in parks, like climbing walls, frisbee golf areas and skate parks are gaining popularity with young people outside of organised sports.
- One interviewee reported on sports institutes, with suitable facilities build for disabled people

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS/Minorities

- interviewees reported that they have a good participation of migrants, often through projects
- one sport because it is the most popular sport with migrants
- Some suggested that the participation in their grassroots program would be too expensive for migrants.
- One interview partner reported that racist attitudes within the municipal population has lead to challenges in implementing their programs
- Next to municipalities, migrants own organisations have the most concepts and highest number participation of migrants in Grassroots Sports activities

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS/Projects and concepts

- almost all the existing activities had so far been run through projects
- almost all the interviewees expressed frustration in the short term effects of temporary funding
- Most of the interviewees had organised some Grassroots initiatives
- migrant organisations had been specialised on projects
- most concepts had low threshold, low demand on commitment and (except one), low cost
- concepts had been self-developed only one had been shared or coordinated with other actors

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS/Projects benefits

- some interviewees pointed out the benefits their organisations had:
- build new networks,
- learn about a new approach and to
- gain relevance within society
- For some experiences and methods had remained after project

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS/Costs

- The only one sustainable concept runs on covering the costs or actually providing a profit, (*"We provide attractive grassroots sport at the right price!"*), is too expensive for low income groups.
- generally agreed that no costs or low costs for the participant are a significant factor.
- savings for the economy in the health and social sector, as well as in crime prevention repeatedly pointed out. (*"Solely the annual increase of health costs is as large as the whole budget for sports."*)
- decision makers have recently increased the support for elite sports and decreased the support for health oriented and social sports

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS/Opportunities

- One interviewee said, somewhat mockingly: “Maybe ‘Pokemon Go’ is our solution.” and
- one sports federation has recently developed an app in order to promote grassroots sports and to make their sport more popular.
- Also opportunities provided by private enterprise, such as gyms and game-parks had been mentioned.
- One interviewee said that motivating volunteers would support sustainability.

Data and findings: INTERVIEWS/ standards & evaluation

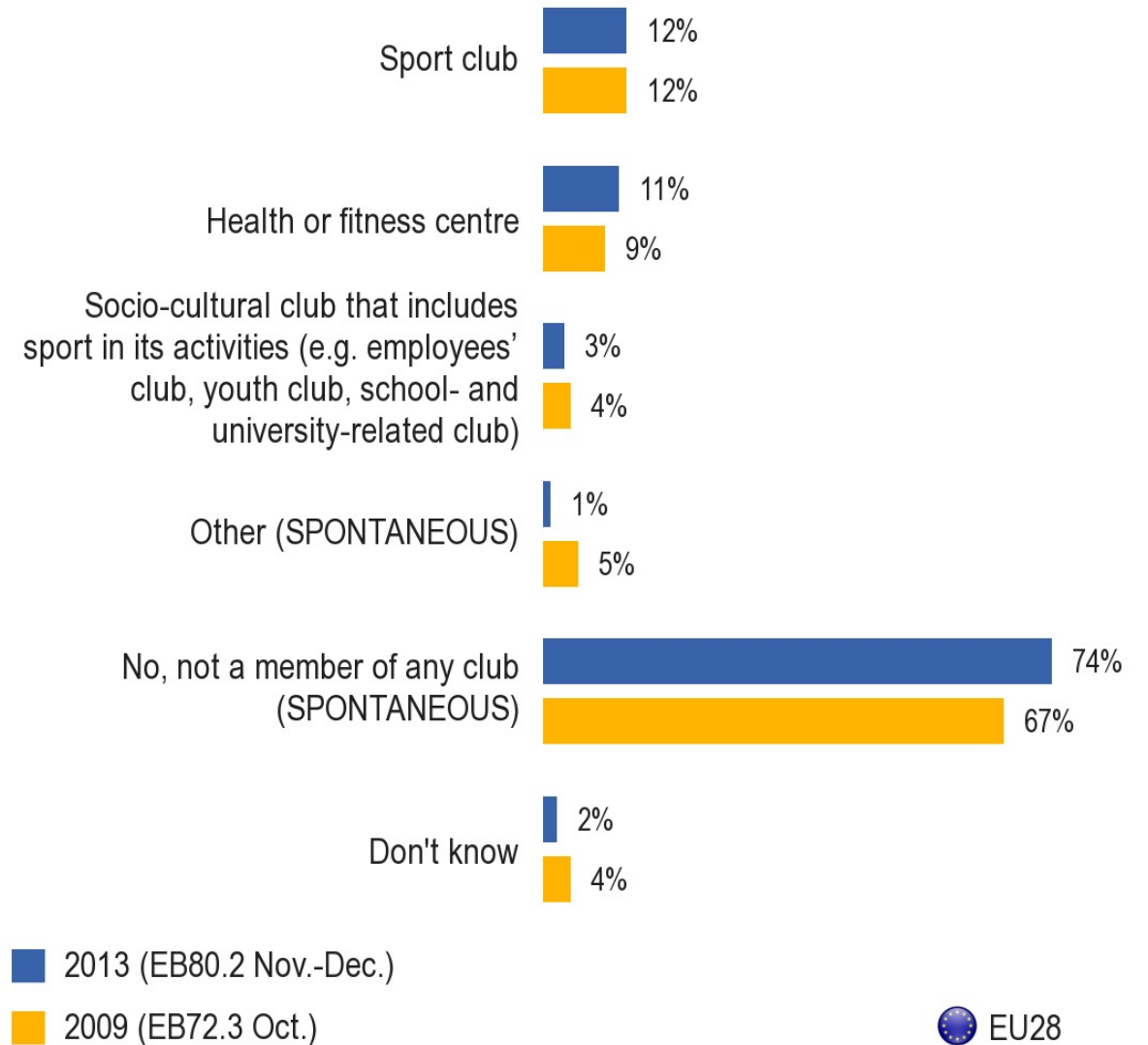
- None of the interviewees was aware of any generally and largely implemented standards and guidelines
- Ministry makes recommendations
- Almost all interviewees reported to use professional and trained staff.
- effect of those is evaluated by research organisations
- Follow-up through annual reporting and evaluation
- follow number of participation to see if participation numbers are growing annually.

