

More than Football Networks

Public Value Literature Review: using the strategic triangle as a compass for public value creation in professional football

Vidar Stevens & Jan-Willem van der Roest

Utrecht University School of Governance



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Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
WHY IS PUBLIC VALUE CREATION IMPORTANT FOR PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CLUBS?	5
Value creation in football	5
Public value creation motives	6
WHAT DOES MOORE'S PUBLIC VALUE MANAGEMENT TRIANGLE IMPLY?	8
Public value proposition	9
Operational capacity	13
Legitimacy and support	17
CONCLUDING REMARKS	19
REFERENCES	20



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Introduction

In 2022, Athletic Club Foundation's Aterpe programme was awarded a UEFA Grassroots Football Award in the category "Best European Professional Club". The Aterpe programme focuses on the creation and protection of safe spaces for children in sports and helps local organisations define and implement prevention strategies to combat interpersonal violence against children. Athletic Club won the award due to "its inclusive agenda and specific social objectives that demonstrate commitment to the club's role in society, the local community and the grassroots game" (Athletic Club, 2022). The Aterpe programme is a prime example of professional football clubs' movement to get increasingly involved in socially responsible activities with a specific focus on the needs of youth.

Just like the Athletic Club Foundation, nearly all professional football teams in Europe have established charitable foundations – creating new influential agents in local communities who intend to give back value to the local context in which they operate (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2022; Babiak & Wolfe, 2009). The types and focus of professional football clubs' community outreach initiatives vary considerably, from initiatives giving disabled children and young people a chance to play football (e.g., Special Champions League or Nobody Offside), to programmes focusing on improving youngsters' school performances (e.g., STEM Football & Education and NBS EduWORLD), to projects for social inclusion (e.g., Diversity Wins or Welcome through Football) and addressing key issues in sport such as safeguarding and safe stadia (e.g., SAVES and Safer).

Within the literature, different concepts are used to refer to football clubs' community engagement activities, e.g., community outreach; corporate social responsibility; community and social responsibility (CSR); football social responsibility (FSR); environmental, social, & governance (ESG); and public value creation. In this literature review, we use the concepts of public value creation and public value management to describe the activities of professional football clubs that are aimed at "giving back to society". This is because, more so than the other concepts, public value creation and management highlight the catalyst role football clubs can play in

promoting public values such as health, inclusion, and sustainability (Van Eekeren, 2021, p. 43). Public value management embraces the notion that doing something good for society is not simply an activity alongside a football club's other activities but is instead an integral part of the strategy and operations of a football organisation. The public value paradigm is a response to the challenges of a "networked, multisector, no-one-wholly-in-charge world" (Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg, 2014, p. 445). This paradigm acknowledges that governments can no longer solve societal problems by themselves and need to collaborate with other (local) stakeholders to leave a mark on local communities and provide value to them. In addition, public value management underscores stakeholders' obligation to give back to their community, which simultaneously plays a vital role in the organisation's existence. As such, public value management focuses on the reciprocal relationship between organisations and the local communities of which they are a part.

Public value management puts extra pressure on professional football organisations. As Moore (1995) points out, public value management aims to align the value proposition of an organisation with its operational and administrative capabilities and the legitimacy derived from the authorising environment. From this perspective, community outreach projects must be significantly valuable to the citizenry and local community, (politically) legitimate, feasible and sustainable, and operationally possible and practical. Moore's (1995) strategic triangle provides a compass for, *inter alia*, community managers of professional football clubs to navigate the clubs' community initiatives in such a way that they can be implemented, are supported by local partners, and provide value for society. So far, Moore's strategic triangle has not been operationalised in such a way that it can be used by community managers of professional football clubs¹ to design and monitor the impact of those clubs' community outreach activities. Hence, this document focuses on the implications of Moore's strategic triangle (1995) for the operations of professional football clubs and their foundations.

¹ Although we focus in this document on football clubs, the insights from this document can also apply to other professional sport organisations that aim to be of value to their local communities.

