

## Volunteering in sport clubs in Catalonia

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### Abstract keywords

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### Introduction

The Catalan Sport Observatory is an instrument whose purpose it is to provide knowledge for individuals and institutions involved in the world of sport in Catalonia. These agents can then make use of this information to follow up the evolution of the sport phenomenon and to support decision-making in their area of responsibility.

### Aim of the research

The Catalan Sport Observatory has promoted a research called "Sports clubs in Catalonia" in order to analyze the current situation of sporting organizations in Catalonia. Among other topics, this research has analyzed the staffing structure of clubs, with regards to both voluntary and professional staff. Human resources are one of the pillars of sports clubs, because they are essential for their operation. This is the reason why the information obtained in this research is valuable for the organization of sport clubs, the set of rules that regulate them and also to face the future of these entities.

### Methodology

The methodology used in this research was based mainly on another research carried out in Germany in 1994 (Heinemann&Schubert: 1994). The method of research was a face to face standardized interview (opinion poll interview) with a total of 52 closed questions and only 2 opened questions. With regard to sample, 1.000 clubs were interviewed, which was considered to grant representativeness, hence the results were applicable to 95% of Catalan sport clubs with a margin of error of only +/- 3.0%.

### Results

The composition of clubs is very homogeneous and any differences are due to club size and level of professionalism. In general, 61.2% of people who work in clubs are paid employees whereas 38.8% work as volunteers.

Steering Committees, are the main body of clubs' governance, and are made up entirely by volunteers. From an institutionalization point of view, these are formal positions, as they have a fixed role and a fixed tenure resulting from an election process (Heinemann, 1999).

The existence of a manager position in a club seems to indicate a professionalization process as these are paid positions, professionally consolidated and requiring a certain level of qualification. This process can be found in large clubs, as they are the ones that have the highest percentage compared to small ones. In the case of technical staff, in both large and small clubs 65% are paid employees and 35% are volunteers.

Drawing a comparison between positions, team delegation is the position with a higher presence of volunteers (88.6%). The other positions (technical director, technical coordinator and sports specialist) feature more paid employees than volunteers; the highest number of paid employees can be found in the position of manager (85.7%).

### Conclusions

The importance of volunteering in associations is a known fact in the sport system of any country, so it is impossible to dissociate sport associations from volunteering. Thousands of people contribute their time, knowledge and their best intentions to the management of a club and its administrative, social and technical aspects. In Catalan clubs, 39% of the people involved in their operation do so voluntarily. From the study data, the estimated contribution of volunteering to Catalan sports clubs can be valued at over 213 million euro. In other words, this is the amount that would need to be invested into the sport system in order to maintain the quality and variety of the sport association offer if the role of volunteer did not exist.

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