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## CSD-SSD Chapter 2: Towards a 'Community Practice' Approach

### Introduction

The preceding chapter argued for a more critical approach to bridging the CSD / SSD 'divide'. We have suggested that enforced separation is a conceptually and strategically weak approach that does little to help serve the needs of communities and / or sports. This seems particularly pertinent in view of the widely-held scepticism toward NGBs' capacity to engage in community agendas. The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) voiced the concern held by many that the rationale behind the WSP programme was flawed:

Instead of highlighting under-performance by individual NGBs, Sport England and the Government would do well to consider the overall value of the strategy adopted in 2009, and to question whether they made the right decision. It may be simply that NGBs are not the best possible partners to deliver a mass participation agenda (CSJ 2011:45).

Regardless of any subsequent changes to the funding regime it remains the case in perpetuity that NGBs are responsible for driving up participation in their own sports, even if a scenario were returned to in which meaningful, central funding was made available to those closer to under-represented communities. The previous chapter therefore concluded with a call for CSD and SSD professionals to collaborate more often and more effectively: this chapter utilises material presented throughout the book to consider how this may be achieved in practice.

A prime opportunity for greater integration of CSD and SSD exists at what might be termed the participation-performance nexus, the stage at which talented performers move from recreational participation into performance programmes. This transition point is therefore a very significant site for any discussion of NGBs' inclusive, strategic management with reference to strategic CSD practice. Most NGBs, Lottery-supported or otherwise, attempt to model their development pathways to illustrate the progression of talented athletes and sometimes to show how resources will be deployed at each stage. The Gymnastics England "Gymnast Pathway" (Gymnastics England 2009) is an example of this. **INCLUDE ILLUSTRATION?** The accompanying notes offer a refreshing acknowledgement of the need to function strategically and align resources to the needs of the participant:

The Model reflects a step change in the strategic and operational thinking of the sport. It places the participant at the heart of the planning and delivery process with all interventions - coaching, clubs, competition, volunteering - designed to ensure that the requirements to support a participant at any given stage in the pathway are met (Gymnastics England 2009, nn).

The Gymnast Pathway illustrates the multiplicity of possibilities for transition from participant to performer and the above quote begins to hint at the diversity of stakeholders (clubs, coaches etc) with a role to play. English Lacrosse, meanwhile, identified in its Whole Sport Plan a “Club Development Pathway” (English Lacrosse 2009) where, in broad-brush terms the progression of a club to “Performance” status is mapped and the support to be offered by the NGB is specified. As ever the devil is in the detail (or lack thereof), such that it is not immediately clear how statements such as “Create system to manage increased club volunteer workforce” (English Lacrosse 2009, p13) would be operationalised. However it gives us a foothold from which to base our assessment of NGBs’ strategic intentions and suggests that athletes’ progressions from participation to performance are being mapped with more sophistication than was often previously the case. The participation-performance nexus can only be effective if the strategic intentions, resources and capabilities of all stakeholders can be unified and coordinated for the advancement of the sport.

CSD, meanwhile, incorporates two main strands of work. The first is concerned with increasing participation in sport and physical activity amongst social groups who are traditionally non-participants. This has been described as ‘developing sport in the community’ compared to the second approach, ‘developing communities through sport’ (Coalter 2002; Houlihan & White 2002). This approach sees sport being used in community settings as a tool to achieve broader social policy goals such as social inclusion. It may also incorporate more radical objectives, where sport is used to further the interests of, and divert power to disadvantaged or minority groups in society (Hylton & Totten 2008). As the previous chapter outlined there is no convincing reason why young people participating in CSD activities should and could not be able to progress in their chosen sport(s). Any separation between CSD and SSD is socially constructed and should be challenged by those with a commitment to inclusive sport development. With relatively minor modifications to the sporting infrastructure, coupled with more significant ideological shifts on the part of those who control the resources it is eminently possible for participants from more diverse backgrounds to access long-term participation opportunities and talent pathways.

