

SPORTS OUTREACH: WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

PROJECT PROPOSAL



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Overview

This proposal details a concept to deliver a week-long wheelchair basketball train-the-trainer program in Honiara, Solomon Islands with the goal of identifying the development needs of people with disabilities, breaking down negative community attitudes towards disability in the Solomon Islands through sport, and establishing a sustainable wheelchair basketball program for people with and without disabilities to play together in Honiara.

Background

In 2011, Motivation Australia conducted a Peer Group training workshop to seven people with physical disabilities living in Honiara and from outlying islands. The training centred on functional, practical skills for wheelchair users to help them cope with challenges they face living with a disability and overcome obstacles in their communities. Ten sports wheelchairs specifically designed for wheelchair basketball were delivered as part of the program.

The final day of the workshop included a brief introductory session to wheelchair basketball where participants felt for the first time the joy of movement, exhilaration and speed on the basketball court and acceptance amongst their peers. This session had a huge impact on those that attended and sparked an interest and passion for establishing a regular wheelchair basketball program in Honiara.

The need for this project

With nearly 1000 islands and a few hundred different language dialects, the Solomon Islands are one of the most challenging environments to deliver effective, sustainable development, particularly in the areas outside the capital of Honiara.

People with disabilities in the Solomon Islands are faced with poor infrastructure to support their basic needs and very limited opportunity to showcase their abilities and participate in mainstream society.



Lack of inclusive sports program

Prior to the introductory session hosted by Motivation Australia's representatives during their Peer Group Training session, there has not been an opportunity for people with disabilities to participate in basketball, and their choices to join any regular sport and physical activity program are also limited. After the spark was ignited during the initial introductory session, there has been little progress made as local stakeholders do not yet know how to start developing a sustainable basketball program, tailored to the needs of people with disabilities. Motivation Australia were faced with a similar situation in Dili, Timor Leste and delivered a wheelchair basketball train-the-trainer workshop with the view to developing regular sporting opportunities for people with physical disabilities in Timor-Leste.

Proposed Concept

In order to develop a sustainable program for people with and without disabilities in the Solomon Islands, there are three core components that need to be addressed:

- Connecting local stakeholders and building relationships across different sectors, including disability organisations, sport organisations, development agencies, local Government and non-government organisations (NGOs).
- Building capacity for local stakeholders to deliver regular wheelchair basketball sessions and developing leadership skills of people with disabilities.
- Identify broader development goals so basketball program can be delivered in a targeted way to meet the needs of people with disabilities in the Solomon Islands, this may include for example; WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), physical accessibility, access to education and health information.

Key Stakeholders

The project will undertake a collaborative stakeholder approach to promote the sustainability of outcomes and local ownership. Key stakeholders include:

- **CBR** – the primary provider of rehabilitation and mobility aid equipment and part of the Ministry of Health. The sports wheelchairs are housed and managed by CBR.
- **People with Disabilities Solomon Islands (PWDSI)** – the peak representative body for people with disabilities in the country.
- **Solomon Islands Paralympic Committee** – the peak disability sport body.
- **Solomon Islands Basketball** – responsible for delivery mainstream basketball in the Solomon Islands and connections to existing basketball infrastructure.
- **Water Aid** – an international NGO with a mission to enable the world's poorest to gain access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

- **Motivation Australia** – an Australian NGO dedicated to providing mobility solutions for people with physical disabilities in developing communities.

Project Outcomes

This project aims to deliver the following outcomes:

- Deliver a five-day train the trainer wheelchair basketball workshop delivered by Sport Matters and an Australian Paralympic role model athlete.
- Host network meetings and focus groups with local stakeholders
- Deliver a public wheelchair basketball exhibition game
- Develop a comprehensive plan for ongoing wheelchair basketball activities addressing broader development goals

Financial Assistance

Contributions have already been committed from the Switzerland Embassy in Australia to cover some travel expenses and the cost of the inclusive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene component of the project. Additional funding is sought for AUD\$15, 000 to assist with travel costs, additional sports wheelchairs, basketball equipment and costs of delivering the train-the-trainer workshop.

Contact Us

To support this project and make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities in the Solomon Islands through sport, please contact the project partners Huy Nguyen on 0402 207 775 or huy@enableddevelopment.com or Jackie Lauff on 0409 421 765 or jackie.lauff@sportmatters.org.au.