Therefore, the research question we define in this theoretical exploration is as follows: *How can Moore's strategic triangle be operationalised into a tool for designing and monitoring (the impact of) professional football clubs' community outreach activities? Where possible, we have a specific eye for the applicability of our operationalisation to the public value management of youth projects, as a large proportion of the projects of football organisations and foundations target children and young adults between the ages of 6 and 18 (59% of the target population of European clubs are children and youths (ECA, 2016)).*

This document takes the form of a travelogue.² It is in part a theoretical and analytical endeavour, building on insights we have collected on the topic from the literature³ and our own experiences in studying public value management practices within and outside the field of sports (e.g., Hansen et al., 2022; Van der Roest & Dijk, 2021). We do not claim that our study has the structure and density of a systematic literature review following the PRISM methodology. In a sense, our study is a way of combing through the literature to understand the elements that make professional football clubs successful at creating public value, especially for youths in their local communities.

To answer the main research question, we address the following questions sequentially:

1. Why is public value creation important for professional football clubs?
2. What does Moore's strategic "public value management" triangle imply?
3. What (operational) conditions allow professional football clubs to pursue the goals encapsulated in Moore's public value management triangle?

Why is public value creation important for professional football clubs?

Value creation in football

For any organisation, there are different types of value creation for different types of audiences. For example, most private for-profit organisations seek to maximise their

² Like Haraway (2004, p.63) and Linghede (2018, p.570), we use the word "travelogue" to describe a theoretically guided excursion through theoretical landscapes and mindscapes – in other words, a type of analytical trip report.

³ We draw from studies of the CSR, shared value, sport-for-development, feminist, and public value literature.

financial profits, whereas public organisations, such as municipalities or government agencies, focus on implementing policies that benefit society. Professional football clubs are slightly more complicated in this respect. Van Eekeren (2016) identifies four types of value creation that matter to all football clubs.

First, each football club must proficiently generate sporting value, as on-pitch performance significantly impacts clubs regardless of their tier or level of professionalisation. Second, clubs are obligated to cultivate business value, a need particularly evident for professional clubs given their reliance on revenue streams such as television rights, commercial partnerships, and merchandise sales. Third, clubs must foster cultural values, aligning these values with those cherished by their fan base. This alignment may manifest through adherence to symbolic elements, such as club colours or traditional crests, that foster a sense of belonging among supporters. Fourth, the creation of public values has recently emerged as a contemporary imperative for football clubs. While three decades ago, professional football clubs were mostly disengaged from socially responsible initiatives (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Robinson, 2005), the recent integration of football clubs into societal roles has necessitated a careful examination by sports management scholars of the distinctive characteristics inherent in the public value initiatives undertaken by clubs within society.

Public value creation motives

The literature on public value management identifies three reasons why football clubs are increasingly focusing on creating public value. First, governments have started to see sports as an instrument to reach out to communities that are often difficult for public sector organisations to engage with (Waardenburg, 2016). From the young to the elderly, and from urbanites to those in rural areas, sports enthusiasts hail from a variety of backgrounds. Sports evoke strong emotions in individuals. Football organisations can tap into these emotions to forge a meaningful bond with their fans. It is for this reason that local governments are engaging with football organisations to partake in policy initiatives with the aim of amplifying their impact on communities that are otherwise challenging to reach. Sports scientists have identified this shift as the “sport as means” perspective in public discourse (e.g., Coalter, 2007; Van der Veken et al. 2020a; Walseth

& Fasting, 2004). In response to this policy shift, football organisations, both professional and grassroots, have adopted this newfound social responsibility, integrating it into their fundamental objectives, missions, and activities, and as a result have changed their way of “doing things” (Waardenburg & Nagel, 2019, p. 83-84).

For example, the CATCH research project (2016-2019, Flanders, Belgium) documents the impact of sport-for-development programmes (aimed at the social inclusion of socially vulnerable youth) on the activities and competencies of sports organisations and their coaches (Van der Veken et al., 2022). To establish an emotional connection with vulnerable youth, the programmes required sports organisations and their coaches to be able to:

- build positive relationships with the project participants whilst also maintaining strong links with the partners and stakeholders from various organisations and administrations in the local community.
- have loose job descriptions and procedures, as the coaches “invented” their job on the spot, aligning their delivery to the context and needs of the youngsters they engaged with.
- spend a lot of time searching for public funds to turn the programme into a long-lasting project instead of another *ad hoc* sports initiative.

Second, scholars have underscored the “social contract” that football organisations have with their local communities, asserting that such organisations have an inherent obligation “to give back to society” (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Babiak & Kihl, 2018, p.124). From an identity perspective, one can argue that most football organisations have deep roots in their local communities. In fact, many clubs and teams were founded by local enthusiasts, often with community support. Over multiple decades, even as these entities might have grown in wealth and influence, and in some cases have even developed as global brands, the core of their identity remains tied to their place of origin. Giving back is, in many ways, an acknowledgement of these roots.

