

CAPACITY BUILDING IN COMMUNITY SPORT: UNDERAPPRECIATED BUT ESSENTIAL

54%

of people are concerned that their community sports club would struggle to stay running over the long-term, without support from external organisations.¹

The majority of community sport groups in the UK are under-funded and under-resourced, often run on shoestring budgets by only a handful of dedicated staff and volunteers. Their ability to engage and enhance the lives of the young people in their communities is unrivaled, and yet, the work of these small community sports groups often goes overlooked, and they struggle to access much needed funding to keep their doors open day after day.

An analysis of Sported's 3000+ members highlights why community sports groups are so vulnerable:

- 56% are entirely run by volunteers
- 29% have an annual income of less than £5,000
- 45% are based in the 30% most deprived communities in the UK²

Typically community groups are richer in non-financial resources, such as volunteers, institutional knowledge and good local connections, than financial resources. When members join Sported, by far the main area in which they request help is fundraising. 49% report funding as their biggest barrier to sustainability.

So why do small community sports groups struggle to secure funding?

Understandably funders want a level of security. They want to know their investment will have a positive impact; they want to be sure the group they are supporting has good governance in place and the money will be spent wisely; they want reassurance the group will be able to deliver for the lifetime of the grant. Essentially, funders want to be sure that groups are 'funding ready' before they are comfortable supporting them.

1. TSB research conducted in Jan 2018 by One Poll surveying 1,000 UK adults who are a member of, or are regularly involved with community sport

2. Data taken from Sported's member Database, correct as of 31 July 2018

3. Data taken from a survey of 140 group leaders through Sported's Game Plan questionnaire between August 2016 and July 2018



In a survey of 140 group leaders:³

69% **weren't sure the group would continue if their leader left at short notice**

64% **didn't collect information about their impact**

40% **were concerned their facilities are not secure into the future**

39% **didn't have systems in place for annual accounts**

IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN JUST THE MONEY

Capacity Building is all about helping community groups to survive.

"If it wasn't for the fantastic support from Sported our club would no longer be in existence."

June Kelly, Abraham Moss Warriors JFC

We want to increase our members' organisational capacity so they are more effective when delivering their activities and are sustainable long into the future.

At Sported, we have developed a model to understand and measure capacity, known as the 'Frisbee'. It is made up of 25 'elements' which feed into the five core areas of organisational capacity. Sound Finances is only one of these areas. A group's connection to the community, ability to deliver, the skills and capabilities of their staff and volunteers, and their structure are all as important.

