

Miscellany

Statistics on sports and exercise – The Swedish experience

1. Introduction

The statistical policy of Sweden is best summarized in the contents of the 42 different statistical programmes now in operation. These programmes are designed to produce statistics that comply with the requirements at the ministry level for major policy areas. This breakdown of statistics by major policy areas is an attempt to organise the supply side of statistics according to the policy making process (demand side). Each ministry determines the scope and coverage of statistics needed to analyse the impact of policy decisions and to evaluate the outcome of such decisions and, if necessary, to change policy decisions. The production of statistics is done by Statistics Sweden, which is an independent government organization.

Statistics on sports and exercise were initiated through the above-mentioned scheme in 1986 and the data were presented in the Yearbook on Statistics on Sports and Games in March 1989. Sweden was the first to compile statistics in this field. It is a new area for international statistical co-operation. Against this background the UNESCO Statistical Office commissioned a pilot study from Statistics Sweden, and put forward a proposal for a World-Wide Survey to be carried out with the assistance of Sweden.

2. Presentation of the statistics

The major task in preparing the information in the Yearbook of Statistics on Sports was to identify and document statistics that were available in published form or otherwise. The guidelines were twofold:

1. To establish a system of presentation of the data to keep track of national developments.
2. To provide important indicators for evaluating the outcome of policy decisions.

The data in the Yearbook cover a wide spectrum of activities:

Participation rates of the population in physical activities at various levels by age,

sex, education and geographic regions.
Participants in regular training and competitions by age, sex and sports.
Organizational environment and financing of sports.
Physical education in schools, and higher education and research in sports.
Planning and organizing of teaching of physical education teachers, coaches, and other leaders in the practical and professional fields of sports.
Measuring the benefits of physical activity.
Injuries sustained in training and competition and the costs in health care.
Availability of sport facilities.
Attendance rates at sport events, public ratings of sports on TV and radio, transmission hours and newspaper coverage of sports.
General comparison of physical-activity levels with other countries.

The study made an attempt to review and assess the need to formulate national goals for physical activity and fitness levels of the population. It also indicated areas not sufficiently covered by statistics and discussed the need to carry out special surveys to fill in the gaps.

3. Concluding remarks

Most of the figures about the professional sport environment, including means of measuring performances, were subject to qualifications, cautious notes and technical annexes. The statistical information collected through censuses and regular surveys were sufficient to show progress through time. On the whole the statistics were sufficient for cross referencing and indexing to give readers a rapid understanding of the interdependence of related issues. The source material and definitions were clearly and concisely spelled out in the beginning of each new chapter to give readers a clear understanding of the terms and words that relate statistics to sports.

4. Title

Statistics Sweden (1989): *Statistics on Sports and Games*. ISBN 91-618-0251-4. Four page English summary.

Statistics Sweden (1990): Manuscript for the video film on *Sports Statistics*. Facts and figures on status and growth together with some ideas about trends in the 1990s.

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