



# **Gainfully Employed Coach in Sport Clubs´**

**Case: The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation**

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### **Gainfully Employed Coach in Sport Clubs'**

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### **Abstract**

In Finland, the majority of sports clubs are based on voluntary work. The nature of volunteer work and sports clubs is changing. The expectations of members and stakeholders towards sports clubs are increasing, clubs are becoming more professional, which has led to an increase in the number of people in gainfully employment. The third sector and sports clubs play an important role as service providers in Finnish society.

The aim of the research was to find out how the member clubs of The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation have utilised gainful employment and how the clubs have financed coaches' expenses. The focus of the research was also to find out what kind of challenges the clubs have met and how coaches' expenses could be financed in the future. The purpose of the study was to increase understanding of the situation of member clubs.

The qualitative research was carried out through semi-structured interviews. 18 representatives of the Finnish fencing and modern pentathlon clubs were interviewed between 4th of April and 19th of June 2023. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The collected data was further analysed by categorizing and combining them into themes. The interviewees were anonymized. The theoretical framework of the research was based on previous academic publications and research.

The research shows that a small majority of the clubs interviewed have coaches who are compensated. The findings indicated that the size of a club does not reflect the number of people with compensation, the average weekly working hours or having a coach from abroad. The majority of coaches work less than ten hours a week and one fifth are full-time workers. Even small clubs have been able to hire a full-time coach and several of them comes from abroad. According to the results, self-financing through membership and training fees is the only sustainable way to finance coaches' expenses, even. 40 % also use The Ministry of Education and Culture's wage subsidy. The interviews highlighted that financial matters are the biggest faced challenges.

The research was planned to create an overall insight and summary for the Federation about the current situation and phenomenon. The research can be used by other sports clubs and federation for examining the coaches with paid compensation as well as for further research about similar topics.

### **Keywords/tags (subjects)**

sports clubs, gainful employment, professionalization, coaching

### **Miscellaneous (Confidential information)**

## Contents

|          |  |           |
|----------|--|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Introduction .....</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Purpose, goals and research questions of the study .....</b>                          | <b>5</b>  |
| 2.1      | Structure of the study process .....   | 8         |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Theoretical Framework.....</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| 3.1      | The third sector .....   | 10        |
| 3.2      | Professional coaching in Finland .....   | 16        |
| 3.3      | Financing options for a sport club.....  | 21        |
| 3.3.1    | The financial development support of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland 21 |           |
| 3.4      | Pay subsidy.....   | 24        |
| 3.5      | Apprenticeship .....   | 25        |
| 3.6      | Other sources of funding .....   | 25        |
| 3.7      | SWOT-analysis.....   | 27        |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Implementation.....</b>   | <b>28</b> |
| 4.1      | Research methodology .....   | 28        |
| 4.2      | Data collection and description .....  | 30        |
| 4.3      | Data analysis.....   | 34        |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Findings.....</b>   | <b>37</b> |
| 5.1      | The interviewed clubs .....  | 37        |
| 5.2      | Current situation .....  | 38        |
| 5.2.1    | Current funding of coaches .....   | 40        |
| 5.2.2    | Background factors of coaches.....   | 42        |
|          | Employment relationships of coaches .....  | 43        |
| 5.2.3    | Salary models.....   | 44        |
| 5.2.4    | The coach's role and effects on the club.....  | 44        |
| 5.3      | Faced challenges .....   | 45        |
| 5.4      | The possibility to hire and finance coaches' expenses in the future.....                 | 48        |
| 5.4.1    | Guidelines for clubs planning hiring .....   | 49        |
| 5.5      | Summary .....  | 51        |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Conclusions .....</b>   | <b>54</b> |
| 6.1      | Reliability, Validity and Research Ethics.....   | 60        |
| 6.2      | Proposal for future research .....   | 62        |

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>References</b> .....   | <b>64</b> |
| <b>Appendices</b> .....   | <b>71</b> |
| Appendix 1. Interview questions .....   | 71        |
| Appendix 2. Cover letter .....  | 74        |
| Appendix 3. Summary of the tables .....                                       | 75        |
| Appendix 4. Seurojen tueksi: Avustukset, tuet ja hankerahoitukset -guide..... | 76        |

## Figures

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Figure 1 Research roadmap (Burian, Rogerson & Maffei 2010, 20; Kananen 2017, 14-18). .....   | 8  |
| Figure 2 Number of non-profit sports clubs acting as employers and man-years in 2013-2018 (Turunen et al. 2020, 12).....               | 15 |
| Figure 3 The number of full-time professional coaches in 2002, 2012 and 2016 in Finland (Puska et al. 2017, 10).....                   | 18 |
| Figure 4 The structure of Finnish coach training (Puska et al. 2017, 8; Jussila et al. 2016, 60-61). .....                             | 20 |
| Figure 5 Granted financial development support by type of activity in 2013-2022 (Turunen et al. 2020, 22; Likes by Jamk. 2022, 7)..... | 22 |
| Figure 6 Granted financial development support activity by form 2013-2022 (Turunen et al. 2020, 23; Likes by Jamk. 2022, 7).....       | 22 |
| Figure 7 Progress of the content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108-113). .....   | 35 |
| Figure 8 Number of full-time workers in fencing and modern pentathlon clubs (Puska et al. 2017, 34; appendix 3). .....                 | 56 |
| Figure 9 SWOT-analysis of benefits and challenges a club may face when hiring a coach .....  | 59 |

## Tables

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Table 1 Membership and license numbers of the clubs in season 2021-2022 .....          | 38 |
| Table 2 Number of members and persons receiving compensation.....                      | 39 |
| Table 3 Clubs' current funding of coaches .....  | 41 |
| Table 4 Number of persons receiving compensation and their average working hours ..... | 43 |
| Table 5 Clubs' current payment method .....  | 44 |
| Table 6 A summary of main findings.....  | 53 |

# 1 Introduction

According to third sector forecast, the employment impact of the third sector in Finland has increased and is predicted to increase rapidly in the future (Jussila, Laitinen & Myllyharju-Puikkonen 2016, 13, 23; Ruuskanen, Selander & Anttila 2013, 3). Municipalities are willing to outsource the provision of welfare services to third sector organizations, which increases gainful employment in non-profit organizations. Thus, it has led to the professionalization of club activities. Sports clubs have hired more full-time professional coaches to meet the demand. Members and expectations towards sports and stakeholders have also contributed to professionalization, and a similar trend can be seen in the future. (Turunen, Turpeinen, Inkinen & Lehtonen 2020, 2; Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 10.)

The commissioner organization of the research is the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation. The Federation has noticed that clubs need to find different ways and opportunities to hire coaches and figure out different methods of funding. The most important issue for clubs is to recognize a suitable model for their own club. The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation hasn't researched or utilized neither available opportunities, nor information about the clubs' current situation. A better understanding helps to support clubs better and meet their needs. The information can be used to improve the functions of clubs in the future. Other small clubs and sports can also benefit from the results of the study when considering hiring employees and finding funding methods.

The prior research of Turunen et al. (2020) about paid work in Finnish's sports clubs between 2013-2020 and the research of Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen (2022) about professionalization of sports clubs created a framework for further research to expand the employment opportunities of sports clubs. Aarresola et al. (2022, 4) points out that there is only a little researched information available from Finland. The clubs have stated that although information on wage subsidies and hiring employees is available, acquiring and familiarising oneself with information is laborious and time consuming. In addition, the clubs noted that quick and easy access to information makes it easier and lowers the threshold for hiring a new employee. Information is especially needed about possible methods of support an employment, costs, and statutory matters. However, the clubs have proven that with the development and professionalization of club activities, the need to employ people will be even greater in the future. (Jussila et al. 2016, 14-15.)

This research focuses on the insight and experience of club representatives in hiring and financing coaches and instructors. By studying the insights and experiences of representatives, it is possible to utilize the knowledge for Federation and other clubs. In order to develop the knowledge of the Federation and clubs, the phenomenon must be studied and analyzed.

## 2 Purpose, goals and research questions of the study

The purpose of a research gives meaning, motivation, and direction to the work. It includes justification for the study, the topic, the research problems, and questions addressed. The researcher motivated by personal or scholarly interest, conducts research to investigate some faced challenge. (Saldana 2011, 23.) Defining the research problem and questions is the first stage of research. They outline what the researcher is interested and willing to know. The research problem arises from the researchers' own observations or the needs of the surrounding society. (Schensul & LeCompte 2013, 3.) The research problem can be considered as the premise of the research. It guides the research process, and it is a mandatory part of scientific research. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2006, 16; Kananen 2017, 45.) The research problem should be carefully considered and clearly formulated before starting data collection. The problem is often a question of a general nature, which outlines the entity under the study. Descriptive research asks how or what a certain thing is like. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2000, 125, 128-129.)

The research problem of this study is to find out how the member clubs of The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation have used compensation for work to solve their coaching challenges. The research problem has been selected to meet the needs of The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation and to respond the threats and challenges highlighted in the Federation's strategy for 2022-2028. The strategy includes a decrease in the number of coaches, aging coaches, activities mainly on a voluntary basis, as well as a decrease in the number of competitors and enthusiasts. (The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation 2021.) The topic of the study is also linked to the strategic objectives of the Finnish Olympic Committee for year 2024, which aims to increase the professionalism and the attractiveness of club activities and to increase professionalism in elite sports. The objectives also include improving the quality of coaching. (Finnish Olympic Committee 2021, 14.) The choice of research problem has also been influenced by the researcher's own interest. The researcher acts as a chairman of one of the clubs under The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation, and the research is also from the perspective of her own club.

Based on the research problem, concrete research questions are derived (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2006, 13). The answers to the research questions, make it possible to answer to the research problem (Hirsjärvi et al. 2000, 128). The success of the work as desired, depends on the correct definition of the research problem and research questions (Kananen 2017, 45).

The aim is to find out the current situation of the clubs: how the member clubs have hired coaches, what salary and funding models they have used and what challenges the clubs have met. In addition, the aim is to improve the Federation's opportunities to offer support in the hiring situations for clubs through getting an overall view of the current situation. In addition, to improve the Federation's support for the clubs, a material of possible grants, subsidies, and project fundings for clubs will be produced.

The research questions of this research are:

- a) How have the clubs currently hired coaches?
- b) What kind of challenges can be identified in hiring coaches?
- c) How could clubs hire coaches and finance coaches' expenses in the future?

Questions related to employment and gainful employment in the third sector have been studied reasonable amount in recent years. But the field of sports and physical activities hasn't been centrally involved in the studies even the increase of paid work has been part of general social development, and also a state of will in sports politics. (Turunen et al. 2020, 2.) Especially the resources of medium and small associations and expertise to comprehensive development of club activities are limited. Clubs need support and know-how in subjects related to employment, as well as information on working as an employer. This requires not only counselling, but also gathering information for the needs of clubs. Information on sports clubs is needed nationwide, not only for decision-making by the Ministry of Education and Culture, but also for sports clubs and associations to develop their operations. (Jussila et al. 2016, 16, 41, 43.)

The selected research questions will produce new information on the professionalization of sport, for which only little research data is available. The research questions support the research problem and help to narrow the research. Matters other than those describing the current situation and those related to gainful employment are excluded from the research. The questions summarize what the Federation wants to know and investigate about the subject. The aim of the research questions is to provide information to the Federation on the clubs' situations. With the first research questions the Federation will be able to gather an overview of the current hiring situation.



The second question can be used to highlight the various challenges that clubs have faced and may face when hiring employees. With the third question, the study answers the question of existing opportunities and making them visible so that the Federation can offer better support to the clubs in their needs. The Federation is able to offer, for example, better targeted education, find out different methods of support for club development and advice and utilize information obtained from different reports. At the moment, the Federation doesn't have a clear overall picture of how and the extent to which clubs have hired coaches or is the coaching organized only with volunteers. In addition, the Federation doesn't have a clear picture which kind of challenges the clubs have faced on hiring. Also, all the clubs may not be aware of all possible financial support actions. The topic is current and will generate new information for the Federation. In order to answer the research questions, qualitative research is considered the most appropriate research method.

## 2.1 Structure of the study process

There is an established general model for scientific research, which is followed by national and international higher education institutions. The structure of the thesis follows the steps of the research process, ensuring that the work contains the elements required for scientific reporting. The structure of the research shows what was planned, the knowledge base on which the plan is built and how the work was carried out. (Kananen 2017, 12-13, 15.)

The figure 1 describes the structure of the study process.



Figure 1 Research roadmap (Burian, Rogerson & Maffei 2010, 20; Kananen 2017, 14-18)

According to Burian et al. (2010, 20) and Kananen (2017, 14-18) the research process includes different phases, which are now divided into six areas:

**The introduction** part describes the commissioner Federation and background. It focuses to define the research topic and problem. The section clarifies the background and necessity of the research.

**The theoretical framework** starts with a literature review which presents studied phenomenon, previous studies and the concepts used. It defines the key concepts of the research, such as the third sector and sports clubs in Finland. In addition, it introduces the most common financial models for hiring employees for Finnish sports clubs.

**The research method and implementation** are focusing on the research methodology and describe the research plan. Furthermore, the part justifies the chosen methods.

**The data collection and analysis** part discuss the choice of the data collection method. It describes the target group and implementation of data collection. The chosen method and stages of the data analysis are brought up.

**The findings** are focusing to present the research findings and on corresponding to the research problem. It contains figures and tables that illustrate the results and makes conclusions more understandable. The results are examined in terms of the research problem, the used data base and the used methods.

**The conclusions** summarize the research results and builds a dialogue between the research findings and the theoretical framework. It focuses on justifying the reliability and validity of the research. In addition, possible future research topics are presented.

### 3 Theoretical Framework

Research is situated in context; it builds on the legacy of former studies. The conceptual framework includes theoretical and methodological approaches to study. (Saldana 2011, 23-24.) The theoretical part is based on various valid sources, such as previous academic publications and research, which improved the reliability and provided an opportunity to deepen the understanding of the chosen topic. The literature review enables a preliminary understanding of the phenomenon before data collection. The importance of theory in qualitative research is obvious and therefore it's an important part of the research. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 18.)

The theoretical framework of this study consists of three main themes: presentation of the commissioner Federation and the sport, the third sector and methods of financing for hiring an employee in a non-profit organization. The concept of the third sector has been opened to describe the situation of the third sector more precisely in Finland, Finnish sports clubs as employers and the history and current state of coaching in Finland. The financial models for hiring an employee in a non-profit organization make it possible to understand the common financial models in Finland.

#### 3.1 The third sector

According to Ruuskanen (et al. 2013, 9) the third sector refers to the area between the public sector, the market, and households. By its very nature, it is in the general interest. Third sector organizations, like registered associations and foundations, are based on voluntary and civic activities and are characterized as non-profit and public benefit. (Turunen et al. 2020, 2; Ruuskanen 2013, 9, 46.) At the turn of the year 2022-2023 there were almost 108 600 third sector organizations and 7 795 sport associations in Finland (Likes by Jamk N.d.; Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus 2023).

The third sector plays an important role in Finnish society. It plays an important role in the development of society and democracy, as well as in the provision of various services that complement the private sector and public services. There is a lot of activities in areas where the public sector plays a more passive role, e.g., in sports and cultural industries and religious communities. Since the recession of the 1990s, the role of the third sector as a provider of welfare services has grown rapidly. In particular, municipalities began to purchase statutory services from third sector organizations. (Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 9-10.)

### **The third sector as an employer**

For the most part, paid work complements and supports the work done by volunteers. The employment impact of the third sector in Finland has grown rapidly in recent years and organizations are increasingly acting as employers. (Turunen et al. 2020, 2; Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 10.) Over the past 20 years the workforce has grown by 70 %. At the same time, the number of organisations acting as employers has doubled. A total of 70 000 man-years of paid work were performed in 2016, which corresponds to around five percent of the wage labour input of the Finnish economy. 21 % of the organizations acting as employers are culture, sports, and hobby organizations. (Sejlander 2018, 10, 65-66.) Paid work was particularly concentrated in social and health organizations, where more than 40 % of the workforce is working. Regarding to this, education, culture, sports and hobby activities come to a standstill. Since the mid-1990s municipalities began to outsource their activities to the third sector, which rapidly increased gainfully employment in non-profit organisations. In addition to this, organisations were given a more significant role in the implementation of labour and social policy, which brought new project financing and wage subsidy work to the sector. (Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 10-11, 36, 38.)

