



# **FUNDING IN SPORT: WHAT WE LEARN**

**B I T E S I Z E   L E A R N I N G   S E R I E S**

# REFLECTIONS SINCE 2009...

SportWorks was founded back in 2009. We've had lots of highs and lows, and almost went bust in 2010!

So what have we learned in terms of funding and finances?

Here is our "Bitesize" reflection...

*(PS - don't tell anybody...but we're still learning!!)*



**WHO SAID  
FUNDRAISING IS  
STRESSFUL?**



**I'M 25 AND FEEL GREAT!**

# 1) Set A Clear Strategy

- **Set clear goals:** When we first started we just focused on delivering a really good community sports project. One that made an impact to local people.
- But that wasn't enough. We learned how important it is to have a clear vision about what we are seeking to do, why our work is important, and why we are the best organisation to deliver a certain piece of work.
- In short, we learned that we needed to have a plan, and communicate it.
- Even today, it still amazes us how many organisations in the sport for development sector have no business plan nor fundraising strategy.
- We now like to take a very professional, proactive approach which we think (hope!) puts us in a strong position when bidding for funding.
- Communicating our vision and strategy makes it much easier for funders to understand how their contributions will make a difference and what exactly their money will be used for.

## 2) Work Closely With the Community

- When we first started, our work was very much project based. When the funding ran out, the project stopped.
- This didn't benefit anybody and probably made little impact to the health and wellbeing of the local community.
- These days we recognise the importance of working with the local community to ensure projects self sustain, even after our work / funding finishes.
- So how can you do this... ?
- it is important to really engage with your local community to stand the best chance of accessing funding. Work closely with the local authority, charities, voluntary groups and other sports clubs to really understand where the biggest challenges are.
- Funders all want the same thing: to see evidence that an organisation really understands the needs, aspirations and challenges of a local community. Without first hand knowledge it is far more difficult to access funding.

### 3) Provide Transparency

- Back in 2009 we didn't really talk openly about funding and finance. Not that we had anything to hide, it just didn't seem important.
- These days we work differently: we choose to be really open and transparent with our partners and funders from the very beginning.
- Specifically, we feel it is important to communicate about where their funds are being spent, what challenges we have had and what potential risks there are in a particular project.
- This approach really builds trust and ultimately leads to greater levels of financial support in the future.

## 4) Talk About Impact

- Every funder wants something different in the world of sport for development: some are interested in the number of participants per week. Others want to see more detailed evaluations of reduction in obesity or improved mental health. Others want very detailed data reports measuring educational outcomes.
- There isn't one defined method of measuring impact and getting good quality information isn't always easy.
- We have invested in our own systems to really understand the impact we are making. We've tried lots of different approaches and continually update and improve the way we collect information.
- This has really helped us to communicate the impact we make to people's wellbeing and education.
- Knowing precisely how our work benefits people's lives ultimately helps us to access more fund so we can help even more people.



We hope this short guidance is helpful. If we can help to support your work please do get in touch!

Thank you.

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