

Practical Experience and Realistic Enlightenment of British Community Sports Charity Organization "Sported"

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Abstract: *Through literature review, logical analysis and other methods, this paper explores the practice of the British Sported community sports charity organization, analyzes its development characteristics, and proposes practical implications for China. The practical experience of the British Sported community sports charity organization includes: multimedia promotion and marketing strategies; Perfect social network; Multi-agent collaborative participation mode; The value concept of social integration of vulnerable groups. Implications for China: Raise funds through multiple channels, improve the "hierarchical" funding mechanism; Internal training and external shaping of human resources, building a "complex" social network; Cultural symbols break through regulatory barriers and reshape the "ecological" value goal framework.*

Keywords: *sports charity organizations; volunteer service; the UK*

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th CPC National Congress pointed out: improve the volunteer service system and work system; encourage enterprises, social organizations, and individuals to participate in public welfare undertakings. Charity organizations are non-profit organizations that play an important role in promoting the development of public welfare undertakings and improving social welfare levels as a complement to government safeguard mechanisms^[1]. Charity organizations bear the important task of carrying out volunteer services and can effectively achieve the strategic goal of improving the volunteer service system. Sports charity organizations are social public welfare activities carried out by sports social organizations based on the principle of humanitarianism, which play an active role in promoting the fair distribution of sports resources and social resources^[2]. Yao Fund Sports Charity Organization is the first sports charity organization in China. Based on the purpose of "education through sports", it is committed to providing educational assistance and promoting the healthy development of young people. However, due to the late development of sports charity organizations in China, they face problems such as unclear operating entities and small operating scales, which restrict the role of sports charity organizations in promoting sports fairness in China^[3]. In more than ten years of development and evolution, the British Sported community sports charity has accumulated rich experience in promoting sports development, promoting social integration of vulnerable groups, and sustainable development of community sports groups. Learning from the practical experience of foreign sports charity organizations is an effective way to promote the overall development of sports in China, improve organizational management level, and enhance sports volunteer services. Therefore, this article will systematically elaborate on the successful experience of the British Sported community sports charity organization to provide long-term and effective references for Chinese social sports charity organizations to actively participate in volunteer service work.

2. British "Sported" Community Sports Charity Organization

2.1. Overview of the Development of British "Sported" Community Sports Charity Organization

Sported is derived from the past participle of the word "sport", which originated from the ancient Roman or Latin word "desporeo" and contains the meanings of entertainment, recreation, and sports^[4]. The British Sported community sports charity organization refers to the general term for organizations and groups that manage sports volunteer service activities established for the promotion of sports development, the social integration of vulnerable groups, and the sustainable development of

community sports groups. Looking at the time series of the formation of the British Sported community sports charity organization, it has experienced the following four periods: In 2005, Sir Keith Mills, the International Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games, and Lord Seb Coe led their teams to Singapore to bid for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, making a commitment to inspire a generation through the Olympics, laying the foundation for the establishment of Sported. In 2008, Sir Keith Mills invested 10 million pounds in the project, thus founding Sported, serving as its chairman, with the organizational goal of making the legacy of the London Olympic Games last for a long time among the people, inspiring generations of people through sports, and using sports to change young people, communities, and society. Here, Sported was officially established. As of 2022, after continuous development, Sported has funded the development of 2,900 community sports organizations in the British Isles, offering 100 sports programs that have benefited over 500,000 members. Moreover, Sported has worked with the government and donors to use data and engage, attract, and enhance the leadership capabilities of leaders in order to help change disadvantaged young people throughout the UK. During this period, Sported rapidly developed into the largest sports community charity organization in the UK dedicated to promoting sports development. Then, in the four-year strategic plan for 2021-2025, Sported mainly focuses on three areas: well-being, equality, and community. Sported leverages its own advantages, professional knowledge, and experience to have a significant impact on well-being, equality, and community. During this period, the British Sported organization has become more stable, with effective organization management, diverse functions, and a clear structure, fully embodying the mission of "helping community organizations survive and promoting the growth and development of young people."