The share of services in employment and gross domestic product in Finland is already more than 70 %. Paid employment in the third sectors is mainly focused on service production. In addition to this, the importance of paid work has increased in civic-related organizations, clubs and in the organizations of volunteer activities related to those. It's important that the activities of the organizations are based on professionalism. However, the special nature of the organizational activities is considered. The third sector is a significant employer, which in many ways constitutes a special labour market area in relation to the private and public sectors. Essentially organizations are mainly managed by volunteers and working with volunteers put pressure on paid workers to adapt their working hours with the volunteers' schedules. Work is done mainly in small workplaces with less than ten workers and fixed-term employment contracts are even more common than in the public sector. (Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 10-11, 37-38, 96; Jussila et al. 2016, 53.) The third sector as a whole is a distinctive area of work (Turunen et al. 2020, 32).

### **The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation**

The main purpose of the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation is to promote and develop fencing and modern pentathlon in Finland. The Federation was founded on 1.1.2012. Before that,

there were two separated associations: Finnish Fencing Association and Finnish Modern Pentathlon Federation. The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation had a total of 27 member clubs with a total of 975 licensed hobbyist for the season 2021-2022. All member clubs offer fencing, in addition, the rules of ten clubs mention the possibility of practicing modern pentathlon. (The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation 2022; The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation N.d.b.)

### **Fencing**

The history of fencing is millennia old. It started to become a sport at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when dueling was gradually banned in Europe. In addition, it's one of the five sports that have been present at every Summer Olympics. There are three different fencing weapons: sabre, foil and épée, and the rules vary between the weapons. Fencing requires mental agility, physical prowess, and technical skills. (Bristol Fencing Club N.d.) The content of fencing trainings may vary depending on the coach, but mainly it includes footwork, blade work, tactical training and one to one lesson.

### **Modern Pentathlon**

At the moment, the modern pentathlon consists of four sports: swimming, fencing, horseback riding and LaserRun, which is a combination of shooting and running. Sports require different features: fencing and horseback riding require experience and a versatile technique, swimming and running require physical performance and speed, and shooting requires concentration. (The Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation N.d.a.) The sport was developed by Baron Pierre de Coubert to meet the essential skills needed by a Cavalry soldier at the turn of the century (Finnish Olympic Committee N.d.).

### **Sports clubs**

More than one million Finns participate in sports club activities every year, of whom 420 000 are aged 3-18. Sports are by far the most popular hobby for children and youths. About 43 % of children between the ages of 3-18 participate in organized sports every year. Over the years, the number of sports has increased and today there are 75 sports associations receiving the state aid. (Mäenpää & Korkatti 2012, 6-7, 13, 16.) According to The Finnish Patent and Registration Office there are 7 795 sports associations in Finland (Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus 2023). However, it's

difficult to find out the exact number of sports clubs, because there is no unified register of the clubs and the definition of sports clubs isn't precise (Mäenpää & Korkatti 2012, 16).

According to a study carried out in 2018, about one-fifth of the Finnish population volunteered in sports and physical activity. Physical activity, especially for children and young people, is largely carried out by volunteers. (Aarresola et al. 2022, 9.) However, the nature of volunteer work has changed; nowadays people want to be involved more in a project-like way (Jussila et al. 2020, 28).

Sports clubs have a long history in Finland. The first sports club was founded in 1856 in Pori. The seasons of a sports club can be divided as follows (Jussila et al. 2016, 19):

1. the period of organizational culture around 1900-1930s
2. the recreational-competitive period from 1930s to the 1960s
3. the competitive-coaching period from 1960s to the 1980s
4. the period of differentiated activities started in 1980s

Sports clubs have gone through many changes, in the 1990s and 2000s the most important changes were in growth, segregation and professionalization, e.g., in growth of paid employees. The sports culture in the 1970s was characterized as the decade of hobbyism and amateurism. At that time, the clubs were operated with small resources and focused on competitive activities and consolidation of operations. In the 1980s, operations began to stabilize and become more systematic. In addition, educational activities were developed. In the 1990s, the purpose and values of organizations were considered. (Itkonen, Heikkala, Ilmanen & Koski 2020, 18, 120-121.) At the same time, the public sector started to work in a closer cooperation with the third sector organizations and to outsource services to them. Moreover, the public sector began to expect more general social impact from sports organizations. (Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 10; Itkonen et al. 2020, 18, 131.) However, it is essential to observe that in different sports professionalization has progressed at different speed and intensity (Aarresola 2022, 15).

## Sports clubs as employers

The professionalization of sports has continued in Finland for decades. However, only little researched information is available. Professionally driven hobby activities have become an alternative to traditional voluntary activities. The number of hired people (not athletes) has been considered as an important indicator of professionalism. (Aarresola 2022, 5-6, 44.) The number of full-time employees in sport and physical activities has increased. In 1986, seven percent of sport clubs had a full-time employee, there were about 1 500 of them in total. In 2006, 12 % of the clubs had a full-time employee, which meant 2 700 full-time employees. In 2016, 21 % of the clubs had at least one full-time employee, with total number of 5 100. The increase of full-time employees has mainly arisen from general club activities and administration, as well as through coaching and instructing sport exercises. During the years 2006-2016, the number of coaching and sport instructing related employees has more than doubled. (Koski & Mäenpää 2018, 67-68.) According to Statistics Finland, the number of employed persons is lower.

The figure 2 shows The Statistic Finland estimation that around 2 000 sports clubs have had paid employees in the years 2013-2018. At the same time, the total man-years in the clubs varied between 2 978 and 3 685. When the development is examined a little more closely, it can be observed that the rising trend has been the increase of man-years, excluding the year 2017, when the number of man-years decreased slightly. The biggest change in the number of sports organizations has been in 2014-2015, when the number of organizations decreased by more than a hundred. This could have been due to, e.g., mergers and liquidation of the small organizations. The number of man-years in sports clubs related to the number of clubs has remained approximately the same over the six years. At its highest, in 2018, an average of 1.8 man-years was done in sports clubs.



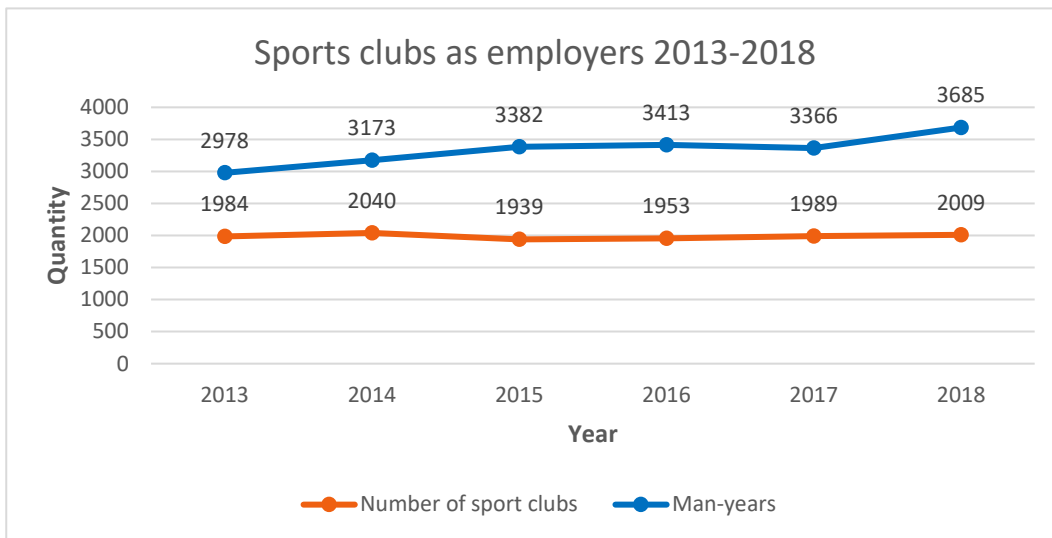


Figure 2 Number of non-profit sports clubs acting as employers and man-years in 2013-2018 (Turunen et al. 2020, 12).

Between 2013-2018, the number of wages paid by the clubs increased by 31 %, being 104 million euros in 2018 (Turunen et al. 2020, 12, 14-15). Exercise and sport management activities and maintenance of facilities employ a total of 17 000 people in Finland. Of these, sports clubs employ approximately 3 500 people. The growth rate of full-time employees in sports clubs is estimated to be between 5-10 percent per year. (Mäenpää & Korkatti 2012, 9.) Payroll in Finnish sports club has raised from 79,5 million euros up to 104,3 million euros between 2013 and 2018 (Lehtonen, Hakamäki, Kukko & Oja 2022, 10). The employment trends in the sports clubs are in line with trends in third sector (Ruuskanen et al. 2013, 20, 32). There are no labour market organizations familiar with sports club activities. Therefore, advice related to employment was mainly provided by sport organizations. (Aarresola 2022, 63.)

In recent years, the state has supported the hiring of employees in sports club. The purpose of the salary support distributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture has been to support the development of the clubs' operations so that the support acts as an initial impetus for permanent hires. (Turunen et al. 2020, 31-32.)

Sports clubs have more part-time employees than full-time employees. According to Turunen et al. (2020, 20) research, there is a clear majority of employees who work less than ten hours per week.

Clubs of all sizes seem to be able to hire part-timer employees, while full-time employees are found in larger clubs in terms of financial figures and memberships. Sports clubs as a form or organization of civic activities are constantly changing and paid work is part of the future. (Turunen et al. 2020, 32.)

According to Jussila et al. (2016, 14, 73) the productization of clubs' activities has had a positive impact on the clubs' economic conditions. The professionalisation of activities, such as the recruitment of skilled coaches, has increased the quality of activities. The development of club activities has led to an increase in the number of different work tasks and the need for employment will increase in the future. External funding, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture's financial development support, has contributed to some extent to the employment of clubs (Aarresola et al. 2022, 28).

According to earlier studies, it can be assumed that the professionalization of activities will increase the quality of coaching. The productization of services will have an employment-enhancing effect and will provide the club with more financial resources to hire coaches. It can be assumed that the amortisation of activities will increase the quality of coaching.

### **3.2 Professional coaching in Finland**

*“There are more competent professional coaches working at different stages of the athlete’s path.”* has been defined as one of the strategic goals of Finnish elite sports. According to a study conducted in 2017 by the Finnish Institute of High-Performance Sport, Professional Coaches of Finland and The Finnish Coaches Association, there were a total of approximately 80 000 volunteer and professional coaches in various sports in Finland in 2016. (Puska, Lämsä & Potinkara 2017, 4-13.) From these, 1 682 were professional coaches. In the mid-1990s, a full-time coach worked in about two percent of the sports clubs. (Jussila et al. 2016, 63.)

The figure 3 shows the development of the number of the full-time professional coaches between 2002 and 2016. The number of full-time professional coaches in sports clubs has been on a strong upward trend. Compared to the number of professional coaches in the early 2000s, the number has almost quadrupled. The change is probably due to the clubs' need to become more

professional, the public sector's need to outsource services to third sector operators and the public sectors expectations from sports organizations to have more general social impact.

The number of fulltime coaches is also supported by Statistics Finland's occupational register from 2014, according to which 1 556 persons worked under the professional title of sports coach and administrator, 64 % of them were men and 36 % were women. The figures include full-time and part-time coaches who received at least half of their income from coaching. From 2002 to 2012, the proportion of full-time professional coaches among all coaches increased from 40 % to 80 %. Estimating the number of part-time coaches has been perceived to be difficult, which is why the study was supported only from the point of view of full-time professional coaches. In addition, there is no comprehensive register of professional coaches in Finland. Only a few sports associations have a coaches' register, which would include information about all or even the professional coaches. Collective hiring may have contributed to the transition of some coaches to professional coaches or full-time employment. Collective hiring has made it possible to hire when an individual entity would not have been able to afford it. (Puska et al. 2017, 4-12, 23-24.)

It is difficult to separate part-time professional coaches and active coaches based their own work. The figure 3 shows that professional coaches work mainly in sports clubs (70 %), the second largest number of professional coaches are in sports associations. The most professional coaches are in football, ice hockey, figure skating and swimming. Neither fencing nor modern pentathlon are among the 20 sports that employ the most professional coaches. According to the research, in 2016 there were seven full-time coaches in fencing and modern pentathlon, all of whom were men. In the 2002 the number of full-time coaches was 0 and 2012 four. (Puska et al. 2017, 4-13, 34.)

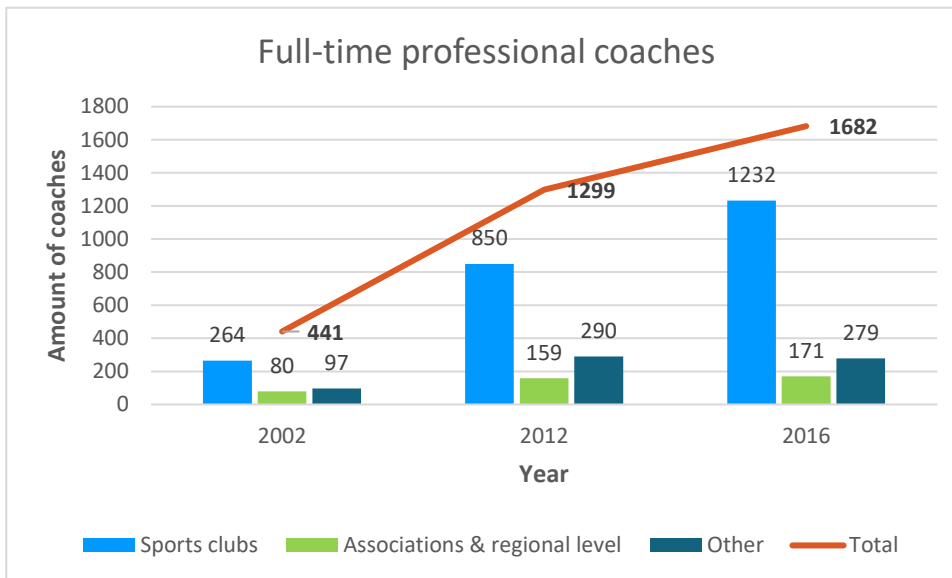


Figure 3 The number of full-time professional coaches in 2002, 2012 and 2016 in Finland (Puska et al. 2017, 10).

The figure 3 describes the number of full-time professional coaches and their main employer. Sports clubs cover all full-time professional coaches whose main employer is a sports club. The association and regional level include the sport associations' /federations' own coaches as well as the coaches working at the regional level of the sport association/federation. The dark blue figure includes, e.g., those who work in the Defense Forces, sports academies, and institutes coaches, as well as in entrepreneurs and under a trade name. In 2016, a total of 139 persons worked as entrepreneurs and under a trade name. (Puska et al. 2017, 4, 10.) During the years 1995-2020, a total of 2.2 million euros have been supported by the state's athlete grants for the personal coaches of grant athletes (Lämsä 2020, 4).

The figure 3 shows that the number of full-time professional coaches has grown steadily in the 2000s. The biggest increase in the number of professional coaches is in sports clubs, which may explain the clubs' desire to become more professional and also the willingness of municipalities to outsource their activities to the third sector.

The authors of the 2017 study defined professionalism through a process created by Harold Wilensky (1964). The steps of the process are:

1. Full-time employment
2. Creation and establishment of the education system
3. Creation of a professional association
4. Compliance with the code of ethics

The process of professionalization included the establishment of a professional association. In 2002, the Professional Coaches of Finland was founded to promote the professional disinterested of coaches and to develop the job description and operating environment of coaches. The Finnish Coaches Association, which is the member association of all coaches, participates among other things, in the drafting of a code of ethic for sports. (Puska et al. 2017, 8.)

Reasons for professionalization have been considered, such as the expectations of the sport, members and other stakeholders. The development of the quality of coaching, coach training and investment in player development have created the conditions for professional coaching. Many sports associations have also created different concepts for clubs to use. (Aarresola et al. 2022, 29, 32.)

### **Definition of a professional coach**

For the Finnish Institute of High Performance Sport, the Professional Coaches of Finland and The Finnish Coaches Association the definition of a professional coach in 2017 is: *A professional coach does coaching work or works closely with sports directly. A professional coach works as an employee or entrepreneur and receives salary income or business income from the work he or she does. In addition, he or she has training related to the tasks. A professional coach bears responsibility for the development of the athlete and the sport according to socially acceptable customs.* (Puska et al. 2017, 5.)

