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Multicultural Youth Engagement ...

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Research Paper 2010

Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria (ECCV) Inc. was established in 1974 as a voluntary community based organisation.

Over 35 years later, ECCV is a broadly based, statewide, peak advocacy body representing ethnic and multicultural communities in Victoria.

ECCV's role includes supporting, consulting, liaising with and providing information to Victoria's ethnic communities.

ECCV delivers policy projects for key partners in areas like multicultural policy, aged care programs and skilled migration strategies.

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Foreword

Australian youth today are often told that they have it too easy. Parents, teachers and other elders regularly inform young people that previous generations had it tougher, that they had to work harder and had to grow up sooner. If they are not being told this, young people are, somewhat conversely, being cautioned to enjoy their youth. They are told that, as they get older, they will come to realise that their youth was in fact the happiest time of their life. There are few among us who can say that they themselves were not told the same thing by their elders. Indeed, these words, or variations thereof, have been communicated across generations for generations. These tired sentiments conceal the simple truth that adolescence is a hard time for everybody. It is a time when we all begin trying to figure out who we are, where we are going and how we fit into our rapidly changing world.

For our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) youth these challenges are intensified, for they must navigate not only a new chapter of life, but also a new way of life, a new language and a new country. This quest can, at times, be too big for these young, already overburdened shoulders and many, perceiving themselves to be irreparably at odds with their new surrounds, simply retreat, or disengage.

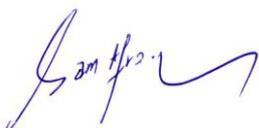
The importance of avoiding civic disengagement among multicultural youth cannot be overstated. It is young people CALD backgrounds who will be needed to shape the future policies and progress of Victoria's multicultural landscape. This will only transpire if young people remain connected to and inclined to trust their wider communities.

In 2010, the eccv, in partnership with Springvale Neighbourhood House, set out to investigate ways in which such young people might be assisted in their quest to establish a sense of belonging in their new communities. This paper and the recommendations therein are the product of consultations involving young Victorians and other community stakeholders. Through this process it was determined that we can greatly assist our CALD youth by encouraging and supporting strong familial bonds and by promoting civic and community involvement through school curriculum. It was also revealed that youth engagement can be greatly improved through structured extracurricular activities that feature a community development approach. The successful All Nations Soccer Competition provided a sterling example of this approach at work.

This paper recommends the measures that should be taken in order to not only establish, but to sustain programs that promote civic engagement within families, at school and through extracurricular activities. We invite governments and community organisations to consider the key recommendations in this paper and to contemplate the wider benefits that such programs can provide to young people and, by extension, the community at large.

It is vitally important to the future of civil society that our young, culturally diverse population develop a sense of community connectedness and a willingness to become civically active. The recommendations presented in this paper provide the necessary framework for those who wish to see our young Victorians become empowered through meaningful, constructive and lasting connections with their peers, neighbours and wider community.

The eccv would like to extend our sincere thanks to all at Springvale Neighbourhood House and to the many other project participants who gave their time, knowledge and support to this research. Their input has been invaluable.



Sam Afra JP
Chairperson
Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria

Executive Summary

The Multicultural Youth Engagement paper is an outcome of a number of consultations between eccv and the Springvale Neighbourhood House. The consultations were aimed at exploring youth disengagement in communities in the south-east of Melbourne and the circumstances which lead young people to be at risk of anti-social or disruptive behaviour. In consultation with members of the Maori, Cook Islander, Burmese, Hazara, Oromo, Hararian, Eritrean and Sudanese communities, we have developed a discussion paper outlining what is required to engage youth from the south-eastern council areas, with the underlying aim of ensuring their full participation in society.

The consensus among the community members involved was that local youth need access to a shared community facility, where they can meet, outside school hours, to engage in recreation, arts, cultural, educational and leisure activities. It was brought to our attention that youth, particularly those from new and emerging communities, often miss out on the language, skill and leadership development workshops promoted by migrant resource centres in the south-eastern council areas. This is due mainly to a shortage of community facilities available to host these programs. Clearly, the collective demand to participate in localised leisure undertakings is growing; hence, there is a need to establish an effective means of engaging newly arrived youth from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD). According to the participants in this research, the most favoured approach to encouraging such engagement is through organised sport.

The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly we seek to explore the issue of youth disengagement in more depth. Secondly, we make specific recommendations that will assist the local community, who are seeking to create an environment that encourages the development of young people's capabilities, one in which their contribution can be truly valued.

The following recommendations have been developed through these consultations:

ECCV Recommendations

Civic Engagement Strategies: Family

Recommendations

1. That families of disengaged youth from ethnic minority groups are assisted through specific counselling programs that, firstly, address intergenerational differences and, secondly, support parents and their young to develop effective communication, conflict management and mutual understanding. These programs could be in the form of government-offered tutorials and special TV or radio programs on successful child engagement techniques.
2. That families of disengaged youth are supported through access to learner-centred programs and literacy resources on engagement and volunteerism.

