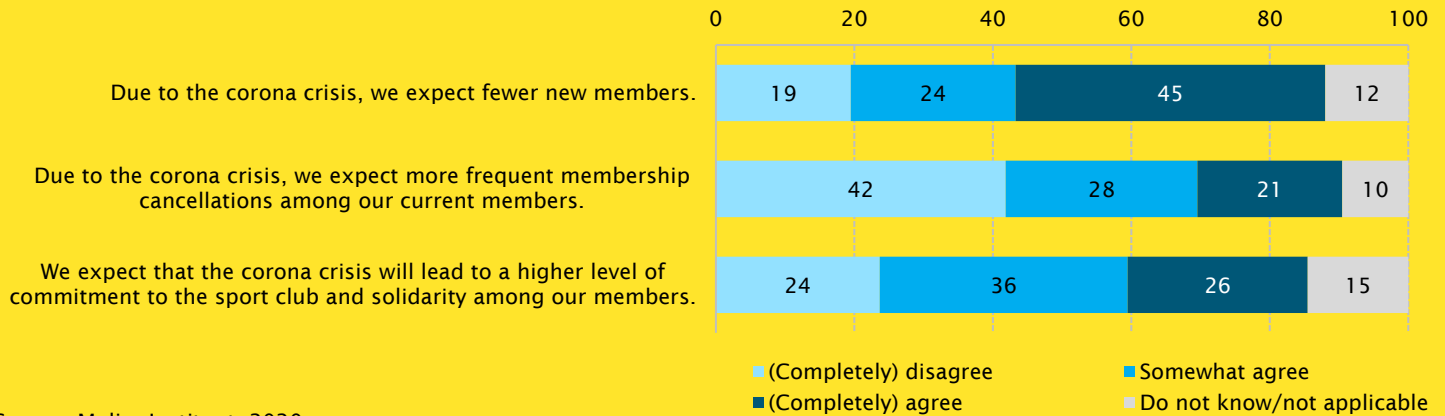


Corona crisis consequences for Dutch sport clubs

Factsheet 2020/16

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Figure 1 Expected consequences of the corona crisis for membership development sport clubs (in percentages, n=3,256)



Source: Mulier Instituut, 2020

On February 27th, 2020, the Netherlands' first case of the coronavirus was reported. On Thursday March 12, the first restrictive measures for sport clubs, in order to combat the coronavirus, were announced. Commissioned by NOC*NSF and in coordination with VSG (the Association of Sport and Municipalities), the ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, and various sport federations, the Mulier Institute researched the consequences of the corona crisis for sport clubs and their need for support measures. 3,256 (12% of all) Dutch sport clubs filled out the questionnaire. Data collection took place from April 1st, 2020 to April 13th, 2020. During this period, there was uncertainty about the duration, content and consequences of the restrictive measures that were in place to combat the coronavirus. The main findings are summarized below. Read [here](#) the full report in Dutch.

Anxiety and resilience in Dutch sport clubs

- Four out of ten sport clubs' board members (40%) show (grave) anxiety about the impact of the corona crisis on their club. These sport clubs are mainly clubs with a large budget (50,000 euro or more (e.g. golf, field hockey, soccer clubs), 50%), clubs using sports fields (e.g. soccer, field hockey, tennis clubs, 47%), clubs with their own facilities (46%), large clubs (> 250 members, 45%) and clubs with their own canteen (45%).
- Sport clubs are particularly (gravely) concerned about the loss of members/volunteers (33%) and the loss of income (general revenues 18%, bar/catering revenues 17% and ongoing costs/rent