Third, it is undeniable that the vitality of football organisations is intertwined with their fan base. The unwavering allegiance of fans translates into steady revenues,

whether from ticket purchases, merchandise sales, or broadcast viewership. Initiatives that resonate with community welfare not only fortify this bond but also deepen the sense of community among supporters. Hence, it is not surprising that football clubs today make public value management an integral part of their organisational strategy, as this might lead to an increase in revenues from their local fan base.

At this point, we have identified the reasons why a football club might engage in public value creation activities. However, to answer the question of how a football club can practise public value management, we turn to Moore's (1995) strategic "public value management" triangle.

What does Moore's Public Value Management triangle imply?

Moore's (1995) public value management triangle, also known as the strategic triangle, is a framework designed for managers to conceptualise, develop, and monitor programmes that create public value. The triangle offers a holistic framework in which the focus is on whether the programme that is being designed is valuable to the public, is operationally feasible, and enjoys legitimacy from the local community in which the programme is launched. This comprehensive approach encourages community managers to think strategically, ensuring that public value programmes are not only well-intentioned but also effective and sustainable. The triangle captures three vertices: public value (proposition), operational capacity, and legitimacy.

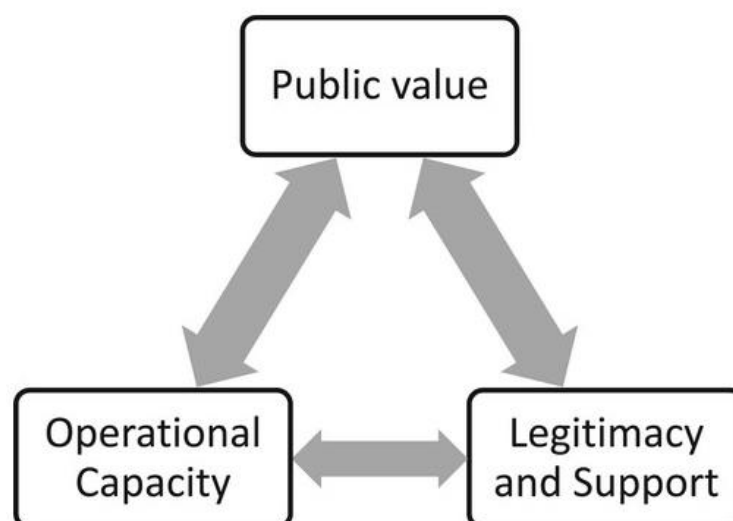


Figure 1: The strategic triangle of public value management. Source: Moore, 2013, p.103.

The “public value (proposition)” vertex denotes the tangible value that a proposed initiative is set to offer the public. Meanwhile, the “operational capacity” vertex addresses whether the football organisation has sufficient resources and capabilities to effectively implement and deliver the proposed public value. At the most basic level, operational capacity encapsulates whether the organisation has sufficient resources – including financial, human, and material resources – to undertake the proposed initiatives. However, Moore’s triangle also considers the skills and expertise of implementers, the organisation’s internal processes, its infrastructure and culture, and the feedback and accountability mechanisms in place to learn from its operations and make the necessary adjustments. In Moore's (1995) strategic framework, the importance of operational capacity is clear: even if there's a well-defined public value proposition, without the operational capacity to deliver, the strategy for the project will fall short.

The third vertex – “legitimacy and support” – acknowledges that a successful public value initiative requires not only a clear value proposition and operational capability but also legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders involved in the local context. This means ensuring that there are authorising conditions in place and that stakeholders, including political authorities, local organisations, sponsors, end-users, and the broader public, are on board with the project. Next, we discuss what these vertices imply for the public value activities of managers of football organisations, and we develop “reflective questions” for community managers of football organisations to assess the design of their programme and monitor its progress during implementation.

Public value proposition

The first vertex, public value (proposition), underscores the need for organisations to articulate a well-defined vision regarding the contributions they wish to make to society. Oftentimes, football (and other sports) organisations define a specific public value proposition, which serves as the societal counterpart of a business case, delineating the organisation’s commitment to addressing specific challenges and delivering tangible

outcomes (Van der Roest & Dijk, 2021, p. 679-680). The YETS Foundation, for example, has drafted a public value proposition stating that through their basketball and coaching interventions, they aim to increase the resilience and self-reliance of vulnerable young adults who received limited social support when growing up. In everything they do, the coaches of the YETS Foundation (based in Schiedam, the Netherlands) always reflect on how their activities and coaching styles relate to this core proposition, which they drafted at the very start of the foundation.

