



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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School of Public Health and
Community Medicine

Social Cohesion through Football

Intervention and Research Brief for Community Relation Commission, NSW

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Partners: NSW Community Relations Commission; NSW Health; Sydwest Multicultural Services Inc.; Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre; Miller, Lurnea and Evans Intensive English Centres; Blacktown District Soccer Football Association; Sydney Football Club

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Table of Content

	Page
Abbreviations	ii
1. Summary of intervention and research	1
1.1 Key achievement of Intervention in 2009	1
1.2 Key achievement of the Research Project in 2009	2
2. Ethical Approval	3
3. History of Football United	3
4. Project Partnership and Funding	3
5. Project Governance	2
5.1 ARC Advisory Committee (AAC)	5
5.2 A Program Management Group (PMG)	5
5.3 A Research Reference Group (RRG)	5
6. Football United Strategic Areas	6
6.1 Football activities	6
6.2 Training	6
6.3 Fostering involvement with local football clubs	6
7. Football United Sites	6
8. Research study design	7
9. Research methods	7
10. Research timeline	8
11. Key contacts	9
12. References	10
Appendix: Selected Recent Media	11

ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	ARC Advisory Committee
ARC	Australian Research Council
BDSFA	Blacktown District Soccer Football Association
CRC	Community Relations Commission, For a Multicultural NSW
IEC	Intensive English Centre
FD	Director of Football Development
FUn	Football United
KI	Key Informants
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
LMRC	Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre
MCP	Management Committee for Project
MRCs	Migrant Resource Centres
PCYC	Police & Community Youth Clubs
PMG	Program Management Group
PO	Project Officer
RA	Research Assistance
RRG	Research Reference Group
SDM	Strategic Development Manager
SERAP	Student Engagement and Program Evaluation (Department of Education)
SFC	Sydney Football Club
SPHCM	School of Public Health and Community Medicine
SSW	Sydney South West Area Health Service
STARTTS	NSW Service for the Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors
SWMCS	Sydwest Multicultural Services Inc.
TAFE	Australian Technical and Further Education
TMHC	Transcultural Mental Health Centre
UNSW	University of New South Wales

1. Summary of intervention and research

Social isolation and disengagement fragments local communities. Evidence indicates that refugee families are highly vulnerable to social isolation in their countries of resettlement. The Commonwealth is debating how best to foster social cohesion in communities with high refugee settlement. Research to identify means to best address this is needed. Football United aims to foster social inclusion and cohesion within areas with high refugee settlement, through leadership, skills development, mentoring, and the creation of links with local community leaders and organisations. The research project aims to investigate the effects of the Football United program on individual's health and wellbeing and social cohesion in the community.

1.1 Key achievement of Intervention in 2009

- **Deliver Weekly Football activities:** Deliver weekly football programs, holiday camps and Futsal competitions, which include coaching and playing activities for participants, delivered by trained volunteer coaches.
 - Over 1500 children, youths and their families have participated in Football United
 - Over 20 nationalities are represented with participants coming from Africa, South America, South-East Asia and the Middle East.
 - Grown to 6 programs (3 after-school programs with Miller, Lurnea and Evans IECs, 1 in-school program with Granville South High School, 1 Futsal program at Blacktown PCYC and 1 Football in the Park activity in Blacktown) in 4 different regions of Sydney
 - FUn has organized to run a Football United Festival on Tuesday December 11, 2009 at UNSW.
 - Inter-school Football Tournament is regularly organized and tournament for Miller and Lurnea was recently conducted on Tuesday September 22, 2009. For Granville and Evans will be on Wednesday November 18, 2009.
- **Development Leadership:** Train refugee youth and adults as volunteer coaches and referees, enhancing their leadership, personal development and role model capabilities.
 - Blacktown now has a committee of youth coaches who oversee all program activities in the area
 - Sydney FC soccer star Alex Brosque attended and accepted to become Ambassador to Football United
 - Sydney FC player and FUn ambassador Alex Brosque and Sydney FC team member Matt Jurman celebrate Refugee week at Lurnea, on 17 June 2009.
 - Working with its multiple partners and support groups, Football United organized and ran Spring School Holiday Football camps for boys and girls at Sydney Academy of Sport in Narrabeen from 7 to 11 October 2009 with special focus on girls' development - 51 boys and 32 girls participated.
 - First course of Level 0 coaching courses was held on 22 July 2009 for Blacktown program area.
 - Preliminary grassroots coach course was run on 30 June 2009 for Liverpool program area.
 - FUn has organized to run Grassroots level coaching courses for all program area in November 2009.
- **Facilitate Community Partnerships:** Create extensive partnerships with stakeholders, including local, state and national football organisations, government agencies, local councils, businesses, community groups and other not-for-profit organisations to achieve long term and sustainable outcomes for the participants.

