

Sports partnerships to connect with communities

Overview

How can sports link in with emerging community groups in interesting and inventive ways? Developing working relationships with community and educational organisations that hold a strong position at a grassroots level can be advantageous for all involved, in particularly young people.

CMY's Multicultural Sports Network Meeting in July 2008 looked at the ways some sports and peak bodies have tapped into the community sector to develop strong innovative programs. The workshop involved four rotating stations in which representatives from sporting, community and educational organisations discussed programs and initiatives that link newly arrived and refugee young people into sport and recreation.

Learning from the Schools Network (1998-2008)

The Schools Network was established in 1998. Funded by the Australian Sports Commission and managed by the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER), the Schools Network has worked to develop connections for schools that support their promotion and development of active programs. Through its 10-year funded period (to be completed on 31st December 2008), the Network has worked to develop school-community links around activity, but in latter years the focus has become more specifically connecting schools and sport.

The Network is made up of over 1000 schools across Australia that share an interest in sport and physical activity, and place value in the health and wellbeing of young people and communities. The Network is also supported by a vast range of partners, including sporting organisations (national, state and local), state departments (education; sport and recreation), and a range of relevant health agencies. The brokering of partnerships and network development for schools supports teachers to remain informed, and stimulates local partnerships and initiatives to assist young people into community sport.

Working with schools and supporting outside organisations to establish working relationships with schools, has been one of the Schools Network's core functions.

Working with schools

1. Approaching and building partnerships with schools is based on locating areas of mutual interest, and defining the merit for both parties. It requires communication and a clear sense of what you want to achieve, together with recognition of the value for the school. This process is enhanced if you:

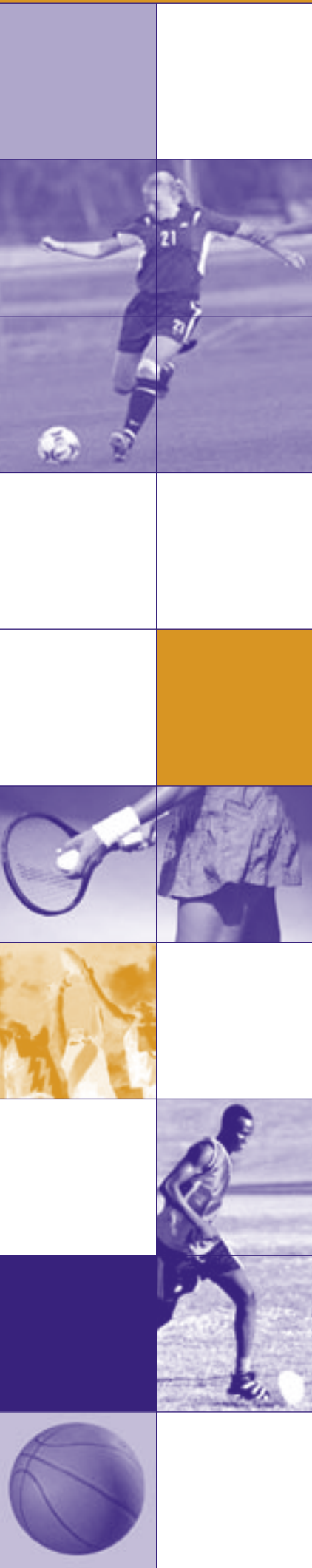
- Locate teachers who share your interest – the 'Champions'.
- Discuss what you are hoping to achieve and the merits for the school.
- Discuss the various resources / support on offer.
- Locate ways that working together will enhance current school programs.
- Work with the local community group at the same time to seek their involvement.
- Plan your mode of attack and set realistic timelines that support your objectives (e.g. season starting dates).
- Broker relationships for schools with their community club / associations for more sustainable outcomes.



This information is based on a Multicultural Sports Network Meeting held in Carlton, July 2008.

Sport - access for all cultures.

Tip Sheet from CMY



2. When working with schools it is worth realising that:

- The curriculum is extremely crowded and teachers are busy. Your contact is enhanced if you can connect or support a program that the school is currently working towards, and if you commit to doing your fair share of the work.
- Understand that teacher time is pressed and you need to have realistic expectations of teacher input.
- Teachers can be difficult to contact – email contact (if you can establish it) is the preferred mode of communication. Don't always expect an instant response.
- Schools' interest in sport and their needs for support vary considerably.

