



Inclusion of migrants through Sports

a guide to good practice



Inclusion of migrants through Sports

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Introduction

About MYSA

Multicultural Youth South Australia Inc (MYSA) is the state representative advisory, advocacy and service delivery body for multicultural young people aged 12-30 years. It is the only youth-specific multicultural agency in South Australia, and one of two leading youth-specific multicultural agencies in the country. MYSA is recognised locally and nationally for its leadership on multicultural youth issues.

Overview

This resource has been developed for sporting bodies and facilities seeking to create sustainable opportunities for multicultural youth to participate in sport and recreation. The information and guidance provided here will assist in the development of culturally inclusive opportunities and activities. These include sport exposure programs and sporting carnivals, multicultural coaching and training programs as well as multicultural sport awareness training.

This information is based on MYSA's extensive service delivery experience as well as the findings of a mixed methods investigation of the sport and recreation experiences of young refugees living in South Australia

Questionnaires were distributed to:

- 16 sporting bodies and clubs
- 87 young refugees aged between 12 and 28 years originating from Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Congo, Sudan, Somalia, Rwanda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Bhutan, Togo and Uganda.
- Four focus groups were held with a subgroup of 42 young refugees.
- 25 of these were male and 17 were female.

Aims of the research:

- Investigate young people's engagement and participation in sport and recreation
- identify the barriers impacting on their engagement.
- Provide policy and decision-makers and the sport and recreation sector with recommendations to enable them to more effectively respond to areas of identified need.

The project was funded by the State Government Office for Recreation and Sport and was undertaken by MYSA in partnership with the University of South Australia.



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What percentage of the Australian population is multicultural?

SNAPSHOT

People from multicultural backgrounds comprise approximately 25% of the Australian population. Similarly, multicultural youth comprise 25% of the Australian youth population. Of these, many are from refugee backgrounds.

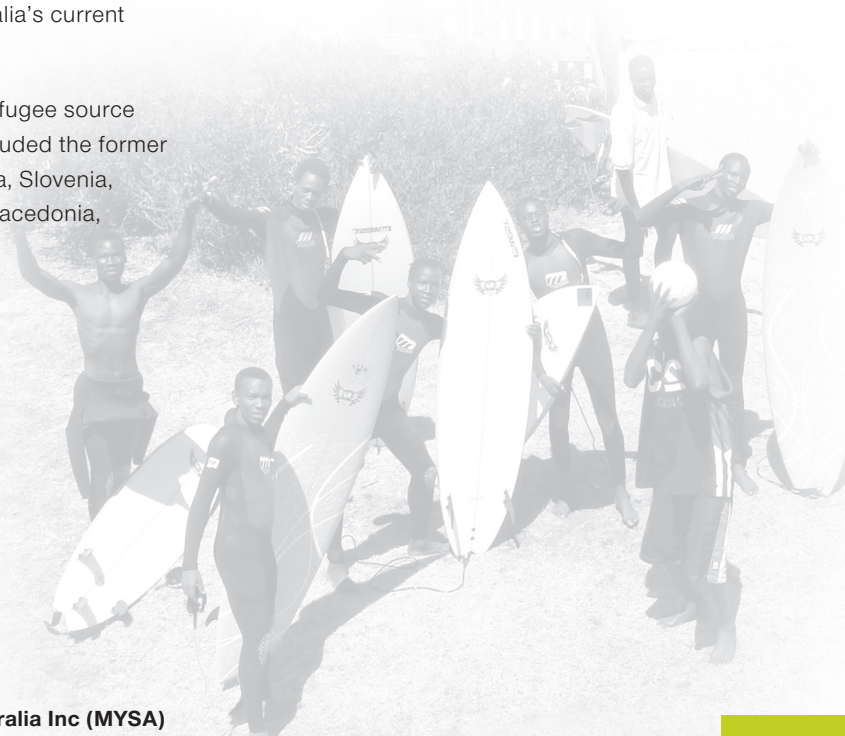
Vojvodina and Kosovo), the Middle East (Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq), South Asia (Afghanistan, Bhutan and Burma) and Africa (Burundi, Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan).

CLOSE UP

Over 750,000 refugees have migrated to Australia since the end of the Second World War. Up to 13,750 more are added to this number each year under Australia's current Humanitarian Program.

Children and young people make up at least 40% of Australia's humanitarian intake at any given point in time, with almost 70% of the current intake being under the age of 30 years.

In recent decades, the major refugee source countries and regions have included the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia,



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What are the benefits of creating a culturally inclusive sporting environment?

SNAPSHOT

Creating and maintaining a culturally inclusive sporting environment has physical, psychological and social benefits for individuals, groups, communities and society as a whole.

CLOSE UP

The benefits for individuals include physical and psychological wellbeing, increased self-confidence and self-esteem, greater social interaction and participation, and increased exposure to different cultures.

