

Sport policy in all spheres of the society

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1. Aim of abstract

Sport Policy cannot be restricted to take part in the smallest government ministry or being handled by the minister lowest in the ministerial hierarchy. Sport Policy must fight for its right to be considered as an important policy tool in nearly all aspects of the government policy. To be regarded as such Sports Policy must be developed in mainly three areas being: Content, evidence and its ability to lobby professionally among government ministers and parliamentarians.

The aim of this abstract is to explain how the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark has worked with content, evidence and upgrading of its lobby efforts in order to strengthen the position of Danish sport in government policy.

2. Practice description

Using a new political program named "Sport for All", The National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark has launched initiatives directed at content, evidence and upgrading of its lobby efforts

- Content

Sport is often said to be able to contribute positively to policies focused at education, integration, environment and health. Seen from the NOC of Denmark's perspective sport has not been good enough to maximize its influence on these selected areas because sport has been too preoccupied with including education in sports policy instead of working for that sports policy will be included in education policy. It is the ambition of the NOC of Denmark that our fundamental sports policy "Sport for All" the coming two years shall be supplemented by concrete policy proposals concentrating on selected areas, where it is identified that sport can contribute to secure the objectives in an overall government policy, which has a much wider target group than is the case of the specific sports policy.

- Evidence

An upgraded sports policy is a policy, which is able to be evidence based by backing the policy proposals and recommendations with statistics, analyzes and scientific papers. Sometimes it even seems like sport is afraid of stepping into the path of evidence, because this path could prove all the festive speeches of sports abilities wrong. But the steps of evidence are necessary if sport shall extend its

contribution and influence on the development of the society in the long run.

- Professionalizing the lobby work

If Sports Policy shall get out of its niche, Sports organizations must start to use the same methods in lobbying as are being seen in other branches? This means being closer to more ministers than the one having the responsibility for sport. Being close to more parliamentarians than the spokespersons for sport. Developing its network among professionals in most government ministries and among political party professionals.

The first step to take is getting more knowledge of the parliamentarian's attitudes and views on sport policy. This was the step taken by the NOC of Denmark before the general election in September 2011; the NOC asked all +700 candidates six questions on sports policy.

3. Context description, actors involved

The context is the parliamentary elections in Denmark in September 2011 and the formation of a new Danish government, where sports can start from zero, when it comes to get more accept and acknowledge of sports policy's opportunities and positive contributions to parts of the government policy related to health, education, environment, growth and employment.

The actors involved are The National Olympic Committee of Denmark, all parliamentarian candidates for the Danish parliamentary election in 2011, government ministers and the political party's spokespersons for health, education, environment, growth and employment.

4. Implications and learnings

Sport has still a lot to learn from the more experienced interest organizations in industry, education, banking or health. The learning is especially imminent, when it comes to the following areas in the lobbying for sports influence on the political agenda:

- More evidence based approaches, when sport wants to set the agenda that is a little away from the usual sports policy sphere.
- More analysis and statistics, which can underline concrete political proposals in areas like health, education, employment and growth
- Broader networks among political parties and politicians in order to take advantage of contact to politicians, who are important spokespersons in fields as finance, taxes and education

The implication is that sport need to play at the same political lobbying level as other lobbying organizations are doing from other industries, if sport wants to extend the influence to more spheres of the society, than where sports policy and sports organizations are used to be present and exercise their influence.