Aalto University
School of Business

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPORTS COMMUNITY'S SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM FROM THE FINNISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO THE SPORTS FEDERATIONS AND CLUBS

Master's Thesis
Venla Hakkarainen
Aalto University School of Business
Management and International Business
Spring 2023

Aalto University
School of Business

Aalto University, P.O. BOX 11000, 00076 AALTO
www.aalto.fi

Abstract of master's thesis

Author Venla Hakkarainen

Title of thesis THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPORTS COMMUNITY'S SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM FROM THE FINNISH OLYMPIC COMMITTEE TO THE SPORTS FEDERATIONS AND CLUBS

Degree Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration

Degree programme Management and International Business

Thesis advisor Jukka Rintamäki

Year of approval 2023 **Number of pages** 91 **Language** English

Abstract

The purpose of this master's thesis is to describe how the sports community's sustainability program has been implemented from the Finnish Olympic Committee to sports federations and clubs. The theoretical background is based on various definitions of sustainability as well as theories and research related to implementing sustainability at inter-organizational context. The aim is to outline the sustainability strategy of the sports organizations and the related practices as well as how the implementation of the sustainability program is influenced between the Finnish Olympic Committee, sports federations and clubs.

The empirical research was conducted using qualitative research methods. The research is a case study which data was collected by interviewing altogether nine representatives of different sports organizations. The analysis of the transcribed interviews was carried out as a content analysis using both a deductive and an inductive approach. The results of the analysis are based on the reduction, classification and conceptualization of the interview data.

The findings of the thesis specify the sustainability practices of the sports organizations and the inter-organizational influence regarding sustainability as well as determine the sustainability strategy of the sports organizations. Further research is suggested on analyzing the diversity of sports organizations as a meta-organization.

Keywords sustainability, implementation, inter-organizational

Tekijä Venla Hakkarainen

Työn nimi URHEILUYHTEISÖN VASTUULLISUUSOHJELMAN JALKAUTTAMINEN SUOMEN OLYMPIAKOMITEASTA LAJILIITTOIHIN JA -SEUROIHIN

Tutkinto Kauppatieteiden maisteri

Koulutusohjelma Management and International Business

Työn ohjaaja Jukka Rintamäki

Hyväksymisvuosi 2023 **Sivumäärä** 91 **Kieli** Englanti

Tiivistelmä

Tämän maisterintutkielman tarkoitus on kuvailla, miten urheiluyhteisön vastuullisuusohjelma on jalkautunut Suomen Olympiakomiteasta urheiluliittoihin ja -seuroihin. Tutkielman teoriatausta pohjautuu erilaisiin kestävyyden määritelmiin sekä teorioihin ja tutkimuksiin liittyen kestävyyden toteuttamiseen organisaatioiden välisessä kontekstissa. Tavoitteena on hahmottaa urheiluorganisaatioiden kestävyysstrategioita, niihin liittyviä toimintatapoja sekä sitä, miten vastuullisuusohjelman jalkauttamiseen vaikutetaan Olympiakomitean, urheiluliittojen ja urheiluseurojen välillä.

Tutkielman empiirinen tutkimusosio on toteutettu laadullisena eli kvalitatiivisena tutkimuksena. Tutkimus toteutettiin tapaustutkimuksena, ja aineisto kerättiin haastattelemalla yhteensä yhdeksää eri urheilujärjestön edustajaa. Litteroidun haastatteluaineiston analyysi toteutettiin sisällönanalyysina sekä deduktiivista että induktiivista lähestymistapaa hyödyntäen. Analyysin tulokset pohjautuvat kerätyn haastatteluaineiston pelkistämiseen, luokitteluun ja käsitteellistämiseen.

Tutkimuksen tulokset määrittelevät urheilujärjestöjen kestäviä toimintatapoja ja organisaatioiden välistä vaikutusta kestävyyteen sekä erittelevät urheilujärjestöjen kestävyysstrategiaa. Jatkotutkimusaiheeksi ehdotetaan urheiluorganisaatioiden monimuotoisuuden tarkastelua metaorganisaationa.

Avainsanat kestävyys, jalkauttaminen, organisaatioiden välinen

Table of Contents

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Research objectives and questions 2

1.2 Research methodology 3

1.3 Theoretical framework and limitations 3

1.4 Structure of the study 5

2 Sustainable development 6

2.1 The definition of a sustainable organization 6

2.2 Organization's sustainable strategies 8

2.3 The role of NGOs in CSR 14

3 Implementing sustainability in inter-organizational context 18

3.1 Inter-organizational perspectives 18

3.1.1 Meta-organizations 18

3.1.2 Institutional translation 21

3.1.3 Decoupling and organized hypocrisy 22

3.2 Implementation structure 23

4 Research methodology 26

4.1 The Finnish Olympic Committee, sports federations and sports clubs 26

4.2 Research method and data collection 29

4.3 Analysis of the data 31

5 The implementation of the sustainability program to the sports organizations . 33

5.1 Practices related to the five themes of the sustainability program 33

5.1.1 Practices in the FOC 33

5.1.2 Practices in the sports federations 35

5.1.2.1 Assets regarding the practices 35

5.1.2.2 Challenges regarding the practices 39

5.1.3 Practices in the sports clubs 41

5.1.3.1 Assets regarding the practices 42

5.1.3.2 Challenges regarding the practices 44

5.1.4 Summary of the sustainability-related practices 46

5.2 Strategy-related perspectives to sustainability 47

5.2.1 Strategy-related perspectives in the FOC 47

5.2.2 Strategy-related perspectives in the sports federations 49

5.2.2.1 Organizational culture 49

5.2.2.2 Key competencies 52
5.2.3 Strategy-related perspectives in the sports clubs 54
5.2.3.1 Organizational culture 54
5.2.3.2 Key competencies 56
5.2.4 Summary of strategy-related perspectives 58
5.3 Influencing the implementation of the sustainability program 59
5.3.1 Implementation structures in the FOC 59
5.3.2 Implementation structures in the sports federations 61
5.3.2.1 Stakeholders and their engagement 61
5.3.2.2 Other activities of implementation structure 63
5.3.3 Implementation structures in the sports clubs 65
5.3.3.1 Stakeholders and their engagement 65
5.3.3.2 Other activities of implementation structure 67
5.3.4 Summary of the implementation structures 68
6 Conclusions and discussion 70
6.1 Research results and conclusions 70
6.1.1 Creating shared value as a meta-organization 72
6.1.2 A gap between self-evaluation and practice in sustainability strategies 75
6.2 Research reliability and suggestions for further research 78
References 81
Appendix A: Interview framework 89
Appendix B: An example of the analysis progress 91

List of Figures

Figure 1. Five sustainability strategies. 4
Figure 2. Triple bottom line 6
Figure 3. Creating shared value. 10
Figure 4. Implementation evaluation criteria. 24
Figure 5. The five themes of the sustainability program 27

1 Introduction

The examination of organizations that develop their social, ethical and environmental responsibilities is a topical issue, as the role of business in society is changing. Public services which have traditionally been managed by the government, are now provided by the private sector. Organizations and corporates are thus increasingly critical in many areas of society. The growing power of companies also brings with it responsibilities, as companies have an impact on the world's biggest social and environmental problems. The digital economy has also changed the relationship between business and society, as different data make things more measurable and thus more transparent about the responsible or irresponsible behavior of companies. (Rasche, Morsing and Moon, 2017, pp. 1-2.)

Under the auspices of the Finish Olympic Committee (FOC), the sports community has, for the first time, built a joint sustainability program (2020-2024). The program has been developed in close cooperation with sport federations. The aim is that the program serves as a framework for sustainability and can be used by the entire sports community. (FOC, 2021a.) Although many actions are already underway, more work is needed to implement the program. The aim is to create a sustainability program in which the ethical principles are brought to life, and which are felt by every member of the sports community (FOC, 2021a). A sustainability program, a compliance process, is needed to implement the guidelines, to coordinate the feedback process, and to follow the objectives. For compliance to be achieved as desired, organization-wide collaboration is needed. The focus is on internal networks as well as stakeholders. These are multidisciplinary tasks, and good results cannot be achieved from the perspective of just one area of expertise. Compliance requires common goals and monitoring of change to support leadership and learning. Even unfortunate results should not be hidden - openness and transparency are the starting points for accountability and compliance. (Koipijärvi and Kuvaja, 2020, p. 85.)

Sports have often been seen as an interesting field to illustrate the organizational phenomenon (Gomez, Opazo and Marti, 2008, p. 2). Korvenpää (2021) examined in his master's thesis how is the implementation of the sustainability program approached by the FOC and sports federations during the initiation phase. Despite the promising results of comprehensive collective practices, engagement and adaptive organizational actions, the

research shows that there is need for development relating to implementation process of the program. Therefore, Korvenpää (2022, p. 113) suggests that after the initiation phase there is a need for research how the implementation of the sustainability program continues further in the inter-organizational context of the sports community. In response to the Ministry of Education and Culture's request for clarification, the Board of the Olympic Committee announced that the Olympic Committee is building a more detailed plan to implement the sustainability program (FOC, 2022a). By acquiring information on how the themes of the sustainability program are visible in the FOC and its stakeholders, it is easier to build an open and ethical operating culture and to create a low threshold for dealing with grievances (Koipijärvi and Kuvaja, 2020, p. 85).

1.1 Research objectives and questions

"For when a sustainability program is made, the culture in practice will determine whether it remains just a paper, great goal, or whether it is really part of that culture. And whenever it is not part of the culture, then it also poses pretty big risks to the organization because the number one destruction of organizations is that talk and actions do not meet." (Sports Federation Manager, from Korvenpää, 2021, p. 94)

The objective of my master's thesis is to describe how the sports community's sustainability program has been implemented from the FOC to sports federations and clubs. For this purpose and from the perspective of the sports organization, I try to identify the most descriptive of the five sustainability strategies of Valente's (2017) model, which serves as a theoretical framework. In addition, reflecting on the framework, the objective is to describe what the sustainable practices implemented in the organization are. According to Seitanidi and Crane (2009, p. 413) for the learning in both practice and theory, it is essential to understand how sustainability partnerships are implemented in practice. Mintzberg (1993) described implementation as a fundamental part of the continuous strategy process instead of something that happens once a strategy has been designed. Just as the strategic management of a firm can be expressed as an interconnection of corporate strategy, structure and financial performance, sustainability performance can be understood as a function of structures and strategies. Therefore, the fundamental question is how those structures and strategies are related to the sustainability performance (Husted, 2000, p. 34.) Thus, the objective is, using the concept of implementation structure, to also describe how the

implementation of the sustainability program is influenced between the FOC, sports federations and clubs. In my thesis I try to answer the following main question:

- How has the sports community's sustainability program been implemented from the FOC to the sports federations and clubs?

The sub-questions supplementing the main question are:

- What kind of practices related to the five themes of the sustainability program are implemented in the organization?
- How is the implementation of the sustainability program influenced by the FOC, sports federations and clubs?

1.2 Research methodology

My master's thesis is a qualitative case study in which the aim is to understand the research subject. Qualitative research methods are advisable for gathering holistic information which fits the objective of this thesis (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, pp. 5-6). The data was collected by interviewing representatives of the FOC, sports federations and clubs using a semi-structured interview since it enables gathering versatile data (Galletta and Cross, 2013, pp. 45-46). The interview material was transcribed, and the data was analyzed using content analysis inductively and deductively. A theoretical framework was used in the deductive content analysis and accordingly the results determine the interaction between the FOC, sports federations and clubs as well as the classification of the strategy related to the sustainability of these organizations. According to the principle of inductive, material-oriented content analysis, it was found out what kind of practices related to the five principles of the sustainability program are implemented in the organizations.

1.3 Theoretical framework and limitations

The theoretical framework of the study is based on Valente's (2017) model (Figure 1), where based on inclusiveness, interconnectedness and equity, it is possible to classify organizations into one of the five sustainability strategies, which at one extreme separate sustainability

practices from the organization's main strategy, and at the other end, sustainability practices define the organization's strategy. Inclusiveness means a systems perspective in which political, social, ecological, economic and citizen-related rights and structures are included. Interconnectedness emphasizes nestedness, integration and diversity. Equity refers to the systems that all have the same rights and where no compromises are made between them. (Valente, 2017, p. 90.) The concept of implementation evaluation criteria by Clarke (2011) is also utilized. The five criteria offer evaluating tool for the sustainability program's implementation structure and how has it been influenced by the sports organizations. The five interrelated criteria are partner engagement, collaborative practices, organizational actions, further networking, and monitoring and evaluation.

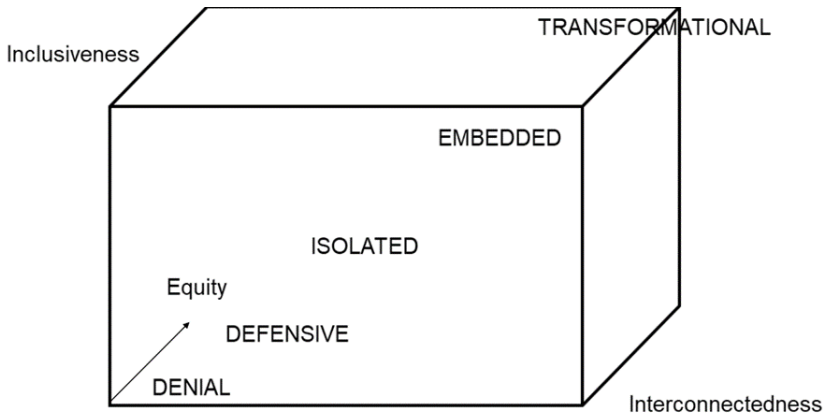

Figure 1: Five sustainability strategies (Valente, 2017)

There exists multiple models and concepts one could adopt when researching versatile organizational phenomena such as implementation of a program. Thus, this study design is only one option that has been chosen for this particular research case. According to the case study, the research is limited to examining only field of sports organizations, in which case certain characteristics of the field come to the fore in terms of practices. The extent of this research is also restricted to Finland as a region which indicates that the findings cannot be straightforwardly generalized to other countries since political, social, technological, economic factors differ globally depending on the operational business environment (Hans, 2018, p. 70).

1.4 Structure of the study

In my master's thesis, I examine the implementation of the sports community's sustainability program from the FOC to the sports federations and clubs through six main chapters. In the introduction, I present the topic of the research, the objectives, the research questions, the limitations, the key concepts through a literature review and the theoretical framework. In the second chapter, I discuss sustainable development by defining it and the sustainability strategies in more detail. In the third chapter, based on literature and research, I consider how the structures and strategies of organizations are related to the implementation of the practices. After reviewing these topics, I move on to the empirical section of my own case study, where I present the FOC, the research and data collection method used, the analysis as well as the results. Finally, based on the results, I will present the conclusions as well as the limitations related to my research and possible topics for further research.

2 Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a multidimensional phenomenon, and different groups of people define and apply it in different ways. This shows that the discussion about the impact of organizations and companies on society is important, although the multidimensionality may also cause companies to exploit the concept by selectively applying it only to certain areas. The phenomenon of sustainable development also partly overlaps with other concepts describing the relationship between organizations and society, such as business ethics and responsibility. The definition of sustainable development also changes over time, as new challenges arise and previously new practices become routine. (Rasche et al., 2017, pp. 5–6.) In the next chapter, I examine the concept of sustainable development, theories and strategies from the perspective of organizations.

2.1 The definition of a sustainable organization

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a dynamic concept, and there are several terms referring to it. Rasche et al. (2017, p. 6) define it as a combination of the organization's social, ethical and environmental responsibilities, which manifests itself towards society and which is manifested in the organization's operations, processes and the core of the business strategy together with relevant stakeholders. In the 1980s, the United Nations defined sustainability as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The European Union considers corporate sustainability to be the responsibility of organizations for their impact on society (European Union, 2011). Business ethics, on the other hand, is related to business situations, activities and decisions, which deal with the questions of right and wrong (Crane & Matten, 2019).

Although the term 'corporate social responsibility' for corporate sustainability refers specifically to social responsibility, the concept also includes factors affecting the environment of organizations (Rasche et al., 2017, p. 7). The social responsibility can be divided into the following areas: charity and volunteer work, internal activities focused on improving working conditions, transparency of company practices, communication practices to increase internal and external company awareness, activities with customers and

activities in the supply chain. The environmental responsibility of organizations can be defined through the following areas: practices focused on waste, measures related to environmental protection (including recycling of packaging and materials), reduction of water and noise pollution, related innovations and environmental certificates such as 14001 and EMAS. (Larrán Jorge, Herrera Madueño, Lechuga Sancho & Martínez-Martínez, 2016.) As a whole, the concept of corporate sustainability therefore covers corporate responsibilities in at least four key subject areas: human rights, workers' rights, environmental principles and anti-corruption activities. (Rasche et al., 2017, p. 7.)

One theory emphasizing the sustainability of organizations is the Triple Bottom Line perspective (Figure 2), which balances the company's financial, social and environmental responsibility. According to this perspective, at the intersection of social, economic and environmental performance are activities that not only have a positive impact on the natural environment and society, but also lead to longer-term financial benefit and competitive advantage from the perspective of organizations. (Carter & Rogers, 2008, p. 365.)

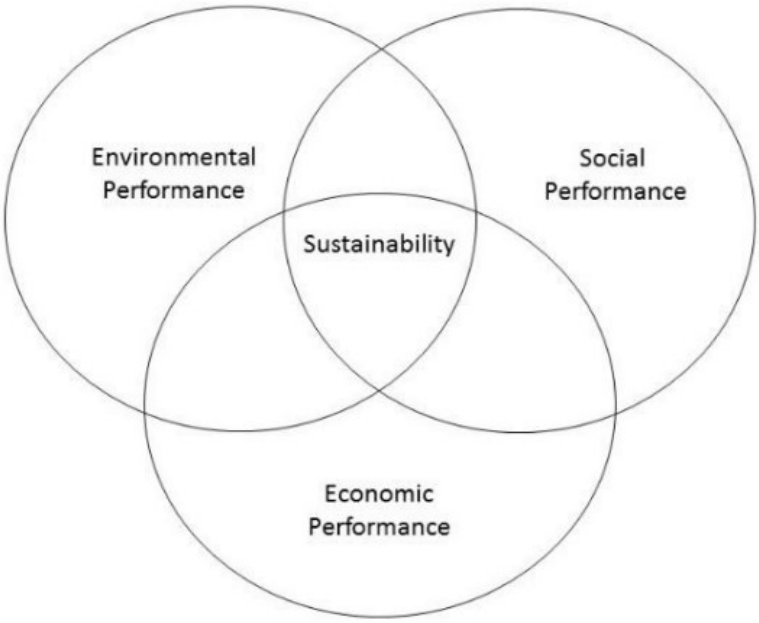

Figure 2: Triple bottom line (Carter & Rogers, 2008)

There are also other different perspectives related to the sustainability of organizations. The normative point of view emphasizes ethics, and it refers to the obligation of those working in the field of trade to strive to pursue practices, decisions and policies that are desirable

from the point of view of society's values and goals (Bowen, 1953, p. 6). The integrated perspective, on the other hand, emphasizes social and environmental factors. According to it, corporate sustainability covers the financial, ethical, discretionary and legal expectations that society holds towards organizations at a certain time. (Carroll, 1979, p. 500.)

The instrumental perspective brings out gaining a competitive advantage. Corporate sustainability could thus be considered as a form of investment, and managers should define the appropriate level of investment for corporate sustainability. (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001, p. 119.) The political perspective emphasizes corporate citizenship. According to it, the sustainability of organizations should include such responsible business measures based on which organizations become providers of public services when public authorities are unwilling or unable to provide them. (Scherer, Rasche, Palazzo & Spicer, 2016, p. 3.) According to the emergent perspective, corporate sustainability should be a topic of ongoing discussion rather than an established concept (Gond & Moon, 2013, p. 4).