- Football United works in partnership with Sydwest Multicultural Services Inc to run a number of programs in the Local Government Area such as Football in the Park program, Futsal program, Gala Day events and Holiday Football Camps.
- In partnership with Evans High School and IEC centres, Football United implements a weekly after-school program designed to foster social connectedness through football. Support for implementation of this program is part of the Australian Research Council Grant.
- Football United youth secured their own grant from Australian Youth Foundation Spark program. They develop and manage drop-in Futsal programs and participate in local competitions.
- In partnership with Granville South High School, the Australian Sports Commission, and supported by JP Morgan Inc, Football United will implement weekly in school program designed to foster social connectedness through football. The program includes leadership training, weekly playing and coaching opportunities.
- In partnership with Lurnea and Miller High Schools and IEC centres, and Liverpool Migrant Resource centre, Football United implements a weekly after-school program designed to foster social connectedness through football.
- With support from the Australian Government's National Action Plan funding program, the NSW government's Community Relations Commission, and the Mary McKillop Foundation, Football United is developing an exciting leadership development program which integrates stakeholder contribution and recognized leadership development methods into a program specially designed for Football United. FIFA and St George Foundation also support FUn's leadership development program.
- Football United has been accepted into the Streetfootballworld (SFW) network, and participates in many membership activities, in particular attending the first Streetfootballworld /FIFA Forum for Hope (South Africa 2009) and sending a team to Streetfootballworld /FIFA 2010 Football for Hope Festival, an official event of the FIFAWorld Cup™.
- In partnership with TAFE NSW, Football United will trial a Personal Development and Leadership course for between 40 and 60 youth identified as potential leaders. The course will commence in January 2009.
- **Advocate and Promote:** Promote the program with the support of partners extensively in the media, publications and at Football United events and activities.
 - Media coverage (please see appendix)
 - Harmony Day activity was organized at Cambell park in Blacktown on Friday March 27, 2009
 - Gala day launch for Miller IEC students in May 12, 2009.
 - Gala day launch for Lunea IEC students in May 20, 2009.
 - Gala tournament held for Miller IEC on Friday March 27, 2009.
 - Granville Primary School Festival will be conducted on Tuesday November 3, 2009 at Guildford County Park, in Guildford.

1.2 Key achievement of the Research Project in 2009

Football United has received Australian Research Council grant to evaluate, through a longitudinal study, the use of sport (football) to enhance social cohesion for humanitarian refugees in urban areas. Partnering this research are the NSW Community Relations Commission and NSW Health. The research project aims to investigate the effects of the Football United program on individual's health and wellbeing and social cohesion in the community.

The project will advance knowledge about how football, and sport programs more generally, can contribute to fostering social inclusion, community capacity and social cohesion as well as promote individual health and well being. The research will inform future initiatives in local

communities that aim to address the needs of young refugee people. The research will result in information about how to implement sports-based social inclusion programs and how to foster connections between local communities, schools and community organisations. Key achievements in 2009 include:

- Ethical approval documents prepared and submitted: Both the UNSW Human Research Ethics Committee and Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau (NSW Department of Education and Training) have approved the study.
- Substantial literature review undertaken on social cohesion, concepts of community, sport and social development, measurement issues and instruments used with refugee communities and young people including ethical issues in research with these groups.
- Study design and sampling approach reviewed and refined.
- Proposed data collection tools reviewed and measurement instruments drafted for piloting in 2010.
- Draft research protocol document prepared to guide research process.
- Governance structure developed.
- Research Associate employed to work with the research team to undertake the research in 2010 and 2011.
- Briefing with all partners on 8 December 2009 in preparation for 2010 start date and establishment of Research Reference Group and other governance structures by the end of the year.