Civic Engagement Strategies: School

Recommendation

3. That schools offer community service opportunities and volunteering programs in their curricula that include a youth mentoring component and teach CALD youth about civic engagement.

Extracurricular Activities: Sport

Recommendations

4. That more opportunities for culturally inclusive extracurricular activities are provided to youth groups, especially those that encourage young people to co-operate towards achieving a common goal.
5. That sport be used as an avenue for youth to build networks and make friends outside their own ethnic groups.

An Effective Sport Diversion Program: All Nations Soccer Competition

Recommendations

6. That single ethnic group sporting clubs extend their membership to players from other cultural groups in the local area, in order to reflect the diversity of the local community and to minimise ethnic confrontation based on historical conflicts in countries of origin.
7. That alliances between different local sporting clubs be encouraged through membership that is open to all cultural groups in the community.
8. That the program be actively reinforced and promoted in the community and in schools. This will minimise the likelihood of groups being unaware of the program or falling through the cracks.
9. That attempts to emulate the success of the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' program provide a commitment to ensure ongoing funding for the program and training in appropriate cultural sensitivities for coaches and administrators. This training is to be conducted in a manner that will foster increased understanding and empathy.
10. That cultural information sessions be provided to trainers and volunteers, in order to further educate them regarding the communities with which they are working. This is vital for facilitating communication and dispelling misunderstandings.
11. That such awareness-raising is supplemented by inviting trainers and volunteers to participate in community activities and events, in order to build good relationships between them and the communities concerned.
12. That the sporting instructors selected are able to act as role models for youth as well as conduits of information.
13. That orientation sessions include the use of footage to better familiarise young people with the rules of the sport being played and to teach them about the differences between formal and informal structure.
14. That the establishment of a sport-based program with a broader community development focus incorporates the voices of the ethnic communities concerned. Engagement with peak body advocacy organisations is to be combined with consultations involving neighbourhood houses and community advice bureaux.
15. That football programs which target social and human development are analysed and that evidence is gathered to measure their success against their desired outcomes. The measurement of impacts could be based on anecdotal evidence, such as testimonials.

Perceived and Experienced Barriers

Recommendations

16. That participation in sport be increased by targeting recently arrived young people and offering skill-building opportunities.
17. That opportunities are provided for women from new and emerging communities to 'skill-up' and undertake essential training.
18. That a sense of inclusion and belonging is fostered by increasing the number and quality of media images in advertising campaigns that depict ethnic minority women taking part in sporting activities.
19. That equality of access to resources is ensured via the removal of institutional, administrative and socioeconomic barriers to participation.
20. That information on fundraising opportunities and training be provided to CALD community members, in order to build their fundraising capacity.

Council Managed Sporting Facilities

Recommendations

21. That local councils consider ways to boost expenditure in order to ensure the availability of public sector facilities for sport; to provide financial support and infrastructural aid to youth groups; and to fast-track investment into the expansion of existing venues and the construction of new ones.
22. That partnerships between councils, community organisations, ethno-specific agencies and schools are cultivated for the provision of subsidised transport arrangements, alternative meeting spaces and to foster strengthened networks.
23. That linkages between community groups, and the sharing of facilities, be better encouraged.
24. That stakeholders consider the idea of reserving a minimum quota of time solely for youth-based activities at such facilities.
25. That school grounds be considered as alternative sporting club facilities.
26. That shared objectives between the school community and outside users be established by ensuring that students from the school are able to join the team.
27. That team membership be extended to all CALD groups in the local community, to ensure that community sporting teams are not limited to one ethnicity, but encompass those from other cultural groups, within each age bracket.
28. That an overarching practical program be developed that incorporates various educational components and pathways, where sports or recreation is but one of many facets of the program.
29. That the inclusive objectives of the program are made clear to the young people involved, in order that they may work together to achieve them.

1. Introduction

Newly arrived youth in Australia from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds often find it difficult to develop a sense of belonging in their new country. Many who come under the humanitarian stream of entry have fled civil conflicts, and experienced the trauma of loss and separation, and of family and community breakdown. In addition to adjusting to life in a new country, recovering from trauma, and navigating education, employment and complex bureaucratic systems, these young people must also negotiate family, peer and community expectations while going through adolescence. These combined pressures place a strain on their wellbeing, their immediate relationships and their affinity with their broader community (Olliff 2008, p53).

The challenges experienced by youth in seeking to create a sense of belonging in their new home can be exacerbated by settlement difficulties, feelings of social exclusion, generational differences in integration and adjustment, as well as by the struggle to reconcile the dual sources of identity that arise when home and peer groups come from different cultures. These difficulties are compounded for those between the ages of 16 and 20 who are too young for immigrant programs designed for adults and too old to benefit from a gradual integration process that schools and families can promote for CALD children.

