



Social Inclusion Through Sports

Sports Without Borders

Sports Without Borders is a national not-for-profit organisation, auspiced by the Australian Multicultural Foundation (AMF) and dedicated to providing support for young people from new and emerging communities to overcome the barriers of participating in community sport. The following case study, titled “Social Inclusion Through Sports” demonstrates the impact of an Australian NGO in promoting diversity and building social inclusion in Australia. Since 2008, activities have been delivered within three pillars: Sports Grants and Scholarships, Capacity Building Programs and Raising Awareness.

Social Inclusion Through Sports

Background

Sports Without Borders (SWB) was formed in 2006 in response to key findings by an ABS report which found people from non-English speaking backgrounds were two thirds less likely to participate in sport than their Australian counterparts due to barriers such as a lack of appropriate facilities or programs, increasing costs and perceived racism. Funding has been received from a mixture of sources including; philanthropic organisations, businesses, local council, state and federal governments.

Innovation

Capacity building sports programs ensure that sports organisations and members of the CALD community build the skills, knowledge and experience to run sports programs and participate in sports clubs and organisations. SWB trained 13 Palestinians and 13 Israelis to take part in the AFL International Cup in 2008. The team had just 7 months to prepare and won games against China and Finland. In doing so the team promoted cultural diversity and tolerance, helped build bridges between local Islamic and Jewish communities and showcased AFL. The program was awarded a prize by the Peres Centre for Peace and a film on the program featured in the Cannes Film Festival. The Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) Program was held in the City of Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Shepparton, Monash

and Dandenong. In each council young people were given leadership, sports and event management training so they could design and organise a local sports events. Four Migrant Resource Centre's in the City of Maroondah, City of Whitehorse and City of Yarra held sessions with families from Cambodian, Horn of Africa and Middle Eastern backgrounds and described how sport improved health, education and well-being. These sessions also facilitated social inclusion by providing scholarships to young people to join sporting clubs and encouraged parents to get involved in sporting clubs as volunteers. SWB was supported by Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), the Scanlon Foundation, the AMF and the Australian Sports Commission during the course of the program. A sports carnival held at the University of Melbourne for newly arrived communities in Carlton and surrounding suburbs which includes sporting clinics, entertainment and food. The carnival involves the University of Melbourne, the City of Melbourne, Tennis Victoria, Athletics Victoria and Melbourne Heart FC and was nominated for the VicSport Contribution to Sport Award earlier this year and the Migration and Settlement Council awards.

Partnerships

SWB hosts an annual community sports participation conference to influence public policy and unite sports people,

club officials, volunteers, policymakers, government workers and sports administrators.

Sustainability

SWB adopted an incremental approach to its programs. When it first started giving out scholarships it found that one off scholarships were insufficient to counter the rising cost of sport for newly arrived communities. It therefore started to give long term, three-year scholarships, but found scholarships alone were insufficient. In response, SWB instituted capacity building programs that engage with a diverse range of partners. SWB has facilitated the exchange and transfer of knowledge and skills between major stakeholders and was able to influence government policy at the state and federal level.

Impact

SWB has given over \$800,000 in sports grants and scholarships to over 14,000 young people from CALD communities. It has built strong linkages with multiple local councils, sports clubs, MRCs and government and run capacity building programs that have led to greater involvement of newly arrived communities in Australian sport. It has raised awareness about the barriers to sport faced by newly arrived communities and how sport can act as a mechanism to facilitate social inclusion.