The notion of public value goes beyond a mission statement; instead, it explicitly links societal needs with what an organisation can offer. In the context of football clubs, the essential task is to identify and pursue the distinctive contribution they can offer to stakeholders in their local communities. From our literature review, we have identified three reflective questions community managers of football organisations need to address when drafting their public value propositions.

1. *What are the needs of the community you, as a football club, are addressing and how did you find out about those needs? (Principle of voiced needs)*

It is essential to address a voiced need. Meynhardt (2015, p.152) highlights that the concept of needs refers to the deficit felt when there is a mismatch between a person's current and desired psychological state, thereby affecting their motivation and ability to engage with others in society. Hence, the goal of public value creation should be to foster the capacity of individuals or groups to contribute meaningfully to society. In youth development, this aim could be directed towards educational goals or – as in the above-mentioned example of the Aterpe programme – combatting interpersonal violence against children.

Alford and O'Flynn (2009, p.175-176) stress that public value does not merely consist of the delivery of public goods, namely nonexcludable and indivisible goods. Public value differs from this in three ways:

1. Public value includes remedies to market failures beyond the inadequate provision of public goods, such as addressing negative externalities, natural monopolies, and imperfect information, along with the institutional arrangements that make the remedies possible. This fits with Bozeman's

(2007) and Bozeman and Johnson's (2015) views of public value. According to Alford and O'Flynn's understanding, public value stimulates public value programmes to focus on remedies which help individuals and groups who are marginalised by the dominant incentive structures of the distribution of goods and services in society.

2. Public goods are tangible outputs, while public value includes the outcomes made possible by the public goods (Moore, 1995; 2013). The creation of public value extends beyond the provision of tangible products or services; it encompasses the subjective dimensions and values that the target audience associates with them. For example, while establishing a food bank at the club for the local community reflects commendable intentions, the effectiveness of such an initiative is contingent upon the subjective experiences of the community members. If feelings of shame deter individuals from engaging with the club through such means, the public value derived from the initiative becomes compromised. In essence, the success of public value creation hinges not only on the concrete offerings but also on a nuanced understanding and strategic addressing of the subjective experiences and perceptions of the beneficiaries. It is important to ensure that initiatives align positively with the values and needs of the community, fostering a resonance that transcends tangible provisions alone.
3. Third, public value has value for the valuer, which accords with Meynhardt's (2009) psychological approach. To understand what has value for the valuer, it is thus necessary that an organisation aiming to create public value truly listens (Murphy, 2021) and responds to what is voiced as a need by the (underprivileged) societal group and the members of this group whom the organisation aims to help.

For managers of football organisations overseeing public value programmes, this implies that they should develop programmes which respond to a call made by (underprivileged) individuals or groups in society and that they should be explicit about how they discovered the voiced need. It will be easier for some groups than others to voice their needs. For example, one group that often finds this relatively difficult are

young adults and children. Fortunately, in football, we are increasingly seeing the establishment of youth advisory boards to help clubs and leagues draft their core activities (Collins et al., 2016). Additionally, collaborations with local schools and youth organisations in the local community help football organisations gather information about how they can be of value to young people in their local neighbourhoods.

2. How integral is the public value proposition to the football club's organisational strategy and operations? Do other organisational goals hinder the football club's community outreach ambitions?

As the importance of public value creation in sports increases, football organisations are confronted with the challenges of integrating public value management (PMV) into their overarching organisational strategy (Hartley, Alford, & Hughes, 2015, p.30). Many football clubs still organise their PVM activities separately from their core strategy, for example by setting up a foundation, donating money to charities, or launching PR campaigns. While helpful in building an external reputation, an isolated organisational approach such as this may not always lead to optimal societal results. For instance, a club's foundation might provide low-income families with essential food provisions, while the club simultaneously has a major sponsorship deal with a gambling organisation. This can inadvertently heighten the risk of gambling addiction within the very vulnerable community the football club is aiming to support. Such contradictions highlight the complexities of aligning public value management with broader organisational strategies.

