

The Conditions And Support Approaches That Lead To Organizational Development In Voluntary Sport Clubs

Boven, Magda¹; Trooster, Anouk¹; Van Kalmthout, Janine²; Van der Roest, Jan-Willem²; De Jong, Johan¹; Slender, Hans¹; Dijk, Bake¹

¹Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen, The Netherlands; ²Mulier Institute Utrecht, The Netherlands

E-mail: m.a.boven@pl.hanze.nl

Aim of the research

Aim of this study is to gain more insight into conditions and approaches used by professional sport club consultants, in developing the organizational capacity of voluntary sport clubs (VSC's). This study is part of a larger research on the competencies, approaches and interventions which sport club consultants need to provide support on organizational development in VSC's.

Theoretical background

A VSC with great organizational capacity has the ability to offer their sport, now and in the future, in a sustainable and socially responsible way to (potential) members. Dutch VSC's are facing several challenges, as perceived consumerist behavior by members (Van der Roest, 2015) and demands by the government to attribute to the social policy agenda (Waardenburg, 2016). Organizational development and becoming a learning organization (Senge, 2006), which has the capacity to adapt continuously, is required to face this challenges. Dependence on volunteers in conjunction with the democratic nature of VSC's makes organizational development in sport clubs complex (Enjolras, 2009). Professional support is often necessary, especially in the northern region of the Netherlands where the number of inhabitants in small villages is falling and sport clubs are facing a decreasing number of members. Verhagen (2014) states that although much research has been focused on the question of aspects that contribute to organizational capacity of VSC's there is lack of information on the process of increasing the organizational capacity and on what type of support these clubs need related to organizational development.

Between 300–500 sport club consultants, mostly funded by local governments or sport associations, are tasked to increase the organizational capacity of these VSC's. From Senge's perspective, real improvement will occur only if people responsible for implementation design the change itself. This has consequences for the support that is offered by the professionals. For this professionals it is important to have a better understanding of the mechanisms involved in the process of organizational development and the kind of support that is required.

Methodology, research design, and data analysis

Based on theory about organizational development, organizational capacity, organizational learning and change processes, an online survey is designed to identify the organizational development processes of the VSC's. This online survey is conducted among the boards of all VSC's in the northern region of the Netherlands (+/- 3000 sport clubs). A baseline measurement is carried out in May 2017 (t0). A follow up measurement will take place in May 2018 (t1). This follow up measurement will define if and what the differences in organizational development processes are between sport clubs that received support from a professional sport club consultant and those where this was not the case. Cross-sectional analysis will be carried out to measure any correlations between characteristics of sport clubs and support processes that have taken place, as well in which extent organizational development occur. The study provides an analysis of the nature of organizational development processes involved in sport clubs in the northern region of the Netherlands and to which extent sport club consultants have supported them.

Results, discussion, and implications/conclusions

In the expected results both the extent of organizational capacity of the VSC's and the processes of organizational development within this clubs as well as the support they received in this process will be analyzed (t0). New insights on the process of organizational development and support of professional sport club consultants contributing to the sustainable development of VSC's will be presented. The results of this study (t0) together with two other parallel studies will be used in order to compose a new repertoire (competences, interventions and approaches) for club consultants. These club consultants will be trained to develop a new repertoire from September 2017 until May 2018. Hereafter the next measurement (t1) will be carried out in may 2018. At the time of writing, the results, conclusion and discussion are not yet known, because data collection will take place in May/June 2017. During the EASM congress, the results of t0 will be presented.

References

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