

Sports For Development

A panacea for all CSR



Table of —— Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction	7
SROI in the context of S4D	9
Return On Development (ROD) through Sport	10
Design and structure of an S4D project	12
Right S4D implementation partner	14
Conclusion	15





Nelson Mandela

Sports have the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sports can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers.

Foreword



Sudhanshu Fadnis
Founder Director, Sportseed

Sports binds individuals and communities together. We have read about numerous initiatives in our country and rest of the world on how sports has been introduced as a medium to relay information on key life skills, social skills, leadership and cooperation. Final outcomes from such initiatives have been as varied as peace, empowerment or employment. It is this ability of sports to impact the intermediate outcomes more effectively than any other intervention, that is leading to an increased focus of CSR funding being channelled towards Sports For Development (S4D) projects in recent years. However, the scope and magnitude certainly need a significant push from the current allocation of around 1-1.5% of total CSR outlay of companies mandated by the CSR rules of the Companies Act. We must work on building a common vision of deploying sports as a widespread tool for a very large social impact – be it the development of sports at the grassroot levels or using sports to develop the youth and vulnerable sections of our society, for it truly could be a cure for all CSR concerns.



Whether the overall objective is to impact health, education, women's upliftment, skilling, community, environment or any other such area, this paper will establish Sports as perfect tool to assess the Return on Development (ROD), without losing sight of Social Return On Investment (SROI)

Introduction

Companies (Amendment) Act 2019, Section 21 that pertains to amendments to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provisions of Companies Act 2013 was recently held back due to the onerous nature of the section that criminalized non-compliance to meeting the mandatory 2% of profits to be spent on CSR attracting even a jail term. While this provided an immediate relief to the corporates, it still is a wakeup call for them to more actively identify development objectives in line with their respective policies, as also projects to be implemented. This requires not only a CSR strategy that establishes the spends as a strategic business concept rather than just philanthropy, but also a tactical plan that provides not only the desired impact, but also required visibility in line with CSR as a strategic business concept.

Sports For Development (S4D) is an option that can be adopted and deployed as a 'cure all', be it early childhood, education, vocational training, lifeskills, community building, or sports itself, as the primary objectives of the CSR policy. Sports is an irreplaceable tool in the toolkit of any corporate, irrespective of whether the impact objective is broad or deep.

Traditional relationships between corporates, implementation agencies and sports are therefore undergoing a change.

Table I: Traditional vs Modern outlook on Sports in CSR

Approach	Corporate	Implementation Agency	Sports
Traditional	CSR policy focus on sports	NGO/not-for-profit with large footprint irrespective of area of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant sports federation plays the role of technical and approving authority Government looks at corporate CSR for viability gap funding
Modern	CSR policy focus on any of the development areas around education, skilling, health, sports, community, gender or early childhood	Social impact organizations with a focus on implementing Sports For Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of sports federation limited only when CSR initiative involves competitive sport Corporate looks at government for viability gap funding, if at all



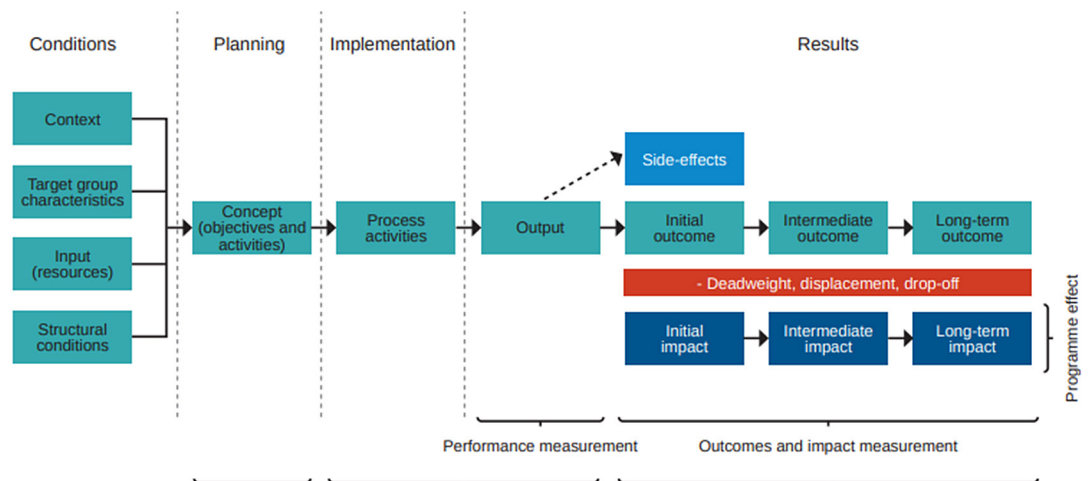
Sports have the potential to improve the SROI by impacting the intermediate outcomes directly, by reducing the deadweights, displacements and drop-offs in the investment, and in their ability to have practically no side effects