As such, this chapter advocates a combined community development-strategic management approach to CSD and SSD, building upon the work of Banks et al (2003) around the management and leadership of ‘community practice’. This approach encompasses a range of professions and situations where community work methods are utilised, but where practice is broader than just community development or community work, and sets out a range of principles to follow when managing this type of work. The chapter now turns its attention to the strategic practicalities of implementing a community practice approach, drawing upon the book’s key themes for guidance.

### **Strategic thinking / approaches to strategy**

Previously we have questioned the relevance of the 'glossy document' to meaningful sport development, be it in disadvantaged communities, specific sports or any other setting. Vail (2007) and others would no doubt argue that inherent to such weighty strategy documents is an assumption by those in managerial positions that they have the expertise and experience to make effective and efficient decisions. This approach would not be condoned as a method in community development with its emphasis on involvement and empowerment. Agile strategic thinking does not manifest itself in the production of long-term plans with limited shelf lives, which in the context of inclusive sport development only serve to reinforce the dominant, hegemonic structures which sport development is supposed to be challenging. Sport development professionals' commitment to inclusivity will be captured in their *praxis*. Praxis is generated through thoughtful action, such that practice is informed by a critical awareness of the social context in which it takes place (understanding how and why things happen): it is the combination of outlook and action with the underlying goal of transforming society for the better and achieving social justice. Long and Bramham (2006:136) argue that policies relating to social exclusion often tackle the symptoms and not the causes and a "simple inversion will not promote inclusion if it fails to tackle the process of exclusion". A community practice approach recognises the need to tackle the underlying issues that cause inequalities in society. This should be instinctive for CSD practitioners and an important aspiration for sport-specific practitioners and others working in sport development. A commitment to inclusive approaches will result in more flexible and responsive strategic thinking.

Greater strategic flexibility means being more sensitised not only to the needs of those we are paid to serve but to the emergent nature of the work being undertaken. A community practice approach would advocate that contextually-appropriate ways of agreeing and articulating strategic priorities are sought (although this is manifestly not always the case), in comparison to the assumption that development work should be tied to long-term goals expressed in detailed plans. For Vail (2007) a sense of control and self-determination on the part of all service users and other stakeholders is crucial. All of the above requires a commitment on the part of the practitioner to a more logically incremental approach to strategic thinking (Mintzberg & Quinn 1998) which neither expects nor requires stakeholders to align to fixed, esoteric, unrealistic plans over the long term. Instead, shared learning through experience and experimentation can lead to more appropriate outcomes. The following Volleyball England case study illustrates how this ambition can be accomplished in practice.

Case Study: <b>Volleyball England (Rosie)</b>
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## **Internal analysis**

As discussed in Chapter X it can be a thankless task in sport development to try and pin down precisely what is the organisation we are attempting to analyse, particularly if we are committed to bottom-up strategy. Strategic leaders of a NGB oversee an especially complex network of internal stakeholders and we should refrain from glibly demanding that cultural, capability and resource analysis should be undertaken in impossible levels of detail. However it is not unreasonable to aspire towards a more thoroughgoing approach to internal analysis in both SSD and CSD with the focus on making better use of scarce resources. Despite the multiple changes in government priorities for sport, or relative lack of success in achieving participation targets, the structures of sport development units and NGBs have not significantly changed. Butcher and Robertson (2007) argue strongly that constant 'white-water change' (such as that experienced within the sport development policy arena) has left practitioners with a thankless task when trying to oversee the organisation, management and leadership of interventions. Restricted by the bureaucratic, hierarchical structures in which they work, they are often pushed into ad hoc and partial changes instead of being able to develop fit for purpose organisational strategies. The ability to free oneself from historical ways of working is a challenge for all sport development practitioners, particularly if following a community practice approach.

