

NETBALL CONNECT

PROVIDING NETBALL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



A guide for Associations and Clubs

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What is Netball for all?

The philosophy of including All.

Netball Australia and Member Organisations are committed to assisting Associations/Clubs in being inclusive. Our society has changed and is still changing rapidly. We have a more multicultural and diverse population that is ageing, and expect to be able to access sport opportunities no matter what their abilities are. This is a distinct opportunity for Associations/Clubs to capture a wider portion of the population and increase the numbers of members and volunteers. Organisations that embrace this will be the ones that grow and flourish.

How to use resource

This resource is intended as a guide and not a definitive step by step resource. There will already be lots of great programs and people at your Association/Club. Use this guide to assist and supplement what is already happening, either at your Association/Club or other inclusive ones close by.



Including a broad range of people in your Association/Club is about bringing more people to the sport of Netball, as players, coaches, officials or administrators. There are many benefits for organisations that include a broad range of people.

Benefits to your Association/Club may include:

- More members who can add a richness and diversity to the environment;
- More volunteers, from either the 'new' person or their family and friends;
- Social benefits;
- Re-invigoration of a organisation with 'new blood' and new ideas;
- Promotion of you Association/Club to the wider community, including local councils and prospective sponsors as being welcoming to all;
- Opportunities to utilise the facility and courts seven days a week;
- New levels of competition; and
- Additional expertise in officiating, coaching and/or administration.

Associations/Clubs may also find that by increasing their focus on a broader range of people it may become easier for other (non-traditional netball) people to join the organisation. This may include people recovering from injuries or parents with small children. For example: the provision of ramps for people using a wheelchair may also assist mothers with prams or people recovering from injuries. Addressing physical access issues such as clearer signage may make it easier for people with vision impairment to use the organisation's facilities, as well as those that are new to the facility.

An attitudinal change within the existing membership of the Association/Club can create a more 'people-friendly' environment for everyone, and membership may increase as others join your welcoming and friendly Association/Club.

CASE STUDY – Players from indigenous communities

How it started:

In 2004, the Moorditj Noongar Yorgas Netball Club was formed with four junior teams competing in the local Netball Association.

This program was developed and expanded to include other regions in early 2005. Key partners were involved in this expansion, including Healthway, the Indigenous Sports Program, Department of Sport and Recreation, Netball Australia and Netball WA. The program was supported by an advisory group.

Where and how the program has progressed:

Since the beginning numbers have grown significantly. A pathway now exists for Indigenous players with regional carnivals. There is also significant participation in non-playing roles (coaches, umpires, scorers or team managers).

What issues/problems have you encountered and how have they been overcome:

Family continuity is of high importance in these communities, therefore it was very important to involve family members in the program; organise social functions, presentation nights and include the young players in training programs wherever possible.

Continued volunteer support is essential to the stability of these programs. It is important to maintain the support and encouragement of these volunteers in order to retain them for future years. Volunteers may move on, so training of new volunteers is essential to maintain the program.

At times, attendances can be disappointing; however sometimes this is unavoidable due to family issues and understanding is essential. Rescheduling of courses and/or training sessions, once confirming suitable dates with the participants is valuable.

Positive aspects of the program:

Volunteers have been provided with coaching and umpiring education with a significant amount of participants increasing their skills and knowledge by receiving their coaching and umpiring accreditation.

Planning

Planning is the key to success with any new initiative. Gather a small group of keen people at your Club/ Association and work through the following:

- **What** are you going to offer? Look at what is existing at the Association/Club and see how this may be able to be offered to groups from different backgrounds. Your local council may be able to assist here.
- **Who** can you target? It is best to look at the demographics of the local area and talk about options with others at the Association/Club. Identify any potential barriers to participation at this early stage and talk about possible solutions. Most, if not all, potential barriers can be overcome with a little thoughtful planning. Before starting anything do a needs analysis first. Talk to community groups and find out what they want to do and what their needs are.
- **When** should you offer the programs? Is there a time that is best for both the Association/Club and new population groups? Remember to be flexible and creative when thinking about timetabling.
- **How** you are going to seek out these groups and conduct the programs?

Partners

Never try to begin a new program on your own! There are many organisations that are available to assist you. Look locally at the services available and try to link in with these. Many will welcome the opportunity to get their clients active. The best place to start is the local council who will be able to advise of these groups as well as any projects that they have to partner with. An example of a partnership would be to link with the local special school about the possibility of forming a competition.

