VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT – DENMARK

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

1.1 Tradition and contextual background

The evolution of volunteering in sport was shaped by two factors: the adoption of a democratic constitution and the emergence of the popular movements. The Danish Constitution of 1849 gave citizens the right to form associations for any lawful purpose without the approval of the monarch (The Danish Constitutional Act Section 78), and whilst the notion of joining together was nothing new, given the prior existence of guilds, the association was a new way of doing it. The late 19th century mass movements were the driving force behind the comprehensive network of associations that developed as a reflection, partly, of the ideological and cultural identity of the various movements. The mass movements included among others the farmers’ movement, the labour movement, the mission movement (the religious revivals of the Grundtvigian movement and Evangelical movement/Inner Mission), the temperance movement and the popular sport movement (Habermann & Ibsen, 2005: 2).

In sport it was the rifle and gymnastics associations (emerging from the need to defend the country, and the farmers movement’s interest in keeping the farming population fit and healthy), as well as the English ball games (especially football) that people became involved with early on. A shared feature of these early sports was that the activities were taking place within voluntary associations, and this became the model for most subsequent sports as these were introduced from abroad or developed internally within the country (Communication with DIF).

The sport movement was not, however, a homogenous movement, but was greatly influenced by cultural and ideological movements in general. Hence, different gymnastics and ball games associations were set up by respectively the labour, cooperative and religious movements, and it was only in the 20th century that these affiliations started to weaken and some associations merged to provide bigger associations serving the local community more widely.

The organisational structure of sport developed according to hierarchical principles as competition was introduced, leading to local, regional and national tiers. The Sports Confederation of Denmark (Dansk Idrætsforbund, DIF) was established in 1896 as an umbrella organisation for a number of national sport federations. The Danish Youth Associations (De Danske Ungdomsforeninger) was established in 1903 as the national confederation for rifle shooting and gymnastics, but continuing differences between shooting and gymnastics made them part ways and the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Association (Dansk Gymnastik og Idrætsforening, DGI) was established in 1929, and is still one of the three main sports confederations in Denmark. The third confederation is the Danish Association of Company Sport (Dansk Firmaidrætsforbund, DFIF) which did not emerge out of the voluntary associations and popular movements but still operates on a voluntary basis.

For sport associations it is just as much the tradition around the associations and volunteering itself as it is the particular sporting activities which matter to people and make them want to be involved. Volunteering in sport, as in all other areas of the voluntary sector, is believed to be about democratic organisation, participation and self-determination.
(communication with DIF). The fact that sport, unlike some other areas of the voluntary sector, is relatively autonomous makes the role of self-determination particularly important to volunteers and the sport associations.

1.2 Definitions

There is no specific definition of volunteering in sport, whether in legislation or in policy. Hence, the following general definition of volunteering covers sport too. It states that volunteering is (Ministry of Social Affairs/The National Volunteer Centre, 2001: 5):

- **Voluntary or non-obligatory**, i.e. undertaken freely without physical force, legal coercion or financial pressure and no threats of financial or social sanctions (for instance being cut off from social security benefits or a social network) if the volunteer no longer wishes to continue the work.

- **Unpaid**. However, this does not preclude payment of renumeration for expenses the volunteer has incurred while carrying out the activities, such as travel and telephone expenses, or payment of a symbolic amount as compensation for the voluntary work.

- **Carried out for persons other than the volunteer’s own family and relatives**. This distinguishes voluntary work from ordinary domestic activities and the informal care of family members.

- For the benefit of other people than the volunteer and his or her family. The value that the work has for others makes it voluntary work. This **precludes participation in for instance self-help groups or participation as a mere member of sport clubs** from being voluntary work.

- **Formally organised** – mostly in an association, although this need not be the case. However, ordinary helpfulness or spontaneous acts are not voluntary work.

Volunteering in sport generally takes the form of the following three roles (communication with DIF):

- **Trainers/instructors** who are in charge of planning and managing the particular sporting activities that an association offers.

- **Leaders** who are in charge of running the sport association as an organisation, i.e. they perform administrative, decision making (via the committee and in other ways), accountancy and other functions.

- ** Helpers** who provide practical assistance with maintaining facilities/accommodation, travel to and from events, washing of clothes, helping out during training, etc.

1.3 Number and profile of volunteers in sport

The 2004 survey of the Danish population that was conducted for the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector project found that **11% of the population** between 16-85 years of age and **31.5% of the total volunteering population** volunteer in sport (Boje, Fridberg & Ibsen, eds., 2006: 46).

**Trend**

There appears to be an **upward trend** in the number of volunteers in sport. Thus, the 2004 survey of voluntary organisations, also conducted for the Johns Hopkins project, showed that ca. 25% of voluntary associations in Denmark had experienced an increase in membership in the past 5 years, while ca. 20% had experienced a decline. It was
particularly organisations within the areas of Health, Social services and Sport which had seen an increase. Since volunteering is usually a membership based activity in Denmark, especially in sport, an increase in association membership tends to suggest an increase in the number of volunteers too (Boje, Fridberg & Ibsen, eds., 2006: 81).

According to a 1985 study of volunteering in sport there were 9.2 instructors/trainers and 7.6 leaders (committee members, etc.) per association, whereas the 2004 survey of voluntary sport organisations showed 9.7 instructors/trainers and 10 leaders per association (Boje, 2006: Table 12 p. 22).

The reasons for the increase in the number of volunteers are believed to be, first, an increase in the share of the adult population interested in volunteering, and secondly, an increased interest in sport, which has resulted in the formation of more sport associations and therefore voluntary roles that need to be filled to keep the associations going (communication with DIF and Danish researcher).

Volume of voluntary work

Volunteers in Sport, exercise and dance contributed a total of \(41,297\) million hours of voluntary work in 2003-04, equivalent to \(25,031\) TFE jobs (calculated on the basis of Boje & Ibsen, 2006: Table 9.4 p. 205).\(^1\) This amounts to 80.08% of the total volume of work performed in the non-profit sport sector (calculated on the basis of Boje & Ibsen, 2006: p. 202 Table 9.2 and p. 205, Table 9.4).

Volunteers in Sport, exercise and dance worked an average of 17 hours per month.

Compared to other areas of the voluntary sector Culture & recreation (which includes culture, sport and leisure) is the area with the lowest share of people working only a few hours (1-4) and the highest share of people working more than 20 hours (Boje, Fridberg & Ibsen, eds., 2006: 49).

There are no comparable data on the trends in the volume of voluntary work over time.

Age

The 2004 population survey found the following differences in volunteering in sport between age groups (Fridberg, 2009):

- 16-29 year olds: 12% do voluntary unpaid work.
- 30-49 year olds: 15% do voluntary unpaid work.
- 50-65 year olds: 9% do voluntary unpaid work.
- 66- year olds: 3% do voluntary unpaid work.