Vail (2007) discusses asset-based planning, which involves community leaders playing a role in identifying assets in the community and helping to structure a strategic plan around these assets in order to address an issue or opportunity. A comprehensive needs assessment involving the organisation(s) and community is required at the start of this process to help identify the assets and gaps from both perspectives (Frisby et al 1997). The applicable National Occupational Standard, "Support the efficient use of resources" (SkillsActive 2010) emphasises amongst many other things the need for practitioners to "enable people to identify and communicate the resources they need" and to "develop and argue an effective case for changes in the management of resources". The adoption of a community practice approach necessitates the practitioner engaging with and advocating for relevant members of the volunteer workforce. As Chapter X stresses this requires sensitivity to organisational culture, but in the spirit of consultative, bottom-up planning the definition of 'organisation' in this case needs to accommodate layers of stakeholders beyond the paid workforce. Once again this may require a shift in mindset on the part of traditionalist sport development practitioners who see themselves as service providers and communities as customers as opposed to potential collaborators. This complexity is exacerbated by the governance arrangements for NGBs which usually involve a non-executive, elected Council, Board of Governors or equivalent, and even without the mass of additional stakeholders in any given sport this seems potentially troublesome. The following Football Association case study demonstrates how a considered analysis of human, financial and material resources and capabilities can be used to achieve better outcomes.

Case study: <b>FA (Lee)</b>
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This case study will analyse the core areas covered in the internal analysis chapter from a leader's perspective.

Kelly Simmons is the Football Association's National Game Manager and responsible for the leading and implementation of the The FA's National Game Strategy 2008-12. The strategy focuses on the non-professional side of the game looking after the development of important areas such as youth football, officating, women's football and disability football, etc. and has four key goals which are:

1. To grow and retain participation
2. To raise standards and address abusive behaviour
3. To develop better players
4. To run the game effectively

### **Leading the vision**

Having the responsibility to devise and implement such a vast strategy that impacts upon such a significant amount of people requires excellent leadership skills if it is to be done effectively. Kelly states how leadership is about having a clear vision and taking people on a journey to deliver it whilst management is about process and function, setting one year objectives, etc. As a leader she believes it is really important for people to buy into the vision that is created so that they feel passionate about what the 'vision' is trying to achieve. In an attempt to achieve this the FA have taken considerable steps in understanding what issues stakeholders have within football and then ensuring that the aims of the strategy reflect this.

Using a consultative approach a key aspect of the success of the strategy appears to be the early discussions with key delivery agencies such as the county FAs who rather than being handed a draft strategy to comment upon, were involved from the outset in terms of what should be included. This is an excellent case of best practice for all sport development professionals to consider in their own strategic process. Giving an authentic voice to internal stakeholders rather than it being seen as an afterthought is essential if you are to gain the motivation of people with the development of a strategy. The benefits of this genuine consultative process is that ideas are not supplanted into the minds of those requested to engage in the strategic process and comment upon 'established areas' and instead have the freedom and license to offer their own undiluted voices.

### **Skills audit and motivating the workforce**

A key aspect of effective delegation is to ensure that people do not just feel they are being given the jobs others do not want to do. Matching up tasks with the skills of the workforce is a key leadership role in ensuring the job gets done without being to the detriment of the morale and motivation of the workforce. To make delegation easier Kelly states that having effective management systems in place helps, examples from the National Game team of this are the importance of everyone having clear and SMART objectives

which are reviewed every 100 days and fortnightly meetings.

### **Skills training and capacity building**

In terms of leadership training, this is seen as an essential element of Kelly's CPD and job role. Having been on a course at Cranfield Business school for potential directors Kelly has picked up on the concept of 'grip self' which refers to the need for leaders to understand themselves and the situations that they face to then be able to take teams along with you. This is something that permeates Kelly's team and is a good example of how experience of external courses/activities can be brought back into the team for wider development of all rather than the individual. Being assigned a mentor has also helped Kelly in her leadership development and again this is a very practical role in which all organisations can engage in (whether it is done officially or not). Having the opportunity to discuss and debate areas of work and leadership in the workplace can be an effective way of developing ideas and strategies as long as the parameters of the relationship are clear from the outset.

### **Organisational culture and decision making**

One of the final areas covered in the interview with Kelly was whether the notion of inclusivity, consultation and empowerment of others was too romantic for it to be practical in terms of strategic development and strategic leadership. As can be sensed through the rest of the issues discussed Kelly had firm beliefs that far from being romantic the inclusivity demonstrated by leaders is essential in ensuring strategic objectives are met. Although at times decisions do have to be made which may not always have consensual support, the culture and philosophy of an organisation should espouse a genuine and authentic engagement which has at its heart the best interests of the organisation and everyone within it.

