

Title: How, and Why, does Participatory Evaluation work for **actors** involved in the **delivery** of a sport-for-development initiative?

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** There is a lack of understanding around how and why a participatory approach to evaluation could work within, and add value to, sport-for-development programmes. This requires greater attention if to enhance the current approaches to evaluating sport-for-development programmes and foster use of evaluation findings. This paper communicates the findings from engaging a group of key actors in conducting a participatory evaluation to deepen understanding around how and why it worked.

**Design:** This realist-informed research consisted of realist interviews with 12 actors whom had been involved in mobilising participatory evaluation within a sport-for-development programme to establish and explain what worked, why and under what circumstances. The findings are synthesised to inform a refined model to guide practitioners in mobilising participatory evaluation more effectively within sport-for-development programmes.

**Findings:** The evidence generated supports the **utility** of participatory evaluation within sport-for-development. Specifically, how the flexible nature of participatory evaluation, role of the researcher as facilitator in fostering evaluative thinking and engaging stakeholders within evaluation processes as key mechanisms in co-producing and implementing a contextually relevant monitoring and evaluation framework.

**Practical Implications:** To enhance participatory evaluation methodology within sport-for-development programmes there is a need to incorporate: stakeholder motivation(s) to evaluate; evaluation capacity building and reflection on **evaluation** to refine and improve.

**Research Contribution:** This paper adds knowledge to guide, and improve, future participatory evaluation practice within sport-for-development programmes. **This has informed a reconceptualised model to guide practitioners in conducting participatory evaluation within sport-for-development programmes.**

Key Words: Sport-for-Development, Monitoring and Evaluation and Participatory Evaluation.

## Introduction

The continued commitment and (re)configuration of sport as a 'vehicle' for driving development towards socio-political goals, has catalysed increasing calls for evidence. This is to justify and legitimise political and economic commitments beyond the anecdotal championing and/or ideological-driven rationale of sport as

an ‘inherently good thing’ for people, communities and society (Coalter, 2007; Levermore, 2008; 2011; Grix and Phillpots, 2010; Levermore and Beacom, 2009; Giulianotti, 2011; Hylton, 2013).

The challenge to produce ‘evidence’ which is tailored to, and captures, the complexity of reality when implementing and integrating a sport-for-development programme (SfD) within a given set of circumstances tends to follow technocratic ‘evaluation’ approaches as a means of ‘controlling’ the evidence sought (Chouinard, 2013; Harris, 2018). This approach predominately focuses on monitoring and/or tracking changes within a SfD programme, at the expense of fostering evaluative thinking and learning about the programme’s impacts (Levermore and Beacom, 2009; Harris and Adams, 2016). The impact of technocratic approaches focusing on what can be measured in evaluation has constrained current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practice. This limits the ability to introduce and examine the utility of alternative approaches to evaluation and data collection methods for understanding the impact of SfD programmes (Harris, 2018) whilst recognising the role and contribution of stakeholders (funders, practitioners and participants) within evaluation processes.

Recent literature reviews and studies concerning M&E in SfD by Kidd (2007); Coalter (2007; 2010); Levermore (2008; 2011); Kay (2009;2012); Nicholls *et al* (2010); Smith and Leech (2010); Chouinard, 2013; and Adams and Harris (2014) have labelled many current M&E frameworks as ‘inappropriate’ or ‘ineffective’ on a number of levels, in that they struggle to:

1. Articulate a causal explanation which links the change(s) generated through a project to outcome(s)
2. Capture and accurately reflect the outcome(s)/impact(s) in consideration to the conditionality of findings
3. Involve practitioners and participants as actors and informants within M&E processes (Harris and Adams, 2016)
4. Utilise data generated from M&E to enhance the effectiveness of a SfD initiative and/or influence decision-making processes associated to local-national policy and funding.

To move the field forward, there is a growing need, realisation and acceptance for improvements, and alternative approaches, to M&E within SfD (Coalter, 2009; Adams and Harris, 2014; Chen, 2018). An approach which has gained increasing support within international development, and the evaluation community since the early 1990’s are ‘participatory’ based approaches to evaluation (Cousins and Earl 1992; Cousins and Whitmore, 1998). Participatory Evaluation (PE) are broadly conceived as an umbrella term for any evaluation that actively involves traditionally ‘subjugated’ voices (and in some cases liberates) stakeholders e.g., programme staff and/or participants within key evaluation processes to bring to life their own experiences and local knowledge. This has been identified as a gap within SfD as supported by Spaaij *et al* (2018, pg. 26); “It appears that SfD research has thus far failed to fully engage with the wealth and diversity of local knowledge, experience, and expertise. The SfD research community, we argue, needs to be more inclusive and collaborative in designing creative ways to improve this state of affairs”. The underlying premise is that participatory approaches to

evaluation lead to better learning, understanding and utilisation of findings (Cousins and Earl, 1992; Cousins and Whitmore, 1998; Shah *et al*, 2004; Atkinson, 2005; King, 2005; NSD, 2009; Fetterman *et al*, 2013).

Within the context of **SfD**, Coalter (2010); Henry and Ko (2014); Preti (2012); and **Network for Sport Development NSD** (2009) all draw upon the value and promise of PE **based** upon two key justifications: Firstly, the potential of PE principles in possessing the capacity to expand the horizon of M&E methodology and methods in practice; and secondly, how PE can contribute towards generating better understanding of impact to inform and (re)configure sport policy, provision and practice at both a local and/or national level.

Despite the promise of PE, there is a lack of research on, and application of, PE in practice within **SfD** programmes, making it challenging for the existing evidence base to attest to the **claims** made or provide empirical guidance on mobilising PE within **SfD**. That is not to say however that there is a lack of innovation around participatory based research methodology in the **SfD** field to support PE. A growing array of literature has emerged over the last six years challenging existing traditional research discourses (Spaaij *et al* 2018; Darnel *et al* 2016 Hayhurst *et al*, 2015, Sherry *et al* 2017), and we draw upon this literature to recognise how such innovation can inform PE.

Subsequently, this article discusses the findings from a **realist-informed piece of research that examined the utility** of an innovative participatory based M&E approach within a **SfD** setting on the **Isle of Wight (IOW)**. The Newport Inclusive Football Club (NIFC) used sport as a tool to reach and engage children and young people with varying needs and abilities though a shared interest in football. The aim was to build relationships between participants which could contribute to enhancing other aspects of their lives.

### **Problematism Monitoring and Evaluation and Evidence in Sport-for-Development**

The continued commitment towards ‘sport’ as a ‘vehicle’ for driving development to achieve social policy ambitions influences the type of evidence sought, the evaluation methods favoured, and the role evaluation has (Levermore, 2008;2011; Houlihan and Green, 2010; and Hylton, 2013). The main role of evaluation in this context is to produce data which measures against agreed outputs/outcomes as a monitoring process to inform funders and/or hold provider(s) to account. Furthermore, Spaaij *et al* (2018) have highlighted how research and evaluation is firmly placed within the power nexus of **SfD** privileging academic institutions and subjugating those on the front line of delivery (Harris and Adams, 2016). This limits the scope and influence of evaluation on sport policy, provision and practice currently (Jeanes and Lindsey, 2014).

