Sport in Sweden
Sport in Sweden

The Swedish Sports Confederation paves the way for Swedish sport

What is a voluntary, popular movement? Which organizations qualify for membership of the Swedish Sports Confederation? How does the democratic process function in Swedish sport? What is SISU – Swedish Sports Education? What has made a tiny country like Sweden so successful in sport?

These are just some of the questions that people ask about the Swedish Sports Confederation which represents much the largest voluntary organization in Sweden. This booklet is intended to provide answers to all of these questions and to give the reader a real understanding of the Swedish sports movement.

The Swedish Sports Confederation paves the way for Swedish sport and SISU - Swedish Sports Education is the organization that is charged with developing it.

Further information is available at: www.rf.se.

Basic statistics of Swedish sport

• 9.4 million inhabitants in Sweden
• Almost half – 3.4 million (age 7-70) – are members of sports clubs
• 2.4 million compete regularly
• 7 000 elite athletes in Sweden

Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sweden a sporting nation</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The idea of Swedish sport</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A democratic movement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leading leadership school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity as a unifying force</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating and promoting Swedish sport</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International collaboration</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and other resources</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facts about Sweden</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sweden – a sporting nation

Sweden is part of the Scandinavian peninsular and, in area, the fifth largest country in Europe. In terms of population it ranks as one of the smallest European countries.

Close to 9 million people are spread over 450,000 km – a population of about 20 people per square kilometre.

The northernmost part of Sweden is situated above the polar circle while the most southerly part lies in the temperate continental climatic zone. There can be snow and ideal skiing conditions in the north while people are sailing in the south. The distance between the northern and southern extremes of Sweden is 1,500 km, the same distance that separates Copenhagen and Rome. Most Swedes live in the southern and central parts of the country.

Unique public access to the countryside

The Swedish countryside is open to everybody under the “Right of Common Access”, a unique Swedish right which allows everyone to move freely in forest and field. It guarantees the right to swim in and boat on lakes, rivers and other open water.

Swedes spend a lot of time in the outdoors, making constant use of the countryside for sports such as orienteering, sailing, canoeing and skiing. Being so used to outdoor activities means that the Swedes have a built-in appreciation of and respect for nature and the environment.

Swedes on the move

In relation to its geography and population, Sweden is one of the world’s most sporting nations. Almost half of Sweden’s seven million inhabitants between the ages of 7 and 70 are
members of a sports club – as active competitors, keep-fitters, leaders, trainers or supporters. Some two million of these are active in sports. Less than one per cent of this figure can be said to belong to the elite; that is, they compete at national championship level.

Sport has an even more dominant position among youngsters. More than two out of every three boys and every other girl between the ages of 7 and 15 belong to a sports club. The profile of Swedish sports is youth sports and sport-for-all. There are some 20 000 sports clubs in towns and villages throughout Sweden. 12 000 of these organize sports for children and young people.

Voluntary societies play a major role in Swedish life. Nowhere else in the world is the ratio of societies and clubs to the population so high.

The right to participate in clubs and societies is guaranteed by the Swedish constitution. This gives everyone the right to found a club or society with a particular aim without outside interference.

Clubs are the foundation of the sports movement in Sweden. The development of Swedish sport is the result of the initiatives of innumerable people. The clubs were created by people who needed to collaborate and organize themselves in order to practise their chosen sport. Thus sport in Sweden was developed at grass-roots level by the participants themselves. This is fundamental to what we in Sweden term a popular movement.

The Swedish sporting miracle
The minute country of Sweden has contributed innumerable stars to world sport. Ingemar Johansson, Gert Fredriksson, Nils Liedholm, Björn Borg, Ingemar Stenmark, Anders Gärderud, Gunde Svan, Pernilla Wiberg and Jan-Ove Waldner have for ever carved their names into international arenas.