Professional coaches work in sports, but they don't include instructors working in health enhancing physical activity. In a few commercial sports, such as horse riding, tennis and golf, the division is challenging because the coaches may also guide the exercisers. (Puska et al. 2017, 6.)

## Finnish coach training

The role of clubs as employers of sports professionals has grown, but it hasn't reflected much in the vocational education structure of educations or in the contents of the training courses (Mäenpää & Korkatti 2012, 28). In the 2010s, there have been no major changes in the training of coaches in Finland. The Further Vocational Qualification in Coaching and Specialist Vocational Qualification are the most popular forms of education. The Finnish education system for coaches has been developed over the past decades. In 1994, a five-step coach and instructor training system based on European Network of Sport Sciences in Higher Education was introduced. Training can be divided into vocational education in physical education and training organized by sports associations. The figure 4 describes the vocational coaching degrees in physical education. (Puska et al. 2017, 8; Jussila et al. 2016, 60-63.)

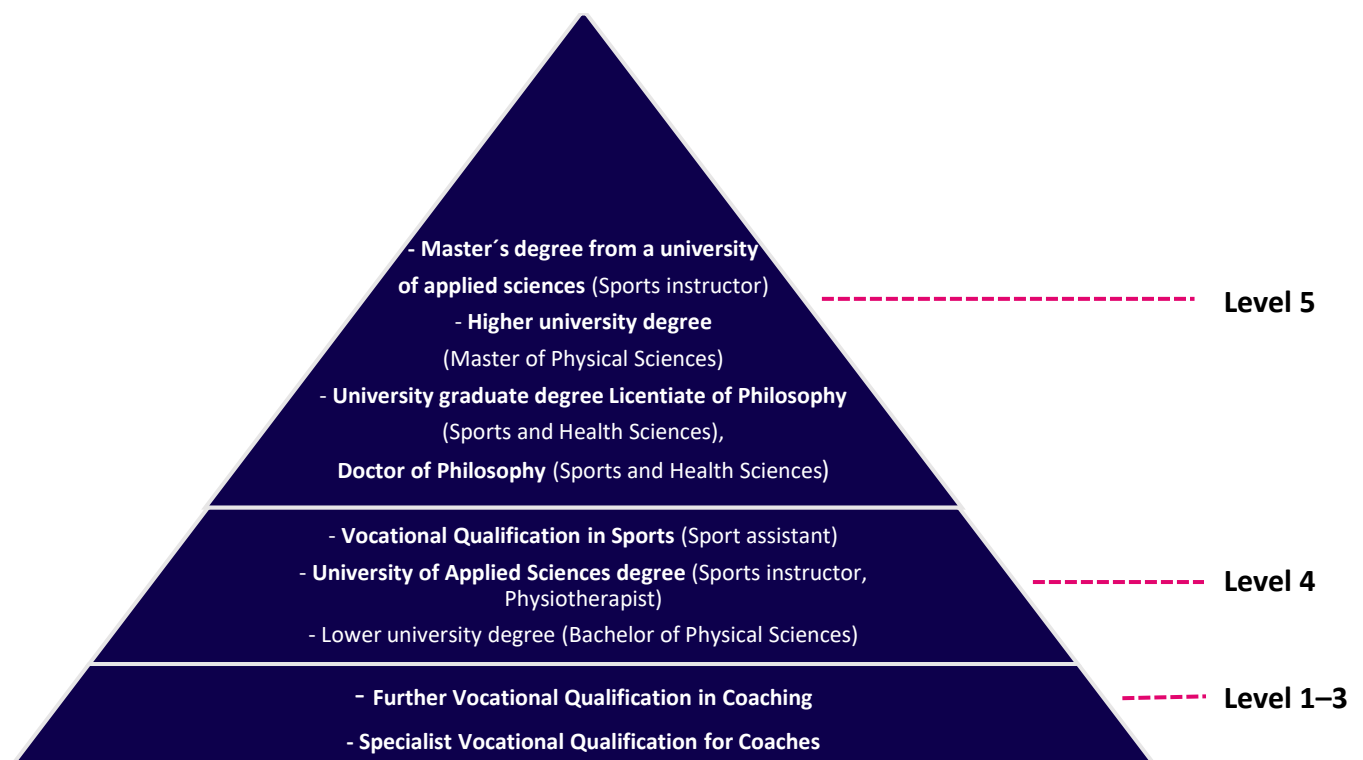


Figure 4 The structure of Finnish coach training (Puska et al. 2017, 8; Jussila et al. 2016, 60-61)

The education of sports associations is mainly divided into 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> level coach trainings (Puska et al. 2017, 8). At the moment, the most common level of education are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> levels, for which 40,7 % of full-time coaches have trained. In matters related to the development of

coaching, the associations are the most important partner of their clubs. Associations invest a reasonable amount in training of coaches of clubs. (Jussila et al. 2016, 43, 60, 63.)

### **3.3 Financing options for a sport club**

The Olympic Committee's guidelines for sports clubs Anttila, Hannula, Koivujoki (2020, 42) state that clubs can engage in fundraising to cover the costs of their activities. Sports clubs can receive income from participants in coaching activities, for example. Regular and continuous funding is important for an organization to fulfil its purpose and to maintain its activities. Typically, the activities of organizations are funded by service income, fundraising, grants, donations, and investment returns. (Perälä & Perälä 2006, 253-254.) The income structure of sports clubs is relatively independent, and funding comes mainly from members. Clubs are largely dependent on membership funding, as membership fees are usually the main source of funding for club activities. Income is also often generated from external admission fees, participation fees, donations, public subsidies, and sponsorships. (Breuer & Feiler 2021, 1, 6; Perälä & Perälä 2006, 258.) Grants can be general grants for the entire activity or targeted grants for specific activities, projects, or investments.

#### **3.3.1 The financial development support of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland**

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland awards annually financial development support for club activities. It has been distributed from the proceeds of gaming and betting since 1999. The support is intended to increase children's and youngsters' sports hobbies and to develop versatile organized physical activities. The grant is granted to the recipient as a discretionary special grant. Local registered associations organizing sport and/or physical activities can apply for grants. Since 2009, there has been two types of grants: salary support for recruitment of staff and operational support to develop club activities. (The Ministry of Education and Culture N.d.; Lehtonen et al. 2022, 3.) During the years 2013-2020 fencing has received salary assistance for a total of eight projects (Turunen et al. 2020, 35).

The figure 5 and 6 shows that total of 3 857 project received in total 40.8 million euros between 2013 and 2022. During the same period 24.3 million euros were granted as a salary support for 1 629 projects. The number of salary support grants was lower during the Covid-19 than before or after it. The average wage subsidy in euros has also increased over the past two years. The trend

of the quantitative share of salary support projects in the total number of projects has remained at the same level during the review period, being approximately 35-40 %. In euro terms, the share of salary support projects has decreased from the peak in years 2013-2015, being currently approximately 50 %.

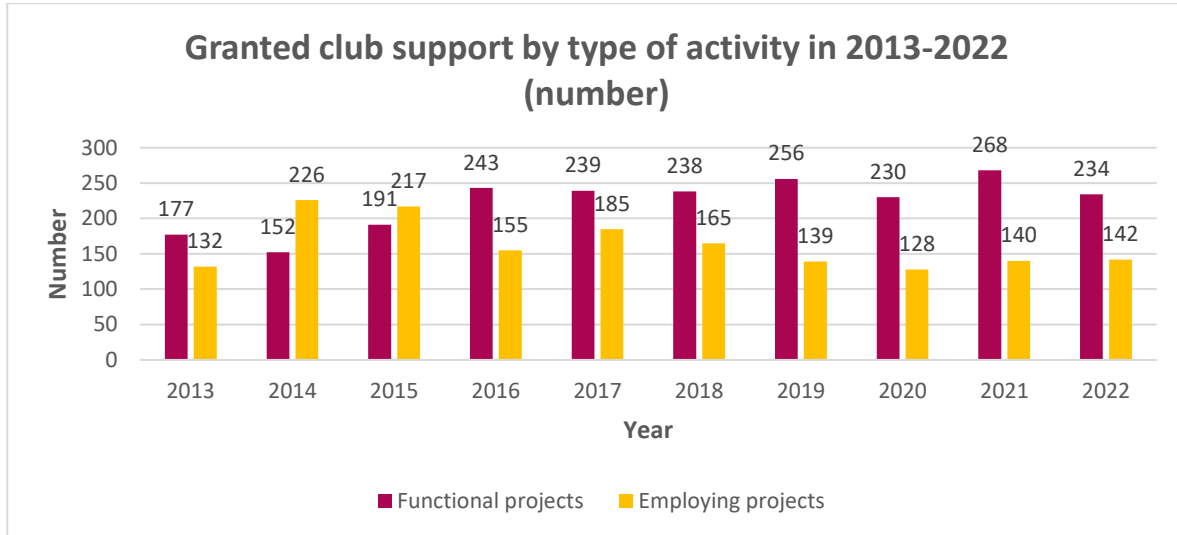


Figure 5 Granted financial development support by type of activity in 2013-2022 (Turunen et al. 2020, 22; Likes by Jamk. 2022, 7).

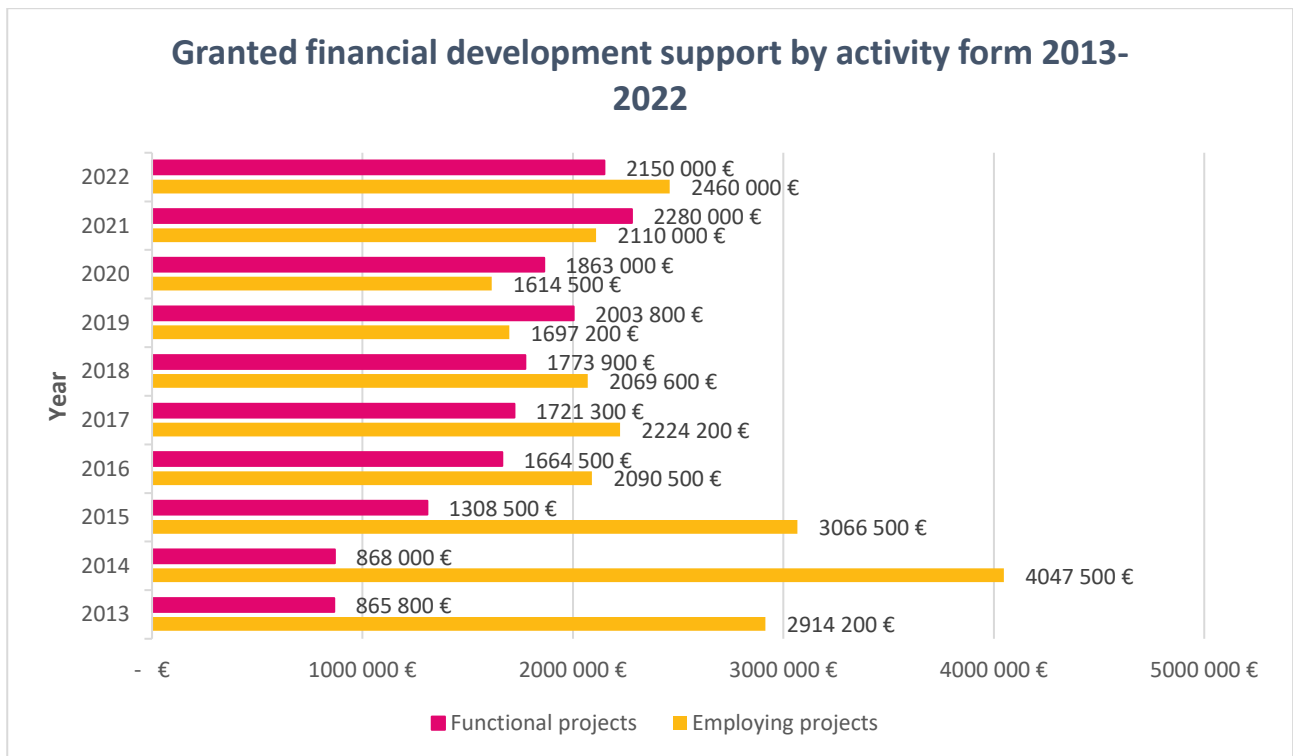


Figure 6 Granted financial development support activity by form 2013-2022 (Turunen et al. 2020, 23; Likes by Jamk. 2022, 7).



According to the Ministry's application guidelines, the minimum support to be applied is 2 500€ and the maximum 25 000€. The average amount of salary support has been between 12 000€ – 17 000€. (Lehtonen et al. 2022, 3-4; Likes by Jamk. 2022, 7.) Salary support can be applied for a one- or two-year project, in two-year projects the club's self-financing share must increase in the second year. Club support is granted for joint projects of many sports or clubs as well as for projects that develop the activities of one sport or division. (Turunen et al. 2020, 23, 29.)

In the salary support project, the goal must be to hire a full-time employee for a permanent employment relationship. Employees of sport clubs that received salary support, were mostly part-time workers, regardless the number of memberships. On average, clubs with at least 500 members or an annual budget at least 250 000€ hired full-time employees. About 50 % of the clubs that received salary support employed an employee after the end of the grant period. However, it mattered how many years the club had received support. Most likely, employment continued after the grant period in those clubs that had received support for several years. Moreover, clubs that did not hire their first employee were more likely to be able to continue hiring. (Lehtonen et al. 2022, 6, 8.)

The ability of clubs to hire employees and establish employment relationships after salary support varies a lot (Turunen et al. 2020, 31-32). Most often the reasons for termination of employment were financial difficulties or employee-related issues like changing the working place. Other reasons were that the employee's skills weren't at the required level or the club didn't find suitable employee. Essentially the most common income source to continue hiring employees was activity and membership fees (90 %) and the second important grants (64 %). (Lehtonen et al. 2022, 8; Turunen et al. 2019.)

The figure 5 shows that since 2014 there has been around 400 projects supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland each year. It also shows that in 2020 there were fewer supported projects (358), probably due to Covid-19. In 2021 the number of supported projects was already at the same level as before. Since 2016, each year a numerically larger proportion of the projects supported has been functional projects, so that in 2017 approximately 56 % (239) of supported 424 projects were functional projects, in 2022 the corresponding figures were 62 % (234) of 376 projects.

The figure 6, on the other hand, shows that until 2015, the main focus of financial support in euros was on employing projects, for example, in 2015 about 70 % (3 066 500€) of the euro-denominated support (4 375 000€) went to employing projects. Since then, the support has been distributed more evenly: in 2022, approximately 53 % (2 460 000€) of the euro-denominated support (4 610 000€) was allocated to employing projects.

### **3.4 Pay subsidy**

In addition to municipalities and companies, third sector organizations may receive pay subsidies. The relative share of those working with pay subsidy in the third sector is higher than in other labour market. In 2011 around 11 000 people were employed in organizations and foundations with pay subsidies. (Ruuskanen, et al. 2013, 16.)

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Economic Development Office grant pay subsidy for companies and organizations that hire unemployed persons. It's discretionary subsidy aimed to encourage employment in the open labour market for unemployed jobseekers who have a lack of professional skills or disability or an illness that affect the ability to work, or when they are 60 old and long-term unemployed. The main purpose of the grant is to compensate the employee's lower productivity. Financial support can be 30-50 % of the payroll costs. In some situations, associations and foundations can receive a salary subsidy of 100 % of the salary costs. In 2022, the maximum amount was 1 400€ per month. On average, during 2015-2021 the number of persons working with pay subsidy has varied between 17 400 – 22 700 employed persons. The pay subsidy is paid annually in the amount of approximately 200-250 million euros. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland N.d.)

Pay subsidy is meant for all employers, except central government agencies. The decision on pay subsidy must be done before the employment relationship can start. According to the grant rules the employer must commit to pay a wage in accordance with collective agreements, the employer has to fulfill its statutory obligations and the grant can't distort competition. Support can be granted for full-time employment contracts valid until further notice, fixed-term full-time employment contracts, apprenticeship training and part-time employment, if this promotes the job seeker's employment opportunities. The grant can be applied from Employment and Economic Development Office. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland 2023.)