There is a correlation between age and volunteering in sport which means that younger people are more likely than older people to be involved with this. As is the case of many other areas of the voluntary sector, it is the very active 30-49 year olds who are most likely to be involved (Boje, Fridberg & Ibsen, eds., 2006: 58-59).

Gender

According to the 2004 population survey there is a statistically significant difference between the participation of men and women in different voluntary sector areas, with men

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\(^1\) Table 9.4 contains weekly figures for number of hours worked. This figure has been timed by 44.59 weeks to give a total for the year. The figure of 44.59 weeks derive from the Danish John Hopkins study's definition of a full-time equivalent post as consisting of 1650 hours of work in a year with a 37 hour working week.
being significantly more involved in sport. Thus, 14% of men compared to only 9% of women are volunteering in sport (Boje, Fridberg & Ibsen, eds., 2006: 46).

Men also put in significantly more hours of voluntary work in sport than women, at 21 hours per month compared to 12 (Fridberg, 2009).

The reason for the above differences is that men are traditionally very involved with sport and would therefore also be expected to have a higher degree of voluntary involvement.

**Level of education**

There is a positive correlation between education level and propensity to volunteer in sport in the sense that people who have an education are the more likely they are to volunteer. However, the exact nature (vocational or non-vocational) and level of education (short, medium and long non-vocational education) have very little impact. Below is listed the share of people who volunteer in sport according to educational background (Fridberg, 2009):

- No education: 7% do voluntary unpaid work.
- Students: 11% do voluntary unpaid work.
- Vocational education: 13% do voluntary unpaid work.
- Short non-vocational education: 13% do voluntary unpaid work.
- Long non-vocational education (e.g. university): 13% do voluntary unpaid work.
- Medium length non-vocational education: 14% do voluntary unpaid work.

The above pattern changes when we look at the number of hours of voluntary work contributed by people with different educational backgrounds. Those with no education turn out to actually contribute the most hours, and a difference between people with vocational and non-vocational backgrounds emerge, with the former spending fewer hours on volunteering in sport than the latter (Fridberg, 2009):

- Vocational education: 14 hours of voluntary unpaid work per month.
- Students: 15 hours of voluntary unpaid work per month.
- Medium length non-vocational education: 17 hours of voluntary unpaid work per month.
- Short non-vocational education: 19 hours of voluntary unpaid work per month.
- Long non-vocational education (e.g. university): 20 hours of voluntary unpaid work per month.
- No education: 25 hours of voluntary unpaid work per month.

**Socio-professional status**

According to the 2004 survey there is a strong and positive correlation between employment and propensity to volunteer in sport. Thus, of those not in work 6% perform voluntary unpaid work in sport, whereas among those working 1-40 hours per week 14% do and, finally, among those who work 40 hours or more per week 16% volunteer in sport (Fridberg, 2009). Those not in work do, however, contribute 1 hour of voluntary work more per month than those in work, at 18 hours per month compared to 17 for those in work (their contribution is the same regardless of the length of their working week) (Fridberg, 2009).
1.4 **Number and types of sport organisations engaging volunteers**

The non-profit sport sector in Denmark is organised in a **pyramid structure**. At the top of the pyramid are the national confederations, below which are national federations, regional, local and town associations.

The biggest sports confederation is **Sports Confederation of Denmark/National Olympic Committee** (Dansk Idrætsforbund, DIF) which has 60 national sport federations as members. The 60 federations have 10,580 local sport associations as their members with a total of 1.646 million individual members (communication with DIF).

The **Danish Gymnastics and Sports Associations** (Danske Gymnastik og Idrætsforeninger, DGI) has 16 regional member associations and 5,173 local associations as members with a total of ca. 1.4 million individual members (communication with DIF).

A merger of DIF/DOK and DGI has been discussed. One reason for merging would be the significant overlap in individual and association membership between the two confederations. Thus, 40% of DIF’s member associations are also members of DGI (communication with DIF).

The **Danish Association of Company Sport** (DFIF) organises 80 town associations and 92 local sport associations for companies with a total of ca. 330,000 individual members. DFIF is small and is not truly part of the world of voluntary associations as it is for work place based sports, i.e. individuals at their work place getting together in sporting teams and competing against teams from other work places (communication with DIF; information from DFIF’s home page).

**Share of volunteers and paid staff in the sport sector**

According to the 2004 population survey volunteers in Sport, exercise and dance contributed a total of **41.297 million hours of voluntary work in 2003-04, which amounts to 25,031 TFE jobs**. By contrast paid staff in Sport, exercise and dance contributed **10.272 million hours of paid work**, which amounts to 6,226 FTE jobs. Voluntary unpaid work therefore made up 80.08% and paid work 19.02% of the total volume of work performed in the non-profit sport sector (calculated on the basis of Boje & Ibsen, 2006: Table 9.2 p. 202 and Table 9.4 p. 205).

These figures are fairly similar to figures that were arrived at by DIF, DGI and DFIF in a piece of research also undertaken in 2004. This research showed that 83% of trainers and instructors were unpaid volunteers whereas 17% were paid (Ibsen, 2006: 22).

There is a **feeling that professionalisation in sport is increasing**, and figures for wages and reimbursement of expenses seem to confirm this with an increase from 18% of the local associations’ total costs in 1985 to 31% in 2004 (Ibsen, 2006: 24). However, the figures are uncertain as it is impossible to tell how much of the increase stems from wages and how much from reimbursement of expenses. Neither can it be ruled out that the same number, or perhaps even fewer, trainers and instructors are now paid higher wages rather than it being a case of associations taking on more paid trainers and instructors. Finally, the increase in wage costs is not statistically significant (communication with Danish researcher).

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2 Table 9.2 contains weekly figures for number of hours worked. This figure has been timed by 44.59 weeks to give a total for the year. The figure of 44.59 weeks derive from the Danish John Hopkins study’s definition of a full-time equivalent post as consisting of 1650 hours of work in a year with a 37 hour working week.
1.5 Main voluntary activities

Level of volunteering in different sport segments

There is a shortage of data on the level of volunteering by sport segments, so the following provides only a rough estimate of the situation made by DIF and a Danish researcher based on the data that they have at their disposal.

The vast majority of volunteers in sport are found in local sport clubs and associations, although some volunteers are delegated to represent their clubs/associations at higher levels, e.g. in the regional and national federations. As elite sport primarily takes place in voluntary associations this segment is also dominated by volunteering.

The commercial sport sector in Denmark is dominated by the fitness centres where all labour is paid.

In professional sport there are very few volunteers, as in the case of professional football.

Some voluntary (non-sporting) associations working with the elderly as well as some popular education organisations provide various sport or exercise related activities (e.g. gymnastics and yoga), but while these associations are themselves voluntary the people who provide the courses and activities are paid staff.

Local authorities sometimes have a few staff delivering sport projects, but these staff are also paid.