Characteristics of a popular movement

- Open to all
- Independent
- Non-profit and voluntary
- Democratic
- Based on voluntary leadership and work
- Dynamic
- A co-operating force in developing society
- Support from government and society
How can it be that a very small country like Sweden, with a population of only nine million, is such an important sporting nation? This is a question that many people ask, not least in other countries. Proof of this claim can be seen in the fact that Sweden occupies seventh place in the Olympic medal table. Added to this are numerous successes in “Swedish” sports that are not represented at the Olympics or that have only recently been included: tennis, orienteering, golf, floorball and table tennis. There are a number of explanations:

External factors:
- Welfare (a long period without wars, no natural catastrophes, raw materials, energy sources, well-developed educational system and good infrastructure).
- Long tradition of collaboration between local authorities and sport.
- Sport enjoys a strong reputation with politicians and receives generous grants and investment capital for sports facilities.

Internal factors:
- Lengthy tradition.
- Organized as a popular movement with sport’s greatest resources, the extensive voluntary contributions, and having elite sports and sport-for-all under the same umbrella.
- Opportunities for combining sport and education, mainly through the national sports secondary schools.
- Long-term policies and major sports programs for children and young people.
- Serious investment in leadership training and own adult-education organization SISU - Swedish Sports Education.
- Extensive sports research, principally physiology.

In Sweden we have a united sports movement that works towards the same vision based on the same values (see page 9-10). This vision is shared by all the associations and clubs in both sport-for-all and elite sports. We are equally concerned to promote sport-for-all and elite sports in that both aspects of sport stimulate each other and help to develop the sports movement.

Our sporting stars are important as entertainers, but even more so for the way in which they inspire young and old alike. Each week some child is curious about trying their hand at what the stars have shown them, whether it is Zlatan scoring a goal or Charlotte Kalla winning in cross-country skiing. Our great international successes lead to thousands of new people taking up sports.

The social value of elite sports
The great social value of elite sport is seldom taken into account. Our sporting stars inspire coming generations to take up sports and stimulate adults to join in fitness activities. They also provide us with entertainment and excitement in our daily lives.

Every culture in every age has its heroes. Our own heroes are star athletes. There is real social value in our leaving the comfort of our homes and going to watch a match or competitive sports. On the terraces we become part of the event and can feel like experts. We rejoice with thousands of other people. When things are going badly we can complain in unison. Then we discuss the match or competition during coffee breaks or among our friends. A match or competition is never a foregone conclusion. The uncertainty generates excitement and drama. Life on the terraces with other supporters is unconstrained and often results in social networks that mean a lot to individuals.
The idea of Swedish sport

The Swedish sports movement adheres to the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“Sport wills - aims and guidelines for the sports movement” is the name of the policy programme for Swedish sport. It represents a common system of values for the entire sports movement and provides guidelines for the organization of sports activities in federations and clubs.

Sport is physical activity that we undertake with a view to performing better, having fun or feeling good.

Sport consists of training and fun, competition and display.

We categorize sport according to age and level of ambition. Children’s sport is normally considered to be up to the age of twelve. Youth sports are normally up to the age of twenty. Adult sports are for those over twenty.

In children’s sport we play and let children learn different sports. The child’s all-round sporting development is the norm for children’s sport. Competition is an aspect of the game and must always be conducted on the children’s own terms.

In youth and adult sports we distinguish between competitive, performance sports and fitness sports.

The idea of sport: We want to organize sport at all levels so that it develops people positively both physically and mentally, socially and culturally.