### **External analysis**

Confirming the need to consider one's own praxis prior to analysing the internal and external environments, Hudson (2004) states that the three main influences on community development schemes (and as such sport development schemes) are the practitioner factors, organisational factors and environmental factors. National Occupational Standard A12, "Contribute to strategic development in sport and active leisure" requires practitioners to "Monitor the external environment to identify potential opportunities and threats relevant to strategic management in your organisation" (SkillsActive 2010). We are by now well versed in the chaotic nature of the social, political, economic and related domains which seem to change on a daily basis, always with implications for NGBs and other providers of sporting opportunities. We never said this was easy! The complexity of inclusive strategic management in sport development is aggravated by the burdens placed upon stakeholders from the external environment, for example in the form of national targets. As we have discussed throughout the book sport is of

unique interest to central government, although this attention is supported with an at best modest response in terms of resources. This means that specific demands are made, often based on a superficial understanding of the potential of sport, whilst at the same time sport is highly susceptible to the caprices of the political class and fluctuations in the economy. At least in the case of Lottery-funded NGBs, published WSP targets provide some measure of certainty as other external drivers shift perpetually.

Chapter 4 applied the STEEPLE tool for environmental scanning, and throughout the book the need for flexible strategic management has been emphasised along with tools to aid strategic leaders to practise it. Strategic leaders of sport organisations cannot be expected to anticipate and respond to every nuance of external phenomena such as a world championship win, but if their strategic management is supple enough that they can observe, interpret and react quickly to unexpected events, opportunities can be seized upon and threats staved off. Can SSD practitioners borrow from CSD practice in terms of monitoring the external environment? As would be expected there is plentiful evidence of many CSD programmes being particularly responsive to local political, economic and social factors: for instance Partington and Totten (2012) identify the use of community representatives from social housing estates who were able to provide insights into factors affecting participation in sport and physical activity in that geographical area. Conversely there is reason to suppose that CSD programmes, with their focus on localism, lack penetrative impact due to their lack of awareness of the external environment at national and regional level. For sustainable change to occur, it is imperative that localised programmes have an awareness of the external environment in order to anticipate and respond to changes and insulate their work from any negative repercussions at regional and national level. WSPs and other NGB strategic documents, however, are more likely to encompass an awareness of national-level drivers, reflecting the location of their authors at the apex of the governance pyramid. For example British Rowing has a vision that incorporates references to both the 2012 Olympics and physical activity levels; both key national drivers for sport development (British Rowing 2009). At the participation-performance nexus, the point at which the work of CSD and SSD is most likely to intersect, there would seem to be the greatest opportunity for CSD's local political 'savvy' and SSD's grasp of the bigger picture to be utilised together, leading to better informed stakeholders and clearer strategic thinking. The following Sport Leeds case study is particularly revealing in terms of the benefits of using STEEPLE in a structured manner.

**Case Study: Sport Leeds (Lee) Is this about Sport Leeds or Leeds Sports Development?**

**Do we need to add subheadings within this e.g. 'social'?**

Sport Leeds is the strategic partnership for people and organisations with an interest in the provision and development of sport and active recreation within Leeds (Sport Leeds 2006). Various individuals representing organisations such as West Yorkshire Sport, Leeds City Council and Leeds Metropolitan



University are members of the board with each organisation being tasked with actions linked to their own organisational interest, expertise or goals. As part of a wider strategic framework Sport Leeds is part of a cultural partnership which in turn sits under two city-wide groups ('Going up a League' and 'Narrowing the Gap') who are responsible for leading the 'Vision for Leeds'; a "long-term strategy for the economic, social and environmental development of the city" (The Leeds Initiative 2010:nn). This complex structure based around the development and delivery of a sustainable community strategy was a requirement of the New Labour government, and demonstrates how the work of sport development professionals is inherently political (whether or not they acknowledge it) and constantly affected by changes in the external environment. In this case, Sport Leeds must ensure they meet the demands of wider governmental strategies in order to draw down funding which supports delivery against government targets such as increasing participation. The integration of national and regional strategies is evident in both Sport Leeds and Leeds City Council Sports Development Unit business plans, which both reference key national drivers such as the 2012 Olympics and Active People Survey.