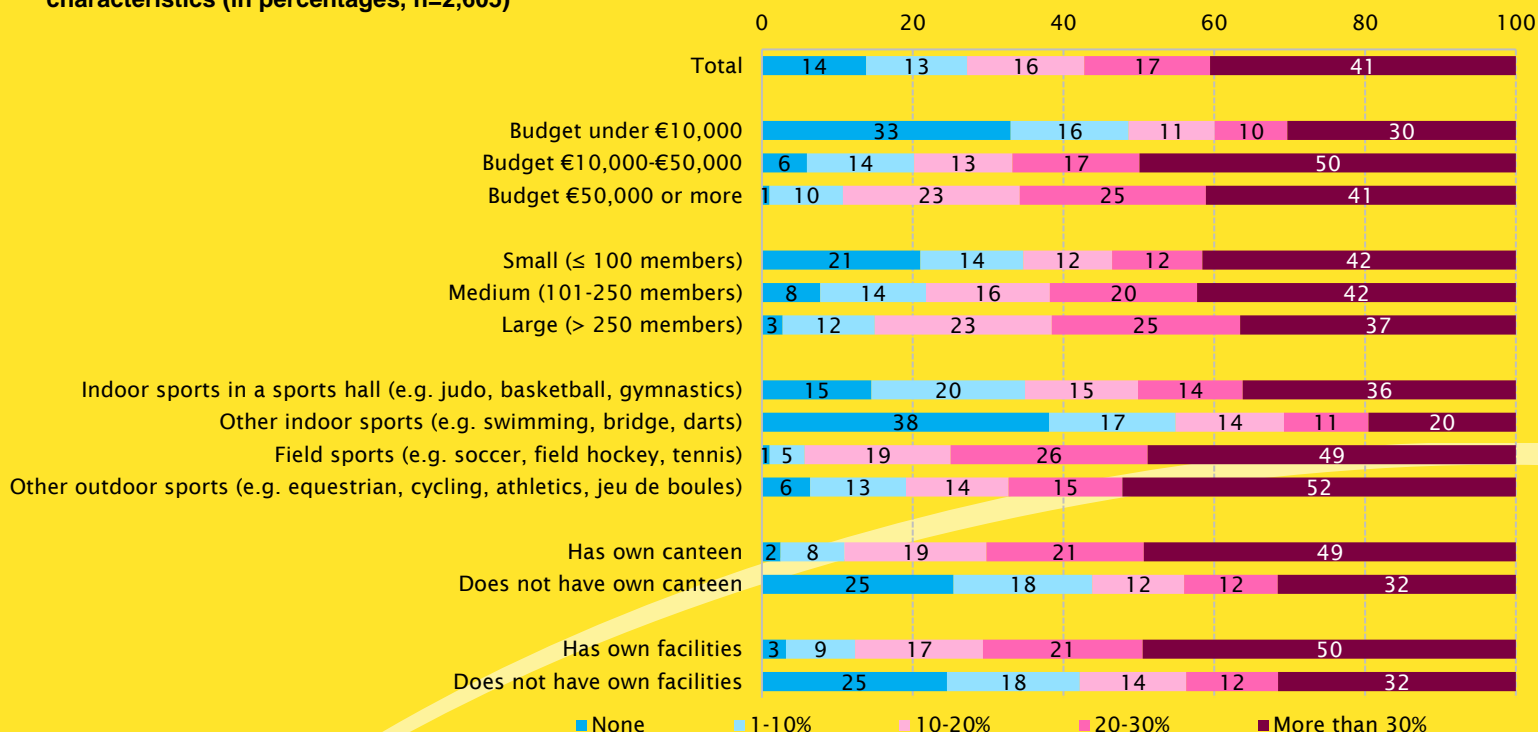
16%). Sport clubs are also concerned about the health of older members (13%).

