

Original Article

## The State of Condition of Sport in Cyprus: a Study of the Cyprus Sport Organization and Sports Federations of Cyprus

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the condition of sport in Cyprus. An analysis of how and by whom sport programs are operated presents an overview of sport facilities and the operating costs of the Cyprus Sport Organization (CSO) and the national federations. Data was collected using mailed survey and desk research. Results indicated that: (1) Cyprus has the necessary infrastructure that can support social, leisure and grassroots sports, (2) the economic recession has contributed to the decrease of related funds allocation (3) willingness on behalf of the CSO to further develop leisure sport, (4) many federations do not seem to keep related records, (5) the CSO seems well organized in supporting the existing institutions. Despite lack of funds, sport continues to play a critical role in the development of society. It is recommended that sport continues to come to the forefront of decision making in Cyprus and in developing a sporting culture, offering the necessary opportunities and facilities.

### 1. Introduction

The three service sectors (public, private, and non-profit) in Cyprus have historically been actively involved in the provision of sport and leisure services (Kartakoullis, Webb, Karlis, Pouloukas, & Loizou, 2015). The Cyprus Sports Organization (CSO) is the major provider and authority for sports and physical activity in Cyprus. This organization, in combination with the various sport federations that represent the most popular sports engaged in within Cypriot

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society, take on responsibilities such as kick-starting national sport programs/initiatives while also providing and funding sport facilities in each of Cyprus' five districts. Meanwhile the sport federations of Cyprus promote their respective sports, provide sport-specific training from qualified personnel in sport facilities, and are the main providers of various sporting activities at different levels.

Recent research has reported on the increasing value of leisure and sport in Cypriot society. For instance Kartakoullis, Pouloukas, Loizou, Karlis, and Kriemadis (2010) report on the growing need for sport tourism for Cyprus and its people while Kartakoullis, Karlis, and Karadakis (2009) found that there is increased participation in national endeavors (i.e., Sport for All) occurring within the state. Even more recently, a study involving comprehensive data collection, through phone surveys, on the participation behaviours of Cypriot adults has been published (Kartakoullis, et al., 2015). However, there is minimal published research informing on the national programs and organizations (i.e., the CSO and its various sport federations) that provide Cyprus and its citizens with leisure sport programs. This research intends to be among the first to report on these macro-level institutions including the dissemination of a variety of quantitative (e.g., operation costs, participation numbers) and qualitative data (e.g., programs offered, partners cooperating) to enhance data on leisure sport provision in Cyprus at the state level.

Such information would be especially poignant at this time as this society has been in the midst of difficult economic times which no doubt affect the leisure and sport provision sectors. The accessibility and availability of recreational resources and opportunities, thus, may be experiencing various changes from decreases in government funding to a reduction in facilities and programs offered. However, if leisure and sport is truly valued by the citizens of this society and the providers of leisure services it may be possible that programs and leisure resources may be sustained or even increased through these difficult economic times. This study will attempt to highlight the extent to which leisure is valued through this culture's rough economic climate.

The purpose of this study is to examine the state of condition of sport in Cyprus. To fulfil this purpose, an analysis of how and by whom sport programs are operated in Cyprus will be presented. Further, focus will also be placed on providing an overview of sport facilities and the operating costs of the Cyprus Sport Organization as well as the federations of Cyprus responsible for the delivery of sport services.

## **2. Material and methods**

### *Recent Statistics in Leisure Sports Participation in Cyprus*

Little has been published on the current state of conditions regarding leisure sport behaviour and leisure sport provision in Cyprus. Regarding this lack of research on the former, a recent study by Kartakoullis et al. (2015) conducted a comprehensive overview of leisure sport participation patterns of Cypriots through data collected by phone surveys with 1000 Cypriot men and women. The results