Despite demonstrating an awareness of national and regional drivers across a policy area broader than sport alone, the Chair of Sport Leeds (who represents the partnership on the Cultural Partnership) has no presence on the two city-wide groups who have overall responsibility for the City's community strategy. This may well hit home with lots of sport development professionals who become rightly frustrated with sport not being given the voice it deserves at the higher echelons of power despite the frequent endorsement of sport being a force for good across multiple policy areas. To overcome this issue, Sport Leeds encourages cooperation between strategic partners and through this process has been able to create a more visible and vocal presence within the City. It may not have representation at the top table, but the impact of its work has made a lasting impression on those sat around the table.

One of the most interesting aspects of the social and political influences that have developed through the Sport Leeds initiative is the emergence of five sub-groups or 'Local Sport Alliances' (each based around a geographical 'wedge' of the city) which between them represent the whole city. Community sport officers are briefed to engage with the various communities within their 'wedge' and report back to Sport Leeds on the needs and issues within those communities. This appears to reflect the 'Castleford' example given earlier **(WHERE IN THE BOOK?)** where local people have a real voice within their community. However, despite adhering to one of the principles of a community practice approach, this has not been without issues. It requires local needs to be addressed by those on the board of Sport Leeds (even though for some of the organisations represented, this responsibility may not have been a consideration when signing up to the partnership), and is further complicated by the variety of needs expressed by Local Sport Alliances, representative of the diversity of social contexts across the city. Yet the flexibility within Sport Leeds and the emphasis on cooperative working means that a multitude of issues can be covered by the expertise of board members,

and results in genuine consideration of community need at a strategic level, with subsequent strategic planning to address those needs.

Technology is becoming an area of increased interest for sport development, particularly the internet and social networking tools due to their ability to get messages out to current and potential participants. Within Leeds, the Sports Development Unit are looking to take ownership of their own website and circumvent some of the strict guidelines imposed around the City Council's website which have restricted their ability to make the most out of this technology. Other technological advances were based around the replacement of old membership card systems that generate purely quantitative information such as attendance at centres, to more sophisticated management systems that are able to capture more detailed data and support strategic decision-making within both Leeds Sports Development Unit and Sport Leeds.

Part of the strategic decision-making aspect of Sport Leeds, centres around funding. Whilst the partnership does not directly attempt to gain funding for itself, an important aspect of their work is to act as an advisory panel for organisations such as Sport England (with what was Community Investment Funding) by recommending bids, and acting as consultants to community groups to support them with the writing and development of bids. One of the interesting dilemmas facing Sport Leeds and its constituent members is that without tangible outcomes that demonstrate the usefulness of being a board member, it is difficult for members to return to their organisations and request funding to support the work of stakeholders or to establish new programmes to meet community need. Once again this highlights the resource driven mechanisms that impact upon sport development, and can ultimately result in work being undertaken or forgotten. **LEE – can you check this paragraph to make sure I've interpreted your notes properly!**

The STEEPLE analysis also encourages practitioners to consider the impact of the environment, and although it was acknowledged that energy saving takes place in leisure centres, and recycling is an accepted practice within Leeds Sport Development Unit it was noted that the environmental concerns that are so prevalent in today's society are not a big factor in the decision making processes within Sport Leeds. It was felt that other officers within Leeds City Council have this as their full time brief, and that their work will subsequently impact upon Sport Leeds activities, negating the need for environmental concerns to be considered directly by the partnership. Despite the lack of emphasis currently towards environmental concerns, there is increasing awareness within Active Leisure and Physical Activity departments of the need to consider 'green' issues, albeit not as a priority.

Legal issues such as the CRB process were acknowledged as being extremely important but also recognised as being problematic. There is a need when undertaking planning whether it is for a summer camp or for a city-wide strategy to consider the legal aspect of employing staff. For example, a delay in receiving a CRB check could render a staff member being unable to start work on time, impacting on the organisation's ability to achieve certain

strategic goals. Although there is a cost and time resource that goes with adhering to legal guidelines such as safeguarding and CRB processes, Leeds Sports Development Unit acknowledges both the benefit and need for such safety mechanisms to ensure the safety and well being of customers and staff. This also relates to ethical influences that permeate the working practice of sport development practitioners through various means such as Leeds City Council Corporate Guidelines, Equal Opportunities Policy, child protection acts, equity policies and codes of conduct for staff.