The degree of volunteering is generally related to the size of an organisations and the character of the sporting activity. Thus, the large associations have more volunteers but a lower share of volunteers in relation to number of members, whilst the small associations have fewer volunteers overall but a higher share of volunteers relative to number of members. Sports based on the performance of individuals such as tennis or golf tend to be associated with less volunteering, whereas team/collective sports tend to be associated with higher degrees of volunteering. Generally, the degree of volunteering is the greatest in small associations; associations with a homogenous membership composition and relatively many adult men; associations within a relatively small sport; associations without commercial activities; and associations with a high degree of autonomy vis-à-vis the market and the public sector (Ibsen, 2006: 21).

Level of volunteering in different sport disciplines

All sport disciplines are based on volunteering, but the most volunteers are found in the larger disciplines, i.e. football, gymnastics and handball. There are not many data available for volunteering by sport discipline, but below are the figures for the 10 biggest sports organised in DIF (communication with DIF. There are no data for DGI but given the 40% overlap in membership of the two confederations the data are likely to be fairly representative):

Football: 32.000 trainers 22.000 leaders 55.000 helpers
Gymnastics: 29.000 trainers 12.000 leaders 15.000 helpers
Handball: 20.000 trainers 16.000 leaders 54.000 helpers
Badminton: 9.000 trainers 11.000 leaders 19.000 helpers
Swimming: 7.000 trainers 5.000 leaders 9.000 helpers
Shooting:  6.000 trainers  9.000 leaders  7.000 helpers
Tennis:  3.000 trainers  6.000 leaders  5.000 helpers
Golf:  500 trainers  7.000 leaders  5.000 helpers
Sailing:  1.000 trainers  3.000 leaders  2.700 helpers
Riding:  500 trainers  2.200 leaders  2.600 helpers

The 10 biggest sports have 2/3 of all volunteers. However, there are smaller sport disciplines which in relative (and in some cases absolute terms) have more volunteers than some of the bigger disciplines. Thus, a big sport like golf for instance has relatively few trainers whereas a small sport like table tennis has more trainers than golf (communication with DIF).

As was mentioned above, it is apparent that team sports like football, handball and gymnastics are much more dependent on volunteers than individual sports like swimming, shooting and tennis.

**Type of activities carried out by volunteers**

Volunteering in sport is typically multifunctional rather than specialised. It is therefore difficult to rank the various functions that volunteers perform, as many do a bit of everything and cannot remember exactly how much time they spend on each (communication with Danish researcher).

However, a tentative ranking was offered by DIF (1 taking up the most time/effort and 4 the least):

1. **Training/instruction** (in particular of children)
2. **Committee work** (Chair person, secretary, treasurer)
3. **Operational assistance** (transport, washing of clothes, preparation of courts and playing fields, etc.)
4. **Fund raising.** Many organisations do not have a sponsor, and if they do it is often somebody who is already involved with the club such as the local butcher who is playing in the football team, or the local factory owner who is on the committee or knows a committee member. Being very limited and done largely through informal channels fund raising is a small task in most associations.

As regards **skills**, sport associations gratefully receive anybody interested in volunteering and do not place demands regarding specific skills, unlike in the case of for instance voluntary social work where people are often interviewed and vetted prior to involvement. One does not need to have any formal competences to be involved in sport as a volunteer, and even if there are courses for trainers/instructors these do not always lead to formal qualifications. Thus, once a person has decided to become a volunteer the association looks at what the person has to offer and allocates a task on that basis. It is not a case of going out to recruit people with particular skills from the outset. This situation does make it difficult to fill posts like those of treasurer and finance director (if a post like this exists in a local sport club). Economic planning and accountancy both require particular knowledge of finance and legislation (tax, VAT, etc.) and are therefore at the high skills end of the scale and sometimes require particular recruitment measures to find the right person for the job.
2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

2.1 Main public bodies and other organisations involved in volunteering in sport

There is no body responsible for voluntary work in sport as such. However, The Ministry of Culture is overall in charge of sport, and since the vast majority of the sport sector in Denmark is based on and thus synonymous with volunteering the closest one gets to a ministerial responsibility for volunteering in sport is that of The Ministry of Culture. As sport associations have historically operated and still are acting as independent associations, they are treated as autonomous organisations in whose work the Ministry does not interfere in a regulatory manner. However, it does act as a policy maker and in this capacity the Ministry of Culture focuses on the role played by sport in society (see section 2.2 below).

The Ministry of Culture’s role as a funding body is very straightforward as the historical independence of voluntary associations means that the Ministry provides the funding but does not interfere in how it is spent. The share of the national gambling profits that is allocated to the Ministry it therefore passes directly to the large national sport federations (currently the amount is ca. 700 million DKr per year) for them to spend according to their priorities. There are no conditions attached to this funding apart from organisations having to comply with common accountancy rules. This arm’s length policy is what is meant by the term autonomy in sport in Denmark (communication with The Ministry of Culture; the Gambling Act of 2006).\(^3\)

The Ministry of Education has legislative and funding responsibilities in relation to the sport sector. It is the responsible ministry for the Act on Popular Education (1990 with later revisions) which obliges local authorities to provide support for voluntary popular education either in the form of a subsidy for a given activity or in the form of accommodation provided free of charge or as a contribution towards the running costs of an association’s own or rented accommodation. The Ministry’s policy making focus relating to volunteering is on popular education, i.e. education that enables participants to gain knowledge and enlightenment but not specific qualifications, a significant share of which is provided by voluntary sector organisations. In Denmark sport has historically been seen as popular education and the vast majority of Ministry of Education funds for popular education go to local sport associations which receive ca. 3 billion DKr per year distributed by local authorities (The Danish Act on Popular Education of 2000).\(^4\)

The National Volunteer Centre is a self-governing organisation, i.e. an independent unit with its own supervisory board, which was set up by the Ministry of Interior and Social Affairs in 1992 to service voluntary social service organisations. Although a self-governing organisation it is subject to legislation and defined as a public agency. The core funding of the centre is Government grants with only a small percentage deriving from the services it provides. The Centre supports voluntary work and organisations working in the area of welfare (health, social services and humanitarian assistance) and more recently culture and sport throughout Denmark. Its main activities are: 1) Consultancy; 2) Training and education; 3) Development of organisations and networks; 4) Conferences; and 5) Knowledge of the voluntary sector – nationally and internationally. The Centre also provides a very informative website which includes a database with information about a range of voluntary social organisations in Denmark (the National Volunteer

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\(^3\) Link to the Gambling Act of 2006: [https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=114734](https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=114734)

\(^4\) Link to the Danish Act on Popular Education of 2000: [http://www.socialjura.dk/index.php?id=2815_cat=1&showpage=1&cHash=71b84c6f75#7661](http://www.socialjura.dk/index.php?id=2815_cat=1&showpage=1&cHash=71b84c6f75#7661)
It is too early to say how extensive its role in relation to sport will be given that sport is so well served already by the associations and their national federations and confederations.

