



Sport Matters Submission to the Pacific Plan Review

May 2013

Sport is universal. In the Pacific, that is no exception and Pacific Islanders take pride in sport participation and success, regardless of the type of sport or the level of competition. Sport has a role to play in nation-building, in uniting communities and empowering individuals. The Pacific Plan already includes indicators related to sport participation and performance, however, these indicators do not go far enough and could be enhanced by harnessing the potential of sport to contribute to other areas of the Pacific Plan.

‘Sport for development’ refers to the intentional use of sport, physical activity and play to attain specific development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Sport is a fundamental human right and this is reflected in numerous international instruments including UNESCO’s International Charter for Physical Education and Sport, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Sport for development is increasingly being embedded as a tool in all development initiatives, rather than a stand alone activity. The MDGs as global targets for poverty alleviation will end in 2015. Their successor, currently under development, will pick up and aim to improve international unified action towards global targets. Sport has the potential to make a positive impact on development and strategies towards poverty alleviation.

Sport is a culturally accepted activity that unites communities and has the potential to reach sectors of the population who do not usually participate. Sport for development practices are now embedded in the core business of most United Nations agencies, donor governments, international sports federations and international NGOs. Pacific Island Countries have much to gain by increasing the application of sport for development. Sport is well recognised internationally as a low-cost and high-impact tool for development.

Sport for Development in the Pacific

- There are numerous stakeholders with a vested interest in the delivery and the development of sporting infrastructure across the Pacific. These include but are not limited to: Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC), regional and national sport federations, and selected development agencies.
- There are a number of regional projects already making an impact on development across the Pacific including for example, ONOC’s Stop HIV program and the Just Play program of the Oceania Football Confederation. In addition, the Australian Government invests in a number of sport for development programs managed by the Australian Sports Commission including the Pacific Sport Partnerships and the Australian Sports Outreach Program.

- There is largely un-tapped potential in harnessing the power of sport towards targeted development goals. A number of initiatives have made a start but including stronger targets and indicators in the Pacific Plan will contribute to stronger regional focus and stimulate action at the national level to address areas of the Pacific Plan that are not directly related to sport participation or performance, such as health, education and training, gender equality and sustainable development.

Regional Opportunities

- There is international interest in sport for development in the region with a host of donors, such as the European Commission and FIFA, supporting a youth conference in New Caledonia in December 2013.
- ONOC recently announced a new project targeting prevention of non-communicable diseases in partnership with the regional office of the World Health Organisation and the Australian Sports Commission.
- The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) has identified non-communicable diseases and disability inclusive development as priority areas for the Pacific.
- At a 2nd Forum Disability Ministers Meeting in PNG, the Ministers called for a stronger emphasis on sport and culture including the introduction of a 'Para-Pacific Games' showing strong regional support for disability inclusive sport for development strategies.
- Regional forums such as the Healthy Islands through Sport forum have already identified regional priorities, and consultations between government ministries of health and sport.
- The Glasgow Commonwealth Games recently announced a partnership with UNICEF as their legacy project which is of interest to Pacific Island Countries who are also members of the Commonwealth, but there is also potential to engage UNICEF as a regional partner with strong sport for development capacity internationally.
- There is largely un-tapped potential to utilise sport and physical activity in disaster risk reduction, peace-building and environmental sustainability. However, selected examples of good practice do exist at the country level.

Sport and the Pacific Plan

- The Pacific Plan already includes a number of indicators that directly relate to national, regional and international participation in sport. However, without effective monitoring tools and national accountability, those targets remain intangible ideals.
- One of the challenges is that sport for development lies outside the realms of sporting organisations with the result that so many people living in poverty fall between the cracks. Sport is often seen as a luxury rather than a human right. Without cohesive national implementation and government support, people across the Pacific living in poverty will never achieve their right to sport and physical activity, and to full and active participation in their community.
- Sport has enormous potential to value-add to diverse regional priorities and when implemented in combination with other approaches can impact positively on development areas such as health, education and training, gender equality, sustainable development.

Recommendations

- More ambitious sport for development targets developed in consultation with both the sporting and the aid and development sectors.
- Consideration for including sport based interventions and targets across the Pacific Plan.
- A commitment needs to be made to creating capacity within implementing organisations to ensure all stakeholders are accountable to achieving development, not just sporting outcomes.
- Establishing central data collection, research, analysis and technical support for sport for development
- A regional monitoring and evaluation platform that captures development outcomes against clearly defined development agendas.
- Employing best practice principles of consultation, participation and empowerment in sport for development program design, implementation and evaluation.
- Ensuring all marginalised sectors of the population are included in sport for development activities.
- Harnessing opportunities for supply of sport-specific equipment to support new initiatives.
- A formal partnership approach linking government, NGO, sport and community partners.

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