

All Nations Soccer and Volleyball Competition

1. Overview: Genesis and Aims

The *All Nations Soccer and Volleyball Competition* was developed by the *CMYI Multicultural Sport & Recreation Officer* in response to numerous enquiries from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) young people seeking to play competition sport. Many were experiencing barriers to participation as a result of factors such as unfamiliarity with procedures for setting up a team or sports club and the prohibitive costs associated with joining sporting association competitions.

In order to involve CLD young people in competitive sport, CMYI developed a program model designed to facilitate a process through which young people could participate in a locally based, low cost competition.

The project initially focussed on the development of a soccer competition for young men. In response to a growing demand from female community members however, the program

expanded to include a volleyball competition for young women.

Through this process, a range of program aims were developed and these included:

- To offer a low-cost competition;
- To offer a competition that brings different community groups together in a social and sporting environment;
- To educate newly arrived ethnic community groups in the processes of structured sport competitions and clubs;
- To link teams into mainstream competitions and clubs;
- To divert young people from possible involvement in 'high-risk' behaviour

This Information Sheet is designed to provide an overview of the program and a best practice model to enable other individuals, groups or organisations to establish their own local competitions.

2. The Development Phase

After developing a project model, CMYI approached the Victorian Soccer Federation (VSF), Volleyball Victoria and *Onside Soccer* to become key-stakeholders in the *All Nations* competition. *Onside Soccer* is a program initiative of the Victorian Magistrate's Court and the Victoria Police, aiming to provide social and sporting opportunities to disadvantaged, newly arrived and refugee young people. These organisations were targeted as key stakeholders, essential to the success of the program.

Two locations were identified as appropriate regions for the competition: the South East and

the Western suburbs of Melbourne. These regions were chosen as a result of the number of enquiries received from CLD groups in the areas. Recreation Officers at the local council level were consulted and involved in the process. These Officers offered valuable support and assistance.

Project stakeholders offered in-kind or financial assistance and were extremely pro-active in their involvement and support for the competition. In fact, the *All Nations* program was considered beneficial to both participants and the organisations involved.

3. The All Nations Soccer Competition

Each soccer competition ran for 6 weeks. Teams were charged a small fee, with the money covering a portion of the competition costs. Team meetings were held before and after the competition and support was made available to groups at all times. In order to minimise costs

and develop participant skills, each team was required to provide a linesman for all games. The competition provided a valuable learning experience and 'stepping-stone' to VSF competitions.

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3. The *All Nations Soccer Competition cont...*

The knowledge base of participants was broadened through direct involvement in time management, registration processes and liaison with the other organisations involved in the program.

Both competitions ended with a final 'All Nations Cup' held between amalgamated teams from the

West and the South East. Each team nominated 3 to 5 players as participants in an integrated team of 15 players representing their area. The integration of teams and participants was a deliberate strategy, to encourage integration and socialisation both on and off the field.

4. The *All Nations Volleyball Competition*

An informal volleyball competition was organised for female community members attending the *All Nations* soccer competition each week. Onside Soccer responded to the popularity of the competition by working with Volleyball Victoria to offer a clinic in order to gauge commitment and to enhance the skills of the young women participating.

As a result, Volleyball Victoria made a commitment to more extensive involvement in the program, working with Onside Soccer to facilitate an *All Nations* female volleyball competition running concurrently with the *All Nations* soccer program. At the conclusion of the program, it is intended that participants be linked to accessible clubs and competitions.

5. Best Practice in Working with CLD Young Women

A number of best practice principles in working with CLD young women have been developed as a result of the activities undertaken through the *Multicultural Sport & Recreation* program. These include the need to:

1. Ensure organisers receive commitment and support from the young women and their families prior to offering the program. Unless the groundwork is sufficiently carried out, the program will have limited success, no matter how valuable the program appears;
2. Establish a good rapport with community members and leaders;
3. Hold meetings and ensure families are fully informed about the program and are given the opportunity to ask questions;
4. Have information translated if necessary;
5. Understand that newly arrived families are often very protective of their daughters. This may restrict participation.

6. Sustaining the Program

Following the successful implementation of the All Nations pilot program, the local government and VSF facilitated linkages between a number of the teams and local clubs who volunteered to take on a mentoring role. An accredited soccer-coaching course was also offered to committed program participants at a reduced cost. Finally, to reduce the competition costs and further skill participants, a first aid course has also been

planned prior to the start of each competition season.

For further information contact the CMYI *Multicultural Sport & Recreation Officer* on **(03) 9349 3466**