Local authorities are involved with volunteering in sport at local level through the support for popular education that they are required to provide according to the Danish Act on Popular Education. Thus, each local authority sets up Popular Education Committees to distribute the available funding. The Committee is made up of seven members of whom a minority represent the local authority and a majority represent a broad section of organisations working in the areas of popular education for children, young people and adults. While the Act contains a general definition of popular education, and thus what can be supported, there are no specific requirements or priority areas identified, and there is no opportunity provided for the local authority to lay down its own. Hence, there is significant autonomy for the Popular Education Committee (with its majority popular education sector representation) in the distribution of funds, and for voluntary sector organisations in the way they spend the funds. As mentioned above, the vast majority of the funding under the Act goes to local sport associations.

Given the extensive autonomy of the non-profit sport sector in Denmark the sector’s own representative bodies are responsible for volunteering. The sports confederations (DIF, DGI and DFIF) perform a number of roles. Thus, DIF, and DGI have funding responsibilities towards their national federations and distribute the confederations' share of the national gambling proceeds according to a set framework. DFIF also receives funding from gambling, albeit at a much smaller rate, and spends it according to need on a mixture of internal organisational costs and activity at local and regional level. In addition, the confederations offer a range of services to member organisations (and thus the volunteers involved in running these) such as advice and advocacy, training and professional development (including in issues like legislation, integration, insurance and club development and trainer courses), and representation of the sport sector in various political negotiations and working groups at national and international level. Finally, they seek to promote the sport sector and individual sport disciplines through provision of information, research and campaigning. Specifically on volunteering, DIF ran a campaign last year to raise awareness of the work that volunteers perform called ‘Thank a volunteer’ (‘Tak en frivillig’) (communication with DIF and information available on DIF, DGI and DFIF home pages).

National federations perform similar functions in relation to their member associations, although not on the same comprehensive scale as the confederations. At regional level associations are organised in district federations that are typically in charge of tournaments, competitions and education. Also at regional level are county committees which handle the common interests of sport in relation to the county authorities, especially looking at environment and physical planning. At local authority level the local associations act as umbrella organisations for the local sport clubs. The local associations of sport clubs look after the interests of local clubs in relation to municipal authorities, and typically they act as representatives of sport on the municipal Popular Education Committees which allocate funds to sport at local level (communication with DIF; information from DIF and DGI home pages).

5 Link to the National Volunteer Centre website: http://www.frivillighed.dk/Webnodes/English/296
2.2 Policies

In Denmark there are strategies for elite and non-elite sport but no specific government strategy on volunteering in sport. The reason being that a strategy is seen as unnecessary given that sport is synonymous with voluntary effort, and as such anything that is done to support sport will therefore automatically support volunteering too (communication with The Ministry of Culture and DIF).

As a result, all policies for sport will therefore also have an impact on voluntary activities, and it has therefore been decided to follow an inclusive approach when outlining policies which impact on voluntary work in sport.

Overall, the Ministry of Culture’s policy on sport has three dimensions (communication with The Ministry of Culture):

- **Cultural dimension**: It is in the associations that children learn about democracy and what is acceptable behaviour, i.e. how we best interact with each other. The Ministry sees it as one of its priorities to protect and support democracy and thereby the voluntary associations that make up the realm of sport.

- **Social dimension**: Participation in sport and sport associations helps break down social barriers as participants do something together with others regardless of ethnic origin and social status. Football is probably the sport with the most ethnic minorities represented, and as a team sport is ideal for integrating people despite their many differences.

- **Health**: This dimension has been paid more attention in recent years following documentation of the health effects of exercise.

As sport is increasingly seen as a means to achieving social policy objectives the Ministry of Culture sometimes focuses efforts on reaching particular groups in society. Currently there is a funding stream for children experiencing barriers to doing sport which is administered in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Social Affairs. SATS funding administered by the Ministry of Interior and Social Affairs provides funding for work on particular social issues, and when the work is delivered through a sport project the Ministry of Culture will be involved in the overall policy formulation too (communication with the Ministry of Culture).

Two main strategies currently define the work in the sport sector in Denmark, one for elite sport and one for non-elite sport, of which the latter appears to have the most direct impact on volunteering. A working group of Ministry of Culture representatives and representatives of local authorities and sport organisations was set up to look at non-elite sport and its challenges. The group found that the main challenges were how to ensure that sport facilities match the changes in the population’s sport and exercise habits, and how to address the situation where teenagers stop doing sport and where children who could benefit the most from sport often do not have access to or engage in it. A report was published in March 09 and the Ministry is now looking at concrete initiatives to address the challenges (see section 2.3 below). A working group published a report on elite sport in 2002 which formed the basis for the 2004 Elite Sport Act. It also led to an action plan in 2007 for attracting international sporting events to Denmark, for which 260 mill. DKr was set aside. As a result, Denmark is hosting more than 50 international sporting events as well as the IOC congress in 2009 (communication with The Ministry of Culture).

As the sport sector enjoys significant autonomy, to the extent that The Ministry of Culture could be seen to make policy through the sports confederations, the Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) priorities are in many ways as important as government policy. DIF’s main objective is to safeguard and promote sport founded on voluntary work, and its current
4 year programme identifies the following as the main areas of work for the confederation (DIF/Olympisk Komite, 2006):

- Simplification and lightening of the administrative burden on associations.
- Improvement of sporting facilities.
- Increase in local authority funding for sport.

While there is recognition among DIF and sector observers that government policy has focused more on voluntary work in sport in the last decade than has been the case in the previous 2-3 decades there is an appetite for more concrete initiatives and more of them (communication with DIF and Danish researcher).

2.3 Programmes

A number of actions have come out of the report about non-elite sport and its challenges (communication with the Ministry of Culture):

- Inclusion of a number of sport related objectives in the 2007 government programme (Regeringen, 2007):
  - In order to promote good sport and exercise habits among children local authorities shall increase their collaboration with local sport associations on work to take place in nurseries and after-school clubs.
  - Central government will contribute to the refurbishment of local authority sport facilities, especially those used for Physical Education provision in schools and those used by sport associations.
  - Support for children who for various reasons experience barriers to participation in sport. 10 mill. DKr has been set aside for projects, administered in collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of the Interior and Social Affair.
  - Improved collaboration between local authorities and sport associations on projects that address social objectives like social integration and prevention.

- A competition between local authorities to become local authority of the year for non-elite sport for which 20 mill. DKr has been set aside.

A number of programmes have been developed by the Ministry of Culture which were initially aimed at improving conditions in the sport sector. However, as some of these are of a more general nature they have benefitted other parts of the voluntary sector too. These are (communication with The Ministry of Culture):

- SATS funding streams (administered by the Ministry of Interior and Social Affairs) which provide funding for social objectives that are sometimes addressed in sport projects. Sport associations can bid for this project funding on their own or in collaboration with local authorities or other local organisations. There is currently a project on improving access to sport and leisure opportunities for children who experience various social and personal risks.