### 3.5 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship training is an effective way to recruit or train current staff, there are more than 160 degrees available. The employer, the student and the educational institution are the parties to the training. 80 % of the studies consist of work task at the workplace and 20 % consist of theoretical studies organized by the apprenticeship operator. The only direct cost to the employer is the salary costs. An employer may receive training compensation if the employer and training provider estimate that the training will result in costs for the employer. (Oppisopimus N.d.)

If an organization or company hires an unemployed jobseeker, it can apply for a pay subsidy from the Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland. The office will decide the amount and duration of the support. Apprenticeship training or employment can't begin before the grant decision is made. (Oppisopimus N.d.)

### 3.6 Other sources of funding

In addition to national general subsidies, sports clubs are using local and own fundings like membership fees and donations (Aarresola et al. 2022, 30). Membership fees and donations can be assumed to have remained more or less unchanged, but public funding, which accounts for about a third of the funding of organisations has tightened and become more compensated (Selander 2018, 28).

#### **Cities' and municipalities' grants**

Cities and municipalities award operating and premises grants. The number and amount of grants and the application processes vary from city to city and from year to year. (Suomen Pakolaisapu N.d.) In Helsinki, the operating grant for sport is a general grant for the activities of sports clubs and other sports groups. The grant is awarded on a discretionary basis and is based on numerical criteria. The grant may be used to cover expenditure arising from the club's own activities. The grant must be used for the club's non-profit activities. (Helsinki N.d.b.)

### **Clubs' own fundraising**

Financial resources typical for the third sector are membership fees (Aarresola et al. 2022, 30). Typical forms of funding for the actual operations of a club are, for example, membership fees, participation fees, operating income, and advertising and publicity income (Anttila et al. 2020, 9). Most of the work of sport and sports non-governmental organisations is done by volunteers as unremunerated work in which the club has no employer responsibilities. An example of regular volunteering is running a weekly club without compensation. Unremunerated work is usually defined as work done for someone else without compensation. (Anttila et al. 2020, 14, 48.)

### **Summer work allowances**

Various private, public and third sector actors provide subsidies to clubs to help young people find summer jobs. For example, regional sports organisations support short-term employment of 15–29-year-olds between 1 April and 30 September with 700€ per person. (Sports Federation of Southern Finland 2023.) OP banks support the summer employment of 15–17-year-olds for two weeks, for example in clubs. Subsidy is 400€ per person. (OP-bank N.d.) In addition, municipalities and cities have their own summer vouchers to help ninth-grader students to find summer jobs (Helsinki. N.d.a). Clubs can inform that they are willing to offer work for youths with summer vouchers. The amount of aid varies depending on the municipality/city.

### **Companies' and foundations' grants and sponsorship**

Sponsorship is a partnership between the company and the target organization, which is a win-win collaboration. For the company, it is borrowing of the image of the sponsoring organization and using it in marketing communications. The company gets access to the image of the organization, and the organization receives financial support, goods, or services from the company. Sponsorship is characterized by contractual, publicity and marketing objectives. A sport organization must clearly define its property assets and what it has to offer for the sponsor. (Alaja 2001, 23; Doherty & Murray 2007, 50.) Charity (and grants) differs from sponsorship in that charity is about helping others without the self-interest that is primarily involved. Sponsorship is a mutual cooperation between two different parties, the company and the target. (Pulli 2023). Sponsorship and charity are often confused with each other.

### **3.7 SWOT-analysis**

A SWOT-analysis can be used to determine the current state of operations internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. The methodology is a good tool for planning an activity or project, because it helps to develop awareness of the current situation and it helps in strategic planning and decision-making. It provides assistance in exploring opportunities, making decisions, and identifying opportunities and problems. The main idea is to identify issues that affect both the current state of the matter under review and its future. SWOT-analysis is a simple way to group many factors affecting the functioning of an organization into a visual quadrilateral format. (Renault N.d.)

## 4 Implementation

The nature of the phenomenon under the study defines the approach of the research (Kananen 2017, 52-53). Before data collection, the appropriate approach for the research must be decided. In addition, reasons for the choice should be considered, and decided how the material is collected. The choice depends on the selected research assignment and the research problem. Most commonly research methods are divided in to qualitative and quantitative approaches. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2000, 111-112, 120, 124-125.)

### 4.1 Research methodology

Qualitative research is an umbrella term for methods for the study of natural social life. The goals are multiple depending on the purpose of the particular study. Outcomes are most often composed of essential representation of findings from the analytic synthesis of data which can include for example understanding individual and social complexity or documentation of cultural observations. (Saldana 2011, 3-4.) Qualitative research is by nature a comprehensive acquisition of information and the material is gathered in natural, real situations. The starting point of the research is not testing a theory or hypothesis, but a multifaceted and detailed examination of the material. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2000, 155.) Qualitative research is used when the phenomenon to be studied is to be explained and understood (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 28). The purpose of the project and the nature of the themes to be addressed will provide the framework for a qualitative research report (Burian et al. 2010, 42).

For this study, qualitative research is chosen based on the purpose and interests of the study. It allows to describe and understand the phenomenon and answer the research questions. A qualitative approach allows to gather a large amount of detailed information on the chosen subject. The aim of the study is to deepen the understanding of the employment opportunities and the current situation of the member clubs of the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation member clubs' employment opportunities and the current situation, bring visible encountered challenges, as well as to bring visible proposals for funding gainfully employment and to develop the competence of associations.

Different research strategies can be used in qualitative research, such as: ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study, action research, biographical research, and classical content analysis (Saldana 2011, 4-21; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2004, 25, 152). A case study focuses on a single unit, for example one group or organization. In the case study, the selected object is valued, which allows for in-depth examination. The case study often answers the questions “how” and “why”. (Saldana 2011, 8-9.) In a case study, an individual case is studied in the context of its environment in natural situations. The aim is often to describe phenomena and look relationships. A case study is especially good for forming a rich picture and gaining analytical insights from it. (Gary 2011, 10-11, 23.)

A case study was chosen as the research strategy because the aim of the study is to describe the phenomenon as accurately as possible and to get a comprehensive picture of the situation. It allows to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of the phenomenon in a real-life context. By conducting a case study, it's possible to learn what has worked well in clubs, what has not, and what could be opportunities in the future. It can generate new findings of the situation.

In qualitative research, it is typical that the material is collected from the subjects in an interactive relationship, the research material comes from several sources and the researcher plays an active role as the collector of the material (Kananen 2017, 32-34). Therefore, the individuals from whom the information is collected play an important role. It's important that they know as much as possible about the phenomenon and are suitable for the purpose. The selection and appropriateness of the respondents must be explained in the report, and they must be justified. The research method brings out the research subjects' observations of situations and gives the opportunity to consider their experience. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2004, 27; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85-86.) The criterion of scientific quality of data is not quantity, but quality. In qualitative research, a discretionary sample is important, focusing on those who know as much as possible about the chosen topic. (Tuomi et al. 2009, 18.)

The target group is limited to the member clubs under the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation. The selection criteria for the interviewees were that the selected persons represent a club under the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation, are officials of the club and know their club's situation as well as possible. Demographic factors are not selection criteria in this study.

Multiple clubs are selected for the research for comparison and contrast of the experiences. Thus, the case group seems to represent all the member clubs under the Federation. The material collected from club representatives has as an important role in the research.

## **4.2 Data collection and description**

In qualitative research the most common data collection methods are interview, survey, observation and collected information based on various documents. The activity of the informant is separating survey and interview from each other. An interview is a personal conversation where the interviewer presents questions orally, while with survey the informants fill the questionnaire given to them. The advantage of an interview is that the interviewer can repeat, clarify, and ask additional questions. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 71, 73, 75.)

Interview is chosen for the data collection method because the answers are based on the interviewees' own experiences and perceptions and with interviewees through it is possible to answer the research problem. The survey is not selected because it doesn't allow additional questions, given the opportunity to clarify the answers or ask for reasons. In a survey, the same question may be understood in different ways. In an interview, it is possible to minimise misunderstandings by explaining. From the research problem and questions point of view the interview is a better approach because the aim is to collect information from a specific target group as comprehensively as possible. At the same time, it is possible to be sure that the desired person has answered the questions. The commissioner organization of the research also requires an interview to be conducted.

A semi-structured interview is one data collection method that allows to ask detailed questions and discuss with the interviewees. The method is characterized by the fact that the interviewees have experience in current situation. Interviews highlight the respondent's personal experiences and thoughts. The semi-structured interview is progressing according to the selected themes and related detailed questions. The questions are the same for all, but the responses are expected to vary. The main purpose is to find with qualitative data set patterns within cases and themes. (Schensul & LeCompte 2012, 171-172.)



A semi-structured individual interview is chosen as the implementation method of the research because of its flexibility and because it's important to collect as much information as possible about the research topic. Semi-structured interview enables to ask more detailed questions and, if necessary, to change the order of the interview questions. Couple or group interviews were not chosen because the interviewees come from different clubs. The couple or group interview could influence the interviewees' willingness to talk openly about their own club's affairs and thoughts.

Representatives are selected by their knowledge of the topic, and they need to meet the appropriate for the purpose criteria. Participation in the interview need to be voluntary and it is good to provide information beforehand about the target of the research and information about the interview. In an interview, the most important thing is to obtain as much information as possible about the desired topic, which is why it is justified and advisable to provide the interviewees interview questions or topics well in advance so that they can familiarise themselves with them. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 73, 85-86.) The way the questions are framed affects the amount of information obtained, as well as its quality and depth. Questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" answers are dangerous. These questions should be avoided, because in qualitative research, the interviewees must be able to tell as much as possible about the phenomenon being studied. Also, the questions should not be too guiding for the respondent. In qualitative research, structured questions with predefined answer options can be used as background information. Open-ended questions provide more and broader information than closed questions. Basic questions are used to describe and open the phenomenon, such as "what", "how" and "why". (Kananen 2014, 88-89, 92, 94.) It is good to test interview questions beforehand with someone not involved with the research (Saldana 2011, 37).

Participation in the interviews is voluntary. The target of the research and information about the interviews as well as interview questions are provided in advance via e-mail, so that the interviewees have time to familiarize themselves with the topic and think about answers in advance. This will help to get as much information as possible on the chosen phenomenon, when allowing interviewees to reflect and find out answers in advance. Pre-selected themes on the interview are based on the research framework. The questions shown in appendix 1 are designed to provide as much information as possible on the chosen topic, which is why there are no straightforward "yes" and "no" questions. Questions have also been withdrawn to avoid leading questions. Background

information questions have utilised structured questions with pre-defined answer options for collecting background information in the same format. The other questions are basic questions aimed at obtaining empirical knowledge on a broad scale.

Respondents have an opportunity to interrupt the interview and ask questions at any point. The interview questions are tested one week before the first interview with a neutral person, who does not take part in the research. It offers an important possibility to test the interview questions and their comprehensibility, as well as to test the remote connections and the estimated length of the interview. Representatives are selected by their knowledge and experience of the topic, and they meet the appropriate for the purpose criteria because interviewees have deep understanding of the affairs of their own club.

Interview themes and questions are created based on earlier studies of the topic, theoretical framework of the research and the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation's needs. Representatives of the Federation had the opportunity to influence on selected questions. Of the wish of the Federation, the information about the research and interview invitation are send to all member clubs in April by e-mail. Representatives are told that interviews would be implemented anonymously but their organizations details could be recognizable. Nonetheless, the background information of the interviewees is asked during the interview, so that clarification to the answers could be requested afterwards, if necessary. However, the background information is not used in the analysis of the answers.

The primary purpose of the interview is to gain a deeper understanding about the current situation of the clubs and recognize suitable models for the clubs. Interview invitations were sent to all 27 member clubs, of which 18 were willing to participate in the interview. In total, 18 representatives from 18 different Finnish fencing and modern pentathlon clubs interviewed for the research between 4<sup>th</sup> of April and 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. 16 of the interviewees are on the board of the representative club, one is coach, and one is official. All except two interviews are held via Microsoft Teams. One interview is done via WhatsApp videocall and one via phone call at the request of the interviewees. Representatives are explained that they should answer to the questions from the club's perspective. The interviews are held in Finnish to ensure that the participants understand the questions correctly. All the interviews are recorded and transcribed.

The interview form has three sections: background information, current state, and future plans (see Appendix 1). Background questions are used to understand the background factors of the club represented by the respondent. The questions about the current situation are expected to answer to the club's current employee and voluntary situation, resources and used funding models. While the last part is expected to clarify the club's future plans and needs related to paid workers and founding models.

Reliability analysis in qualitative research is tangential to objectivity, because in qualitative research the researcher has a lot of power. The researcher decides, for example, who to study, what and how to ask and how to analyse and interpret the collected data. Research must be carried out according to the rules of science. The reliability of research can be improved by collecting data from different sources and comparing it with the information obtained. Adequate documentation must be ensured, and the decisions taken at different stages must be described. (Kananen 214, 266-269.)

The research is carried out in accordance with scientific rules and JAMK's research ethics guidelines. The way the research is carried out is described and the choices made are justified. The interviewees are selected from persons who are believed to provide the broadest possible picture of the phenomenon under study. Previous research findings are compared with the results of the study.

Moral and legal codes guide ethical treatment of people involved in the research. Voluntariness of participants' in the research and researcher's supportive rapport with them is necessary of the ethical implementation of research. (Saldana 2011, 24.) Participation needs to base on voluntariness, and they need to have the right to interrupt their participation at any time and the right to refuse to be interviewed afterwards. The reliability of the research increases if the respondents are aware of the questions in advance. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2017, 63, 116; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 85-86.) The anonymity of the subjects must be ensured. The data obtained from the interview is not allowed to use for any other purpose than promised. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2017, 63, 116.)

Participants are volunteers and they have the right to withdraw from the research. Interviewees have the right to deny afterwards the use of the interview data as research material. The data

obtained from the survey will not be disclosed to third parties and will not be used for any other purpose than that for which they were authorised. Interviews are conducted anonymously, and the interviewees have opportunity to familiarise themselves with the questions and themes beforehand. These factors can be seen to enhance the reliability of the research.

### **4.3 Data analysis**

Collected data and information need to be sorted and analysed by researchers to bring order and sense to them. Models are constructed by reorganizing and grouping data into comparable categories and themes. In qualitative research there are no standardized methods of data analysis, but several recommended ways of constructing the meaning can be found. Key factors and relationships among them need to be explained. An organised and coherent presentation of the material helps the readers. (Saldana 2011, 26, 29.) The first step of qualitative data processing is standardization which can be done by littering. Littering means transforming various recoding, such as audio recordings or videos, into a written form, when they can be processed manually or programmatically with help of chosen analysis methods. In general littering style and depth can be selected between general littering, word-to-word littering and propositional littering. In general littering, the text is converted into written language by removing colloquial expressions. (Kananen 2017, 134-135.) The accuracy of the transcription depends on the questions the research seeks to answer; whether it is interested e.g., in content or the flow of interaction. When you are interested in the perspectives, opinions and understanding of a particular phenomenon of the interviewees. The research is interested in the content of the speech, in which case it is enough to be precise that the point is understood, and the pauses and other details of the speech are not the main focus. (Tampereen yliopisto N.d.)

The figure 7 describes the structure of the analysis used in the research. Littering, summarizing, classifying, and combining are used in processing the data. At the beginning of the analysis the interview recordings are littered. General littering is used in the research because it is sufficient for the research to understand the experiences of the interviewees. The research is interested in the substance and perspectives of the interviews, rather than the interaction.