Despite the multidimensional nature of corporate sustainability, its definition emphasizes certain aspects. It would be misleading to define corporate sustainability as a completely voluntary concept, as the organization’s responsibilities towards society also include its legal obligations (Carroll, 1979). Organization’s sustainability is not only about charity such as donations. While an organization’s sustainability strategy may include philanthropy, there is much more to organization’s sustainability. A well-planned sustainability strategy is at the core of the organization: it affects the organization’s everyday practices and business processes and is in line with the general business strategy. Organization’s philanthropy is sometimes detached from the organization’s core operations, while organization’s sustainability is about considering the social, environmental and ethical impacts of core operations. Sustainable development should be part of the organization’s everyday life, and it should also be taken into consideration when deciding on the organization’s strategic direction. (Rasche et al., 2017, pp. 6–7.)

2.2 Organization’s sustainable strategies

Organizations have different reasons why they participate in sustainable development. Firstly, from a business point of view, it has been found to have a positive effect on the

economy. With sustainable development, organizations' social and environmental activities lead to innovative products and services, which in turn increase revenues. Good sustainability practices can also lead to improved productivity, as environmental practices for example can affect operational efficiency and thus savings. Sustainability allows organizations also to minimize risks and thus better network with investors. In addition to obtaining financial benefits, from a moral point of view, organization's sustainability is the right thing to do. (Rasche et al., 2017, pp. 16–18.) From an institutional point of view organizations often start applying sustainability because other organizations are also doing so. Such imitative behavior is particularly relevant if organizations are characterized by uncertainty, for example, regarding future legal regulations. (Campbell, 2007.)

Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a strategic turn in the debate about CSR, as both its supporters and opponents have begun to adopt a positive, productive, innovative and value-creating perspective on the responsibility in question. This strategic change in the sustainability of organizations is called the creation of shared value, which, according to the view, should be the fundamental purpose of organizations instead of creating results. CSR should no longer be a question of whether organizations should practice it, but only of how they begin to practice it. (Vallentin & Spence, 2017, p. 63.)

The perspective of creating shared value developed through different stages (Vallentin & Spence, 2017, p. 63). The strategic philanthropy means that the organization creates value for both business and society, creating a "win win" situation, where the focus is on positive dependencies between organizations and society instead of negative tensions (Porter & Kramer, 2002, p. 58). CSR, on the other hand, prioritizes social challenges. The purpose of prioritization is to create a clear and positive social program for the organization, which must also meet the expectations of stakeholders, although the real strategic sustainability of organizations goes beyond the reactions of stakeholders. Instead of seeing sustainability as a cost, responsibility is seen as an opportunity and an investment that can benefit the organization and society at the same time. (Porter & Kramer, 2006, p. 89.)

The creation of shared value, on the other hand, ventures beyond CSR and focuses on the connections between social and economic development. Creating shared value means practices and operating methods that increase the organization's competitiveness and at the

same time promote social and economic circumstances in the communities where the organization operates (Figure 3). Value is identified as benefit relative to cost, and an organization can create it through three basic ways: enabling the development of local conglomerates, redefining productivity in the value chain as well as redesigning markets and products. The basis of the shared value is to identify social needs, benefits and disadvantages that are or can appear in the organization's services and products. The productivity of the value chain is related to issues of sustainability, for example working conditions, health and safety and the use of natural water and resources. It emphasizes that possibilities for creating shared value arise because environmental and social issues can cause financial costs for organizations. The development of local groups means cooperation with other social actors to create a better operating framework and thus support the competitive situation. (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 6.)

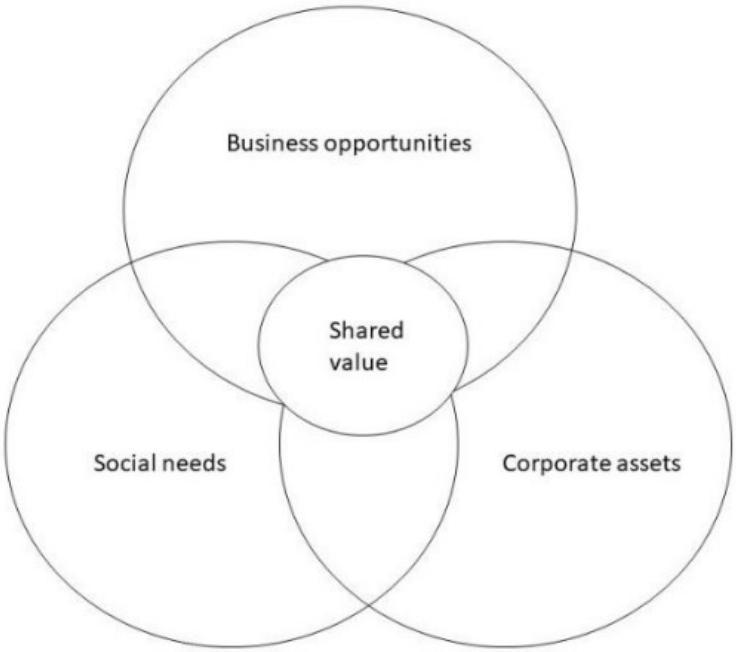

Figure 3: Creating shared value (Porter & Kramer, 2011)

There are three factors that can be used to determine organizations' sustainable development strategies: 1) the organization's positioning in the market in relation to its competitors, 2) the organization's key competence, which differentiates it from its competitors, and 3) the organization's fundamental culture, which clarifies the organization's basic identity and purpose as well as the processes, structures and practices to employees. Positioning is more

than marketing and manifests a unique value proposition for customers that differentiates the organization from its competitors. For example, the positioning of Apple is related to high quality and innovation. Marketing is important in representing this image to outsiders, but positioning comes with evidence to support the claims made. The strategy is largely based on what the organization does well and what is valuable and unique about it, which is very difficult for competitors to imitate. Lastly, internal competence and external positioning must be supported by the identity and culture of the organization, which is related to the worldview of the employees to the extent that they see the importance of the organization's strategy in their everyday work. (Valente, 2017, p. 90.)

Based on these three factors as well as inclusiveness, interconnectedness and equity, Valente (2017, p. 90) has defined five different sustainability strategies for companies and organizations. The first strategy is denial, where sustainability is irrelevant to the organization's strategy. In this strategy, all involvement in ecological or social issues takes the form of philanthropy, and sustainability has little to do with the organization's key operations. The focus is therefore on charity, the purpose of which is to promote the organization's image as a good corporate citizen and distract stakeholders from the organization's negative effects. Sustainability is left out of the organization's competitive positioning, and differentiation from competitors is not based on sustainability. Examples of this kind of strategy are, for example, tobacco companies and weapon manufacturers. An organization using a defensive strategy, on the other hand, admits that it is partly responsible for certain social, economic and ecological systems, and continues to operate as usual, making small and easy changes to respond to social pressure. Organizations are starting to reduce their impact gradually but are not seriously considering their strategy. Charity is still closely related to the organization's operations. Defensive organizations have social and ecological goals that are more closely related to the organization's operations and thus show a slightly deeper understanding of their connections to economic goals. (Valente, 2017, pp. 92–94.)

Since 2007, the United Nations has carried out a corporate responsibility study called Global Compact-Accenture every three years. The survey and interview research in question is conducted on hundreds of CEOs of public organizations from dozens of different countries in order to understand their views on sustainable development (United Nations, 2019). In

2010, 93% of CEOs stated that sustainable development is important for the future success of their companies (United Nations, 2010). That number has only grown over the years, with a 2019 study showing that 99% of CEOs with annual revenue over $1 billion believe that sustainability is critical to their future success. The results therefore show that CEOs consider sustainable development to be a strategic issue and that sustainability is beginning to expand from the organization's strategy to all its operations, although the majority of CEOs also believe that organizations do not do enough sustainable development and that more ambitious actions are needed to achieve the United Nation's sustainable development goals. (United Nations, 2019.) However, the studies in question give managers important signs that denial and defense strategies will probably not have a place in the business world in the future.

International corporate responsibility reporting studies also point to the same. The sustainability reporting surveys published by KPMG since 1993 give insight into the latest trends in corporate responsibility reporting and statistics related to the extent to which organizations report and thus measure their sustainable development strategies. According to the 2020 survey, reporting on organizations' sustainable development goals focuses almost exclusively on the organizations' positive work contributions instead of showing negative effects as well. Even though the reporting related to sustainable development goals is often unbalanced and disconnected from the organization's goals, 80% of global organizations still report on their sustainability. A significant majority of organizations also combine their business operations with sustainable development goals in their reporting. (KPMG, 2020.)

In the third, or isolated, strategy, organizations begin to emphasize the strategic importance of sustainability. Such a strategy involves, for example, an entire department or questioning the underlying design of a particular service or product. However, the rest of the organization's operations are not yet sustainable. Although core competencies related to sustainability can be isolated from the rest of the organization's competencies that are not incompatible with sustainability, this strategy is the first of the five to demonstrate the strategic importance of sustainability. In the integrated strategy, on the other hand, sustainability is present in all areas of the organization's business, and it is not separate from daily routines. Sustainable development becomes the organization's main way of

distinguishing itself. The organization's customers may be willing to pay an additional price that supports the additional costs caused by sustainability. These organizations consider many social and ecological goals and consider them as important as economic goals. Organizations react systematically to holistic sustainability. Examples of organizations implementing such a strategy include The Body Shop and Patagonia. (Valente, 2017, pp. 96–99.)

Since sustainability is ultimately based on finding ways to optimize value for different stakeholders, Porter and Kramer's (2011) concept of shared value offers an opportunity to achieve this goal. The idea of creating shared value suggests that instead of profitability being out of social value and vice versa, organizations should create added value for all stakeholders, including the organization itself (Porter & Kramer 2011). In the context of sustainability strategies, shared value therefore provides insight into how organizations can strive to achieve an isolated sustainability strategy but does not explain how they can achieve an integrated strategy (Valente, 2017, p. 108).

In the fifth, or reforming strategy, organizations make significant changes to their external operating environment to facilitate more sustainable practices. With competitive positioning, the organization represents leadership, where competitors expect innovations from the organization. This strategy also requires networks of actors, and stakeholders outside the organization become important partners. (Valente, 2017, p. 101.) Benn, Dunphy and Griffiths (2014, p. 208) also think that achieving sustainable development requires reformative change. They define a reforming strategy as an organization's commitment to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic implementation and development of production processes, products and services that support ecological and social responsibility, as well as innovative human and information resources management practices (Benn et al., 2014, p. 176).

Benn et al. (2014, 183) concretize some internal organizational changes that should be made to achieve an integrated or reforming sustainable development strategy. First, organizations striving towards strategic sustainability should focus on creating their core competencies for innovation and value creation. Second, organizations should utilize and develop the skills needed to implement sustainable strategies in a humane and ecological way. Third,

organizations should develop structures that establish expertise so that the organization is no longer dependent on key personnel to implement best practices. Competence should be embedded in all the organization's systems and culture and should be seen simply as a way of doing things. (Benn et al., 2014, pp. 183–185.)

Finally, organizations need to integrate with local actors to be responsive to community needs. For this reason, a strategically sustainable organization prioritizes top-notch HR practices and strives to create value-based cultures for sustainable results. They strive to develop into efficient organizations. Achieving a successful sustainable strategy also involves moving from efficiency to strategy, combining operating processes with a sustainable strategy, introducing new tools and techniques, creating enabling structures and models, implementing financial management and leadership, developing various stakeholder strategies and building employee knowledge and their commitment. (Benn et al., 2014, pp. 183–185.)

2.3 The role of NGOs in CSR

Bakker and den Hond (2017, p. 222) define non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as ”organizations that are not controlled by the state and are neither a part of government nor a conventional for-profit business”. NGOs are self-governing and private organizations which have an explicit social mission (Vakil, 1997, p. 2057). NGOs are not interested in making a profit, but in advancing some cause. NGOs are assimilated in civil society, as separate from political society. (Jordan and van Tuijl, 2006, pp. 3–5.) NGOs are usually divided in three groups: 1)”Direct aid” NGOs that aim to offer help to people in need, e.g. Red Cross, 2) ”Empowerment” NGOs that pursue to strengthen local communities in achieving their objectives, e.g. OXFAM, and 3) ”Advocacy” NGOs who pursue to affect business policies, e.g. Greenpeace. (Bakker and den Hond, 2017, pp. 222–223.)

However, defining NGOs is not that simple task. NGOs vary according to whom they are accountable: donors, members, beneficiaries, constituents, and so on. (Najam, 1996, p. 340.) There are many organizations that operate independently from government and business and that are not driven by a profit motive. Some NGOs emphasize particular characteristics. When a cause is mostly a private matter, such as the organization of sports or religion, they

are usually referred to as civil society organizations. There are also secondary stakeholders, social movement organizations, public interest groups and yet others that are labelled under the concept of NGO. None of these labels are not mutually exclusive. Thus, many actual organizations fit more than one label or are hybrids. (Bakker and den Hond, 2017, p. 222.)

CSR issues began to rise to the corporate agenda through crises and negative news. In particular NGOs and investigative journalists raised issues that were challenging, complex and even embarrassing for companies. NGOs continue to take the lead in many themes related to sustainability. The most cynical may say that CSR progresses only through crises, and that these crises are caused to businesses by organizations that criticize grievances and report their activities. This is the watchdog role that many NGOs have, along with many other roles. As a watchdog, the organization highlights grievances, discusses them, demands corrections, and suggests them themselves. From the point of view of CSR, the role of NGOs as partners of companies has increased in recent years. In addition to this growth, co-operation has deepened: if in the past it meant almost exclusively financial support for organizations - with which the company aimed to receive a good reputation - now companies are also looking for specific expertise that they do not have. A good reputation can result from the fact that, thanks to organizational cooperation, the company is progressing even faster in its CSR. (Koipijärvi and Kuvaja, 2020, pp. 195–197.)

Since NGOs play a key role in CSR, it would be important for them to know how other stakeholders perceive them. Arenas, Lozano and Albareda (2009) studied the role of NGOs in CSR by analyzing how different stakeholders perceive NGOs and how NGOs perceive themselves. They labelled the perceptions in four categories which were: 1) concerns about their legitimacy, 2) recognition of NGOs as drivers of CSR, 3) the self-confidence of NGOs as important players in CSR, and 4) difficulties in the common understanding between NGOs and trade unions. There were discrepancies between the perception of NGOs themselves and others which can be an explanation why NGOs' role is often controversial. Although secondary stakeholders, like NGOs, are important players in CSR, their legitimacy stays questionable. Misunderstandings among different stakeholders, especially between NGOs and trade unions, are a challenge to the development of CSR in corporate governance. NGO managers should pay attention to the fact that NGOs are often unaware of the stereotypes they create and that NGOs' roles, that are considered ambivalent by other

stakeholders, usually cause issues. These roles are a judge and accuser, idealist and fund raiser as well as critic and counsellor. (Arenas, et al., 2009.)

Some characterizations of NGOs' objectives can be distinguished. First, NGOs' mode of operation can be distinguished between collaboration and contention. Collaboration can be an effective way for NGOs to influence corporate activities since joint projects and partnerships give them the ability to steer company initiatives. With collaboration NGOs also participate in corporate initiatives such as stakeholder engagement and cause-related marketing. Other NGOs target corporations since they think that collaboration could jeopardize their independent position. Secondly, NGOs' ideological position affecting their interactions with businesses, can de distinguished between radical and reformist. Radical NGOs strive for fundamental change in their area of concern, whereas reformist NGOs are inclined to work with businesses to evoke corporate social change. Unlike radical NGOs, reformist NGOs think businesses should be part of the solution by reforming their ways of operating. (Zald and McCarthy, 1980; Seitanidi and Crane, 2014; Bakker and den Hond, 2017.)

Thirdly, NGOs can be characterized by their tactical repertoire. Their tactics can aim at inflicting damage or bringing gain, both of which can be symbolic or material. Another dimension to categorize the repertoire of tactics is the amount of support that is needed to make some tactic effective. Some tactics only require a limited number of committed people in order to be effective, whereas other tactics rely on the participation of large numbers of people, e.g. a boycott. Lastly, there is also a time dimension to the repertoire of tactics. When the use of some tactics turns out to be ineffective, there is a likelihood of escalation. NGOs differ in how they seek the possible escalation. (della Porta and Diani, 1999; Bakker and den Hond 2017, p. 224-225.)

There is a wide variety of options on how NGOs can affect corporations to make them more socially responsible. The main tactics work through governance, financial means, collaboration and creating alternatives. Firstly, shareholder activism makes use of the principal–agent relationship between a firm's owners and its management in order to influence privately held corporations either through finding allies among a firm's shareholders (e.g. banks, pension funds) or becoming shareholders themselves. Operational

costs and benefits can be influenced through marketplace tactic or public opinion. In marketplace tactic, informed by NGOs' claims, consumers are politicized to use the marketplace as an arena for change through their choice of products, services and producers. Public opinion tactics use mass media and social media to spread information and emotion on firms. NGOs can also exert influence over firms by collaborating with a corporation, for example in the form of a partnership or alliance. Some of these partnerships involve the transfer of resources while others focus on establishing change in corporate policies or products. With the tactic of new business system, some NGOs choose to contribute to developing some alternative economic order. Rather than challenging individual corporations, it is the institution of corporate capitalism that they challenge and that they seek to replace with one that is more inclusive and sustainable. (Bennett, 2003; Micheletti, 2003; Bakker and den Hond, 2017, p. 224–225.)

3 Implementing sustainability in inter-organizational context

According to Seitanidi and Crane (2009, p. 413) for the learning in both practice and theory, it is essential to understand how sustainability partnerships are implemented in practice. Mintzberg (1993) described implementation as a fundamental part of the continuous strategy process instead of something that happens once a strategy has been designed. Just as the strategic management of a firm can be expressed as an interconnection of corporate strategy, structure and financial performance, sustainability performance can be understood as a function of structures and strategies. Therefore, the fundamental question is how those structures and strategies are related to the sustainability performance. (Husted, 2000, p. 34.) Thus, in the next chapter, I discuss the managing of organizations that impact the implementation of a strategy as well as the implementation structure.

3.1 Inter-organizational perspectives

When it comes to reaching the strategic goals, structure affects the implementation of collaborative plans (Huxham & Vangen, 2000, p. 600). It is essential to also understand the organization where strategic management occurs to efficiently implement a strategy. When we address for example the concept of a sport organization, it can be referential to a number of different organizations with their own operations and goal setting in the context of sports. Globally many sport organizations operate on the principles of non-profit and voluntariness, meaning their funds are utilized for the good of the organization's members (Slack & Parent 2006, p. 4.) I will next discuss an organization such as the FOC from the perspective of meta-organizations, institutional translation as well as decoupling and organized hypocrisy.

3.1.1 Meta-organizations

The interests of stakeholders that are impacted by a NGO's work can be quite different. NGOs can be considered accountable to three groups of stakeholders: 1) the NGO itself with its partners and employees, 2) local populations such as beneficiaries and organizations based on membership, and 3) the donors allocating the funds. NGOs respond to the stakeholders formally through service-delivery, budget, regular reporting and contracts or morally through achieving their goals. (Najam, 1996, p. 345.) Thus, holding NGOs

accountable to different stakeholders with various interests can be difficult. Tensions exist between beneficiaries and organizational arrangements which are the result of donor requirements. Organizational arrangements like logical frameworks, or inflexible budgets that result from too great a focus on relationships with donors get in the way of allowing staff to develop trusting relationships with beneficiaries and local partners. (Mangin, 2016, pp. 24–25.)