SROI in the context of S4D

Social return on investment (SROI) is a concept to account for social value when evaluating investments. It goes beyond traditional economic evaluation tools, by considering value produced for multiple stakeholders in all three dimensions of development: economic, social and environmental¹.

SROI aims at broadening the ROI from only the shareholder value creation to stakeholder value creation with respect to the change, positive or negative, experienced by the various stakeholders of the change created due to the investment. Implies, it also looks at the 'side effects' of the change observed due to the investment in the entire impact chain.

Figure 1: Example of an impact map model²



It is worth noting here the three 'Ds':

Deadweight: what would have happened anyway and is therefore not attributable to the programme/investment

Displacement: refers to the possibility that some benefits for one group come to the detriment of another group. In this case, expenses are just shifted, and no real benefit can then be claimed for the society as a whole

Drop-off: implies that the benefits may not be maintained over time

Sports have the unique ability, as compared to any other intervention, to minimize the three 'Ds'. This is because, sports as an intervention rarely impacts the final/long term development outcome (unless, of course, it is directly related to performance in sports) in the form of a causal relationship. It, however, impacts the initial and intermediate outcomes. For example, it can impact development of life skills, increased social interaction, development of leadership and community building. These in turn may lead to achievement of final outcomes like child development, women empowerment, gender equality, vocational skills, conflict resolution or peace, etc³. In addition, sports as a tool has no side effects, except perhaps sports injuries, which can be controlled by deployment in a controlled environment.

¹ WHO Europe Region's paper, "Social return on investment: Accounting for value in the context of implementing Health 2020 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", 2017

² Source: adapted from Rauscher, Schober & Millner, Social impact measurement and social return on investment (SROI) – analysis, 2012

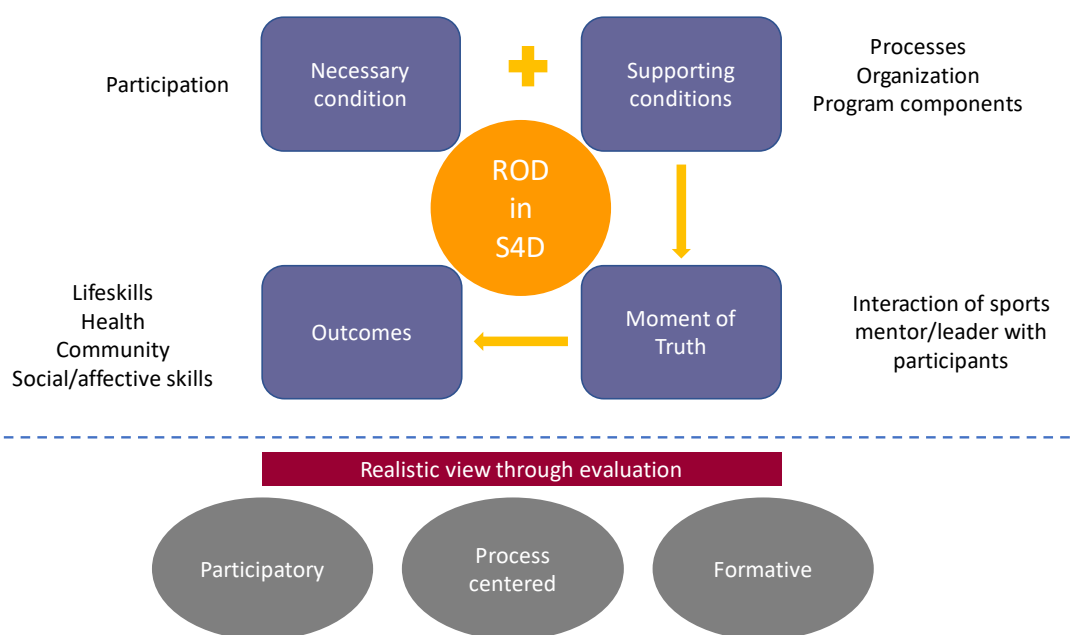
³ Sports for development: the potential value and next steps; review of policy, programs and academic research 1998-2013, Van Eekeren, F., K. ter Horst & D. Fictorie, Utrecht University, 2013