3. Collaborative planning

- What are you ultimately trying to achieve? Get a clear picture of what you want to achieve and why, and consider the best approaches. Think of the end result and work backwards. What are the local sport needs – more participants? More volunteers, coaches, umpires? Increased access to facilities?
- Consider the merits of a targeted approach (where you consolidate work in a particular area) versus a broad-brush approach (which provides a glimpse).
- Look for support: Who else has an interest?
- Work with school clusters - groups of local schools (including the secondary school – they may link in with their leadership programs). This helps build connections and networks.

Case Story 1 - ESL to Little Athletics

- A primary school English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher in Hobart saw increase in number of Sudanese students and families in the area.
- Aim: to engage refugee students and families in community life, an improve English exposure and language development.
- Project was driven by ESL teacher to support ESL and welfare programs.
- Five primary schools and two secondary schools involved.
- Discovered the barriers for young people included – Transport, cost and parental endorsement.
- Consulted with the children about their interests.
- Partners assembled: Schools Network, Dept of Education, Hobart Little Athletics Club, Athletics Tasmania and a local bus company.
- Little athletics club were willing to learn about newly arrived community and be involved as a means of increasing membership and member diversity. Between the club and the state association, subsidies and uniforms were made more affordable.
- Bus company offered transport support.
- 73 students and families regularly participated in Year 1, 54 new club registrations resulted.
- Positive English language development and welfare outcomes.
- The initiative continues in Year 2.

Case Study 2 – Fencing Initiative

- Fencing Victoria was looking to engage with primary school students to generate an interest in fencing.
- Schools Network approached schools within close proximity to the National Fencing Centre in Brunswick.
- Seed funding was granted to three schools to purchase a modified Fencing Kit to be shared.
- An "isolated" group of Muslim girls were chosen by one of the schools to work with as a means of involving them in the school sport program.
- 75 students from 3 primary schools were involved in a series of lessons on Fencing.
- Students and teachers enjoyed six weeks of Fencing tuition and provision of lesson plans to support further sessions.
- Students travelled to National Fencing Centre to experience the real thing.
- Teachers are now planning an interschool competition.
- Fencing Victoria is planning to continue work in the schools and to provide training to teachers to keep Fencing in the school program.

For sporting organisations wanting to work with schools, this online resource has checklists and information relevant to national, state and local sporting organisations: Sport working with education online resource can be found at: http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/schools_and_juniors/juniors/resources/sport_working_with_education

AMES and Bowls Victoria - Multicultural program

Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) is Australia's largest provider of specialist multicultural language, employment and settlement services. AMES is the largest provider of English language services in Victoria in addition to being a major supplier of specialist employment and training services in Melbourne and Sydney (AMES Website 28/07/08).

AMES and Bowls Victoria (RVBA & VLBA) have developed an eight-week program for students attending the AMES campuses in Footscray and St Albans. The program mainly involves the youth classes at these campuses; however in 2007 the program also incorporated an adult class with a lower literacy level and an interpreter to assist.

The program is aimed at introducing multicultural communities to the sport of bowls, the Australian sporting culture, and club environments. A work book has been developed as a series of lessons that covers the sporting side of the program as well as being a useful English language tool for classes at AMES.

Partnerships

- Bowls Victoria
- Local clubs in the western region
- CMY and AMES
- Newly arrived and refugee communities

Barriers for participation

- Social bowls casual entry run on Sundays, which is a religious day for many communities.
- Club joining fees

Outcomes

- Eight-week program + one-week BBQ/competition
- Days run by volunteers and development officers.
- SpiritWest – the community arm of the AFL's Western Bulldogs – offered free promotional materials.
- Around 40 students were involved in the Footscray program.
- Developing a multicultural resource kit that is visual and interactive for clubs to use to run programs locally.
- Aim in future is to expand into regional areas.
- Bowls Victoria has partnered with CMY to look at delivering inclusion training to the local Bowls clubs involved in the program, to prepare the clubs for the needs of newly arrived young people, and some of the strategies they can employ to make sustainable inclusion more successful.