With the above in mind, it is clear that there are a range of personal, social, cultural and community factors that may affect a young person's successful integration into their new country. These circumstances may lead to the withdrawal of youth from public life, limiting their proactive involvement in the community. There is a danger that, if these symptoms of disengagement are not identified and addressed in an adequate and timely manner, they may have far-reaching negative consequences for young people's connection to and trust in civil society.

It appears that the lack of trust in civil society, which is often apparent among CALD youth, may also be a product of past experiences in their countries of origin. It appears that a lack of confidence in the societies in which they lived prior to arriving in Australia impacts the way they interpret events in their new home, particularly if they have come from authoritarian regimes in which citizens have low levels of trust in government. This eroded confidence can be difficult to rebuild among CALD youth in their new home country, especially if incidents of racism and discrimination become common experiences for them.

What is required to encourage active participation of CALD youth in the social life of their communities is a clearer understanding of the ramifications of a decline in levels of youth civic engagement. Also needed is an identification of the factors that will encourage their participation and strategies to address the barriers to their engagement. This objective is the driver of this paper.

2. Civic Engagement

Understanding the meaning of civic engagement is vital for developing an awareness of the reasons for its decline among newly arrived youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The definition adopted for this paper was introduced by Hall (2007):

Civic engagement involves some kind of participation in the life of the defined community ... It is a process by which people learn or understand the way their community/society works and then become involved in social or public activities based on that new understanding (Hall 2007).

The participants in this research share a concern that youth engagement is substantially declining in communities in the south-eastern local government areas of Melbourne. This decline may have long-term consequences for the broader community, as they can inevitably change societies through generational replacement affecting the country's political and economic resources.

To avert such long-term negative impacts, three factors must be considered in determining the level of youth engagement and civic participation. These are: the availability of socioeconomic resources; ensuring equal access to resources such as education and employment; and developing social networks that promote participation (Stolle & Cruz 2005, p. 98).

A variety of benefits come from engaging youth in society, ranging from their wellbeing (including physical and mental health) and academic performance, to participation that extends beyond their immediate community into the wider society and its political institutions and economy. Most importantly, embedding youth within the support of social networks allows social capital to flourish in diverse societies, and fosters tolerance and acceptance of others (Stolle & Cruz 2005, p.98). It is therefore important that we build on existing strategies to overcome barriers to participation and instil a sense of belonging in newly arrived young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

It is well established that there are strong connections between one’s sense of worth, genuine civic engagement and contribution, feelings of belonging and the strength of entire communities (Canada25 2005; Matthews 2000). However, somewhere along the passage of youth transitioning to adulthood, many struggle to feel socially included, and these connections may be broken. The wider community must address this issue to ensure that positive, pro-social development is experienced by young people.

The literature presents two socialisation strategies aimed at achieving civic engagement in youth. These strategies are largely related to young people’s daily experiences and immediate networks, in particular familial relations and schooling.

3. Civic Engagement Strategies

3.1 Family

Various studies have shown that the family environment is an important determinant in young people’s motivation to engage pro-socially, as this kind of engagement begins in the home (Stolle & Cruz 2005; Uslaner 2002). It is understood that the family is the primary transmitter of information for youth, particularly during the early stages of socialisation (Kiang & Fuligini 2009). Through family socialisation, basic civic skills are developed in youth, demonstrating the importance of the family in fostering youth engagement.

Support for the whole family unit, which must include sensitivity to family and cultural differences, is essential for nurturing family environments that are conducive to co-operative social engagement. There is a growing recognition of the importance of working with the family unit to enhance the capacity of youth, as this is the space in which social attitudes and norms (such as norms around trust and reciprocity) are formed. Thus, facilitating ongoing positive family connections and relationships among youth, parents and other family members is crucial to the development of these values. It has also been found that children who are socialised within a self-respecting and tolerant atmosphere are more likely to be co-operative and socially engaged (Uslaner 2002).

Recommendation:

1. That families of disengaged youth from ethnic minority groups are assisted through specific counselling programs that, firstly, address intergenerational differences and, secondly, support parents and their young to develop effective communication, conflict management and mutual understanding. These programs could be in the form of government-offered tutorials and special TV or radio programs on successful child engagement techniques.

Parents act as role models for their children, indicating the importance of the family context for promoting the value of community to young people. However, parents must be supported to become civic role models for their children, which can be enabled through volunteerism and adopting a resource-based, learner-centred approach.

Family volunteering (as a whole unit) is seen as a method that fosters civic engagement by providing youth with role models who demonstrate their sense of responsibility towards the broader community (Stolle & Cruz 2005). If families hold positive attitudes towards volunteering, their effective communication and cohesiveness can be encouraged.