Sport is to be organized so that it promotes:

- Democracy
- Development
- Gender equality
- Universal right to participate
- Respect for others
- Voluntary commitment
- Fair play
- Good health
- Sound finances
- Environmental awareness
Vision and values of the sports movement
We are a united sports movement working towards the same vision based on the same values, namely “Swedish sport – world best”; a vision that is rooted in all our associations and clubs, both those involved in sport-for-all and elite clubs. We value sport-for-all clubs and elite clubs equally since they are equally important in motivating and developing sport. The 2009 General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation adopted the vision Swedish sport – world best, stipulating that the value system should primarily accord with:
• Sport is joy
• Everyone’s right to participate
• Fair play
• Democracy and participation.
A democratic movement

The Swedish sports movement is part of our cultural heritage and an important aspect of our national identity. Thanks to the sports movement, millions of Swedish citizens have learned democratic procedures, respect for rules and fair play, have developed their leadership skills and improved their knowledge of dietary issues, physical exercise, health and wellbeing.

Sport is organized differently in different parts of the world. Our organizational tradition is generally known as the “Scandinavian” or “Nordic” model. This means that sport is organized as an independent voluntary movement. A long experience of collaboration with central government and local authorities has led to the sports movement being entrusted with the task of organizing sport in Sweden with the help of local authorities.

Local clubs are the foundation of all organized sport. And so it is the primary task of support organizations in the sports movement to create the essential conditions for a successful club. Matters to be dealt with include grants, tax regulations, sports grounds and facilities, development of club democracy and leadership training. The executive committee is, apart from the General Assembly, the most important organ of the local sports club.

Democratic structure

A club is “owned” by its members; it is the members who determine, at the club’s annual general meeting, what the club is to do and how it is to allot its financial resources. At the same meeting there are reports from the executive about the previous year’s activities and about how the executive has discharged its duties. The annual general meeting concludes with the members deciding who is to be entrusted with running the club until the next annual meeting. The basic principle is that each member has one vote.

Innumerable Swedes have first become acquainted with the formalities of democratic government when someone has demanded that a vote be taken at an annual general meeting of their club. As a member of a voluntary, non-profit organization one soon becomes involved in the democratic process. And the Swedish Sports Confederation only admits democratic forms such as annual general meetings, executive committees, nominating committees, rules governing motions (proposals from members) and so on. At a time when many other voluntary organizations are declining in membership, the role of the sports movement in fostering democratic ideals is all the more important.
The path to gender equality

Approximately 40 per cent of people active in sports in Sweden are women. Although much has been done to promote equality between the sexes, women constitute only 30 per cent of the executives of special sports federations.

In 1995 the General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation decided that all organs of the Swedish Sports Confederation and district federations shall consist of equal numbers of women and men. In 2005 Karin Mattsson Weijber was elected as the first female President of the Swedish Sports Confederation.
The leading leadership school

The Swedish sports model is entirely dependent on the voluntary support of local leaders as well as on public financial support, especially from local government, and the widely spread club system.

It is estimated that about 640,000 Swedes have one or more positions as leaders in the Swedish sports movement. Most of them fulfil their duties without any financial compensation. They are to be found on executive committees at various levels, as trainers, youth leaders, officials, team leaders, etc. Together they create the essential conditions that enable the Swedish sports model to function. In their work they often derive lifelong benefit from developing their leadership skills.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of leaders in sport attend courses with the intention of becoming better leaders and developing their clubs. Most of the courses are run by the sports movement’s own adult education organization SISU – Swedish Sports Education. Studies promoted by the Swedish Sports Confederation indicate that what people learn in leadership training courses is highly valued both by sports leaders and employers. No other Swedish organization has such a comprehensive leadership-training programme as the sports movement.

Why do people want to be or become sports leaders?

Source: Sifo
There is remarkable diversity in the Swedish sporting family. There are clubs that unite those lone wolves who, in rain and sleet, cover mile after mile of lonely roads, testing their own absolute limits. There are clubs that pay homage to team sports and collective ideas in which collaboration between individuals and the sum of individual skills determine the result. There is room for those who want to become stronger, improve their stamina, and develop their coordination, technique or tactics. But sports also form an important arena for social contacts in which old and young, able-bodied and disabled, men and women, native Swedes and immigrants, carefree keep-fitters and almost fanatically serious elite sportsmen and women can meet. It does not matter where you live or what the climate is like. The Swedish sports movement offers something for everyone who wants to be a part of it, irrespective of where one lives.