2. Ethical Approval

The study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of University of New South Wales (*HREC approval number 07194*) at the Executive Meeting held on 28 April 2009 and period of approval is valid up to 27 August 2012.

Student Engagement and Program Evaluation (SERAP) under NSW Department of Education and Training approved the research project (*Approval no. 2009059*) to be undertaken in NSW Government schools, and the approval will remain valid until 27 August 2010 and will be extended on yearly basis.

3. History of Football United

Football United began two years ago with a vision to assist recently arrived humanitarian refugee youth and families in their transition into Australian society. Sport in general and football especially, has an important role to play in people's lives and speaks to them in a language they understand. Research has shown that participating in sport improves physical and mental health, encourages strong community bonds, reduces crime rates, and can offer access to positive mentors for young people in disadvantaged communities (Burnett 2006; Henley, Schweizer et al. 2007; Guerra 2008; Høglund and Sundberg 2008). Transition to a new country includes practical challenges such as learning new languages, cultural and societal values, making refugee youth an important group to include in a program like Football United. Refugees from conflict impacted areas are often carrying emotionally traumatic experiences with them which can result in higher than average problems with language, housing, health, employment and education.

Football United's first years have evoked high enthusiasm, engaging outstanding commitment from the refugees, residents and key community and industry groups. To date it has provided over 300 young people and their families with opportunities to participate in the western and south-western areas of Sydney. Young people who have participated in the program are now registered in clubs, playing representative football, and competing as teams in local futsal competitions. Parents coach on a weekly basis, and there is a constant stream of recently arrived young people being introduced to the program by Migrant Resource Centres, Intensive English Centres and via word of mouth.

4. Project Partnership and Funding

A collaborative research partnership under the Australian Research Council Linkage Program has been formed between the UNSW SPHCM and a range of partner organisations. This project is significant in both the breadth and the extent of its partner engagement. For purposes of this research, the project has engaged local and national football bodies, international researchers, local communities and government agencies.

The Football United program began with scarce funding at the grass roots level, which fostered a partnership and volunteer model to develop and implement the activities. Persistent partner recruitment and successful pilot activities succeeded in engaging Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), Intensive English Centres (IECs), football clubs and community members in the program. New partners, most notably the Community Relations Commission (CRC) and local NSW health services, who see the potential to improve health and social cohesion in the participating communities, have become involved in this study with significant offers of cash and in-kind support as part of this ARC Linkage Grant. A budget update will be prepared at the end of 2009 for the ARC and partners.

5. Project Governance

The following governance structure will operate for the duration of the project so that all investigators and partners can be involved in key decision making in respect of their interests. While it is important that all be involved, the structure and proposed membership is designed to be workable as well as representative. The governance structure will be comprised of the following 3 groups:

5.1 ARC Advisory Committee (AAC): The committee is composed of 2 members nominated by UNSW and 4 members nominated by the UNSW and Collaborators which represent the following interests:

- a) The Blacktown Intervention site: nominated from the Sydwest Multicultural Centre, due to their longstanding and extensive involvement with Football United.
- b) The Liverpool Intervention site: nominated from Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre and Miller Intensive English Centre due to their longstanding and extensive involvement with Football United
- c) Sydney South West Area Health Service and Transcultural Mental Health Centre
- d) Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW

*The AAC will work mostly via email, to keep informed of progress of the intervention and research. This committee will be responsible for reporting back progress to the ARC and will be advised by the PAG and RRG detailed below.

