

Newly Arrived and Refugee Young People talk about Pathways to Participation

Overview

This information sheet is based on a Youth Panel question and answer session held at the CMYI Multicultural Sports Network on 17 October 2007.

The panel was made up of six young people from Horn of African Communities, who typified experiences from recently arrived and more established communities. They had played a variety of team sports, with basketball and soccer being the most popular amongst this particular group, so although many of their insights are based on this experience, the ideas and issues that the young people raised are transferable to other sports and related environments. The audience was made up of representatives from sporting associations, leisure centers and local council. Some of the following questions came from the floor, while others were prepared.

You can view videos of the discussion through YouTube – links are included in the November 2007 edition of the CMYI Multicultural Sports newsletter.

Question: Why do you participate?

Veronica: I love sport; it makes me healthy and keeps me in good shape. When an opportunity to play sport comes up, I grab it and always have fun.

Jackson: Sport is a culture of its own, it's inside of you, and it is necessary. It's a good career and you can make it part of your life. Sport should be a part of everyone's day.

Question: Is racism an issue in sport?

Omar: Sport is very passionate. Often when the team is not winning the blame is on us. It is demotivating. I have heard players being called monkey or black in other languages. When the club is more familiar with Africans there is less racism, more acceptance. I set up the Heidelberg Stars as a way of encouraging other young Africans to play soccer; it can be a frustrating role when games are organised and no umpire turns up. I've experienced this only happening with the African teams and it's a form of discrimination.



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Kicci: I played on an all white team and often players don't pass the ball to me and the coach doesn't say anything, but I persevered and tried to get to know other players.

Nyagoa: Recently I tried to register in a local basketball competition and the staff member asked me if I wanted to play for "the white or the black team".

Question: Are your parents involved in your sport?

Nhial: Families see others succeed at sport, but parents mostly think you are just going to have fun. It would be nice for parents to support us in making sport a career. It's difficult to fight for this and often those people who encourage you will only go so far but there is no 'funds' which is what is needed as well – need lots of encouragement from parents.

Veronica: My mum's very encouraging with my sport, she trusts me and knows I'm old enough to make my own choices, as long as I go to school she is happy for me to participate. It's difficult sometimes for my mum – who is a single mother who looks after seven children – to drive me to different games.

Kicci: My mum trusts me but likes proof of where I am going, such as pamphlets etc. I think this is because we are in a different country and they are still unsure. Parent contact from coaches helps but also sometimes they don't want their children to be taken away and they see sport as a distraction.

Question: How does sport assist in other areas?

Kicci: Sport helps me in making friends, helps me with school, and with overall fitness.

Question: How did you get involved / hear about various sporting opportunities?

Jackson: I found out about different clubs through friends and the newspaper. Recently, a worker with African youth, James, came to us asking to start up a soccer team.

Kicci: Through school I enjoyed netball, so asked the coach how to find out about this. Basketball was through friends, and through Claudia's project.

Veronica: School.

Omar: Through friends initially, and then found out about more clubs.

Nyagoa: School, and through Claudia's programs.

Question: What other resources do you need to go further?

Nhial: There needs to be more games and more referees; 20 minutes (Futsal

competition) is not long enough. There is not enough funding for those that come from refugee and newly arrived backgrounds to play sport.

Veronica: A late game for girls is difficult. Most girls' parents don't have cars so transport to and from the sport facility is required. Parents may then be more encouraging if transport is provided.

Omar: More and better quality soccer facilities are needed.

Nyagoa: I need for people to understand my situation and the difficulties we face to play sport, it's not as easy as with other people.

Question: In terms of the sport you play, where will you be in five years from now?

Jackson: A professional – I want soccer to be my occupation.

Kicci: I would like to link sport to career, but my main goal is being a lawyer

Veronica: I would like to go to university to study something but still have sport in my life. I also want to play basketball for Victoria.

Omar: I would like to be in a sport management position at club level.

Nyagoa: I will give it my best and keep playing sport.

Question: What are parents' goals for young people?

Kicci: My father believes education is number one but still supports my sport.

Question: What are the barriers for girls in sport?

Girls have less opportunity to play sport because parents need to know where the girls are, culturally girls are meant to stay at home, while boys can just go, but girls need permission to go play sport.

When it comes to playing competitions, I often find womens' sports become less of a priority. At Springvale and Dandenong, where I play, girls' matches are often cancelled before boys' matches.

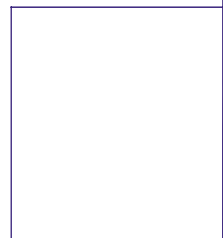
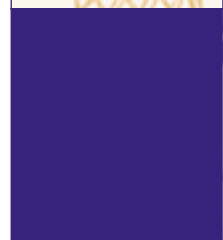
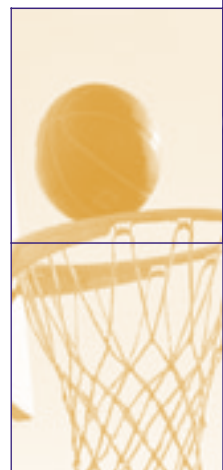
Question: We have heard a lot about Soccer. What about other sports?

Omar: All my friends play soccer so that's why I play, I'd play AFL but there are no clubs in my area.

Question: What is the best way to contact parents?

Kicci: The best place is the school. The school can contact parents, and the parents feel the program is credible. Having someone else talk to parents is also a good way of parents hearing how sport is good for young people not just left to young people only. Some parents may be suspicious when young people bring registration forms home for parents to sign.





For more sport and rec
resources, check out
[www.cmyi.net.au/
MulticulturalSport](http://www.cmyi.net.au/MulticulturalSport)