Thus in addition to the stakeholder theory, another way of understanding an organization such the FOC and other sports organizations is through the concept of meta-organizations. Many organizational theories suggest explicitly or implicitly that organizations' members are individuals. However, increasingly several organizations can be called ''meta-organizations'' meaning other organizations are their members. Thus, individuals such as an administration, an NGO, a company or a sports club can form an organization, but also other organizations can compose an organization creating the meta-organization. The members of organizations influence how organizations function. Meta-organizations have a wide range of different compositions, and it can be created through a corporation, a company, a subsidiary, an association or a state. The differences for example between other companies and combines is more about the matter of degree than substance. For example, several subsidiaries can be perceived departments in a strongly decentralized organization structure. (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2005, pp. 429-432.) It is typical that in a meta-organization the suborganizations resemble each other whether they are firms in a certain field or industry or sports clubs within a certain sport. (Ahrne, Brunsson and Garsten, 2000).

One incentive for becoming meta-organization's member is to join it to use it as a tool for organizing the desired cooperation with its other members. This is often the reason for a sports club to join a sports association. The key objective of this kind of a meta-organization is within the organization. In an alternative way the main reason for joining and cooperating in meta-organizations can be to gain social status or to achieve external influence. When an organization cooperates with a certain status member in a meta-organization, it is possible to gain the same status for itself. Whether an organization decides to join a meta-organization depends also on the expected contribution that the organization should make in the meta-organization. (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2005, p. 434.)

Meta-organizations may experience conflicts in values or interests within the members. Although the members are based on similarity, they also differ in other aspects such as size, competencies, constitutions and administrative structures. With these factors, conflicts are likely to occur. Meta-organizations' conditions for conflict-resolution influence the decision-making as well as how these decisions are implemented and formulated. Because meta-organizations are often hesitant about the scope of their right to decide and because there exist usually disagreements about a solution between the members, decisions are often made not as binding rules but as standards which are optional for the members. These include for example guidelines, codes of practice, policies and recommendations. (Brunsson and Jacobsson, 2000.) Moreover, the meta-organization's activities are difficult to change because of the rather weak central authority. This makes it more difficult for the meta-organization to discover, initiate, control or terminate changes in its organizations' activities. This is the case even in decisions that the members have agreed to act in a certain way. (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2005, p. 438.)

From a managerial perspective, the meta-organizations' main objective is to manage collective actions and thus they act as support for cooperative strategies among companies. This relates to the key contemporary societal challenges that require more cooperative act from organizations. These include CSR, human rights and sustainable development. (Berkowitz and Dumez, 2016, p. 154.) However, CSR and organization scholars have taken fairly little notice of meta-organizations, although CSR issues demand collective participation from several actors and not just individual firms or industries to define and implement them. Meta-organizations collectively construct and implement CSR issues. Collaborative organizational action related to meta-organizations pays attention to how organizations solve collectively issues that market mechanisms and contracts cannot solve as well as how organizations relate to other stakeholders. (Ahrne and Brunsson 2005; Gulati, Puranam and Tusman, 2012.)

To enhance research on meta-organizations, Berkowitz and Dumez (2016, p. 154) suggest three major issues that demand examination. First one is the analyzing of the diversity of meta-organizations' membership and structure since the dynamics of the organizational forms imply this. Secondly, there is a need to deal with the question of how meta-organizations interact with their members as well as their institutional and organizational

environments. Thirdly, it would be relevant to study the usefulness and efficiency of meta-organizations in the light of their performance and impact. (Berkowitz and Dumez, 2016, p. 154.)

3.1.2 Institutional translation

In institutional theory the question of how practices and ideas move across and between organizations is a long-term issue (Deephouse, Bundy, Tost and Suchman, 2017). The basis of the institutional translation perspective is that for the ideas to move from one organization to other they have to be understood by the receiving organization. This turns attention to how recipients translate ideas to understand them during the adoption process. (Wedlin and Sahlin, 2017.) Translation processes can have meaningful affects since they have been shown to impact and change how organizations perceive themselves, their activities through which they operate the responsibilities, as well as results such as regulatory compliance and innovation (Pallas, Fredriksson and Wedlin, 2016; Wright and Nyberg, 2017). Translation processes seem to affect also organizational field and community at the level of institutional change (Lawrence, 2017). All in all, to make sense of the diffusion of ideas and practices in field-level and organizational change, translation processes matter (Claus, Greenwood and Mgoo, 2021, p. 1499).

Institutional distance means the scope to which the worlds of the advocating organization and the receiving organization are different from each other. In situations where there exists high institutional distance between these two, the translation context can be complex. (Gaur and Lu, 2007.) A main issue when studying institutional distance and translation processes is the lack of focus in the latter phases of the institutional translation and giving attention mainly to the early presentation of ideas. The research shows that ideas enhance during the translation and implementation process which require adopting and reconfiguring customs to make sense of them. (Ansari, Fiss and Zajac, 2010, p. 67.) However, it cannot be taken for granted that the translated ideas are continuously accepted meaning that whether the ideas that were accepted at the point of adoption will remain a success cannot be assumed. (Claus et al., 2021; Wright and Nyberg, 2017.)

Claus et al. (2017) examined in their study how come ideas that were diffused between organizations of high institutional distance later disappear. In a longitudinal study they examined Villages for Africa that admit loans to rural Tanzanians. These macro credit loans were supposed to allow them to start their own village firms. However, the idea crashed years later after the adaptation phase. The findings of the study point out how it is possible for the advocating organization to present a strategic idea to an organization with a highly different context by culturally detaching and assimilating it from the institutional origins to a new one. Even though cultural detachment and assimilation makes it possible to translate an idea from one organization to another, it doesn't prevent the potential rejection subsequently. (Claus et al., 2017.)

3.1.3 Decoupling and organized hypocrisy

The comprehensive spread of external influences in society, such as public policy, legislation and the professionalization of management, as well as public opinion and social activism have generated major changes in the external environments of organizations. Thus, organizations experience increasing pressure to conform to influences in an expanding number of domains, and to match their practices and policies from promoting employee morale to enhancing the natural world. In this context, the concept of decoupling - a gap between policy and practice - is applied to organizations. (Bromley and Powell, 2012, p. 484.)

Regarding decoupling, it is suggested that buffering of internal practices from outside monitoring is often the result when organizations try to response to external pressures. These kinds of efforts generate a decoupling of formal policies from everyday practices in an organization's internal core. (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Meyer and Rowan, 1977.) Assumingly, organizations adopt different policies to conform to external pressures regarding for example operational procedures and formally stated goals, but in practice do not supposedly change their behavior (Scott, 2008). There are many reasons why organizations lack alignment. In some circumstances, decoupling is an unintended consequence, whereas in others idealistic wishes are crushed by the demands and difficulty of the tasks. And in some cases, internal buffering is a simple effort to protect internal

activities from external inspection. (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Bromley and Powell, 2012.)

Although the talk about sustainability is pervasive, there is still a major gap between organizations' sustainability policies and practice. The reason for this could be that ambivalent institutional and societal influences demand organizations to develop façades and engage in hypocrisy, which limit the possibilities that sustainability reports will develop with relevant matters. It is argued that the concept of organized hypocrisy is beneficial because with that it is possible theoretically to recognize how the contradictory stakeholder requirements and prevalent economic system put pressure in the choices made by individual organizations. (Cho, Laine, Roberts and Rodrique, 2015, p. 78.)

Brunsson (2007) points out how organizations usually react to contradictory stakeholder requirements by engaging in organized hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is a way through which organizations as well as individuals deal with conflicts as a response to a world which ideas, values or people are incoherent. Thus, through organized hypocrisy an organization can handle and reflect conflicts in inconsistencies among decisions, talk and actions. Organized hypocrisy is essentially necessary considering various stakeholders' conflicting demands as well as organizational legitimacy that can be enhanced through hypocrisy in some circumstances. (Brunsson, 2007, pp. 113-115.)

3.2 Implementation structure

When implementing inter-organizational strategies, this usually involves two types of analysis which are the collective and individual level. At the collective level the organizations are considered as an entity whereas at the individual level the organizations are perceived as part of the entity. Regarding strategy implementation through these two types of analysis offers meaningful knowledge on how it is possible to develop collaborative strategic plans in practice. (Cropper, Ebers, Huxham and Ring, 2008, p. 10.) Several studies have examined inter-organizational practices by paying attention to the structures that are included in the implementation process of collaborative strategies and plans and by evaluating those structures in regard of reaching the goals. When collaborative plan is being implemented, one can focus on its implementation structure since the structure is the main

factor implicating how ais the collaborative strategic plan formulated. (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Clarke, 2011; MacDonald, 2016; Sun, Clarke and MacDonald, 2020.) Hjern and Porter (1981, p. 211) define implementation structure as an administrational unity that the participants who are responsible for the implementation use to achieve the set goals. Implementation structures determine activities which are aimed at putting programs into practice and thus involve many organizations or parts of them (Hjern and Porter, 1981, p. 222).

Inter-organizations usually create collaborative strategic plans which is why Clarke's (2011) research focuses on the major structural factors when implementing a strategic plan which aims at collaborative goals. The results from four case studies considering collective sustainable development strategies point out five criteria for evaluating a sustainability implementation structure that are presented in Figure 5. The five interrelated criteria can be summed into as partner engagement, collaborative practices, organizational actions, further networking, and monitoring and evaluation. (Clarke, 2011, p. 165.)

Criteria	Structural Features
Key organizations engaged	Partners – Number of partners; key partners; engagement mechanism
Collaborative oversight entity exists	Implementation forms – full partnership level and/or joint project(s) level; and processes - decision-making
Individual organizations implement	Implementation form – individual partner(s) level
Communication system exists	Processes – communication and information
Monitoring and renewal systems exist	Processes – monitoring and evaluation; decision-making

Figure 4: Implementation evaluation criteria (Clarke, 2011)

The first criterion includes having resources to identify, add and engage major organizations from different fields. When implementing plans that are related to certain issues, suitable and adequate partners have to be involved to achieve the attention of the critical mass. The second criterion requires networking between organizations and includes collaborative planning to monitor the implementation process as well as to recognize issues and formulate remedial short-term activities. The third criterion requires individual organizations implementing inside of their own organizations. This assures that sustainable development is being dealt with across the sector. The fourth criterion means that the partner organizations have a system to communicate that allows them to network further with organizations and citizens. The fifth criterion emphasizes the monitoring system that exists, that makes it

possible to adjust and renew the implementation activities for the collaborative strategic plan. (Clarke, 2011, pp. 165-167.)

According to Sun et al. (2020) confronting contemporary society's complex challenges such as climate change, demands collaborative actions from different stakeholders including government, nonprofit sector and business. Since it can be troublesome to coordinate activities between such versatile stakeholder groups, it is not a surprise that these partnerships might form new challenges. Thus, it is essential for these partnerships to have suitable structures to ease the challenges associated with the coordination of different actions. However, there exists little research on how different structural factors affect the plan outcomes. It seems that some implementation structures may be more essential for reaching the set climate change alleviation outcome, and for example structural factors related to monitoring and organization-wide practices are positively associated with it. (Sun et al., 2020, pp. 1-2.) Eventually, the collaborative implementation structure for a sustainability program will demand a setup of all structural factors, since in order to reach the plan outcomes, it is not enough to meet only a few of the criteria (Clarke, 2011, p. 167).

In his master thesis, Korvenpää (2021) investigated how is the implementation of sustainability program approached by the FOC and sports federations during the initiation phase. The study focused on the collaborative strategic plan implementation, and thus the concept of implementation structure as well as the evaluation criteria were utilized. Drawing to the finding of the study, the implementation of the program has been manifested especially in collaborative actions aimed at enhancing mutual learning, networking among the organizations and capacity building. The results show that the adaptation of the program has happened both at the organizational level as well as at the organization- and federation-specific level. Despite the encouraging results of collaborative actions, engagement and adaptive organizational actions, the implementation structure analysis also shows the need for development related to monitoring and evaluation as well as further networking. It addresses that the concept of implementation structure and the structural evaluation criteria can be applied in studying the interaction between the FOC and sports federations. Thus, it would be interesting to examine further how the implementation of the FOC's sustainability program progresses after the initiation phase and how the objectives have been achieved. (Korvenpää, 2021, p. 113.)

4 Research methodology

My master's thesis was a qualitative research process that is typically flexible as the perspectives and interpretations related to the data take shape throughout the process. Next, I describe the implementation of my research, from the target organizations and research method to the acquisition and analysis of the data.

4.1 The Finnish Olympic Committee, sports federations and sports clubs

The FOC is a national non-governmental sports organization that works together with its member organizations and partners to make Finns more active and successful in competitive sports at the highest level. The FOC has 90 full members of sports federations, 31 partnership members and four individual members as well as 60 employees. Partnership members consist of legal entities and foundations whose purpose is the promotion of physical activity or whose activities involve measures promoting physical activity. The FOC's annual budget is about 10 million euros, and the activities are financed by state subsidies and own funding. The state grant comes from the betting profits distributed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Their values are highlighted in five words: together, joyfully, respectfully, responsibly and excellently. (FOC, 2021b.)

In regard of their values, the FOC has built a sustainability program for the sports community (2020-2024) that has its background in United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals 2030 as well as in Fair Play -ethical principles for the sports community. The sustainability program includes five themes (Figure 6). The first one of good governance aims towards actions that are transparent, open and inclusive. The second is safe space and safe environment, which aims towards sports that are a source of joy and positive experiences and where no one should experience bullying, harassment or other inappropriate behavior. The third theme of equality and equal opportunity means that all are welcome to sport communities' activities, The environment and climate -theme highlights that sports

communities operate sustainably and consider future generations. The last theme of anti-doping aims towards approach to sports that is fair and clean. (Sustainable Sports, 2020.)

Figure 5: The five themes of the sustainability program (Sustainable Sports, 2020)

The FOC's operations include federation- and club-based sports, top-level sports, physical activities for children and youth and everyday sport activities of the Finnish people (Stenbacka, Mäkinen, Lämsä and Nieminen, 2018, p. 49). As a multidisciplinary umbrella organization, the FOC's operation model is necessary in Finland, as it offers the opportunity to coordinate and develop the activities of Finnish sports and physical activity on the field, in sports federations and clubs. The fragmented field of exercise and sports organizations needs a guiding hand - one that is within the sports community. (Itani and Tienari, 2020, p. 24)

Although the FOC has a large operational scope, the major stakeholder is the sports federations. Together with sport clubs the federations form a crucial role in the organized Finnish sports community. Each sport can be represented only by one sports federation, and the main task of the Finnish sports federations is the maintenance of national teams' activity and competition for sports that they represent (Lehtonen, 2017, p. 19). Sports federations are united by the common goal of maintaining and promoting recreational and competitive sports of their own. The differences between the sports federations are related to the scope of activities and focus areas. The rules, organization and management principles of sports

federations can often be quite different in practice. Sports federations are often criticized for having great strategies that are not implemented in practice. The credibility of some federations is almost non-existent in the eyes of the people of the sport. However, the activities of sports federations are constantly being developed. (Itani & Tienari, 2020, pp. 121-122.)

When moving from sports federations to the level of clubs, a sports federation acts as a representative for sports clubs and individuals among them (Opetusministeriö, 2004). Sports clubs are the basic unit and foundation of Finnish sports. Sports clubs are characterized in many ways. They can be approached as part of a sports system, as an organization, as part of civil society, as a community. Sports clubs are part of the lives of a surprising number of people; about every third Finn has some contact with sports clubs. Sports clubs can be defined as associations that organize sports and physical activity for enthusiasts and athletes (Aarresola, 2021.) The scope of the clubs' activities has also grown to promote the economy and employment, as well as more diverse and stronger partnerships with the state, municipalities and companies. The main causes of development are the differentiation into large and small clubs, diversification, rising costs and professionalization. (Itani & Tienari, 2020, p. 133.)

The FOC also has a program called The Star Club which is a joint quality program of the FOC, sports federations and regional organizations that supports the club activities. The Star Club develops domestic club culture, and operations are reviewed and developed regularly. There are already more than 600 Star Clubs in Finland. The star sign is a promise of quality that the club acts responsibly, listens to and encourages participants, reacts to the changes, acts in a modern way and influences the operating environment. In a Star Club, everyone can play sports and move at their own level towards their own goals. The areas of the star sign are: children and youngsters (green star), adults (red star) and top sports club activities (blue star). A quality club that meets the criteria of all three areas gets a full three-color star sign. The FOC offers Star Clubs free online service, various tools and expert help for the club's self-assessment and audit, training, materials and various information for practical development work. (FOC, 2022b.)

4.2 Research method and data collection

Altogether nine representatives of different sport organizations were interviewed for this thesis. Among these interviewees one represented the FOC, four represented different sports federations and four represented sports clubs that were each a member of one of the sports federations being interviewed. The sports federations and clubs were thus connected. To preserve anonymity, I will refer to the interviewees as the FOC rep, Federation X, Y, Z, W and Club x, y, z, w. The sports club has the same alphabet as the federation it belongs to. All the clubs are part of the Star Club program with the Clubs x, y and z having a green star in one sport division and the Club w having a green and red star in two sport divisions. The interviews were conducted in November and December 2022 via Teams. At their request, seven interviewees were provided the interview questions in advance. All interviewees were interviewed separately, as individual interviews bring out more personal and genuine opinions. The interviews were recorded, and the duration of the interviews varied from 34 to 70 minutes, with an average of about 54 minutes.

The basis of qualitative research is the description of diverse, real life. In qualitative research, the aim is to understand the research object, and not to find average connections or statistical regularities. (Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara, 2009, p. 161, 181.) My research is a case study in which the phenomenon is studied as comprehensively as possible, and the informants are treated as unique cases. The thoroughness of the case study gives room for the ambiguous interpretation of the phenomena, allowing generalizations at the same time (Laine, Bamberg and Jokinen, 2007, pp. 9–10). Since my goal was to understand the FOC as a meta-organization as deeply as possible, the implementation of a qualitative case study is justified, as it aims to study the phenomenon in a natural environment by describing its characteristics in detail and truthfully. The case study aims to describe cases mainly with how- and why-questions, which help to get answers to my research questions related to the organizations' sustainability strategy, taking into consideration its context. (Saaranen-Kauppinen and Puusniekka, 2006.)

An interview is a suitable data collection method for a qualitative case study since it involves direct linguistic interaction with the subject (Hirsjärvi et al., 2009, pp. 204–205). The interview highlights people's interpretations of things and the meanings they give to different

things (Tuomi and Sarajärvi, 2009, pp. 75–76). Because of these facts, in my opinion the interview was the best choice of method for this research setup: the purpose was to describe the experiences and views of the organizations' representatives regarding sustainability and its implementation. In this study, the interviews were semi-structured. A semi-structured interview proceeds in such a way that all interviewees are asked the same or nearly the same questions in the same order. According to some definitions the order of the questions can be varied even in a semi-structured interview, such as in a themed interview. A partially structured and partially open interview is placed between a fully structured form of interview and a theme interview. (Hirsjärvi and Hurme, 2001, p. 47.) In practice, the interviews in this study were conducted in such a way that all the interviewees were asked specific questions about certain themes, but not necessarily the same questions. A few spontaneous questions were also asked during the interviews.

The purpose of the detailed interview framework (Appendix A) was to ensure that I stayed on topic and that the issues I wanted to be addressed would be covered. I wanted to make sure that I could ask the questions sufficiently openly and still clearly. When preparing the interview framework, I considered Hirsjärvi et al.'s (2009, p. 202) recommendations, and after clarifying the background, I started the interview with broad and general themes, after which I asked more specific and detailed questions. I considered Valente's (2017) model as a theoretical framework as well as Clarke's (2011) implementation evaluation criteria when preparing interview questions under three themes: the five principles of the sustainability program, sustainable development and implementation of the program. The structure of the interview follows the research questions. There are a total of 26 interview questions, and they have been prepared based on the theoretical part presented in chapters 2 and 3.