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indicate that: (1) almost half of the Cypriot population (44.5%) participates in leisure sports, (2) more men (42.1%) than women (37.6%) reported being involved in leisure sports (3) participation in leisure sports and exercise decreases with age, (3) participation in leisure sports tends to be driven by health benefits (as opposed to other factors such as appearance, being social, self-esteem, and learning new skills), (4) most Cypriots participate in leisure sport at no cost, and (5) some Cypriots plan their vacations around leisure sport experiences (i.e., sport tourism). The leisure sport activities that were most participated in by participants in this study (both men and women combined) was walking (47.6%) which was followed by going to the gym (26.4%), football/soccer, (13.2%), swimming (9.2%), jogging (5.9%), dancing (5.0%), basketball (3.8%), tennis (3.4%), volleyball (2.7%), futsal (1.7%), and cycling (1.7%). In comparison, unpublished data by the women and sports committee of the CSO, examining women's engagement and participation in everyday, non-competitive, physical sports activities, show the following preferences: 57% walking, 16% gym/fitness centers, 13% aerobics, 11% jogging, 8% yoga/pilates, and 7% swimming, 5% dancing, 4% biking, and 3% tennis.

Kartakoullis et al. (2009) report on the participation patterns of a national endeavor in Cyprus, under the umbrella of the CSO, aimed at getting all citizens involved in sport programs for the purpose of the country's quality of life, entitled "Sport for All". Originally the program was a social service aimed at children in Cyprus, aged nine to 12, already involved in sports for enjoyment, recreation, fitness and health purposes (Kartakoullis et al., 2009). Results indicate that participation in this program in Cyprus up to 1997 increased overall (5,500 in 1985 to 12,520 in 1997) but declined from late 1997 to 1999 (10,214) and remained relatively stable until 2006. Embedded in this overall participation was an increase in participants involved in the "Swimming for Children" program (5000 in 1993 to 7000 in 1998) followed by a subsequent decrease (3600 in 1999), an increase in the participation of women (664 in 1993 to 1100 in 1999), an increase in the participation of men (72 in 1993 to 300 in 1996) followed by a subsequent decrease (200 in 1999), and an increase in the participation of people with special needs or disabilities (80 in 1993 to 238 in 1997) followed by a subsequent decrease (100 in 1999). Though the steady participation rates following 1999 shows that the program may have reached a plateau (Kartakoullis et al., 2009), the reason for the decrease seen within the data is not made clear.

The following unpublished data from 2011 has been reported, as a part of the CSO's National "Sports for All" Program, concerning the total number of children participating in sports by category. It should be noted however that this data by the CSO are derived only from their national sports programs and do not include participants from Cypriot sport programs outside of the CSO's scope. Results stated that 2,411 children four to six years old (pre-school) engage in physical game activities, 4,253 children aged six to 12 engage in team sports (football, basket-ball, handball, volleyball), 3,559 children aged six to 12 engage in individual sports (judo, karate, rhythmic gymnastics and gymnastics, taekwondo, badminton dancing, tennis, ping-pong wrestling, track and field athletics), 6,000

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children aged four to 12 engage in swimming, and 6,216 adults including elderly people take part in team and individual sports (swimming, aerobics, football, walking, volleyball, basketball, dancing, pilates, yoga, chronic diseases rehabilitation sports).