Return On Development (ROD) through Sport

Sport seems to be the most appropriate tool for a visible impact and realization of the most optimal Return On Development (ROD) in line with achievement of SROI mentioned above, for amongst others, because of the following⁴:

- Impact on intermediate outcomes
- Limited moment of truth parameters and hence more effective control through effective monitoring & evaluation, as compared to other types of interventions
- Only one necessary condition increasing the possibility of sustainability

Figure 2: Return of Development in Sports For Development interventions⁵



Thus, while S4D program SROI provides double bottom line, achievement of a triple bottom line (includes Environmental impact as the third bottom line) looks more realistic as compared to any other intervention due to the above listed factors⁶.

⁴ Author's analysis

⁵ Source: Author

⁶ Author's analysis

Figure 3: Indicative triple line from S4D intervention⁷

The circular⁸ by Ministry of Corporate Affairs providing clarification to the corporates to take up CSR activities in a program/project mode, rather than limited one-off events/interventions for the sake of only visibility & short term impact, makes understanding the significance of S4D interventions for achieving the triple bottom line even more critical.

⁹S4D project

Hyderabad based Naandi Foundation's Nanhi Kali project has been much in news lately for the tremendous work done by them to make girls in age 6-15 play Sport For Life. The highlight of this initiative has been a 'Sports Day' for girls across the country where 37000 girls participated and is envisaged to follow up with 4-day bootcamps for 600 girls.

Challenge

Mobilizing an event is great, but how does one create a genuine 'Sport for Life' program that is sustainable and impactful?

Way

Sports videos with content that is technically simple, easily understandable with simple subtitles, has girls/local environment in the video that are similar to the audience & their environment and size that is easily accessible over low bandwidths across 1800 communities.