In the collection of qualitative data, the principle of saturation, which refers to the adequacy and sufficiency of the data, is used. The material is sufficient when the same things start repeating themselves in the interviews. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 181-182.) This also happened in my own research, and my nine interviewees complemented each other's answers to some extent regarding the sustainability program. At the end of the interviews, I asked for feedback on the interview. Many of the interviewees found the questions thought-provoking and topical.

4.3 Analysis of the data

The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to create clarity in the data and thus produce new information about the subject under investigation. The analysis aims to summarize the data without losing the information it contains. (Eskola and Suoranta, 1996, p. 104.) Recorded qualitative data is most often appropriate to write clean word for word, i.e. to transcribe (Hirsjärvi et al., 2009, p. 222). Teams' script function did this automatically when recording, although the text still had to be refined afterwards. There was a total of 92 pages of ready-transcribed material using the font Calibri and the font size 10.

I analyzed the interviews with content analysis, which allows for systematic and objective analysis of qualitative data. In content analysis, the aim is to create models that present the research phenomenon in a condensed form and helps to conceptualize the phenomenon. (Kyngäs and Vanhanen, 1997, pp. 3–4.) In my own research, the content analysis happened partly both deductively and inductively. In the deductive content analysis, the theoretical framework included the five different sustainability strategies (Valente 2017), which include different sustainable modes of operation, and implementation evaluation criteria (Clarke 2011). Based on what kind of sustainable practices the organization had, a sustainable strategy was defined, and through implementation evaluation criteria it was determined how the sustainability program had been influenced by the sports organizations. According to the principle of inductive content analysis, which is also called data-oriented analysis, it was found out what kind of sustainable practices are implemented in the organizations in relation to the five themes of the sustainability program.

Content analysis is a time-consuming process, and each researcher develops appropriate tools to facilitate the analysis. (Kyngäs & Vanhanen 1997, 10.) Such a tool in my own research was an analysis table (Appendix B), where data was collected. The length of the analysis table was 83 pages in total. The structure of the interview served as the analysis framework. The analysis frame was loose, and within it, the data was formed according to categories. I organized the data by first structuring it according to the questions of the interview framework into the analysis table, after which I brought out the most interesting and essential things from the text in terms of the research questions by reducing them. The unit of analysis was a set of ideas. In accordance with the suggestions of Tuomi and Sarajärvi

(2009), I progressed towards a more conceptual view of the data in the content analysis with the help of interpretation and reasoning. In this study, the analysis of the data is both a description of the results and their interpretation. However, the subject, the researcher and the reader of the research always interpret the text in their own way (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009, 229).

5 The implementation of the sustainability program to the sports organizations

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the results of the study, which are presented in accordance with the research questions. I will describe what kind of practices have been implemented in relation to the five principles of the program as well as what kind of strategy-related perspectives to sustainability occur in the sports organizations. In addition, I describe how the implementation of the sustainability program is influenced between the FOC, sports federations and clubs.

5.1 Practices related to the five themes of the sustainability program

The sustainability program includes five themes which are good governance, safe space and safe environment, equality and equal opportunity, environment and climate as well as anti-doping. Next, I will analyze what kind of practices relating to the sustainability program have been implemented to the different sports organizations, since good sustainability practices can lead to improved environmental, social and economic performance (Carter & Rogers, 2008).

5.1.1 Practices in the FOC

"The program kind of summarized what we are doing in this sustainability work, it has really made everyone's work easier. – – It is a really simplified version of a difficult and broad topic, so it has been good that everyone knows now what are we talking about." -FOC rep

From the FOC rep's point of view, the joint sustainability program of the sports community gave the framework for sustainability work, which had been somewhat fragmented before. It was also seen as an asset that the program has been made in cooperation with the sports federations and the Ministry of Education and Culture, in which case it is not just given from above and thus there is a desire to commit to it. Putting the program into practice was seen as a constant challenge, because even though some of the practices are quick to implement, changing the culture is slow and therefore requires daily work.

When asked how the first theme of good governance is apparent in the organization, the FOC rep mentioned that they have professionals who train the sports community about good governance. They have also considered that good governance in their own organization goes by the book. Regarding how good governance could be even more apparent in the organization, the FOC rep stated to be satisfied when the agreed measures are completed. Relating to the theme of safe space and safe environment, the FOC rep said that it has been the main theme in recent years, in which the most training, measures and communication have been done. Now they also have internal instructions and processes in order, and they are organizing training to the staff. The FOC rep would like an open discussion on this topic, and although tools and such are fine, they need to communicate them internally and externally.

"It's no longer a taboo, but it's not an easy topic either. In the whole sports community and in the FOC it should be talked about openly, what mechanisms and tools there are, where you can report, what is allowed and what is not. For example, the talking culture that has arisen again from the research by Finnish Center for Integrity in Sports this week, that type of talk about people experiencing it in slightly different ways, so that there really shouldn't be anything that offends others. It seems that even if it is clear to some, it is not to everyone." -FOC rep

Regarding the third theme, the FOC rep said that this year equality and equal opportunity has been the strongest theme in their sustainability clinics aimed towards the sports federations, meaning that gender diversity and sexual minorities have been on the agenda. The FOC rep thought that there is not enough participation in the discussion about racism, and in that regard the skills still need to be developed. They have also had a strong investment in equality work, for example through leadership projects.

"Yes, and it is strongly linked to the previous theme. If equality and equal opportunity progress, safe space and environment will probably progress as well." -FOC rep

With the theme environment and climate, the FOC rep said that the Ministry of Education and Culture requires environmental programs, and in recent years the FOC has helped the sports community to create environmental programs. Currently they are calculating the FOC's carbon footprint and will commit to the international environmental agreement,

which certainly has work to be done, according to the FOC rep. Regarding the last theme of antidoping, the FOC rep told that even though the Finnish Center for Integrity in Sports (FINCIS) is expert on it, antidoping is still part of the sustainability program. It has a long history, and if the sports community can reach the same level in other themes as it has with antidoping, the FOC rep will be satisfied. The FOC has their own anti-doping program, close cooperation with FINCIS as well as routine practices in competitions and antidoping clauses in all contracts.

As a summary, the FOC's practices in social responsibility can be divided in internal activities focused on improving working conditions, transparency of organizational practices and communication practices to increase internal and external organizational awareness. The environmental responsibility of the FOC can be defined through measures related to environmental protection, such as carbon footprint calculation and environmental certificates. It seems that the FOC's main objective relating to the practices of the five sustainability themes is to manage collective actions in the sports community. Thus, they act as support for cooperative strategies and practices among sports organizations. The issue of how practices and ideas move across and between sports organizations slowly was brought up, as well as the topic of the FOC being accountable to different stakeholders with various interests such as the Ministry of Education and Culture and FINCIS.

5.1.2 Practices in the sports federations

At the level of sports federations, all four of them stated that they are committed to the sustainability program. One incentive for committing to the program is to use it as a tool for organizing the desired cooperation with its other members or to achieve external influence (Ahrne and Brunsson, 2005, p. 434.). Federation Z for example pointed out that their organization is committed to the program because it is a member of the FOC, even though they have not been in the process of drafting it. Different assets and challenges regarding the sustainable practices could be perceived at the level of sports federations.

5.1.2.1 Assets regarding the practices

The sports federations had implemented a lot of practices relating to the five themes. Considering the aspect of social responsibility, many of the practices were related to

transparency of organizations' practices. Federation X emphasized their active role and the openness, for example in terms of sharing materials, and thought that in their organization the theme of good governance is best in order. The federation follows that the law, regulations and instructions go by the book. Federation Z told that although they have not yet put the theme of good governance into words in their own program, the federation's operation is open, it is communicated and it is participative. In addition, the trust bodies are involved in making the rules, the staff working for the organization are professionals, the rules are up to date and the procurement ceilings are established in the financial management. Federation W told that the minutes and appendices of their board are published for the sake of transparency.

Communication practices to increase internal and external organization awareness were used a lot. Federation Z told that since 2019 they have had their own structured program with instructions to prevent sexual and gender-based harassment as well as other bullying. It contains instructions and work tools for clubs and others working within the sport on how to identify and prevent harassment and bullying, and the program has been introduced in webinars and live events. The federation also has a designated contact person for harassment cases, who is the executive director. Federation Y stated that with the pandemic, a lot of new enthusiasts joined in, and proper behavior came to the fore again. Thus, to make everyone feel as good as possible, communication and support material have been emphasized by the federation. They also have their own equality plan, which is updated annually in terms of gender equality, special sports and low-threshold activities. Federation X stated that they have their own equality plan, which has become more and more part of their daily work instead of just words on a paper. They have developed their communication, i.e. how to communicate about their sport and what image choices are being used with the aim of showing that the sport belongs to everyone. Federation W stated that they have a common equality policy with the cooperating sports federations, which is updated every two years.

"Concrete recommendations for action are that the status of women and minorities should be improved, the ways of speaking in sports should be changed, and then the big thing is the work to prevent harassment. It has to be made visible, so yes, we do it, but we also have to talk about it, it also has an effect. We communicate actively. We have a club bulletin, which goes out to all license holders 4-6 times a year, so these things are communicated." -Federation W

Relating to the internal activities focused on improving working and practicing conditions, Federation X thought that the theme of safe space and safe environment is the core of their sustainability work, which started with a crisis that almost every sport has had. For them, the crisis was connected to the coaching culture and accelerated their work. A coaching culture survey revealed that shouting and favoritism came out as issues. Systematically they started to improve their activities including for example trainings and camps. They also have a Concord-model, which is for the prevention of bullying. Federation W told that they have set up hybrid meetings to increase the participation since the geographical distances might be long for some of their members. They also instruct their clubs to check the coaches' criminal records and conduct an equality survey every two years. In terms of activities focused on special sports, Federation X has a group where they have tried to increase the skills of the instructor regarding neuropsychiatric children. Federation Y has a person in the federation who is responsible for the development of special sports and works to ensure that the sport can be practiced in clubs despite physical deficiencies. Federation Z emphasizes the inclusion of athletes with disabilities in national competition activities, and they are trying to increase the number of female coaches.

The sports federations also had practices relating to activities with members and partners. Federation W told that they cooperate with other similar sports, which is a big help for a small federation as theirs. They have FINCIS's notification service, and they are part of You are not alone -campaign which are visible on their website. Federation Y has started a project with the municipalities' sports instructors to get their sport involved in sport advising with the aim of the sport becoming more approachable. In Federation Z they have an Open door -project with a few clubs involved, which aims to lower the threshold for clubs to start special sports activities. Regarding charity and volunteer work, Federation X has invested in low-threshold activities in school projects, with the aim of children getting easily involved with the sport without a certain amount of financial investment or skills.

The environmental responsibility of the sports federations can be defined firstly through practices related to environmental protection and reduction of pollution and waste. Federation X told that they have emphasized green office measures, for example preferring paperless and reducing office space. The staff's clothes no longer have the name of a certain event on them, thus they can be used in future events. Federation Z told that their carbon

footprint was calculated in 2021, which brought up that traveling is a key environmental burden in the federation. Thus, they are trying to influence the international competition calendar to make travel expenses as little as possible. They aimed to make one of their biggest events carbon-neutral, and those learnings will be transferred to other events. They also have sports ambassadors who communicate about their advocacy work. Federation W told that they started working on the theme by monitoring the consumption of paper which has collapsed to one-tenth. Federation Y mentioned that they have a new station for recycling waste.

Sports federations' practices also included environmental certificates. Federation X told that they have drawn up their environmental plan, which received full points from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and they have received the eco-compass award for the environmentally responsible implementation of a sports event. It means they have an environmental perspective in their events. There is an expert in the Federation Y who helps the clubs to be as ecological as possible and to achieve the geo-environmental certificate. Federation W mentioned that they have a joint environmental program with cooperating sports federations, even though environmental theme was regarded as challenging. Some of the practices focused on related innovations such as Federation Y's example of them awarding one of their clubs for the environmental act of the year.

The sports federations also had practices focused on anticorruption as one subject area of CSR. Federation X was a pilot federation for FINCIS the last time the anti-doping regulations were reformed, and currently they have their own antidoping guidelines and educators, so that all athletes will have the knowledge needed. Federation W told that they are aware that doping is not only a problem in elite sports, but also in competitive and even recreational sports. Thus, training about the topic is required for all employees and trustees, as well as those participating in national competitions. FINCIS also visits some of the trainings. It is also recommended that all license holders go through the federation's material so that for example the parents are also informed. Federations Y and Z stated they have their own antidoping programs and cooperation with FINCIS. In Federation Y the theme relates more to violations of the rules for which they have their own disciplinary committee.

5.1.2.2 Challenges regarding the practices

Regarding transparency of organization practices, Federation X thought that the challenge is that the principle of transparency and the possibilities to influence could be properly utilized. For example, the clubs have possibilities to give the federation feedback, but they rarely do. Thus, it would need to be easier for the clubs to grasp the possibilities to influence. Federation Y thought that good governance appears to be starting to interest also clubs that work on a voluntary basis so that they would have some continuity in the operations. The downside is that it is not enough that the topic is of interest, but the federation needs to find the clubs the tools to put good governance into practice. Federation Z considered that their contact person for inappropriate behavior could be someone other than their executive director.

"What is challenging is the principle of transparency and the possibilities to influence when we want to move on from the fact that it exists in principle and to actively utilize it. In my opinion it is a bit of a different matter if on the paper there are ways to influence, yes everything is transparent, but is the opportunity to influence such that it is easy to grasp it." -Federation X

"Because there is so much staff turnover in the clubs, then there would always be something to leave to the successor that would be well documented, or the process would be planned and done in the right way." -Federation Y

As for internal activities focused on improving working conditions, Federation X stated that one challenge are the long-term coaches who are used to doing things in a certain way and for who it is difficult to see any faults in their own behavior. Another challenge are coaches from different cultures, whose understanding of what constitutes as responsible is very different. According to Federation Y, their sport is male dominated, which is why they are working to ensure that, for example, there are more women involved in decision-making bodies. Federation Z thought that even though half of their employees are women and half are men, it would be important to have more female members on the board. Also, practices relating to equality should be developed in their clubs. In the future, Federation W will discuss about quotas in their organization. Relating to practices focused on activities with the members, Federation X thought that the immigrant background is an unknown topic for the clubs, and practices supporting immigrants to join the sport should be addressed.

"We have asked the clubs how they perceive equality and equal opportunity, and I believe that it is perceived important, but there are hardly any concrete actions on the matter. You can see them better in the Star Clubs, but otherwise in the clubs maybe it's a bit still in its infancy." -Federation Z

"We have gender distribution as a strategic indicator, in which we consider the employees and trustees, and we have set the goal to have at least 40% of both genders. Now it has gone a bit worse. We have had more women join us, but there have been even more men, so that ratio has weakened. And there has been a discussion about including a quota in the rules, but I haven't managed to get it accepted yet." -Federation W

According to Federation X, one challenge relating to the environmental responsibility is that it is not yet as visible in the federation's everyday life and in the planning phase as for example equality and equal opportunity is. Federation Y thought that some of the clubs have already adopted environmental responsibility as a competitive symbol, which means that some of the customers may choose a club based on it. However, green thinking could be used as a competitive advantage and marketing tool even more apparently.

"Progress is happening, and I feel that the clubs have single measures. There is for example carpooling and local exercise is preferred, and they think about the recyclability of clothes and such, but it is not yet an integral part of all the activities of the clubs." -Federation X

Relating to anticorruption, Federation X thought that the clubs rely heavily on the federation about antidoping, which means they do not have as much knowledge on who the rules apply to, although all license holders should understand what they are committed to. Also, clubs with competitive activities should organize antidoping education for athletes and their parents, and this is rarely organized. Federation Z thought that although they have an established antidoping program, it could be implemented even more efficiently.

"Yes, the antidoping program has really been around for a very long time. We have now updated it to be in line with the new set of criteria, and it also includes the program on the prevention of the competition manipulation. I would say that it is apparent at the level of education and communication, and concretely in trainings that are held for the national team athletes by FINCIS. Well, the theme is established in that way, but I would say that maybe it could be made even more effective. Since they have the annual clocks in this antidoping program and in the competition

manipulation prevention program, I would say that they could be implemented even more efficiently. But even so, I believe that nothing new is needed in the program." -Federation Z

As overall challenges, it was brought up that although the sports federations are based on similarity, they also differ in other aspects such as size, competencies, constitutions and administrative structures. Federation X mentioned that sports federations of different sizes have different resources to advance sustainability. Federation W pointed out that it was helpful that a joint program was drawn up under the leadership of the FOC, because the basic task of the sports federations is the sport itself, and a large part of the working time of the employees in small and medium-sized federations already goes to other topics than the sport.

The issue of implementing sustainability and changing culture was also brought up. In Federation Y's opinion, it would be necessary to actively update the program and see if any issues could be highlighted to increase the implementation. Federation X thought that although a lot is being done both at the federation and club level, there is still space for development, because there are many cases relating to inappropriate behavior coming up. Federation X assumed that changing things is slow, but on the other hand, the fact that people are more aware than five years ago, is the reason there are also more cases nowadays. When they first addressed the yelling which had been brought up by the coaching culture survey, it was denied by the staff, but today it does not happen anymore, which is a sign that change has also happened which is why they must persistently continue the work.

5.1.3 Practices in the sports clubs

As the federations, the sports clubs stated to be commitment to the sustainability program. Club w felt that with the program, more attention is paid to sustainability issues in clubs, even though many things related to it are already done automatically. Handling different stakeholders with various interests can be difficult, and Club x emphasized that the program facilitates the operation of ordinary clubs, because it provides ready-made frames, which reduces the club's documentation that is perceived as extra. Club y referred to the FOC's role to act as support for cooperative strategies among sports organizations saying that since sports clubs are voluntary organizations that are not structurally sustainable, it was important that the program was guided by a higher authority, which makes it easier to implement it to

the clubs. Different assets and challenges regarding sustainable practices could be perceived also with the sports clubs.

5.1.3.1 Assets regarding the practices

The social responsibility was visible in the clubs' activities relating to activities with members as well as charity and volunteer work. Club x has for example applied for a project funding, because they would like to offer Ukrainians and quota refugees the opportunity to practice for free and thus support integration. Their training fees are also low since there are no paid employees. Club z mentioned too how their sport is cheap and the membership fee small, because the goal is not to make money, but to maintain the membership register. The club has a steady financial situation, which means they can organize activities that are not expensive.

The clubs had practices relating to internal activities focused on improving working and practicing conditions. Club x told that local exercise is preferred, which creates safety since the trainings are at schools in residential areas and children can basically get there on foot. Club w told that although they do not have special groups, members with disabilities can practice with an assistant. They cannot build a class based on members with disabilities, but they can join and apply what they can do themselves. It was also mentioned that the club has foreign members, although it was not mentioned what kind of concrete practices are implemented for them.

Relating to transparency of organization practices, Club z mentioned transparency on social media and showing through it that club activities are more than sports, such as bees and being together. They also try to show equally athletes of all looks from all their sports divisions. Club y told that last year their new rules were approved, and the management model and its documentation were reviewed through the organizational reforms. In Club y's opinion it requires documentation to keep the processes at the core of the club when the actors change, so that good operating patterns are maintained. Club x told that their old protocols can be found from 100 years ago, so the documents are stored and currently their activity reports can be found on their website. They have also established financial regulations and professional accountants. For the sake of transparency everything is also done electronically, and they have for example Netvisor, invoicing through Suomisport-

service and a payment terminal. In general Club x considered that sustainability has always been a cross-cutting principle in their club and it is self-evident even when it has not been documented.

