



## Tip Sheet for Sports Providers

### Engaging culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) young women in sports and physical activity

#### Overview

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There are few opportunities for women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds to participate in sport or recreational activities due to barriers they may experience from within sporting environments or from within their own communities. These barriers are sometimes based on cultural, religious and gender expectations placed on young women or because of their own cultural beliefs.

As sports providers you already have excellent skills in working with all groups - so don't be afraid to use your knowledge and experience when working with this target group.

While this resource is directed towards young women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, the strategies can equally apply to any group and are an integral part of program delivery.

#### The benefits of sport

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Young women from CLD backgrounds participate in sport for the same reasons that all young people do. Sport can provide physical, social and emotional benefits that help in the growth and development of a young person.

Involvement in sport and recreational activities can also improve the resettlement experience for young people who are newly arrived in Australia and their families.

#### Definitions

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It is important to have an understanding of what we mean when we use terms such as *migrant*, *refugee* and *asylum seeker*, or *culturally and linguistically diverse* young people.

A **migrant** is someone who chooses to leave their country of origin for a range of personal or economic reasons.

A **refugee** is someone who has suffered or has a well-founded fear of suffering persecution for reasons of race, religion, and membership of a particular social group or political opinion and as a result of this has fled their country.

An **asylum seeker** is someone who is seeking asylum or protection in a country that is not his or her country of origin or nationality. Asylum seekers may be refugees, but until the government approves their application they will not be recognised as refugees.

**CLD** or **CALD** are terms used to describe people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The term is used to describe young people who are born overseas or who are Australian born with one or both parents (or grandparents) born overseas.

(A full definitions info sheet can be downloaded from the CMYI website: [www.cmyi.net.au/uploads/downloads/cmyi/pdfs/Publications/InfoSheets/11\\_definitions.pdf](http://www.cmyi.net.au/uploads/downloads/cmyi/pdfs/Publications/InfoSheets/11_definitions.pdf))



VicHealth

HEALTH THROUGH PARTICIPATION

## Sport - access for all cultures.

# Tip Sheet from CMYI

## **Barriers facing CLD young people**

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Young people today face many challenges and responsibilities. Issues impacting on young people's participation in sport and recreation may include:

- Lack of time due to school commitments
- Family commitments
- Peer pressure
- Body image
- Financial difficulties

Migrant and refugee young people, and in particular young women, face additional barriers that can make access to sport and recreation even more difficult. These include such things as:

- Lack of familiarity with the structure of sporting clubs and associations
- Language barriers
- Lack of priority given to sport by parents
- Lack of transport
- Fear of racism or discrimination
- Cost
- Lack of culturally appropriate venues and facilities

## **10 tips for designing a physical activity program for CLD young women**

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What are young people looking for in physical activity? Successful and sustainable programs tend to be those that have taken into consideration the following 'needs' when planning and programming:

### **1. Fun**

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Top of the 'wants' list for activities is for participants to have fun, hence when designing the program take into consideration:

- The activity should be an enjoyable and positive experience.
- Eliminate the requirement to meet standards of fitness, ability, dress code etc.
- Place emphasis on team achievements rather than the individual.

### **2. Safe Environments**

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The environment in which an activity is conducted will be a major factor in ensuring participation levels. It is important to:

- Conduct activities in a facility that is easily accessible and family friendly.
- Provide an atmosphere that is non-threatening, bearing in mind that some of the participants may:
  - Lack confidence (in their abilities or about their bodies)
  - Have low self esteem
  - Fear competition
  - Have a low fitness level
  - Have to negotiate cultural barriers (language, customs, religious beliefs, and clothing requirements etc.)
  - Be dealing with previous bad exercise experiences

### *Tips and ideas*

- Conduct the program in a facility that is easily accessed by private or public transport, or;
- If possible provide a pick-up service (community bus, car pool etc.)
- Ensure parking areas are well lit.
- Conduct activities during daylight hours or in the early evening.
- Keep parents informed and try to provide information in other languages, CMYI has parent consent forms available on our website in 15 different languages.
- Try to meet religious or cultural requirements where possible, e.g. provide an area that can be kept separate from male visitors or participants.
- Provide a gender specific environment, this includes having female coaches, staff and volunteers.

### **3. Mixture of physical and social activities**

To maintain interest, build confidence and enhance the formation of new friendships, a combination of physical and social activities works best. Try not to be too structured during the program and allow for some social interaction.