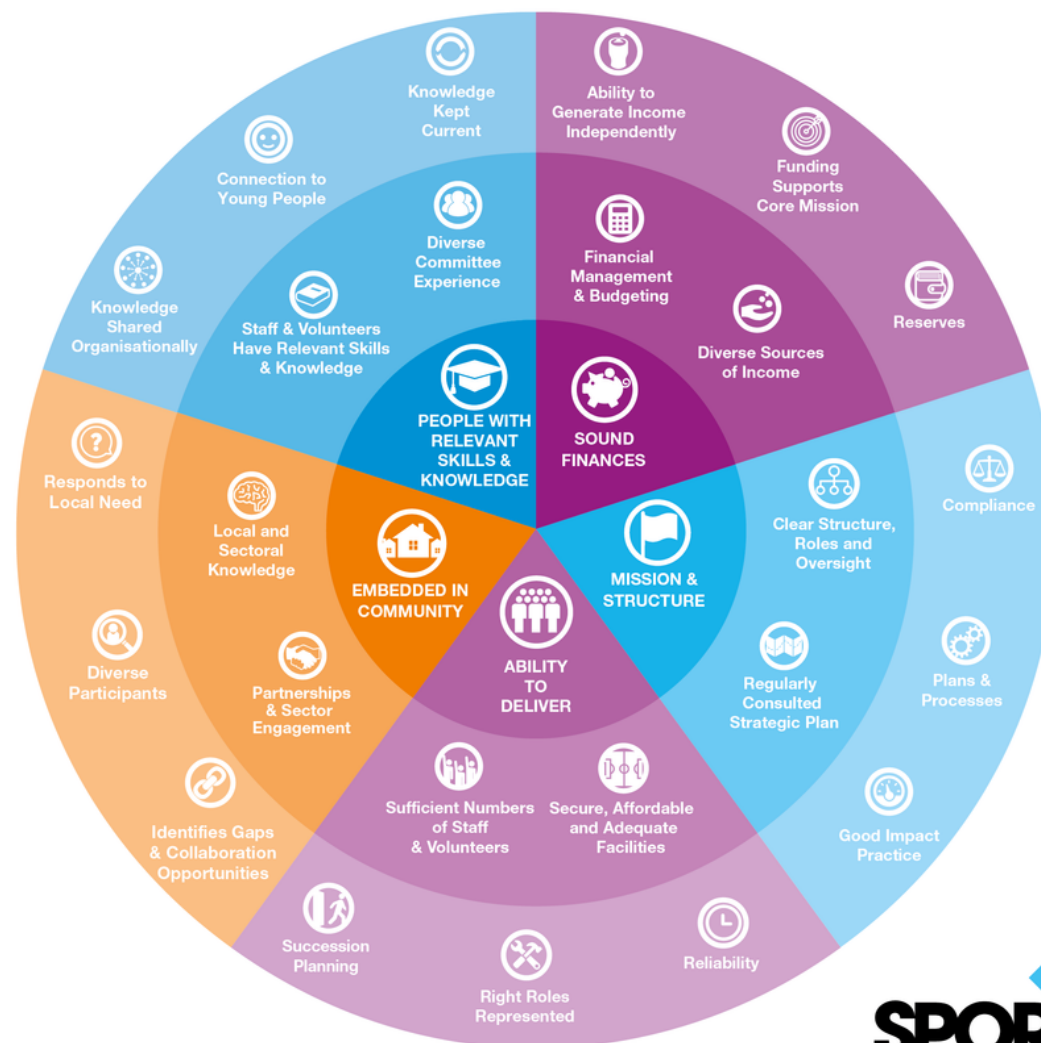
From assessing over 200 of our members against the Frisbee we know that:⁴

Typically Sported members are strong in:

- Having a good connection to young people
- Having the right roles represented
- Having staff and volunteers with relevant skills and knowledge

They struggle most with:

- Having suitable reserves
- Measuring their impact
- Having a strategic plan that's regularly consulted



SPORTED'S APPROACH

The majority of our capacity building support is offered on a one-to-one basis. Sported is unique in having a presence in every UK region. The regional team combines decades of experience in community sport and youth development. Each National and Regional Manager has a thorough knowledge of their local area and a genuine understanding of the challenges our members face.

Sported also has a team of over 250 highly committed volunteers, all with a range of professional experience and skills, including business planning, financial management, marketing, fundraising and youth development. Our volunteers are dynamic and talented individuals with an enthusiasm and passion for mentoring our members.

We strive to build capacity rather than dependence.

As one of our volunteers describes, “The most rewarding part of the role is seeing the group develop to such an extent that you can walk away - to me that’s very important.”



ADDRESSING: MISSION & STRUCTURE

Sported's Support: Access to one-to-one support from a mentor to develop long term plans.

"Being matched with a mentor through Sported has helped the organisation develop key strategy and a business plan, which was a major weakness for the charity. The mentor has also been able to offer support around governance so that the charity has high standards and operates at professional level."

James Gregory, Families Against Violence, Manchester

ADDRESSING: SOUND FINANCES

Sported's Support: Monthly funding bulletins highlighting funds and opportunities available.

"The Sported Funding Bulletin has been so beneficial to the club in terms of finding out about funding streams. We found out about funding, that we would never have known about."

Terence Patton, Strabane Cricket Club, County Tyrone

ADDRESSING: PEOPLE WITH RELEVANT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Sported's Support: Through our Engage Her project, groups were supported to develop their understanding of how to engage with women and girls in sport.