The Swedish Sports Confederation consists of 69 special sports federations. They can be specific to a single sporting activity, such as those governing football (soccer) or rowing, or so-called multisport federations covering a large number of different sports, for example the Swedish Sports Organization for the Disabled.
Sport promotes integration
Some 20 per cent of Swedes today are of foreign origin.

Finding one’s feet in a new country with a different language and culture is no easy task whether for an adult or a child. But the language of sport is universal: a ball bounces equally well in Swedish as in Serbian and one can jump just as far in Swahili as in Swedish.

A study by the Swedish Sports Confederation in 2010 found that sport is by far the most popular leisure activity for youngsters of both Swedish and foreign backgrounds. The study also found that boys of foreign origin rate sport even more highly than their Swedish counterparts. Sport is also considered important by girls of foreign origin, but the sports movement needs to do even more to attract participation from these girls.

Sport builds bridges over ethnic divides and, given its wide-ranging activities, it is the most important social arena for integration. The issue is important to the sports movement; but it is even more important to the future of Sweden.

Requirements for membership of Sweden’s sports family
Election to membership of the Swedish Sports Confederation requires nomination and approval by the General Assembly of the Swedish Sports Confederation. Certain formal requirements must be met. The association must have:

- A voluntary society
- Organize sport that is in harmony with goals and ideology of the voluntary sports movement
- Organize a sport that is not related to any other sport within the Swedish Sports Confederation
- A minimum of 25 member clubs and 1 500 members

Half of the special sports federations (35 out of 69) not only belong to the Swedish Sports Confederation; if their sport is featured at the Olympic Games they are also members of the Swedish Olympic Committee which administers Swedish participation at the Olympic Games for which it receives financial support via the Swedish Sports Confederation’s government grant. The financial viability of the Swedish Olympic Committee is further enhanced by commercial sponsorship in view of the marketing value of the games.

Read more about the Swedish Olympic Committee on page 18.
Co-ordinating and promoting Swedish sport

The national organization of Swedish sport

The Swedish Sports Confederation is an umbrella organization consisting of 69 special sports federations and 21 district sports federations.

Many people believe that the Swedish Sports Confederation controls its member associations. In fact, the role of the Swedish Sports Confederation is the reverse. It is to execute the policy agreed by the member associations at the General Assembly. The fundamental principle is that each special sports federation is responsible for its own sport and any problems in that sport are dealt with by the sport’s own federation. But each member association is also responsible for the entire organization.

Legally, the Swedish Sports Confederation is a society that is regulated by the charter agreed by its members. This form of an assembly of independent organizations is often termed a federation.

The main task for the Swedish Sports Confederation is to work as effectively as possible for the member federations so that these can devote the maximum time to sport itself. There are for example many tasks of a more general character that are either too complex or too time-
The Confederation’s role can be summarized as:
- Supporting
- Representing
- Leading

The special sports federations are represented by 200 delegates at the General Assembly which is the sports movement’s supreme decision-making body. Besides electing members to the Executive Committee, the assembly determines the direction of sport for the ensuing two years. Delegates consider various motions and also decide whether to allow new sports to join the family. A financial auditing committee is elected as well as members of the Doping Commission, the Supreme Sports Tribunal and an Electoral Committee to propose candidates for the next General Assembly.

The General Assembly sets the course

The Swedish Sports Confederation is also active in areas in which individual federations cannot allocate resources, principally in matters of IT-services, finance, research, legal matters and overriding collaboration.

One of the most important tasks is to represent the whole Swedish sports movement in contacts with the authorities, politicians etc. High priority is given to employing the full force of a united popular movement vis-à-vis politicians.

Strategic leadership

The Swedish Sports Confederation is a powerful organ of opinion in the service of Swedish sport, continually clarifying the responsibility that sport assumes and the positive values that the popular movement represents. The Swedish Sports Confederation is a regular consultative partner of the government as well as collaborating with government departments and ministries.