*Leisure Sport Behaviours of Cypriots in Other Studies*

Bathrellou, Lazarou, Panagiotakos, and Sidossis (2007) and Walker, Crawford, and Taylor (2008) both examine children in urban and rural areas of Cyprus, though the latter study also compares their Cypriot participants with additional study participants based out of England and Greece. In Bathrellou et al. (2007) it was found that urban children reported engaging more in after school sports than rural children (though this amount was not significantly different). Furthermore, rural children were more occupied with outdoor chores during the week than urban children, and due to this, reported being engaged significantly more in physical activity than urban children overall after school. However, there were no significant differences between the sedentary behaviours of urban and rural Cypriot children including time spent watching TV, using or playing on the computer, and playing electronic or videogames. This study clearly leaves out an important intervening factor that Walker et al. (2008) looks at in their analyses of the socio-economic statuses of participants in Cyprus. In examining how poverty affects young people of single-parent families in various aspects of their lives, including participation in leisure sports, these researchers found that a low socio-economic standing was associated with reduced physical activity and increased sedentary behaviours in children and their families. Various barriers related to low income were pin-pointed in this study including insufficient incomes and living in low income neighbourhoods which are characterized by small homes and a lack of leisure facilities. With regards to the former, a lack of income meant either the cost of leisure programs in particular, or the cost of transportation to these leisure programs (often found far away from low income housing) makes leisure opportunities inaccessible to those who lack the needed funds. For the latter, small homes typically making up low income neighbourhoods provide little place for children to engage in active play (thus encouraging more passive lifestyles). Meanwhile parks, sports centres, recreational programs, and other leisure opportunities are often not within the boundaries of these low-income neighbourhoods meaning that children and their families living here often have few places to play outside of their homes.

Gibbons, Lynn, and Stiles (1997) reported on differences of leisure preferences between male and female adolescents' in Cyprus, though they were also compared to participants from 3 other countries as well (United States, Netherlands, and India). Though 444 activities were indicated as possibilities by Cypriot adolescents, boys' showed a significantly greater preference for sports (48.8%) than girls (41.4%). Regardless, this pattern was not unique to Cyprus but was observed in responses from all four of the participating countries' adolescents. Dissimilarities in the socialization and enculturation of males and females in industrial societies may result in the differences between males' and females'

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leisure preferences in these societies (Gibbons et al., 1997). However, there were no rural youth approached in this study and these results may not be generalizable. Furthermore, in the case of the Cypriot youth, participants were recruited from a summer camp where sports are salient and the preference for sport may naturally be higher regardless of the gender of participants.

#### *Policy Implementation by the State*

Within the EU, as in most developed regions, sport and leisure activities are provided within the public, private, and non-profit sectors with a mixed variety of programs and implementation processes carried out in each (Scheerder et al., 2011). However, each member-state regulates and provides sport services autonomously (Alexopoulos, 2005) with each having its own national sports structures that differ from those of other member-states (Chaker, 2004). Decisions at the EU level are not binding for member states but come in the form of recommendations. States are, thus, free to either harmonise these recommendations with current legislation or policies or to create new legislation, policies or initiatives based on them. In Cyprus this falls under the responsibility of the Cyprus Sport Organization (CSO) who closely watch the EU recommendations and act on them when possible. Recently, as of 2012, the CSO has outlined several areas of policy ratification including: (1) reinforcement of the cooperation among all interested parties responsible for the promotion of physical activity and more specifically of the fields of sports, health, education, urban planning; (2) formation of basic principles for the physical activity for the elderly; (3) proposition for the establishment of a European Day / Week for Sport; and (4) the adoption of evidence based policies or the application of empirical data in sport policy formation. As is evident, the CSO prioritizes the implementation of the realization of EU recommendations. Cyprus' sport federations, which were a part of this current study, are responsible for promoting their respective sports, providing sport-specific training from qualified personnel in sport facilities, and are the main providers of various sporting activities at different levels.

#### *Methodology - Participants*

As the supreme authority for sports in Cyprus the CSO is the focus for this study's data collection. This organization cooperated well with the research team and provided very informative responses. Cyprus' sport federations have also been chosen to be a part of the current study since they are the main providers of various sporting activities in the country. Only 22 (out of 69) sports federations replied though four of them were not in a position to provide data. The Cyprus sports federations of a) Weight Lifting, b) Sailing, c) Amateur Football and d) Co-federation of Local Federations replied that they could not provide the data either because they do not exist or because they do not have programs falling in the survey category. Meanwhile The Cyprus Football Federation and the Cyprus Handball Federation provided limited information with the suggestion that the study team should contact their club members separately. Regardless, information from them can be useful to understand the infrastructure for sport participation and identifying the areas that need to be improved.