- One out of four sport clubs (24%) offers alternative physical activity exercises or alternative club activities to their members.
- Forty-five percent of sport clubs expect fewer new members due to the corona crisis, and a fifth of the sport clubs (21%) expects more frequent membership cancellations among their current members.
- One out of four sport clubs (26%) expects the corona crisis will lead to a higher level of solidarity among their members. However, one in four sport clubs (24%) does not expect this.
- One out of ten sport clubs (9%) indicates the manageability of the club is compromised because board members and/or volunteers cannot physically meet.
- 10 percent of the sport clubs feel their existence is threatened by the corona crisis in the short term, and one in three sport clubs (34%) feel that the corona crisis will endanger their survival in the long term if their facilities have to be closed for a longer period.
- Two out of three sport clubs (67%) have confidence in their club's resilience to survive the consequences of the corona crisis.

Financial consequences of the corona crisis

- Seven out of ten sport clubs (70%) expect to be able to meet their financial obligations without using support measures. One in ten sport clubs

Figure 2 Expected income loss of the 2020 budget of sport clubs if the sport facilities have to be closed until July 31st, by club characteristics (in percentages, n=2,605)



Source: Mulier Instituut, 2020

indicates being unable to meet financial obligations now (April 2020, 2%), next month (May 2020, 2%) or sometime before summer (6%).

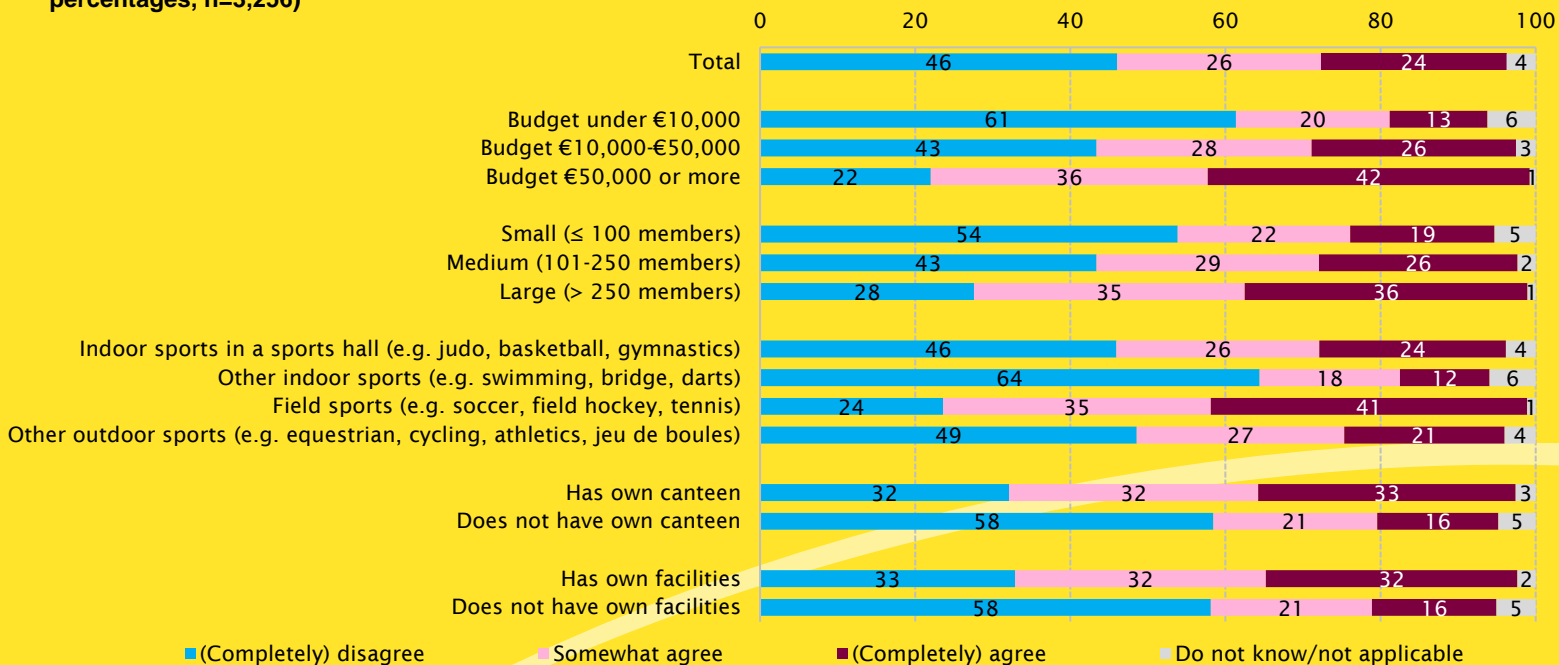
- If the sport facilities have to be closed until April 28th, sport clubs expect an average income loss of 11 percent of the 2020 budget. If the sport facilities have to be closed until July 31st, the expected income loss increases to 28 percent of the 2020 budget. One out of five sport clubs does not expect an income loss if the sport facilities have to be closed until April 28th.
- Three out of ten sport clubs (28%) expect their sponsors to fulfill their obligations this year.
- One out of five sport clubs (18%) considers reimbursing or not collecting (part of) the membership fees. Two out of three sport clubs (65%) expect their members to be willing to pay their membership fee.
- Most sport clubs (79%) expect to be able to make cutbacks during the corona crisis. The most frequently mentioned cutback options are canteen purchases (32%), accommodation rental costs (30%), energy costs (27%), volunteer compensation (26%) and club activities (24%).