Because the project at the centre of this research is UK based it is important to recognise the UK policy context. Specifically, within the UK, the type of ‘evidence’ sought can be traced to the imposition of neo-liberal tendencies and pragmatism in UK Sport policy development since the 1990’s. The introduction of New Public Management (NPM) as a mode of governance (under the New Labour administration

1997-2010) created the infrastructure to modernise and enhance the performance of the public sector. In doing so, it was anticipated that the M&E of government funded programmes would ensure that decisions were made on sound evidence to inform practice (Houlihan and Green, 2010). The emphasis placed on ‘results-based-pay’ and associated accountability has brought about a culture of target-driven practice premised upon the view that sport works (Harris, 2018; Smith and Leach, 2010). This has led to monitoring methods that must prove intervention/programme impact. This is reflected in government tendency to favour (ineffective) pre-determined ‘evaluation’ approaches introduced into programmes which align to, and are influenced by, existing funding and governance structures in place (Adams and Harris, 2014; Coalter, 2010; Hylton, 2013; Giulianotti, 2011; Chouinard, 2013).

This **results in** usually positivistic preordained designs, with predetermined evaluation questions, targets and **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** in order to obtain ‘objective’ data to measure success (Coalter, 2007; Nicholls *et al*, 2010; Houlihan and Green, 2010; Kay, 2012; Chouinard, 2013; and Robinson *et al*, 2013). Further, such approaches have limited scope for stakeholders to be involved in M&E processes beyond as ‘subjects being researched on’ (Darnell, *et al*, 2016). Subsequently, M&E frameworks usually fail to reflect local need/interest as a result of key actions not being able to inform the evaluation design and implementation (Bloyce and Smith, 2010; Kay, 2009; Nicholls *et al*, 2010; Houlihan and Green, 2010; Chouinard; 2013).

The culmination of these critical issues in relation to current M&E practice **limits the current empirical evidence base in attesting to the broader contribution**, worth and value of sport in achieving socio-political objectives often claimed, as reflected within the work of Coalter (2007; 2009); Kay (2009); Nichols *et al* (2010); Bloyce and Smith (2010) and Harris and Adams (2016). **This has created** a crossroads for **SfD** in where to turn in the pursuit of evidence, as technocratic institutionalism currently dominates the evidence discourse in **SfD**. This is compounded by an austerity discourse which Jeanes and Rossi (2017) suggest has led to an unfilled promise of **SfD** over the last decade.

Over the last five years some excellent contributions have been made to the **SfD** field problematising these issues and illustrating possible innovations in participatory based research and evaluation. As a starting point, Spaaij *et al* (2018) have called for the need to conceptualise participatory research around the themes of power, participation and reflexivity. They highlight the need to deconstruct power relations where traditional researchers move away from being ‘evaluator’ or ‘director’ more towards facilitator or collaborator (Spaaij and Jeanes, 2013). This can then **result in a** cohesive process where local actors can participate **as equals** (Spaaij *et al*, 2018), which supports more of a reflexive environment where knowledge is produced, translated and acted upon (Harris, 2018).

Conceptualising what participatory research and evaluation is within **SfD** can then help to provide a foundation to mobilise innovative approaches. For example, Hayhurst’s (2015) post-colonial feminist participatory research mitigated some of the key issues highlighted by actively engaging local actors through the likes of

sharing circles, photovoice and collaborating with cultural intermediaries to uncover insight not usually possible through traditional researcher and participant approaches. In addition, Sherry et al (2017) illustrate how innovative methodological approaches such as stories of change making use of technology to record day to day experiences was able to bring to life the journeys and life experiences of those within the programmes. However, whilst these authors advocate the strengths in this innovation, they still recognise the challenges of how these approaches align with the bureaucracy of funding and academic institutional pressures for publication and ethics (Spaaij et al, 2018).

With this in mind, there is a need to challenge what kind of evidence or knowledge is/should be considered legitimate, and how it can be captured, when evaluating SfD initiatives. This consists of recognising how to meet the needs of all stakeholders involved in evaluating SfD programmes and fostering use of knowledge (Kay, 2012; Chouinard, 2013), whilst questioning M&E thinking and practice through alternative M&E methodologies. With a specific focus on evaluation, the likes of Chen (2018) have provided useful reviews of the M&E landscape in sport which has culminated in calls for more theory-driven approaches to evaluation such as Pawson and Tilley's 1997 Realist Evaluation to capture and make sense of complexity. Furthermore, other examples such as Harris (2018) has attempted to mobilise realist approaches to evaluation through participatory methods to demonstrate that some differing attempts are emerging. We now specifically draw upon the case for PE in Sfd and how it is conceptualised.

### The Potential of Participatory Evaluation within Sport-for-development

Participatory Evaluation (PE) methodology stems from participatory 'research' traditions spearheaded by the work of Freire (1972) and Fals-Bosa (1985) who advocate 'bottom-up' action and reflection approaches to evaluation (and development) to overcome marginalisation and transform imbalances in power within communities and society (Minkler and Wallerstein 2003; Cousins and Chouinard, 2012). The increasing attention towards PE can be shown by the number of publications since the mid-1970's and increasing theoretical and empirical support within the evaluation community since the early 1990's (Cousins and Earl, 1992; Cousins and Whitmore 1998; and Chouinard (2013).

Within the field of participatory evaluation there are different approaches to involving stakeholders which impact on the role of the researcher/evaluator and non-evaluators i.e. participants and practitioners. This is demonstrated by Fetterman *et al's* (2013) classification between the three most common approaches; Collaborative Evaluation (CE), Participatory Evaluation (PE) and Empowerment evaluation (EE):

1. Collaborative Evaluation: the researcher/evaluator initiates and takes the lead role among participants throughout each phase of an evaluation
2. Participatory Evaluation: the researcher/evaluator jointly shares control with participants throughout each phase of an evaluation
3. Empowerment Evaluation: the researcher/evaluator empowers programme staff, participants, and members to take control and lead throughout each phase of an evaluation

Subsequently, the role of the research/evaluator within each of these approaches directly impacts on the role and responsibilities of stakeholder's involved within an evaluation. This links to Cousins and Whitemore's (1998) classification of 'participatory' evaluation based on the diversity of participants, extent of involvement within the technical tasks of the evaluation processes, and control of the evaluation process between researcher and participants. Further, in terms of contemporary relevance pertaining to the PE movement, it is necessary to acknowledge the work of Shulha et al's (2016) Collaborative Principles to Evaluation (CAE) which transcend the conceptual classifications of CE-PE-EE methodology ascribed above. CAE is a principle-based approach which is more responsive to context and stakeholders involved with, or connected to, a programme, and how stakeholder roles and responsibilities change over time.