A great place to start looking for assistance is your Member Organisation. This is perhaps your most important partner as your Member Organisation can potentially assist with knowledge of other Associations/ Clubs that are inclusive, any state partnerships with

relevant organisations, any state specific netball resources and initiatives, and any state specific general funding or assistance that may be available. They may also be able to help with promotion and marketing of your organisations as being inclusive of all.

Recruit the right people

Get other eager people at the Association/Club involved either directly in the planned activity or program or as “champions of the cause”. Getting the key people on side and enthusiastic can be the best way to both promote and smooth over any concerns. Create an “army” of enthusiastic members that will spread the word.

Give the idea some time

Build a foundation of information. Give members access to all of the material they need to in order to understand how this new group will be involved. Then give them time to think about and discuss any issues. Also, give community leaders enough time to promote the idea within their own communities.

Starting small

Always start with small but achievable tasks. Your Association/Club may also want to start with a trial and then re-assess after the trial.

Celebrating the successes

It is important to celebrate the successes. Including other groups that have not traditionally been involved in your sport and your Association/Club can be a fabulous promotion to the local community and can bring many benefits.

Associations and Clubs run on the good will of volunteers. It is important to recognise the important work of volunteers, especially in new initiatives. Recognition can be as simple as a thank you card, certificate, special event, or public recognition. Any recognition of volunteers for Netball for All programs should be part of the overall strategy to recognise and reward volunteers at the Associations/Clubs.

For further information www.govolunteer.com.au.

Creating a welcoming environment

Any inclusive Netball initiatives will fail if the Association/Club generally is not welcoming and friendly. Ensure that policies and procedures are in place to ensure that your organisation values all of its members, volunteers, coaches and officials. This would include a transparent and open communication where all can have their concerns listened to. It also includes a facility that is well signed and clean.

Also ensure that the Association/Club sends a clear message that it is inclusive of all. This may include displaying posters or photos of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, indigenous, people with a disability and older adults.

Netball Australia has policies that promote the welcoming, safe and inclusive club philosophy. These include the Member Protection and Junior Netball policies. For more information regarding these either contact your Member Organisation or visit the Netball Australia website on www.netball.asn.au.



CASE STUDY Players with a disability

Objective of the program:

To make a safe game of netball for people with a disability, both male and female and all abilities.

How it started:

In 1985, Special Olympics initiated a fun day which quickly grew into a competition which consisted of 10 teams.

Where and how the program has progressed:

After a few years various Clubs were asked to 'adopt' a team. Now these players are coached and umpired by the Club, wear the same uniform of the Club, attend the Club's social activities and presentations, watch their Club team's games and Club teams watch & encourage the players with disability's games.

Each year a carnival is conducted with teams competing from the state. The regional Academy of Sport is also involved.

What issues/problems have you encountered and how have they been overcome:

Numbers in November 2007 and again in January 2008. Specific marketing needs to be carried out – not just general letters to shopping centres etc. It is important to consider when you schedule these games and competition according to the group that you are attracting as some people such as those from group homes or hospitals cannot always play competition on Saturdays and then attend carnivals or training on Sundays.

Barriers to including all

It is important to recognise that access to sport and recreation is not equal for all groups. This is often a difficult concept for people that love their sport and have been involved in sport for all of their lives. There are a number of barriers that prevent certain groups from having equal access. The following are examples of barriers that may need to be addressed at your Association/Club:

- **Perceptions** of the ability and desire of people from different backgrounds to participate in sport. **Negative attitudes** towards new participants provide the biggest barriers and must be addressed if any program is to succeed.
- The **cost** of participation which may include costs associated with equipment, clothing as well as membership.
- **Timetabling** of activities and competitions. Weekends or late at night may not be the best time to attract certain population groups.
- **Inadequate advertising** of activities or your Association/Club in general. How can new potential groups learn of the opportunities available to them?
- **Transport** issues including the location of the venue, lack of accessible and safe transport.
- **Lack of appropriate or appealing role models.** Netball is traditionally seen as a sport for fit, young females. What images can you provide to broaden this perception?
- **Inflexibility and the traditional model of how Netball is played.** Netball has been played in a similar fashion for a hundred years. If you want to attract new groups then you need to be innovative and flexible. Really focus in on the goal of your Association/Club and be innovative on how you reach this goal. For example, if the goal of your Association/Club is to grow membership then be creative about how you involve new groups. If transport and court space is an issue, then why couldn't you set up a modified session at an alternative venue such as a school? These participants could still be members of your Association, just play an alternative type of the game at an alternative venue.
- **Inflexibility of uniform requirements.** Many Associations/Clubs adopt a very traditional uniform code. Consider alternatives to this, such as allowing shorts/leggings, coloured T-shirts (not just Club) so that participants can wear something that is in their wardrobe already.



