



Multicultural Sports Network Report

29 March 2006

Topic – Including culturally and
linguistically diverse young women in sport
and physical activity



Preamble

The purpose of the CMYI Sports Network meetings is to provide a regular forum in which workers who are engaged with CLD young people have the opportunity to meet and share information. Workers with specialized skills and knowledge impart current information about the sector to their colleges, and individual workers are given the chance to network with other workers in the field.

CMYI facilitates the Sports Network Meetings every quarter. It is hoped that the meetings can provide support to workers by placing value on their contribution and enriching their work by providing a mechanism for potential partnerships and collaborative work.

The issues and any outcomes of each meeting will be document and distributed to the Network, as well as to government agencies and funding bodies.

CMYI will also investigate appropriate strategies if any issues arise from the Network in relation to participation of CLD young people.

The aims

Further to the general purpose of the Network. The CMYI Sports Network will also

- Identify gaps in services for sport and recreation provision to CLD young people.
- Provide information to Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth about the issues for engaging CLD young people in sport.
- Identify issues facing CLD young people's access to sport and recreation.
- Identify gaps in the provision of sport and recreation to CLD young people.
- Identify strategies to engage CLD young people in sport and recreation.
- Promote partnerships and collaboration between the sport sector, the community sector and the health sector.

Membership

Membership to the Multicultural Sports Network is open to, but is not limited to, workers from the Sport, Community, Health, Government, Non Government Agencies, Ethno Specific Agencies, Service providers, Youth workers, or any person involved in the delivery of CLD sport and recreation programs to CLD young people.

Meetings

Meetings will be held every quarter between 9.30- 12.30 is. Catering will be provided.



Multicultural Sports Network Meeting

DATE

Wednesday 29th March 2006

TIME

9.15am-12.00

VENUE

Queen Victoria Women's Centre

210 Lonsdale Street

Melbourne

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are few opportunities for young women from ethnic communities to participate in sport and recreation due to barriers they may experience from within sporting environments and sometimes their own communities.

These barriers can be based on cultural, religious and gender expectations.

This forum will explore how to engage CLD young women in an environment that is appropriate and meets the needs of both sports providers and the community.

Speakers

Julie Ryan

Football Federation Victoria

Julie is responsible for the delivery of the government's strategy to increase the involvement and participation of women in Football (Soccer).

Chrissie Williams

Doutta Galla Health Service (DGCHS)

Chrissie is a Community Health Nurse / Health Promotion Project Worker focusing on the priority area of physical activity with CLD women.

Fatma Abdo and Gabrielle Nolan

Victorian Arabic Social Services

Fatma coordinates an Arabic speaking young women's physical activity program.

On the 29th March 2006 CMYI held its third Multicultural Sports Network for workers who are delivering sport and recreation services to CLD and newly arrived young people.

The Network meeting is funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria and was held at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre in Melbourne.

50 people including CMYI staff and speakers, from various organisations attended the session

List of organisations who attended included

- City of Whittlesea
- Basketball Victoria
- Young People's Health Service
- City of Yarra Youth Services
- VicHealth
- Centre for Ethnicity and Health
- Brimbank City Council
- Cricket Victoria
- SportEd
- North Richmond Community Health Centre
- Kensington YMCA
- AMEP Research Centre Latrobe University
- ISIS Primary Care
- Phoenix Weigh Lifting Club
- Football Federation Victoria
- Swimming Victoria
- Banyule City Council
- Bowls Victoria
- Frontyard
- Moreland Community Health
- Victoria Arabic Social Services
- Australian African Welfare
- School Focused Youth Services – Hobson's Bay/Wyndham
- Volleyball Victoria
- City of Melbourne
- Western Region Football League
- Cricket Victoria

About CMYI

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) is a State-wide community based organisation that aims to strengthen and build innovative partnerships between young people, support services and the community to enhance life opportunities for young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds living in Victoria, Australia. The centre has a priority focus on young people from refugee and newly arrived communities.