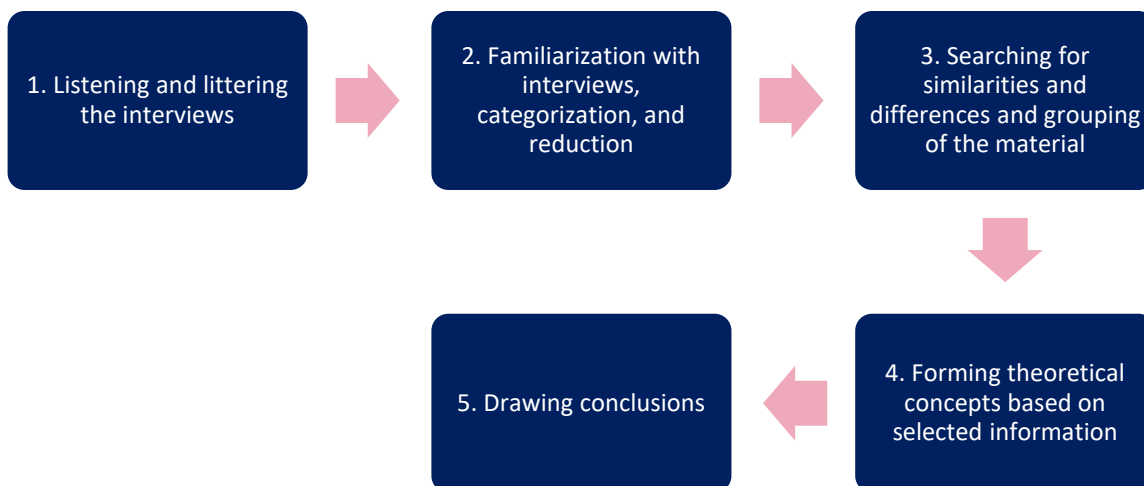


Figure 7 Progress of the content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108-113)

The research problem is guiding the chosen reduction method. The reduction can either condense the information or break it into parts. In clustering, similarities and differences are searched from the data and then coded. The clustering creates the basis for the basic structure of the research and the phenomenon under the study. The next step is the abstraction of the data, where the relevant information is transferred as theoretical concepts and formed based on the information and then lead to conclusions. (Kananen 2017, 134, 146; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108-113.)

As the figure 7 shows after littering the focus is on understanding and familiarizing the gathered data, which is reduced with the clustering method and analyzed further by coding, categorizing and combining them in themes. At the next step the data is divided into chosen themes which are chosen based to the research problem and questions. According to the themes, the material is further analyzed. The data is divided into different themes which are coded with different colors and then written to Excel-document, which enabled effective observation of collected data. After that, relevant information to the research is separated from the material and irrelevant information is deleted, theoretical concepts are formed based on the selected information. Later, the collected information is used as research findings and further analyzed more specifically.

In qualitative research, the amount of data needed is just what is necessary for the topic and the research task. One way to solve the adequacy of the material is through saturation. There is enough data when new cases no longer provide new information for the research problem, so the data starts to repeat itself from the research problem perspective. (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 62-63.) The concept of saturation can also be thought to be linked to the generalisability of the results. Even relatively small data can be used to draw more general conclusions than just those about the data in question once the data starts to repeat itself. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 89-91.)

This research aims to seek diversity from the data, so that more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon can be formed. 18 representatives from different clubs under the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation are interviewed. It represents 67 % of all member clubs. The collected answers start to repeat itself, in which case the data collected is considered to be sufficient for the purpose of the study.

## 5 Findings

Findings are presented as a narrative or data display with an accompanying description of how they were achieved. Patterned regularities can be contextualized, compared with another case, and evaluated. The research procedures themselves are both spelled out and self-critiqued for their effectiveness. Interpretation reaches out for “understanding or explanation” beyond the particular research to find broader. (Saldana 2011, 29.)

This part of the research concentrates on findings which have been obtained through interviews. The results of this study are divided into three parts in order to answer all research questions. To answer the first research question, how the clubs have currently hired coaches, the current situation was clarified with the interviews. To answer the second question, what kind of challenges can be identified for hiring coaches, the clubs were asked about the challenges they experienced and things the club could have done differently when hiring coaches. To answer the third question, how could clubs hire and finance coaches' expenses in the future, the interviewees were asked their clubs' future view and experiences about financing. Interviewees' comments have been brought up to highlight the answers. The used citations were translated word-to-word from Finnish to English. In this work, small clubs are defined as clubs with maximum of 20 members, medium clubs as clubs with 21-99 members and large clubs as clubs with minimum of 100 members.

### 5.1 The interviewed clubs

In total 18 clubs participated in the interviews. The interviewed clubs cover 67 % of the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation's member clubs. The participated clubs are quite different in terms of number of members and licenses, as well as the range of sports. The unifying factors are that all clubs offer hobby activities and activities at least for adults. 16 of the clubs offer hobby and competition activities, one offers only hobby activities, and one was on hiatus.

Three of the clubs offer modern pentathlon, fourteen clubs offer épée. In the majority (61 %) épée is the main sport. One club is specialized only in foil and five have all the fencing sport offered, one of these has also wheelchair fencing and another wheelchair fencing, historical and Viking fencing.

The interviewed clubs are from Helsinki, Hyvinkää, Hämeenlinna, Jyväskylä, Kemi-Tornio, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Mikkeli, Oulu, Porvoo, Savonlinna, Tampere, Vantaa and Veikkola. The most of the interviewed clubs are located in Southern Finland. The majority (61 %) of clubs are located in the fourteen largest cities in Finnish with more than 68 000 inhabitants. (Kuntaliitto 2023.)

Table 1 Membership and license numbers of the clubs in season 2021-2022

|         | Members | Adult hobby license | Adult and youth competition license | Children's hobby license | Children's competition license | Total licenses |
|---------|---------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Club 1  | 78      | 16                  | 27                                  | 17                       | 4                              | 54             |
| Club 2  | 150     | 48                  | 23                                  | 23                       | 2                              | 96             |
| Club 3  | 17      | 2                   | 2                                   | 0                        | 0                              | 4              |
| Club 4  | 131     | 9                   | 25                                  | 26                       | 5                              | 65             |
| Club 5  | 20      | 0                   | 3                                   | 1                        | 0                              | 4              |
| Club 6  | 206     | 108                 | 33                                  | 59                       | 6                              | 206            |
| Club 7  | 30      | 5                   | 5                                   | 12                       | 8                              | 30             |
| Club 8  | 50      | 9                   | 7                                   | 19                       | 0                              | 35             |
| Club 9  | 119     | 4                   | 19                                  | 2                        | 0                              | 25             |
| Club 10 | 20      | 5                   | 5                                   | 1                        | 0                              | 11             |
| Club 11 | 20      | 0                   | 0                                   | 0                        | 0                              | 0              |
| Club 12 | 20      | 4                   | 6                                   | 7                        | 0                              | 17             |
| Club 13 | 20      | 7                   | 7                                   | 10                       | 0                              | 24             |
| Club 14 | 20      | 4                   | 3                                   | 1                        | 0                              | 8              |
| Club 15 | 40      | 7                   | 6                                   | 9                        | 2                              | 24             |
| Club 16 | 30      | 2                   | 0                                   | 3                        | 0                              | 5              |
| Club 17 | 3       | 0                   | 0                                   | 0                        | 0                              | 0              |
| Club 18 | 100     | 3                   | 17                                  | 0                        | 0                              | 20             |

As shown in the table 1, most clubs have 20 to 40 members. Five clubs have at least 100 members and two less than 20. Therefore, the majority (61 %) of the clubs are very small and have many enthusiasts who have not obtained a license from the Federation.

## 5.2 Current situation

The first research question was intended to illustrate an overview of the current hiring situation of the clubs. In five clubs, coaching and exercise guidance is carried out by volunteers, one club's activities are on hiatus, but earlier the coaching was organized with volunteers. In 12 of the clubs coaching is implemented partly or fully for compensation.



The titles of those who are receiving compensation are head coach (5 persons), coach (26 persons) and executive director (1 person). The numbers include one person who works for three of the clubs in a cooperation project, in which the coach's working time and costs are divided between the three clubs. She works with head coach title in one club and with coach title in two clubs. In addition, in one multi-sport club, the sport division pays part of the executive director's salary. A total of thirty persons are receiving compensation in the clubs. People receiving only kilometer allowance are not counted as people receiving compensation.

In two clubs the salary payment is handled by an accounting office, and six clubs take care of their club's salary payment using a free payroll software (palkka.fi). The software is especially made for small employers, such as companies, associations, and clubs (Verohallinto, 2023). One club is using palkka.fi and also paying compensation based on invoice. Rest of the interviewed clubs pay compensation based on invoice.

Table 2 Number of members and persons receiving compensation

|         | Members | Persons receiving compensation | Average total working hours per week |
|---------|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Club 1  | 78      | 2                              | 40-50                                |
| Club 2  | 150     | 3                              | 80-90                                |
| Club 3  | 17      | 1                              | 1-2                                  |
| Club 4  | 131     | 5                              | 50-60                                |
| Club 5  | 20      | 5                              | 15-20                                |
| Club 6  | 206     | 11                             | 50-60                                |
| Club 7  | 30      | 1                              | 5-10                                 |
| Club 8  | 50      | 1                              | 5-10                                 |
| Club 9  | 119     | 2                              | 5-10                                 |
| Club 10 | 20      | 1                              | 1-2                                  |
| Club 11 | 20      | -                              | -                                    |
| Club 12 | 20      | -                              | -                                    |
| Club 13 | 20      | -                              | -                                    |
| Club 14 | 20      | -                              | -                                    |
| Club 15 | 40      | -                              | -                                    |
| Club 16 | 30      | -                              | -                                    |
| Club 17 | 3       | -                              | -                                    |
| Club 18 | 100     | -                              | -                                    |

As the table 2 shows, the number of memberships doesn't correlate the number of the total average working hours per week or persons receiving compensation. There are persons receiving

compensation in small, medium, and large clubs. However, the responses from the interviewees show that there are persons receiving compensation in all club's which provide modern pentathlon. The number of persons receiving compensation doesn't directly reflect the average number of hours worked per week. There is a trend towards a higher average number of hours worked by those receiving compensation in larger clubs, with more than 70 members, than in clubs with less than 70 members. There are also exceptions, however, as even in clubs of more than 100 people the average weekly hours are between five and ten per week. According to the interviewees' responses the clubs of 22 employees are located in Southern Finland. A comparison with the clubs with gainfully employed and the list of the largest cities according to the population drawn up by the Association of Finnish Municipalities (Kuntaliitto 2023) reveals that the majority of gainful employed are located in Finland's fourteen biggest cities. 15 are working for the clubs located in these cities.

The results do not show that only the big clubs have coaches recruited from abroad, all sizes of clubs have coaches from abroad. Currently, there are six foreign coaches receiving compensation from France, Estonia, Hungary, Cuba and Spain. In the past there have also been coaches from Bulgaria, Russia and Scotland. The longest ongoing employment of a foreigner is over 15 years and the shortest is one month, when the employment started about a month before the interview. The majority of those hired from abroad were already known to the club or were found through contacts, but coaches have also been found through open searches.

### **5.2.1 Current funding of coaches**

The table 3 presents the way how clubs have funded coaches' salaries at the moment. Own funding via membership and/or training fees are the most used methods. All the clubs who currently have gainful employment, are financing coaches' salaries with their own funding, i.e., membership and training fees. In addition to training and membership fees, two club cover expenses with event and competition profits and one with various grants from foundations and companies. At the moment, four clubs have financed coaches' salaries with wage support granted by The Ministry of Education of Finland. Three of these clubs have an ongoing cooperation project, where the coach's working time and costs are divided between three clubs. One to one lessons held by the coaches don't always cover the coaches' wages, because they are either part of the coaches' job

description or they are additional work and additional income for the coach, in which case the hobbyist also pays directly to the coach for one to one lessons.

At present, clubs do not have any coach funded with pay subsidy or apprenticeship. One club has had three sports apprentices in the past from Varala sports institute, but their studies and employments have ended. The apprentices were studying further vocational qualification in coaching, specialist vocational qualification in coaching and vocational qualification in sports instruction. The club has actively sought to find out whether others would be interested in apprenticeships within the club.

Table 3 Clubs' current funding of coaches

|         | Membership/<br>training fees | Event &<br>competition<br>profits | Companies' &<br>foundations'<br>grants | The Ministry of<br>Education of<br>Finland's grant | Pay<br>subsidy | Apprenticeship | City's/<br>municipality's<br>pay support |
|---------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|----------------|----------------|--|
| Club 1  | Yes                          | Yes                               | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | Yes                                      |
| Club 2  | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 3  | Yes                          | -                                 | Yes                                    | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 4  | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 5  | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | Yes  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 6  | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | Yes                                      |
| Club 7  | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | Yes  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 8  | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | Yes  | -              | -              | Yes                                      |
| Club 9  | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | Yes  | -              | -              | Yes                                      |
| Club 10 | Yes                          | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 11 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 12 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 13 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 14 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 15 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 16 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 17 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |
| Club 18 | -                            | -                                 | -                                      | -  | -              | -              | -  |

One respondent mentions that this is the first time his club has received a city subsidy for the salary of a coach. One of the clubs had a coach paid by the Federation for 1.5 years in the beginning, when the sport was introduced into the club's activities, but this support has ended. Other clubs didn't mention any financial support from the Federation. The rest of the clubs interviewed have no gainful employees at the moment. Additionally, three clubs mentioned that they have used the regional sports organisations' or cities' summer grants to enable hiring youths for summer work.

And one club has had before a coach via TE-service's introduction-to-working-life periods (TET-periods). One club had a coach with the city's and regional sport organization's support but the support was only for one year and it ended at the turn of the year.

The results show that clubs that have coach receiving compensation are more willing to hire again. Among clubs that do not currently have a coach with compensation, the majority (63 %) say that they have no plans to pay to the coach, at least not in the near future (see Appendix 3). Of these, one club is considering the possibility of occasional coaching visits. One club state that there could possibly be a coach with compensation in a couple of years' time. One club has plans to acquire a coach with some method of compensation. Also, one club is thinking that they could have a part-time coach with a trade name, but they will first conduct a member survey to find out the interest of the members.

### **5.2.2 Background factors of coaches**

The interviews revealed that clubs do not have a very comprehensive picture of the educational background of all coaches. The responses do not indicate that large clubs have more highly qualified coaches. However, the answers indicate that in Fencing and Modern Pentathlon, the Further Vocational Qualification in Coaching is the most common education with coaches receiving compensation. After that, the most common educations are a National first-level coach and instructor training provides by Regional Sports Associations and university-level fencing coach degree (19 %) completed abroad. It is noteworthy that university level education was mainly completed by foreign coaches. In addition, one has completed a Vocational Qualification in Sports and one the UIPM's (The Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne) highest coach education. Other coaches, who receive compensation, have only their own sports background or the association's coaching trainings to support their coaching. In addition, one club has its own coaching academy. Volunteer coaches have their own sporting background and approximately half (49 %) have done at least a Federation coaching qualification.



### 5.2.3 Salary models

Clubs have different ways of paying compensation for the work done. Findings are presented in the table 5. As shown in the table 5 the most popular model is to pay employment compensation as wages to persons in employment. The second most popular model is to pay to another club, which are acting as coaches' employers. Working with a trade name is the third most popular model. One club is paying compensation to another type of company and one interviewee didn't answer how they are paying compensation. It is worth noting that four clubs use more than one method of payment.

Table 5 Clubs' current payment method

|         | Tradename | With a tax card | Another club bills | Another business form | No information | No coaches with paid compensation |
|---------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Club 1  | -         | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 2  | Yes       | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 3  | -         | -               | Yes                | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 4  | -         | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 5  | Yes       | Yes             | Yes                | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 6  | -         | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 7  | -         | Yes             | Yes                | Yes                   | -              | -                                 |
| Club 8  | -         | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 9  | Yes       | Yes             | Yes                | -                     | -              | -                                 |
| Club 10 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                 |
| Club 11 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |
| Club 12 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |
| Club 13 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |
| Club 14 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |
| Club 15 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |
| Club 16 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |
| Club 17 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |
| Club 18 | -         | -               | -                  | -                     | -              | Yes                               |

### 5.2.4 The coach's role and effects on the club

*The activity has gained an attitude and expertise in the sports. ..we are able to provide quality and consistency for enthusiasts. (3)*

The operations become more diverse and more goal-oriented and organized when the coach is compensated, in some clubs, the activities have also expanded. A coach who receives

compensation from his/her work affects the management of coaching matters with his/her own contribution. Activities have become more professional, systematic, and organized in the clubs since the coach began to be compensated. At the same time, the contribution of volunteers has become lighter. The changes that have taken place have been seen as positive for the development of the club and enthusiasts.

*Membership has grown and activities have become more streamlined. The Society has its own engine. (2)*

Four clubs mention that they consider it likely that new members have joined the club's activities when the activities have become more organized after the coach has started to be compensated. The commitment of the paid coach has lightened the workload of the volunteer instructors/coaches.