CASE STUDY – Players with a disability

Background:

Nine year old Maddy is part of her school netball team that participates in the competition conducted at the local Netball Association. Maddy is legally blind and is helped at school by a support teacher. She is excited to be part of the team and play with her school friends. Her parents are pleased she wants to play and are extremely encouraging.

The local Netball Association is concerned that allowing Maddy to play netball may be unsafe, with a risk of injury to herself as well as the other players. The volunteers at the Association had not encountered this issue before and is unsure of what to do and contacts the Member Organisation for advice.

A way forward

A meeting is conducted to discuss the issues and investigate ways in which Maddy can be included. The meeting had representatives from the Member Organisation, Netball Association, School, School Netball Team, Blind Citizens Australia as well as Maddy's parents and support teacher. Issues raised included:

- the Association personnel were fearful of litigation
- the team coach did not feel equipped to coach Maddy and needed assistance
- the team and the Association were unsure of how to modify activities to assist Maddy participate
- whilst Maddy had been assessed legally blind, she had not been assessed in a netball setting

Outcomes

Reassured Association that they were not at risk and that few modifications would be required

Maddy undertook a vision assessment to establish her capacity to participate in netball and identify any modifications or aids that may assist her.

Identify training opportunities for the coach to assist her with coaching a player with a disability

That a carer must be present at both training and matches to assist the coach with Maddy and provide more specific instruction and feedback.

The Association to notify all teams and umpires about the modifications required.

Modifications & Aids

Allow Maddy to wear a hat and sunglasses as she is sensitive to light

Ensure Maddy has appropriate training opportunities

Wear contrasting bibs to other team and use a yellow or orange ball with bell inside

Play on courts with well painted lines

Play Maddy in GK – confined to small space

Allow someone to verbally help Maddy's with what is happening on court

Teach other players to use Maddy's name when throwing the ball to her



How to include all

Making your Association/Club inclusive of all people in the community does not require a great deal of hard work, rather a common sense approach. Above all, it is a best practice approach to running any sporting organisation.

It is not about creating more work for the overstretched and dedicated volunteers. It is about working smarter!

An example of practical steps that your Association/Club can take include:

- Provide a comfortable physical and emotional environment. Encourage positive and sensitive interaction by all members that is welcoming and accepting of difference.
- Make it public knowledge that your Association/Club is accepting of ALL people, regardless of ability, race, religion or age.
- Establish a welcoming committee to make all new comers to your Association/Club feel comfortable and welcome.
- Ensure that offensive or harassing behaviour is not tolerated within the Association/Club environment. Refer to Netball Australia's Member Protection Policy.
- Inform all members, families and spectators of the Codes of Behaviour.
- Educate members about the inclusion of people from different backgrounds and the participation opportunities available to them. Adapt and modify to include all, but never affect the integrity of the game.
- Offer a range of competitive and social opportunities. Think of both playing and non-playing roles.
- Be as flexible and innovative as possible. If these groups wanted a traditional netball experience then they may have accessed it before this initiative
- Review registration procedures and forms, and modify if required, so that they are easy to read and follow.
- Consider developing transport systems where regular participants give others a lift to and from the venue. Investigate the use of community buses and drivers, or alternative venues that reduce the need to travel.
- Minimise the financial strain by;
 - providing membership concessions for people living on a pension or fixed income;
 - offering monthly or periodic payment systems;
 - creating a pool of second hand equipment or equipment that people can borrow for a small fee from the Association/Club; and
 - be flexible regarding uniform. A full netball uniform does not need to be compulsory. Uniform "pools" where participants can wear their own active wear and borrow bibs can be highly effective for many groups.