CMYI's Multicultural Sport & Recreation Project (MSRP) was developed to address the lack of involvement of CLD young people in structured sport. Phase 1 focused on program delivery and community consultation. It revealed a number of issues impacting on the participation of CLD young people, including the lack of connection between sport providers and ethnic communities, racial discrimination, parental support, restrictions on young women and issues around cultural identity. Phase 2 of the MSRP focused on developing good-practice models, providing direction and links between relevant sporting and community groups, and practical strategies for government, non-government organisations, sporting bodies and ethnic community groups. Phase 3 has seen the project move towards capacity building, advocacy and policy development in the areas of Multicultural Inclusion.

First speaker

Julie Ryan

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Women's Sport Package- Developing Diversity in our game

What is the Women's Sports Package (WSP)? The WSP is a grant awarded to 3 Victorian State Sporting organisations Basketball Victoria, Cricket Victoria and Football Federation Victoria.

Each of these organizations have been awarded funding over 4 years specifically for developing women's participation in their respective sports. Major funding has been allocated for years 2006/2007

This is tonsures adequate preparation; build for long-term sustainable change and not just for the duration of the grant

What is the government hoping to achieve with the WSP?

- To foster environments that encourage and support the full involvement of women and girls from all backgrounds at all levels of sports organisations
- To increase women and girls' participation in physical activity and sport.
- To increase women and girls' participation in leadership and decision making roles within sport's infrastructure.

How is FFV supporting this initiative?

- Extensive research and planning to determine how best to invest the funds for maximum return to football community
- 5 key areas were chosen for investment
- Corporate Culture
- Participation and player pathways
- Coach recruitment and training
- Official recruitment and training
- Club awareness and Education

FFV appointed a WSP grant coordinator in July 2005 as well as a trainee appointed January 2006.

It was important that support for the project came from the top down including the FFV Commission.

All departments, staff and Commissioners were and are required to contribute to implementing tasks.

Benefits of the WSP to our game.

Women's participation is a largely untapped market. Anecdotal evidence suggests that "Mums" as decision makers favor "inclusive" environments.

Many WSP tasks are designed as pilots for rollout to wider football community in terms of Recruitment

- Mentoring programs
- Support for existing "volunteers" will aid retention and recruitment
- Better management of expected "boom" as result of World Cup profile

How do we change the "culture"

- Success will occur in small steps
- Challenge language & stereotypes
- Increased "Inclusion" is the aim
- Involve all levels of the organization
- Educate at levels the importance of equality for all stakeholders
- Tailor the "sales pitch"
- Invoke a decision making model
- Ensure proposed outcomes are measurable

Inclusion Management Decision Model

- Utilize the following logic for all organizational decisions
- Have I considered the needs of the following customer groups
- Juniors,
- Men's,
- Women's,
- Multicultural,
- Indigenous
- Disabled Groups
- Referee's

Have all the above listed groups been considered/provided for in a fair and equitable manner

Success is contagious

- Remember to promote your success stories
- Internally to all levels
- Externally
- Don't be discouraged change takes time
- Celebrate the small wins too

Second speaker

Chrissie Williams

Doutta Galla Health Service
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Establishing Community Relations

On Monday of this week I commenced a 10week program that is predominantly about social connectedness and promotion of physical activity - in specific walking for the young mums (Arabic speaking) from the Horn of Africa. Sounds simple enough to put together & deliver but it has taken me 12 months of what would be considered to be 'Community Development work' in order to reach this point.

'Developing relationships in a culturally diverse society is about working together to respect and value individual and group differences. It has several dimensions:

Encourage a greater degree of acceptance and respect for, and communication between, people of different ethnic, national, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Promoting inclusiveness, cohesion and commitment.

Ensuring access by all members of the community to all services and programs provided by government and non-government service providers.

Recognising and overcoming barriers faced by some CLD communities to participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their community in which they now live.

Reducing discrimination and prejudice'

(Ref: Community Relations Resource Kit – Queensland Government)

Consultation has to be one of the major components in the process of relationship building. Without a consultation process taking place there is an apparent 'us' and 'them' feeling that is far from conducive towards building relationships and sustainability.