The clubs mention planning and leading the trainings as the most important duties for the coaches who are receiving compensation. At some of the clubs, the coaches are also leading one to one lessons and courses.

### **5.3 Faced challenges**

To find answer to the second research question, participants were asked about the challenges their club has faced while hiring coaches. The changes that have taken place are seen as positive in terms of the development of the club and coaching, but challenges have not been completely avoided. The minority of the clubs (22 %) do not mention any faced challenges on hiring and financing coaches.

Financial matters were seen as the biggest challenge. The majority of smaller clubs, with maximum of 50 members, have found the financial matters as the main obstacles to hiring. In two clubs, the paid compensation of the coach was significantly facilitated by the granted club support. Both clubs believe that the workload of the paid coach will decrease when the club support ends. Three clubs have given up the use of paid labour because the external funding, for example the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation's and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Economic Development Office grant pay subsidy, ended. These clubs have found it too expensive

to pay for coaching after the end of the support. In one club, the executive director received a small salary more than ten years ago; this was given up when the club's training hour reservations became chargeable. In addition, one club gave up a coach working under a trade name, whose costs were covered by membership and training fees, because there was not enough interest from the participants' site.

One of the respondents brings up the organization of occupational health care. In the club's opinion, it would have been a big risk if the occupational health care had been ordered from a private occupational health care. The matter worried the club from a financial point of view. Based on the interviews, clubs have faced relatively few challenges other than financial ones. The clubs are saying that mainly the things have gone well.

*It's been going really well for us. After all, now we are talking about small communities, in relation to the budget, a significant salary, that is, it is a big decision financially, so we are talking about a big change process for everyone, and it certainly has the potential for many kinds of challenges. It requires the ability to change and adapt.*  
(4)

Covid-19 and war between Ukraine and Russia have caused challenges for one club. The club was supposed to have a coach receiving paid compensation from St. Petersburg, but first the Covid-19 restrictions hit and then the war, which made it impossible for the coach to travel between Finland and Russia. Therefore, the club ended up with distance coaching guided by an Estonian coach. The club first used offline trainings, which the coach filmed beforehand. Offline exercises caused misunderstandings and it was not possible to give feedback while the trainings. Thus, the club switched to online training, which had a video connection in both directions.

*From the offline exercises, we found that it didn't work and then we switched to these online exercises. That if -name of the coach- is watching at the same time as it's done, then maybe it's easier to comment on it. (10)*

Cultural differences, personality challenges and language skills are also mentioned as difficulties. One club has had challenges, e.g., with the coach's personality or cultural differences and language



skills. Sometimes, the perspectives of the club and the coach have not always coincided which have caused problems.

*Did he hold such group exercises at all? Well, no, and that fell also to a lack of language skills and maybe it was that kind of cultural position, that he always remembered to mention that I'm Maestro -name x- will take care of it. (15)*

*There have also been failed recruitments. There have been no suitable persons and conflicts. Opinions not always meet. (5)*

Hiring a foreigner was seen as a challenge in one club, because only few people want to come to work in Finland. Recruiting from abroad takes time and can be a long process. The expatriate coach also needs more support from volunteers at the beginning of the employment relationship with day-to-day matters such as getting an apartment, a phone subscription and a bank account. Clubs in smaller locations found distance a challenge, as coaches do not want to travel long distances or kilometre allowance would be too expensive for the club.

Two clubs that offer Modern Pentathlon have faced challenges in finding coaches. Challenges have been perceived as e.g., finding committed coaches, lack of expertise of the sport and the lack of hours available and little bit difficult training times.

*Is not. We need a person who knows the sports and the club and makes the enthusiasts both have fun and learn. (7)*

Six clubs announce that finding qualified coaches is a challenge. It is perceived as easier to find coaches who have their own sport-specific experience and expertise but lack actual coaching training. One club felt that the Federation should be more active in supporting clubs in matters relating to salaries. The respondent feels that the Federation does not take enough interest in the clubs' affairs.

*The Federation should play a more active role in support other than financial. Nobody seems to be interested. (16)*

Essentially, the clubs have found it relatively easy or easy to find coaches who receive compensation. In four clubs, the coaches receiving compensation have been e.g., already familiar to the members or found through cooperation networks. In addition, it has been easy to find head coach-level professionals in one club. However, the club is finding it challenging to find qualified youth coaches. Some clubs mentioned that it is difficult to find and engage coaches. Many want to do coaching only as a side job and quit when their studies are finished.

*People don't think of coaching as a career, it's where you end up. (1)*

#### **5.4 The possibility to hire and finance coaches' expenses in the future**

To answer the third research question, the participants were asked how the clubs could recruit the coaches in the future, how costs could be financed and what kind of advice the interviewees would like to give to a club considering hiring a coach. All the interviewees see coaches with paid compensation in sports clubs as positive and enabling the development of the club, at least to some extent. It is believed that paid work will increase in clubs in the future, although many find it easy to find volunteer coaches/instructors. The majority (61 %) of the clubs still believes that in their club the number of coaches with paid compensation will stay in the same level as it is now (see Appendix 3).

Some clubs mention that the Federation could play a more active role in supporting clubs, e.g., in relation to coaches. Two clubs mention in the interviews that there would be a need for a Federation coach, if the clubs could occasionally use her/him in their coaching, e.g., against a separate invoice and that way share know-how and coaching expertise to the clubs.

*Could the Federation have coaches who could be commissioned to give, for example, a half-day training course or training sessions and thus share knowledge with the clubs. (16)*

The interviews highlighted that most of the clubs are planning to implement coaching activities with paid compensation in the future. Only two clubs are planning to organize all coaching with volunteers in the near future, so membership or/and training fees won't have to be increased. Three clubs, where coaching is currently carried out by volunteers, think that in the future at least

part of the coaching should be subject to compensation. At one of the clubs, the external funding ended at the turn of the year, and because of that, the coach receiving compensation was given up. The club hopes they would find support that would enable a new hire.

One club, currently run by volunteers, is considering hiring a coach. The coach would be paid on an invoice and the costs would be covered by membership or training fees. It is possible that some training sessions could become fee-based in the future, so that training fees could be collected and used to cover the coach's expenses. Another voluntary coached club thinks that in a couple of years there could be a coach who could get compensation.

The majority (70 %) of the clubs with coaches with paid compensation are planning to have the same amount of work done with paid compensation in future. 20 % are willing to have the same amount but they believe that the hours will decrease at the end of the current grants. One club (ten percent) is hoping to increase the work done with paid compensation to the pre-Covid-19 level. In financial matters, half (50 %) are worried about the possible increase in membership and hobby fees.

Regarding external funding sources, the clubs mentioned some possible sources in the future, e.g., corporate sponsorships and grants from various foundations. Half (50 %) bring up the possibility to apply the financial development support of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland for a new project in the future. In addition, two clubs mention the use of pay subsidy again as a possibility in the future. The possibility to utilize of apprenticeship in the future is brought up by one of the clubs.

Respondents recommend actively "*keeping nets in the water*", as formal recruitment notices are not seen as a viable solution. Clubs recommend identifying potential coaches and asking them directly if they are interested.

#### **5.4.1 Guidelines for clubs planning hiring**

Most of respondents mentioned that a club planning to hire coach should accurately calculate the costs arising from the hire in order to assess whether the hire is possible. If the salary is paid with financial support, e.g. The Ministry of Education of Finland's salary support, the club should plan

how the salary will be financed when the financial support ends. The interviewees also mention that advance preparation is important and that it is worth setting out early and asking potential coaches directly about their interest in the job.

The majority (83 %), of the interviewees mention that self-financing is the only sustainable financing model in the long term. Different forms of support and grants make it easier, which reduces the financial burden, but they are hardly perceived as a permanent solution. One club proposes a gradual increase in hobby fees for a club that is planning to hire for the first time, e.g., with a few parts of the training sessions being paid separately, so that self-financing can be secured.

*I recommend raising prices. When the prices are higher, people are more engaged. There is no need to be afraid of raising prices. Increase the prices in stages, for example one day a week of guided training at a separate price. Then gradually all guided activities with payment. (2)*

*If the club has money to hire then I recommend it, a great way to educate and engage people in the club. You need to have a person with whom you can cooperate. (2)*

One of the interviewees brings up the importance that the coach with paid compensation has an opportunity to influence to organizing activities and the guidance of the groups. It's perceived as one of the attractive factors in finding coaches. An inflexible club may face challenges. The clubs also encourage guided activities by professional coaches, so that the activities are high-quality and attractive.

*It is important to have guided activities so that the club's activities remain attractive, and members participate in trainings. New members can be attracted and committed through guided activities. (9)*

A club that is using online distance coaching recommends other clubs to try it. A coach abroad films the exercises in his club's fencing trainings. In the Finnish club's training sessions, the videos are reflected on a silver screen and the coach monitors the performance of the exercises via video

connection. The coach instructs the warm-up, footwork, pair training and various fencing exercises in Finnish and gives feedback to the participants.

The interviewees recommend asking for help from the Federation and other professionals, although only three clubs mention that they have used the Federation's help in hiring. One club mentions that if they could change something in their own hiring project, they would describe the coach's job description more precisely. Clubs also recommend making a written employment contract. The responses indicate that more coaching experts are wanted in the sport.

*Fencing has been a sport of professional coaches for hundreds of years. Finnish fencing needs professionals. (4)*

Several small clubs mention that clubs should consider cooperation with other clubs, both within the sport and with other martial arts. Cooperation would make it easier to hire a coach and share responsibilities between clubs.

## **5.5 Summary**

Noteworthy is that the size of the club is not an indicator of the number of people with compensation. 56 % of the interviewed clubs had hired a coach. The majority (85 %) of employees from 30 workers are located in Southern Finland and half (50 %) people receiving compensation are working for the clubs counted in to the 14 biggest cities in Finland. Similar results can be seen in the study of Jussila et al. (2016, 63-64), the study shows that coaching is more professional in clubs in Southern Finland, where the majority of coaches are employed. Coaches from abroad can be found from clubs of all sizes. Comparing the number of full-time employees in clubs' now and in 2016 (Puska et al. 34), the number has remained the same.

One significant finding is that the number of members don't correlate with the total average working hours per week. The average hours between five and ten can be found in small, medium, and large size of clubs. Mainly the average number is higher with clubs with at least 70 members. The key finding related to the first research question, how clubs have currently hired coaches is that all the clubs are using at least membership and training fees to cover coaches' costs. 40 % of the clubs with coaches with paid compensation are using The Ministry of Education of Finland's wage

support and none of the clubs are using one to one lesson, pay subsidy or apprenticeship to cover coaches' wages. The trend emerged from the research is that most of the coaches are hourly workers with 1,5 to three hours per week. However, a fifth (20 %) of those receiving compensation are full-time workers. If not counted one full-time worker whose working hours comes from three different clubs, all the full-time workers are working in big clubs. The findings with full-time workers and majority of hourly workers are in line with the results of Turunen et al. (2020, 32) study. Important finding is that 40 % are using more than one model to pay compensation. Still paying compensation with tax card is the most used from (80 %).

Related to the second research question, what kind of challenges can be identified for hiring coaches, a considerable finding is that financial matters are the biggest challenge. Some of the clubs are not willing to raise membership or training fees so that they could finance coaches' salaries after external funding ends, so they will have financial difficulties to keep the coaches. According to Turunen et al. (2019) commonly the reason for termination of employment in club less than 500 members are financial difficulties.

Also, long distances are challenges because then the club should pay kilometer allowance to the coach, and it would come too expensive to hire a coach. Another remarkable challenge is to find qualified coaches or committed coaches because clubs have only few working hours available. In addition, cultural, personality and language skills can be big challenges. Sometimes the expectations and perspectives of the club and coach don't met. Additionally, the current world situation, Russian invasion of Ukraine 2022-, can cause problems because Russia would have potential fencing coaches, especially for clubs on the Eastern Finland. The majority of clubs (78 %) have faced challenges on hiring coaches.

To answer the third research question how could clubs hire and finance coaches' expenses in the future the main finding is that the club's need to find a way how to finance the coaches' cost after the possible external funding. The clubs need to be ready to raise membership or training fees or find out different founding methods. Clubs could cooperate more and do collective hiring. According to the Puska et al. research (2017, 23) collective hiring could make possible to hire when an individual club aren't able to afford it. Currently four clubs are using this model and clubs have found it working. Clubs thinks that at the first employment or new project clubs could use the

Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland's salary support. To reduce the challenges of distance, one club has experimented with distance coaching. Distance training could also provide an opportunity for other clubs to hire a coach. Clubs could also try to use apprenticeship if good candidates would be found.

Table 6 A summary of main findings

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Current situation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 % of clubs have only volunteer coaches</li> <li>• 56 % of clubs have coaches with paid compensation</li> <li>• 85 % of them employees from Southern Finland</li> <li>• 50 % of the coaches work in the biggest cities</li> <li>• 30 persons receive compensation</li> <li>• 20 % are full-time workers, those are only in big clubs</li> <li>• Majority of coaches work 1,5-3h/per week</li> <li>• Membership numbers doesn't correlate with the average working hours of coaches or the number of coaches</li> <li>• Foreign coaches in clubs of all sizes</li> <li>• Membership and training fees are the most used funding methods</li> <li>• 40 % use more than one model to pay compensation</li> <li>• 80 % pay with tax card</li> <li>• 2 projects funded by The Ministry of Education of Finland</li> <li>• No apprentices or pay subsidies</li> </ul> |
| <b>Faced challenges</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial challenges are the biggest</li> <li>• No willingness to raise prices</li> <li>• Long distances → expenses</li> <li>• Only a few hours available → hard to find committed coaches</li> <li>• Cultural, personality and language skills</li> <li>• Russian invasion of Ukraine 2022</li> <li>• 78 % have faced challenges</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Future</b>            | <p><b>Cover the costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own funding after external funding</li> <li>• Membership and training fees</li> <li>• Salary support from The Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland</li> </ul> <p><b>How to hire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation between clubs</li> <li>• Distance coaching</li> <li>• Clubs whose coaches are compensated are more willing to hire again</li> <li>• Majority of the clubs run by volunteers do not intend to pay compensation</li> </ul>   |

The table 6 summarises the main findings from the responses of the 18 member clubs participating in the research.

## 6 Conclusions

The research was planned to create an overall insight and summary for the Federation about the current situation and phenomenon. The research can be used by other sports clubs and federation for examining employing coaches with paid compensation as well as for further research about similar topics.

The chapter focuses on summarizing the main findings of the research and answering the research questions led from the research problem. The aim is to give an overall view what is the current gainful employment situation at the member clubs of the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation. Results of this study are answering the three research questions:

- a) How have the clubs currently hired coaches?
- b) What kind of challenges can be identified in hiring coaches?
- c) How could clubs hire and finance coaches' expenses in the future?

This study answers the research questions set in the beginning. It can be justified that the research is beneficial for the Federation to get an overall view of the clubs' situations in the big picture. The research provides reader theoretical background to understand the phenomenon.

More than half (56 %) of the clubs interviewed had a coach with paid compensation. Interviewees did not mention any difficult challenges, although in many clubs some of the exercises are supported by volunteers with the help of paid staff. All the clubs are using self-financing, at least membership and training fees, to cover the coaches' salaries, which is supported with the result of Lehtonen et al. (2022, 8) and Turunen et al. (2019) research. These fees are also seen as the only sustainable solution in the long run. Fencing is a relatively inexpensive hobby in Finland compared to many other sports. As one interviewee said, clubs should not be afraid to raise membership or training fees if they want to offer professional coaching to their members. A small increase in prices would allow the coach to be with compensation which could also engage enthusiasts. The study shows that since the arrival of the hired professional coach, clubs have become more organized, which could bring new enthusiasts to the sport. By arranging one to one lessons through the club, the club could also get some extra income for the club to cover expenses and provide



additional work for the coach. An electronic booking calendar could help here, for example, when enthusiasts could easily book a private lesson from the available slots.