The constitutive principles of 'participatory' evaluation set out by Cousins and Whitemore (1998) as diversity, depth of control and extent of involvement is achieved methodologically through reconnecting the voice of traditionally subjugated stakeholders (predominately practitioners and participants) in: setting aim(s)/objectives; (co)developing approaches to data collection; conducting M&E as evaluators; interpreting and analysing data; and disseminating findings (Shah *et al*, 2004; Daigneault and Jacob, 2009; NSD 2009; Nicholls *et al*, 2010; Houlihan and Green, 2010; Preti, 2012; Kay, 2009;2012; and Chouinard, 2013).

The justification for PE is well established within the evaluation discipline by Cousins and Earl (1992); Shah et al 2004; Atkinson; 2005; Rodrigues-Campos, 2012; Shulha, 2010; and Chouinard (2013); and more recently within SfD by Harris (2018) whom link how rebalancing 'power' between stakeholders; placing value on the views of practitioners and participants throughout evaluation processes as equals, results in:

1. Challenging conceptions and assumptions between stakeholders about the programme;
2. Developing better understanding of the programme;
3. increasing relevance of research/evaluation within initiatives between stakeholders
4. Producing more appropriate and effective ways to M&E the programme;
5. Generating better quality of evidence about the impact of the programme;
6. Increased utilisation of findings to learn, inform decision-making and improve practice.

Further, at an individual level, PE approaches can result in a transformational and/or practical benefit for stakeholders. Practical benefits can be generated as a result of participatory design i.e. creating a culture and environment for collaborative inquiry as equals in decision-making to support identifying problems, solutions and using findings to make improvements. Transformational benefit can be a result of involvement in evaluation building stakeholder capacity in evaluation which improves confidence, skills, knowledge, and can elicit self-determination (Cousins and Whitmore, 1998; Cousins and Earl, 1992; Weaver and Cousins, 2004; Greene, 2005; Chouinard, 2013).

Therefore, despite the conceptual (un)clarity surrounding PE, the theoretical and empirical support suggests PE can contribute to addressing concerns in current M&E practice; becoming tailored to, and more representative of, local need/interest and context, address issues in data quality (Chen, 2018) and enhance methodological practice and methods to M&E within SfD programmes. In doing so, producing better knowledge about SfD programmes. This is key if to ensure SfD programmes are responsive to context, and continue to learn and improve (Harris, 2018). In doing so, it can build and improve evaluative practice within programmes and build stakeholder capacity which can impact on their individual capability and wellbeing, as supported by both Preti (2012); and Gozzoli et al (2013).

Despite the potential of PE, few empirically tested models for guiding participatory evaluation exist (Springett, 2010; Cullern and Coryn 2011, Daigneault and Jacob, 2009; Cousins and Chouinard 2012). Guidance to support PE application in practice is limited as the constitutive dimensions or fundamental attributes utilised within research/evaluation are rarely provided or critically scrutinised (Robinson et al, 2013). This is consistent within the field of SfD, as there are limited PE conceptual frameworks to guide practitioners, with one PE study of note by Gozzoli et al (2013), though the study did not report the PE approach followed or how it was mobilised within practice. This is problematic in the light of repeated calls to undertake further empirical research of PE, and in determining feasibility within SfD (Cousins and Earl, 1992; Mark, 2001; and Chouinard, 2013).

Within the PE camp, Pfohl's (1986) Participatory Evaluation methodology (Appendices 1) was one of the first empirically tested approaches for guiding PE with a range of stakeholders in an international development project. The approach and manual have since been cited many times within evaluation literature and utilised as a basis for further PE. Pfohl's (1986) PE model incorporates the three key principles for PE identified by Cousins and Whitmore (1998) with the academic literature as; diversity, depth of control and extent of involvement in all evaluation phases. Further supported by the evaluator as a facilitator, and as an equal, with non-evaluators, meaning Pfohl's (1986) model coincides with the PE categorisation established earlier on within the paper.

#### **A UK based project to mobilise PE - The Newport Inclusive Football Club Initiative on the Isle of Wight**

Despite the advocacy for PE and participatory based research approaches, there are very few examples of these within the UK setting. Apart from Harris (2018) there are little or no examples of PE that have encouraged local actors to participate and take control over how they evaluate their SfD projects to understand complexity.

To contribute to this gap in understanding around PE in practice within a SfD setting, one of the authors of this paper worked with primary stakeholders; funders, practitioners and participants at NIFC on the Isle of Wight as key actors in co-productively mobilising PE. The NIFC aims to use sport to reach and engage children and young people (aged 10-18) with varying needs and abilities in a weekly football session to connect and build friendships with other participants.

The benefit being that building relationships could contribute to improving their individual wellbeing. As such, increasing sport participation among children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities was a secondary outcome for the Sfd initiative whom had to report monitoring data to the FA in receipt for funding accessed.

## Methodology

The NIFC was identified as a suitable case-study for achieving the aim and objectives of the research study, as though the Sfd programme were required to produce technocratic evidence from funders, the key actors favoured a collaborative, pragmatic approach to generating evidence which could elicit a wider benefit for the programme with all stakeholders willing to be involved.

To achieve the intentions of the study, the research strategy was twofold. First, Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology was utilised to elicit collaborative inquiry and action from stakeholders as co-evaluators (Frisby, Reid and Millar, 2005). This was achieved through the researcher spending time with stakeholders at the Sfd initiative to build relationships with stakeholders, better understand the context of the Sfd initiative and talk about the prospective research study and questions stakeholders had. Following this, the research proceeded to mobilise Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology through facilitating the active involvement of the participants to collaborate together in each phase and process of an evaluation as set out by Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology (Appendix 1) which resulted in the co-produced participatory monitoring and evaluation framework (Appendix 2).

Secondly, to understand the impact of Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology within the context of the Sfd setting, realist interviews (Manzano-Santaella, 2016) were conducted. A realist interview follows the teacher-learner cycle' which involves an interviewer presenting a programme theory (or testing propositions) (Harris, 2018) to the interviewee who then 'teaches' the interviewer specific components of the programme theory (Manzano-Santaella 2016). In relation to the study, this orientated around the iterative processes of collaboratively developing, and mobilising, a participatory M&E framework.

The study utilised purposive sampling as the stakeholders participating in the research study were already involved within the Sfd initiative and viewed as the relevant 'subject matter' to establish and explicate what worked (or not), for whom, in being involved in the participatory evaluation phases and process, and why. Alongside, what could enhance PE in the future. The study's sample population was (N=12): 2 founders, 3 coaches, and 7 young people, with parent assistance to self-advocate.

The sample provided relevant explanations in relation to what worked, for whom, how and why in collaborating together to mobilise PE within the context of their Sfd programme. This resulted in the causal links between how and why PE did, did not and could have, worked amongst stakeholders involved to be elucidated and understood (Santaella 2016; and Harris, 2018).



This realist informed research follows, and achieves, Pawson and Tilley's (1997) contribution to evidence in that it captures how people interact and reason with or against resources within a specific set of circumstances that generates change (Dalkin et al, 2015; and Harris, 2018). In relation to the study, unearthing and understanding how and why the processes of PE did, did not and could have, worked for stakeholders as a result of collaborating to evaluate a Sfd programme, is central to the realist epistemology of knowledge (Pawson and Tilley 1997; Pawson, 2006).