"The general concept of sustainability is somehow built-in in our club; it has always been a cross-cutting principle. But like they ask in this modern age, has it been documented? Can it be found in a club handbook? Do we have any dates when marked it? Then that's another story." -Club x

Relating to communication practices to increase internal and external organization awareness, Club x told that their instructors plan the lessons carefully and parents see the lesson plans. The rules are drawn up together, to which both children and parents commit. They encourage healthy lifestyles, and for example they are a completely drug-free organization. Club w told that they have an anti-bullying campaign that is emphasized among members, and the groups participate in the making of the rules which everyone must sign, even the smallest ones. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged, and there are for example exercise bulletins on the walls to give ideas for physical activity. Criminal record is required from instructors, and they have their own code of conduct as well as feedback surveys. Club z mentioned how in communication they aim to be communal and welcoming, emphasizing how in their club no one is excluded based on age, and girls and boys are often mixed up.

"Well, I feel that we are really open and aim for equality, that everyone is welcome to participate. And it certainly has an effect that we are a small town and there are few people, so many times the youngest can be four years old and the oldest about 16 years old, and we all practice together. And if something is organized, it's always open to everyone since we don't want to limit it to people of certain age. The aim is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the hobby." -Club z

The environmental responsibility of organizations could be defined through practices focused on environmental protection and reduction of pollution and waste. Club x told that they for example travel to competitions by bus and carpools as well as prefer local exercise facilities for the kids to walk or bike. They pay attention to small actions such as the material of mugs to drink from, saving water in the shower and saving electricity by turning off the lights. However, recycling clothes does not suit their sport. Club w has a car that can accommodate several people for the traveling to competitions. They also encourage traveling to trainings by foot or bike, sorting waste and decreasing the use of paper. Club y emphasized

environmental certificates and related innovations by stating that green thinking should become a marketing tool. In this their federation has played an important role in communicating the environmental responsibility for the clubs by guiding them with environmental programs and certifications as well as demonstrating the benefit of them.

Relating to the subject area of anticorruption, Club y told that their staff goes through antidoping training and can then bring up issues and materials with the juniors. Their coaches are mostly professionals which is why it is trusted that antidoping matters are automatically part of coaching. Thus, they are raising members to antidoping within the sport. Club w stated too that their coaches and competitors undergo antidoping training and have been informed that doping is absolutely prohibited. They also have intoxicant regulations drawn up with the city.

5.1.3.2 Challenges regarding the practices

Regarding challenges on transparency, Club y wants to further promote good governance and refine documentation, for example, regarding financial instructions. In Club z's opinion their board could increase communication with the members about what is being done in their operations. This could lower the threshold to join the board and take on a role in the club. Club w could not think how good governance could appear more in their operations. In Club x they do not check instructors' criminal background.

"First of all, we don't check the criminal backgrounds, and that's because 99.5% of our instructors have all grown up in our club. They have been there since childhood and then they went to study somewhere and then came back as family mothers. In a way, we already know their backgrounds. That's where the safety comes from, that we know those people. It's a different matter if we have to hire a stranger, but when everyone knows each other and they've grown up with the same systems, someway it's taken for granted" -Club x

Relating to internal activities focused on improving working conditions, Club y told that they had a safety-related episode in which they had to intervene in a member's activities. Although the club had thought that they had reasonably good processes on how to proceed, they had to learn in practice what it means dealing with issues related to threats, for example. The club's rules and process model have been reformed, and the know-how is now high in

this regard since the club's rules must allow for intervention and the rules must be documented.

"But at the same time, it has to be said that yes, it is very far from the normal club life run by the volunteers. Yes, I would really like clubs to have instructions and models that they can use to intervene in improper activities and behavior. And I don't think that many clubs really even have the skills for that at a decent level." -Club y

Club x considered engaging special groups to be a tricky topic, and mentioned that there is certainly work to be done when it comes to taking language and cultural background into account. However, if they do not get funding for it, it is hard for the club to organize it themselves, because they would even need to use interpreter services at first.

"It has been in our club even before this kind of sustainability program was even invented because the club was established from the fact that the children have been able to exercise regardless of what kind of home they come from. Nowadays, there is a lot of talk about the fact that special children should be included. I am a retired special education teacher and I think it is a bit problematic. We accept a child in the group if he comes there with an assistant. But we cannot think that we will take a child to the sports group without an assistant, if he has some kind of restrictions that he needs an assistant also at school. There is no need for our instructors to have children with behavioral disorders in their trainings, since our young instructors voluntarily instruct, and they do not have any professional skills needed for it. In other words, you don't need to instruct if you have difficulties with a child, because it is extremely difficult to find an instructor for a sports group for special children without a salary. From the point of view of a special education teacher in an ordinary sports club, it's really not that easy." -Club x

Both Clubs z and w thought that the environmental responsibility is challenging. While working for the club only for three months, Club z did not recall discussing the theme with any member of the club and thus was not sure how to answer. Club w considered that the environmental responsibility should be developed. Club x told that they have a strict approach to doping, although it is quite a foreign thing for them. Club z wondered too whether the topic affects their young athletes participating in national competitions, although the theme had not been mentioned while working for the organization.

"It's quite clear that there is absolutely zero tolerance for it in our club management. Somehow, it's a bit like a foreign thing that it would seem funny to even start talking about it to some enthusiasts when it's such a distant thing." -Club x

"Yes, it's a topic that I feel hasn't come up during my time or been discussed or seen anywhere." -Club z

5.1.4 Summary of the sustainability-related practices

As a conclusion on the sustainability-related practices, it seems that a lot of practices relating to the five themes have been implemented in the sports organizations, and to some extent one can see the impact of communication and training from one sports organization to other. For example, both the FOC rep and federations mentioned the implementation of the program as a challenge and a constant focus of work. Both Federation X and Club x brought up the carpooling and local exercise as their practices, as did Federation Y and Club y mention sustainability as an important competitive advantage. However, perceptions of different themes are variable. The variation seems to be more apparent at the level of the clubs. It is not clear which issues and practices belong to which theme, and for example the themes of safe space and equality were somewhat mixed. Also, the scale of the listed practices was vast; some considered sorting waste, having foreigners as members, and organizing hybrid meetings as sustainable practices worth mentioning, whereas for some those were organizing carbon neutral events or applying for funding to integrate refugees. Some organizations focused almost exclusively on the positive work contributions instead of showing challenges as well.

Relating to the sustainability practices, in general it seems like the FOC focuses on managing collective actions and supporting cooperative practices in the sports community, whereas the sports federations are more focused on communication practices, internal activities as well as activities with members and partners. Since many sport clubs operate on the principles of non-profit and voluntariness, meaning their funds are utilized for the good of the organization's members, it is natural that their practices emphasize more activities with members as well as charity and volunteer work. In contrast to the sports federations, the clubs did not really mention activities with partners. The clubs also brought up tensions

existing between beneficiaries and organizational arrangements which are the result of funding requirements implicating that dealing with different stakeholders with various interests can be difficult.

5.2 Strategy-related perspectives to sustainability

Sustainability performance can be understood as a function of structures and strategies (Husted, 2000, p. 34). Organizations have different reasons why they participate in sustainable development. These reasons can be used to determine organizations' sustainable development strategies. Therefore, in this chapter I will describe different strategy-related perspectives to sustainability in the sports organizations.

5.2.1 Strategy-related perspectives in the FOC

Regarding the sustainability-related goals, the FOC rep mentioned that they are aiming higher when it comes to both themselves as an organization acting responsibly in every area as well as supporting the sports community in their sustainability which relates to their positioning. Encouraging physical activity and promoting public health are sustainable as they are and related to the FOC's key competence. The reasons for implementing sustainable practices in the FOC were that they want to be making a better world and see people feeling good in sports. This perspective on the sustainability of organizations emphasizes ethics to pursue practices, decisions and policies that are desirable from the point of view of society's values and goals. Thus, the FOC rep's views have elements of Bowen's (1953) normative perspective on the sustainability of organizations.

"Well, yes, it is definitely present-day. So, we want to do good, we want to make better sports, even a better world, if we can. It's the heart that's beating there." -FOC rep

Relating to the organization's fundamental culture, The FOC rep stated that sustainable practices are related to the organization's key competencies pervasively through the five themes. For example, when organizing events and using the themes it is easy to detect whether for example environmental issues have been considered, the financial aspects have been tendered and so on. They should discuss together in the organization what the themes

mean in any given situation. Sustainable practices are reflected in the daily life of the FOC' staff in many ways. For example, in financial management it is precise how tenders are conducted, and each purchase can be checked afterwards with the justification of a sustainable purchase made. When there are events, the organization considers whether gender equality exists and whether the location is reached by public transport. The organization is building a new channel where it is made as easy as possible to report inappropriate treatment. They have adopted centralized discipline for the entire sports community, invested in good governance, and continue to improve those processes. Currently they are also building a blog. However, the FOC rep also stated that the organization is certainly not ready yet and there is always something new to improve.

"After all, this is such a continuous process, and then it's really good that the staff or the sports community also raises problems, where we should offer some new kind of help and support." -FOC rep

When describing how well-established sustainable practices are in the organization, the FOC rep said that some parts of the program are established, such as antidoping, for which all team members undergo training. There are also well-established practices related to financial management and good governance. However, there is still development to be done especially in the three middle themes of the sustainability program.

"It cannot be said that it is self-evident that we always know how to do everything in the best possible way, or that everything is optimal, such as support and tools. There is room for improvement in terms of the environment. Then, as in matters related to a safe environment, equality issues should be considered. For example, diversity is still not really visible on the organizational level. And of course, the gender equality. Now we have got gender-related quotas with the board members." - FOC rep

When asked how important the organizations consider sustainability for their future success and why, The FOC rep mentioned that based on sustainability families make decisions where they take their children, as do partners about cooperation. The FOC reports about their sustainability in the annual report as well as directly to their partners and funding projects. They also report to their member at a fall meeting and to the Ministry of Education and Culture separately. Regarding the strengths and development needs in sustainability, the

FOC rep evaluated that their organization have the so-called natural strengths such as the double-career path for athletes as well as the promotion of physically active lifestyle. They also support the sports community with material, advice, tools and one-to-one meetings about sustainability. However, they would need to develop their own inner work. Thus, on a scale one to five, the FOC rep graded their sustainability between 3,5 and 4.

"And you must evaluate truthfully because in this sustainability work you set the bar yourself. But everyone always has something to improve and usually the case is that when quite a lot has already been done, you realize how much there is still to be done and evaluate it critically." -FOC rep

In sum, the FOC's sustainable strategy involves combining operating processes with a five-theme sustainable strategy, creating enabling structures and models, implementing financial management and building employee knowledge among other things. They have considered creating their core competence of promoting physical activity for value creation through the stakeholders in the sports community.

5.2.2 Strategy-related perspectives in the sports federations

The main task of the Finnish sports federations is the maintenance of national teams' activity and competition for sports that they represent (Lehtonen, 2017, p. 19). Thus, from that perspective, sports federations can have different reasons why they participate in sustainable development compared to other sports organizations. The rules, organization and management principles of sports federations can often be quite different in practice (Itani & Tienari, 2020, p. 121).

5.2.2.1 Organizational culture

The sports federations' fundamental culture, which according to Valente (2017, p. 90) clarifies the organization's basic identity and purpose as well as the processes, structures and practices to employees, had some connections to the sustainability. The pervasive nature of sustainability was brought up by all the federations. According to Federation X, sustainability is their value that is written in their actions in three levels as "my responsibility, our responsibility and the community's responsibility". Their action planning

is also done through target cards by the sustainability themes, and on each person's card must appear sustainability. In terms of communication, marketing and cooperation partners, there is talk about sustainability in Federation Y, and the organization's carbon footprint is calculated for the third year. Referring to Federation W, sustainability flows from their strategy into the metrics and from there into action plans, board meetings, decisions and core activities such as competitions and instructions. Federation Z also emphasized different core operations where the sustainability appears.

"Regarding sports competitions, we are thinking about the timing in such a way that there would be several competitions in a row in Finland, in which case there would be no extra travel to the home country for the competitors. In administration, invoices are accepted by different people. In communication, responsibility is a basic pillar, and the responsibility goals of our partners must support our own." -Federation Z

Federation X stated that sustainability is part of everyone's job description, albeit in different ways. Everyone can affect the carbon footprint for example through paperless and remote meetings, and everyone affects the safety of the working community, for which the federation has its own rules for how others are treated. The organization aims to be a responsible employer and support the well-being of employees for example by allowing them exercise for one hour a week during working time. The openness of communication can be seen in everyday life by using Teams for internal communication, so that the agreed matters can be seen in the conversations. They have built their own trainings related to sustainability, which are implemented online, and a huge amount of material has been produced. Processes have been created for dealing with situations of inappropriate behavior, which have also been presented to the clubs.

Reflecting on sustainable practices visible in the staff's everyday work, Federations Y and Z emphasized decreasing carbon footprint by travelling less. For Federation Y the carbon footprint calculation has brought out their sore points and they are related to travel, among other things. In their everyday work, sustainability can be seen in small actions such as planning trips and acquiring a new sorting station. They also discuss about the members' magazine and its transition to digital. The organization is also involved in the eco-compass project. When it comes to traveling, Federation Z states that sustainability can be seen by

preferring shared rides and trying to make the club tour as reasonable as possible by combining events. When organizing events, guidelines have been put in place that for example parking spaces will not be arranged so that people arrive by public transport. Federation W also pointed out digital connections that are sustainable-related practices visible in everyday work which on the other hand are related to the pandemic.

"We have a very thin organization, and my job description includes sustainability by participating training events, updating programs, communicating with the clubs, and communicating to stakeholders. And in the same way, other staff are also trained and in their own practices they bring up the sustainability issues." -Federation W

The sports federations had various answers relating to the well-established sustainable practices. According to Federation X, the principle of environment is not established yet, but equality and good governance are, whereas Federation Y stated that no one in their organization considers environmental matters anymore in a way that they are a burden, although people still have differences in opinions. This establishment is seen as the spread of awareness. Related to established sustainable practices, Federation Z mentioned certain free events that, from a public health point of view, move a lot of people and therefore indicate social responsibility. In terms of equality, all sports are practiced by different genders, competitions' prize money is equal, and the para-athletic club is integrated into the national team. Federation W pointed out antidoping trainings and transparency through public minutes that are well-established practices in their organization.

"You can see the arc of the process, that at first, it's words on paper. Then it's small actions. Then it's bigger actions and then it's a part of all that activity. And that would be the goal in my opinion that you don't have to think about it, but it would come automatically." -Federation X

In addition to reporting about sustainability in the annual report and funding projects, Federation X has a personnel group to who they report for example about the equal treatment of the staff. For their annual report, Federation Y explained how they do a lot of research work and have a research house as a cooperation partner, and thus they are strong in leading with knowledge. Recently they for example conducted SROI-study where the social capital of the sport was measured. Federation Z brough up how the most important event of their

environmental program is reported to the partners. Federation W mentioned annual report and partners as their ways to report about sustainability.

5.2.2.2 Key competencies

According to Benn et al. (2014, 183) organizations striving towards strategic sustainability should focus on creating their key competencies for innovation and value creation. The four sports federations stated as their goal to bring the themes of the sustainability program into everyday actions which relates to their positioning. Federation X mentioned as their aim to have all their member clubs creating their own sustainability steps by the end of 2024 as well as educating their staff to raise the awareness. Federation Y stated that when sustainability is visible on a practical level, members may consider it as a criterion in choosing their sport facilities. Federation Z told that their goal is sustainable exercise and sport in all situations. Federation W said that their goal is that the measurability of sustainability provides guidance for their actions. For this, they are for example discussing about measuring their carbon footprint.

"And maybe it's more the fact that we would get even more from the fine words into the practical level. That is probably the goal that is actually so big that there is already enough of a goal and things to do about it, that it doesn't just rattle around in the air, but it really shows up as clear actions". -Federation Y

The reasons behind sustainability included ethicalness, finances and the nature of the sport. Federation X mentioned how unethical actions in sport organizations have led to scandals in media that turn against the organization. Both Federation Y and Z emphasized that their sport requires nature around which is why sustainability becomes crucial. Like the FOC rep, also Federation Z mentioned how the public health perspective is also important. Federations Y, Z and W brought up also the financial reasons behind sustainability such as partnerships and state general grants that depend on sustainable actions.

"In my opinion, the Ministry of Education and Culture is doing it smartly now that they direct their funding to also comply with sustainability, i.e. they have defined that in the state's general aid to sports federations the sustainability weights 15%. And it certainly affects. And that's good. And it must be said that since it affects our income, we do it also for that reason." -Federation W

Every federation saw sustainability important for their future success whether it was related to the quality of operations or maintaining the members and funding. Federation Z and W emphasized the funding from partners since it offers tools to take sustainability-related matters further. Federation X and W stated that lack of sustainability starts to show in the number of members. Reflecting on the answers, it seems that while emphasizing ethics, the sports federations' views describe Bowen's (1953) normative perspective related to the sustainability of organizations. The views also had elements of McWilliams and Siegel's (2001) instrumental perspective bringing out a competitive advantage.

"I think it's vital, not just for our sport, but for the whole Finnish sports community. There comes a limit to how many bumps can be taken, that if it starts to happen, the action is no longer perceived as reliable. -- You can't think as others would like to think, that sports and physical activity are some strange external islands. We are part of society and even when it comes to environmental issues, we have just as big responsibility as everyone else." -Federation X

Federation X assessed that compared to most sports federations, they have come far with their sustainability. However, when considering the overall goal that for example no one faces inappropriate behavior, all actions are environmentally friendly and everyone could really join in, perfection is impossible. Federation X thought that firstly their strength is that they really have a genuine desire to develop sustainability and secondly, they have the resources for it in terms of working time and money. Cooperation and openness were also seen as their assets. Environment and climate -themes were considered necessary to develop to make them a part of all staff members' everyday work. Also raising awareness in the clubs as well as offering them more help was perceived as development goals. If compared with other sports federations, Federation X would rate their sustainability as 4, but when considering the general goal, it would be 3.

Federation Y evaluated their total sustainability level as 3. Their strength are the environmental and climate issues, however there is room for improvement in the fact that sustainability does not stay at the level of the federation but spreads to the field of clubs. "Less fine words and more actions", as Federation Y it stated. Federation Z would grade their total sustainability as 3. According to the organization, what needs to be developed includes raising awareness in the entire organization and engaging a wide network in

sustainability, as well as outreaching to clubs and providing tools. Their strengths were seen the consideration of gender and para-athletes. Considering the small resources, Federation W graded their organization's sustainability as 4, stating that their strengths are that they take sustainability seriously and have indicators to follow the development. What needs to be developed includes the environmental issues as well as communication to establish sustainability in the whole community.

In sum, sports federations are united by the common key competence of maintaining and promoting recreational and competitive sports of their own. The differences between the sports federations are related to the scope of activities and focus areas on sustainability as well as commitment to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic implementation and development of processes and services that support ecological and social responsibility, as well as innovative human resources management practices.

5.2.3 Strategy-related perspectives in the sports clubs

Sports clubs are associations that organize sports and physical activity for enthusiasts and athletes (Aarresola, 2021). The scope of the clubs' activities varies for example according to the differentiation into large and small clubs, diversification, partnerships and costs and professionalization which also affects the sustainability of the organizations (Itani & Tienari, 2020, p. 133).

5.2.3.1 Organizational culture

Reflecting on how sustainability is visible in the everyday work, Club x stated that good governance can be seen for example in the fact that their instructors do not have to worry about finances but instead they can focus on coaching. To make the voice of staff members heard, they have teams that meet regularly. Through the audit of the Star Club program, the club have implemented disciplinary practices and they take part in the You are not alone - campaign. They also have a process that is called the problem-solving path, which is used if there are problems in the groups.