When first asked to work with the young mums from the Horn of Africa it was in the form of 'come and give some health education sessions to these young mums' –very quickly it became apparent it was not what they needed – another person standing their delivering information in written & verbal format.

In light of my apparent failure to meet the actual needs of the women in the first instance, there was clearly a need for consultation. A process I had not carried out initially as I was advised to what was required of my professional knowledge and time.

With the invaluable support of the Horn of Africa access worker we set up focus groups in order to attempt ascertaining their actual, and not perceived needs.

The focus groups where set up at times that where most convenient to the young mums, and I had to learn to put aside the watch as appointment times was not

something familiar to the cultural background of the women.... The concept of 'Africa time' was reality...and I had to acknowledge this and be flexible to this if, I was to take even one step forward in building my relationship with them.

It has taken several focus groups over a period of time to finally ascertain the target populations expressed needs, as initially, there was clearly a lack of trust towards me – evident by the reluctance to disclose information to me and the limited representation at the focus groups. Word of mouth within the community and encouragement from the Access worker enhanced the attendance greatly.

An ongoing process of consultation slowly started to create a sense of ownership by those present at the focus groups. A sense of ownership will ensure greater commitment to the initiative.

It is well known that if we choose to participate in an activity we are more likely to continue that activity as oppose to when we are told we must participate which frequently lends itself to high drop out rates.

Community relationship strategies work best when they are initiated, designed and owned by groups in the local community in partnership with local organisations that serve that community.

With the program that we have just commenced, the young mums have chosen all the information topics that will be discussed and the venues that we will walk to or catch public transport to for the information sessions to take place. I have simply facilitated the process not taken control.

Careful and thorough planning is critical to effective community relationship building and successful initiatives. The planning process should be structured around extensive and inclusive consultation with the community.

With the young mums from the Horn of Africa there has been ongoing consultation around the day and time that the project would run. The latter has clearly required that I be flexible and accommodating to their needs, which have, on several occasions varied from that planned! Consequently, as a service provider, I have had to go away and restructure the planning. However, if this leads to better participation by the target population then it is clearly a process that is worthwhile. I emphasised my role as a facilitator and encouraged them to assist me in developing their program to achieve combined outcome goals.

Community relationship strategies work best when they are integrated with existing processes and programs. This is particularly important for consultation and information dissemination about a potential project as people generally feel more comfortable participating in existing or familiar networks and structures than they do accessing a new service in a new environment that may feel threatening.

By working with the Access worker I was able to gain exposure to a greater percentage of the Horn of Africa Community within some of their established group settings. My presence along side the access worker implied trust that then allowed me the opportunity to develop a rapport with members of the community.

I have now been accepted into the group and have been buoyed by several invitations to attend social functions from within the group. I feel honoured to have received such invitations.

Good relations are based on informed decisions about the current situation, available resources, and relevant social and human networks.. Information from the

community was vital in the planning of their program, without a good relationship I was not going to be privy to their diverse needs.

It has taken me 12 months to develop a project that identifies with and meets the needs of the young mums from the Horn of Africa. It has not been easy and there were times when feelings of being negative would be felt by myself. Challenges will arise but it is important as project leader to remain positively focused and reflect on the achievements to date. This positive framework will encourage continuation by all involved.

There is no quick, one-off solution to building community relationships. Community consultation, ownership, and planning with an integrated approach – by that I mean working with existing groups – will all lend themselves towards a better relationship.

However, pertinent to all of the latter is the need for awareness and sensitivity regarding cultural, religious and gender expectations of the community you are working towards engaging in physical activity and recreation.

You must determine the correct language to communicate, will a professional interpreter be required and enhance the outcome for the community. It is vital to be aware of the appropriate way of addressing the community – in some cultures the given name follows the family name. Be aware of non-verbal communication – in some cultures eye contact or hand shaking may be an unfamiliar custom.

Ensure you are aware which cultural group or groups the community identifies with (Ethnicity) – country of birth, preferred language, other languages, literacy

With the young mums from the Horn of Africa I have two groups that will run as they have identified themselves by language – Arabic speaking and Somali speaking.