Pawson and Tilley (1997) suggest that findings should be presented through a programme theory which links how and why a programme (in this case Pfohl's PE methodology) did (or not) work, and why. A Programme Theory is made up of Context - Mechanism - Outcome (CMO) configurations (Pawson and Tilley 1997). Harris (2018, p.4) describes the CMO as:

- Context = what conditions are in place for a project to trigger mechanisms to produce outcome patterns?
- Mechanism = what is it about a project that may lead it to have a particular outcome pattern in a given context (for example, how do resources intersect with participants beliefs, reasoning, attitudes, ideas and opportunities?)
- Outcome = what are the practical effects produced by causal mechanisms being triggered in a given context.

The empirical data generated from the realist interviews was analysed and coded using the C-M-O logic as an analytical framework to extract causal links between Context, Mechanism(s) and Outcome within the transcriptions. The data extracted following the coding was synthesised to begin configuring C-M-Os in relation to what did, did not and could work better in adopting PE within a Sfd programme, addressing issues in reliability and trustworthiness. To support this configuring phase, Dalkin et al's (2015) contribution to disaggregating a mechanism (M) into Mechanism Resource (MRes) and Mechanism Reasoning (MReas) was adopted to simplify the causal pathway to show how specific resources introduced, generated and/or mobilised (MRes) within specific conditions (C) catalysed a change through individual's reasoning response (MRes) which caused the Outcome as a result.

Therefore, the findings are presented as a series of CMMOs within Programme Theories in relation to what did, did not and could have worked, for stakeholders by connecting how the resources provided and/or generated through mobilising Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology within the context of the Sfd programme were reasoned with, and enacted by, the stakeholders involved, and what impact this had (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Manzano, 2016).

Finally, in following Pawson and Tilley's (1997) Realist Evaluation approach, the findings presented within the Programme Theories were utilised to refine and reconceptualise PE methodology and provide a model for enhancing the effectiveness of PE practice within the field of Sfd.

## Findings and Discussion

The findings below are presented through a series of Programme Theories which are composed of C-M-M-O configurations. A C-M-M-O explains how and why the outcome was caused within the specific set of circumstances described. Subsequently, the Programme Theories present the key findings which articulate what did and did not work, and what could make PE work better within Sfd initiatives going forward.

### What Worked, for Stakeholders, in Mobilising PE within the Sport-for-development Programme?

The Programme Theory below presents a series of CMMOs illustrating the efficacious capacity of PE methodology through how it worked for stakeholders in co-producing an M&E framework within the context of the Sfd programme.

Table 1.0: Programme Theory: What did Work, for Stakeholders, in Mobilising Participatory Evaluation, and Why.

Context	Mechanism (Resource)	Mechanism (Reasoning)	Outcome
Stakeholders; founders, practitioners and participants a part of the Sfd programme and willing to be part of the PE approach alongside the evaluator.	Work flexibly to the contexts of stakeholders involved in following PE with technical support from the evaluator.	Stakeholders feel supported to be involved in evaluation processes tailored to their contexts.	Stakeholders contribute towards coproducing the M&E framework implemented within the Sfd programme, irrespective of previous evaluation experience and understanding.
Stakeholders; founders, practitioners and participants apart of the Sfd programme and willing to be part of the PE approach as an equal with the evaluator.	Spend time with the evaluator to discuss concerns and questions about evaluation prior to commencing the evaluation.	This builds relationships and generates engagement from stakeholders in completing PE processes working alongside evaluator.	Stakeholders feel willing and supported to contribute towards developing M&E framework and data collection tools to evaluate Sfd programme.
Stakeholders; founders, practitioners and participants are part of the Sfd programme and willing to collaborate in evaluation	Become involved in discussions and making decisions collectively in each phase of the evaluation.	This fosters new relationships, and different interactions, amongst stakeholders within the Sfd programme.	Creates a greater sense of ownership over the evaluation, which increases the 'collective efficacy' in mobilising the evaluation, and willingness to learn and use findings.
Stakeholders; founders, practitioners and participants apart of the Sfd programme and motivated to collaborate in the PE approach.	Work alongside the evaluator to apply and Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology.	Which generates active involvement, contribution and greater stakeholder control in all evaluation processes.	Leading to a co-produced, contextually relevant M&E framework and data collection tools for the Sfd programme.

The first CMMO identifies when working collaboratively with a group of stakeholders whom have different; experiences in, and understanding of, evaluation; needs in order to be involved; and motivations for being involved, a flexible approach enables the tailoring of an evaluation in response to the differing contexts amongst the stakeholders within the Sfd programme. The flexible

principle underpinning PE elicited all stakeholders to contribute within all phases associates to Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology (Appendices 1A). This is supported by the quotes below:

*'It felt good to be involved with the other participants as a group, it was flexible in how we worked to meet our different needs which was good as it enabled everyone to be involved, even when things changed during the evaluation, it meant we could all have an input'* (Participant 4, Coach).

*'Involving everyone and being flexible meant it became more valuable, we were able to adapt when things changed, whilst continuing to evaluate what we felt collectively was important through ways which enabled us to express our views'* (Participant 2, Founder).

This empirical material reflects the prominence of flexibility within all phases of PE to enable stakeholders to collectively contribute to evaluation processes, in doing so, enhancing perceived value of evaluation. Subsequently, the role of the evaluator is to create the conditions which support stakeholder's contribution within the evaluation and responding when circumstances change to ensure evaluation proceeds.

The second CMMO configuration, illustrates how the role of an evaluator in spending time within stakeholders to foster communication and relationships is as an important precondition for PE in creating a tailored, context-driven M&E framework and data collection tools within the context of the **SfD** programme. This is supported by the empirical material below:

*'Before this, we had not been asked to be involved in any evaluation, let alone all together. It felt good to get to know you [the Evaluator] and to be able to have conversations with you before the evaluation began. We both felt more comfortable to then be involved in this evaluation as we were familiar with you'* (Participant 9, Young Person with Parent assistance).

This quote illustrates the causal links between the impact of the evaluator spending time with stakeholders in their **SfD** programme where they are comfortable prior to the evaluation, **which** led to building relationships with stakeholders which resulted in people feeling more comfortable and willing to be involved.

The third CMMO configuration articulates how the nature of collaboration in evaluation processes fosters collective efficacy among stakeholders as they start to take ownership over, and feel responsible for, the evaluation within their **SfD** programme. This is supported by the quotes below:

*'Overall if the organisation is going to survive I think you've got to feel part of it...So I think you've got to have encourage everybody's input and to feel part of the evaluation otherwise...I don't think they'll ever*

*continue to come, and that goes for the parents as well'* (Participant 5, Coach and Parent of participant).

*'I think we, well I certainly do, feel more responsible for evaluating what we do together now, and using our evidence to improve what we do* (Participant 1, Founder).