- Evaluation of proposed legislation with respect to its impact on volunteer efforts. The aim is to ensure that new laws do not have unintended effects on voluntary work and make this unnecessarily difficult (Ministry of Culture, 2001: 2). Opinion is divided, though, on how comprehensively this rule is being applied.
The working group The Beating Team (Tæskeholdet) was set up by the Ministry in 2002/03 to look at barriers to volunteering and how to address these. The outcome of the group’s work were:

- Abolition of ‘The Sausage Rule’ (Pølsecirculæret) which in the past meant that everybody involved in producing food in sport associations, including volunteers, had to do an 8 hour food hygiene course. It was an administrative burden and took up valuable volunteer time.

- A voluntary, non-profit organisation no longer has to declare income to the local tax authorities provided the income is used for the benefit of the organisation's non-profit and public utility aims and is not given away to any individual for his/her personal gain.

- Increase of the threshold for VAT registration by voluntary organisations to a level which means that the vast majority of organisations have become exempt from VAT. Previously VAT accounting was a big administrative burden for the sector.

- Improvement in the opportunity for recipients of unemployment benefit and early retirement benefit to do voluntary work.

- Simplification of reporting of membership: Previously clubs had to use different forms for reporting to the sport federations and various public bodies about their membership numbers. This was cumbersome and time consuming, so standardised forms were designed.

3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

3.1 General legal framework

Three pieces of legislation underpin the sport sector in Denmark and the voluntary work performed in it:

The Danish Constitution of 1849, Paragraph 78 enshrines the right to form associations: “The citizens have the right without prior permission to form associations for the benefit of any legal purpose”.  

The Danish Act on Popular Education of 2000 obliges local authorities to support voluntary and non-voluntary organisations working in the area of popular education:

- Paragraph 3. To qualify for support the independent (of the public sector and others) popular education activity has to be provided by a popular education association with the required statutes for its work.

- Paragraph 5. The local authority's Popular Education Committee decides whether an association meets the requirements that entitle it to support. The committee in charge

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6 Link to the Danish Constitution of 1849: https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=45902

7 Link to the Danish Act on Popular Education of 2000: http://www.socialjura.dk/index.php?id=2815_=18&cat=1&showpage=1&cHash=71b84c6f75#7661
of the voluntary association is responsible for the use of the received funding and accommodation vis-à-vis the local council and for accountancy and documentation for the activities. The association has to submit a yearly report describing the popular education activities undertaken, including any fees that participants may have paid, although the local council can decide that this is not needed. A popular education association cannot be a commercial enterprise and any profits generated through fees shall be used in accordance with the purpose of this Act or for public utility purposes.

- Paragraph 6. Support can go to voluntary and non-voluntary popular education associations. The local council defines and distributes a specified amount of funding on a yearly basis to:
  1. Adult popular education
  2. Voluntary popular education in associations

- Paragraph 14. Prescriptions regarding voluntary popular education activities: The aim of the activities is to strengthen popular education and thereby the ability and inclination of the association’s members to take responsibility for their own lives and to participate actively in and be engaged in society. The voluntary popular education work encompasses sport as well as philosophical and society oriented activities for children and young people under the age of 25, and, if the local authority decides, also activities for adults over the age of 25. Support for voluntary popular education comes as subsidies paid for work with children and young people under the age of 25 and, if the local authority decides, also for people over the age of 25, in the areas of sport and philosophical and society oriented activities.

- Paragraph 21. Local authorities provide accommodation free of charge (including for electricity, heating, cleaning and necessary equipment) for activities in the area of sport and philosophical and society oriented activities. The associations benefitting from this need to comply with the rules governing subsidies laid down in the law but it is not a precondition that the activity itself is subsidised by the local authority. If the local authority pays a contribution towards the running costs of accommodation owned or rented by an association it can ask that the association charges a fee for use of the accommodation.

- Paragraph 34. The Popular Education Committee consists of 7 members of whom a minority represent the local authority and a majority represent a broad section of organisations working in the areas of popular education for children, young people and adults.

- Paragraph 38. The Popular Education Committee distributes the subsidies and allocates the accommodation under this law.

- Paragraph 53. The Ministry of Education provides a subsidy for pilot and developmental activities within the area specified in this law.

The Gambling Act of 2006 lays down the rules relating to gambling, including licence and distribution of the proceeds of gambling. The following sections are relevant to this report.⁸

- Paragraph 2. Licence is only given to one company providing games.

Paragraph 3. The shares in the company are distributed in the following way: 80% for the state, 10% for Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) and 10% for Danish Gymnastics & Sports Association (DGI).

Paragraph 6 A. Profits after payment of licence, prizes and expenses to administration, etc., and dividends are to be distributed accordingly: 66.44% to the Ministry of Culture.

Paragraph 6 B. The Ministry of Culture shall distribute its share accordingly:
- 7.59% to Team Danmark (the elite sport organisation).
- 25.11% to the National Olympic Committee/Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF).
- 22.88% to the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Association (DGI).
- 3.41% to the Danish Association of Company Sport (DFIF).
- 7.30% to the Accommodation and Facilities Foundation.
- 8.20% to the Foundation for Horse Racing.

3.2 Legal framework for individual volunteers in sport

There are no legal provisions for volunteers in sport specifically. **Volunteers in all areas of the voluntary sector are subject to the same legislation** (communication with the National Volunteer Centre and DIF).

3.3 Legal framework for sport organisations engaging volunteers

There is no legal framework specific to sport organisations engaging volunteers, other than the Danish Act on Popular Education which obliges local authorities to support popular education of which sport is a provider. Apart from that, **sport associations are subject to the same legislation as all other voluntary organisations** (communication with the National Volunteer Centre and DIF).

When comparing the Gambling Act and Danish Act on Popular Education with the Act on Social Service it becomes clear, however, that **sport associations are much less regulated** than for instance voluntary social service organisations as concerns eligibility for funding and what the funding is spent on. Although sport associations are accountable to the local authority for the popular education support they receive (subsidies and/or accommodation) and for the financial reporting on and documentation of the activities, the local authority cannot be prescriptive in the activities and output that it wishes to see in return for the funding. This is very different from the more prescriptive role of local authorities in administering funding for voluntary social service. Neither does the Ministry of Culture have any say in how big a share of the national gambling profits go to the sports confederations or in what the money is spent on.
4 ECONOMIC DIMENSION OF VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

4.1 Public financing of volunteering in sport

There is **no specific public funding allocation for voluntary work in sport**, but as the non-profit sport sector is synonymous with voluntary work we have used the funding allocations for the sector itself as a proxy figure.

**Public sector financing of sport comes through two channels** (communication with DIF):

- The allocation at national level of a share of the gambling profits, which goes to Team Danmark, DIF, DGI, DFIF, the Accommodation and Facilities Foundation and the Foundation for Horse Racing. At present DIF’s and DGI’s share of the funding amount to ca. 700 million DKr per year in total.