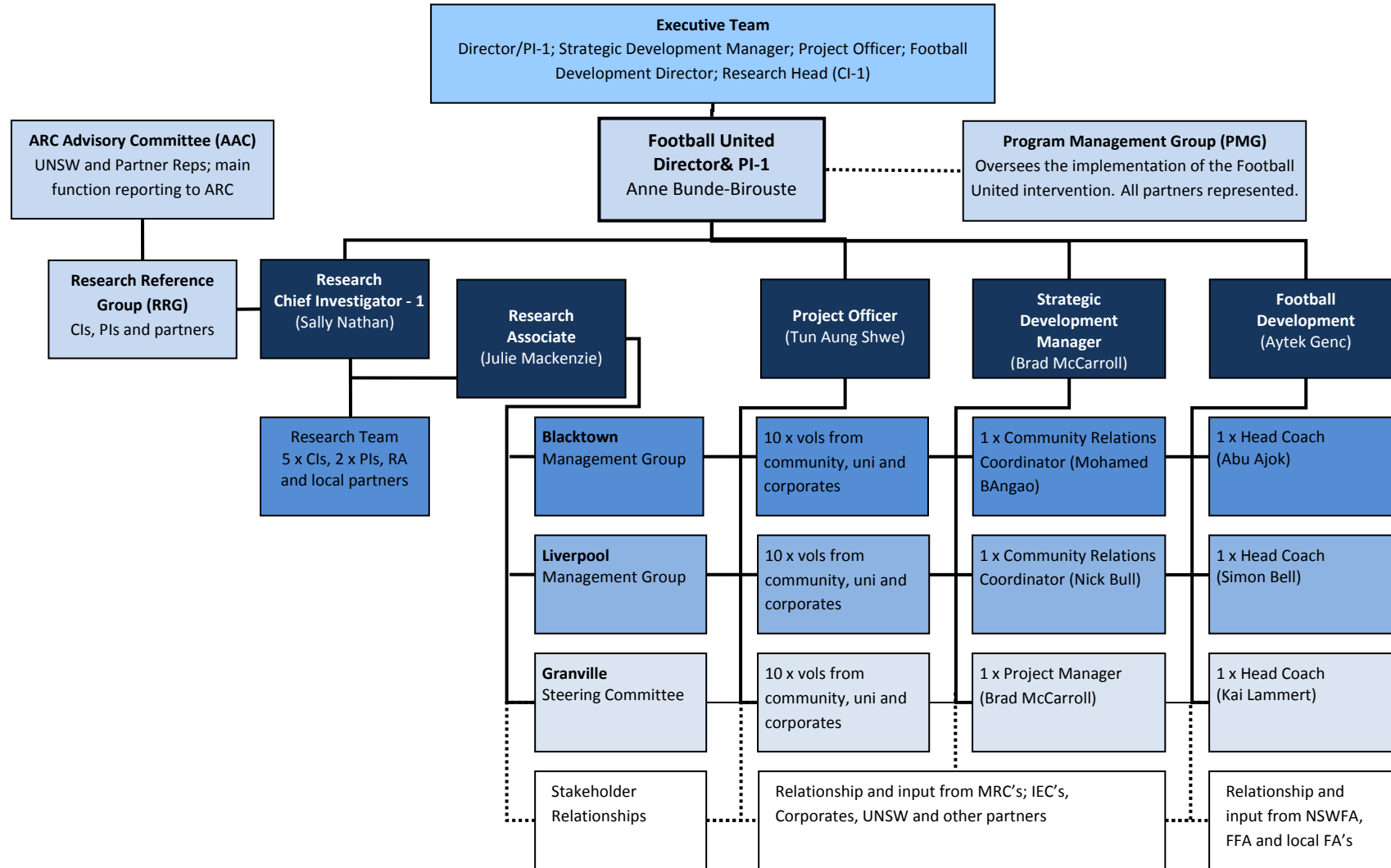
5.2 A Program Management Group (PMG): This group will oversee the implementation of the Football United Program including the intervention sites. It will meet no more than once quarterly, with electronic communication in between meetings as necessary. All partners will be invited to nominate a representative to the PMG. The Football United contact for this group will be Anne Bunde-Birouste.

5.3 A Research Reference Group (RRG): This group will oversee the implementation of the research involved in the Football United ARC project. It will meet on a schedule determined at its first meeting. The Football United contact for this group will be Sally Nathan.

For maximum efficiency this group will be smaller than the PMG. It will include all the named Chief Investigators for the ARC grant and the two other Principal Investigators – Anne Bunde-Birouste and Dr Lynn Kemp. The following agencies will also be asked to nominate a representative to this group: Sydwest Multicultural Centre, Liverpool Multicultural Centre, Community Relations Commission, Sydney South West Area Health Service and Transcultural Mental Health Centre, Miller Intensive English Centre (IEC), Evans Intensive English Centre (IEC)

NB: Both the PMG and RRG may break into smaller working groups as the project progresses to handle specific aspects of the research or intervention and other members may be nominated to working groups as required.