These findings support how PE fostered collaborative efforts over evaluation and maintained motivation to evaluate with an intention to use findings to inform and improve practice. This supports statements made by Cousins and Whitmore (1998); Pfohl (196); Diagneault and Jacob (2009); and Shulha (2010) proposing that involving key stakeholders within the development and implementation of an M&E frameworks can create a greater sense of ownership, which increases the likelihood of participants continuing to utilise the approach to evaluate, and findings generated.

The most prominent finding from the research is the impact of following Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology within the context of the SfD programme which resulted in the generation of a contextually relevant M&E framework and data collection tools, as demonstrated by (Appendices 2: NIFC M&E Framework), and supported by the quote below:

*'I think everyone was involved as much they wanted to be or were able to be, and we have produced something [M&E framework] which has practical use and benefit to us all* (Participant 12, Young Person with Parent assistance).

*'This approach has strengthened the relationships between coaches, participants and their parents and us [Founder], we have worked together, which has been challenging at time, tough we have produced a way to evaluate the important things to all of us involved, and how to work together to come up with solutions'* (Participant 2, Founder).

The M&E framework (Appendices 2) demonstrates how Pfohl's (1986) PE methodology enabled stakeholders to be involved throughout the entire evaluation process, relative to their circumstances. These findings support the efficacy of PE within SfD, in particular how it enabled the creation of context-driven evaluation which was tailored to the specific sets of circumstances as a result of engaging key stakeholders from the outset, as outlined within the literature by Cousins and Earl (1992); Cousins and Whitmore (1998) and Chouinard (2013).

### **What did not Work, for Whom, in Mobilising PE within the Sport-for-development Programme?**

To enhance understanding of stakeholder praxis in mobilising PE within SfD, it is relevant to establish how and why certain processes of PE did not work, and why. Subsequently, this section focuses on the key mechanisms of PE methodology which caused challenges in operationalising collectively within the context of the SfD programme.

**Table 2.0: Programme Theory: What did not Work, for Stakeholders, in Mobilising Participatory Evaluation, and Why.**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Mechanism (Resource)</b>	<b>Mechanism (Reasoning)</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
For stakeholders; founders, practitioners and participants to engage in PE processes with the evaluator.	Stakeholders undertake a series of interrelated tasks, over a period of time, in order to coproduce the M&E <b>framework</b> .	During the evaluation, some stakeholders are unable to be as involved due to changes in individual circumstances which impact on engagement.	Individual tasks are not completed, causing a ripple-effect which reduces other stakeholder’s engagement and creates a need to respond to resource available in conducting the next phase(s) of the evaluation.
Stakeholders; founders, practitioners and participants actively involved in evaluation decision-making processes with the evaluator.	Make decisions collectively within each evaluation phase; evaluation design, mobilisation; analysis and use.	This results in instances when stakeholder views are not adopted which can negatively affect new, and existing, relationships and engagement between stakeholders.	Creates a negative impact on the proceeding evaluation processes, and ripple-effect on contribution from stakeholders who feel negated/conflicted.
Stakeholders; founders, practitioners and participants apart of the PE approach.	Proceed on the basis that all stakeholders have confidence, skills, knowledge and experience in evaluation.	Though in practice stakeholders have different degrees of knowledge, experience and views about evaluation and evidence.	This causes some stakeholders to feel less confident and able to contribute to the evaluation as a co-evaluator.
PE is mobilised as an equal approach to monitoring and evaluation between stakeholders involved,	The PE approach followed by stakeholders within the <b>SfD</b> programme requires the evaluator with the technical knowledge and experience to initiate each phase of the evaluation.	This results in stakeholders requiring the evaluator to facilitate their involvement and contribution within each phase of the evaluation.	Meaning ‘equal’ participation of all stakeholders in mobilising PE is not possible due to the different understanding of, and experience in, evaluation, between stakeholders involved.

The first CMMO configuration articulates the outcome pattern surrounding how PE in practice results in instances where changes in individual circumstances and/or motivation occur, and how this can impact on engagement and task completion, the role of an evaluator in responding to this and the ripple-effect this can have on collective engagement and contribution. This is supported by the empirical evidence below:

*'Obviously there has been times when some children and their parents have been unable to attend sessions for different reasons, which impacted on getting things done as agreed, and it caused you [the Evaluator] to have to step-in' (Participant 4, Coach).*

*'I think for me, the biggest challenge was the time commitment, because there were times when we couldn't come along to a session, which meant we missed out, and that impacts on momentum because you feel you have let the others down' (Participant 10, Young Person).  
I think the times when people hadn't done what we agreed to do, I found the most challenging as you feel less motivated doing the next bit as it's not equal' (Participant 15, Young Person with Parent Assistance).*

This demonstrates an unforeseen impact of PE in practice, as individual's circumstances alter throughout an evaluation it can affect their involvement and contribution as a result. This can impact on the motivation of other stakeholders and interrelationships between them. This also identifies the prominence of an evaluator needing to be adaptable and responsive to the resources available to evaluate when stakeholder involvement changes due to circumstances.

The second CMMO surrounds the 'manageability' of PE decision-making processes when stakeholders disagree within evaluation phases. Specifically, how to manage whose idea(s) should be acted upon, and how to then maintain the collective involvement of stakeholders, as supported by the quote below:

*'I think for me, what I would like to have agreed before we started is how we were going to manage the decision-making parts of the evaluation between us, and how to respond to disagreements between those of us involved, because that would have served to ensure we all understood what happened in these situations, and supported people staying on board and taking it personally' (Participant 1, Founder).*

Within an evaluation which is collaborative in nature, fostering collective discussions and decision-making can result in situations of disagreement and impasse, which can impact on participants motivation, and their extent of involvement going forward. How to manage these incidents when conducting PE in the existing literature is unclear, as is whose responsibility it is to address the confliction in viewpoints generated when it is an 'equal' approach. In PE literature, it is suggested that this should be a negotiated process between all stakeholders in agreeing on the course of action (Pfohl, 1986; Cousins and Earl, 1992). Thus, it can be suggested that the manageability of PE needs to be incorporated, and collectively agreed, within, the planning phase of an evaluation prior to implementation (Daigneault and Jacob, 2009).

The third CMO configuration orientates around another unintended impact pertaining to how stakeholders collaborating in evaluation results in people becoming more aware of each other's knowledge and contribution, this can cause negative effects as people may feel inferior and/or of less value to other stakeholders, as supported by the empirical evidence below:

*'At times I felt I was going along with it, I didn't really know the different ways we could evaluate things, when others seemed to know more, so I thought it was best to let them have more of a say' (Participant 10, Young Person).*

*'I became more aware of other people and how good they were in coming up with ideas and what we should do next... which made me feel like I wasn't as good as them... like I knew less... and that made me feel like I should be less involved and just focus on coaching the sessions, as the evaluation would be better if they did it without me' (Participant 5, Coach).*

The impact of PE in creating contexts whereby stakeholders who perceive themselves to be less knowledgeable and competent in evaluation and/or a burden, is the effect on their confidence, motivation and intention to contribute to PE discussions and undertaking tasks. This creates a need within collaborative efforts to ensure the evaluator continually encourages stakeholders to discuss feelings and views in relation to evaluation activities through appropriate modes to support and respond to situations which can ameliorate and negatively impact on stakeholder(s), and their engagement and contribution within PE.