⁷ Source: Author

⁸ www.mca.gov.in/Ministry/pdf/General_Circular_21_2014.pdf

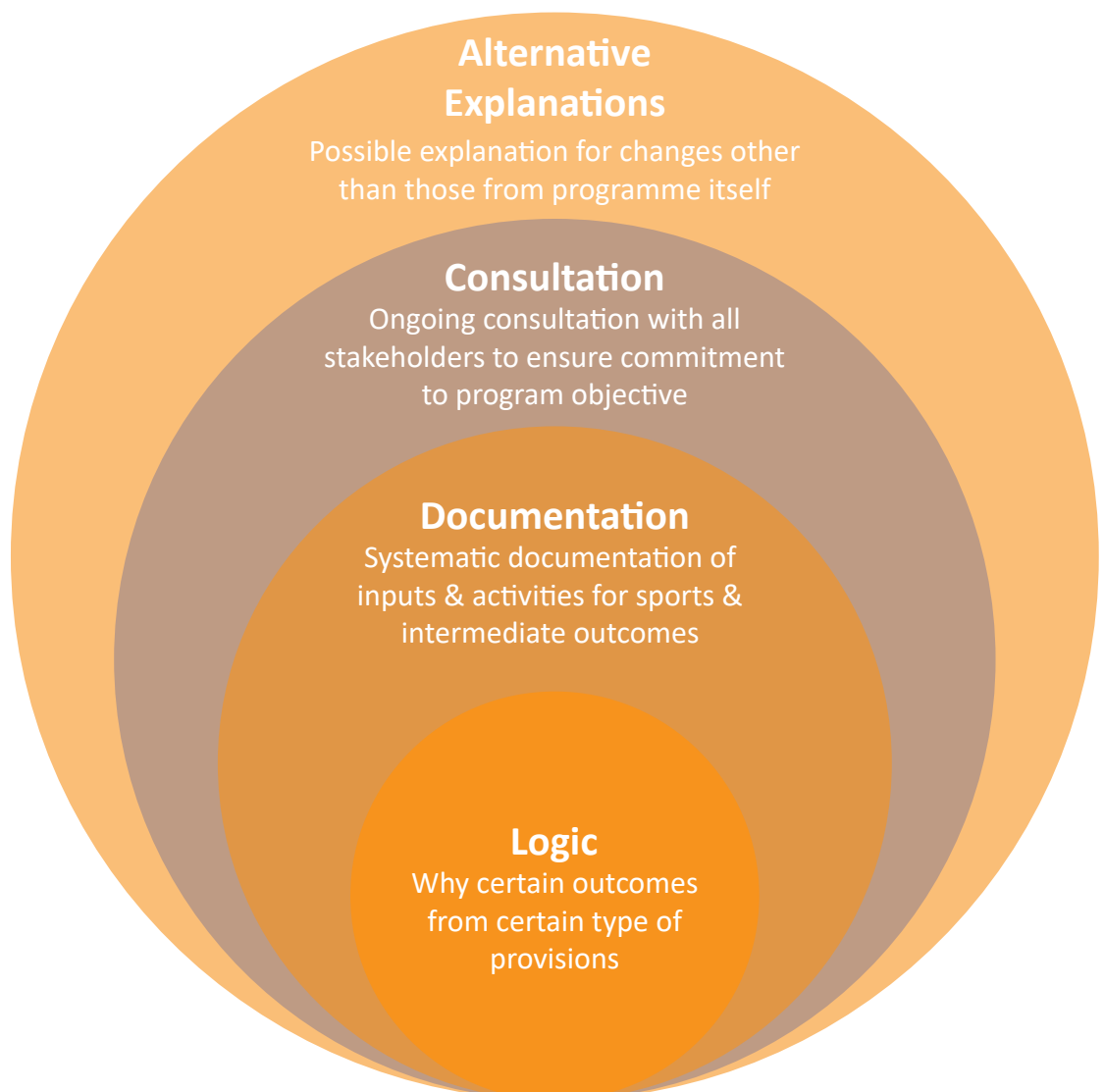
⁹ <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/article/news/challenges-and-obstacles-sport-and-development-india>

Design and structure of an S4D project

For a robust and objective implementation & evaluation of a S4D project, that is high on ROD & SROI, it is imperative to consider the following in design & structure of the intervention¹⁰:

- A clear theory (logic model)
- Documentation
- Consultation
- Alternative explanation

Figure 4: Design & structure of an S4D project



¹⁰ Grangar, 1998

S4D project

Nalanda foundation (an IL&FS initiative) implemented soccer & athletics as tools to get the children from the ragpicker community slums, to come to their partner NGO Gulmeher's study center located in Ghazipur landfill & garbage dumps in Delhi.

Logic

Natural propensity of children to play will attract them to come to the center, especially since these children had no exposure to any sporting activity whatsoever

Documentation

Attendance of children in 3 batches totalling to about 120 kids, sports curriculum progression and physical test batteries & sports skill assessment data

Consultation

Gulmeher NGO staff, community heads and parents/guardians

Alternative Explanation

Employment to slum women, mothers of these children, provided in small factories for sanitary napkins and for craftworks from paper mache crafts at the Gulmeher center, brought the children to the center