2.2. Development Characteristics of the British "Sported" Community Sports Charity Organization

2.2.1. Multi-channel Funding Support

The actual operation of the British Sported Community Sports Charity Organization requires necessary capital income streams and the collection of a certain amount of materials to ensure the stability of the project. The British Sported Community Sports Charity Organization supports the development of various activities in community groups and provides them with sufficient financial support for their sustainable development. In addition to providing cooperation space for community groups, it invests a large amount of funds in charitable activities every year.

In addition, Sported members actively cooperate with different social forces, government agencies, enterprises, and foundations in different regions. Sported has accumulate received £10.06 million in funding from 2019 to 2022, which mainly comes from the Times Christmas Appeal Donation, the England Sports Agency, NIKE, the National Lottery Community Fund, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 led to a decrease in funding income in 2020. As the global COVID-19 pandemic has been effectively controlled, the data has increased by 165% and 120% compared to the \$19.73 million in funding income reported in 2020 after 2021.

2.2.2. Carpet-style Assistance Strategy

The British Sported Community Sports Charity Organization should prominently build a direct interpersonal network structure based on "local volunteers" while constantly guiding the joining of potential followers in social network attributes to achieve the aggregation of various relationships and recruit new members. The British Sported Community Sports Charity Organization mainly adopts the following assistance methods to attract followers: (1) volunteer support, providing members with one-on-one professional consultation and business guidance; (2) light touch service, including short-term remote support, focusing on specific issues and challenges; (3) member benefits, providing free and half-price services, including training, resources, and legal advice; (4) allocation of grants to support marginalized areas and easily overlooked groups; (5) regional support and networks to ensure that members benefit from local professional teams and support networks.

2.2.3. Significance of Social Impact

As of 2020, more than 2,680 groups have benefited from Sported, with 45% coming from the 30% poorest areas. It provides 96 sports programs, 52% of which are entirely managed by volunteers. Many groups rely only on a few key individuals, and 43% of groups have an annual income of less than £10,000. Each member of Sported utilizes the power of sports to prevent and address the most urgent social issues affecting young people today: youth violence, community cohesion, and mental health. In the 2020 annual report, Sported's five major social outcomes include reducing crime and antisocial

behavior by 10%, improving sports participation by 19%, enhancing community cohesion by 29%, improving health and well-being by 25%, and improving education and employment by 17%.

In the 2022 annual report, the five major social outcomes include reducing crime and antisocial behavior by 28%, reducing sports participation inequality by 45%, enhancing community cohesion by 39%, improving health and well-being by 50%, and enhancing education and employability by 32%. It can be seen that in three years, Sported has achieved remarkable results in addressing youth violence, enhancing community cohesion, and improving mental health through the social functions of sports activities.

3. Practical Experience of the British Community Sports Charity Organization "Sported"

3.1. Strategies for Multimedia Promotion and Marketing

Firstly, in all collaborations during 2020-2021, Sported's most influential partnership was with the Christmas charity appeal in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. Over the course of six weeks, 13 Sported stories were promoted, emphasizing the work of community sports groups and their amazing impact. This resulted in significant donations from readers, foundations, and donors, generating over £670,000 of income for Sported. Foundations included the Lindsey Foundation, Matthew Mullin Foundation, and Heart of England Foundation. Aside from strengthening Sported's own financial situation and creating a new donor base of 2,000 people, this appeal enabled Sported to connect with 150 new members, develop a new IT system to better serve existing members, and create a mental health-focused project based on member feedback. Secondly, Sported has implemented an ambassador program to disseminate its message further, increase its influence, and raise awareness to promote fundraising and impact. Two ambassadors were selected: Eric Dier, a Tottenham Hotspur and England footballer, and Rory Best, former Ireland rugby union captain. These ambassadors promote Sported's work on social media, launch inclusion projects in Northern Ireland, and speak on behalf of Sported at various events, including Sported's 10th anniversary in Northern Ireland and the London Sports Awards (via video). Finally, Sported's monthly email newsletter provides the latest news, member activity updates, member support, and information from external partners. Volunteers receive bi-monthly emails with updates on volunteer activities and news from Sported and the industry.