The benefits for sporting associations, organisations, clubs and facilities include an increase in the number of skilled players, greater volunteer involvement, increased membership, new avenues for funding by being more representative of the community, and sustainability of the sport for the future.

The benefits for the wider community include increased community harmony and social cohesion.



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What are the benefits of sport and recreation for multicultural youth?

SNAPSHOT

Sport and recreation is as important to social participation and community integration as it is to health and wellbeing. Through sport and recreation, multicultural youth are able to make links and connections with the wider community which assist in their long-term settlement, future pathways and community integration.

resettlement process. This is on top of multiple losses including home, country, culture, family and friends.

These issues place young refugees at increased risk of a range of social problems. Sport and recreation can be preventative measure against at risk behaviours and therapeutic for those recovering from a history of trauma, grief and loss.

CLOSE UP

Adjusting to life in a new country can be very difficult, particularly for refugees who have been subject to forced migration. Young refugees in the initial stages of resettlement have to contend with many difficult issues including learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture and its systems, making new friends and, for many, helping parents cope with the



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Is it necessary for sporting associations and organisations to have a multicultural policy to guide their activities?

SNAPSHOT

A multicultural policy will help you raise awareness of inclusion and effect positive change in your association, organisation, club or facility.

Despite the fact that multicultural youth comprise 25% of the youth population of South Australia, most sport and recreation policy and programs focus almost exclusively on Australian-born youth, overlooking the barriers that refugee youth face.

CLOSE UP

Multicultural youth need to be seen as a special needs group within the broader youth population. Limited access to sport and recreation is partly due to the absence of policy for multicultural youth in general and refugee youth in particular.

In the absence of multicultural-specific policy, young refugees will continue to face barriers in accessing sport and recreation programs.



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What factors limit the involvement of multicultural youth in sport and recreation?

SNAPSHOT

While multicultural youth face a range of barriers to sport and recreation, many are simply not aware of the programs and facilities available to them or do not have adequate support and information to get involved in programs. These barriers are accentuated where similar opportunities do not exist in the young people's countries of origin.

the sport and recreation sector (15%); lack of or limited transport to access opportunities (14%); and racism and discrimination (12%).

Family responsibilities were also found to prevent or limit young people's ability to participate in programs and in some families, parents can refuse permission altogether due to a general distrust of mainstream society.

CLOSE UP

It is not possible to access reliable data on multicultural youth rates of participation in sport and recreation in South Australia because there is no research, no data management systems, and there is no agreement on how sport and recreation participation should be defined (i.e., formal or informal).

Sporting bodies and clubs highlighted a lack of funding and equipment and an overall absence of support to develop initiatives.

However, MYSA's own research in 2011 found that young people's participation is quite low. High costs and financial pressures were identified as the biggest challenge for young people (18%), closely followed by a lack of awareness of opportunities (17%); not understanding how to get involved and navigate



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Are there special barriers to participation for young Muslim women?

SNAPSHOT

Young Muslim women generally experience more barriers to sport and recreation than other multicultural youth, particularly those from Middle Eastern backgrounds.

CLOSE UP

MYSA's 2011 research found that 82% of females were not involved in any type of sport or recreation. Of these, 90% were from Muslim backgrounds. Cultural and religious obligations can prevent many young Muslim women from participating in sport and recreation. For example, some young women are not permitted to engage in sport where males are present while others are not permitted to wear uniforms deemed to be too short.

Culturally prescribed gender roles can involve significant restrictions on young women's freedom and participation in activities outside the home. Many young Muslim women also experience discrimination or unwelcoming sport and recreational environments. Consideration must therefore be given to prioritise female participation in sport and ensuring that programs are culturally sensitive.



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Is it important to engage the families of multicultural youth?

SNAPSHOT

In many multicultural communities, the family and extended family are the main source of wellbeing for young people, which includes their involvement in activities outside the home. It is therefore important to engage the families of multicultural youth in sporting activities.

CLOSE UP

The centrality of the family has practical implications for sporting clubs and programs. Some young people may not be permitted to participate in sport and recreation if their parents or caregivers have reservations about their involvement.

Parents and caregivers may be concerned that their children will be introduced to ideas that conflict with their own cultural values, beliefs and practices. For example, many young Muslim women would not be permitted to wear short uniforms, participate in mixed gender sports, or swim in mixed gender public swimming pools.

Sporting associations, organisations, clubs and facilities can increase their reach with multicultural families by engaging in regular, targeted outreach into communities rather than expecting them to know about available opportunities. This involves going to community

events and multicultural festivals, and providing families, parents and caregivers with translated information.

Before reaching out to communities, it is important to learn as much as possible about your target groups. An awareness of their cultural background and current circumstances will provide appropriate information necessary to establish some level of trust.

It may also be helpful to recruit known and trusted community members of the same culture to help break down barriers.