Be informed of customs within the community. Decision-making may not be the role of the community you are directly working with; it may well be that they need to seek permission from the spouse or other significant other. This process can be time consuming and you need to express patience and understanding as this process takes place.

With the young mums from the Horn of Africa I know that obtaining consent to participate for some has been a process of taking the information away to the person that makes the decision for them.

Be aware of religious practices and links between religion and ill health. Ill health may be seen as a result of lack of prayer or faith. It is vital that you consider and allow time for prayer or other religious activities and that you ensure provision of an appropriate environment.

To conclude as can be seen relationship building is complex and requires time, patience, understanding, knowledge, awareness and sensitivity in order for there to be an ongoing and sustainable relationship.

It is vital that a holistic approach is adopted thus taking into consideration the complex factors that impact on community relations. Issues raised may be symptomatic of other underlying problems that require further investigation. For this reason, community programs are frequently multi-pronged and require the cooperation of a number of groups or agencies.

I strongly urge that as service providers that you and your colleagues consider and act upon the need for cultural awareness of a chosen target population prior to

engaging with them. Thus you have cultural and ethnic awareness and sensitivity which in turn will enhance the relationship building dramatically. Having lived in Saudi Arabia I speak a little Arabic – sufficient to ensure the correct greeting is utilised when first meeting – this, the young mums from the Horn of Africa expressed a token of appreciation to. In addition to which I have travelled extensively through Africa and so have an insight although small into their lives 'back home' – something for us to have common ground.

When attempting to provide services for the CLD community. Your awareness may be increased by use of appropriate CLD resources kits such as the Home and Personal Care Kit – the reason I recommend this is that it gives excellent cultural and religious profiles that includes customs and values, communication styles.

Clearly working in partnership with agencies such as CMYI and CEH will enhance greatly the services you provide to CLD communities. Utilise and work with local community centres, neighbourhood houses and health centres to access the community in the first instance.

And remember that good relationships take time to build and once established need ongoing work in order to be successful and this can only be achieved through getting out there and working with the community not for the community.

Third speaker

Fatma Abdo and Gabrielle Nolan

Victorian Arabic Social Services

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Fatma and Gabrielle co ordinate a young women's physical activity and health and well being program for Arabic Speaking young women aged 12-35 in the Hobson's Bay area.

They currently have approximately 30 young women who participate on a regular basis.

They believe that the strength of the program comes from the fact that Fatma herself is from the community and therefore provides that trusted link and safety that reassures parents, as well as participants that their religious and cultural beliefs are understood and respected.

Gabrielle strengths lie in her project management skills, her connections in the fitness industry and her studies as a social worker.

Some of the activities have been, group exercise, yoga and martial arts. Fatma and Gabrielle also engage speakers from health services in the area to come in and talk to the young women around issues such as breast screening, sexual assault and nutrition.

They hope that these young women will also promote the health message to their community.

CMYI Sports Program Register

CMYI is putting together a register of sport and recreation programs for CLD young people. Often we get requests from workers who want to link young people into CLD specific programs. We anecdotally know that there are a number of community, health and sports organisation who are conducting programs for CLD young people.

The register will give us an opportunity to collect information and distribute that back to the sector.

A copy of the database is available on the CMYI Sports Network Yahoo Group or you can email amorrone@cm yi.net.au for a copy.

To join the group to <http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/cmyimsn/> and register.

Evaluation

All the participants that responded to the evaluation found the network useful.

All the participants that responded to the evaluation found the practical examples most beneficial.

All the participants who responded to the evaluation said they would attend again.

Suggested topics for future meetings

- General youth engagement
- Assistance for Clubs
- How to assess council services
- Marketing to CLD communities
- Non tradition sport opportunities

I would like to thank all the speakers, Julie Ryan, Chrissie Williams, Fatma Abdo and Gabrielle Nolan for their wonderful presentations.

We look forward to seeing all those who attended at the next meeting and those who missed out we look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Venue and time to be advised

Assunta Morrone
Senior Policy Officer
Sport and Recreation

Alex Prado
Sport and Recreation Project Officer