### *Procedure and Data Collection*

Recruitment for the CSO and the various sports federations within Cyprus began with the research team making initial contact by phone to inform them about the research and request that their members respond to the relevant questionnaire. After their approval, instruction letters were sent by email accompanied by the relevant questionnaire and tables to fill in. The measurement tools consisted of questionnaires and a fill-in table asking for information on sport programs, facilities, and costs. This questionnaire was sent to the CSO and the various Sport Federations existing within Cyprus. For the CSO, a special document was prepared which required information on the policy of the organization. Specifically, information was collected regarding (1) the promotion of leisure, social and grassroots sports, (2) a list of the facilities, and (3) the costs associated with the programs and the running of these facilities. For the federations a special template was prepared asking for information regarding (1) the nature of the programs provided, (2) the district distribution, (3) the number of people training in grassroots sports, (4) the number and expertise of personnel, (5) club members, and (6) infrastructure and cost of infrastructure. In addition, data was collected using desk research as it provided a means to summarize, collate, and synthesize secondary research from archival and written works of the CSO and the federations.

Quantitative and qualitative data were used to analyze data. Quantitative data is mostly used to address the amount of facilities owned by the CSO along with the differences in their operating budget between the years 2011 to 2012. Quantitative data is also used to inform on the distribution of programs between each of Cyprus' districts, the amount of individuals training in grassroots sports, the number of personnel employed including their salaries, the amount of club members within each federation across the five districts and the amount of facilities used by each federation across all the five districts along with their operating costs. Qualitative data presented in this research informed how the provision of leisure sport is organized in Cyprus at the state level. Qualitative data also addresses more of the intricacies of the Sport Federations program delivery including the nature of the programs provided and the expertise of the personnel that they employ.

### **3. Results and Discussions**

#### *Organization of Leisure Sports in Cyprus at the State Level*

The following information was collected as qualitative data from the CSO. Overall, in Cyprus different kinds of leisure sports programs operate on an organized or non-organized basis. Leisure sports activities and programs, specifically, are provided to (1) the general population (all citizens regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, mental and bodily ability, educational professional, social and financial background), (2) in pre-school, school and university environment, (3) in the natural environment (e.g., parks, walkways, bikeways), (4) urban or rural environments, (5) in children's camps, (6) in theme parks, (7) in the summer or winter, (8) to tourists (sports tourism), (9) as partial activities of big cultural or

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charity events (e.g., radio-marathon, Make-a-Wish), (10) for people with disabilities, (11) in prisons, (12) in the national guard and the country's security bodies, and (13) in rehabilitation centers. Leisure sports programs in voluntary clubs, children's playgrounds, and hotels are not developed by the state or community providers, but do demonstrate significant participation numbers from the general Cypriot population. Leisure sport programs are provided in Cyprus, at various levels (e.g., state and community), by the CSO, the ministry of education and culture, municipalities and communities, the National Olympic Committee (including sports federations and sports clubs), the Cyprus Tourism Organization, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of defense. Private enterprises (e.g., gyms, fitness centers, and hotels), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and non-profit organizations (NPOs; charity and volunteerism organizations) also provide a significant number of leisure sports programs but do not operate through the state or through community organizations. Cyprus' sports infrastructure systems include sport facilities and physical activity settings, sports equipment, transportation and access to sports and physical activity setting (e.g., SFA), insurance coverage for participants in sports and physical activities (e.g., participants of SFA), information (print and electronic) needed for the operation of sorts and physical activity programs (setting, days, times, ect.) and information material (e.g., guidelines for proper engagement in exercise and physical activity).

#### *Cyprus Sport Organization*

This following information was also collected as qualitative data from the CSO. The CSO was founded in 1969 by way of the Cyprus Sport Organisation Laws of 1969 to 1996. It is a semi-governmental organization and is defined in accordance to those 1969 and 1996 laws as the Supreme Authority, within the Cyprus Republic, for out-of-school sport. The basic objectives of the CSO include the development of out-of-school sport, the coordination of 'the sport life' of the country, the cultivation of the Olympic Ideal, and the promotion of Cyprus in the international sports milieu. The CSO is managed by a administrative Board consisting of nine members that is directed by a President and Vice President. On operational terms the CSO relies on four basic services: the fields of Sport and of Sport Facilities, of Financial Management and of Personnel Management.