National and State sporting organisations along with Associations and Clubs have both a legal and a moral obligation to include people from a broad range of backgrounds in netball. There is anti-discrimination legislation pertaining to race, sexual and disability that organisations should be aware of.

Including a broader range of people is about introducing more people to the social and health benefits of participation in the sport.

Developing an Association/Club environment which encourages participation by people from a broad range of backgrounds should not be onerous. It does require a basic awareness of the needs of people from the different background areas and your willingness to cater for individual differences.

Including different groups
in your Association/Club is not
about working harder...
– it is about working smarter!!

CASE STUDY

Players from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds

There are currently two teams with nine players in each in the local netball club. Of the 18 children involved, 14 are from CALD backgrounds. Ages range from 10 to 13 years. A teacher at the school developed the two teams following the success of the school's inter-school netball competition. A third team will be created for the next year's competition. The club is part of the local district netball Association.

The major challenge experienced by the teacher in charge of the teams is communication with the families of the netballers. A strategy adopted by the teacher to counteract this is to read notes to the children, ensure that they understand what is written and then ask them to translate the note for their parents.

Lack of parental support has also been an issue.

To date the teacher in charge has not requested much of the parents, but will be placing bigger demands on parents next year for assistance with transportation. The teacher believes that many of the parents of the CALD young people do not understand netball, nor are they very interested in the game. Cost has not been a major issue for the players and the fact that students play in their school sports uniform has ensured that uniforms have not been problematic.

A major success of the program is the enthusiasm of the students and the fact that they turn up to every game. Teachers at the school have noted improved teamwork and sporting skills of players, as well as an increase in confidence and self-esteem.

The adapted case study was reproduced from CMYI's Sports Tips Sheets.



Specifics to think about

Including People from a Range of Backgrounds

There are a number of issues which Associations/Clubs need to consider how they are able to address the barriers, perceived or otherwise, to include people from a range of backgrounds in all facets of netball.

Groups	Issues Regarding Participation	
People with a Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The general public's lack of understanding of people with a physical, mental or intellectual disability and the stigma often associated with disabilities.• Lack of awareness of the activities, opportunities and options available to people with a disability.• Isolation sometimes experienced by people with a disability.• Lack of confidence in a personal or skills area.• Access to community activities including sport is sometimes difficult resulting from lack of physical access and more commonly, attitudinal problems such as those outlined above.	



Broad Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

- Remember to focus on what the person with a disability can do – ascertain what they can do and start from there!
- Contact Department of Sport and Recreation in each state or Local Council for advice on how to attract and include people with a disability at your Association/Club.
- Don't assume that people with a disability want (or need) to play in a segregated competition or training – find out how they want to participate at your Association/Club.
- Where it is necessary to adapt skills or activities to include a person with a disability it is also important to maintain the integrity of the game.
- Whilst some people with a disability will only want to play the game, encourage them to get involved in non-playing roles as well. Others may not be interested in playing but want to help out in other areas of your club/Association.
- People with a disability may bring particular skills your Association/Club needs to fill any one of a number of off field roles in an Association/Club, such as accountancy skills that are vital for the role of Secretary.
- Advertise widely to reach isolated people with a disability.
- Partner with a disability specific organisation or service in your area. They will have the people and you have the product! For a list of these go to either your local council or State Department of Sport and Recreation.
- Consider the possibility of inclusive training to assist the volunteers at your Association/Club. Visit www.ausport.org.au for a list of Disability Education Program training.
- Consult with other Netball groups that have successfully conducted programs for people with a disability. Contact your Member Organisation for details.



Groups	Issues Regarding Participation	
People from Indigenous Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness and appreciation amongst the general community of the diversity and complexity of indigenous culture, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Limited understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values – Cultural protocols – Kinship and extended family structures and relationships – The importance of family obligations – Respect of elders, culture, land and environment. • Limited access to netball in general including equipment, facilities, support structures and information. • Smaller indigenous populations in some rural communities making it more difficult to establish support for Indigenous people to participate in organised netball, or travel to larger centres. • Social isolation can be an issue whether in rural, regional or urban areas. This isolation of Indigenous people from netball may occur due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The lack of support networks within the club, whether through other Indigenous players, or indigenous involvement in non-competitive roles – Stereotypical views of indigenous people – A lack of information or knowledge of netball, and – Direct and indirect racial discrimination or exclusion • Opportunities to interact with the broader community are often limited. • Many indigenous people, especially youth, may feel isolated and lack confidence in some settings, such as in an Association/Club situation. • High proportion of indigenous population in the lower socio-economic bracket. 	

