Basic information on civic activity in Finnish sports:

Participation and volunteer work in sports clubs

English summary

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Introduction

This summary is based on the policy-relevant research report *Basic information on civic activity in Finnish sports: Participation and volunteer work in sports clubs. LIKES Research Reports on Sport and Health 274 (Liikunnan kansalaistoiminnan tietopohja – liikunnan harrastaminen ja vapaaehtoistyö urheiluseuroissa. Liikunnan ja kansanterveyden julkaisuja 274)*. The full publication can be found online: www.likes.fi/julkaisuhakemisto. The complete report gives more information on how the individual research projects have been conducted, who have been the target groups, the paradigms and research questions that have been used to evaluate participation and volunteer work in sports clubs, and whether these factors influenced the research results. This summary presents the main research results, as well as observations about the information gaps.

This policy-relevant research has been financed by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry requested the report because the studies conducted regarding civic activity in sports clubs have provided contradictory information about the amount of participation and volunteer work in sports clubs. In addition, there are no regular reports about development at the local level.

This information has been gathered from research reports, through personal interviews, and from the Finnish Social Science Data Archive in Tampere University.

Report material

This report includes information from the following studies, which were conducted to investigate participation and volunteer work in sports clubs.

1. Sport Survey (Kansallinen liikutatutkimus)
2. Eurobarometer (Eurobarometri)
3. Leisure Time Survey (Vapaa-aikatutkimus)
4. Adolescent Health and Lifestyle Survey (Nuorten terveystapatutkimus)
5. Youth Barometer 2012 (Nuorisobarometri 2012)
6. The Finnish Student Health Survey (Korkeakouluopiskelijoiden terveystutkimus)
7. Turku Polytechnic Student Health Survey (Turun ammattikorkeakoulun opiskelijaterveystutkimus)
8. Physical Activity follow-up (Liikunnan seuranta - projekti)
9. Finnish Children study (LAPS SUOMEN -tutkimus)
10. Youngsters’ Relationship to Sport in Focus (Kouluikäisten liikuntasuhde luupin alla)
11. Finnish Lifestyle Survey 1995 (Elämäntyylitutkimus)
12. Time-use Survey (Ajankäyttötutkimus)

**Participation is sports clubs**

- The proportion of children who participate in sports clubs has grown steadily among under 14-years-olds since 1995.
- The proportion of adolescents participating in sports clubs has stayed the same among 15- to 18-year-olds throughout the 2000s.
- There were no major changes in the proportion of adults who participate in sports clubs between the years 1995 and 2010.

The following four figures are based on the different reports listed above; data points are listed according to their study number (from above) and noted in the figure legend.
Figure 1. Participation in sports clubs among 3- to 18-year-old girls and boys.

Figure 2. Participation in sports clubs among 3- to 18-year-old girls.
Figure 3. Participation in sports clubs among 3- to 18-year-old boys.

Figure 4. Adults participation in sports clubs.
Volunteer work in sports clubs

It is not feasible to analyse the changes in volunteer work based on the studies included in this report, since the research questions, response options, and the age range of the respondents differ between the studies. The most reliable estimation can be reached by assessing the individual report results. According to those, 14 to 22% of men and 9 to 12% of women have done volunteer work in some form for Finnish sports clubs.

Conclusions and information gaps

- The existing information on participation and volunteer work in Finnish sports clubs is diffuse.
- Questions about participation in sports clubs has often been asked included as part of health and leisure time habits in the questionnaires.
- The most information is about adult participation and volunteer work. There is also information about young people’s (12- to 18-year-olds) participation in sports clubs, but very limited information about their volunteer work participation.
- The research on participation in sports clubs among the under 7-year-olds and retired people is scarce.
- The population’s physical activity, functional exercise, and the amount of physical activity are interesting research topics in studies concerning physical activity and health.
- The questions concerning participation and volunteer work in sports clubs vary in different studies, and questions are partly imprecise. In addition, the response options differ from study to study. Hence, the results from different studies are incomparable.
- Some of the research reports do not include questionnaires. In addition, there are deficiencies regarding age and gender distributions, emphases, and other factors affecting research samples and methods. Presenting that information would be important in order to evaluate the reliability and feasibility of the studies.