- The allocation at local authority level of support for accommodation/facilities and subsidies for activities, which amounts to approximately 3 billion DKr per year.

The sector may receive a small amount of EU funding through regional development projects, but the interviewees were not convinced or sufficiently knowledgeable about this. Not least, as they were under the impression that the European Commission cannot provide sport specific funding (communication with DIF and Danish researcher).

The **trend in public financing** is that the gambling profits and hence the sport sector’s share of these are declining, whereas the local authority funding (prescribed in the Popular Education Act) have increased slightly. When looking at the decline in the national level funding one needs to bear in mind that the funding for sport from gambling increased significantly from the end of the 1980s to the middle of the 1990s, and that the recent decline is not of a magnitude that makes funding drop to anywhere near the late 1980s level (communication with Danish researcher).

4.2 Other support schemes and benefits

There are **no other support schemes and benefits specifically for the sport sector** in addition or as an alternative to those enjoyed by all other voluntary associations.

4.3 Private financing and support schemes

It was not possible to get data on private financing and support schemes.

4.4 Specific issues: state aid, public service and general interest

**State aid**

While it was not the impression that the rules on state aid clash with the allocation of grants, subsidies and donations in the case of the vast majority of the sport sector that is non-profit, there may be some tension in the case of professional sports, which many local authorities would like to support although they are not allowed to subsidise commercial enterprise. As a result, local authorities instead provide support in the form of a sponsorship or by developing facilities that local football or handball clubs, even with significant commercial income, could not afford to build themselves. A local authority may for instance build a large
sport hall and rent it back to a club at a certain subsidised price. A working group looked into this and found that this sort of arrangement did not amount to indirect support even if criticism was voiced of a couple of cases. However, the question was raised by one interviewee for this study if the case of a local authority building a smart new stadium for the local football club, only to see the club relegated to a lower division with accompanying income loss and inability to pay the rent on the new facility, does not amount to indirect support of a commercial enterprise (communication with Danish researcher).

Public service and general interest

Sport and volunteering in sport in Denmark is seen as something that individuals get involved in for their own benefit (such as the pleasure in doing the particular sporting activity, health benefits and social networking), and not as something they do in the way that one consumes a service. Likewise, sport associations see their role as providing their members with an activity that they enjoy, which happens to take place in a social context within an association and therefore has various positive spin offs such as social networking and learning about democracy. Sport is therefore not seen by the associations and their members or by the public authorities as a public service, but as a private undertaking that is decentralised and autonomous vis-à-vis the state and the public sector.

As a result, the sport sector is treated by public authorities according to a so-called ‘arms length principle’. Thus, there are no specific requirements attached to the funding that the sector receives, unlike in the case of many other parts of the voluntary sector, and the Ministry of Culture is operating more as a facilitator than as a heavy regulatory and policy prescriptive body.

4.5 Economic value of volunteering in sport

As we saw in section 1.4 above, volunteers in Sport, exercise and dance contributed a total of 41.297 million hours of voluntary work in 2003-04, equivalent to 25,031 TFE jobs, and voluntary unpaid work made up 80.08% of total employment in the non-profit sport sector (calculated on the basis of Boje & Ibsen, 2006: Table 9.2 p. 202 and Table 9.4 p. 205).

When calculating the economic contribution of the voluntary sector the Danish Johns Hopkins study used an hourly wage of 194.47 DKr (Boje & Ibsen, 2006: 211). Based on this wage level the economic value of voluntary work in sport is 8.031 billion DKr.

Importance of volunteering for the functioning of the sport sector

The vast majority of voluntary work takes place in local sport associations, and given the size of the estimated economic value of this work it is crucial for the associations that the circumstances for voluntary work are not changed for the worst as an enormous resource would be lost.

It is even more important that it is safeguarded when it is considered that it is unlikely to be replaced by anything else (i.e. the public sector or market) in case it declined or disappeared. Research shows that if social type activities/experiences provided by volunteers disappear from an organisation’s work then they do not reappear in a different guise as they are too expensive to provide for any other party, i.e. a commercial or public sector organisation. The social dimension of an association, i.e.

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9 The hourly wage was set according to a calculated average wage for staff in social institutions and associations who were performing work of a similar kind to that performed by the majority of volunteers in all sectors (Boje & Ibsen, 2006: 210-11).
the coming together about an activity and working collaboratively, is a cornerstone and prime value of sport. The democratic function of sport associations is integral to the sector’s self-image and is the reason why sport associations are funded under the Law on Popular Education. The notion that sport is popular education is unique to Denmark, even if it is not widely recognised among associations themselves of whom only 1/10 are aware that sport is seen as popular education. This is so even though all volunteers will emphasise collaboration, community and democracy as something they contribute to (communication with Danish researcher).

The popular support for volunteering is enormous and it is almost protected against any criticism. However, the exact economic contribution is not always at the forefront of people’s minds. Research occasionally provides estimates of the economic value of voluntary work, including the work done in sport associations. However, the fact that volunteers perform work of a significant economic value is not continuously debated. Possibly as it is a difficult calculation to make, not least as some of the work could possibly be done more efficiently on a professional basis, and might therefore cost less than current estimates suggest. The public discussion about the value of voluntary work is more about the fact that there are people who can be bothered to do it, i.e. that there is somebody who is interested in looking after the children and doing their bit for the local community and local democracy (communication with DIF and researcher).

5 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSION OF VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

5.1 Key benefits of volunteering for sport volunteers, the community and direct beneficiaries

Volunteers

Volunteering is about being part of a community and doing things together with other people. It is about keeping the local football club or gymnastics association going whether for one’s own benefit or for the sake of one’s children, as many people get involved with sport associations when their children become members. Hence, the benefits for volunteers are the maintenance of a local service, the social interaction/community around the activity (which is more than just a side effect and for many is as important as the voluntary activity itself), as well as the lessons in democratic rule and active participation in society that volunteering brings (communication with DIF and Danish researcher).

Direct beneficiaries

Volunteers provide the obvious technical benefits in terms of training and instruction that beneficiaries (football players, athletes, swimmers, etc.) would not otherwise enjoy. They also provide a range of practical benefits such as transport and washing of clothes which saves beneficiaries a lot of trouble on match days and the days before/after. Finally, they offer a range of social and cultural benefits by simply being there to talk to and socialise with. There is a debate at the moment about the benefits to children and young people of engaging with volunteers rather than professionals like teachers, social workers and youth workers. Some observers argue that engaging with volunteers who come from all walks of life, bring different values, and use their everyday language rather than a professional (perhaps slightly sanitised) language is a form of socialisation in itself. It introduces children and young people to so-called ‘normal’ people and teaches them about the world outside the protected realm of the school and nursery.
Wider society

The 2004 survey of voluntary organisations that was undertaken for the Johns Hopkins study looked at how organisations perceive themselves, which illustrates the kinds of social and cultural benefits volunteering has. The type of association that best characterised sport was that of the ‘activity based association’, whose contribution and importance derive from the internal life of the association, i.e. the activities that it puts on and the way in which it works. **Sport associations' specific contribution to wider society is the lessons in democracy, trust and norms relating to cooperation and community that organisational life provides.** This view has been a significant element of many voluntary organisations' self-perception for many years, with 34% of all voluntary organisations seeing themselves as belonging in this category. However, as the majority of organisations quoting this self-perception work in the areas of leisure, culture and sport it is something that sets sport and these other two areas apart from voluntary associations working in many other areas of the voluntary sector (Boje, Fridberg & Ibsen, 2006: 104, 113-114).