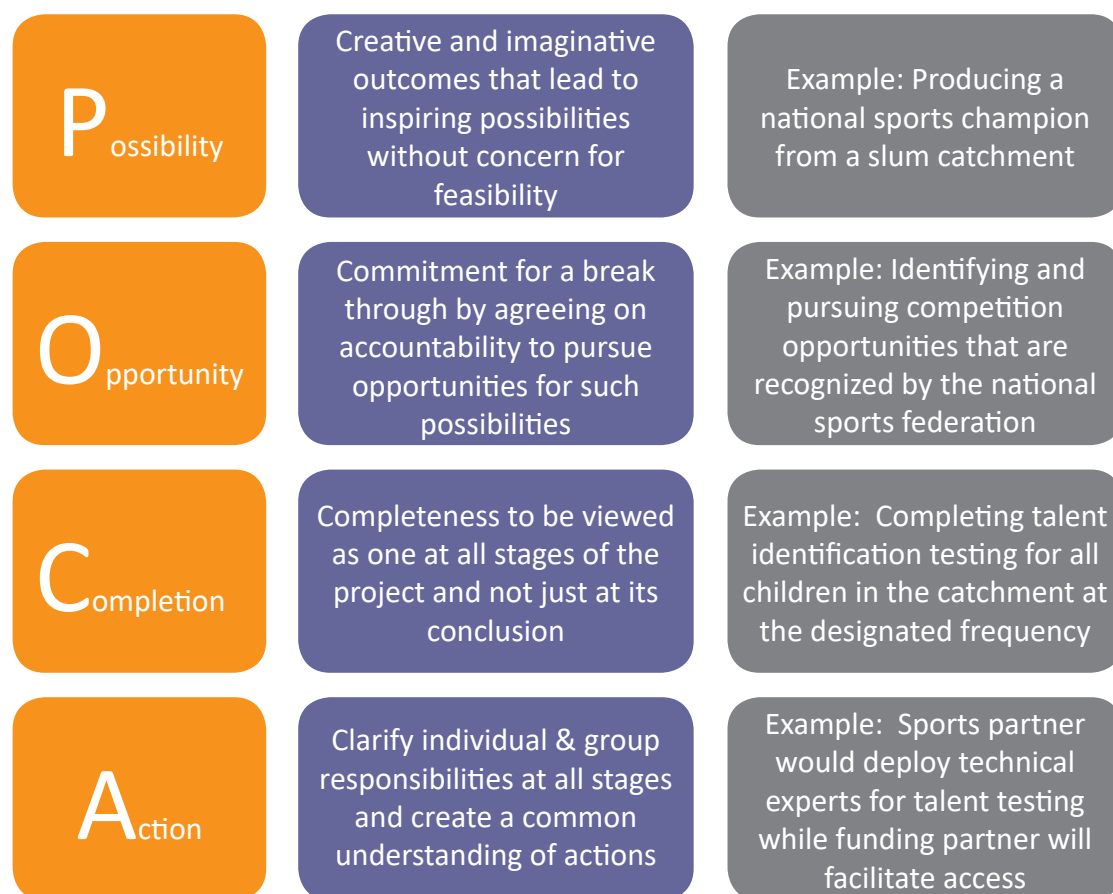
Picture 1: Girls football team from Ghazipur slums that participated successfully in Delhi Youth League 2016-17



Right S4D implementation partner

While the current CSR rules under the Companies act amendment drive engaging a society, trust or company registered under section 8, they also provide flexibility to corporates to collaborate with other companies to undertake CSR projects/ activities¹¹. Given S4D interventions impact the intermediate outcomes, rather than the long-term final ones, it is absolutely essential to consider partnering with an implementation agency that has experience and subject matter professionalism in delivering sports interventions, irrespective of the nature of the partner’s constitution. But more importantly it is the ability of the partner to work on what may be referred to as the ‘POCA’ approach.

Figure 5: **POCA approach to evaluating & assessing S4D implementation partners**



¹¹ Notification – Amendment to CSR Rules, 2014

We went with a private sports company that was a for-profit social impact organization, instead of another sports NGO who had worked with us earlier, primarily because they came up with innovative approach of introducing unique sports like Archery, which no one had proposed to us, in our CSR interventions. They spoke about possibilities of creating serious competitive sportspersons from amongst a lot of children who had practically no exposure & access to sports. The fact that they backed it up with their experience of doing this regularly in their non-CSR work gave us a lot of confidence.

-Anurag Kashyap, Associate Director, Nalanda Foundation (an IL&FS initiative)

Conclusion

While the traditional relationship that exists between corporates, implementation agencies (NGOs/Social Impact organizations) and Sports (meaning governing bodies of sports and governments), there are compelling arguments to establish how sports can be a cure-all for various issues that corporates and organizations providing charitable funds face with respect to impactful deployment of their funds. Whether the overall objective is to impact health, education, women's upliftment, environment or any other such area, sports emerge as the perfect tool to assess the Return on Development (ROD), without losing sight of Social Return On Investment (SROI).

In India, there is a sure upward trend to put CSR money in sports as more and more corporates are realizing that focusing on Sports can provide higher ROD. The game is changing from NGOs/Social Impact organizations competing for limited availability of funds to corporates competing for finding the right Sports For Development organization that can provide them the required ROD.



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