According to the shared value literature, it is increasingly evident that a company's competitive edge is defined not only by the demand for its products but also by its proactive role in uplifting the socio-economic environment within which it operates (Porter & Kramer, 2011). By investing in its local environment, a company increases its likelihood of being able to attract skilled labour or increase its revenue. The same holds true for football organisations, as clubs and the context of which they are a part are highly interdependent. Giving back to the local context can in turn lead to positive benefits for the club. Hence, creating public value requires a conscious decision to perceive societal and economic benefits not as divergent paths but as intertwined elements of an organisation's overarching strategy.

Public value creation cuts across the traditional divide between the responsibilities of business and those of government or civil society. It repositions the role of sports organisations. From society's perspective, it does not matter what types of organisations created the value it enjoys. What matters is that those organisations – or combinations of organisations – deliver benefits that are best positioned to achieve the most impact for the least cost (Porter & Kramer, 2011). If football organisations embark on the path of public value creation and take up this significant societal role, consistent management oversight is required to ensure that internal tensions between pursuing societal advantages and serving the organisation's economic interests are properly addressed and balanced. Otherwise, these internal struggles can negatively influence the organisation's impact on the communities it aims to address.

3. Does the organisation have a well-defined and structured plan for its public value proposition?

A public value proposition remains a mere proposition if not linked to concrete outcomes, activities, mechanisms, and goals. It is, therefore, important that a football organisation drafts a rationale that turns its public value proposition into concrete activities. Within the field of sport, the methods of theory of change (ToC) and theory of action (ToA) are often used to create a causal pathway for how the programme hopes to foster change and what activities are needed to put a public value proposition into action (Center for Theory of Change, n.d.; Tarell, 2019; Weiss, 1995). ToC provides a comprehensive roadmap, delineating the mechanisms and reasons an organisation believes certain actions will culminate in the intended value within a given context. Essentially, ToC is a strategic tool that illustrates the pathways an organisation should navigate to bring about change, thereby creating specific public values. ToA takes ToC a step further by converting the envisioned change processes into actionable steps. The Dutch professional football league (Eredivisie) and Utrecht University recently drafted a handbook for professional football clubs to work with theory of change and theory of action (see Van der Roest, Geubels, & van der Touw, 2022).

Operational capacity

Operational capacity is the second vertex of Moore's (1995) strategic triangle. When Moore (1995) speaks of operational capacity, he essentially addresses the question,

"Can the organisation actually do it?" Operational capacity ensures that an organisation can turn its public value proposition and strategy into tangible results, considering the internal workings of the organisation. We discern three factors which a public value manager needs to bring into alignment to ensure optimal operational capacity for implementing public value programmes: 1) a robust organisational structure with sufficient resources; 2) recruitment and training programmes for implementers; and 3) monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for organisational learning.

4. Is the football organisation structured appropriately, and does it have the necessary resources to coordinate its activities?

It is crucial to assess any given football organisation's structure and resource availability. To determine whether the organisation is optimally structured for delivering public value activities, four specific elements may be considered (Chen, 2005; Kihl, Babiak, & Tainsky, 2014). First, it is important to evaluate whether the organisation has clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and channels of communication. The roles and responsibilities need to be tailored in such a way that they support the mission and objectives of the public value initiative. Second, resource availability – whether in the form of financial, human, knowledge, material, or technological resources – is essential for programme delivery. Resources need to be distributed in such a way that they support the objectives the football organisation strives for within the public value programme (Moore, 2015, p.128).

Third, coordination within the organisation is pivotal (Kihl, Babiak, & Tainsky, 2014, p.331). Coordination mechanisms should be set up to ensure that various teams working on the public value programme within the organisation are aligned. This ensures that activities related to public value creation are integrated seamlessly and not isolated. The coordination system should also facilitate cross-functional communication and collaboration to foster unity in driving towards the public value mission.

Fourth, it is crucial for an organisation to possess the ability to adapt to unexpected circumstances (O'Flynn, 2007, p. 359). The organisation's structure and strategies should be designed in a manner that allows for changes based on internal evaluations, external feedback, and shifts in societal needs or expectations. The adaptability aspect should also encompass the capability to explore new opportunities

or collaborations that could enhance public value. This means the organisation should not be rigid in its approach but must be ready to adapt its strategies, reallocate resources, and adopt new policies and methods when necessary. Maintaining adaptability ensures that the organisation's public value initiatives remain relevant, effective, and responsive to the evolving societal demands and challenges in the implementation of the programme (see also Van de Veken et al., 2022, when talking about "being adaptable to the context").