According to DIF, volunteering in sport is as much about democracy and participation as it is about the actual sporting activity. Hence, volunteering in sport has beneficial effects for democracy and individuals' ability to take responsibility and contribute actively to society through sport and other activities (communication with DIF).

Finally, the collaborative working and community spirit of the associations mean that sport is increasingly seen as a means towards integration and social equality, whether the associations wish to be used specifically for this purpose or not. For instance, social integration of ethnic minorities is encouraged through membership of a sport clubs under the assumption that such membership will promote their learning about Danish society and democracy through having to work within the rules of the club. Whilst the associations and their confederations are aware of these inherent benefits they are reluctant to be relied upon by policy makers and the public sector for addressing specific social issues (Ibsen & Habermann, 2005: 8; communication with The Ministry of Culture, DIF and researcher).

5.2 Factors that motivate individuals to volunteer in sport

There are no data specifically for sport on the factors that motivate individuals to volunteer in the sector. However, the Johns Hopkins study does provide figures for Culture and recreation which includes sport along with culture and leisure. Below are the **reasons given by volunteers in Culture and recreation for their involvement** (Koch-Nielsen, Skov Henriksen, Fridberg & Rosdahl, 2005: 99. Note that the percentages reflect that individuals could tick more than one reason for being involved):

- Was asked to/chosen: 58%.
- Out of personal interest or awareness of circumstances of close relative: 59%.
- Emerged from prior membership of the organisation: 21%.
- Out of necessity/"someone had to do it": 15%.
- A wish to be part of a social network: 13%.
- As a result of job or education: 5%.
- Had spare time: 4%.
- A coincidence/Other: 4.
- As a result of an advert: 2%.
Generally, the figures show that one has to either be asked or have a personal/family interest in sport, e.g. people often start to volunteer in the local sport club when they have children who make use of it. While there is not much difference between the reasons given by people volunteering in sport and in other areas of the voluntary sector, sport is the area where most people get involved as a result of membership which is natural given that sport is something that people in Denmark do as members of sport associations.

6 EU POLICIES AND VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

Sport is not covered by the EU treaty but only talked about in informal articles and discussions. As a result, EU policies have relatively little impact on the sport sector and none on volunteering in sport in Denmark (communication with The Ministry of Culture, DIF and researcher). In fact, one misgiving raised by the Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) was that because sport is not a treaty matter EU initiatives do not take into account their potential impact on sport, and the lack of treaty status means that sport organisations are not heard prior to their introduction and so cannot highlight any impacts. DIF would therefore like sport to be a treaty matter in order to have the right to be consulted on legislation and programmes (communication with DIF).

The Nordic countries have fairly similar sport sectors which again differ quite significantly from the sectors in some of the other EU countries. The hope is that sport in Denmark will remain autonomous in future, and that this piece of research will help shed light on the differences between the countries (communication with the Ministry of Culture, DIF and Danish researcher). According to DIF EU initiatives today pose more problems for the sport sector than they offer benefits. The reason being that the Danish sport sector sees itself as autonomous, whereas the EU wishes to use the sport sector for various purposes such as integration and fostering understanding between people and nations, which is not the prime function of the sport sector. The EU also interferes in issues that are none of its business, e.g. its interference in the number of foreign players that a football team can field (communication with DIF).

The European Council does some work on anti-doping, which together with the work of WADA (the World Anti-Doping Agency), has been significant in the development of anti-doping policy in Denmark. The influence of international organisation is likely to grow in future (communication with The Ministry of Culture).

EU competition policy

Opinions were divided as to the impact of EU competition law on volunteering in sport and the sector overall.

According to DIF there is absolutely tension between EU competition law and the Danish Act on Gambling, and the tension has been growing in recent years. The EU Commission has questioned Danish legislation, i.e. the monopoly for Danske Spil as the games provider, but despite the fact that sport is so dependent for funding on the profits from gambling the Commission has not been particularly sympathetic. The sector is losing income already because of foreign internet based bookmakers and the government has not been willing to do anything about it due to the controversies with the Commission over the monopoly status of Danske Spil. The Ministry of Finance has formulated a new law which is currently being looked at by the Commission, but it is hard to tell if the new law will guarantee the same level of income as the sector used to receive. Gambling is a complicated area to regulate and nobody knows how many foreign bookmakers will register with the Danish authorities and agree to pay tax.
One researcher predicted that a change of the law will probably mean that voluntary organisations will have to be funded in other ways than by means of the gambling profits, for instance via the annual government budget. This is likely to come with more strings attached, which amounts to a greater regulation of voluntary work (communication with Danish researcher).

Hence, the impact of EU competition law could be to both reduce the amount of funding available for sport and to push organisations into a more regulated relationship with their public funders. Whether a reduction in resources or potential greater regulation will impact on the extent of volunteering is an unknown, as one has to distinguish between the circumstances within which voluntary work is performed and voluntary work itself. Circumstances may be less favourable, but the voluntary work may not necessarily decline (communication with researcher).

The Ministry of Culture did not share the above concerns and stated that a partial liberalisation of gambling is on its way not just because of EU pressure but also because the current monopoly is untenable given the existence of internet gaming providers who do not pay taxes and therefore lose the government, and the voluntary sector, important revenues. A proposed new model is to allow more gaming providers to enter the market on the condition that they obtain licences. They will be registered and pay VAT and tax, a percentage of which will go to the voluntary sector, including sport. The aim is to ensure that the voluntary sector does not lose out, and the different ministries involved with the work on revising the Act are looking at what is being done on gambling in other countries in order to ensure that Denmark ends up with the most favourable regulation possible (communication with The Ministry of Culture).

7 MAIN OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT

7.1 Main challenges

Recruitment

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many sport associations find it difficult to recruit new volunteers. This is down to a combination reasons (communication with DIF and Danish researcher):

- **Ever more volunteers are needed to meet the expectations of users**, which in the case of sport associations often means parents who feel their children should be better looked after. This means that a larger number of trainers and helpers are needed.

- **There is a problem with recruiting young people specifically.** The volunteer population has aged, so that those who helped out 20-30 years ago are still involved as there are too few to replace them. The reasons why it might be harder to recruit young people could be that:
  - **People have children later**, and it is often through children that people get involved in the local sport association.
  - **Young people are used to short-term project work** rather than the long-term involvement with an association.
  - **Young people are expecting to be paid** for their effort.
Young people feel they are not given sufficient responsibilities and interesting jobs to do, unlike in other areas of their lives (e.g. when studying or doing paid work).

