UK Sports Volunteering Research Network

- Seminar on 19th March 2015
- Presentation from Alex Thurston, Loughborough University.
- All material in these slides belongs to the author.
- For more information about the SVRN please see the website http://svrn.group.shef.ac.uk or contact the secretary at Fiona.Reid@gcu.ac.uk.

Rationale

- Policy-makers are predominantly centrally located, often at a distance from the point of delivery.
- Unfortunately, majority of public policy studies have tended to focus on the agenda setting (identification) and formulation stages.
- It is argued, with this distance, the local environment is highly variable, pressurised and political, often requiring negotiation and interpretation during the process of implementation.

Implementation

- Describes the process of putting a proposal into effect.
- Top-down analysis:
  - Derived from 'Scientific Management' literature (cf. Taylor, 1911)
  - Rational model (Homogenous/monolithic)
  - Hogwood & Gunn (1984) 10 preconditions=perfect implementation
  - Adequate resources, based on valid theory, understanding/agreement of objectives, perfect communication/coordination, obtaining perfect compliance etc.
- Bottom-up analysis:
  - Individuals at point of delivery (grassroots) should be the focus.
  - Lipsky’s (1980) Street-level bureaucrats
- Synthesis:

Policies

- Clubmark – Sport England’s nationwide cross sport accreditation quality mark for community sports clubs
  - Swimming – swim21
  - Boxing – Clubmark
  - Rugby Union – Seal of Approval (replaced with RFU’s Club Accreditation)
- Safeguarding policies
- Increasing participation (membership?)

Method/Methodology

- Swimming (ASA)  Rugby Union (RFU)  England Boxing (EB) (formerly ABAE)
- Critical Realism
- Qualitative research
- Case studies (Interviews & document analysis)
- 3 sports (swimming, rugby union & boxing)
- 2 clubs for each sport - rural/urban
### (Initial) Key Findings

1. Implementation is **not straightforward**: NGBs had to be flexible with their strategies and be willing to negotiate and adapt certain Clubmark criteria due to the varying capacities of clubs.

2. NGBs needed to be aware of the **constraints** of a club's local environment in an attempt to ensure successful implementation.

3. Accreditation **prestige**, hence a club's **motivation**, varied across sports.

4. The role of club officers (**volunteers**), as implementing agents, is **fundamental** in the policy process.

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### Rugby Implementation

- **Clubmark**
  - SoA became a **cumbersome** process
  - Based on Clubmark but went beyond criteria
  - Club Accreditation: Core purpose + 6 key drivers
  - Far simpler process
  - RDOs offer guidance/support (capacity building)

- **Safeguarding**
  - No issues with policy conformity

- **Membership (Participation?)**
  - Interest for their own clubs

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### Swimming Implementation

- **Clubmark**
  - Promotion/Marketing
  - Benefits of accreditation for clubs (**“just want to box”**)
  - Overcoming the **“ivory tower”** criticism
  - Capacity building
  - Elicit attempting to dispense with ‘one man bands’
  - Support offered by CSOs
  - Improving the understanding of policy documentation (up skilling)

- **Safeguarding**
  - No issues accepting policy conformity

- **Membership (Participation?)**
  - No real interest
  - Unique geographical location – gangs

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### Implementation Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Implementation Criteria</th>
<th>Pre-condition</th>
<th>Example of the Agency’s Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>ASA</td>
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<td>RUG</td>
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<td>Box</td>
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### ASA: Hogwood & Gunns’ (1984) Pre-Conditions for Perfect Implementation

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<tr>
<th>Pre-conditions for safety</th>
<th>Example of the ASA’s strategy</th>
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### Boxes Implementation

- **Clubmark**
  - Promotion/Marketing
  - Benefits of accreditation for clubs
  - More than just financial gains (course discounts, grants etc.)
  - (Lack of) capacity of small clubs
  - Diverse nature of clubs (different aspirations)
  - Geographical location (attending courses/cancelled courses)

- **Safeguarding**
  - No issues accepting policy conformity

- **Membership (Participation?)**
  - No real interest
  - Difficult to balance pool time allocation with club members of wide range of abilities

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### ASA-Box Implementation

<table>
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<th>Pre-condition Details</th>
<th>Example of the Agency’s Strategy</th>
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Role of Volunteers in Implementation

- Selecting the most suitable Clubmark implementation strategy is complicated for NGBs.
- Disparate nature of clubs
- Size / capacity / local constraints / aspirations / relevance
- NGBs have had to adapt/refine accreditation criteria over time (primarily as a result of club feedback from volunteers)
  - Accreditations were onerous / arduous / laborious for volunteers
  - NGBs have had to negotiate with volunteers to find a mutually acceptable process
    - Shown flexibility but still within Clubmark limits
  - What are the boundaries set by Sport England? How rigid does Clubmark have to be? Is any movement is seen as implementation failure? Compromise for success?
- NGBs must support volunteers (capacity building) to achieve successful implementation
  - Development Officers are crucial
- Further education for club volunteers is still required (benefits)
- Buy-in from volunteers (street-level policy actors) is critical for success

Further Clubmark Research

- This research is consistent with other research (that Geoff kindly passed onto me last month!)
  - Reassurance (for parents) that correct procedures are in place
  - Time, amount of work, burden clubs, deter volunteers
  - Criteria needs to be more flexible to allow for club differences
  - Clubmark (re)accreditation needs to be simplified and/or implement a tiered system. [Although, the ASA have purposely moved away from a tiered system]
  - Drastic alteration introduced by RFU – is it seen as a simplification or dilution of policy?
  - Are Sport England happy with this? Or is this a compromise to achieve successful Clubmark implementation?

Thank You For Listening

Do you have any questions or feedback?

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