A second approach is to make available literacy resources that parents can use with children to promote discussion and debate in the home around civic engagement. The material is to include themes around engagement and the benefits of social participation. Other programs based on a learner-centred curriculum are those that prepare families for citizenship by giving families information on Australian society and its people.

Youth could also be supported to reinforce their parents' engagement through the introduction of a set of programs at different stages of child development that bring families together to participate in activities aimed at enhancing family relationships and supporting communities. This is enabled through creating links between families, their children's schools and the communities in which they live.

Recommendation:

2. That families of disengaged youth are supported through access to learner-centred programs and literacy resources on engagement and volunteerism.

3.2 School

The second socialisation strategy presented in the literature for achieving civic engagement in youth involves schooling institutions, as they have the capacity and mandate to reach every young person. Schools are the first gateways to the formation of peer relationships and one of the first environments in which young people experience discrimination, rejection and pressures to assimilate, or conversely, acceptance and belonging (eccv, 2009). In this context, schools have the capacity to lead in establishing programs that foster youth engagement.

The literature highlights two approaches that have been found to be successful in fostering youth engagement. The first is the provision of hands-on activities such as the national Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) in the United States, which is designed to foster greater community awareness and participation. The program combines in-class, fieldwork and online sessions for students to learn about civic duty. Thus, the aim of YLI is to generate classroom discussions and integrate civic skills to build youth capacity.

Research indicates that schools offering community service opportunities in their curricula and promoting volunteering experiences in service learning, contribute to the development of civic identity among their students (Youniss et al. 2002). Thus, the establishment of youth-led service learning or volunteering programs teaches students how to engage proactively in society.

A study has found that encouraging student volunteers to discuss their experiences in class makes them twice as likely to continue volunteering later in life (Andolina et al. 2003). However, to ensure the success of these experiences, these programs need to be integrated into the curriculum with a focus on community involvement, and should include a mentoring component whereby students not only drive the program but also act as mentors for other students.

Recommendation

- 3.** That schools offer community service opportunities and volunteering programs in their curricula that include a youth mentoring component and teach CALD youth about civic engagement.

While the two strategies identified in the literature are crucial steps in overcoming barriers to engagement, the findings from the consultations indicated the importance of building on these existing strategies and identifying the significance of extracurricular activities in developing civic skills, in order to secure youth engagement.

Additionally, community participants emphasised the importance of promoting extracurricular activities that involve teamwork as a valuable tool for encouraging positive co-operative experiences among youth. These activities must be supported by both the family and the school.

The aim of these activities is to encourage young people's co-operative efforts towards achieving a common goal, and linking the achievement of these common civic goals to the development of norms such as reciprocity, tolerance and trust. Recent research points to how these norms can mobilise youth into thinking differently about their roles in society (Glanville 1999; Conway & Damico 2001; Mutz 2002).

3.3 Extracurricular Activities: Sport

It was agreed by participants in this research that the notion of achieving common civic goals must also be linked to less civic-oriented activities that are more popular among youth, namely the arts, music and sports. Of the three proposed activities, the participants identified structured sport as their favoured approach to youth engagement. The primary reasons behind this preference are based on the numerous benefits of participating in sport, including the development of community and social networks and its general appeal to young people.

A recent empirical study confirmed that youth participation in sporting activities is a pathway to civic engagement and a key driver for young males to feel they are involved in the life of their community (Hall 2007). This finding is also validated by a previous study that linked participation in public performances of sport to a strengthened sense of belonging to local communities. This is due to the increased public recognition afforded to youth by adults and peers from their local community (Hall & Banno 2001). The participants supported the view that sport can be used as a vehicle for engagement and integrating newly arrived youth into life in Australia.

It is understood that the benefits of participating in sport are numerous, with a range of positive health outcomes including the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of individuals and the community as a whole (Townsend, Moore & Mahoney 2002). A recent study, which formed part of an Australian Research Council funded project titled *The Well Rounded Person: The Role of Sport in Shaping Physical, Emotional and Social Development*, highlighted that young men play sport to be part of a social network, to make friends and to test those friendships (Lumby et al. 2010). Sport also appeals to young males because there is a sense of achievement derived from this engagement, the competitiveness of the sport and self-testing (Evers 2010).

While the participants demonstrated an awareness of these benefits, what appeared to be far more important to them were the community capacity-building opportunities that sport represents. The participants suggested that, through sport, various sets of individual traits (such as communication skills, teamwork skills, sense of fair play, self-respect and conflict resolution) may be developed (Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995). Accordingly, the advancement of young people's skill sets is reliant on the social networks that are created through sport, where co-operation is facilitated by an increase in face-to-face interactions between youth. These interactions create a setting for the development of trust. Thus, it is believed that these networks

are important for youth primarily because they shape attitudes and co-operative behaviours, provide networks for mobilisation, and build confidence in young people.