The CSO owns several facilities in four of the five districts of Cyprus for the purposes of social sports, leisure sports, and grassroots sports. Specifically, they own five facilities in Nicosia, six in Limassol, four in Larnaca, and two in Pafos. A comprehensive list of each CSO owned facility in each of these four districts including whether they cater to social, leisure or grassroots sports.

The CSO operating budget is presented in Table 2. Upon inspection it is clear that significant reductions in public spending have been made between the years 2011 and 2012. This is likely due to the economic recession that was taking place at that time. The largest cuts are observable in the cases of social sports and of rural sports infrastructure development in both real money spent and of the proportion of the total yearly budget being spent on these endeavors. In the case of SFA there is a

slight increase (0.2%) in the percentage of the total yearly budget going towards this endeavor.

#### *National Programs in Leisure Sports/ Participation*

The CSO operates, among others, three national programs addressed to mass sports and grassroots sports: the Sports for All Program (SFA), the Sport for All Program in the National Guard and Security Corpses, and the National Scheme of Developmental Sports Support (NSDSS).

*Sports for All (SFA)*. The SFA, run by the CSO, began in 1985 with the goals of improving citizens' wellbeing, improvement of physical condition and health, and recreational opportunities for sport and physical activity. The main philosophy of the SFA is offering the population an equal opportunity to engage in such activities regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and physical or mental condition. In data from 2011, 700 sports were in operation with more than 17,000 members of all ages participating (1200 children, 3500 adults, and 2300 elderly participants). In that same year the program had an operating budget of €2,000,000. In 2011 there were 103 qualified physical education graduates employed in the program, of whom 89 were employed at these sport centers while 14 conducted coordination and managerial duties. School sport settings, CSO owned sport facilities, sport and leisure settings (e.g., parks, cycling ways) owned by municipalities and communities, private facilities (e.g., kindergarten settings), and more specific facilities used in particular program focuses (e.g., national guard, rehabilitation centers, schools for persons with special needs) are used for SFA programs.

The SFA runs seven programs within Cyprus including several programs for children and adults. For children the SFA offers (1) a General Sports Program for children aged 6 to 12 to obtain skills to help them enjoy sports (e.g., basketball, volleyball, handball, football, and track and field), (2) a Program for children of Pre-school age (4-6) to introduce children to movement and sport activity through play, (3) Specialized Sport Programs for children aged 6 to 12 that offer sports for children (through scouting talent) eventually leading to specialization and future athleticism, and (4) a "Child and Swimming" program providing children the opportunity to familiarize with water and be instructed in all types of swimming. More adult programs include the (5) Programs for (adult) women and men encouraging a healthy lifestyle and escape from stress and every problems, (6) a Senior Citizens Program (at indoor gyms and nursery homes) with the aim to improve body, motor, mental and physical condition, and socializing of the elderly, and (7) Programs for people with special needs to develop multiple skills, provide psychological support, provide equal opportunities, encourage social inclusion, and reinforce curative treatment for people who have specific/special needs.

In recent years the program has developed a close relationship with municipalities and communities in order to further the development of a sport infrastructure, encourage a larger participation of people in sport, and organize sport events. In 2011 the SFA program was cooperating with 22 municipalities and 34 communities but also with the Ministry of Education and Culture to subsidize

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the participation of students in the Child and Swimming Program. The SFA employs various measures to motivate members to participate in the program with various benefits including: insurance coverage (including the employed PE instructors), free transportation for children to the program's sport events, gifts, free use of the equipment at the sport facilities, and free program participation to (1) children who receive public benefit, (2) persons who have disabilities or special needs, (3) senior citizens and pensioners, (4) and the third child in the family if the other two participate as well.

