

**(PP) THE USE OF GAMBLING SURPLUS AS A MEAN FOR SPORT  
RECRUITMENT AMONG IMMIGRANT YOUTH IN SWEDEN  
- THE PROJECT “HANDSHAKE”**

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**Introduction**

The Swedish Sports Confederation (RF), founded in 1903, functions as an umbrella organisation for 68 different sports. It involves about 1/3 of a population of roughly 9 million inhabitants in about 22 000 local sports clubs nationwide. The great majority of administrators and coaches are some 600 000 unpaid volunteers representing equivalent wages costs of EUR 2 000 million annually.<sup>15</sup> The RF sport policy for children and youth strongly emphasises that sport should be open to all youth based on youngsters' own expectations and needs.<sup>16</sup> RF does furthermore state that “all individuals – no matter race, religion, age, sex and nationality have the right to participate in organised sport”.<sup>17</sup> Research does, however, indicate that talented youth and early developers often are given more attention than friends of the same age and sex.<sup>18</sup> In 2004 RF introduced the 4-year programme “The Handshake” with the purpose to attract more youngsters to its activities. The funds originate from the surplus of state controlled gambling of various kinds. The total amount of money involved exceeds EUR 1,1 million to be distributed to sport organisation projects in 5 defined areas: *opening doors to more people, keeping fees low, developing sports for girls, taking part in the fight against drugs and intensifying collaboration with schools.*

**Method**

RF also allocated funds for evaluation of the project “Handshake” to The Swedish Sports Research Council. About 20 research groups representing approx. 10 universities in Sweden received funding in this matter. This paper focuses on the area of *opening doors to more people* – more specifically from a multicultural perspective. The purpose was to analyse how RF member sport organisations processed “Handshake” project applications from sport clubs with reference to immigrant youth. The following aspects were considered;

- Marketing strategies and allocated resources
- Principles for granting and administrative routines
- What are the projects and how can they be categorised
- How does variations between sports influence recruitment of immigrant youth

Ten sport federations within the main organisation RF were selected for evaluation. They represent different sports such as, team sports and individual sports, indoor and outdoor sports, arena sports and open nature sports, sports focusing body

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<sup>15</sup> Swedish Sports Confederation (2004). Swedish Sport – International Agenda 2004-2005, p.3. Stockholm.

<sup>16</sup> Swedish Sports Confederation (2005). Idrotten Vill (Sports will), pp. 15. Stockholm.

<sup>17</sup> SISU – Swedish Sports Confederation (2001). Introduction to RF conference on Ethnicity and Integration, Bosön, Sweden, Sept. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Carlson, R. (2004). Snow & Fun – a policy proposal how to bring children and youth on snow. FIS Youth and Children Conference. Bucharest, Rumania.

dimensions such as strength or endurance as well as socio-economic standards. Data were collected via structured interviews with officials on site and from respective sport federation.

## Results

Selected sports were skiing, gymnastics, soccer, basketball, swimming, tennis, orienteering, golf and ice-hockey. The proportion of projects within the area of *opening sports to more people* varied from 96 percent (ice-hockey) to 25 percent (basketball). Out of the five selected areas 45 percent of all projects were defined as part of *opening doors to more people*. The proportion of projects to be referred to immigrant youth issues varied among the 10 selected sports as well - in skiing 2 percent compared to basketball 95 percent. The variation is due to the fact that team sports - soccer and basketball in particular - were found more accessible, attractive and less expensive. Individual sports – primarily skiing and orienteering – placed sport specific demands on performance levels and parental support thus, making it less accessible. Officials from the 10 selected sports revealed that each sport federation had appointed one person as responsible for processing the project “Handshake”. Administrators in question clearly pointed out that the guidelines from RF how to cope with project applications were vague. General directions to sport clubs from respective sport federations concerning application guidelines involved purpose and specifications such as a plan and schedule how to carry out the project, evaluation and expected effects. The processing of applications varied by sport concerning amounts of allocated funds and standard/details in respective applications. This infers that applications could be a 5-page well prepared document or a handwritten note. The results clearly indicate that marketing strategies in between sports varied considerably. In order to meet the demands and sport specific criteria, RF organised two seminars where all sport federations were invited. Nine out of ten projects focused on sport as a mean for integration, whereas half of those involved physical education teachers and sport within mandatory school as a source to reach the target group. Variations between sport was essential in the recruitment of immigrant youth. Costs, neighbourhood structure, parental support and sport specific criteria could be mentioned as decisive factors.

## Discussion

Immigration to Sweden in later years represent a large number of cultures - often from continents such as Africa and South America - and where sport as a popular movement seldom exists. The intention from the government is that newly arrived settle in urban as well as rural areas. However, most immigrants remain in larger urban areas where also most of the sport is represented. The project “Handshake” involves a tremendous amount of money offering possibilities and opportunities to recruit more participants to organised sport of dimensions never heard of. This paper focuses one of the outlined areas – *opening doors to more people* - to investigate immigrant youth issues. Respective sport federations were given guidelines from RF which did not include detailed process procedures. As sports per definition differ considerably, this could be regarded a necessity but also a disadvantage depending on sport characteristics. Basketball could be referred to as a good example, whereas the sport is very international, attractive to most groups in society and with low materialistic demands.<sup>19</sup> Even though the variation in proportions of projects focusing immigrant issues was considerably high, surprisingly few projects

<sup>19</sup> Swedish Integration Board (2001). *Idrott & integration (Sport and Integration)*. Kungsholmsgruppen.

overall involved multicultural aspects. This contradicts the general opinion about sport – being referred to as an institution of global value and a suitable mean for social integration.<sup>20</sup> Further analyses of strategies and processing from a respective sport federation point of view will be carried out.

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<sup>20</sup> Houlihan, B & White, A. (2005). *The Politics of Sports Development. Development of Sport or Development through Sport*, pp. 209. Routledge, London.