**NB This probably needs reducing in size**

## **Strategic choices**

The internal and external environments having been analysed, Chapter 5 discussed how strategic choices can be made which are more robust and appropriate to the needs and shared values of stakeholders. A rigorous review of the internal state of the organisation, coupled with current data on trends and issues in the external environment can lead to the production of a range of future scenarios which Lapide (2008) believes can help to navigate through an uncertain future. Korte and Chermack (2007) discuss the possibility of changing organisational culture through scenario planning, stating that it “facilitates self analysis and challenges an organisation’s shared assumptions, beliefs and values” (2007:653). Plausible scenarios affecting collaborative CSD-SSD work include familiar themes such as economic recovery versus further economic downturn, political changes at state and local authority level, withdrawal of WSP funding and so on. Strategic choices need to account for those scenarios considered to rank highly in terms of likelihood and potential impact, strengthening the case for collaboration between the worlds of ‘development through sport’ and ‘development of sport’.

What form might these shared strategic choices take? Andrews et al (2006) discuss from a commercial standpoint the possible actions following strategic analysis, but they can readily be adapted to fit a community practice approach. The first of these is change the target environment, which to a CSD practitioner could mean refocusing resources in a new area of need, also a possibility for a NGB seeking to move into new markets for more representative participation. The second possible action is change the relationship with the existing environment. This involves an alteration to a service or the resourcing of a service within an existing setting. The third action is to change the organisation itself through internal restructure to meet demands of external environment. In reality some combination of these options will be arrived at with different solutions devised to meet the many challenges faced by the sport organisation. The second and third options in particular hint at the divestment of power in which NGBs (and some CSD practitioners) would need to engage in order to bring the benefits of sport to the most disadvantaged and marginalised communities (Partington & Totten 2012). This enables communities not only to influence the decisions of those dominant groups but to act independently of them.

There is little doubt, though, that bottom-up working and actively involving the community in decision-making and planning (Frisby & Millar 2002) offers new possibilities to NGBs, local authorities and others who desire a breakthrough in mass participation and the accompanying boost to talent identification programmes. In the NGB context, for instance, it is necessary to ask to what extent were volunteers consulted and involved in agreeing the numerous, exacting “Grow, Sustain, Excel” targets for their sports? Paid staff need to adopt facilitator or enabler roles, shifting power relations between professionals and citizens. The Huddersfield Giants Netball Club case study will illustrate how more imaginative approaches to community collaboration can begin to yield encouraging outcomes.

Case study: **Huddersfield Giants Netball Club (Janine)**

## **Implementation**

As covered in Chapter 6 we have now reached the potentially daunting stage of turning ideas into actions (of course, for the purposes of clarity we are dealing with these matters sequentially, but as has been pointed out elsewhere a flexible strategic management process involves a continuous cycle of analysis-choice-action-evaluation). Regardless of how inclusive and rigorous the above stages have been, they are rendered meaningless if not enacted successfully. Implementation in itself can be a convoluted enough task, with Getz, Jones and Loewe (2009:18) asserting that it is “both deterministic and emergent”. In other words strategic leaders must strike a fine balance between programming tasks and committing resources in a decisive fashion whilst allowing for the inevitable and frequent shocks in the environment. In CSD settings a further layer of complexity is added in order to satisfy Turner’s (2009) call to avoid false promises and a lack of actual action or change.