CMY and Banksia Gardens Community Centre - Hume Futsal League

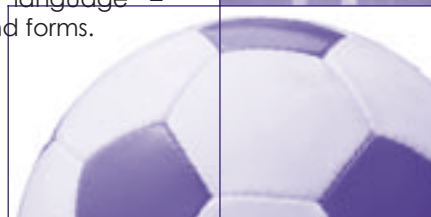
The program seeks to provide an accessible and sustainable Futsal league in the Hume area. The program is designed to equip participants with leadership skills that are transferable to their own lives and within their own communities, with an overall outcome of increasing confidence and self-esteem. It is envisaged that those who participate in the league will be active citizens within the broader community and develop cross-cultural understanding and respect.

Partners

- CMY
- Banksia Gardens Community Centre
- Australian Lebanese Welfare
- Broadmeadows Magistrates Court
- Dallas Neighbourhood House
- Hume City Council Youth Services
- Football Federation Victoria
- Victoria Police
- Victorian Arabic Social Services
- Australian Futsal Group
- Meadow Heights Learning Shop

The league's development

- Get to know the current situation – attend programs already running, speak to young people and local community organisations.
- Identify community and sport of interest - In the local area there is a large numbers of Iraqi, Lebanese and Turkish young people who want to play soccer.
- Created outline about the program to use as an "elevator pitch" for potential partnerships
- Developing partnerships involved, allocating roles and responsibilities based on expertise, and creating a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between all partners.
- Venue decided after scoping options (venue selection cost: must be sustainable, location: close to schools, shops etc., accessibility: public transport).
- Funding applications – a combined request from 10 organisations results in more confidence for funding bodies.
- Aim to remove/reduce barriers to inclusion such as cost, transport and language – especially registration process and forms.



Outcomes

- Program is currently for 16 to 21 year old males.
- As of term 4 2008, will include under-16s boys, and a girls program to follow in early 2009.
- Cultural challenges:
 - Take time, be patient, build trust.
 - Shift expectations: Allow young people to come through as they feel comfortable, rather than focusing on meeting "target" numbers.
- Creating pathways:
 - Possibilities to link young people with community support programs.
- The program becomes a forum to speak with young people and to promote other things.
- The keys to a successful program are "sustainability and partnerships".
- The key to a successful partnership: MoU - "the MoU has really driven it (the program)".
- Funding from Council, community groups and Magistrates Court (diversion of first time offenders). Encouraged to make a gesture through even a small donation.
- Evaluations – after 5 weeks and 10 weeks for players.

AFL Multicultural Football Program – Western Bulldogs

The Multicultural Football Program is a joint initiative of the AFL and AFL Victoria, established in partnership with the Department for Victorian Communities. Its primary objective is to assist migrant and refugee communities to access football. We want football to be a vehicle that encourages community strengthening and inclusion within the wider Australian community.

A further objective is to broaden both the participation and fan base in Australian Football by engaging people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds.

Multicultural Development Officers have been appointed by the AFL to provide AFL Victoria with the resources to work with AFL clubs (Collingwood, Western Bulldogs, Hawthorn, Richmond and Essendon), in conjunction with its Region Development Manager network in CLD communities, to implement the program in clubs and schools.

(AFL – Multicultural program website 28/07/08)

Multicultural Schools Football program - Western Bulldogs (part of Bulldog Friendly Schools)

Partnerships

- Victoria University: Pre-service teachers
- Victoria Police – Multicultural Officers & Youth Development Officer
- Western Jets- ESL students invited to Development Squads
- Schools – Principal endorsement important
- AMES – Sports communities coordinator
- Ethnic community groups in the West
- Sports Without Borders

School involvement

- 2 AMES outposts (Footscray and Werribee youth classes) – culminating in Inter- AMES Gala Day
- 22 primary schools
- 4 secondary schools
- VU Bridging Class

Program details

- 6 week program – Incorporation of values in programs, such as respect, teamwork, leadership, harmony etc.
- ESL Cup – Competition for Secondary School ESL students
- Participation is free
- Trip to National Sports Museum and MCG involved in program
- Multicultural Schools Cup- grade 5/6 boys and girls competition
- Participation in AFL Half Time Match Entertainment – Auskick and Grid Games
- Girls participation is important to the program.
- Twice a year – tickets to AFL games provided and the involvement of parents/ grandparents is encouraged.

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