One of the Swedish Sports Confederation’s overriding tasks is that of providing strategic leadership for Swedish sport pertaining to matters of finance, organization and communications. The Swedish Sports Confederation also initiates and supports interdisciplinary research in medicine, physiology, sociology, technology and the behavioural sciences.

It is the Swedish Sports Confederation that defends the legitimacy of sport and reports on the current state of sport, illuminating its extent and importance.

The Executive Committee governs

The Executive Committee of the Swedish Sports Confederation, which governs operations between general assemblies, consists of twelve members including the President. In 2005 Karin Mattsson Weijber was elected as the first female President of the Swedish Sports Confederation.

Two organizational principles

Throughout the country, clubs are organized according to two principles: one geographical and one linked to the sport. The geographical organization takes the form of district sports federations while particular sports are organized in special sports district federations and special sports federations. At the national level the unifying organization is the Swedish Sports Confederation.
**District sports federations**
Swedish sport is divided into 21 district sports federations. Within their respective areas these federations work with much the same matters as the Swedish Sports Confederation.

**Special sports district federations**
Within their districts the special sports district federations co-ordinate all the activities of a particular sport, especially competitions and talent development for youth sports and lower divisions.

**The Swedish Supreme Sports Tribunal**
The sports movement has its own “supreme court” called the Swedish Supreme Sports Tribunal. The tribunal deals with appeals against legal decisions handed down by the special sports federations.

**The Swedish Olympic Committee**
The supreme authority of Swedish sports in all Olympic matters is the Swedish Olympic Committee, SOC. It comprises 35 national Olympic sports federations as well as 12 federations of sports recognized by the International Olympic Committee.

The Executive Board is elected for terms of four years and consists of eleven members.
including the IOC members in Sweden.

The SOC is dedicated to the support of Olympic sports in Sweden. The main responsibility for developing individual sports rest with the appropriate Special Sports Federations but the SOC aims to strengthen the work of these federations.

The principle tasks of the SOC are:
1. Organizing Swedish participation in the Olympic Games
2. Preparing athletes to take part in Olympic competition
3. Selecting athletes for the games
4. Developing elite sports
5. Maintaining international contacts
6. Marketing and sponsorship

**SISU Swedish Sports Education**

Swedish sport has its own education organization. Its main aim is to cater for the needs of clubs and special sports federations in training leaders, coaches, trainers, instructors, officials and referees. One often used methodology is the study-circle, which is based on the concept of a syllabus being followed by a group of club members who share their knowledge and experience. It is led not by a teacher but by one of the participants.

SISU Sports Education is also an internal consultant for member federations and clubs in such fields as organizational development and process management.

Since 1992 SISU Sports Education Sport Books has been a publisher in the physical activity field, with a production of around 400 titles. SISU Sports Education Sport Books also runs a book club with approximately 15,000 members.

SISU Sports Education is also responsible for the Bosön Education Centre.

**Bosön – the heart of Swedish sports training and education**

Bosön – Swedish National Sports Centre – is the meeting place for sport leaders, athletes, national teams and clubs.
The complex, which is owned by the Swedish Sports Confederation, is beautifully situated on the waterfront north of Stockholm and comprises three areas:

Bosön Top Sport Centre: The National Sport Complex at Bosön is home to the Swedish sports movement’s institute for elite support.

Bosön Education Centre offers those interested in sport unique opportunities for combining sport with studies. It also provides programmes for trainers, coaches, referees and other leaders.

Bosön Conference Centre arranges all kinds of gatherings and events.

**Sport and education for young people**

There are upper secondary schools making it possible to combine education and elite sports. These pupils follow a standard curriculum but have opportunities for training during the day.