Clubs y and z brought up implemented disciplinary processes that are visible in the staff's work. In addition to various processes relating to the rules, their violations and handling, Club y has an environmental program and a geo-certificate. They also took part in the #dressingroomtalk -campaign and thus social media communication has been implemented. Club z mentioned that they have adopted "rules of the game" that were launched by the municipality, and which have three points that are general instructions regarding behavior, social media rules and instructions for disruptive behavior. Clubs y, z and w also emphasized that sustainability is present in the staff's work in such a way that they themselves must act responsibly and commit to the guidelines. According to Club w the Star Club program and its feedback surveys are sustainability related practices apparent in the staff's work.

"*In my opinion, this Star Club status is a very broad practice related to these sustainability issues, and I see it almost as a primary practice. It was a long process, and a lot of work was done to bring these issues to the fore and write them down."* -Club w

There were differences in established sustainable practices between the clubs. Club x felt like they have always followed sustainable practices and now they are just documented. According to Club y, their environmental program is very well established, although sustainability is a subject that can never be done well enough, and continuous development is needed. Club z emphasized equality and safe environment that have certainly been part of the organization's operation for a very long time by the fact that in a small town the sense of community is a trademark. However, transparency could be brought out even more in the club through different means. Club w thought that because of the Star Club status that they want to maintain in the future, they must pay attention to different themes of the sustainability and thus they are somewhat established, although the themes can also be further developed in their operations.

The clubs emphasized maintaining members through sustainability. Club w stated that it is one of the conditions for high-quality club activities that sustainability issues are brought up and developed, whereas Club z thought that in a small municipality themes such as safe environment and equality are highlighted to keep the club functioning. In the Club y's opinion, the club's reputation is always at stake, and having many satisfied members happens through reputation and the quality of activities. Club x stated that sustainability is

an absolute prerequisite, because for example parents follow very actively the club's actions. Club x also thought that the FOC would not have drawn up the sustainability program without warning examples which make other sport organizations suffer too. The Club x was critical about the program making the organization sustainable, rather than people involved in the club who have grown into it.

"For quite a few actors, the euro is so important, those economic numbers. Of course they are, but those euros also come through responsibility." -Club y

"The task of the FOC is to figure out what it is doing in the eyes of the general public and whether things have been improved, although unfortunately faults can be found in their own nest. But the fact is that no matter what kind of programs you make, those won't change the club, it's the people who are there. You don't suddenly become sustainable in the club activities, instead you must grow into it. And even if you signed a paper, it doesn't guarantee that you act sustainably anyway. These are just the things that I think should be somewhat self-evident." -Club x

At the club level there were no established ways on how to report sustainability. Clubs x and w mentioned the Star Club status and audit every three years as their way to report. Club y stated that their board is constantly monitoring that their operation meets certain criteria but admitted that reporting is an area they could use help from the FOC or the sports federation. Club z and x also mentioned their websites as a way to report about their sustainability.

"Good question. There should definitely be more reporting. At least based on my own experience we need those external parties. Is it some FOC's process where we write those things and check that they are in order and audit? Is it something from the sports federation? However, those would be sparring sessions where the matters should be watched and recorded. How many of the clubs would do that independently? Well, not many." -Club y

5.2.3.2 Key competencies

The cross-cutting nature of sustainability was emphasized as the goals in the clubs which relates to their positioning regarding sustainability. Club x emphasized raising their members' awareness in sustainability, in which case there is no need to tell things separately. The club's staff must also act by example. Club y stated that sustainability is carried forward in a documented and planned way, which is reflected in the strategy and thus in everyday

operations. Club z's goal was to move and involve municipal residents in activities in an equal, open and safe way, since they consider themselves a very communal club. According to Club w the goal is that the different aspects of sustainability are considered as much as possible in the operation, regarding the resources which are limited for example by volunteering.

Three clubs emphasized the importance of sustainability from the perspective of the club's key competence, which was regarded as making the members physically active. Club z and w stated that the club would not have members without sustainability, whereas Club x also reflected the key competence to the five sustainability themes. According to Club y the activities have gone in a more professional direction which can be seen as a more versatile consideration of practices in key competencies. The downside is, however, that even though they are a voluntary organization, in challenging cases they feel they are treated like a professionally managed company which is where they would need help.

"If we didn't manage the finances responsibly and our instructors didn't act responsibly, the club wouldn't be able to survive. So, in a way, it is related in many ways to our key competence, for example in terms of equality. Of course, one can wonder if it would be possible to move children if the club was not environmentally friendly." -Club x

The sports clubs' main reason for sustainability was maintaining their members. Club x stated that if the club is not sustainable, it will not remain in operation, whereas Club y emphasized the good will, quality and taking care of their members. Clubs z and w both stated as their reason for sustainability maintaining their members and the members' well-being. Based on the answers, the clubs' views on the sustainability of organizations had connections to both Bowen's (1953) normative perspective emphasizing the ethics as well as McWilliams and Siegel's (2001) instrumental perspective bringing out a competitive advantage.

"And that people are really taken care of there. They are not customers, they are our members and friends, so maybe it boils down to that it is the right thing to do." -Club y

According to Club x, their strength in sustainability is that they have a long tradition in equality programs and ethical rules and what needs to be developed are the environmental

and climate issues as well as the equality of language and cultural backgrounds. This requires support because it cannot be developed with the club's own resources. Thus, Club x graded their sustainability as 4. Club y assessed that their overall grade would be 3,5 which was based on the fact that sustainability is considered to be part of their operations and seen as important, which is why they want to try their best. However, identifying one's own weaknesses is a challenge, and one should learn about things in order to recognize them. In other words, without external inspection, Club y thought that they are blind to their own actions. Club z evaluated their grade to be between 3 and 4. If one would think of all the five themes, their sustainability would be 3. However, if one thinks about the themes that affect them the most and considers for example what age their members are, it would be 4 since equality and safe environment are their strengths and good governance partly. Lastly Club w graded their sustainability as 4 stating that their strength is the equality and what should be develop are the environment and climate issues.

Overall, the sports clubs were characterized in many ways from being a part of a sports system to a tight community. The scope of the clubs' activities is growing to promote sustainability as part of their key competencies. The demand for professionalization and the lack of resources were the main needs for development.

5.2.4 Summary of strategy-related perspectives

Relating to the strategy-related perspectives, in general it seems that the sports organizations have some variation in their views about sustainability in organizations which relates to the differences in their key competencies. As a multidisciplinary umbrella organization, the FOC's key competencies relate to coordinating and developing the activities of Finnish sports and physical activity on the field, whereas the sports federations and the clubs' key competencies lie in the organizing and promoting of their own sport. Thus, it is logical that the instrumental perspective of sustainability is present more on the level of the federations and clubs. All the sports organizations had considered or were at least aware of how they could use sustainability in the positioning of their key competencies that manifests a unique value proposition.

It seems that compared to the previous chapter where sustainability-related practices were listed under five themes, it was more challenging for the organizations to perceive sustainability through strategy-related perspectives. It was more apparent that some organizations perceive sustainability mainly through certain themes such as safe environment and equality when talking about for example how sustainability occurs in the staff's everyday work. It also seems that some strategy-related practices are not being done consciously but considered as self-evident and thought about only afterwards when trying to figure out what has been done in the organization for sustainability. For example, an instructor acting responsibly was taken for granted which is why criminal records were not checked. Despite all of this, many organizations still evaluated their total level of sustainability as 4, which according to Valente (2017) accounts as integrated strategy, where sustainable development becomes the organization's main way of distinguishing itself. Thus, it is relevant to also present strategy-related questions when considering organizations' sustainability.

"This interview helped to structure everything, because sometimes you get the feeling that even though you know that a lot is being done, you wonder if enough is being done or if the right things are being done. It's always difficult to judge whether the right things are being done, or it can often be seen in hindsight" -Federation X

5.3 Influencing the implementation of the sustainability program

Since sustainability performance can be understood as a function of structures and strategies, the fundamental question is how those structures and strategies are related to the sustainability performance (Husted, 2000, p. 34.) Thus, in this chapter I will describe how the implementation of the sustainability program is influenced between the FOC, sports federations and clubs.

5.3.1 Implementation structures in the FOC

Reflecting on stakeholders and networks influencing the organization's sustainability, the FOC rep named sports federations and clubs since it is crucial that the sports community do it together. The FOC is also connected straight to the clubs through the Star Club -concept,

which is a quality system for clubs with responsibility criteria by the FOC. When describing the engagement to the sustainability program, the FOC rep stated that the program requires joint discussion. Someone must coordinate it, like they have, but different points of view are heard, for example in the comment round when updating the program.

"We can't do this alone, so it's crucial that the sports federations do this with us. And from there it goes to the clubs where it actually happens in practice, the sustainability work. And we need all of us for this, that everyone works at the individual level and then at the organizational level." -FOC rep

As sustainability-related cooperation practices the FOC rep mentioned the sustainability clinics. During the clinics certain themes are discussed and advice is given, experts are consulted and even the next version of the program is worked on together with the federations. Another practice is one-to-one sparring sessions with one federation at a time where they review sustainability program and the federation's strengths and areas for development in it. In general, they also listen what the stakeholders have done and share practices as well as communicate about different services, such as You are not alone -campaign.

When describing the meaning and role of the sustainability program, the FOC rep said that they have benchmarked it and could not get by without, because a common framework is so beneficial. It seems that it is established to such an extent that the basic idea does not need to be presented much anymore, but instead the demonstration of best practices is most useful. The FOC rep said that continuous networking and information sharing happens through established practices, such as clinics, trainings, cooperation and communication by phone and messaging. There is no joint platform for communication, although lately they have been considering how to reach those federations and clubs who are not strongly in the network.

Relating to the evaluation and monitoring of the program, the FOC rep said that they have certain procedures that are monitored in the form of a checklist, but they should know how to develop better measures, since there are no actual measurements and evaluation in the program. Some federations have measurements of their own, but they are needed also for the joint program. Accurate measures related to good governance and inappropriate behavior

exist, but there should be measurements in every theme. FINCIS studies certain areas, which helps. Often the evaluation includes criteria such as whether a guide has been made or a staff trained, but eradicating racism is a completely different research subject.

In sum, it seems like the FOC considers two groups of stakeholders to influence their sustainability which are the organization itself with its partners and employees as well as local populations such as beneficiaries and organizations based on membership. Out of the five implementation structure criteria, there seems to be most need for development with a joint platform for communication as well as a monitoring system for the sustainability program.

5.3.2 Implementation structures in the sports federations

The evaluation of the sustainability implementation structure in the sports federations involves two types of analysis. The first one includes the stakeholders and other sustainability-related networks as well as their engagement, and the second one includes the other three criteria of the implementation structure.

5.3.2.1 Stakeholders and their engagement

Federation X recognized as their main stakeholders the clubs because in them the sustainability work mainly happens. The organization has four different focal points in their networks, with the first one being the federation's employees at the core. Next is the club management, instructors and coaches. The third point is athletes and exercisers, and the fourth is other actors such as the public and social media followers. Every year the federation's focus is on a different stakeholder.

"I think the clubs are in a key position here, because if they don't get involved, the work of the federation will in a certain way wasted, because in clubs the activity is mainly done, and it should be sustainable from different points of view. I think the key roles are the club management. They put the club's own processes in order. Then there are the coaches, instructors, because they encounter the members the most, and then of course the athletes and exercisers, because it can be, for example,

that teammate in the group who bullies, but also from the point of view that each of us has a responsibility and an obligation to intervene if we see something." -Federation X

Federation Y told that regarding the sustainability related networks they pay attention to the choice of cooperation partners, and with some of them they have implemented things related to the ecosystem, for example. Thus, at best the sustainability issues come together with the stakeholders of different networks. Federation W named as their stakeholders relating sustainability the cooperation partners as well as the FOC through whose sustainability clinics their sustainability improves and flows into operations. Federation Z recognized three levels in their networks: clubs, trust bodies and partners. Clubs are trained to make sustainability move forward, trust bodies evaluate the fulfillment of sustainability, and in the partners' agreements, the sustainability of both sides is considered.

"I thought of three levels, first the clubs that make up the federation. They are our member clubs, so of course we introduce our sustainability program and then the clubs can make their own. And then specifically education and communication are important in the direction of clubs. Well, then there's our trust bodies, that is, for example, the federal assembly, who approve our programs and the measures included in them, and they should evaluate the implementation of these programs and sustainability. And then there are indeed partners whose responsible operation is important, and it is considered in joint work agreements." -Federation Z

Federation X described the engagement in the program through four areas: 1) Training for the staff and competence development work for the clubs, 2) Regular communication through different channels, 3) Materials and tools to be used and shared, and 4) Cooperation whenever possible, such as energy saving projects or the You are not alone -campaign. Federation Y explained that engagement happens through continuous, long-term work such as reprising the themes. In the beginning, they started the sustainability work with small steps, so that there would not be too much opposition from the clubs, but now they are doing it more boldly, even if the themes need to be revised. Federation Z thought that engagement happens through rules, training and cooperation partners, whereas Federation W described how they are committed to the joint program by the FOC. Thus, engagement starts from the strategy and proceeds from there to action. With their partner it is also discussed, for example, how to get a foothold in clubs with the help of a sustainability competition.

As sustainability-related cooperation practices Federation X mentioned the FOC's sustainability clinics, where federations are given the opportunity to influence, since it is precisely the culture of engagement that the program is trying to advance. They cooperate with more than 20 actors, which include for example MLL and AHDH-association. Cooperation between federations was also considered important, of which the You are not alone -campaign is a concrete example. However, peer support was needed for the contact person of inappropriate behavior in the organization. Federation Y only mentioned relating to common practices that the sports community should find concrete things to share. Federation Z stated that sustainability is a big thing in partnership work. Actions usually come from partners and the federation communicates about them. Federation W also told that they have agreements with their partners, where both parties are committed to sustainability and learning from the other.

"What I would like would be peer support for those who receive the bad feeling of others or the fact that they have been treated wrongly. I would like the peer support where things could be talked about because it is really hard to listen to those cases. And then I also consider important this cooperation between the federations, and my concern is that only some sports federations are involved in it, when I think this is a common issue. And it highlights how wide the spectrum is and where we are going in terms of sustainability." -Federation X

"After all, a lot of things happen there that are really difficult to measure, or we don't necessarily even get information about how sustainability is implemented in the clubs, because there are some great things being done there and we just don't know about them. We should somehow find solutions, how to increase that dialogue, so that we are more aware of what is being done there." -Federation Y

5.3.2.2 Other activities of implementation structure

When describing the meaning and role of the sustainability program, Federation X stated that the program brings assertiveness and noteworthiness, whereas Federation Y mentioned that it requires concrete actions. Federation Z thought that thanks to the program sustainability issues are identified at all levels, practices are documented, and the implementation of the practices is communicated externally. Federation W stated that since resources are limited, the program helps to secure funding. No federation can afford to act irresponsibly.

"It is significantly easier for us to talk convincingly about sustainability issues when it is not only our matter, but it is the matter of the sport community, and it has the blessing of the Olympic Committee." -Federation X

"It is an absolute prerequisite, but now the most important thing is that it is concrete actions, which then produce those measurable results. Otherwise, it's just fine words and that's not enough." -Federation Y

"If we are able to create the image, the brand in such a way that we are a responsible actor, it makes it easier to work with partners." -Federation W

Federation X stated that information sharing internally occurs in their meetings. Regarding the clubs, it is more one-way information sharing from the side of the federation than networking both ways. It requires skills development in the clubs to reach a network. As for the whole sports community, networking is random, although it could be frequent, in which case even those who have not been involved much should be more active. This would increase sharing of everyday life between the sports community. Federation Y stated that they invest in sharing researched and measured information, which at best affects the change. Every year an extensive industry portal is made, the purpose of which is to help as many people working within the sport as possible. Federation Z stated relating to information sharing that their programs are up to date and communication occurs with clubs, partners and competition organizers as well as in seminars. In their direction comes an educational perspective from the FOC and peer support with other federations. Federation W also mentioned events organized by the FOC that helps them develop their operations. Some external resources have been purchased for information sharing and they also cooperate with some other federations in terms of creating their own programs.

Federation X told that regarding evaluation of the sustainability they have a target card with metrics that is evaluated throughout the year. The goals of their strategy are evaluated by, for example, how many of their clubs have their own sustainability program. Other unofficial measurements include examples such as information on how many cases have been processed, the coaching culture -survey which results can be compared with previous ones, and an annual statistic in which clubs are asked about various issues. It is difficult to get access to the effectiveness of measures. In other words, they know how many clubs

participated in the training, but they do not know in how many clubs it led to a change. Federation Y told that they evaluate the program annually based on the metrics defined in the action plan. For example, in terms of good governance, the measure is how many clubs start using the digital platform related to administration. Regarding equality and equal opportunity, they have a project relating to physical activity counseling and they measure how many municipalities they can get involved. Federation Z stated that some of their programs have annual activity clocks, and they are reviewed monthly. Annual reporting to the board and partners is also done. According to Federation W, their metrics are in the annual report and the strategy is discussed at board meetings. Although responsibility is not discussed separately, it comes up in connection with other issues, such as employee rate's gender equality.

In general, the sports federations considered as their main stakeholders the clubs and partners, although the networks influencing sustainability were perceived somewhat differently. This also affects how cooperation practices between sports community are understood. Compared to the FOC, the sports federations listed more concrete metrics and unofficial measurements on the evaluation of the implementation of the program. Although the federations mentioned actions for information sharing, it seems that the networking is more random than frequent.

5.3.3 Implementation structures in the sports clubs

As with the sports federations, the evaluation of a sustainability implementation structure in the sports clubs is presented first with the focus on the different stakeholders and networking. The latter chapter involves the analysis of the other actions of the implementation structure.

5.3.3.1 Stakeholders and their engagement

Club x told that they have networked well, which is because of their long traditions. Their stakeholders include parliamentarians, councils and boards, and they have also school cooperation. Thus, they have different networks that can be influenced. The club uses the ready-made materials by the FOC. The connection to the sports federation is minimal and occurs through newsletters. Club x thought that the sustainability program is not visible from

the level of the federation, especially now when they have had organizational changes and there are no more regional managers that one could easily contact. Club y named as their sustainability-related stakeholders the players and different coaching groups as well as partners, such as the city. Club z had only been working a few months in the club, and during that time there had not been any contacts with stakeholders relating to sustainability. However, the municipality was considered a partner. Club w explained that the FOC provides information that can be used to develop club activities, whereas on the website of their sports federation one can find out the operating methods and principles that the club should strive for.

"Yes, of course, the Olympic Committee provides a lot of information and material that can be used as a basis to move things forward, as in club activities. Of course, you can also find information on the federation's website, but I don't know if the federation has really provided any information for the clubs, but we must ask for and get it ourselves." -Club w

Club x explained that their engagement has happened through the Star Club -audit since it expresses what is expected to the club management who conveys the message to the coaches. Club y considered that engaging members in everyday life is already quite a challenge, and it starts from their decision-making body and communication, for example in social media, for everyone to understand what is included in sustainability within the sport. Collaborators such as universities are also important. Clubs z and w also emphasized the role of the decision-making bodies in engagement. Club z explained that it would be good to have clear practice models and through them it would be easy to engage the participants. Club w described how the federation should be genuinely interested in the clubs, and for example if they want to commit clubs through the Star Club -program, they should at least mention the clubs with the status on their website. Generally, Club w thought that active and open cooperation is the best commitment.