5. Does the football organisation have a robust plan for training and recruitment? Are the implementers able to make an emotional connection with the public value programme's participants?

Central to the success of public value programmes are the individuals who deliver them. Whether they are called "coaches" or "sports coaches" (Schulenkorf, 2017), "educators" (Spaaij et al., 2016), "practitioners" (Debognies et al., 2019), "instructors" (Lyras & Peachey, 2011), "boundary spanners" (Jeanes et al., 2019), or "peer leaders" (Lindsey & Grattan, 2012), their position is crucial for the effectiveness of each project (Cronin & Armour, 2015). It is interesting to note that public value practices are delivered by coaches with a range of educational and experiential backgrounds. Some have grown up and experienced the many issues that the programme within which they are working is trying to prevent, thus occupying the cultural intermediary role (Crabbe, 2009). Others possess educational backgrounds spanning higher education-based courses in coaching and sport-for-development, while still others complete formal national governing body qualifications associated with their main sport (Van der Veken et al., 2022).

Building an emotional bond with participants is a pivotal trait of effective programme implementers, especially with young adults. Van der Veken et al. (2022, p. 492) – in their work on socially vulnerable youth – term this as "emotional connectivity". In practical terms, this means that implementers employ a mentorship style, emphasising the cultivation and maintenance of meaningful interpersonal ties rooted in trust (Debognies et al., 2019). This fosters a feeling of psychological safety among the participants, allowing them to meet their personal goals in a space that feels comfortable and welcoming (Van der Veken et al., 2020a; Van der Veken et al., 2020b).

Van der Veken et al.'s (2022) findings indicate that training is an essential feature for implementers to continuously develop their interpersonal and programme delivery skills. This training should be not only competency-based (i.e., based on the technical skills they need in order to implement the programme) but also identity-based (i.e., how to motivate individuals and relate to them in often vulnerable contexts).

Besides training, recruitment is an essential part of selecting the right people for the programme. Not every person will be fit to make a connection with the programme's participants. Depending on which target groups a public value programme addresses, specific skills and qualifications need to be tailored to match both the programme's objectives and the communication style suitable for the programme's audience. For instance, a coach in a football project aimed at supporting school dropouts to improve their grades in secondary school requires a different skill set than a programme aimed at helping ex-convicts find a job after detention (such as the FC Utrecht Inside programme).

6. Is there a regular monitoring, feedback, and evaluation system to support organisational learning?

To ensure the effectiveness and relevance of public value initiatives, it is essential for a football organisation to establish robust monitoring and learning systems to see whether it is (still) moving towards its set objectives (Moore, 2015, p.122; Kroll & Moynihan, 2015, p.189). Monitoring can help identify challenges or bottlenecks early on and facilitate timely interventions. It helps if participants are encouraged to provide feedback on the implementation of the organisation's public value initiatives. In addition to monitoring and feedback, periodic in-depth evaluations can be conducted to measure the substantive impact of public value activities. Ultimately, these evaluations assess both quantitative and qualitative outcomes, ensuring that the initiatives are not only meeting their targets but also creating meaningful change among participants. Based on the insights gained from monitoring, feedback, and evaluation, the organisation learns and can make iterative adjustments to its strategies, processes, and even objectives to enhance its public value impact.

At this point, the concept of organisational learning needs to be highlighted (see, e.g., Argote & Todorova, 2007; Schwandt & Marquardt, 1999). Organisational learning

creates a dynamic feedback loop in which insights from monitoring and evaluation inform organisational knowledge, driving improvements and contributing to more effective and impactful future assessments. This iterative process is fundamental for clubs or foundations seeking to learn, adapt, create accountability, and continually enhance their monitoring and evaluation practices.

Legitimacy and support

As previously noted, an effective strategy for producing public value requires adequate legitimacy and endorsement from an organisation's authorising environment (Moore, 1995). This approval emanates from various stakeholders in the context where the football organisation plans to implement its public value programme. Stakeholders can include citizens, politicians, sponsors, end-users, and other entities operating within the local community. Some of the key players in that local context may even have formal authority over the football organisation – that is, they may be empowered by legislation to take up a certain space in the local context. For example, a school is, by law, allowed to deliver schooling in a neighbourhood. As such, when a football club wants to help potential school dropouts obtain a diploma by offering an afterschool education programme through the club, as, for example, the *Playing for Success* programme does, it makes sense that the football organisation first deliberates with the local school organisation to see how it can be of value and avoid hindering the already existing activities of school organisations.