The results show that the majority of clubs with gainfully employed are located in Finland's 14 biggest cities. It is probably easier to attract coaches to the big cities, and these cities have more amateurs who can later become coaches. In the clubs with coaches with paid compensation, the man-years are on average less than one which is less than in research of Turunen et al. (2020). According to their earlier research the average number was 1.8. This may be because fencing and modern pentathlon clubs are very small in membership numbers compared to many other sports. One of the main findings is that a clear majority works less than ten hours per week is supported by Turunen et al. (2020, 20) research in gainfully employed in sports club in 2013-2020. The difference between the surveys is that full-time employees are also found in small clubs. All fencing and modern pentathlon clubs are counted as small when looking at membership numbers at the Finnish level. Even a club with 70 members has been able to hire a full-time employee. This may be due to the club's desire to be more professional and to have active members and volunteers. In terms of numbers of athletes, individual sports also require more coaches than team sports.

As Puska et al. (2017, 23) argued, collective hiring has made it possible to hire a professional full-time coach. A similar result is also found in this study, when three clubs have hired a full-time coach, whose working hours are shared between the clubs. A similar approach could allow more clubs to hire a part-time or full-time coach in the future. At the same time, it would distribute administrative work to more than one actor. Which would facilitate the administrative work of volunteers, e.g., currently cooperating clubs have divided responsibilities in such way that three clubs pay compensation against an invoice to the club that acts as the coaches' employer and pays the salary.

The figure 8 shows the trend of full-time workers in fencing and modern pentathlon clubs. According to Puska et al. (2017, 10) investigation, the number of full-time workers was increased by 400 % in 2002-2012 and 75 % in 2012-2016. Now the number has not increased. According to Puska et al. (2017, 13) fencing had seven full-time, coaches in 2016, which were all men. Now one of the full-time coaches is a woman. For the ratio to be similar to the Puska et al. (2017, 24) results of the survey, three to four of the full-time employees should be women.

The figures are not directly comparable because information on the number of clubs counted in previous surveys is not available. Mäenpää & Korkatti (2012, 9) estimated that the growth rate in full-time employees is around five to ten percent in a year. In fencing and modern pentathlon, the growth has been higher in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it has slowed down. The interviews also did not indicate that the clubs would hire full-time employees in the near future. This may be due to the small number of clubs and financial challenges.

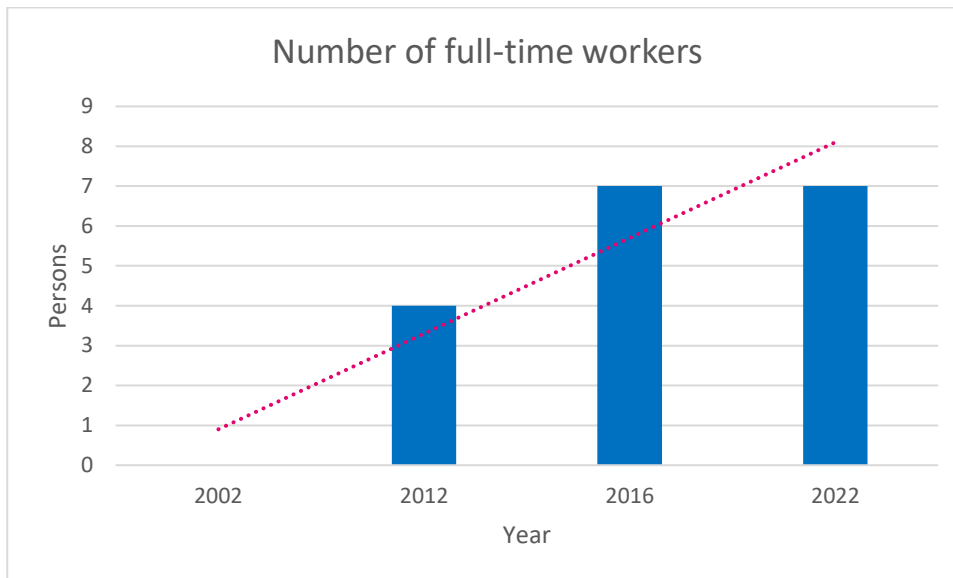


Figure 8 Number of full-time workers in fencing and modern pentathlon clubs (Puska et al. 2017, 34; appendix 3)

The educational background of the coaches shows a similar trend as in previous studies (Puska et al. 2017, 17; Jussila et al. 2016). Both gave the same result, that Further and Specialist Vocational Qualification in Coaching are the most common educations. This may be because these educations are less time consuming, and fencing or modern pentathlon do not have the same level of own educational training in Finland as, for example, football has. Higher coaching education could help people to see coaching as a profession.

The results show clearly that the main problem is financial difficulties. The result support Lehtonen et al. (2022, 8) and Turunen et al. (2019) investigations about employment after subsidies. Like Jussila (2016) stated it is good to have a plan how the club functions will work after the financial support, otherwise the inadequacy of funding will likely to raise a barrier to continued

employment. Also, according to Doherty and Murray (2007, 49) clubs' financial support from the government has reduced, which has forced non-profit organizations to consider alternative funding sources. Before hiring, clubs should calculate the actual cost of hiring and realistically assess the possibility of continued hiring after a possible subsidy period, as hiring after a subsidy period unlikely will benefit the club on a wider scale. Other challenges that the results show are cultural differences and language challenges. Jussila et al. (2016, 77) states that clubs are not willing to hire workers due to employer obligations. Some of the interviewees mentioned challenges related to occupational health care. The solution for these challenges would be to pay compensation for the coaches by invoice. The results show that the clubs have different ways of paying compensation for the work done. The most common method is to pay using tax card (80 %), additionally roughly a third also pay compensation based on invoices. In terms of administrative work, the easiest way for clubs would be to pay compensation based on an invoice. It would decrease club's statutory obligations, which would make it less time consuming for the club. However, it may be that not everyone is ready to do coaching based on invoice and work under a trade name. If a club would hire a coach with a tax card, it would be easiest to use a free payroll software like palkka.fi which six clubs already use. The lack of knowledge in employer obligations is not seen as a barrier to hire a coach.

Previous research of Jussila et al. (2020, 28) highlighted that volunteering has changed and people do not want to commit to long projects. If similar trend continues, it may be more challenging to find volunteer coaches in the future. Clubs should prepare for this in advance, both financially and structurally.

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland's financial support could help clubs considering their first or new recruitment. However, the challenge is that the support should be used to hire a full-time employee for a permanent employment relationship. This can be a barrier for many clubs, as one club may not have enough coaching and other jobs to offer to a coach. The interviews showed that four clubs have their own or a collective project and according to Turunen et al (2020, 35), in the 2010s fencing clubs have received support for eight recruitment projects. In the light of these findings, the support could also be used in the future.

Pay subsidy or apprenticeship are not really seen as a possibility to hire coaches. This is probably because it is a challenge to find someone with expertise in the field. They would also require support for their work, which can be challenging to provide in clubs that rely mainly on volunteers.

According to the interviews, there are currently six foreign coaches working in the clubs with paid compensation. The results show that this has been seen as a good practice in the sport, if a suitable coach cannot be found in Finland. Clubs considering recruiting from abroad should draw on the expertise of clubs that have made similar hires. They could give advice and maybe have good contacts, because most of the coaches are hired via contacts, or the persons are familiar with the club already.

Couple interviewees mentioned that the Federation could support the clubs more, even though just three of the clubs said that they have used the Federation's assistance on hiring coaches. The Federation could provide more support to clubs by sharing information on existing methods of fundings, which may vary depending on location, as well as sharing information on how other clubs have faced challenges and trying to increase cooperation and information sharing between the clubs. For this purpose, a separated document was produced alongside the survey to be distributed to clubs on possible grants, subsidies, and project funding (see appendix 4.). The guide will help clubs to find information on where external funding could be obtained, e.g., for coaches' salaries. All the clubs don't have possibilities or willingness to have coaches with compensation at the moment, in particular, these clubs could benefit from a fencing training material bank, which could be used by volunteer coaches in the training sessions they instruct.

The figure 9 presents a SWOT analysis of the benefits and challenges a club may face when hiring a coach with paid compensation. A critical review is important to help the club consider the most appropriate option for itself.

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| <b>Internal</b> | <b>Strengths</b>  | <b>Weaknesses</b>  |
|                 | Professionalization<br>Use of subsidies<br>Existing financing models<br>Currently hired coaches<br>Coaching competence integration<br>Good member base  | Possible need to raise membership or training fees<br>No previous hiring<br>Lack of knowledge in recruiting<br>Lack of awareness of subsidies<br>Increasing administrative work  |
| <b>External</b> | <b>Opportunities</b>  | <b>Threats</b>   |
|                 | Professional coaching<br>Sharing knowledge to volunteers<br>Less work for volunteers<br>More members<br>Better and more organized club<br>Possibility to increase club's reputation<br>More cooperation between clubs<br>Better commitment<br>Distance coaching<br>Federation's support | Difficulties in financing<br>Lack of good applicants<br>Cultural differences with foreign applicants<br>Lack of ability to change and adapt<br>Lack of Federation's support<br>Statutory obligations<br>Reduction in voluntariness |

Figure 9 SWOT-analysis of benefits and challenges a club may face when hiring a coach

As shown in the study, after having coaches with compensation, clubs see the activities more organized and professional. These can be seen as a positive sight of hiring a coach. With compensation, it is possible to integrate coach's knowledge to the club, when younger coaches do not need to find other jobs alongside their studies. Good and existing member base is a big strength, not only in financial point of view, but also so that there is a good base where the coach can start and then the club can try to raise the number of members. A hired coach can also be seen as competitive advantage when a person is considering between two clubs.

Minority of those interviewed saw that the possibility to raise membership or training fees is not a barrier to hire a coach, but it's seen as a weakness. Also lack of knowledge, for example in recruiting, and awareness of subsidies can be seen as weaknesses, because it might be time consuming for volunteers to find all the information and do administrative work on their free time. Even the interviewed didn't highlight that there would be a lack of information regarding different phases of employment or employers' responsibilities, but these has seen as challenges in earlier studies.

It can be seen as an opportunity, that there would be less work for volunteers. One interviewed mentioned that it is less stressful to take care of salary payments than always try to sort out everything with volunteers. As seen in the results, a hired coach has made club's activities more organized and brought new members, which is a vital factor for small clubs. Deeper cooperation between the clubs could make it easier to hire a coach and share the knowledge. Cooperation would allow small clubs to offer coaches more hours with compensation, which could enable the recruitment of professional coaches and provide them an adequate income. On the other hand, the fragmentation of salary sources may make coaching less attractive profession. In joint salary cases, it would be good if only one club would be employer and the clubs would agree their responsibilities and obligations by mutual contract. This way, interaction between the employer and the coach would be easier than in decentralised system. Puska (et al 2017, 23) research also supports this model. Clubs could also share the skills of existing coaches with other clubs, e.g., through open camp days where members of different clubs could join. Also, distance coaching can be seen as an opportunity. It can offer professional coaching for clubs and trainers with long distances. At the same time, it could also make it possible to share the expertise of coaches abroad and bring variety to training sessions and lower the coaching costs if the coach would need to travel long distances. Clubs could investigate the online coaching possibilities more.

According to this and earlier research financial matters are mentioned as the biggest threat. Faced challenges have also shown that cultural differences and personality challenges can be seen. Similar challenges are found in Lehtonen et al. (2022, 8) and Turunen et al (2019) research. In this more precisely written job description could help at least little bit, like one interviewed mentioned. The study did not reveal any surprising findings. Perhaps most surprising was the findings are that clubs with low number of members have full-time employees and there are several full-time employees from abroad. As Aarresola et al. (2022, 4) mentioned, not much research information is available about Finnish sports clubs. This subject should be investigated more to help sports clubs and federations develop and share their knowledge.

## **6.1 Reliability, Validity and Research Ethics**

To ensure the validity and reliability the researcher must give to the readers enough information about how the research was done so that they can evaluate the results of the research. Reliability is increasing by the fact that the study is based on the principles that generally guide

implementation of scientific research. In addition, the researcher's impartiality perspective should be considered. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 136-139, 141.) It's essential that researcher mentions on the literature review the main authors of relevant works (Saldana 2011, 135).

The thesis has been implemented following JAMK's research ethics guidelines. Theoretical background is collected from reliable sources and evaluated. The theoretical background consists of previous scientific studies and materials from major institutions and the sources have been reported. The research process is described to ensure the readability of the study.

The reliability of research methods is usually assessed through validity and reliability. Reliability means the reliability and stability of the research results, when the research is repeated it produces the same results. Validity refers to the ability of research approach/methods to measure the studied issue. The validity of the research can be ensured with the right research methods, a precise description of the research implementation and analysis. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2000, 213-214; Kananen 2015, 272-273.) Testing the research questions with a person not taking a part on the research, increases the validity (Saldana 2011, 37).

The author had a permission from the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation to approach the representatives of the member clubs. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, form research results and answer research questions. To ensure the validity of the study, attention was paid to formulating the interview questions so that they are easy to understand. The interviews were held in Finnish to ensure that the interviewees understood the questions correctly. Interviewer had a neutral role in the interviews. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, utilizing the collected information from interviewees. The interviewees received information about the research beforehand and participation in the interview was voluntary. Participants also had the option to stop the interview at any point.

To increase the trustworthiness of data collection the gathered information from the interviews were transcribed, categorized, and combined with chosen themes. The results of the interviews were utilized for academic purpose of the study. The collected data from interviews have been stored and managed carefully to ensure that the interviewees' information and anonymity are safe. The collected data was stored in a folder which can only be accessed with the interviewer's

personal password. The data collected is not shared with third parties and are used only for the thesis. In addition, the research finding has been analyzed impartially and conclusions have been made by combining the results of the interviews and theoretical framework. The interview questions were tested one week before the first interview with a neutral person, who didn't take a part in the research. It offered a possibility to test the interview questions and their comprehensibility, as well as to test the remote connections and the estimated length of the interview. The sample covered almost 70 % of the clubs which increase the validity. However, a bigger sample size would increase reliability. All these factors can be seen to enhance the reliability of the research.

The reliability of the survey is undermined by the fact that the interviewees gave information in different forms - for example, it was difficult to obtain clear numbers of hours for people receiving compensation, as some could only give the number of hours, which is distributed differently between employees in different weeks. There were also differences in the way clubs calculated membership numbers. Some counted only those who paid a membership fee and some also counted other people who were not charged a membership fee. Also, some nuances may have been lost in translating direct quotations from Finnish into English, but the thesis has nevertheless sought to preserve the central perspective of the informant.

## **6.2 Proposal for future research**

In future research, this study can be used as a framework for similar context. This research can be considered to deepen our understanding of employment situation of member clubs of the Finnish Fencing and Pentathlon Federation. The Federation can obtain further understanding of the situation of clubs in order to support the clubs more effectively. The Federation can use the material attached to the thesis to inform clubs about existing forms of funding and support. In addition, this research can be utilized in other Finnish sport associations and sport clubs that are considering same issues. This study offers information on what challenges clubs may face when they hire coaches with paid compensation and what kind of salary and funding models clubs can use, for example. These issues should also be studied in other sports, especially small sports, in order to gain a better understanding of the third sector and especially the sport clubs as an employer. This would give an insight whether differences can be found between the sports. In addition, it would be interesting to study how sports clubs abroad have implemented coaches' compensation and compare those findings to Finnish results. It could offer a new approach to the subject.