Broad Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

Cultural awareness

- Association/Club members should have an understanding of Indigenous culture and issues.
- Ensure there is an awareness of cultural sensitivities and beliefs, for example:
 - Direct eye contact is not regarded by some elders and indigenous people as an essential part of communication and shouldn't be regarded by non-indigenous people as a lack of interest
 - Physical contact is sometimes regarded by indigenous people as an invasion of personal space, unless friendship, mutual respect and trust has been established.
- Cross-cultural training is readily available and where possible this should involve, members of the local indigenous community.

Promotion and Consultation

- Market activities through culturally relevant networks, such as:
 - Your local Aboriginal Community Co-operatives and organisations
 - Indigenous community workers and
 - Other key indigenous people to spread the message across local communities.
- Promote all aspects of your Association/Club to indigenous communities – administration, umpiring, scoring, playing etc. The more indigenous people involved at the organisation, the more appealing it will be to other members of the indigenous community.
- Allow time for indigenous community representatives to consult with other key stakeholders in the community before decisions are made.

Engaging with Indigenous People and Communities

- Invite the indigenous community to club open days, events and other activities.
- Traditional, cultural and social factors as well as other community priorities will often take precedence over netball, so take the time to discover the reason for non-attendance at games, training or other events
- Develop and promote widely. netball's and your own Association/Club's policy position on racism. Ensure this policy is enshrined in all practices and make it clear to your members and supporters that racist jokes, language and behaviour are not acceptable.
- Avoid bringing attention to individuals within group situations. If a coach singles out an indigenous child to demonstrate his or her talents in front of peers, it may have a counter-productive effect.
- Be conscious that some indigenous people may be reluctant to approach a sporting organisation. Encourage and support individuals that do approach your club.
- Be flexible and prepared to make allowances for cultural differences.
- In consultation with local indigenous communities, consider developing modified competition such as a indigenous community netball carnival program.

Access to Netball

- In some indigenous communities lack of transport, and/or reliance on public transport, may be an issue therefore it is important to arrange transport or chose a venue that is close to participants.
- Particularly in rural and regional communities, engagement with indigenous people and communities can be assisted through other sporting Clubs, for example Australian Football, Basketball, and Cricket.
- Minimise financial strain by trying to keep fees as low as possible. Consider incorporating a time payment or instalment plan. Establishing a clothing and equipment pool may also be of benefit.

Groups	Issues Regarding Participation	
People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who are new arrivals to Australia may lack an awareness and understanding of netball. • Where knowledge of the sport exists there is still often a lack of awareness of individual Association/Club activities, opportunities and options available. • Cultural and religious differences and expectations can act as a barrier to participation in your Association/Club. • Lack of parental support due to parents having other priorities considered more important than sport. Large families can also mean that support for Associations/Clubs is difficult. • Language can act as a barrier to approaching and becoming involved in an Association/Club. • Your Association/Club may not be seen as culturally relevant. • The perceived potential threat of previous experience of racial prejudice may deter people from becoming involved in netball. • Past experiences of feeling unwelcome in any environment leave little or no motivation for continued participation. • Isolation of some CALD groups of people within the community. • Participation of women in netball may be affected by different cultural practices or values with regard to participation of women in sport and physical activity. • Unfamiliarity with the structure of Clubs and the benefits associated with belonging to an Association/Club. • Lack of flexibility in uniforms. 	



Broad Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

- Educate your Association/Club members about the barriers that people from CALD backgrounds may experience and other relevant cultural issues.
- Broaden the promotion of your Association/Club and its activities to include your local Migrant Resource Centre, and ethno specific organisations.
- Promote netball as an international sport with strong netball cultures and role models in many countries around the world.
- Encourage positive and sensitive interaction of all members.
- Promote netball's and your own Association/Club's policy position on racism. Ensure this policy is enshrined in all practices and make it clear to your members and supporters that racist jokes, language and behaviour. Refer to Netball Australia's Member Protection Policy.
- Form partnerships and links with key organisations in your local area. These groups could include, schools, local government, ethno-specific organisations and youth services.
- Obtain assistance from the Migrant Resource Centre to review promotional material to ensure it is inclusive and culturally sensitive.
- Extend your Association/Club's junior development programs to include groups and locations where high numbers of ethnic young people congregate e.g. English language schools, ethnic community festivals and youth groups.
- Understand that young people from CALD backgrounds are initially more likely to participate in sport in familiar and supportive environments such as schools and ethnic organisations.
- Allow wearing of long sleeves, leggings, and head scarves as required.