We would like to stress that the perspective on legitimacy in this section specifically addresses the external legitimacy aspect of a public value programme. There is an independent stream of literature on legitimacy-related questions regarding the inner workings of an organisation; we do not touch on this area in this literature review (see Deephouse et al., 2017; Greenwood et al., 2008; Suchman 1995). Instead, we address two factors a football club's community manager needs to consider when pursuing a particular value proposition: 1) collaborative advantage; and 2) ethics of care.

7. *What other stakeholders are involved in the context, and how do you aim to create synergies with their public value activities? (Collaborative advantage)*

Public value delivery of football clubs occurs within what Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg (2014, p. 445) term the "networked, multisector, no-one-wholly-in-charge universe". This means that when a new entity, such as a football club, aiming to help its local community steps in, it affects the balance of influence and relationships among the existing organisations in that setting. As Huxham (1993) puts it, this balance can lead to a collaborative advantage for those the programmes serve, suggesting that the combined efforts of numerous organisations can create outcomes greater than the sum of their parts.

Studies in collaborative governance literature have tended to view collaboration through a mostly positive lens, believing that the mere interaction between multiple organisations immediately results in a collaborative advantage (McGuire, 2006). This conclusion is despite Huxham's (1993) early warnings and subsequent empirical studies (summarised in Huxham & Vangen 2005) indicating that the collaborative advantage is rarely evidenced in practice given the difficulties of managing the complexity of the institutions, actors, and their competing interests, leading instead to "collaborative inertia" (Vangen & Huxham, 2010, p.163). Furthermore, Rigg and O'Mahony (2012) note that many participants express frustration over not meeting their collaborative expectations. Factors such as infrequent attendance, individual motivations, poor inter-organisational ties, and lack of trust can hinder effective collaboration.

Therefore, football clubs' community managers must adopt an external perspective, aligning their organisational aims with those of other community stakeholders to maximise benefits for programme beneficiaries. This outward orientation can foster diverse, mutually beneficial relationships among community collaborators. In certain contexts, it can lead to formal agreements detailing the roles and expectations of each partner involved in a collaboration. At a bare minimum, this external approach heightens a community manager's understanding of how the sports organisation's ambitions align with other community partners' programmes. However, it is necessary to avoid scenarios in which a football club's programme thrives to the

detriment of another community partner, especially if that partner has governmental responsibilities or is a public or semi-public entity.

8. *Do the programme beneficiaries have a say in the design and delivery of the football club's public value programme to make sure that the programme activities match the lived experiences of the beneficiaries? (Ethics of care)*

As a community manager, it is desirable to avoid a mismatch between well-intended public value programme activities and the lived experiences of participants. For instance, while some public value programmes cater well to the able-bodied population, they may not be as accommodating for those with impairments. This is why feminist scholars such as Claringbould, Knoppers, and Spaaij (2021) emphasise the importance of incorporating situated knowledge – i.e., the diverse experiences and viewpoints of local community members – in programme designs and delivery. Although the experiences and positions of community members may vary and change over time, an ethics-of-care approach advocates for community managers to engage in continuous dialogue with diverse beneficiaries about a given project's design and delivery. This ensures that public value projects are tailored to the real-life contexts of those they aim to serve.

Concluding remarks

For professional football clubs aiming to enhance their community outreach programmes, adopting the public value management perspective can enrich their understanding of societal challenges and the potential contributions football clubs can offer by addressing them. Public value management remains a complex activity in which football organisations' community managers need to be aware of the various factors that influence their practices. In this document, we have aimed to provide community managers with a compass to navigate their activities.

Moore's (1995) strategic triangle shows that a public value proposition is of little value if the organisational capacity is unclear and there is inadequate support from external parties in an organisation's authoritative environment. Given the increase in socially responsible projects by football organisations, it is important for clubs to realise that establishing a project is a deliberative process and not something that occurs

overnight, particularly when designing initiatives for vulnerable groups. We acknowledge that the diversity of projects implies that football organisations may approach the vertices of the strategic triangle in various ways. Nevertheless, we hope that the eight reflective questions outlined in this document inspire football organisations to adopt a more strategic approach in their public value activities.

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