"We had all the stuff in our heads but we didn't know where to start. This has given us a logical plan to work to, with a time scale and action points, so feels like we have a real chance of making it work."

Jenny Hanna, Splitz, County Fermanagh

SPORTED'S IMPACT: STRENGTH & SUSTAINABILITY

Sported has been building the capacity of community sports groups for the last 10 years. From starting with nothing in 2018, we've grown a network of over 3,000 remarkable community sports groups and 250 volunteer mentors covering the whole of the UK.

We've known though feedback from members that our support has been of benefit to them, but we wanted to generate systematic evidence to demonstrate this.

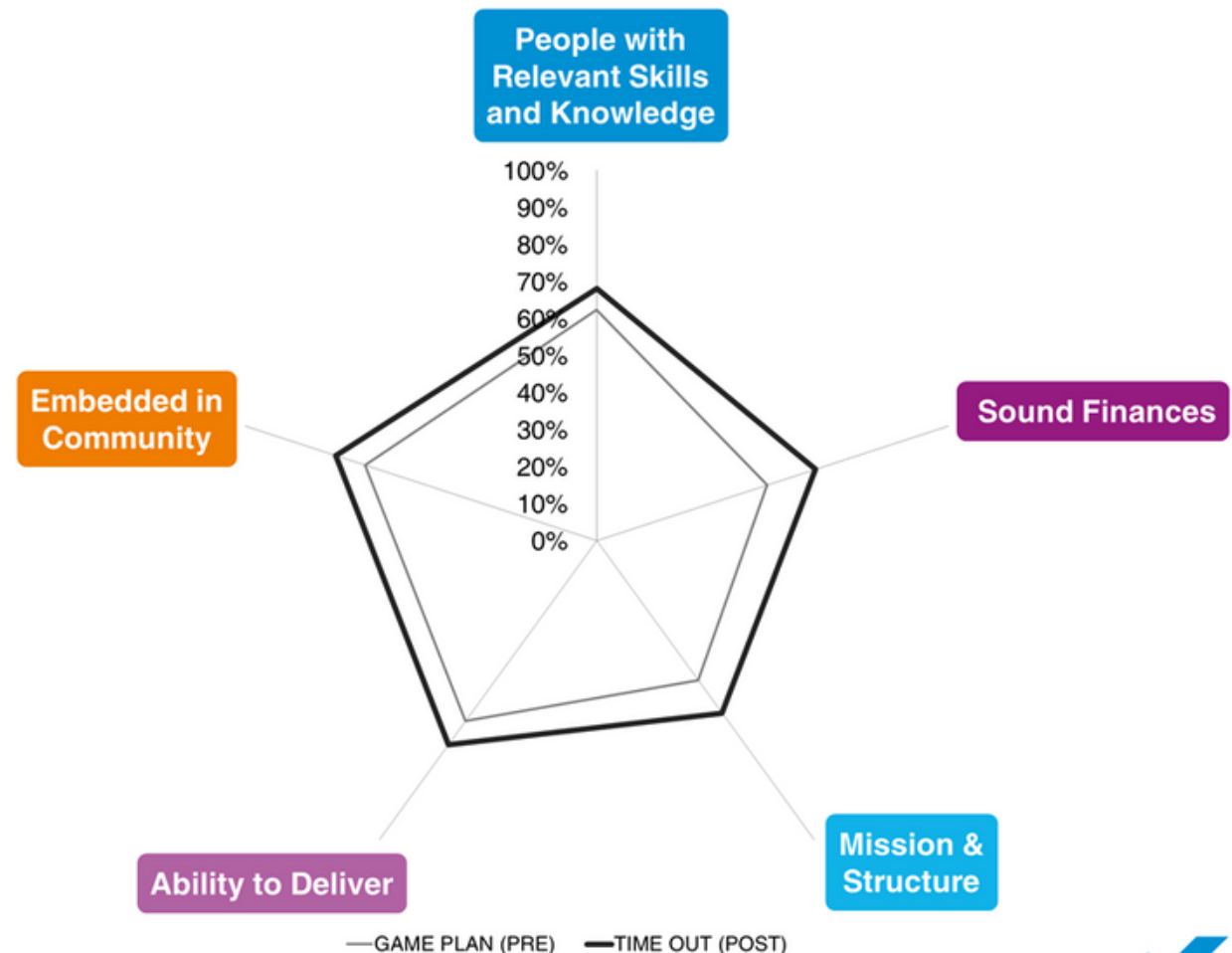
In the absence of a suitable tool for measuring organisational capacity, we've spent the last 4 years researching and developing a way of identifying changes in organisational capacity in community sports groups.