Further research could also focus on how responsibilities and tasks with persons receiving compensation and volunteers are allocated, because all the clubs who have persons with compensation, have also volunteer coaches or instructors, at least to some extent. An interesting research topic could be to investigate how coaches from abroad have adapted to Finland and whether there are differences in coaching and practices between countries. A closer look ought to be taken how digitalization and digital trainings could be used effectively in coaching. This could provide an alternative for clubs that otherwise have difficulties in finding coaches, for example because of their location and distances. Furthermore, it would be interesting to find out whether cooperation with clubs could be increased and how clubs could effectively share responsibilities with each other and what operating models could be found, while at the same time the responsibilities required of clubs have increased, such as acting an employer. Further researchers in sport club industry would enable sport association and public actors to understand sports clubs as a service provider wider. More academic research is needed.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview questions

#### Haastattelukysymykset

##### OSA 1: Seura ja seuran toimintaympäristö

1. Seuran nimi, kotipaikkakunta ja maantieteellinen sijainti?
2. Vastaajan rooli seurassa?
  - a. Hallituksen jäsen, PJ
  - b. Toimihenkilö
  - c. Valmentaja
  - d. muu, mikä
3. Seuran jäsenmäärä?
4. Seura tarjoaa?
  - a. vain harrastetoimintaa
  - b. vain kilpatoimintaa
  - c. harraste- että kilpatoimintaa
5. Seura on?
  - a. Yleisseura (2 tai useampi laji)
  - b. Junioriurheiluseura
  - c. Aikuisten kilpaurheiluseura
  - d. Harrasteliikuntaseura
  - e. Huippu-urheiluseura
  - f. Lajin erikoisseura (yksittäinen laji)
6. Toiminnan pääpaino? Voit valita useita.
  - a. lapset (alle 18v)
  - b. nuoret aikuiset (alle 30v)
  - c. aikuiset
7. Seuran lajitarjonta? Voit valita useita.
  - a. kalpa
  - b. säilä
  - c. floretti
  - d. Nykyaikainen 5-ottelu
  - e. Monilajiseura (jos, niin mitä liiton lajeja jaosto tarjoaa)

**OSA 2: Seuran nykytila**

8. Miten valmennus-/ohjaustyö on toteutettu pääosin?
9. Valmentajien koulutustausta ja milloin koulutus on suoritettu?
  - a. Ei liikunta-alan koulutusta
  - b. Valmentajan ammattitutkinot (VAT)
  - c. Valmentajan erikoisammattitutkinto (VEAT)
  - d. Liikuntaneuvoja, Liikunnanohjaaja AMK, Fysioterapeutti AMK
  - e. Ylempi ammattikoreakoulututkinto (Liikunnanohjaaja, ylempi AMK), Liikuntatieteiden kandidaatti, Liikuntatieteiden maisteri, Liikuntatieteiden lisenssiaatti, Liikuntatieteiden tohtori
  - f. Jokin muu, mikä?
10. Palkattujen henkilöiden tehtävänimikkeet ja lukumäärät? Mihin tarpeeseen henkilöt palkattiin? (Jos monilajiseura, kerro tiedot haastatteluun liittyvän jaoston osalta)
11. Ovatko palkatut henkilöt?
  - a. Osa-aikaisia työntekijöitä
  - b. Päätoimisia työntekijöitä
12. Palkattujen henkilöiden keskimääräinen työaika viikossa?
13. Miten työkorvaus/palkka maksetaan? Mikä oli tilanne 5 vuotta sitten? Voit valita useita.
  - c. Verokortilla
  - d. Toiminimellä
  - e. Muun yritysmuodon kautta
14. Oletteko luopuneet palkatun työvoiman käytöstä? Miksi?
15. Miten seuranne on rahoittanut henkilön/henkilöiden palkkaamisen? Voit valita useita.
  - f. Omalla rahoituksella esim. jäsen- ja kausimaksuilla
  - g. Avustuksilla
    - i. Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön seuratuki
    - ii. Oppisopimuskoulutus
    - iii. Työllistämistuki / Palkkatuki
    - iv. Kaupungin / kunnan tuki
  - h. Sponsorituotoilla
  - i. Tapahtumien tuotoilla
  - j. Yhteistyössä toisen seuran kanssa
  - k. Yksityistunneilla (opareilla)
  - l. Muilla tuotoilla, millä
16. Millaiseksi seuranne on kokenut palkanmaksuvelvoitteet? (esim. tulorekiseri-ilmoitukset, ennakonpidätykset)

**OSA 3: Seuran tulevaisuuden näkymät**

17. Onko jatkossa ajateltu olevan palkkaa saavia henkilöitä? Millä työmäärällä?
18. Onko palkattuja henkilöitä ollut helppo löytää? Miksi?
19. Onko teillä ollut ulkomailta palkattuja henkilöitä? Mistä maista ja miten rekrytointiprosessi hoidettiin? Miten alkuunpääsyssä autettiin ja mistä korvaus on muodostunut?
20. Millaisia haasteita ja onnistumisia olette kohdanneet ulkomaisessa/kotimaisessa palkkauksessa/rekrytoinnissa?
21. Mitä asioita olisi voinut tehdä toisin palkkaukseen/rekrytointiin liittyen?
22. Miksi koitte tärkeäksi palkata valmentajan ja millaisia odotuksia teillä oli?
23. Millaisia muutoksia seurassanne on tapahtunut palkatun valmentajan jälkeen?
24. Miten tulevaisuudessa voitaisiin palkata valmentajia ja miten kustannukset voitaisiin rahoittaa?
25. Mitkä ovat palkatun valmentajan/-ien tärkeimmät tehtävät?
26. Millaisia neuvoja antaisit valmentajan palkkausta suunnittelevalle seuralle? Saitteko itse palkatessanne neuvoja/tukea, jos niin minkälaista ja miltä tahoilta?
27. Mitä muuta haluaisit vielä sanoa haastatteluaiheeseen liittyen?

## Appendix 2. Cover letter

Hyvä seuran edustaja,

Kiinnostaako saada selville, miten muissa miekkailu- ja 5-otteluseuroissa on palkattu työntekijöitä ja mitä rahoitusmuotoja palkkaukselle voisi olla? Teen seurojen hyödyksi, yhteistyössä Suomen Miekkailu- ja 5-otteluliiton kanssa selvitystä seurojen käyttämistä palkkausmalleista ja tämänhetkisestä tilanteesta.

Selvitys toteutetaan haastatteluiden avulla. Haastattelu voidaan toteuttaa etänä tai kasvotusten pääkaupunkiseudulla. Haastatteluun vastaaminen vie aikaa noin 45 minuuttia. Liitteenä on haastattelurunko. Tulen olemaan kaikkiin seuroihin yhteydessä huhtikuun aikana sähköpostitse/puhelimitse ja sopimaan haastatteluajan. Haastattelut pyritään tekemään huhtikuun aikana. On tärkeää, että kaikki seurat vastaavat/osallistuvat haastatteluun, vaikka seuralla ei olisi koskaan ollut palkattuja henkilöitä.

Selvityksen pohjalta työstetään liiton ja seurojen käyttöön kooste erilaisista palkkaus- ja rahoitusmalleista, joita voidaan hyödyntää seuratoiminnan kehittämisessä.

Olen itse Helsingin Nykyaikaiset 5-ottelijat ry:n jäsen. Tutkimus toteutetaan osana opinnäytetyötä, jonka toimeksiantajana on liittomme. Lisätietoja ja kysymykset haastatteluun liittyen opinnäytetyön tekijältä:

Salla Malin  
N5046@student.jamk.fi

## Appendix 3. Summary of the tables

| Club | Members | Clubs' current funding of coaches |                             |                                  |  |             |                |                                     | Number of persons receiving compensation and average working hours |      |        |      |    |      |    |     |           |           |                | Clubs' current payment method        |            |                 |                    |                       |                | Coaches with compensation in the future |                                    |
|------|---------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|------|--------|------|----|------|----|-----|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|------------------------------------|
|      |         | Membership / training fees        | Event & competition profits | Companies' / foundations' grants | The Ministry of Education of Finland's grant | Pay subsidy | Apprenticeship | City's / municipality's pay support | Number of persons receiving compensation                           | 1,5h | 1,5-3h | 2-6h | 3h | 3-6h | 4h | 10h | Half-time | Full-time | No information | Average total working hours per week | Trade-name | With a tax card | Another club bills | Another business form | No information |   | No coaches with paid compensation  |
| 1    | 78      | Yes                               | Yes                         | -                                | -  | -           | -              | Yes                                 | 2  | -    | -      | -    | -  | 1    | -  | -   | -         | 1         | -              | 40-50                                | -          | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                       | Same                               |
| 2    | 150     | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | 3  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | 1         | 2         | -              | 80-90                                | Yes        | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                       | Same                               |
| 3    | 17      | Yes                               | -                           | Yes                              | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | 1  | 1    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | 1-2                                  | -          | -               | Yes                | -                     | -              | -                                       | Same                               |
| 4    | 131     | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | 5  | -    | -      | 4    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | 1         | -              | 50-60                                | -          | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                       | To pre Covid19 - level             |
| 5    | 20      | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | Yes  | -           | -              | -                                   | 5  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | 1         | 4              | 15-20                                | Yes        | Yes             | Yes                | -                     | -              | -                                       | Same, probably will decrease       |
| 6    | 206     | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | Yes                                 | 11   | -    | 10     | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | 1         | -              | 50-60                                | -          | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                       | At least same                      |
| 7    | 30      | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | Yes  | -           | -              | -                                   | 1  | -    | -      | -    | 1  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | 5-10                                 | -          | Yes             | Yes                | Yes                   | -              | -                                       | Same                               |
| 8    | 50      | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | Yes  | -           | -              | Yes                                 | 1  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | 1   | -         | -         | -              | 5-10                                 | -          | Yes             | -                  | -                     | -              | -                                       | Same                               |
| 9    | 119     | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | Yes  | -           | -              | Yes                                 | 2  | -    | 1      | -    | -  | -    | 1  | -   | -         | -         | -              | 5-10                                 | Yes        | Yes             | Yes                | -                     | -              | -                                       | Same                               |
| 10   | 20      | Yes                               | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | 1  | -    | 1      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | 1-2                                  | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | Same level, probably will decrease |
| 11   | 20      | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | No                                 |
| 12   | 20      | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | No                                 |
| 13   | 20      | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | No                                 |
| 14   | 20      | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | No                                 |
| 15   | 40      | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | Maybe after couple years           |
| 16   | 30      | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | With some compensation             |
| 17   | 3       | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | No                                 |
| 18   | 100     | -                                 | -                           | -                                | -  | -           | -              | -                                   | -  | -    | -      | -    | -  | -    | -  | -   | -         | -         | -              | -                                    | -          | -               | -                  | -                     | Yes            | -                                       | Maybe                              |

## Appendix 4. Seurojen tueksi: Avustukset, tuet ja hankerahoitukset -guide



### Seurojen tueksi: avustukset, tuet ja hankerahoitukset

#### Saate

Seurojen tueksi on tarjolla erilaisia avustuksia, tukia ja hankerahoituksia. Avustuksia on tarjolla suuri määrä. Monet kaupungit ja kunnat jakavat yleisavustuksia seurojen toiminnan tueksi. Yksityiset tahot tarjoavat hankerahoitusta usein rajatulle aikavälille ja uuden toiminnon käynnistämiseksi. Monien hankerahoitusten tarkoituksena on vakiinnuttaa toiminta osaksi seuran arkea tai auttaa uuden työntekijän palkkaamisessa.

Avustusten hakuun vaaditaan yleensä yksityiskohtainen hakemus sekä jälkikäteen tarkka selvitys avustuksen käytöstä ja sen aikaansaamista asioista. Avustusten hakuun ja raportointiin on syytä varata aikaa sekä pohtia, millä taholta avustusta kannattaa suunnitelmalle hakea.

Tässä dokumentissa esitellään osa tarjolla olevista avustuksista ja tukimuodoista. Esiteltävien lisäksi, monet yritykset ja muut yksityiset tahot tukevat seuratoimintaa.

## Kaupunki- ja kuntakohtaiset avustukset

Kaupunki- ja kuntakohtaiset avustukset on yleensä jaettu yleisavustuksiin ja kohdennettuihin avustuksiin. Niiden tarkoituksena on yleensä liikuntatoiminnan järjestäminen ja edistäminen.

- Avustukset ovat harkinnanvaraisia
- Voidaan käyttää ohjaajien ja valmentajien palkkakulujen kattamiseen
- Avustusmuodot, myöntämisperusteet ja hakajat voivat vaihdella vuosittain
- Kaupunki/kuntakohtaiset kriteerit ja hakajat
- Lisätiedot kaupunkien/kuntien verkkosivuilla

## Seuratoiminnan kehittämistuki



Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö

Seuratoiminnan kehittämistuki (seuratuki) on tarkoitettu lasten ja nuorten liikuntaharrastuksen lisäämiseen sekä monipuolisen organisoidun liikunnan kehittämiseen.

- Avustukset ovat harkinnanvaraisia
- Tukimuodot: Palkkaushanke ja toiminnallinen hanke
- Tuen suuruus 2 500–15 000€ vuodessa
- Tuki voi kattaa enintään 75% avustettavan toiminnan kokonaiskustannuksista
- Hakuaika marraskuussa
- Lisätietoja [täältä](#)

## Erasmus+ sport



Erasmus+ sport on tarkoitettu eurooppalaisen yhteistyön ja toiminnan kehittämiseen.

- Tarkoitettu henkilöstön ja vapaaehtoisten osaamisen vahvistamiseen, terveysliikunnan ja osallisuuden vahvistamiseen sekä hyvien kokemusten ja menetelmien löytämiseen.
- Yhteistyökumppaneina vähintään kolme tahoa kolmesta maasta
- 1–2 -vuoden hanke
- Tuen suuruus enintään 60 000€
- Hakuaika keväällä
- Lisätietoja [täältä](#)

## TE-palvelut



TE-palveluiden palkkatuki voidaan myöntää työttömän työntekijän palkkakustannuksiin.

- Tarkoituksena edistää työttömän työnhakija työllistymistä
- Palkkatukijakson pituus vaihtelee
- Tuki 50–100% palkkakustannuksista
- Tuen suuruus 1 260–2 020€ / kk
- Lisätietoja [täältä](#)

Suomen Miekkailu- ja 5-otteluliitto ry, Valimotie 10, 00380 Helsinki

## Aluehallintovirasto



Aluehallintovirastojen avustukset on tarkoitettu tukemaan lasten ja nuorten paikallista harrastustoimintaa.

- Säännöllisen ja tavoitteellisen toiminnan järjestämiseen
- Matalien toimintamaksujen kerho- ja päiväleiritoimintaan
- Toimintaan osallistuvilta ei saa edellyttää järjestäjäorganisaation jäsenyyttä
- Tuki voi kattaa maksimissaan 90% avustettavan toiminnan kokonaiskustannuksista
- Hakuaika marras-joulukuussa
- Lisätietoja [täältä](#)

## Järjestöt ja yksityiset tahot

Järjestöt ja yksityiset tahot jakavat erilaisia avustuksia, tukia ja apurahoja erilaisiin toimintoihin ja palkkauksiin. Osa tuista soveltuu myös urheiluseuroille.

- **OP "Kesäduuni OP:n piikkiin"** (15–17-vuotiaiden kesätyöllistäminen)
  - Tuen suuruus 400€ / nuori
  - Nuoren työllistämiseksi enintään 60 tunniksi
  - Kesätuen tulee ajoittua koulujen loma-aikaan
  - Hakuaika helmikuussa
  - Lisätietoja [täältä](#)
- **Liikunnan aluejärjestöt** (15–29-vuotiaiden kesätyöllistäminen)
  - Tuen suuruus 700€ / nuori
  - Nuoren työllistämiseksi enintään 60 tunniksi
  - Kesätuen tulee ajoittua 1.4.–30.9. välille
  - Hakuaika keväällä



## Säätiöt

Säätiöt jakavat erilaisia avustuksia, tukia ja apurahoja erilaisiin toimintoihin ja tutkimuksiin. Osa tuista soveltuu myös urheiluseuroille.

- **Minela-säätiö** (nuorten osaamista ja osallisuutta tukevaan toimintaan)
  - Tuen suuruus maksimissaan 5 000€
  - Hakuaika maaliskuussa ja syyskuussa
  - Lisätietoja [täältä](#)
- **Läpimurto-säätiö** (lasten ja nuorten liikunnan apuraha)
  - Yhdenvertaisten liikuntaharrastusmahdollisuuksien tarjoaminen
  - Liikuntaharrastuksen mahdollistaminen ilmaiseksi tai matalin kustannuksin
  - Lisätietoja [täältä](#)
- **Urlus-säätiö** (mm. nuoriso, urheilu- ja liikuntakasvatus)
  - Toiminta-avustus ja hankeavustus
  - Hakuaika loka-joulukuussa
  - Lisätietoja [täältä](#)



Suomen Miekkailu- ja 5-otteluliitto ry, Valimotie 10, 00380 Helsinki

- Olvi-säätiö (lasten ja vanhusten hyväksi tapahtuvaan toimintaan)
  - Hakuaika tammi-maaliskuussa ja heinä-syyskuussa
  - Lisätietoja [täältä](#)



### Muut tuet

Listattujen avustusten ja tukien lisäksi on olemassa muita urheiluseuratoimintaan soveltuvia avustuksia ja hanketukia.

- Rahoitusmahdollisuuksia voi katsoa esim. Kansalaisyhteiskunnan ylläpitämästä [rahoitushakemistosta](#)