Relating to sustainability-related cooperation actions Club x only mentioned partnering with The Finnish Workers' Sports Federation that has existed a long before the FOC. Club y told that they keep their eyes open all the time for new opportunities, and they for example monitor whether the FOC or the federation has something that they could take advantage of. Currently they have a biochar project going on with the university. Club y assumed that the

FOC and federations' competence will develop, and communication will become easier because it has been varied and a lot depends on whether the club will read an e-mail. Thus, the events are a good practice, for example. Club z was not familiar whether there are any common practices related to sustainability, but at least they have sponsorship agreements with local companies. If they would need to figure out something relating to sustainability, they would approach the FOC. Club w mentioned the city as their closest partner with who they cooperate regarding sustainability.

5.3.3.2 Other activities of implementation structure

Regarding the meaning and role of the sustainability program, the clubs' responses were related to consideration and recognition of the program. Club x mentioned that thanks to the program what has been implemented has been now also documented. Club y told that through the program things must be thought through and done in a different way, in which case they are put into practice. Without the program, there is much else to be done in everyday work that the examination of such a large entity would certainly have been missed. Clubs z and w stated that with the program sustainability issues must be considered, should the club activities to be continued.

"I feel that we would have been just as sustainable without this program. But I am satisfied that the Olympic Committee has done this, because it has written down the things that we have already accomplished in our club. Thus, in a way, things that are self-evident are now in a verbal form." - Club x

Relating to networking, Club x wondered that if they were not a Star Club, would they have received information about the program or in other words, is it normally just an email from the FOC to the club management. According to Club x, there is neither information coming from the sports federation. Club x suggested that the FOC should hire a person responsible of social media to utilize the five themes for example with celebrity athletes to reach bigger audience since it does not help that only the club management is familiar with the themes. Club y admitted that their networking could be at a better level and sharing information should not drown under other everyday things. Their geographical location influences this, but they should better follow the information about the trainings offered by the FOC and the federation. Club y felt that the FOC has been in contact with them especially after the Star

Club -status, and the federation has been actively even in direct contact with them which they appreciate. Regarding their own club meetings, they would prefer more person-to-person contacts. The amount of information is so large that it is easy to miss an email, but effective communication could help. Club y has given feedback to their regional actors, which are the sports college, the provincial sports department and the clubs in the area, that it would be good to have a channel where everyone could be reached at once. Club z could not say anything about the matter because of only working for the club for few months. Club w told that they occasionally communicate with members in the Facebook group and with parents through newsletters. They felt like the FOC is in regular contact with them, at least once a month, and they also update Facebook regularly. If Club w needs to send them an inquiry, the response will come right away.

At the club level, the evaluation of the program implementation was tenuous. Both Clubs x and w mentioned the Star Club -audit every three years, although Club w also mentioned feedback surveys to members. Club z did not know whether monitoring of the program exists, and Club y admitted that there really is no evaluation or monitoring in their organization relating to the program. With the new board term starting soon, they should discuss what to develop next.

In sum, the clubs' emphasized their partners as their stakeholder, although the perceptions about the stakeholders and cooperation actions were various in general. The role of the decision-making bodies was brought up in the engagement of the stakeholders. As with the FOC, there seems to be most need for development with the continuous information sharing as well as evaluation of the sustainability program in the sports clubs.

5.3.4 Summary of the implementation structures

To sum up the section, it seems that sports organizations outline sustainability-related networks and stakeholders as well as cooperation practices in various ways. Some organizations understand networking as interconnection with one stakeholder, whereas others can consider it more broadly with different levels. For example, the FOC considered both federations and clubs as their stakeholders, but moving forward towards the clubs, the

perceptions got narrower. This was the case also with the perceptions about the cooperation practices in the sports community. The attitude towards other sports organizations also varied. It seemed that one club had a negative attitude towards both the FOC and the federation, one had a good attitude towards them both, one did not know, and one had a good attitude towards the FOC but not towards the federation. It seemed like all federations had a positive attitude towards the FOC.

With the third implementation structure criterion that requires individual organizations implementing inside of their own organizations, it seemed that only a few organizations were able to condense concretely how the implementation has happened within their own organization. Relating to the continuous networking and information sharing, it could be more frequent instead of random in all sports organizations since there is no joint platform for communication. With the evaluation and monitoring criterion, the sports federations were able to list the most measurements. This might be logical since compared to the FOC, the federations work closer to the grassroots level of the sustainability. There was barely any evaluation happening at the clubs. Thus, information sharing and evaluation relating to the implementation of the sustainability seem to need the most development within the sports community.

6 Conclusions and discussion

In this chapter, the results of the research are summarized by answering the research questions and making conclusions about the interview results that are based on the previous research. The aim of the study was to describe how the sports community's sustainability program has been implemented from the FOC to the sports federations and clubs, what the sustainable practices implemented in the organization are, as well as how the implementation of the program is influenced between the FOC, sports federations and clubs. Also, specified conclusions are discussed more broadly. At the end of the thesis, the reliability of the research is evaluated, and further research topics are suggested.

6.1 Research results and conclusions

Next, I present the answers to my research questions based on the analysis and draw conclusions based on previous research and theory. I move from the sub-research questions towards the main research question because the sub-research questions can be used to answer the broader main research question. My first sub-research question was:

- What kind of practices related to the five themes of the sustainability program are implemented in the organization?

As a conclusion on the sustainability-related practices, it seems that a lot of practices relating to the five themes of the sustainability program have been implemented in the sports organizations. The sports organizations' practices in social responsibility can be divided in accordance with Larrán Jorge's et al. (2016) categorization in charity and volunteer work, internal activities focused on improving working conditions, transparency of organizational practices, communication practices to increase internal and external organizational awareness and activities with members and partners. The environmental responsibility of sports organizations can also be defined through the classification of Larrán Jorge et al. (2016) which include practices focused on waste, measures related to environmental protection and recycling, reduction of water, related innovations and environmental certificates. The concept of corporate sustainability therefore covers organizational

responsibilities in at least four key subject areas: human rights, workers' rights, environmental principles, and anticorruption activities. (Rasche et al., 2017, p. 7.)

The second sub-research question was the following:

- How is the implementation of the sustainability program influenced by the FOC, sports federations and clubs?

Regarding the first two implementation evaluation criteria by Clarke (2011), sports organizations outline sustainability-related networks and stakeholders as well as cooperation practices in various ways. Some organizations understand networking as interconnection with one stakeholder, whereas others can consider it more broadly with different levels. For example, the FOC considered both federations and clubs as their stakeholders, but moving forward towards the clubs, the perceptions got narrower. This was the case also with the perceptions about the cooperation practices in the sports community. Also, the attitude towards other sports organizations varied. Reflecting to the third implementation structure criterion, only a few organizations were able to condense concretely the meaning of the sustainability program and how the implementation has happened within their own organization. Relating to the fourth criterion of continuous networking and information sharing, it could be more frequent instead of random in all sports organizations since there is no joint platform for communication. With the evaluation and monitoring criterion, the sports federations were able to list the most measurements, whereas there was barely any evaluation happening at the clubs.

This supports the findings of Korvenpää (2021) by addressing that the concept of implementation evaluation criteria can be applied in studying the interaction between the FOC, sports federations and clubs when implementing the sustainability program. The analysis of Korvenpää (2021) also showed the need for development related to monitoring and evaluation as well as further networking. Reflecting on the findings, information sharing and evaluation relating to the implementation of the sustainability seem to need the most development within the sports community also according to this research.

Based on the answers to the sub-research questions, the main research question can be answered, which was:

- How has the sports community's sustainability program been implemented from the FOC to the sports federations and clubs?

Relating to the strategy-related perspectives, in general it seems that the sports organizations have some variation in their perspectives about sustainability in organizations which relates to the differences in their key competencies. As a multidisciplinary umbrella organization, the FOC's key competencies relate to coordinating and developing the activities of Finnish sports and physical activity on the field, whereas the sports federations and the clubs' key competencies lie in the organizing and promoting of their own sport. Thus, it is logical that the instrumental perspective of sustainability is present more on the level of the federations and clubs, whereas the FOC's perspective is normative. All the sports organizations had considered or were at least aware of how they could use sustainability in the positioning of their key competencies that manifests a unique value proposition. The sports organizations' fundamental culture, which clarifies the organization's basic identity and purpose as well as the processes, structures and practices to employees, had some connections to the sustainability in the daily life of the staff, although the organizational cultures certainly are not ready yet. Thus, Valente's (2017, p.90) three factors of positioning, key competencies and organizational culture were applied to determine organizations' sustainable development strategies.

6.1.1 Creating shared value as a meta-organization

In general, it seems that the FOC's main objective relating to the practices of the five sustainability themes is to manage collective actions and act as support for cooperative strategies and practices among sports organizations. According to Berkowitz and Dumez (2016, p. 154), from a managerial perspective this is the objective of the meta-organizations, and it relates to the key contemporary societal challenges such as sustainability that require more cooperative act from organizations. The sports federations are more focused on communication practices, internal activities as well as activities with members and partners. Collaboration can be an effective way for NGOs such as sports federations to influence corporate activities since joint projects and partnerships give them the ability to steer company initiatives (Seitanidi and Crane, 2014). Some tactics of NGOs only require a

limited number of committed people to be effective, whereas other tactics rely on the participation of large numbers of people (Bakker and den Hond 2017, p. 224). Since many sport clubs operate on the principles of non-profit and voluntariness, it is natural that their practices rely on a limited number of people and emphasize more activities with members as well as charity and volunteer work. In contrast to the sports federations, the clubs did not really mention activities with partners. Since Bakker and den Hond (2017) suggest that NGOs can also exert influence over firms by collaborating with a corporation, for example in the form of a partnership or alliance, the clubs could utilize this tactic more.

According to Najam (1996) the interests of stakeholders that are impacted by a NGO's work can be quite different, and NGOs can be considered accountable to three groups of stakeholders, which are the NGO itself with its partners and employees, local populations such as beneficiaries and organizations based on membership, and the donors. The FOC considers two groups of stakeholders to influence their sustainability which are the sports federations and clubs. In general, the sports federations considered as their main stakeholders the clubs and different cooperation partners, although the networks influencing sustainability were perceived somewhat differently between the federations. The clubs' emphasized their own cooperation partners as their stakeholder, although the perceptions about the stakeholders were various in general among the clubs. The role of the decision-making bodies was brought up in the engagement of the clubs' stakeholders.

Reflecting the sustainable practices of sports organizations to Porter and Kramer's (2011) model, it can be observed that in terms of assets, the sports organizations have identified social benefits and disadvantages that have appeared in the sports organizations' activities and services. Thus, for example a sustainability clinic has been redesigned by considering which theme requires most education. In terms of business opportunities, a few sports organizations had calculated their carbon footprint which redefines productivity in the value chain. Opportunities to create shared value arise because such factors related to social and environmental problems cause sports organizations financial costs. Regarding social needs, it is observed that sports organizations have cooperation with other social actors such as FINCIS, Ministry of Education and Culture, corporates and associations, which enable the creation of a better operating framework and thus supports the competitive situation.

As overall challenges, it was brought up that although the sports organizations are based on similarity, they also differ in other aspects such as size, competencies, constitutions and administrative structures. It was mentioned how sports organizations of different sizes have different resources to advance sustainability, as well as how tensions exist between beneficiaries and organizational arrangements which are the result of funding requirements implicating that dealing with different stakeholders with various interests can be difficult. The issue of how practices and ideas move across and between sports organizations slowly was also brought up. This relates to concept of institutional translation which suggests that for the ideas to move from one organization to another they have to be understood by the receiving organization (Wedlin and Sahlin, 2017). Since there exists high institutional distance between the FOC and the sports clubs, the translation context can be complex and explain, why changing the culture by implementing the sustainability program is happening slowly.

Although the practices that increase sports organizations competitiveness and at the same time promote the economic and social conditions of its stakeholders could be more pervasive and the translation processes of the practices between the sports organizations could show more impact and change, it can nevertheless be stated that sports organizations as a whole create shared value according to Porter and Kramer's (2011) model and its three fundamentals.

To influence the implementation of the sustainability program and to make it become a particularly important “stakeholder” within the sports organizations, it might be beneficial to perceive sports organizations as meta-organizations meaning other sports organizations are their members. Thus, individuals such as the FOC, a sports federation or a sports club can form an organization, but also other sports organizations can compose an organization creating the meta-organization. Currently only the FOC perceives both the federations and clubs this way, whereas even the attitude especially among the clubs is negative towards other sports organizations. Although according to Ahrne and Brunsson (2005) the meta-organization’s activities are difficult to change because of the rather weak central authority and conflicts are likely to occur about solutions, values and interests between the members, understanding and perceiving themselves as a meta-organization could improve sports organizations conditions for conflict-resolution and thus influence the decision-making as

well as how these decisions are implemented and formulated. Unifying the perceptions about the stakeholders as well as enhancing the knowledge about the concept of meta-organization among the sports organizations could also influence how cooperation practices between sports community are understood.

6.1.2 A gap between self-evaluation and practice in sustainability strategies

When comparing sports organizations in terms of the extremes of Valente's (2017) five sustainability strategies, it is observed that sports organizations do not seek to deny or hide their practices since they are related to health promoting activities within the society. Thus, all organizations' key operations have some connections to sustainability. On the other hand, no sports organization have made significant changes to their external operating environment to facilitate more sustainable practices. Therefore, based on Valente's (2017) classification, sports organizations' sustainability strategies cannot be described as neither a strategy of denial nor reforming.

When comparing Valente´s (2017) remaining strategies of defensive, isolated and integrated to the FOC, it is noticed that as a contrast for a defensive strategy, the FOC does not aim to continue to operate as usual to respond to observed development areas, but, in a manner typical of an isolated strategy, questions for example the actualization of equality and equal opportunity. In the history of the FOC, there are also similar changes in terms of good governance as well as safe space and safe environment. In Valente's (2017) integrated strategy sustainability is present in all areas of the organization's operations, and it is not separate from daily routines. In the FOC, sustainable practices are well-established in terms of good governance and antidoping whereas the remaining three sustainable themes are work in progress. Although sustainable practices are reflected in the daily life of the FOC' staff in many ways, they should discuss together in the organization what the themes mean in any given situation. Without it, it can be difficult for employees to understand how sustainable development is important in their daily activities. Thus, even though the FOC rep evaluated on scale 1 to 5 their overall sustainability score as 3,75, based on Valente's (2017) classification, the isolated strategy score of 3 describes the FOC the most. In addition, even though it was found in the sub-research question that the FOC as well as other sports

organizations create shared value in terms of their operating methods, shared value in the context of sustainable development strategies gives insight into how organizations can implement an isolated sustainability strategy, but not an integrated strategy (Valente 2017, p. 108).

When considering the sports federations as a whole in terms of the remaining three strategies, it is observed that the organizations' operations partly have features of all three sustainability strategies. As typical of a defensive strategy, some sports federations have tried to make various and partly small changes in its operations to respond to pressure from the sports community, and for example Federation W mentioned hybrid meetings as a sustainable practice visible on the staff's everyday work. As typical for an isolated strategy, the sports federations are striving to develop their activities regarding the challenges presented such as creating carbon-neutral events or educating the staff and members. As typical for an integrated strategy, in some sports federations the sustainability seemed to be present in most areas of the organization's operations, and for example Federation X listed several everyday routines in all five sustainability themes. Even though sustainability seemed to be separate from most of the federations' daily routines, their operations nevertheless contain entire action-planning and self-made programs, including target cards and codes of conduct which show that sports federations are aware of the strategic importance of sustainability. In an integrated strategy, organizations also consider many social and ecological goals, and perceive them as important as financial goals. Since for some of the federations the importance of sustainability was seen specifically in terms of financial profitability, it cannot be said that the integrated strategy describes the federations' situation as a whole. Thus, the isolated strategy of score 3 would perhaps also describe the sports federations the most, even though major individual differences exist between the federations. This is also supported by the self-evaluations of the federations, since Federation Y and Z gave the score 3, Federation W gave the score 4 and Federation X gave the score 3,5 making the average score 3,34.

Lastly, when comparing the remaining three strategies to the sports clubs, it can be noticed that as typical for the defensive strategy, many clubs have tried to make various and partly small changes in their operations to respond to pressure from the sports community, for example by meeting coaches regularly or carrying out feedback surveys. Instead of concrete examples, many clubs also gave general, practical recommendations and some clubs had no

practices at all regarding some themes. The establishment of sustainable practices was also thought to be a natural process, without the need of them being emphasized consciously in the organization. As typical for a defensive strategy, the sports clubs also have social and ecological goals from the perspective of member orientation, which to some extents are related to the organizations' key competencies. Thus, the clubs show a slightly deeper understanding of the connections between sustainability goals and financial goals as in the strategy of denial. The overall strategy describing the clubs the most would be the defensive one with the score 2, even though Club x and w gave the score 4 and Club y and z gave the score 3,5 making the average score 3,75.

Interestingly, in general the sports organizations graded their sustainability to be higher than what the reality seems to be. The tendency seemed to get stronger, the weaker the sustainability actually was. This can relate to the concept of decoupling, a gap between policy and practice, which is caused by the organizations conforming to external pressures (Bromley and Powell, 2012, p. 484.). Some sports organizations might have adopted different policies to conform to external pressures regarding for example the five themes of the sustainability program and its formally stated goals, but in practice do not supposedly change their operations.

According to Bromley and Powell (2012), there are many reasons why organizations might lack alignment. In some circumstances, decoupling is an unintended consequence, whereas in others idealistic wishes are crushed by the demands and difficulty of the tasks. For example, many sport organizations operate on the principles of non-profit and voluntariness, thus their resources to improve sustainability might be limited. Limited resources can also decrease possibilities to raise awareness among sports organizations which is why decoupling can be unintended consequence because of the lack of understanding. And in some cases, internal buffering is a simple effort to protect internal activities from external inspection. This kind of organized hypocrisy is essentially necessary considering various stakeholders' conflicting demands that the sports organizations also mentioned. However, although it cannot be evaluated based on this research whether decoupling and organized hypocrisy exists in the sports organizations, the results regarding the reported status of the implementation of the sports organizations' sustainability program should be perhaps considered with a pinch of salt.

6.2 Research reliability and suggestions for further research

The basis of qualitative research is the open subjectivity of the researcher and the recognition that the researcher is the central tool of the study (Eskola and Suoranta, 1996, p. 165). Consequently, the choices I made, from the search for theory and the implementation of the interview to the analysis and reporting of the data, are influenced by subjectivity. However, to reduce subjectivity, I have tried to justify the choices made and to report the entire process carefully. Since the data consists of nine interviews, the results cannot be generalized, but can be treated mainly as descriptive of the topic. The studies on, for example the inter-organizational perspectives are also very diverse, which weakens their comparability with the results of this study and thus again reduces generalizability.

The authenticity of answers obtained from the interviews may be affected by the will to give socially desirable answers which is typical for interviews (Hirsjärvi et al., 2009, p. 206). In general, however, the interviewees spoke quite openly about their thoughts and attitudes, and dared to make critical comments. According to Kansanen (2004, p. 93), the challenge is also that it is usually difficult to get information about the reasons for the interviewee's choices and the underlying values. It is common for the interviewees to describe their activities in terms of content and situation, and when additional clarification is requested, they further refine the description. This also partially happened in my own interviews. According to Eskola and Suoranta (1996, p. 211), a way to assess reliability in a case study is to convey a sense of reality to the reader, which I have tried to do by comprehensively presenting the views of the interviewees by means of direct quotes, among other things. I also gave the interviewees a possibility to see the thesis before publishing it and notice me about any errors in quotes and interpretations. Only a correction to one sentence was asked to be made.