### **4. Participant input in planning**

Involving young people in the planning and ongoing delivery of a program gives them a more meaningful experience. It can also provide:

- a degree of ownership of the program and greater commitment to attendance.
- an opportunity for young people to learn budgeting, planning and communication skills.
- participants with the skills required to make the group self sufficient, thereby improving the chance of sustainability.

### *Tips and ideas*

- Ask the young people what they want to do.
- Get the group to collectively decide on appropriate activities.

### **5. Female only programs**

Research has repeatedly found that gender specific programs result in greater participation of women and girls.

### *Tips and ideas*

- Use female leaders and helpers.
- Conduct physical activities in a segregated area of a general use facility.

- Use sporting facilities during the day when there are fewer males present.

When working with CLD young women there may be some cultural needs that need to be taken into consideration:

- Some communities may expect women to dress modestly, so make allowances for clothing and cultural requirements such as wearing the hijab (headscarf).
- It is not always possible to find female coaches and trainers; if there happens to be a male coach or trainer, physical contact with female participants should be avoided.
- Conduct activities during the day.
- Be informed about cultural holidays and avoid activities during this time. There are a number of multicultural calendars available online.
- Obtain consent before taking photos of young people.

### **6. Similar age groupings**

The needs and interests of women and girls are often very different, making it difficult to adequately cater for a wide range of ages within a program.

It is recommended that, in general, programs should be geared to specific peer age groups.

### **7. Non-competitive activities**

Women and girls, especially in the early skill-building phase, may prefer to participate in sport and recreation activities that do not involve the stress of competition.

### *Tips and ideas*

- Place emphasis on participation, not the final score.
- Provide instruction on basic skills and promote skill development to build the confidence of participants.

### **8. Food**

Providing food and refreshments enhances the social aspect of a sports program.

### *Tips and ideas*

- Provide food/snacks at the program launch.



- Following an activity, provide refreshments to encourage participants to stay and socialise, discuss any issues or listen to a guest speaker.
- If funds are tight it may be appropriate to ask participants to contribute the occasional plate of food to share.
- When working with CLD groups, take into consideration any special dietary requirements (such as providing halal or vegetarian options).

### **9. Prizes and giveaways**

People like to feel a sense of achievement and recognition. Consider giving some prizes or certificates for participants to acknowledge their involvement.

### **10. Feeling comfortable and relaxed**

To increase the likelihood of women and girls joining the program and being regular attendees, it is important that participants feel comfortable in themselves and their surroundings.

#### *Tips and ideas*

- Ask participants to wear comfortable casual clothes (avoid the need for trendy close-fitting garments that would cause body image issues or clash with cultural requirements).
- Music can ease tension and may also stimulate conversation. A good idea is to ask the participants to bring their own music.

### **General considerations**

Before you start the program:

- Ask young people what they are interested in and what they like doing.
- Involve participants in as much of the planning process as possible.
- Identify a community leader or an agency as a point of contact.
- Consider forming a partnership with an ethno specific or youth specific agency.

Find out about your target group:

- Check to see if it is appropriate to mix genders.
- Consider targeting an existing group.
- Consider running activities straight after school.
- Link in with community events if possible.

Special considerations:

- Transport may be a barrier, so consider running the activity close to where young people live or study.

- Newly arrived young people may be unfamiliar with the structured sport environment, rules or roles of referees.
- Cost will be a barrier to participation for many newly arrived young people, so try to keep the activity costs down where possible.
- Find out about the level of English of participants, as you may need to organise an interpreter.
- For more information about coaching and training tips, download our sports tip sheets from [www.cmyi.net.au](http://www.cmyi.net.au)

Promotional material:

- Stick to basic details
  - Date
  - Time
  - Location
  - Cost
  - Contact name and number
- Use graphics on flyers and try to avoid slang or catchy phrases.
- Consider translating your flyer.
- Talk to a community leader or agency about advertising on community radio.
- Use self identifying language, e.g.
  - Are you a young person?
  - Do you like soccer?

Promote through agencies that work with CLD young people such as:

- Migrant Resource Centres
- English Language Schools
- Youth services
- Secondary schools

You can also contact your local council to find out what CLD groups are in your area.

Information contained in this resource was adapted from *Designing Physical Activity Programs for Women and Girls*, (Womensport and Recreation Victoria).

[www.womensport.com.au/files/C6VQYX8XSE/Program%20Design%20April%2004.pdf](http://www.womensport.com.au/files/C6VQYX8XSE/Program%20Design%20April%2004.pdf)