**A united programme for elite sports**

Swedish sport is developing vigorously. Starting in the autumn of 2009, all support for elite sports is channelled through the Swedish Sports Confederation. There are three aspects to the elite programme:

- Support for national teams
- Focused support
- General support (expert advisers in areas such as training, sports psychology, nutrition and medicine).

Support for national teams helps to make these more competitive and to prepare athletes for the final push towards world-class performance. The focused support goes to individual athletes and teams that are aiming for the highest levels of sport with championship medals in sight. The general support brings with it access to resource people, skills development, and so on.

**Anti-doping programme**

Doping is unacceptable; a form of cheating that damages the soul and credibility of sport as well as threatening the lives and health of athletes.

By developing an active anti-doping programme at all levels of sport the Swedish Sports Confederation intends to ensure that all athletes enjoy the right to participate and compete in sport free from doping.
The anti-doping programme within the Swedish sports movement is led and co-ordinated by the Swedish Sports Confederation and its Doping Commission. The most important tools of the programme are doping tests together with information and education. The tests not only reveal doping where it occurs but they also give athletes the welcome opportunity to show that they are “clean”.

Anti-doping operations have become increasingly internationalized in recent times. With the foundation of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) representatives of governments from all continents are now working side by side with sport with a view to harmonizing and making more effective the struggle against doping. Sweden is actively engaged in this development and has played a prominent role in promoting doping-free sport.

**Lift for Sport**

The Swedish Sports Confederation has a special programme, “Lift for Sport” [Idrottslyftet], which is intended to get children to try out sports activities as well as encouraging older youngsters to continue with sports by

- Developing the federations and clubs
- Improving access to sports facilities and sporting environments
- Recruiting and developing leaders
- Collaborating with the schools.

“Lift for sport” has been promoted by more than 10,000 clubs and attracted more than 800,000 participants with equal numbers of women and men.
International exchange is important to Swedish sport. The Swedish Sports Confederation works intensively with advancing Sweden’s position at all levels in order to increase the influence and spread understanding of the “Nordic model” with sport organized as a popular voluntary movement. For this the Swedish Sports Confederation supports the special sports federations in their international activities. Around 300 Swedish sports leaders have more than 450 positions on executives or committees of different international sports organizations.

The following policy on international rela-
tions was adopted by the General Assembly 1991:

- International sporting exchanges shall follow the goals and direction of sport emphasizing: “Sport shall act as an international means of contact and shall show respect for human equality”. The Swedish sports movement shall have exchanges with other countries irrespective of their political systems and of whether Sweden maintains normal diplomatic relations with them or not.
- The Swedish Sports Confederation shall encourage the development of sport in other countries and take its responsibility for everyone’s right to sport.

Statistically, Sweden is one of the world’s leading organizers of international championships. During the last decade Sweden has, for example, hosted the European Basketball Championships (2003), the European Track and Field Championships (2006), Alpine World Ski Championships (2007), World Figure Skating Championships (2008), the European U 21 Football Championships 2009, and the World Cup in handball 2011.

There are two organizations with international responsibilities in Sweden. The Swedish Sports Confederation is the governing body and the supreme decision-making organization concerning all international relations except Olympic policy at an international level and the Swedish participation in the Olympic Games which is handled by the Swedish Olympic Committee.

For obvious reasons, European collaboration is of central interest to Swedish sport; in a new Europe with open frontiers and new laws and regulations, conditions for sport are affected in many areas.

The Swedish Sports Confederation participates, for example, in the European Non-Governmental Sports Organization (ENGSO), European Sports Conference (ESC) and EU conferences and meetings on sports matters.

The sports movement in Sweden has a commitment to international sports development co-operation.

The Swedish Olympic Committee is engaged in *EOC, **ANOC and various commissions, and has two IOC members. It has bilateral cooperation with other national Olympic Committees.

The Swedish model for sport shall be a useful example for other countries both in Europe and elsewhere. The Swedish sports movement shall assume a responsibility to support sports organizations that are being developed in other parts of the world.

