

Session: **Open session V.**
Abstract nr: **EASM-0070**

Capacity to Grow: The Influence of Organizational Factors on Participation in Community Sport Clubs

A. Doherty¹, G. Cuskelly², R. Batty², S. Hamm-Kerwin¹

¹*University of Western Ontario, School of Kinesiology, London Ontario, Canada*

²*Griffith University, Business School, Gold Coast, Australia*

adoherty@uwo.ca

Given the physical and mental benefits, economic returns, and social capital that are associated with sport participation, it is recognized as a powerful mechanism for the health and well-being of individuals and their communities, (e.g., Bloom, Grant, & Watt, 2005; Doherty & Misener, 2008; Donnelly & Kidd, 2003). Community sport clubs (CSCs) are expected to be major players in providing opportunities for increased sport participation (e.g., Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006; Taylor, 2004). Thus, it is important to understand the capacity of these organizations to meet such expectations.

Hall et al.'s (2003) conceptual model of organizational capacity in nonprofit and voluntary organizations distinguishes five broad dimensions that are fundamental to the ability of these organizations to meet their mandates and goals. Part of our larger project examining organizational capacity in community sport used focus groups with CSC presidents to uncover key elements within each of those five dimensions that were identified as critical to the ability of CSCs to perform. The capacity dimensions and key elements of CSCs included: (1) human resources (positive individual attributes, organization attributes and practices); (2) finances (stable revenue, stable expenses, financial management); (3) infrastructure (formalization, communication, facilities); (4) planning and development (proactive and creative process, implementation); and, (5) external relationships (personal connections, positive relationship attributes). The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of those elements of organizational capacity on the ability of CSCs to increase participation levels.

A survey was developed to measure the key elements identified in the focus groups. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which multiple items representing each capacity element are a feature of their club. A single item measure was also developed to assess the perceived ability of the CSC to increase its participation levels. All of the items in the survey are rated on a 7-point scale. The sample comprises presidents (or their representative) of 600 CSCs in the state of Queensland, Australia. Participants were contacted by email and invited to participate in the online survey assessing organizational capacity in their club. Data collection is currently underway. Item-total correlation and Cronbach alpha reliability analyses will be conducted to verify the structure of the elements. Further correlation and regression analyses will be undertaken to examine the relative influence of the elements on the CSCs' ability to increase participation levels.

The presentation will highlight the relative importance of the various elements (and their broader dimensions) of organizational capacity for increasing community sport participation levels. The

findings are expected to have implications for informing policy, strategy and practice directed towards sustaining and building capacity in CSCs.

References:

Bloom, M., Grant, M., & Watt, D. (2005). *Strengthening Canada: The socioeconomic benefits of sport participation in Canada*. Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada.

Cuskelly, G., Hoye, R., & Auld, C. (2006). *Working with volunteers in sport*. London: Routledge.

Doherty, A., & Misener, K. (2008). Community sport networks. In Nicholson, M., & Hoye, R. (Eds.), *Sport and social capital* (pp. 113-141). London: Elsevier Butterworth Heinemann.

Donnelly, P., & Kidd, B. (2003). Realizing the expectations: Youth, character, and community in Canadian sport. *The sport we want: Essays on current issues in community sport* (pp. 25-44). Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport.

Hall, M.H., Andrukow, A., Barr, C., Brock, K., de Wit, M., Embuldeniya, D., Jolin, L., Lasby, D., Levesque, B., Malinsky, E., Stowe, S., & Vallaincourt, Y. (2003). *The capacity to serve: A qualitative study of the challenges facing Canada's nonprofit and voluntary organizations*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

Taylor, P. (2004). Driving up sport participation: Sport and volunteering. In Sport England (Ed.), *Driving up participation: The challenge for sport* (pp. 103-110). London: Sport England.