As the importance of sustainability becomes even more underlying factor in organizations' operation, the strategies and practices related to the implementation of sustainability in individual organizations should be studied more. In this research, to some extent one can see the impact of communication and training from one sports organization to other. For example, both the FOC rep and federations mentioned the implementation of the program as a challenge and a constant focus of work. Both Federation X and Club x brought up the

carpooling and local exercise as their practices, as did Federation Y and Club y mention sustainability as an important competitive advantage. Korvenpää (2021, p. 113) suggested that a compelling option for further research would be to choose a sports federation and study how the processing of the program continues in the chosen organization. In the future, once the implementation of the sustainability program progresses even further, it would be interesting to also choose a sports club and study its practices as well as the sustainability-related influences between organizations.

The sports organizations' perceptions of different themes are variable, and the variation seems to be more apparent at the level of the clubs. It is not clear which issues and practices belong to which theme, and for example the themes of safe space and equality were somewhat mixed. The scale of the listed practices was also vast; some considered sorting waste, having foreigners as members and organizing hybrid meetings as sustainable practices worth mentioning, whereas for some those were organizing carbon neutral events or applying for funding to integrate refugees. It would be important to unify the understanding of what kind of things belong to which theme to create a common language for the sustainability program. To enhance the implementation of the sustainability program, a further research topic could be to create an evaluation tool where sustainable practices would be listed in three categories from basic to advanced. This could help sports organizations to understand their own level in sustainability.

Some sports organizations focused almost exclusively on the positive work contributions instead of showing challenges as well. To reach beyond the façades of hypocrisy, Berkowitz and Dumez (2016, p. 154) suggest analyzing the diversity of meta-organizations' membership and structure since the dynamics of the organizational forms imply this. The lack of resources is an issue for many sports organizations, which is why mapping out the sports organizations' differences in other aspects such as size, competencies, constitutions and administrative structures would be helpful. Also creating stakeholder matrix could help the sports organizations to perceive themselves as a meta-organization and thus reduce the buffering of external pressures.

Lastly, according to Berkowitz and Dumez (2016, p. 154), it would be relevant to study the usefulness and efficiency of meta-organizations in the light of their performance and impact.

Thus, to improve the generalizability of the results and reduce subjectivity, the implementation of the sustainability could be studied also statistically, for example, by preparing a survey based on the principles and practices contained in Valente's (2017) five sustainability strategies. A survey could be carried out, for example, at a certain organizational level, in sports organizations of a certain size or in a certain geographical area. With the generalizability of quantitative research, it would be possible to specify when and under what conditions the relationship between sports organizations and sustainability strengthens or weakens.

References

Aarresola, O. 2021. *Seurantatietokanta: "urheiluseuroja" etsimässä.* [online] Available at: <https://kihu.fi/kihun-blogi-seuratietokanta-urheiluseuroja-etsimassa/> [Accessed 23 October 2022].

Ahrne, G. and Brunsson, N. 2005. Organizations and meta-organizations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 21(2005), pp. 429-449.

Ahrne, G., Brunsson, N. & Garsten, C. 2000. Standardizing through organization. In N. Brunsson, & Jacobsson, ed. *A world of standards*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Arenas, D., Lozano, J. and Albareda, L. 2009. The role of NGOs in CSR: mutual perceptions among stakeholders. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88(1), pp. 175–197.

Bakker, F. and den Hond, F., 2017. NGO activism and CSR. In: A. Rasche, M. Morsing & J. Moon, ed. *Corporate social responsibility: strategy, communication and governance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 220–245.

Benn, S., Dunphy, D. and Griffiths, A. 2014. *Organizational change for corporate sustainability*. London, UK: Routledge.

Bennett, W. 2003. Communicating global activism. *Information, Communication and Society*, 6(2), pp. 143–168.

Berkowitz, H. and Dumez, H. 2016. The concept of meta-organizations: issues for management studies. *European Management Review*, 13(1), pp. 149–156.

Bowen, H. 1953. *Social responsibilities of the businessman*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.

Bromley, P. and Powell, W. 2012. From smoke and mirrors to walking the talk: decoupling in the contemporary world. *The Academy of Management Annals,* 6 (1), pp. 483-530.

Brunsson, N. 2007. *The consequences of decision-making.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brunsson, N. and Jacobsson, B. 2000. *A world of standards*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Campbell, J. 2007. Why would corporations behave in socially responsible ways? An institutional theory of corporate social responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(3), pp. 946-967.

Carroll, A. 1979. A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance. *The Academy of Management Review*, 4(4), pp. 497–505.

Carroll, A. and Buchholtz, A. 2006. *Business and society: ethics and stakeholder management.* Mason: Thomson South-Western.

Cho, C., Laine, M., Roberts, R. and Rodrique, M. 2015. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 40 (C), pp. 78-94.

Carter, C. and Rogers, D. 2008. A framework of sustainable supply chain management: moving toward new theory. *International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management,* 38(5), pp. 360–387.

Clarke, A. 2011. Key structural features for collaborative strategy implementation: a study of sustainable development/local agenda 21 collaborations. *Management & Avenir*, 50(10), pp. 153–171.

Claus, L., Greenwood, R. and Mgoo, J. 2021. Institutional translation gone wrong: the case of villages for Africa in rural Tanzania. *Academy of Management Journal*, 64(5), pp. 1497–1526.

Crane, A. and Matten, D. 2019. *Business ethics: managing corporate citizenship and sustainability in the age of globalization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cropper, S., Ebers, M., Huxham, C. and Ring, P. 2008. Introducing inter-organizational relations. In: S. Cropper, M. Ebers, C. Huxham, & P. Ring, eds. *The Oxford handbook of inter-organizational relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-22.

Deephouse, D, Bundy, J., Tost, L. & Suchman, M. 2017. Organizational legitimacy: Six key questions. In: R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, T. B. Lawrence, & R. E. Meyer, eds. *The SAGE handbook of organizational institutionalism*. London, U.K.: SAGE, pp. 27-54.

della Porta, D. and Diani, M., 1999. *Social movements: an introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Gaur, A. and Lu, J. 2007. Ownership strategies and survival of foreign subsidiaries: Impacts of institutional distance and experience. *Journal of Management*, 33(1), pp. 84–110.

Gómez, S., Opazo, M. and Martí, C. Structural characteristics of sports organizations: main trends in the academic discussion. *IESE Business School Working Paper 730.*

Gulati, R., Puranam and Tushman, M. 2012. Meta-organization design: rethinking design in interorganizational and community contexts. *Strategic Management Journal*, 33(1), pp. 571–586.

Eriksson, P. and Kovalainen, A. 2008. *Qualitative methods in business research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Eskola, J. and Suoranta J. 1996. *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen.* Rovaniemi. Lapin yliopistopaino.

European Union. 2011. *Corporate Social Responsibility: a new definition, a new agenda for action.* [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_11_730> [Accessed 12 October 2022].

FOC (Finnish Olympic Committee). 2022a. *Suomen Olympiakomitea toimittaa opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriölle suunnitelman vastuullisuusohjelman toteuttamisesta.* [online] Available at: < https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/2022/04/29/suomen-olympiakomitea-toimittaa-opetus-ja-kulttuuriministeriolle-suunnitelman-vastuullisuusohjelman-toteuttamisesta/> [Accessed 12 October 2022].

FOC (Finnish Olympic Committee). 2022b. *Tähtiseurat.* [online] Available at: <https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/seuratoiminta/tahtiseurat/> [Accessed 23 October 2022].

FOC (Finnish Olympic Committee). 2021a. *Vastuullisuus.* [online] Available at: <https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/olympiakomitea/vastuullisuus/> [Accessed 31 January 2022].

FOC (Finnish Olympic Committee). 2021b. *Suomen Olympiakomitea ry.* [online] Available at:<https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/olympiakomitea/suomen-olympiakomitea-ry/> [Accessed 1 March 2022].

Galletta, A. and Cross, W. E. 2013. *Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: from research design to analysis and publication*. New York, NY: NYU Press.

Gond, J.-P. & Moon, J. 2011. Introduction: Corporate social responsibility in retrospect and prospect. In: J.-P. Gond & J. Moon, ed. *Corporate social responsibility: Critical perspectives on business and management*. Oxford: Routledge, pp. 1–28.

Hans, V. B. 2018. Business environment – conceptual framework and policies. *International Educational Scientific Research Journal*, 4(3), pp. 67–74.

Hirsjärvi, S. and Hurme, H. 2001. *Tutkimushaastattelu.* Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö. Helsinki. Yliopistopaino.

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. and Sajavaara, P. 2009. *Tutki ja kirjoita*. Hämeenlinna: Kariston kirja-paino Oy.

Hjern, B. and Porter, D. 1981. Implementation structures: a new unit of administrative analysis. *Organization Studies*, 2(3), pp. 211–227.

Husted, B. 2000. A contingency theory of corporate social performance. *Business & Society*, 39(1), pp. 24-48.

Huxham, C. 1993. Pursuing collaborative advantage. *The Journal of Operational Research Society*, 44(6), pp. 599–611.

Huxham, C. and Vangen, S. 2000. Leadership in the shaping and implementation of collaboration agendas: how things happen in a (not quite) joined-up world. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(6), pp. 1159–1175.

Itani, S. and Tienari, J. 2020. *Huipulle uusin eväin: Urheilu ja johtaminen 2020-luvulla.* Helsinki: Otava.

Jordan, L. and van Tuijl, P., 2006. Rights and responsibilities in the political landscape of NGO accountability: introduction and overview. In L. Jordan & P. van Tuijl, ed. *NGO accountability – politics, principles & innovation.* London: Earthscan, pp. 3-20.

Kansanen, P. 2004. *Opetuksen käsitemaailma*. Jyväskylä. PS-kustannus.

Koipijärvi, T. and Kuivaja, S., 2020. *Yritysvastuu 2.0 – Johtamisen uusi normaali.* Helsinki: Kauppakamari.

Korvenpää. T. 2021. *Collaborating towards a more sustainable sports community. Case Study on the initiation of Sustainable Sports 2020–2024*. Tampere University, Master's thesis.

KPMG. 2020. *The time has come. The KPMG Survey of Sustainability Reporting 2020*. [online] Available at: <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2020/11/the-time-has-come.pdf> [Accessed 12 October 2022].

Kyngäs, H. and Vanhanen, L. 1997. Sisällönanalyysi. *Hoitotiede*, 11(1), pp. 3–11.

Laine, M., Bamberg, J. & Jokinen, P. 2007. *Tapaustutkimuksen taito*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

Larrán Jorge, M., Herrera Madueño, J., Lechuga Sancho, M. P. and Martínez-Martínez, D. 2016. Development of corporate social responsibility in small and medium-sized enterprises and its nexus with quality management. *Cogent Business & Management*, 3(1), pp. 1–21.

Lawrence, T. 2017. High-stakes institutional translation: establishing North America's first government-sanctioned supervised injection site. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(1), pp. 1771–1800.

Lehtonen, K. 2017. *Muuttuvat rakenteet – staattiset verkostot. Suomalaisen liikunta- ja urheilujärjestelmän rakenteelliset muutokset 2008–2015*. Liikunnan ja kansanterveyden julkaisuja, 331. Jyväskylä: LIKES-tutkimuskeskus.

MacDonald, A. 2016. *Multi-stakeholder partnerships for community sustainability plan implementation: understanding structures and outcomes at the partner and partnership levels*. PhD thesis. University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Mangin, M., 2016. *Stakeholder analysis in NGO evaluations.* [pdf] Available at: https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-01431754/document [Accessed 13 October 2022].

McWilliams, A. and Siegel, D. 2001. Corporate Social Responsibility: a theory of the firm perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 26(1), pp. 117–127.

Meyer, J. and Rowan, B. 1977. Institutionalized organization: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2), pp. 340–363.

Micheletti, M., 2003. *Political virtue and shopping: individuals, consumerism and collective action*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mintzberg, H. 1993. The pitfalls of strategic planning. *California Management Review*, 36(1), pp. 32–47.

Najam, A., 1996. NGO accountability: a conceptual framework. *Development Policy Review*, 14(4), pp. 339–354.

Opetusministeriö. 2004. *Huippu-urheilutyöryhmän muistio. Opetusministeriön työryhmämuistioita ja selvityksiä*, 2004:22. Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, kulttuuri-, liikunta- ja nuorisopolitiikan osasto.

Pallas, J., Fredriksson, M. and Wedlin, L. 2016. Translating institutional logics: When the media logic meets professions. *Organization Studies*, 37(1), pp. 1661– 1684.

Pfeffer, J. and Salancik, G. 1978. *The external control of organizations.* New York: Harper & Row.

Porter, M. & Kramer, M. 2011. Creating shared value. *Harvard Business Review*, 2011(1), pp. 1–17.

Porter, M. & Kramer, M. 2006. Strategy and society: the link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 2006(12), pp. 78–93.

Porter, M. & Kramer, M. 2002. The competitive advantage of corporate philanthropy. *Harvard Business Review*, 2002(12), pp. 56–69.

Pressman, J. and Wildavsky, A. 1973. *Implementation: How great expectations in Washington are dashed in Oakland*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Rasche, A., Morsing, M. and Moon, J., 2017. The changing role of business in global society: CSR and beyond. In: A. Rasche, M. Morsing & J. Moon, ed. *Corporate social responsibility: strategy, communication and covernance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-15.

Saaranen-Kauppinen, A. and Puusniekka, A. 2006. *KvaliMOTV - Menetelmäopetuksen tietovaranto.* [online] Available at: <https://www.fsd.tuni.fi/menetelmaopetus/kvali/L5_5.html> [Accessed 23 October 2022].

Scherer, A., Rasche, A., Palazzo, G. and Spicer, A. 2016. Managing for political corporate social responsibility: new challenges and directions for PCSR 2.0. *Journal of Management Studies*, 53(3), pp. 273–298.

Seitanidi, M. and Crane, A., 2014. *Social partnerships and responsible business: a research handbook.* New York: Routledge.

Seitanidi, M. M., and Crane, A. 2009. Implementing CSR through partnerships: Understanding the selection, design and institutionalisation of nonprofit-business partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 85(2), pp. 413–429.

Slack, T. and Parent, M.M. 2006. *Understanding sport organizations: the application of organization theory*. 2. ed. Human Kinetics.

Stenbacka, W., Mäkinen, J., Lämsä, J. and Nieminen, M. 2018. *Liikunnan ja urheilun julkinen tuki ja rakenteet Suomessa, Ruotsissa, Norjassa ja Tanskassa*. KIHU:n julkaisusarja, 62.

Sun, X., Clarke, A. and MacDonald, A. 2020. Implementing community sustainability plans through partnership: examining the relationship between partnership structural features and climate change mitigation outcomes. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 6172.

Sustainable sports, 2020. *Sustainability programme for the sports community 2020–2024*. [pdf] Available at: https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/uploads/2020/03/24a43db4-vastuullisuusohjelma_eng.pdf [Accessed 1 March 2022].

Tuomi, J. and Sarajärvi, A. 2009. *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi.* Jyväskylä: Gummerus kirjapaino Oy.

United Nations. 2019. *UN global compact-accenture strategy 2019 CEO study – the decade to deliver: a call to business action*. [online] Available at: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/5715> [Accessed 12 October 2022].

United Nations. 2010. *A new era of sustainability – UN global compact-accenture CEO study 2010.* [online] Available at: <https://d306pr3pise04h.cloudfront.net/docs/news_events%2F8.1%2FUNGC_Accenture_CEO_Study_2010.pdf > [Accessed 12 October 2022].

Vakil, A., 1997. Confronting the classification problem: a taxonomy of NGOs. *World Development*, 25(12), pp. 2057–2070.

Valente, M. 2017. Corporate responsibility strategies for sustainability. In: A. Rasche, M. Morsing & J. Moon, ed. *Corporate social responsibility: strategy, communication and covernance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 88-110.

Vallentin, S. & Spence, L. 2017. Strategic CSR: ambitions and critiques. In: A. Rasche, M. Morsing & J. Moon, ed. *Corporate social responsibility: strategy, communication and covernance.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 63-85.

van Huijsteen, M. and Glasbergen, P. 2008. The practice of stakeholder dialogue between multinationals and NGOs. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management,* 15(5), pp. 298–310.

Wedlin, L. and Sahlin, K. 2017. The imitation and translation of management ideas. In: R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, T. B. Lawrence, & R. E. Meyer, eds. *The SAGE handbook of organizational institutionalism*. London, U.K.: SAGE, pp. 102-127.

World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Our Common Future*. [pdf] Available at: <file:///C:/Users/Venla/Downloads/our_common_futurebrundtlandreport1987.pdf> [Accessed 12 October 2022].

Wright, C. and Nyberg, D. 2017. An inconvenient truth: how organizations translate climate change into business as usual. *Academy of Management Journal*, 60(1), pp. 1633–1661.

Zald, M. and McCarthy, J., 1980. Social movement industries: cooperation and conflict amongst social movement organizations. *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, 3, pp. 1-20.

Appendix A: Interview framework

1. BACKGROUND
    - What is your own background and role in the organization?
    - Briefly describe the organization, its history and industry.
2. THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM
    - What kind of thoughts does the joint responsibility program of the sports community arouse in you?
    - How does the sustainability program appear and how would you like it to appear in your organization's operations:
        - regarding good governance?
        - regarding safe space and safe environment?
        - regarding equality and equal opportunity?
        - regarding environment and climate?
        - regarding antidoping?
3. GENERALLY ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY
    - What kind of goals does your organization have from the perspective of sustainability?
    - Why does your organization implement sustainable practices?
    - How are sustainable practices related to the organization's core functions?
    - How are sustainable practices reflected in the daily life of the staff?
    - Have any new technologies, tools or processes been implemented in relation to sustainability?
    - How established would you describe your organization's sustainable practices? Can you give an example?

- How important do you think sustainability is for the future success of the organization? Why? What factors affect this?
- How is the organization's sustainability reported?
- How would you describe your organization's strengths in relation to sustainability? What could you still improve? Rate the overall situation on a scale of 1 to 5.

4. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

- How do different stakeholders and networks relate to your organization's sustainability?
- How would you describe the engagement and commitment to the sustainability program from your organization's point of view?
- What kind of cooperation practices are related to the sustainability program from your organization's point of view?
- What is the meaning or role of the sustainability program for your organization?
- How does continuous networking and information sharing related to the sustainability program occur in your organization?
- How is the implementation of the sustainability program evaluated and monitored in your organization?

5. SUMMARY

- Can you think of anything else related to the topic?
- Feedback from the interview

Appendix B: An example of the analysis progress

Interview framework	**Original expression**	**Reduction**	**Main category**
How would you describe your organization's strengths in relation to sustainability? What could you still improve? Rate the overall situation on a scale of 1 to 5.			Sustainability strategy
Federation W	*"Yes, I see it as a strength that we genuinely take this issue seriously and you can see it in the fact that we have measured things. Every year we think about those measures and follow how our metrics develop, so that it starts to become a built-in part of our operations. It's not an isolated thing. There is perhaps room for improvement on our environmental side, that is where I personally feel that we have done the least. Of course, it is also the newest area for us. And perhaps what needs to be developed in relation to sustainability as a whole is communication. You have to be able to communicate it even better, so that it comes out as it should. The sports federation can do a lot, but how do we get the whole sport involved. As I said we have 20 employees, but we have 20,000-10,000 members. When sustainability can be introduced there, then the effectiveness will naturally improve and increase. Overall situation assessment on a scale of 1-5, considering our very limited resources, I give our sports federation a 4."*	Strenghts: Measures, part of everyday work To be improved: Environment, communication Grade: 4	Isolated-Integrated
Club w	*" In my opinion, we are relatively good at these things, that it could be closer to 4. And what we need to invest in, maybe the environment and the climate the most. I think that equality is our strength.*	Strenghts: Equality To be developed: Environment and climate Grade: 4	Isolated