*Sports for All National Program in the National Guard and Security Forces.* This program is addressed to the soldiers as well as the permanent military personnel and other security corpses of Cyprus and aims at the improvement of physical education in these settings. The sports programs were formed with the objective of maintaining the peak physical condition of the army and they are improved and adapted according to the relevant conditions and needs demanded by the National Guard and the Security Corpses. This particular program employs 28 qualified PE graduates of whom two have coordination duties and take on public relations duties. 1600 members of the National Guard were regularly members of this program in 2011 while 4000 were periodic members. Another 300 members come from the security forces of Cyprus. The total operating budget of the program is €630,000.

Apart from training at their units, the appointed instructors cover various other responsibilities including: the organization of local military championships among units and the yearly evaluation of the physical condition of permanent staff. In September 2009 the program was extended to the security corpses such as the police academies, fire brigade, permanent army staff and the civil defense. The Sport Program of the Security Corpses aims at stabilizing and improving their physical condition, body image, the limitation of stress, and the exercise and recreation of the participants through sport activities. According to the 2011 data, the participation of the Security Corpses members in particular activities was as follows: 53% swimming, 19% basketball, 11% football, 9% weightlifting, 4% volleyball, and 4% karate.

*National Scheme of Developmental Sports Support (NSDSS).* The CSO's implementation of the NSDSS came with the ultimate goal of obtaining an identity for Cyprus sport through sport for development including the positive development Cypriot youth along with the athletic development of youth into potential athletes. The NSDSS supports team sports club academies but has also included a small number of individual sports with potential for development and support. The NSDSS provides financial support to Cyprus' sport clubs to ensure participation contingent on continuous and smooth participation in the relevant development championships organized by the pertinent national sport federation of Cyprus. Specifically, they cover athletes aged 12 to 16 (and under a separate body for ages 16 to 18 in basketball, volleyball, and handball) for which the relevant national sport federations organize teenage championships. The program covers a period of seven months, for the duration of the various sports developmental championships,

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so that the needs and requirements of athletes of all the developmental ages are met. The coaches within the program are registered and appointed by the clubs or federations who employ them and report exclusively to them but should comply with the standards set by the NSDSS.

The NSDSS has various objectives in place including: increasing the number of participants engaged in sport clubs, to cover all of Cyprus (with special emphasis in urban areas), to reinforce the clubs financially, to support the Cypriot coach, to inform on the specifics on how to coach individuals of different developmental ages, the establishment of fair play, the non-dismissal of any child, the persistence in teaching the basic technique of every sport, to adopt scientific findings in their operations, to evaluate talent, and to contribute to the fulfillment of talented athletes. Supervision and control of the implementation of this program (e.g., the distribution of subsidies) as well as the function and activities of the clubs and academies is performed by a supervising team of experts appointed by the CSO's board of administrators.

Emphasis is placed by the NSDSS on several areas of sport for development. One of these includes encouraging proper child development physically, psychologically, and socially to contribute to their healthy developmental trajectory into adulthood and potential integrated citizenship. Another area of development in the program is the advanced training, evaluation and fulfillment of potential of talented Cypriot athletes. Specifically the advanced training regards the provision of information to coaches concerning the particularities of the developmental age, but also on general issues regarding the whole spectrum of sport, such as psychology, pedagogics, and sociology. The training is pursued through an annual training program, which includes lectures, publications, and information sessions. The evaluation involves testing large numbers of children in all sports on their physical condition and technique to determine whether they are athletically talented in a sport. The fulfilment of potential talents regards ensuring that children who are suggested to be athletically talented, based on evaluation outcomes, can indeed become talented athletes in Cyprus' sports clubs.