Swedish sport seeks greater influence in international sports organizations in order to:

- Communicate the democratic ideals of the Swedish sports movement.
- Influence the way in which international competitions are organized to ensure that Swedish athletes compete on the same conditions as representatives of other countries.
- Strive for more international events (including competitions and conferences) to be held in Sweden.
- Contribute to increased international exchanges that stimulate the positive development of Swedish sport.

Swedish sport and the European Union

Since Sweden became a member of the European Union (EU) the range of questions pertaining to sport that have connections with the European Union has grown rapidly.

The EU tasks are divided into two principal operational areas:

EU as an arena for sports policy includes work on developing a strategy for Swedish sport within the EU.

EU as a development resource is mainly aimed at making the EU visible and how it can be a development resource for all who are involved in sport. The idea is to increase the Swedish sports movement’s commitment to and understanding of EU’s structural funds so that more people can make use of them.

Seeking international influence

In the new EU Constitution, sport is a concern for the EU for the first time. The Swedish Sports Confederation supports the description afforded to sport in the new constitution and is positive to the fact that sport will now have a legal fundament within the EU. The Swedish Sports Confederation points to the necessity of giving due consideration to the specific character of sport and its independence. We maintain that sport is, first and foremost, a national issue and that it should be treated with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity.

*EOC: European Olympic Committees,
**ANOC: Associations of National Olympic Committees.
A common illusion is that sponsors keep the wheels of Swedish sport spinning. This is not the case. Though sponsors do contribute, particularly to arena sports which create media interest, sponsorship hardly accounts for more than 172.2 million Euros, which represents some 15-20 per cent of total funding for sport if one discounts the contribution of voluntary leaders.

For clubs, local sponsoring is common and it represents an average of about nine per cent of income. By far the largest contribution comes in the form of voluntary assistance, which corresponds to about 70 000 fulltime jobs.

The municipalities of Sweden are responsible for the greater share of public support for the sports movement. A study by the Swedish Sports Confederation shows that subsidies amounted to 250 million Euros, grants to clubs to 109 million Euros and investments in sports facilities to 360 million Euros in 2011.

Government funding amounts to about 183.4 million Euros annually. This grant is administered by the Swedish Sports Confederation. More than 75 per cent of the grant goes to the special sports federations or direct to clubs, based on reported sports activities. About five per cent goes to central administration.

Sport in Sweden also receives more than 9.5 million Euros from the county authorities. Most of this money goes directly to the special sports district federations via the district sports federations.

Another widely held myth is that sport – particularly elite sport – costs society a great deal of money. The truth is that the sports movement also pays a great deal of money into the public purse in the form of taxes and tariffs. Major sporting events draw large numbers of visitors which is highly beneficial to the country’s economy.

The Gothia Cup is one of the world’s largest football tournaments. It attracts some 50 000 players, leaders and supporters from all corners of the globe. In 2009 the tournament turned over some 5.5 million Euros which gave a bonus to the tax authorities of about 12 million Euros.

The Vasaloppet (marathon cross-country ski race) attracts some 50 000 elite skiers, amateurs and spectators. In the course of two or three weeks they spend about 2 million Euros.

**Creative clubs**

Sports clubs show great creativity and commitment to fundraising with everything from tra-
ditional lotteries to sales of domestic products. But the largest single source of income for sports clubs consists of the membership fees and charges.

**Facilities run by clubs**
The Swedish sports movement relies on the active participation of hundreds of thousands of leaders and a political expectation that local authorities should provide sports facilities for school children, club members and other local inhabitants.

At a time when the public sector is expected to make savings many local authorities do not consider themselves able to afford, for example, to run sports premises. For this reason clubs have increasingly reached agreements with local authorities to take over management of premises. Half of the country’s sports premises are now owned or run by sports clubs.
The Swedish model leads to manifold returns

Our organizational model for sport as a democratic and independent popular movement is unique to Scandinavia. It builds on the voluntary contributions of hundreds of thousands of leaders together with a consensus that local authorities should help to create positive conditions for sport.