3.2. Robust and Well-Developed Social Networking

Firstly, under the overall guidance of Sported, all volunteers are required to adhere to the principle of "helping community organizations survive and thrive by promoting the well-being of young people." Local community volunteers must have at least three years of professional experience in at least one of the following areas: evaluation and impact, facilities, financial management, fundraising and income generation, governance, inclusion, leadership training, marketing/public relations, planning (business/strategy), project planning, sports development, volunteer and staff management, women and girls, and other applicable skills or life experiences. Secondly, from a youth perspective, various motivational and fun sports promotion activities are held to awaken young people's awareness of sports and guide them in the right direction. While fully respecting the overall guidance of Sported headquarters, volunteers can fully utilize their professional skills and life experiences to carry out various activities, provide member services and benefits, and offer assistance to these young people. Finally, the success of Sported relies on dedicated volunteers who care about young people. The selfless contributions of 344 volunteer groups ensure that Sported can carry out activities throughout the UK smoothly. Volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, including parents, teachers, school administrators, librarians, reading and media experts, middle school students, university students, etc. Their responsibilities include workshops (online), grant application support, funding programs, entrepreneurship support, staff support, customized financing searches, resources/guidance, demonstrating that volunteers are the driving force behind Sported's sustainable development.

3.3. Operating Model with Collaborative Participation from Multiple Stakeholders

First, among the relevant stakeholders and their relationships in Sported, the UK government, represented by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is the purchasing entity of Sported. It commissions the England Sports Council to organize and supervise the implementation of the program through financial support. As the receiving entity, the England Sports Council serves more as an intermediary, with its main responsibilities being the supervision of effective policy execution and

final delivery. Operational tasks such as training, guidance, and provision of service opportunities are completed by Sported, a social sports organization partner with long-term cooperation with the England Sports Council. Secondly, Sported has partners across 2,900 groups in the UK. Sported provides volunteers with commercial skills (such as strategic planning, fundraising, public relations and marketing, finance, governance, evaluation and impact) to guide member community clubs, partnership relations, programs and projects; financing opportunities and cost savings; seminars, web seminars and local networks; impact measurement support; advocacy and influence, etc., to ensure that Sported members have appropriate structures and foundations, enabling them to continue serving the community even during the most difficult times. Finally, from the perspective of Sported's operations, Sported is led by the government, with the England Sports Council serving as a hub. Relying on the collaborative participation of numerous Sported partners, it reflects the governance philosophy of the UK central government's transfer of power to social sports organizations, which not only effectively improves the execution efficiency of the government's decentralization policies but also maximizes the public interest in sports.