Groups	Issues Regarding Participation	
Including Older Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited or inappropriate opportunities to participate in Netball (e.g. too competitive, length of games, inappropriate age categories, etc). • Stereotypical images of ageing • Lack of confidence amongst older people of their own body's capacity to perform physically. • Fear of injury. • A preference of sedentary activities such as reading and socialising over playing sport. • Association/Clubs often concentrate on delivering activities that attract young people, so older people may feel unwelcome. • Difficulty associated with re-engaging in netball and a hesitation to re-establish lost connections with the Association/Club. • Limited social support available to older adults wanting to participate in sport in general. • Lack of appealing role models. • Limited or patronising media coverage of older adults participating in netball. • Fear amongst older adults of failure or of the ability to perform tasks as well as when they were younger. • A traditional culture of netball Association/Clubs focusing on winning rather than encouraging participation. • Cost of participation in sport. 	

	Broad Strategies for Overcoming Barriers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide social activities in addition to participation and competition opportunities – conduct 'have a go' days at your Association/Club.• Ensure that social activities at your Association/Club are appealing to a wide range of interests and ages.• Make your Association/Club accessible to community groups (such as Older Adult Networks) when not being used by your members.• Be creative and offer flexibility in the programs offered by your Association/Club. Older adults may prefer to participate during the week rather than week ends.• Offer modified netball formats for older people.• Encourage players who retired from competitive netball to maintain their involvement in your Association/Club by offering them other roles such as coach, team manager, umpire, scorer, and mentors for the coaches and umpires.• Ensure fees and costs are affordable.• Use appropriate role models to increase participation at your Association/Club.• Invite juniors to bring along their grandparents to your Association/Club for a family orientated day.• Market the social benefits of participation in netball at your Association/Club.• Use older members to promote your Association/Club to their friends and social circles.• Overcome transport difficulties by encouraging car pooling and organising activities at venues which are accessible by public transport.• Promote your Association/Club at other sporting organisations with a traditionally older membership base. For example lawn bowls clubs.

Groups	Issues Regarding Participation	
People with Social and Economic Disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The general public's lack of understanding of people that are experiencing social and economic disadvantage and the stigma often associated with this. • The cost of playing sport is often high and inflexible in terms of payment options and associated costs such as uniform. • Difficulties in transport can hinder a person with social and economic disadvantage. • Lack of flexibility and open culture of sporting organisations where players must train every week and complete the entire season. • Lack of self-esteem and inadequate nutrition can affect fitness and skills. • The transient nature of some people with social and economic disadvantage means that traditional sport structures are too difficult to access. 	



Broad Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

- Consider the possibility of inclusive training to assist the volunteers at your Association/Club.
- Consult with other netball groups that have successfully conducted programs for people with social and economic disadvantage. Contact your state Netball Associations for details.
- Offer flexible, casual sessions where rules are modified according to who turns up and plays. Consider offering a skills session and then a modified game.
- Overcome transport difficulties by organising activities at venues which are accessible by public transport.
- Establishing a clothing and equipment pool may also be of benefit.
- Consider promoting the program through the use of one or two suitable role models i.e. have an interest in supporting participation by disadvantaged players.
- Minimise financial strain by trying to keep fees as low as possible. Incorporate an instalment plan, or get sponsorships or financial assistance from the local council.
- Consider starting a competition exclusively for disadvantaged groups in partnership with local community agencies. Players can use this environment to progress to 'mainstream' community competitions.
- Consider offering a skills/games session and then a nutritious meal to ensure regular participation.
- Partner with other organisations such as local councils, welfare agencies, church groups and other community organisations that deal with the homeless or people that have a mental illness.
- Encourage involvement in non-playing roles as well. Others may not be interested in playing but want to help out in other areas of your Association/Club.