The need for close collaboration may be great during the analysis and decision-making processes but this pales against the requirement for professionals, volunteers and associated stakeholders to work together intensively during implementation. It is essential that this collaborative, bottom-up process avoids tokenistic gestures of power such as those described by Partington & Totten (2012). They warn that empowerment can be little more than an ‘ideological myth’ but with appropriate support communities can generate their own, alternative provision. In particular they stress the need to avoid using empowerment and capacity building as strategies to justify the withdrawal of support to communities. Whilst they may result in shifts of power (for example community management of a leisure facility) it is important that resources such as funding are not withdrawn, for example as a knee-jerk response to cuts. Vail (2007) argues that successful implementation requires a figurehead drawn from the community to oversee the initiative/scheme and bring together other community leaders to help support developments. The credibility of the strategic initiative, and hence its

successful roll-out, may rest upon such individuals' involvement. Although it is important to recognise the limitations of gatekeepers where a dominant hegemony can emerge within communities, there is also danger of staff-led initiatives where a way of doing it becomes *the* way of doing it, leading to the stagnation of services (Partington & Totten 2012).

Perhaps we have not done a great job of selling this proposition to SSD professionals, but this is no easy sell! However there are plentiful examples of good intentions falling by the wayside, so this call for an authentic bottom-up approach to the development of sport is not for the faint-hearted. Frisby & Millar (2002) state that managerial challenges are accentuated when using a community development approach due to shared power relations, incompatible values or goals, unclear authority and communication channels and use of jargon. The difficulties of doing this work are often underestimated, resulting in conflict between statutory agencies and community partners. Practical measures to address some of these concerns include the use of job descriptions for community representatives, the establishment of a steering group, the issuing of meeting schedules and so on. Turner's (2009) study found that a community group embraced an emergent approach to achieve objectives as they were identified. The group did not subscribe to a detailed business plan, but identified a set of initial goals and worked towards their own timescales, not a set imposed on them by an external partner. Vail (2007) points out that even with these ingredients in place, key individuals or organisations can be resistant to change and 'set in their ways' (eg club officials). It is still important for agents of community practice to involve them in analysis-choice-action-evaluation activities (even if this increases the length of time to secure a consensus). The following case study illustrates some of these principles in practice.

#### Case study: **Leeds North East SSP Community Cricket Project**

This time-limited (April 2010-July 2011) project sought to provide opportunities for young people from under-represented groups to access cricket and in so doing briefly unite the worlds of CSD and SSD. An approach was adopted "which had not been taken previously" (Leeds North East SSP 2011:1). The project's key aims were to enable more children within the Leeds North East School Sport Partnership (LNE SSP) to access cricket, and more broadly to stimulate extra-curricular activity in community facilities. Interestingly, community development was the principal driver for this sport-specific intervention and the regional governing body (Yorkshire Cricket Board) became involved at a relatively late stage once activities were well established. Woodhouse CC, a local cricket club perceived as needing help with engaging young people was chosen as the community venue for the project. The club is located in an area of Leeds exhibiting socio-economic deprivation, but despite having a less 'leafy' image than many others it was seen as remote and unattainable to many in the surrounding community.

Implementation took place on a phased basis and took the form of a gradual handover from the project's instigators within the LNE SSP. The implementing workforce evolved in line with the progress of the project, something which

needed to be anticipated at the outset and managed flexibly in line with Collier, Fishwick and Johnson's (2001) assertion that implementation and development go hand-in-hand. An initial programme of "community clubs" was established at three LNE SSP schools. One of these yielded a poor response and was subsequently cancelled. Rather than abandon the young people at this school resources were diverted towards after-school clubs that were successful in engaging young people. Eventually Woodhouse CC was able to host Saturday morning sessions to convert the interest of young people into participation at a recognised facility. The project was implemented by a diverse workforce which included the paid project leader, paid and volunteer coaches and volunteer personnel at Woodhouse CC. Throughout this process it was necessary for the project's leaders to be cognisant of the wider strategic agenda for cricket, although in effect this was retro-fitted to allow the community in the form of the young participants to set initial direction as the project rolled out.

Whilst a major part of the delivery mechanism (statutorily-funded School Sport Partnerships) was lost as a consequence of the 2010 cuts, the total expenditure for this project of £3,500 shows that such interventions need not be expensive: an amount such as this falls well within the limits of many funding pots. The call of Vail (2007), Turner (2009) and others to grow community projects in a bottom-up fashion may not have been met in full by this project but live examples of the more radical aspects of CSD discussed in this and the preceding chapter are currently few and far between! Communities as yet unaware of the possibilities of and for sport might initially require an external stimulus. We should still derive encouragement from the project's success that work of this nature can be relatively straightforwardly replicated as a precursor to more daring CSD-SSD collaboration.