3.4. The Value Concept of Social Integration for Vulnerable Groups

First, focus on the integration among different races. Although Sported is diverse, it still needs to pay more attention to racial issues, spending time understanding the challenges faced by members and how Sported can support meaningful and effective change. In response to the "Combating Racism Report," Sported has designed a racial equality strategy that prioritizes the suggestions and feedback of members from different ethnic communities (EDC). In 2020, the focus will be on launching Black leaders, aiming to enhance their voice in this field and connect them with influential Black leaders in the sports industry to increase opportunities to jointly stimulate change. In addition, it will also focus on improving the participation level of different ethnic communities (EDC) by working with partners to increase opportunities for all sports programs in these communities. Secondly, promoting equal participation in sports for women. Since its establishment in 2008, Sported has always prioritized women and girls. Over the years, it has supported community groups in providing sports services to women and girls and addressing gender inequality in sports. In addition, it also provides community groups with insight-led sports knowledge and education, encouraging girls to participate in and stay in community sports. From 2021 to 2022, Sported implemented a support plan with Procter & Gamble through its Always brand, providing funds and equipment to community groups serving women and girls to enable them to continue participating in sports activities. Finally, emphasis is placed on promoting the social integration of people with disabilities through sports. Sported has formed a strong inclusive spirit throughout the organization and supports its members to become more inclusive as well. The existing "21st Century" project continues to support members with disabilities in Scotland, and the project has excellently completed the further cooperation between Sported and the St. James Square Foundation, laying a solid foundation for Sported's work in disability inclusion for members in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. At the same time, Sported has received funding from the England Sports Council to pilot projects in the West Midlands region, in collaboration with Access Sport and Street Games, to cover a broader area of disability inclusion work throughout England. It has also partnered with the Nissan-sponsored Possibility Project and the Richard Whitehead Foundation. This project supports local sports clubs in providing sports services to young people with physical impairments. Internally, Sported continues to grow as an inclusive organization. In May 2022, Sported's first disabled leader was appointed to continue supporting Sported's position as a leading organization in the field of sports for people with disabilities and inclusivity. It can be seen that Sported uses sports as an effective way to promote the social integration of vulnerable groups, fully leveraging the diverse functions and openness of sports to achieve the organizational goal of serving vulnerable groups. These strategies have enhanced Sported's influence and importance in the UK, providing valuable insights for sports to address social issues.

4. The practical enlightenment of the British "Sported" community sports charity organization to China

4.1. Raise funds through multiple channels and improve the "tiered" funding mechanism

The "tiered" funding mechanism refers to the ability of charity organizations to mobilize funds by screening and integrating resources obtained from channels such as the government and the market. Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen the "government subsidy". Sports charities have relatively few

resources and available funds in their early stages of establishment, so it is necessary to rely on the organizational management advantages of government administrative agencies to achieve normal operations. The government often helps the development of related projects through systems and policies to ensure the sustainable development of sports charity projects. For example, the government can introduce preferential policies to support the development of community sports charity organizations, provide financial input, and increase the training allowances and rewards for community sports volunteers. In addition, government departments can also choose to purchase products from community sports charity organizations to achieve financial subsidies. Secondly, the depth of "market financing" should be broadened. Market-based mobilization and financing techniques are methods that raise funds through various reasonable and scientific methods in the market in a participatory and market-oriented manner. Community sports charity organizations can find funding sources in the market and use media, communication, cooperation, and other forms to obtain market fund support. For example, raising funds on the Internet, private fundraising, inviting corporate support, and launching special activities. Among them, corporate investment is a relatively large source of funding. For example, non-governmental organizations have strategic cooperation with the Li Ka Shing Foundation to obtain a grant of 10 million yuan to support the "Basketball Season" project in hundreds of rural primary schools in Guangdong and Guangxi. Overall, the tiered funding mechanism can improve the fund mobilization ability of sports charity organizations, and provide support for the sustainable development of sports charity organizations through the integration of government subsidies and market financing.

4.2. Internal Strengthening and External Shaping of Human Resources to Build a "Composite" Social Network

Firstly, it is necessary to coordinate and establish a volunteer member network for sports charity organizations. On one hand, the volunteer recruitment platform of the China Volunteer Service Federation can be utilized to transform service positions. The purpose of developing a sports volunteer training plan is to harness the enthusiasm of the public and integrate it with community sports activities. By designing diversified service formats, those who are not successfully recruited can be matched with suitable positions, thus contributing to the construction of the sports volunteer team. On the other hand, it is necessary to expand the scope of the program and guide public participation. Based on the principle of matching people with positions, the volunteer training plan for sports charity organizations is open to the society, aiming to break the time, geographical, and group restrictions of volunteer service and build a pattern of universal participation and joint construction and sharing.