CASE STUDY

Players with social and economic disadvantage

Objective

To offer a netball program, at no cost to the participants, where they will learn modified netball skills in a relaxed, supportive environment by suitably qualified personnel.

Desired outcomes

Encourage and promote participation in netball to people who are socially disadvantaged.

Extend the range of activities available at the Association.

Promote the Association as one which is 'inclusive' of all socio economic backgrounds.

How it started

The Association identified that there were minimal netball programs available to those who are socially disadvantaged. With the support and assistance from the local council we promoted the program using their networks as well as some of our own. We negotiated 'free' court hire with the council and the Association agreed to provide the coaches, umpires, programs/activities and equipment. The program is run on a Friday morning (during the warmer months) as we only have access to outdoor facilities.

Where and how the program has progressed

The program commenced in 2006 with a couple of local participants. These numbers grew and now numbers are very encouraging. Participants travel considerable distances to be part of the program.

Next step (future) for the program

Whilst the program has grown over the past two years we do not seem to be attracting 'new' participants. There is no cost to the athlete (the Association covers the cost of State registration) so this has not been the inhibitor in attracting participants to the programs.

We will continue to offer the program but will revamp all advertising and seek support from the State Association regarding advertising on its website and in its e-newsletters, in addition to securing the continued support of the city council. A thorough review of the entire program will take place early next year.

Issues/problems and solutions

The starting time of 10.00am was initially a problem for the participants who traveled from regional areas, so we delayed the start by an hour so that they did not have to travel in peak period. This also suited some of the other participants who travel on public transport as they also avoided the morning crush.

Starting at 11am and finishing at 1.00pm meant that part of the program was run in the heat of the day. We brought large water dispensers and had plenty of ice on hand to combat the heat. We also provided sunscreen and encouraged all participants to wear a cap.

Positive aspects of the program

The biggest positive of the whole program is seeing the participants enjoying themselves and having fun; in a sport very few of them have been exposed to. Funnily enough, the majority of the participants are males who were initially a bit taken back by the thought of playing netball, but now they don't miss a session!

Participants have been provided with an opportunity to be able to make new friends, learn new skills, be active and expend energy in a positive way!

The coaches and umpires of the program are exposed to new challenges each session and look for ways to overcome any issues, queries or setbacks which may arise throughout the program. It has helped to make them better coaches and umpires.

Feedback from service providers and/or participants

The local council has been very supportive of the programs and assists where possible. They are happy for the Association to continue to offer this program to those not only within the local area but those from outside the municipality.

Participants – they love it...they come excited each week and when the season comes to an end they are really disappointed and can't wait for the start of the new season (although they do enjoy the end of season Sausage Sizzle and medals).

Our coaches enjoy being involved in the program; they enjoy working with the participants and being challenged each week. They often comment how rewarding it is and how it has pushed their own level of coaching to another level.

The Salvation Army are particularly pleased to be able to offer their participants something that many of them have never previously experienced; a team sport which requires discipline and sportsmanship. The male participants enjoy the physicality of the sport!

Summary

- **People from a range of backgrounds must be seen as a person first** – Similarities to peers should be highlighted; not the difference/s.
- **Think ability, not disability or background/age/race** – Work with what the person can do. Everyone has their own unique skills and abilities, find out what they are and focus on them to get people from a range of backgrounds involved.
- **Modify for all** – Any activity or skill drill can be modified to better cater for all participants. In most instances a rule, equipment, environment (such as playing surface) or instruction style can be changed to allow all participants to better improve their skill level and enjoyment. Consider asking the players what modifications could be made.
- **Activities and games must always be age appropriate** – for instance, do not start a first time adult with an intellectual disability or San Remo Net Set GO!
- **Rules are rules!** Never underestimate a person from a different background. Rules are necessary and there is no need to automatically make modifications just because they are from a different background or ability.
- **Above all, administering, umpiring, coaching and the general inclusion of people from different backgrounds is nothing more than good practice.**



How to market to all

(a) Decide **WHY** you want Netballers from other population groups.

- more members = more money
- target a new market
- access to a new group of netballers
- greater community involvement
- possibility of increasing number of volunteers
- promotion to community/potential sponsors

(b) Decide **WHO** you are going to target.