The final, and most prominent CMMO configuration in synthesising the empirical data pertains to the conceptual categorisation of PE methodology. Fetterman *et al's* (2013) definition of PE as an approach that reflects 'true', equal contribution of all stakeholders (including evaluator) in (co)producing and implementing the PE framework is not always possible in practice when contexts change. The empirical material gathered through this study (some of which outlined above) demonstrates the causal impacts through the associated stakeholder praxis requiring the technical competence and methodological understanding and guidance of an evaluator to lead and facilitate PE. Further, there is a need for an evaluator to be adaptable and respond to resource availability when stakeholder's circumstances change (impacting on their extent of involvement and contribution) to ensure the evaluation practically proceeds, maintains momentum and wider stakeholder's motivation towards PE. This means current PE methodology needs to consider the adaptable role of an evaluator in responding to changing contexts within an evaluation, which conflicts with the categorised boundaries, and current conceptualisation of PE.

Subsequently, the programme theory based on empirical evidence identifies practical challenges associated to Pfohl's (1986) PE model under the current conceptual PE approach, where a scarcity of literature explaining implications in practice exists (Robinson et al, 2013).

### **Enhancing the operationalisation of Participatory Evaluation within Sport-for-development**

The final research objective orientated around establishing what would enhance the effectiveness of PE in practice in the future, and why, within SfD programmes, as called for from Shah *et al* (2004); NSD (2009); and Cousins and Chouinard

(2012). Subsequently, Table 3.0 sets out the programme theory developed for enhancing the methodological practice of PE.

Table 3.0: Programme Theory: What, if Anything, is Needed to Enhance Participatory Evaluation in Practice.

Context	Mechanism (Resource)	Mechanism (Reasoning)	Outcome
PE methodology proceeds on a basis that every stakeholder is willing, and has time, to contribute to each evaluation phase.	Mobilising PE into practice requires stakeholders to have an equal opportunity in contributing to all phases of an evaluation.	Stakeholder's motivation to evaluate changes in practice because of individual circumstances which can impact of extent of involvement and engagement.	Motivation to evaluate and extent of involvement needs to be established and incorporated within the planning phase of an evaluation.
Pfohl's (1986) PE approach proceeds on the belief that all 'non-evaluators' can become evaluators of their intervention.	Mobilising PE with stakeholders promotes: evaluative thinking; requires stakeholders to understand and apply technical aspects associated to an evaluation; and answer evaluate questions.	Stakeholders have differing levels of understanding, skills and experience in evaluation, which can lead to some stakeholders requiring additional support, training and adapted materials to contribute.	Participatory evaluation needs to incorporate capacity building to build confidence, skills and knowledge amongst stakeholders to evaluate, and enhance sustainability of PE.
The final phase of Pfohl's (1986) PE approach is 'Use' which supports stakeholders to reflect on what they have learnt and what they will do differently.	Stakeholders reflect on learning through the evaluation phases, the evidence generated, and how to use and communicate the findings, though do not reflect on learning to improve evaluative practice.	This means stakeholders do not collaborate to reflect on evaluative practice and identify how to refine and improve M&E within their Sfd programmes.	This results in the need to incorporate 'reflection on evaluative practice' to guide stakeholders to refine and improve M&E practice to enhance effectiveness and sustainability beyond initial PE cycle.

The first CMMO configuration identifies the need to establish each stakeholder's motivation to collaborate in an evaluation and the extent that they are willing to be involved at the beginning of an evaluation. This insight better inform the planning and implementation phases of an evaluation. Additionally, this can contribute to identifying the strategies needed to monitor and manage key processes throughout the duration of an evaluation, as supported by the quote below:

*'Everyone is enthusiastic towards something when you first start off, what is important is to maintain that, maybe people setting out why they want to be evolved, to what extent and what they feel they could offer or contribute in which phase of the evaluation from the start*



*would help planning it, and avoiding issues that occur down the line when it comes to doing the do' (Participant 5, Coach).*

Clarifying stakeholder motivation(s) for being involved in an evaluation, coupled with how much they wish to be involved from the outset can lead to a more tailored, context-driven M&E framework within SfD programmes. In doing so, address potential issues in maintaining engagement, managing time(frames) for PE mobilisation and needing to respond to changing individual stakeholder's roles. This will also contribute to informing the role of the evaluator in responding to the resource needs to ensure the evaluation occurs.

The second CMMO sets out a contribution to enhance the quality of PE for stakeholders involved, and evidence generated as a result of the evaluation. This is proposed through embedding 'evaluation capacity building' within a PE approach. Evaluation capacity building would be undertaken prior to the mobilisation phase of an evaluation, in response to the planning phase of an evaluation to build stakeholder confidence, technical skills and knowledge to implement the M&E framework as planned, as supported by the quotes below:

*'I think having more time before we did the actual evaluation would have been good, with you [the Evaluator] for those who wanted it, so we felt more confident in using the tools, and less worried about doing it wrong, as for some of us it was our first time in doing something like this' (Participant 10, Young Person with Parent assistance).*

*'It would have been good to have had more conversations with you [the Evaluator] to support us to think about things in different ways. As I think that would have made me feel confident to contribute more than I did, though I feel I have learnt a lot from this' (Participant 3, Coach).*

*'Everyone sees things differently and different ways of doing things, which is great, though it would have been good to have some workshops where we could test the evaluation tools out, with your support, so we know how to do things in the right way' (Participant 5, Coach).*

The prominence of the CMMO supports the need to establish and incorporate the capacities of stakeholders within evaluation, alongside identifying and providing capacity building training. The need to incorporate opportunities for stakeholders to enhance their evaluation capacity is justified, if to enhance operational practice of participatory M&E within SfD and likelihood of sustaining M&E in practice. This could result in generating both practical and transformative benefits for stakeholders through PE as proposed by Cousins and Whitmore (1998) through learning new skills, increasing competency and knowledge in evaluation and evidence.