This avenue for increased mobility also enhances the development of community and social networks, where youth are brought together, regardless of their language group or ethnicity. This is seen as facilitating social participation, thereby addressing social exclusion across socioeconomic and cultural boundaries and helping to redress entrenched inequities and discriminatory attitudes (Hall 2007).

It is argued that the composition of social networks affects the achievement of positive socialisation results. Teams constituted by a wide variety of people from various (ethnic and socioeconomic) backgrounds appear to gain greater benefits from learning about tolerance and civic attitudes, such as generalised trust (Mutz 2002).

Recommendations

4. That more opportunities for culturally inclusive extracurricular activities are provided to youth groups, especially those that encourage young people to co-operate towards achieving a common goal.
5. That sport be used as an avenue for youth to build networks and make friends outside their own ethnic groups.

There are ample opportunities to mobilise such social networks (created by widespread youth participation in sport) towards youth civic engagement efforts. For instance, organised soccer teams could be encouraged to develop civic-oriented goals, through activities such as fundraising to buy soccer equipment. Sport is also an area where young people could be encouraged to help each other through youth-led participation, where young soccer players on organised teams might encourage the participation of disadvantaged youth by offering to coach them.

Additionally, the participants highlighted the extent of their unsupervised leisure time and the function of sport in reducing young people's boredom and the potential of anti-social behaviour. However, it was established that, in order for sport to be effective in reaching marginalised youth and reducing anti-social behaviour, it must be part of a broader community development approach to diversion. This approach needs to adopt a practical program with a recreation option, which should include pathways that address young people's resource needs.

An example of a sporting program deemed successful by the participants, which was part of a broader community development approach, is the 'All Nations Soccer Competition'. Many of the participants called for the re-establishment of a similar program aimed at maintaining specialised soccer clubs, and engaging these clubs in a yearly tournament.

Some of the statements made by participants include:

We need to form a program where people from different backgrounds can join, hence why we advocate for an inclusive program similar to the 'All Nations Soccer Competition'. VU – 21 June 2010.

The preference for this type of program is that it will keep youth engaged and bring in different people together. SM – 21 June 2010.

Soccer was selected as the preferred sport by the participants because of its universality and subsequent attractiveness to migrants from emerging communities. The participants highlighted that youth from their communities had already become well acquainted with the game of soccer

in their countries of origin. To illustrate the success of the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' as a diversion program, an overview will be presented in the next section.

4. Successful Case Example

4.1 An Effective Sport Diversion Program

As indicated above, the consultations revealed that a structured sporting program with a community development focus is what is needed to address youth disengagement and prevent anti-social behaviour. There was consensus among the participants that running a program with attributes similar to the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' would be an effective strategy for youth engagement.

The 'All Nations Soccer Competition' was initially run in the City of Greater Dandenong (Victoria) in June 2002 as a community-based, ethno-specific, low-cost soccer competition for newly arrived young men. It was initiated in response to numerous requests from CALD youth seeking to play competitive sport. The competition was delivered in partnership with the Centre for Multicultural Youth, the Football Federation Australia and Onside Soccer as an ideal forum for delivering messages of inclusion and harmony (AHRC 2006).

A total of twelve teams made up of youth from the south-eastern and the western suburbs of Melbourne participated in these competitions (AHRC 2006). Both regions were chosen as a result of the number of enquiries received from CALD groups in these areas. Each soccer competition ran for six weeks and a subsidised fee was paid by the young players to cover a portion of the competition costs. Each team was required to hold meetings before and after the competition and to provide a linesman for all games.

The consultation participants indicated that the success and popularity of the program can be attributed to a range of factors. The primary strength of the program appears to be its commitment to ensuring access and equal participation for newly arrived youth, in a low-cost sporting competition, which brings different community groups together. Other success factors include:

- introducing newly arrived youth to a sporting club environment where they can meet in an organised manner and on an ongoing basis
- educating newly arrived youth in the processes of structured sport competitions and clubs
- providing a valuable learning experience and a stepping stone to players through direct involvement in the management, registration and liaison with other organisations involved in the program
- linking players from different sporting clubs in teams to encourage socialisation and integration, both on and off the field.

Despite the program's popularity and continuation for four years, the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' was terminated in 2006 due to a lack of funding.

Some of the noted challenges facing the program were associated with the exclusivity of membership in relation to ethnicity, as some of the teams ended up being quite homogenous. This was primarily due to language barriers. In some instances, when playing against other teams, scenarios of inter-ethnic fighting were noted due to historical conflicts in countries of origin.

Recommendations:

6. That single ethnic group sporting clubs extend their membership to players from other cultural groups in the local area, in order to reflect the diversity of the local community and to minimise ethnic confrontation based on historical conflicts in countries of origin.
7. That alliances between different local sporting clubs be encouraged through membership that is open to all cultural groups in the community.
8. That the program be actively reinforced and promoted in the community and in schools. This will minimise the likelihood of groups being unaware of the program or falling through the cracks.