Data and findings: Secondary data

- to follow up and to validate data which has been produced through survey and interviews secondary data
- secondary data which has been consulted concerns population growth, participation in sports activities, usage of online tools, racism and discrimination and the benefits of sports for social cohesion
- data stems from homepages, previous research reports, statistics and articles.

Data and findings: Secondary data/Trends

QD10. Are you a member of any of the following clubs where you participate in sport or recreational physical activity?



Data and findings: Secondary data/Trends

- According to the European commissions 'Eurobarometer':
- Sport and physical activity' in 2014 the participation in organized sports and sports in general on the European level has decreased from 2009
- the use of privately held sports facilities like gyms and health clubs is slightly increasing
- physical activities through social or cultural organisations is strongly decreasing

Data and findings: Secondary data/cohesion

- Bellos (2002) describes how football has had a crucial role in unifying the diverse society of Brazil
- growing concerns over the potential of grassroots sports not being benefitted of and the negative effects of sports being too exclusive (Berg, April 2016)
- the topic of social inclusion and social cohesion through sports is complex, both migrants own initiatives as well as mainstream sports initiatives can contribute to social inclusion and cohesion (Elling and De Knop 2011)
- In Finland the 'homegrown' rule restricts the number of players who have not played in Finnish football for at least 3 years before they turned 19.
- (Myllyniemi, P. 2016) stated that only 56% of young people feel they are part of society compared to 76% only 3 years earlier (Myllyniemi, P. 2016)

Data and findings: Secondary data/minorities

- migrants in the higher leagues are receiving a similar amount of warnings and sanctions through the referees than non-migrants, but in the lower leagues, the difference is significant, from 1.7 in the 4th highest league to 3.3 times more in the 5th highest (SPL 2011)
- migrants own organisations offer the least expensive services to their members and that those organisations are decreasing in number even though the number of migrants in the region has doubled in the past 10 years (SPL 2011)
- Migrants were not participating in mainstream clubs in equal numbers to their share of the population (SPL 2011)

Partio on halvin ja ratsastus kallein

H5 vertaili alakoulukäisille tyypillisten harrastusten hintoja.

Hinta-arvio syyskaudelta

Aloitushinta perustuu 3-5 pääkaupunkiseudun eri seurasta, laji-aittasta ja koulusta kertyneisiin ästä- tai arviohintoihin. Hinnat eivät sisällä sisä- tai muita alennuksia. Tarkat hinnat saa harraste-paikoista.

Muita kuluja

Partio

27-50 e

27-50 euron jäsenmaksu koko vuodelle. Osa lippukunnista kerää lisäksi omaa toimintamaksua.

Retki- ja leirimaksuja. Suurleireille osallistuminen maksaa noin 100-200 euroa. Pakollisena varustuksena huivi, lisäksi retki-varusteita, kuten reppi ja makuupussi.

Kuinka voi säästää?

Halpa harrastus, ei kausi- tai kuukausimaksuja. Tarkkaile matkakuluja ja kierrätä tai lainaa varusteita.