- If the sport facilities have to be closed until April 28th, sport clubs expect to be able to cut back an average of 4 percent of the 2020 budget. If the sport facilities have to be closed until July 31st, the expected cutbacks increase to 11 percent of the 2020 budget.

Support measures for Dutch sport clubs

- One out of four sport clubs (26%) indicates that emergency measures, support or help are essential for them to survive the corona crisis.
- One out of four sport clubs (27%) plans to make use of the governmental support arrangement *Tegemoetkoming Ondernemers Getroffen Sectoren COVID-19 (TOGS)*.
- Almost half of the sport clubs that employ professionals (54%) plans to make use of the temporary governmental support arrangement *Noodmaatregel Overbrugging Werkgelegenheid (NOW)*.
- Two out of ten sport clubs (21%) are in consultation with their municipality about possible support measures or help. This mainly concerns

Figure 3 Number of sport clubs indicating they need emergency measures, support or help to survive the corona crisis (in percentages, n=3,256)



Source: Mulier Instituut, 2020

suspension, adjustment or refund of rental obligations (84%).

- Despite the current support measures, two out of ten sport clubs (mainly sport clubs with higher (fixed) expenses) are in need of other support measures in order to survive. The greatest needs are exemption from the national sport federation's fees and suspension or adjustment of rental obligations.

Recommendations

- An additional measure to financially support sport clubs is to exempt them from their rental obligations for the months April, May and June (the months in which it is expected that sport facilities have to be (partially) closed). [The government has set up [an emergency fund](#) to support Dutch sport clubs]. Another measure that can help sport clubs financially, is an exemption from national sport federation's fees. However, if this measure is to be implemented, it is important not to overlook the financial position of the national sport federations.
- Sport clubs do not only benefit from financial support. It is important that sport clubs are supported in maintaining member loyalty, e.g. by

offering online activities, frequently communicating online with members and morally appealing to members to commit to the survival of their club.

Furthermore, it is important that recruitment campaigns start up quickly after the sport facilities are opened and that sport clubs receive support in order to do this.

- For sport clubs, there still seems to be a lot of uncertainty as to whether they qualify for the NOW. These sport clubs could also benefit from the NOW, if the NOW were to be expanded to include sport clubs that employ seasonal employees.
- Currently, there is still a lot of uncertainty about the duration and consequences of the corona crisis for sport clubs. In order to gain a better understanding of the impact of the corona crisis on sport clubs, follow-up research must be conducted about the consequences of the corona crisis and the resilience of sport clubs as this crisis continues and after it ends. This will provide insight into the extent to which sport clubs are able to absorb the consequences of the corona crisis, and help design and implement appropriate support measures for the sport clubs most in need.