Participants indicated that since the termination of the program many of the sporting clubs that were established during the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' have been struggling to remain operational. Membership of enrolled players could not be sustained in the face of rising costs associated with organised sport, such as club registration, insurance fees, the cost of public transport to attend training and games, and the cost of equipment and club uniforms. In light of these constraints, club membership could not be extended to new members – a vital condition to ensuring a club's sustainability.

Recommendations:

9. That attempts to emulate the success of the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' program provide a commitment to ensure ongoing funding for the program and training in appropriate cultural sensitivities for coaches and administrators. This training is to be conducted in a manner that will foster increased understanding and empathy.
10. That cultural information sessions be provided to trainers and volunteers, in order to further educate them regarding the communities with which they are working. This is vital for facilitating communication and dispelling misunderstandings.
11. That such awareness-raising is supplemented by inviting trainers and volunteers to participate in community activities and events, in order to build good relationships between them and the communities concerned.
12. That the sporting instructors selected are able to act as role models for youth as well as conduits of information.
13. That orientation sessions include the use of footage to better familiarise young people with the rules of the sport being played and to teach them about the differences between formal and informal structures.
14. That the establishment of a sport-based program with a broader community development focus incorporates the voices of the ethnic communities concerned. Engagement with peak body advocacy organisations is to be combined with consultations involving neighbourhood houses and community advice bureaus.
15. That football programs which target social and human development are analysed and that evidence is gathered to measure their success against their desired outcomes. The measurement of impacts could be based on anecdotal evidence, such as testimonials.

Given that the program's popularity is dependent on the provision of opportunities normally out of the reach of newly arrived youth, especially those who experience barriers to participation, it is vital that we identify these barriers.

5. Perceived and Experienced Barriers

According to the 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics national data, there are large discrepancies with regard to participation in sport and recreation across different groups in the Australian community. The data indicates that people from CALD backgrounds participate less than their English-speaking counterparts, and that women participate less than men in both cohorts (Sawrikar & Muir 2010). The lower rate of participation among CALD people is attributable to factors that include institutional and broader social barriers (Tsai & Coleman 1999).

Research into the barriers that young CALD men and women face when engaging in sport and recreation shows that, while there are common obstacles experienced by both genders, there are additional cultural and gendered expectations that are specifically related to young women. It is important to identify these barriers so that they can be addressed through a structured sporting program, one that has a community development focus similar to the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' favoured by the community members consulted.

The main factors cited as impacting on young people's access to sport and recreation activities include:

- the high cost of club insurance fees, running sporting clubs and hiring facilities
- the cost of hiring security personnel to quell inter-ethnic fighting between teams
- prohibitive resettlement costs and young people's lack of financial independence
- the proximity of facilities, which can reduce the capacity of youth to travel as a consequence of limited access to private cars and heavy dependence on an unreliable and costly public transport system
- a lack of public transport routes to and from sporting facilities
- unavailability of activities in certain geographic areas
- time constraints and pressures due to other commitments related to undertaking education, securing work and learning English as a second language; these activities usually take precedence over participating in sport
- family expectations around youth investing their time in study or in securing employment. In some communities, parents do not see the benefits of sport and prefer their children to study or work. For instance, at the onset of puberty many young refugee men are considered 'adults', and the hopes of the family are seen to rest on their shoulders, so there is a perception, in some communities, that education, career and family are much more important than participating in sports
- interpersonal constraints, such as confidence and self-esteem issues, based on a fear of being unfamiliar with the rules of games played in Australia and/or not having the knowledge or skills required to play the game.

The above factors are recognised as barriers to sport engagement which may hinder participation for young men and women from refugee and migrant backgrounds (Hillsdon et al. 2007).

The consultation participants also highlighted that in some communities young women are likely to experience additional barriers that are influenced by societal norms around gender groups and cultural expectations of gendered behaviour. Some of these factors are also substantiated in the literature, and include:

- cultural expectations regarding the appropriateness of the sport played by young women, based on beliefs held in some communities regarding women's physical abilities
- the shortage of culturally appropriate facilities and dress requirements, which drives some groups of ethnic minority women to instead undertake informal physical activities, such as walking (Taylor & Toohey 2002)
- gendered expectations that girls are to perform a greater proportion of care and domestic responsibilities during their adolescence, resulting in them having lower levels of financial independence and less leisure time (Bittman & Wajcman 2000)
- the timing of sporting activities, which may clash with culturally based family gatherings (Scraton, Caudwell & Holland 2005)
- the perception that opportunities to participate in sport are inequitable because of the lack of media images of sportswomen from ethnic minorities, and poor media representations of women in sport generally (Tsai & Coleman 1999).