Tanssi

80-200 e

40-50 euroa kuussa eli 160-200 euroa kaudessa tanssikouluissa*. Seuroilla on tanssitunteja noin 80 euron kausihintaan. Harjoitukset kerran viikossa.

Perustunneille tavalliset jumppavaatteet ja tossut. Balletissa oma harjoituspuku ja -tossut sekä trikoot. Kilpailtaessa vaate- ja tanssikenkävaatimuksia.

Valitse tanssikoulu, jolla osallistuminen on joustavaa. Monilla urheiluseuroilla on edullisia tanssiryhmiä. Hinnoittelu määräytyy usein tunnin pituuden mukaan.

Jalkapallo

80-280 e

20-45 euroa kuussa eli 80-180 euroa kaudessa. Lisäksi osassa seuroista puolen vuoden seura- ja pelaajamaksu 50-100 euroa. Harjoitukset 1-3 kertaa viikossa.

Nappulakengät 30-50 euroa, pallo 10-40 euroa ja säärisuojat 10 euroa. Lisäksi liivit, pelipaitoja, shortseja sukia ja muita vaatteita. Pelipassi 25 euroa ja vakuutus.

Lajin kulut kasvavat kilpallulisessa joukkueessa nopeasti. Etsi vähemmän treenaava pikkuseura. Tee talkootyötä, hanki sponsoreita, pihistä vaatehankinnoissa.

Uinti

40-280 e

45-70 euroa kuussa eli 180-280 euroa kaudelta uimaseuroissa. Harjoitukset 1-3 kertaa viikossa**. Uimahallien harrastekerhot halvempia, noin 40-65 euroa kaudelta.

Uima-asu ja uimalasit noin 30-40 euroa. Vakuutus ja mahdollinen kilpailulisenssi. Leiriviikonloppu noin 200 euroa.

Kilpailuryhmissä hinta alkaa nousta. Kaupunkien liikuntavirastoilla voi olla halvempia kursseja. Seuroilla myös edullisempia harrastelinjoja.

Koot: ELINA RANTA
Grafiikka: MINN TUOMOLAHS

*Tanssi- tai soitotuntien kesto on osassa 30-45 minuuttia. **3 viikkotunnin kilparyhmissä 2 tuntia kerrallaan.

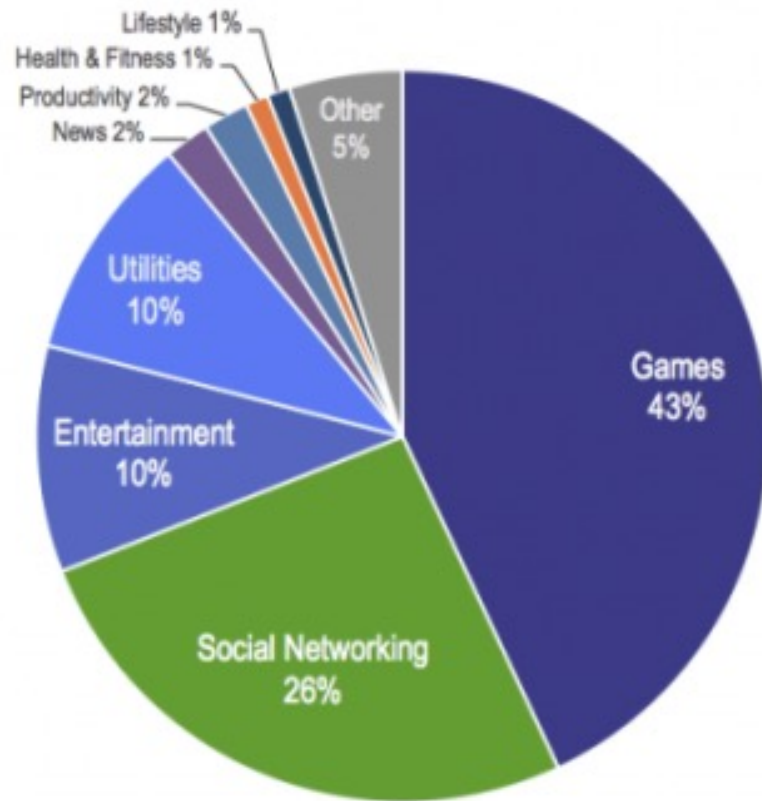
Data and findings:
Secondary data/costs

Costs have been identified as a major obstacle to sports participation

Data and findings: Secondary data/concepts

- A large range of good practices are listed by Maijala and Fagerlund (2012), SPIN EU-project report and Good Practice guide 2014 and Liikkukaa – Sports For All (2012)
- A prime example is a group of Muslim women who had difficulties to make their families agree to their wish to exercise sports. The example shows how the families could be convinced to support the women participation in physical exercise and how this has led to a change in lifestyle involving the whole family.
-