- Be REALLY specific, not just people with disabilities or indigenous netballers.
- Age
- Gender
- Skill level
- Integrate into other settings such as special schools, day programs
- Partner with other organisations like state Wheelchair Sports Organisations, local councils, CMYI, Older Adults Network, Migrant Resource Centres or local Indigenous community organisations

(c) Decide **WHAT** you are going to offer.

- type of competition/development program
- segregated or included
- how are you going to involve other Association/Club members
- training and confidence of personnel
- skill based sessions initially or full competitive experience
- length of sessions/program/competition

(d) Decide **WHEN** and **WHERE** you are going to offer.

- time of day, day of week
- can you go to the audience if it is too difficult for them to come to you? i.e. schools, YMCA/leisure centres that have netball facilities

(e) Decide **HOW** to advertise/promote your activities

- flyers, direct mail to potential members
- community facilities/schools
- articles placed in local/school newsletters/papers
- via other organisations i.e. local government, community radio, neighborhood houses, community workers/leaders



Can we still charge these different groups to play?

Of course! It is degrading to assume that the people from these groups cannot pay like everyone else. It is always best to offer a flexible payment system for all at your Association/Club. It is also important to offer other facets such as equipment borrowing, or alternatives to expensive uniforms.

Do we need coaches, umpires or administrators with special qualifications or skills to include these different groups?

No. All netball coaches and umpires need to have the appropriate netball qualification(s) which enable them to coach and umpire all levels of ability, gender, age and race in netball. Including all is really best practice.

Does the Associations/Clubs insurance cover us or do we need to take out further insurance to cover these different groups?

No. Your insurance (the National Risk Protection Program) covers people with all abilities. It is very important however, that all players sign a personal profile outlining any medical conditions or relevant medications & are current members of your Member Organisation.

Should you let 'other' players know that there is a player with a disability, or different racial or religious background or is this discrimination?

Only if the player wants you to do so. We all have the right to privacy and if people don't want information (such as their disability, age, religious beliefs etc.) known, then it is their right to make that choice. Including other population groups should be a smooth process. To gain the trust of the player you should respect the confidentiality rule and get on with letting everyone enjoy the game!

How do you include these different groups into netball – do you create a separate game for them?

Simply, it depends on the choice of the group, their skills and the available programs and competitions at your Association. Either is suitable. A combination of the two is also fine. Whatever the type of program or competition offered all new members and groups must be made to feel that they are valued.

Do all people with a disability need a carer?

No, in fact very few do. If they do need a carer the person with a disability will organise one but most people with a disability are very independent and will require little, if any specific help.

Does the Association/Club need to organise transport as part of the Netball for All program?

Never assume that people do not drive. It is important to ascertain any potential problems such as transport to the venue as part of the initial planning. Simple solutions can often be put into place. Local councils can be of assistance in sourcing simple solutions or council assisted transport. Even simply pooling taxis/cars, or even pointing out public transport options may be the answer.

What if my Association/Club is not physically accessible?

It does not matter – physical access is not the most important issue. The fact that your club/association really wants to include people with a disability is! Physical access issues are issues of common sense and relate to access for all, for example: If signs are brightly coloured to accommodate people with a vision impairment they generally make them much easier for all to see. If physical access is an issue, grants are available from local councils to assist, for example with building ramps.

Is the duty of care increased with these other population groups?

No. It is exactly the same for all people. Common sense is vital in this regard.

Suggested Resources

Australian Sports Commission

- Game Sense Cards: 30 games to develop thinking players, Australian Sports Commission
- ASC Club development website
www.ausport.gov.au
- ASC Disability Sport Unit
www.ausport.gov.au
- ASC Indigenous Sport Unit
www.ausport.gov.au

Centre for Multi-Cultural Youth Issues (CMYI)

- CMYI website gives you access to the full range of CMYI publications, including research reports, policy papers, sport tip sheets, translated resources, as well as details about CMYI programs and services, which can be all downloaded for free at **www.cmyi.net.au**

RecLink

- Can offer specific advice and support for Associations/Clubs on including groups with social and economic disadvantage
www.reclink.org

State Sport and Recreation Departments

- Information regarding possible grants or other support.
- Names of state disability sports organisations
- Indigenous Sport and Recreation Program

Netball Australia

- Coach Education Framework. Contact your Member Organisation to access a Coaching Accreditation course.





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