The NSDSS also sponsors clubs and federations in terms of covering various operational costs. In particular they subsidize coaches for seven months (during development championships) with the amount being based on their academic qualifications (accredited by the CSO's board of administrators and are related to the degrees of the coaching schools offered). They also help cover the costs of the purchasing of sport equipment, the transportation of teams for their participation in championships, and other organizational expenses such as refereeing and secretarial/administrative support. Through such sponsorship the NSDSS helps ensure Cypriot clubs' participation in national championships.

Between the years 2011 to 2012 the number of athletes (children and adolescents ages 12-16) under the NSDSS program rose to 8,195 while the total number coaches was 394 (309 males and 85 females). Specifically the distribution of athletes by sport under this program goes as follows: 1,709 athletes in football, 1,299 athletes in volleyball, 1,200 track athletes, 982 athletes in basketball, 762

athletes in handball, 400 athletes in swimming and 1,843 total athletes in individuals sports (tennis, ping-pong, badminton, biking, archery, wrestling, gymnastics, boxing, shooting, squash, judo, taekwondo, karate, sailing, skiing, fencing, water-ski, horse riding, canoe).

#### *Sport Federations*

Data provided by the federations show that most programs operate in cooperation with the CSO, the National Sports Development Support Scheme (NSDSS) and the Cyprus Olympic Committee (COC). Some federations reported running programs in cooperation with their respective European or international federations. Table 2 provides an overview of cooperation channels employed by federations for operating programs. All the federations as a whole reported having 103 programs in total in all five districts of Cyprus. Table 3 provides a rundown of federation run programs, for each federation, distributed by district. It was reported that 42 programs are run by federations in Nicosia, 23 are run in Limassol, 11 are run in Larnaca, six exist in Pafos, and eight occur in Famagusta. However, this does not add up to the grand total of 103 programs across all five districts as some federations were not able to provide program numbers by district and instead provided a total number of programs they ran throughout Cyprus, making the 103 total programs the more accurate number reported here. The Football, Taekwondo, Judo, Handball, Weight Lifting federations did not provide data for programs by district.

Among all the federations that responded, it was reported that there were 19,355 total participants across all the federations and across all the five districts of Cyprus. A more detailed template of this information can be found in Table 4 including numbers across different age groups among each federation. The total figures shown in Table 4 indicate that participation in grassroots sports as a whole decreases as the age of participants increases, though some exceptions to this trend exist for Billiards, Shooting, Waterski, Special Olympics, and Hockey. Also, close examination of each Federation's individual results suggest that there are greater numbers of participants in team sports than in individual sports, with the exception of tennis.

With regards to employed staff, it is understood that some of the expertise of federations evolves out of cooperating organizations and their member-clubs. Only eight of the federations stated their staff costs, though it should be taken into account that some salaries of federation staff, specifically those working with the Bowling, Bridge, and Table Tennis Federations, are covered by another body (i.e., member clubs, the Ministry of Education and the CSO respectively). It is apparent in the data that the biggest salary payroll belongs to the Cyprus Tennis Federation with €157,000. Other significant salaries of not include the Cyprus Shooting Federation (€136,000), the Amateur Athletics Federation (€77,000), the Ski Federation (€46,000), the Taekwondo and Judo Federations (both €16,000), the Special Olympics Federation (€14,000), and the Waterski Federation (€1600). Meanwhile the Cyprus Federation of Amateur Athletics reports employing the most staff at 30 followed by Cycling (16) and Shooting (12). Table 5 provides a

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comprehensive list of the amount of staff each federation employs along with the salaries of these employees.

The Federations also reported the number of cooperating members clubs in each of the five districts of Cyprus and in total. The Cyprus Football Association has significantly more members in total (270) than the other federations which is followed by Basketball (27), Taekwondo (26) Special Olympics (22) and Tennis (21) with drastically smaller numbers. Table 6 provides a detailed list of members for each federation across all of the five districts of Cyprus.