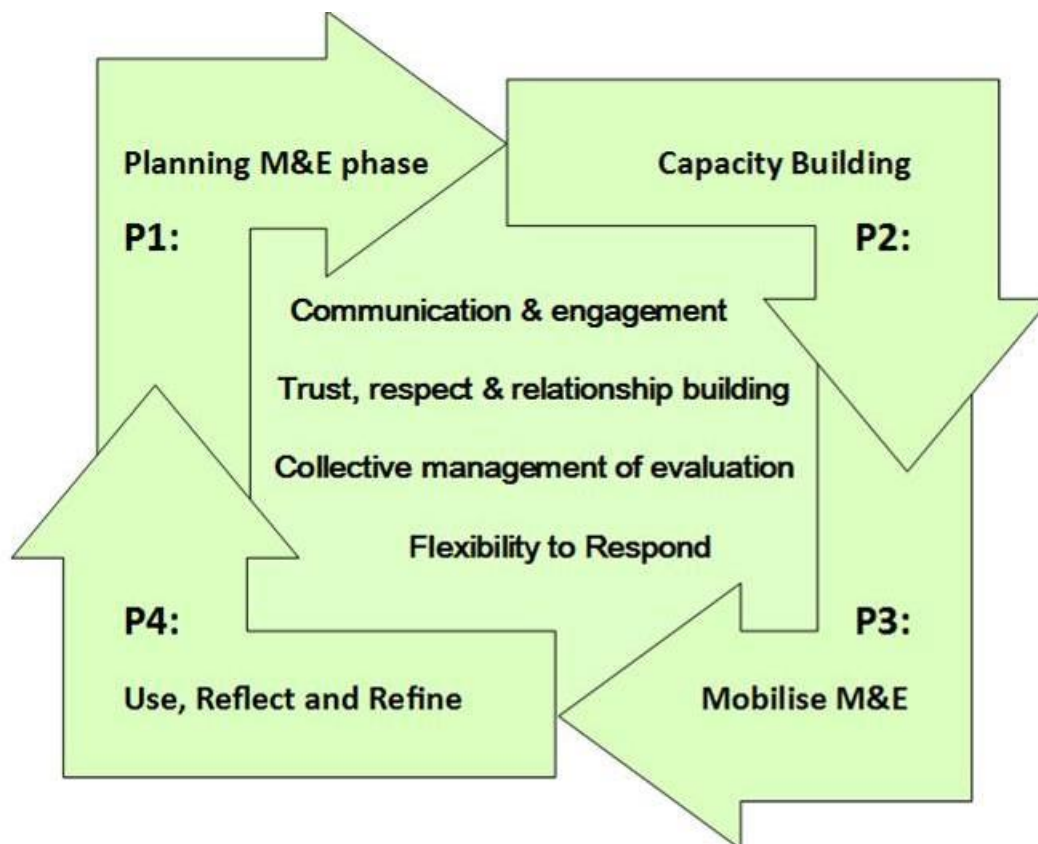
The final CMMO articulates the need to intentionally reflect on internal evaluative practices to refine and improve the M&E approach as part of embedding evaluation within SfD programmes. This is supported by the quote below:

*‘Now we have evaluated our programme together, what we do next is key, it shouldn’t just be focused on how we are going to use our findings to inform our practice, we need to review how we evaluate to make it easier for everyone to continue to be involved in evaluating our programme’ (P1, Founder).*

This CMMO supports how promotes the importance of continual learning and improvement in evaluative practice within a SfD programme is to foster sustaining PE through enhancing efficiency and effectiveness for stakeholders involved. This results in a proposal for incorporating a ‘Reflection and Refine’ process within the final phase of an evaluation to enhance evaluative practice.

The final intention of the research was to synthesise the empirically driven programme theories above to reconceptualise PE based on what did, did not and could work better in conducting Pfohl’s (1986) participatory evaluation methodology. The synthesis of findings has resulted in our production of our own model (see figure 1.0) for enhancing the effectiveness of PE in practice within SfD programmes. As such, the evaluation phases are guided by an interrelated set of principles and values in order to effectively develop and embed PE between stakeholders in practice within SfD programmes.

**Figure 1.0: Phases for enhancing the effectiveness of Participatory Evaluation**



The realist-informed understanding of how and why PE worked, did not and could work better has led to a reconceptualised PE methodology outlined above. This is to guide practitioners in enhancing the effectiveness of planning, implementing and refining a participatory evaluation within the context of a SfD programme. As such, it is suggested that these key phases are interdependent and need to be considered and incorporated if to deliver an effective PE. The principles and values need to be adopted by the practitioner(s), shared by the stakeholders and integrated in practice to guide carrying out the processes and resulting activities within each phases of the PE model.

## Conclusion

The proliferation and salience of ‘sport-for-development’ within UK social policy has generated scrutiny, scepticism and challenge surrounding the evidence legitimising sport towards achieving socio-political outcomes. Current issues in M&E practice and evidence have been established and form a basis for a participatory approach to M&E, which contributes to addressing some of the associated issues to the predominant technocratic approach. Subsequently, the research study set out to evaluate the utility of PE within a case-study context through the associated stakeholder praxis in mobilising PE in practice in a SfD initiative. This is of relevance given the scarcity of evidence within the literature surrounding guidance for operationalising PE, and the efficacy of PE, within SfD.

The findings, presented through Programme Theories, are a series of CMMO configurations which demonstrate the prominent outcome patterns explaining How and Why PE worked (or not) for stakeholders within the context of a SfD programme, alongside what, if anything, was needed to enhance PE practice. As such, the findings show how mobilising Pfohl’s (1986) PE methodology through the facilitatory role of the researcher enabled ‘traditionally subjugated’ people in evaluation to be actively involved in evaluation phases and processes. This catalysed stakeholder’s willingness and support towards the participatory evaluation approach followed and generated a sense of collective ownership over the evaluation. This resulted in fostering evaluative thinking, co-producing and implementing a participatory monitoring and evaluation framework, and fostered key actors intention to use the findings to continue to learn and improve practice.

However, the findings demonstrate that to enhance participatory evaluation in practice within SfD settings there is a need to co-agree governance to collectively manage evaluation processes and activities within the evaluation planning phase. This is to ensure there is collective understanding around roles and responsibilities and how to respond to changes in individual circumstances and/or motivation, difference in viewpoints or practical/technical implications during an evaluation which negatively impact on progress. This supports further findings surrounding the need for flexibility when adopting a participatory evaluation, to establish stakeholder’s motivation to evaluate and evaluation capacity building requirements as part of an evaluation planning phase.

Subsequently, these findings have informed the theoretical contributions to participatory evaluation methodology as illustrated by Figure 1.0 Phases for enhancing the effectiveness of Participatory Evaluation model. This

reconceptualised model offers conceptual and practical developments to PE. Specifically, if to enhance effectiveness and sustainability with SfD programmes going forward. The model illustrates how building relationships and communication with the researcher and between stakeholders, being flexible and collective governance are key contextual conditions necessary to mobilise participatory evaluation through the four key cyclical phases: Planning, Evaluation Capacity Building, Mobilisation and Use, Reflect and Refine to create, refine and improve evaluative practice within SfD programmes.

To further PE within SfD programmes, there is a need for further scrutiny and refinement of PE across varying SfD programmes and contexts if to enhance effective operationalisation in practice. This can be of relevance to the wider evaluation community in capturing insights and understanding about the requirements needed to actualise effective PE frameworks (Fetterman and Wandersman, 2007). Therefore, more realist-orientated evaluations of PE are needed if to produce more powerful context-mechanism-outcome configurations (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Manzano, 2016) supporting the portability, and contribution of, PE within SfD.