The aforementioned barriers indicate that it is neither a lack of interest nor willingness that constrains young CALD women from participating in sport and recreation. On the contrary, many young women see participation in sport as important, and are aware of its health-related and social benefits such as opportunities to develop friendships and skills (as they mix with young women from other cultures), and build confidence and a sense of belonging. It appears that in addition to the structural barriers mentioned above, in some communities there is relatively less tolerance for the breach of gendered norms associated with familial roles among women, which may be a major factor in hindering young women's participation.

Recommendations

16. That participation in sport be increased by targeting recently arrived young people and offering skill-building opportunities.
17. That opportunities are provided for women from new and emerging communities to 'skill-up' and undertake essential training.
18. That a sense of inclusion and belonging is fostered by increasing the number and quality of media images in advertising campaigns that depict ethnic minority women taking part in sporting activities.
19. That equality of access to resources is ensured via the removal of institutional, administrative and socioeconomic barriers to participation.

A key barrier that was repeatedly identified during the consultations was participants' limited access to appropriate information. This related specifically to understanding the processes involved when applying for funding and preparing grant applications, and to translated documentation and other linguistic requirements. This is illustrated in the statements below:

We couldn't rely on funding from grants because the funding criteria is very hard to meet, so we try to raise funds and in 2010, we paid \$2,750 to use a facility for the year. That's expensive. Our communities need information on how to apply for grants and tools to make our applications successful. AGA – 21 June 2010.

The problem is how to apply ... there are lots of requirements and the process is long ... the paperwork is a lot. ND1 – 6 March 2010.

Our community have tried to apply for funding but our efforts were not successful.
VU – 21 June 2010.

We are not aware of what is available out there and at the same time how to secure funding through government grants or even corporate scholarships because we cannot understand what their expectations are. We don't know how to apply for these scholarships. Also our community is new and it is not known and that affects our application. ND2 – 6 March 2010.

Bearing in mind the funding limitations, the participants highlighted a range of activities that they undertake to raise funds from the community. These included cultural festivities and celebrations and formal graduation nights, at which local community entertainment is provided. Funds have also been raised through organised collaboration between cultural groups, who share costs and facilities to run a one-off youth concert. While a nominal fee is collected from those who attend these events, the takings are not adequate to cover the costs of running sporting clubs and hiring facilities. However, they are indicative of the attitudes of and approach taken by community leaders, and their efforts in getting on their feet and engaging their youth to the best of their abilities. It is important to note that relying solely on these methods is not enough to sustain their activities.

Recommendation

- 20.** That information on fundraising opportunities and training be provided to CALD community members, in order to build their fundraising capacity.

Most importantly, the participants from the consultations highlighted that a major obstacle to their communities, particularly those that are new and emerging, is the shortage of multi-purpose community facilities that are culturally appropriate.

5.1 Council-Managed Sporting Facilities

There was consensus among participants that an increase in urban density and changing community expectations and needs have increased demand for multi-purpose facilities to maximise access, safety and environmental sustainability. It was also brought to our attention that a range of sporting activities undertaken by the CALD communities in the south-eastern region of Melbourne cannot be accommodated by the existing council-managed facilities as these facilities are ill-equipped and in most cases unavailable. Thus, we note that a major obstacle to migrant and multicultural groups gaining a foothold in the local community and feeling accepted and engaged is an inability to access suitable venues for group activities.

To form a sporting club is very easy for now but to find the facilities to play sport is hard. ND1 – 6 March 2010.

Our biggest issue is accessing physical facilities; we have secured support from various organisations that are going to supply us with any sporting equipment we need. AGA – 21 June 2010.

New and emerging communities can't find any spaces to meet and run activities and do sport. SM – 21 June 2010.

Not only amongst youth but also adults who want to play traditional sport activities, there is a shortage of facilities for hire to play sport. MW – 21 June 2010.

Long existing clubs are already there using these facilities so new and emerging communities cannot get to the venues There are established clubs that have

been hiring these venues for the last 20 years and we've been waiting to get a space and the waiting makes it the hardest. VU – 21 June 2010.

This issue was acknowledged by the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau in November 2009, and as a result a study was commissioned by the bureau to determine the feasibility of locating a multicultural multi-use community centre in the former Springvale Police Station and Court House. However, the Springvale community members still stressed the need for continued advocacy regarding the ongoing shortage and inaccessibility of council-managed sporting venues, and the inequitable distribution of opportunities for participation.

A mentoring, multicultural, multi-purpose centre where we can collaborate our efforts for the welfare of youth. MW – 21 June 2010.

I am very strong about mixing the cultures, because at the end of the day, our next generation of kids aren't going to be Vietnamese or Indian, they are Australian. It is important to have one multicultural centre where kids mix, respect each other's beliefs and learn about each other's traditions. VU – 21 June 2010.

Local councils have advised that this is because the demand for council-managed venues exceeds the supply.