Increasing attention is now being given to the role of sport in the social economy. Thanks to its democratic and voluntary structure, the sports movement is uniquely placed to contribute to the development of society. It comes naturally to many sports organizations to meet the needs of society by taking responsibility for other activities than purely sporting ones. Sports clubs give the people of their locality good service, not just through their core sporting activities but by organizing swimming lessons, renting out holiday cabins, maintaining ski trails, renting out canoes, preparing skating rinks and much else. Much of this is also beneficial to tourism which, in turn, generates income and creates jobs.

Simply put, sport makes manifold returns: partly in actual money but, above all, in well-being, in improved health, in a sense of community, entertainment, joy and meaningful activities for millions of Swedes.
Facts about Sweden
(October 2011)

**Area:** 450,000 km² (174,000 sq. mi.) similar to California, Cameroon, Iraq, Spain or Thailand.

**Climate:** Average temperature in July is about +18°C (64°F). The winter temperatures average slightly below freezing and snowfall is moderate in the southern parts of the country.

**Population:** 9.4 million with about 85% living in the southern half of the country.

**Inhabitants per km²:** 20.4

**Birth rate:** 1 per cent.

**Capital:** Stockholm, 800,000 inhabitants.

**Ethnicity:** Swedes ca. 83%, European (non-Scandinavian) ca. 4%, Asian origin ca. 3%, Finns ca. 2%, others ca. 8.5%.

**Language:** Swedish (a Germanic language).

**National minority languages:** Sámí, Finnish, Meänkieli (Tornean Finnish), Romain and Yiddish.

**Literacy:** 100%.

**Immigration:** Since the 1940s immigration has accounted for over 40% of the population growth.

**Religion:** 85% belong to the Lutheran Church of Sweden. The rest are mostly Muslims or Catholics.

**Life expectancy:** About 79 years for men and 83 for women.

**Constitution:** Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. The King today only has ceremonial functions as Head of State. Parliament consists of one chamber, whose members are directly elected by proportional representation for four-year terms.

**Universal suffrage:** From the age of 18.

**Foreign policy and defence:** Member of the European Union since 1995. Military non-allied country.

**BNP per head of population:** 55,620 USD; 39,352 Euros

**Currency:** kronor, 1 krona = 100 öre, SEK = Swedish krona; 100 SEK = Euro 1.08 or USD 1.5.

**Labour market:** About 4 million people in the labour force. Roughly 22% per cent, mainly women, work part-time. 70% of all women aged 16-64 are gainfully employed.

**Standard working time:** 40 hours per week, 5 weeks statutory paid vacation.

**Health care and social welfare** are public sector responsibilities, supported by a national social insurance system. Health care is run by the county councils, whereas responsibility for social welfare services rests primarily with the municipalities.

**National health insurance:** All residents in Sweden are covered. A person who is ill or must stay home to care for sick children receives a taxable daily allowance (80% of lost income).

**Parent allowance:** Fifteen months' paid leave from work, which can be shared between the parents and used any time before the child's eighth birthday.

**Child allowance:** Parents receive tax-free child allowances, equal for everyone, until the child’s 16th birthday. Children who then continue their education are entitled to study allowances.

**Child care:** Municipalities provide children with day care and after-school activities at subsidized rates.

**Pensions system:** The standard pensionable age in Sweden is 65 years. Most employees benefit from both a government administered basic pension and a supplementary pension under the joint auspices of the employers' organizations and the unions.

**School system:** Nine years of compulsory schooling for all children from the age of six or seven. About 98% go on to the upper secondary school with both vocational and academic programme. Schools are run by municipalities and provide free instruction, books and lunches.

**Higher education:** Some 40 institutions of higher education, operated mainly by the state and providing free instruction. About half the students are women. More than one fourth of adult Swedes have a higher education.

The Swedish flag.