To put this into context the Johns Hopkins organisation survey found that 20% of voluntary associations (i.e. not just in sport) stated that it was a big problem getting volunteers to join the committee, 39% stated that it was somewhat of a problem, whilst 37% stated that it was not a problem. It was seen as a big problem particularly among associations working in the areas or International affairs, Sport and Health, and among these it appears to mainly be the associations that are mostly heavily reliant on volunteers, as sport associations are, that find it is a big problem (Boje, Fridberg & Ibsen, eds., 2006: 114).

If the question had included other tasks than committee work the findings may have differed and possibly for the worse. However, the challenge of recruiting enough volunteers is not new and is not an increasing one at the moment, especially when one bears in mind that there has in fact been an increase in volunteering since the mid-1980s as pointed out in section 1.3 above (communication with researcher).

Even if the recruitment problem may not be so pressing today it is one of the main challenges for the future as the number of tasks that voluntary organisations perform increases in line with rising expectations, and because of the need for innovation and ‘fresh blood’ which an ageing volunteer population brings. It is currently being addressed through specific and conscious work to make volunteering more attractive, more of which will be needed in the future (communication with DIF and researcher).

Administrative and regulatory issues

The Ministry of Culture Beating Team brought about improvements in the burden of administration such as the raising of the VAT threshold for voluntary associations, developing standardised membership/participant reporting forms and removal of the sausage rule (hygiene regulations), but more rules keep cropping up. Currently the new criminal record checks (Børneattester) are placing a burden on associations, which have been threatened that a system of control will be introduced if they do not comply with the requirement. According to DIF the way the issue has been handled has not shown the greatest awareness of or regard for the way sport associations operate. There is also concern that trainers will have to be registered in future. Not only would this be cumbersome, but it would be invasive and possibly turn some people off becoming involved. There is a need to consider whether public authorities are using a sledgehammer to crack a nut in the interest of public safety (communication with DIF).

The rules regarding limits on the number of hours of voluntary work that an unemployed person or somebody on early retirement can perform (i.e. 4 hours per week) poses a significant restriction on recruitment and retention of volunteers. A top level representative of the sport sector was quoted by one interviewee as saying that the rule was sheer madness and absurd when it means that a voluntary trainer who has been involved with a local football club for years has to drastically reduce or even stop his volunteering when he suddenly becomes unemployed (communication with Danish researcher).

Finance

According to research undertaken by the Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) access to funding and facilities is a concern for 19% of voluntary leaders in sport. The loss of earnings due to foreign bookmakers operating in Denmark via the internet, and the need to change the Gambling Act has created a fair amount of uncertainty. Even the introduction of a new Gambling Act will not provide a guarantee that income from gambling will revert to previous levels, as games providers may still decide to operate without a
license and not pay tax. However, the reduction in profits from gambling has come after a significant increase in funding for sport since the mid-1990s and there is not currently a risk that revenues and funding will drop to a level equivalent to that received in the mid-1990s (communication with DIF and a researcher).

Perception & expectations of the voluntary sector

More than half of the voluntary leaders who contributed to a piece of research commissioned by the Sports Confederation of Denmark in 2004 stated that it had become more difficult to be a sport leader in the last 5 years due to rising expectations. One reason for this is the increased interest in involving sport associations in public health measures as a way of tackling health issues. However, this is not what volunteers become involved to do and they should not have to do it either. Politicians and civil servants should be pleased with all the work volunteers do already, much of which will have a preventative effect anyway, instead of trying to draw associations into delivery of public health policy. If only enough support was given to the sport sector to do the work it is traditionally meant to do then a lot could be achieved. Alternatively, health projects could be focused on the larger associations with greater capacity, on the condition that they are paid specifically for the job (communication with DIF).

7.2 Main opportunities

Interviewees identified development potential in a number of areas, including support for volunteers, awareness raising, legislation and finance (communication with DIF and Danish researchers).

Support for volunteers

The support for volunteers need to be increased across the voluntary sector, but given that sport is the area with the most volunteers it would make sense for the government to target it specifically. When designing the support it needs to be taken into account that volunteers involved in sport have not become involved in order to solve social integration, public health or any other welfare problems. Hence, their particular interests and motivations should be the focus of any support measures that are developed. It would also be useful to build bridges between different organisations (and the ‘anoraks’ within them) that work within the same or related sport disciplines in order to avoid duplication and promote mutual learning and project development. Organisations and volunteers should be given a bigger role in identifying how to address the problems that we as a society may wish to see addressed through sport projects instead of the public sector specifying the methods and intended outputs and outcomes beforehand. This would make for happier and more fulfilled volunteers, promote innovation and learning within voluntary organisations and facilitate knowledge transfer to the public sector.

Awareness raising

A campaign should be designed to raise awareness of volunteering and to explain about the huge amount of work that volunteers do on an unpaid basis. This might increase the public’s appreciation of the sector and make people realise that there is a limit to what can be asked of volunteers who are already contributing a huge amount of time and effort. The Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) ran a campaign recently with the slogan “Thank a Volunteer” and something similar could easily be put in place by the government.

Legislation

It would also be useful if the proposal that ministries estimate the impact of new legislation on volunteering and the voluntary sector were to be implemented across the
board. To the interviewees it looks as if some ministries may do this but others not. As a result, it is still up to the voluntary organisations to spot where the problems are before legislation is passed by Parliament, which is a demanding and time consuming task.

The government should reconsider the weekly 4 hour limit on volunteering that applies to unemployed people and those who have retired early, as it hampers efforts to recruit and retain volunteers.

**Finance**

The government should continue its significant financial support for the sport sector at little or no regulation. There is a need for awareness of the tension between the growing political interest in using sport associations to deliver public health and social integration projects and the associations’ historical autonomy as regards spending decisions and design of activities. It is likely that health and integration projects will increasingly be accompanied by specifications regarding the nature of supported activities as well as their intended outputs and outcomes, which is totally alien to sport associations and may lead many to decline such work. There is therefore a need to spell out associations' legislated right to tax exemption and no-strings-attached support from local authorities, whilst designing other rules for the funding of more targeted welfare type activities in areas such as health and social integration. Sport associations should have a right to not take part in these projects without risking the loss of their existing funding.

The government could help hugely with recruitment of volunteers by providing more funding for sport facilities (such as football pitches, sport halls and athletics stadiums), as more and better facilities will tempt more people to do sport and become members of sport associations, which is one of the main routes into volunteering.
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Sport Confederation of Denmark/ National Olympic Committee

Ministry of Culture

Bjarne Ibsen, Professor, Institute of Sports Science and Clinical Biomechanics, University of Southern Denmark

Thomas P. Boje, Professor, Department of Society and Globalisation, Roskilde University

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