WW iOS & Android Smart Device Time Spent per App Category



Data and findings:
Secondary
data/electronic
tools

app market is expected to be a
77 billion industry by 2017

Data and findings: Results

- Challenges and opportunities can be found in 3 categories:
- Structures (*Agency, Representation, Promotion*)
- Motivation (*Remove obstacles, motivate*)
- Resources (*Facilities, training, tools, opportunities*)

Data and findings, Results: Structures and Agency

- Full awareness of the topic seems to be lacking on most parts.
- Need for effective agency for grassroots sports
- Efforts are wide spread and uncoordinated and do not reach a sufficient part of the population in order to make an impact on the large scale
- project and uncoordinated nature of almost all the efforts made so far and the lack of definition, do not support the development of sustainable structures and networks.
-

Data and findings, Results: Motivation

- 3 main groups in the population,
- those who are physically exercising on a regular basis already,
- those who would like to exercise but get de-motivated by obstacles
- Those who reject physical activities (the most important in order to achieve an impact on the public economy)

Data and findings, Results: Resources

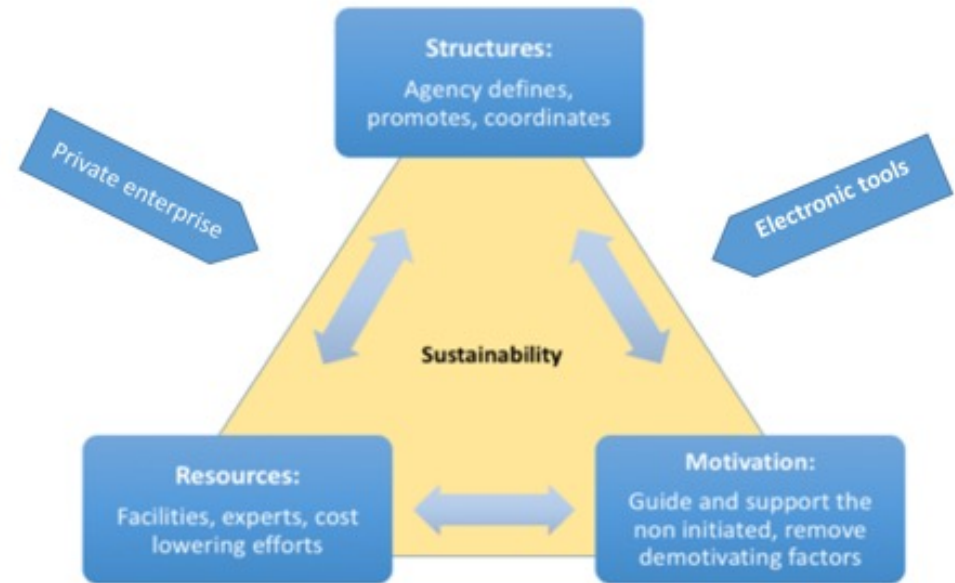
- significant lack of facilities
- complexity of the challenge demands for expertise from different sectors
- project nature of almost all the efforts so far does not support sustainability of expertise
- Costs are a major factor

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- An agency and/or a cross-sectional high level round table for the promotion of physical activity for social and health reasons should be established apart from the competitive sports structures
 - The agency should also define and brand sports for health and social reasons
 - Project funding should be continued in order to initiate efforts
 - in order to achieve sustainability organizations focused on grassroots sports should receive regular funding

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- Demotivating factors as identified in this research should be erased
 - efforts for motivating the most needy groups should be financed
 - Facilities need to be provided on a sufficient level
 - expertise should be maintained and developed.

-
- Diversity training and other sensitizing training should be provided and attended on
 - Minorities should be empowered and their participation should be secured on all levels.
 - existing organizations might need to be convinced of the long term benefits of implementing those steps
 - private enterprise should be encouraged, social media, electronic tools and apps should be made use of

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- Figure 1. Summary of the key findings



Recommendation for future research:

- Costs in the health and social sector caused by lack of physical activity compared to the costs of motivating those in need to embrace a more physically active lifestyle and to offer sufficient methods and opportunities.
- The best practices should be analyzed, common factors identified and quality marks developed. The results should be branded for large scale use and promoted through an agency.

A vibrant, sun-dappled forest scene with tall, slender trees and a dense canopy of bright green leaves. Sunlight filters through the foliage, creating a warm and peaceful atmosphere. The ground is covered in lush green undergrowth and ferns.

Thank you