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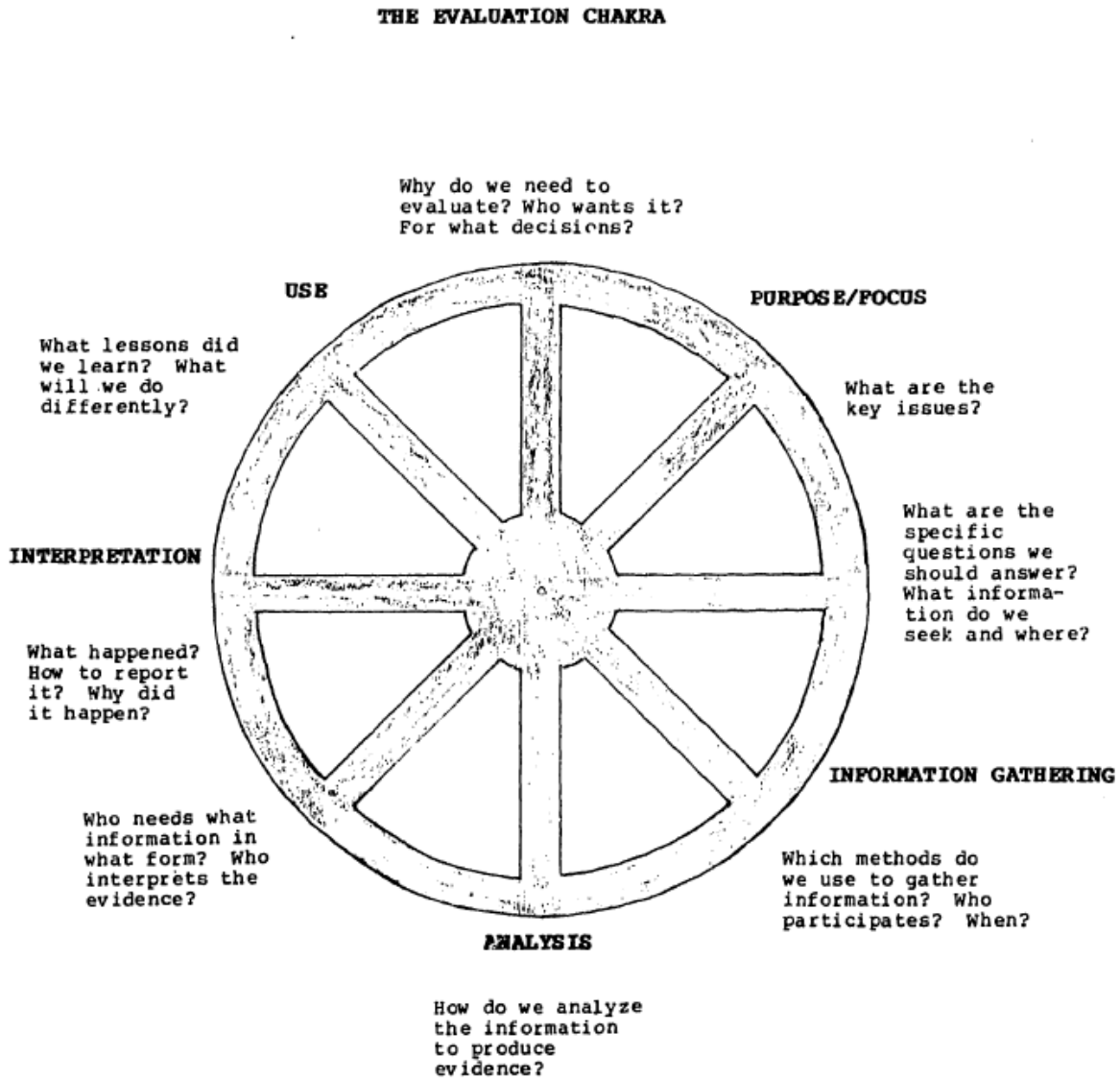
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Appendix 1: Jacob Pfohl's (1986) Participatory Evaluation model



Source: PFOHL, J., 1986. *Participatory evaluation: a users guide*. New York: United Nations. Figure B, p.15

## Appendix 2: NIFC Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Target /goals	KPI/CSF	Method of Collection	Source	Frequency	Data analysis	Use - (what will be done differently)
Enhance individual football specific outcomes	Individual mini-skill score	<i>Formatively:</i> skill session: kick-ups, dribbling, shooting, heading and passing accuracy games	Participant	End of each term (every 12 weeks)	Practitioner and founders	Enhance session delivery in becoming more effective and achieving more outcomes
All involved enjoy coming to the NIFC	Participant score on happiness  Collective views from stakeholder	<i>Formatively:</i> Participant and parent assisted mixed-method questionnaire; and practitioner reflective journal <i>Summatively:</i> Annual focus group with coaches and founders	Participant and parent aided  Founder, and practitioner	End of each term (every 12 weeks)  Annually	Practitioner and founders  External support	Reshaping of sessions to become more enjoyable
Enhance individual self-efficacy	Individual change on Confidence scale	<i>Formatively:</i> parent and participant assisted evaluation mixed-method questionnaire <i>Summatively:</i> multi-methods i.e. drawing pictures / paintings/photos/stories	Participant and parent aided  Participant	End of each term (every 12 weeks)  Annually	Practitioner and founders	Explore team building days, and restructuring of sessions to enhance self-efficacy
Increased number of participants attending the NIFC	Number of new participants per term	<i>Formatively:</i> weekly monitoring through register and document appointments/illness	Practitioner	Weekly	Practitioner and founders	Present monitoring data to Hampshire FA and funding donors regarding growth to sustain funding allocation
Build social relationships	Making new friends  Increased interaction  Friendships continue outside of the NIFC	<i>Formatively:</i> parent and participant assisted evaluation mixed-method questionnaire, and through practitioner journal  <i>Summatively:</i> multi-methods i.e. drawing pictures/ paintings/photos/stories	Participant and parent aided  Participant	End of each term (every 12 weeks)  Annually	Founders with external support	Understand mechanisms which create social relations between key stakeholders within the NIFC
Participants feel included	Involvement in discussions and decisions relevant to NIFC.	<i>Formatively:</i> parent and participant assisted evaluation mixed-method questionnaire  <i>Summatively:</i> multi-methods i.e. drawing pictures/ paintings/photos/stories	Participant and parent aided  Participant	End of each term (every 12 weeks)  Annually	Practitioner and founders	Enhance parity and opportunities for participants, parents to be/feel included and active within the NIFC
Play in competitive fixtures	Number of participants playing in competitive games	<i>Formatively:</i> practitioner journal  <i>Summatively:</i> report submitted to relevant funding donors	practitioner	Monthly  Annually	Practitioner and founders	Present to SportEd (donor), and demonstrate opportunities to parents
Contribute to a physically active lifestyle	1)Self -reported Health outcomes 2)Uptake in other physical/sporting activities	<i>Formatively:</i> parent and participant assisted evaluation mixed-method questionnaire  <i>Summatively:</i> multi-methods i.e. drawing pictures/ paintings/photos/stories	Participant and parent aided	End of each term (every 12 weeks)  Annually	Practitioner and founders	To understand how and why the NIFC contributes to wider health and care outcomes.