Our model has enabled us to see the distance traveled in capacity for 54 of our members whilst receiving support from Sported. We are now able to show that our projects and services are helping community groups to survive.

Our work here will always be evolving; our ambition is to enhance and strengthen our methodology so that it can become a valid and reliable way of measuring organisational capacity within community sport.

Find out more about our Frisbee here.

Average Change in Capacity, shown by Sported Members



Data based on 54 Sported members starting and completing long term support, between August 2016 and June 2018

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Capacity building provides the foundations for funding success

Helping community groups improve all aspects of their organisational capacity should not only improve their chances of securing funding by having a clear plan and supporting governance / infrastructure, but also help maximise the return on any investment from funders by having clearly defined strategic outcomes and indicators of progress and success.

2

Foster a business approach

Community groups are in essence small businesses, requiring revenue to cover their costs in order to become sustainable. As such, they should be supported to adopt more structured and long-term business strategies when it comes to things like business planning, marketing and fundraising. This can be fostered by building bridges between the private and community sector, and volunteering to help upskill and transfer professional knowledge, skills and practices.

3

Appreciate one size does not fit all

The challenges faced by community sport groups vary, as does the support needed and the way community groups like to receive that support. A strong understanding of local context, a good relationship with the group and a flexible, tailored approach are essential to successfully building capacity.

Further recommendations for engaging and supporting community groups, particularly those operating in the most deprived neighborhoods in England, can be found in Sported and Sport England's publication 'Bridging the Gap: A blueprint for engagement'. Available to download [here](#).



Helping community groups survive, to help young people thrive.

Sported is one of the leading Sport for Development charities in the UK, helping more than 3,000 community sport and youth groups survive and thrive.

What makes Sported's members so special is that each and every one uses the power of sport to transform the lives of young lives and local communities. Yet the majority are run on shoestring budgets, relying on the kindness and hard-work of a handful of dedicated staff and volunteers.

At Sported we support these amazing groups by providing much needed professional expertise, resources and business mentoring to help build their capacity and long-term sustainability. Helping to ensure the young people who could benefit most, can continue to access their vital support.

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WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY

"Without Sported's support, mentoring and funding at that time we would have been really struggling. I am forever grateful for Sported's support."

Kamareswaradas Ramanathas (Ram), Young Asian Voices, Sunderland

"The insight and encouragement from the mentor and Sported has been first class. Without Sported we would not have grown or been able to make a positive impact on our community."

Ammar Mirza, Asian Business Connections, Newcastle

"Thankfully we were able to make a successful grant application and a great business plan with the help and support of our mentor. The committee can't wait for the new facilities to start impacting on our members and for Sported to come and see what a difference this fund has made to the club and the wider community."

Neil Hosking, Devonport ABC, Devon

"Sported have been a massive help. We've really progressed over the past two years - and I'm not sure we'd be where we are without Sported."

Jason Kennedy, Knights Wheelchair Basketball Club, Belfast

"We wouldn't be here where we are today without support from Sported, it would have taken us 15 years to get to this stage on our own."

Dominic Hodnett, Wildcard ABC, St Helens

SPORTED'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Theory of Change demonstrates how Sported's capacity building model leads to positive change in local communities.

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES: SPORTED'S THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR PURPOSE

Helping community groups survive,
to help young people thrive.

Here's how we'll deliver this:



This document explains how 'what we do' leads to the difference we want to see. It helps us have greater understanding of our role and demonstrates how we're contributing to 'Our Purpose'.

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