Secondly, it is necessary to create a cross-sectoral alliance for collaborative action involving diverse stakeholders. On one hand, it is important to establish an appropriate decentralized operation mode to ensure the orderly advancement of collaborative governance. Perfecting the volunteer service system for sports charity organizations is a systematic project that neither the government nor a single organization can effectively handle alone. The decentralized operation mode not only highlights the leading role of the government but also reflects the main role of society and the market. On the basis of the government's appropriate withdrawal, participating entities in social sports charity organizations are given certain operational rights, helping them clarify their roles and identities and creating a good institutional foundation for establishing long-term partnerships. On the other hand, a government purchase mechanism for volunteer services provided by sports charity organizations should be established to provide development opportunities for different stakeholders. Volunteer services provided by sports charity organizations are an important part of public sports services. Including them in the scope of government purchases of public sports services is an effective way to address the current crisis facing sports charity organizations. The purpose of establishing the purchase mechanism is to rely on the improvement of sports volunteer services, introduce a large amount of social funds by utilizing the enthusiasm of various entities such as society and the market to participate in related sports activities, or allocate a certain amount of funds from the sports lottery public welfare fund to establish a special fund. This will build a multi-channel project facilitation model where the government commissions from the top down or social sports charity organizations apply from the bottom up, realizing the transformation of volunteer services provided by sports charity organizations into customized supply and achieving collaborative development between the government and stakeholders such as sports charity organizations. These measures aim to increase the scale and quality of the volunteer team of sports charity organizations, promote broader public participation in sports volunteer services, and achieve a pattern of universal participation and joint construction and sharing. At the same time, through the collaborative action alliance of diverse stakeholders, the sustainable development of sports charity organizations and the effective operation of government-purchased

volunteer services can be achieved.

4.3. Breaking Rules Barriers Through Cultural Symbols and Reshaping an "Ecological" Value Framework

Firstly, by combining "grand narratives" with "individual narratives," a framing effect can be achieved. Appropriate narrative strategies will enrich the cultural connotations of discourse, convey the value meanings of community sports charity organizations, and achieve consensus mobilization. When carrying out sports charity activities, community sports charity organizations should deeply understand the political stance, value implications, subject characteristics, etc., of volunteer services provided by sports charity organizations. They should leverage the vivid individual narrative strategies of sports charity organization volunteers while integrating grand narrative strategies. By leveraging the combined power of these narrative strategies, the stories of sports charity organizations can be presented, preventing them from falling into hollow and abstract discourse traps.

Secondly, supported by big data technology, an three-dimensional discourse communication system should be established. On one hand, by leveraging various mainstream media such as the Internet plus database, WeChat official accounts, QQ Xiaoshijie, Douyin, Bilibili, Xiaohongshu, Zhihu, and Weibo, Framework resources such as promotional slogans, value concepts, and cultural spirits for sports charity organizations participating in charity activities can be accurately delivered to various members of the sports philanthropy network. This will disseminate the improved voice of volunteer services provided by sports charity organizations. On the other hand, a framing mobilization model that integrates "online" and "offline" can be created to promote consensus mobilization for the improvement of volunteer services provided by sports charity organizations. In terms of online, by leveraging multimedia to integrate discourse resources such as cross-regional and cross-temporal exchanges and feedback among charity organizations, universities, enterprises, and governments, cultural interoperability can be achieved, showcasing the cultural characteristics of community sports charity organizations and fostering cultural creation within a symbiotic community. In terms of offline, persuasive discourse can be used to achieve.

5. Conclusions

The practical experience of sports charities in the UK has provided positive and useful inspiration for promoting the development of sports charities in China. However, the development of sports charities in the UK has its unique social, historical and cultural background, and the formation of its experience did not happen overnight, but went through a tortuous process. In learning and borrowing, we should base ourselves on China's current national conditions and sports development status, without blindly copying or blindly imitating. We need to actively try and seriously explore in terms of organizational management, organizational construction, service goals, reform measures, etc., gradually forming sports charity organization development experience and practice with Chinese characteristics, and laying a solid foundation for promoting the construction of a sports power.

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