Lastly, with regards to infrastructure, the federations in this study indicated the number of facilities used by them in each district along with the number of facilities they use in total. However, of the 22 federations that responded only eight stated that they used facilities. In total there were 29 facilities reported as being utilized by all the federations across Cyprus. Table 7 provides a list of facilities used by each federation across all five districts. Seven of these eight federations indicated the total yearly operating costs of their facilities with the Cyprus Federation of Amateur Athletics (€170,000) and the Cyprus Shooting Federation (€165,000) covering the largest costs. The second, third, and fourth, fifth, and sixth largest operating costs reported were for the federations of Skiing (€40,000), Tennis (€7,000), Waterski (€5,400), Billiards (€5,000), and Hockey (€1,000).

### ***Discussion***

The research described gathered significant data from key stakeholders at Cyprus' national/state level (the CSO and various sport federations) regarding their sport programs, sport facilities, and the operating costs of these facilities including personnel salaries. Overall the CSO is the main provider of sport programs, sport facilities, and sport funding while being the body most responsible for policy issuing, promoting legislation and for policy implementation and supervision. In terms of leisure, grassroots, and social sports it functions two main programs at the state level: The National Sports for All Program (SFA) and the National Scheme for Developmental Support (NSDSS). The SFA, launched in 1985, is offered for all ages and also supports programs for the National Guard and the Security Corpses. The program's goals include improving the wellbeing and leisure participation of Cypriot citizens and the improvement of the physical condition and health of all citizens engaging in sports and physical activities. The NSDSS support and subsidizes the national sport federations, clubs and academies through the provision of funds and coaches. Specifically it supports three fields. First, the material field covers part of the fund required for the purchase of sport materials. Second, the field of organization concerns covering a wide variety of expenses, such as refereeing and secretarial support. Third, the transport field covers the transport of teams for their participation in championships.

Though 69 federations exist in Cyprus only 22 replied to the questionnaires while four were not in a position to provide data. Therefore, while this data about Cyprus' national sport federations may not be all encompassing it does provide an idea about their state of condition and system of operation. Grassroots sport programs are run by all 18 of the federations that replied, most of them in

collaboration with their member clubs. Nearly all the programs offered are addressed to children, adolescents, and youth (i.e., 63.66% of individuals training under federations were under 15 years old). Almost all of the federations cooperate with the CSO.

#### **4. Conclusions**

As a result of the data provided various conclusions are put forth. First, Cyprus does have the necessary structure, infrastructure and institutions that can support social, leisure and grassroots sports. Second, the economic recession has contributed to the decrease of funds allocated to leisure, social and grassroots sports, even at the state level. Third, there seems to be willingness on behalf of the Cyprus Sports Organisation to further develop leisure sport within Cypriot society. Fourth, many sport federations do not seem to keep records or data regarding programs, costs and participation. Fifth, The CSO seems well organized in terms of supporting the existing institutions, while at the same time it plays a crucial part in policy making and implementation.

Despite lack of funds due to economic measures, it is concluded that sport continues to be delivered while also playing a critical role in the development of Cypriot society. It is recommended that sport continue to come to the forefront of decision making in Cyprus and that state efforts continue to be placed towards developing a sporting culture and offering the necessary opportunities and facilities. Lastly, European policy on the issue is rapidly developing and Cyprus seems to be playing a crucial part during its EU presidency in 2012.

Overall, this research recommends that the state should support efforts towards developing a sporting culture and offering the necessary opportunities and facilities. In order to realize a healthy and active Cypriot society long-term planning in the provision of physical activity and significant investment will be needed. It is realized, however, that such funds are hard to come by given the current economic state of many countries in the EU. Typically, when economic resources are scarce, leisure and sport tend to be seen as less of a priority. Perhaps it is reasonable to say that time is needed for this economic turmoil to be overcome before major development take place in sport and leisure in leisure. However, it should be made clear that, once the time comes that enough funds are present in the economy, Cyprus' investments and precedence for its leisure and sport organizations and federations will go a long way in promoting the active lifestyle, health, and wellbeing of Cypriots. Such investments would also continue to recognize the important role of leisure and sport culture that is present within Cypriot society (Kartakoullis et al., 2015).

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