Bearing this in mind, it is important to be aware of the challenges when providing multi-purpose community facilities, which rest on managing both community and peak sporting body (PSB) expectations.

A forum on youth engagement in sport organised by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, in consultation with local council workers, revealed that some community groups argue that their needs are more specific and important than those of other groups. This indicates that some user groups can develop 'unrealistic ownership expectations' of facilities and lack a willingness to share.

The second challenge is associated with the introduction by a number of PSBs of specific requirements with which local sporting clubs must abide in order to become affiliated with a particular league or competition. These requirements often relate to dimensions and minimum equipment standards, e.g. score-boards for pavilions and sportsgrounds. Thus, the more specific are the requirements, the less flexible a facility becomes for multi-purpose usage.

Discussing the lack of availability and accessibility of council-managed sporting facilities, and the inequitable distribution of opportunities to participate in sport, the participants proposed that alternative facilities be utilised to address these problems.

Other options we can think of is to approach public schools to use their grounds for different sporting activities. VU – 21 June 2010.

Access to school grounds is something that we considered after realising the limitations with using public parks. It is important that the schools we select are close to functions because in the evenings there is no public transport operating apart from the train. AGA – 21 June 2010.

The suggestion to consider using public school grounds may, however, result in significant compatibility issues and competing priorities associated with mixing students and other community users. There are also barriers to overcome in seeking to use school playing fields due to local government requirements and standards in relation to risk management.

Considering these challenges, the participants produced a list of recommendations for local councils in relation to utilising alternative community facilities to run these community sporting programs.

Recommendations:

21. That local councils consider ways to boost expenditure in order to ensure the availability of public sector facilities for sport; to provide financial support and infrastructural aid to youth groups; and to fast-track investment into the expansion of existing venues and the construction of new ones.
22. That partnerships between councils, community organisations, ethno-specific agencies and schools are cultivated for the provision of subsidised transport arrangements, alternative meeting spaces and to foster strengthened networks.
23. That linkages between community groups, and the sharing of facilities, be better encouraged.
24. That stakeholders consider the idea of reserving a minimum quota of time solely for youth-based activities at such facilities.
25. That school grounds be considered as alternative sporting club facilities.
26. That shared objectives between the school community and outside users be established by ensuring that students from the school are able to join the team.
27. That team membership be extended to all CALD groups in the local community, to ensure that community sporting teams are not limited to one ethnicity, but encompass those from other cultural groups, within each age bracket.

In relation to youth having the capacity to progress to a place where they are more socially engaged, where their transition is supported and celebrated by the community in a way that strengthens both the young person and the community, sport has a major role to play. However, we cannot rely on sports-based intervention programs alone as a vehicle that will address all of the challenges experienced by CALD youth during their adolescence. Nor will these programs alone address the social justice and resource needs of young people in seeking to engage and empower themselves. Thus, a number of other educational programs must be incorporated into, or run alongside these programs, with a focus on building capacity. These programs could, for example, teach young people about healthy living options, and could be incorporated into an overarching program, where sport and recreation is but one of many facets of an overall program centred on lifestyle and community engagement. It is encouraged that former players are also given the opportunity to share the skills they have gained with others in the community.

Recommendation

28. That an overarching practical program be developed that incorporates various educational components and pathways, where sports or recreation is but one of many facets of the program.
29. That the inclusive objectives of the program are made clear to the young people involved, in order that they may work together to achieve them.

6. Conclusion

Multicultural youth disengagement is a symptom of a combination of factors that ultimately leads to feelings of social isolation. This is a story commonly shared by new and emerging communities in the south-eastern local governance areas of Melbourne. The consequences of the marginalisation of newly arrived youth from refugee and migrant backgrounds can easily distort their future, placing them at extreme risk of remaining in a cycle of entrenched social

exclusion and disadvantage. To avert this challenge, it is important that we build on two socialisation strategies relating to young people's daily experiences and immediate networks, namely; nurturing familial relations and promoting the value of community and civic duty in school curriculum. Another key pathway to civic engagement is identifying the significance of extracurricular activities where a structured, inclusive sporting program that is part of a community development approach is used as a vehicle for integrating newly arrived youth into life in Australia.

An example of a sporting program, deemed popular by the communities, is the 'All Nations Soccer Competition'. The growing demand by the communities in the south-east for the re-establishment of a similar program reflects its past successes. However, the success of the new program is reliant on addressing a major institutional barrier to youth participation, specifically the shortage of multi-use, multi-purpose community facilities that are suitably equipped and culturally appropriate. To this end, this discussion paper advocates for equal access to suitable venues or council managed sporting grounds so programs similar to the 'All Nations Soccer Competition' can be emulated. This is but a first step to re-engage youth. The second step would be incorporating learning aspects and pathways to this program, where sport is but one of its facets.

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