## **Performance Measurement**

Chapter 8 highlighted the deficiencies of many existing approaches to performance measurement and offered more rigorous and valid alternatives. In particular, practitioners attempting to apply strategic thinking to all aspects of their work, as opposed to mechanistic, cyclical, planning methodologies need to consider the meaning of 'success'. The WSP target-setting regime forces NGBs to pursue an output-driven, 'tick-box' style of evaluation which skews the focus from long-term change towards individual results which can contribute to a positive evaluation from the funder. In authentically integrated CSD / SSD settings, how can this external demand be reconciled against the pursuit of 'softer', less headline-making outcomes which may take many years to be fully realised? As Coalter (2007) puts it, what constitutes a valuable outcome? How serious are we about making a difference? If we continue to judge 'value' on the basis of numbers through the door, are we really judging whether we have made a sustainable change? Coalter argues that there are few outcomes recognised by government that are compatible with a community development approach. Partington & Totten (2012) contend that evaluation often ignores outcomes such as the development of social capital

and the strengthening of community groups, both of which are crucial elements in empowering local communities and fostering participatory democracy and social justice. In his study Turner (2009) adopted a reflective practitioner approach due to his inability to detach himself from research on his own place of work. This involves reframing and reconstructing experiences and adapting earlier understandings of problems. We have spoken previously of praxis and critical consciousness, and here lies one of the greatest challenges to the NGB practitioner who wishes make a real contribution to tackling social inequalities through the medium of their sport. In particular, in the first few years of a truly integrated CSD-SSD approach there may be little to report in terms of significant numbers of previously under-represented people moving from recreational participation into talent pathways, so practitioners need to hold their nerve and be smart about the performance measurement methodologies they employ.

In practical terms Turner (2009) discusses the importance of gathering information both informally (such as conversations with local residents and shop keepers) and formally through methods such as questionnaires and open meetings. We often hear excuses for failing initiatives from professionals along the lines of “Well, they didn’t attend, so they obviously aren’t interested”, instead of an inquiry based approach asking why did they not attend, what needs to change and so on? The irony of this is that these communities do not need fewer services, but often a different type of service that actually meets their needs. This illustrates that the only way to achieve the outcomes supposedly sought by policy-makers and practitioners at all levels of sport is to involve communities at all stages of analysis-choice-action-evaluation processes. We need to ask the right questions, in the right ways, of the right people. The following case study illustrates how, given strategic direction by a Community Sport Partnership, practitioners can engage in more meaningful approaches to programme evaluation.

Case study: <b>CSP (Kirstie)</b>
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### **Closing thoughts**

As with the book as a whole this chapter has encouraged practitioners and students alike to open their minds to new possibilities. The focus of this and the preceding chapter has been on approaches to inclusive sport which join up the domains of sport-specific and community sport development to a far greater extent than is currently practised. This chapter in particular has examined the ways in which better value can be extracted from resources without undermining the *raison d’être* of either SSD or CSD. You are now urged to put our ideas to the test and consider more radical, imaginative solutions to familiar issues in sport development practice. More broadly, throughout the book we have shown how generic principles of strategic management, so often in the literature applied solely to commercial settings, can be used to shed new light on the thorny problems of inclusive sport

development. We have also contested some of the commonly-held assumptions around strategy and strategic thinking which have held back sport development at all levels. Whatever your current or desired role in sport you are encouraged to throw off the shackles of unimaginative, mechanistic approaches to strategic sport development. Engaging with the ideas in this book is hopefully one important step towards a better sporting deal for our most marginalised communities.

Be aware that projects that start as bottom-up, often revert to top-down as they grow in size. The challenge for managers is to ensure this does not happen or the impact of these projects on tackling community needs is often lost “as organisational capacity to listen and respond to...priorities articulated locally” is eroded (Turner 2009:242).

Ultimately, ask yourselves, are you willing to empower individuals and community groups? The answer to this question will determine how successful your community sports work is likely to be.

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