While it is important to be culturally astute, it cannot be assumed that one size fits all. There are differences within and between families based on religion, education, socioeconomic status and other factors. This includes the extent to which they have adapted to Australian culture and where they are situated in the resettlement process.



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Is it more advantageous to have culturally specific teams or culturally diverse teams?

SNAPSHOT

Some believe that culturally specific teams contribute to a greater sense of identity, belonging and social integration while others believe that culturally diverse teams are the most effective way to achieve optimum team outcomes.

The disadvantage of culturally diverse sports teams is that more than one language may be spoken during practices and matches and young people may form cliques along ethnic lines. It is important to consider the pros and cons of each approach and decide which is more likely to achieve your objectives and lead to a successful program.

CLOSE UP

The advantage of culturally specific sports teams is that they can contribute to a sense of belonging as young people generally form closer connections with those who speak the same language and hold similar values and beliefs.

The disadvantage of culturally specific sports teams is that they can present barriers to diversity and inclusivity.

The advantage of culturally diverse sports teams is that they can tap into a broader range of perspectives and approaches which can improve overall performance. They can also provide a good example of how young people deal with cultural diversity.





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What is Ramadan and how does it affect youth involvement in sport?

SNAPSHOT

Ramadan refers to the month of fasting that most young Muslims participate in each year. The date varies from year to year according to the Islamic calendar. During Ramadan, young Muslims are required to fast and focus on additional prayer and worship.

However, for those who do choose to attend training, sensible eating after sundown can allow them to maintain their health and performance during Ramadan.

CLOSE UP

Young Muslims who observe Ramadan are required to refrain from both eating and drinking from sunset until sundown for 30 days in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar.

Some young people will not attend training during this time because they want to focus on their spiritual development. The lack of food and water may also affects their mood, concentration and energy levels.



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What does 'halal' mean for Muslim players?

SNAPSHOT

'Halal' is an Arabic term that is used to refer to what is lawful or permitted under Islamic law.

CLOSE UP

If your association, organisation, club or facility is planning to provide refreshments for its players, it is important to ensure that what is served is culturally and religiously acceptable. Young Muslims are not permitted to consume non-halal ('haram') foods and beverages.

Pork and pork products including lard, ham and bacon are prohibited, as are alcoholic drinks and sweets containing alcohol. Meat from non-herbivore animals is also prohibited.

For other meat and poultry to be considered halal, it must be slaughtered according to Islamic guidelines. Halal meat and poultry must be purchased from an authorised butcher.

Some Muslims regard halal food as anything except pork while others have more strict dietary requirements.

Information about culturally appropriate foods and beverages can be obtained from young people themselves or multicultural organisations.



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Are young Muslims permitted to change or shower after sports activities?

SNAPSHOT

Young Muslims are not permitted to change or shower in communal showering and changing areas because Islam forbids them to be seen naked or to see others naked.

CLOSE UP

While some schools have allowed Muslim youth to shower in their bathing suits after sports activities, many parents would find this objectionable because they cannot avoid seeing other students naked in the shower area. If there are no separate cubicles for changing and showering, young Muslims will wait until they get home to shower.



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What are some immediate changes we can make to create a culturally inclusive sporting environment?

SNAPSHOT

Sporting associations, organisations, clubs and facilities can create a culturally inclusive sporting environment by reviewing current policy and programs to support inclusion. This may require organisational change, adjustment or improvement in a number of areas.

CLOSE UP

Young people from multicultural backgrounds face language, cultural, social and economic barriers to participation in sport and recreation. Suggested strategies for addressing these barriers include:

- Ensure strategic plans and other policy documents reflect a clear commitment to inclusion.
- Undertake an organisational review to identify where improvements can be made and if necessary, develop new policies, guidelines and procedures to support inclusion.
- Implement a working group to take an active leadership role in inclusion and embed inclusive attitudes and practices within the sporting association, organisation, club or facility.
- The key to getting your sport known to multicultural young people and their communities is to reach out to the community. Visit schools with a high multicultural student population, attend community functions and events, hire stalls at multicultural festivals and establish partnerships with multicultural organisations and communities for support.
- Appoint welcome officers to greet new members and players from multicultural backgrounds.
- Ensure staff, coaches and volunteers participate in regular cross-cultural training to support inclusion.
- Train mentors to support young multicultural members and players.
- Take action to reduce the costs of participation for young people from multicultural backgrounds.
- Provide opportunities for families to become involved and learn more about your sport.
- Link young people from multicultural backgrounds to coaching and other programs to develop their leadership skills.
- Due to unfamiliarity with mainstream Australian culture and systems, multicultural young people will take longer than their Australian-born peers to understand how your association, organisation, club or facility works and what it can offer them. It is therefore important to develop promotional materials that are culturally and linguistically accessible to them. They should be written in basic English and be clear and easy to understand.
- Ensure promotional materials are representative of the diversity of your membership base.
- Share positive examples of inclusion with the sporting sector.



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