Football United Organisational Structure



6. Football United Strategic Areas

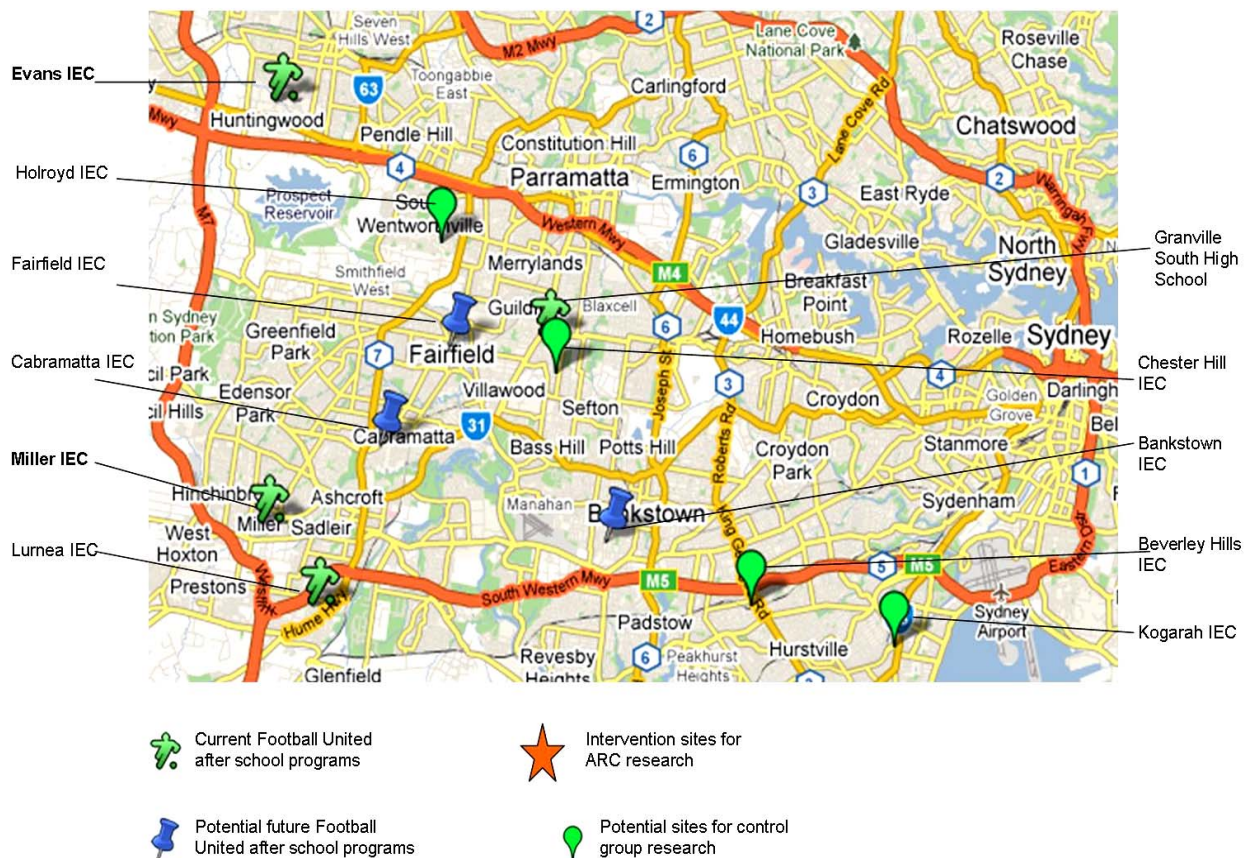
The different areas of activity have been designed to provide individual participants with skill sets that are transferable to other contexts such as fund raising, club management and development, volunteer management and support. On a community level, the program activities are designed to build community capacity and contribute to social cohesion. The various elements are integrated into football training and playing opportunities which include three key focus areas:

6.1 Football activities: These include regular Saturday and after school programs, gala days & school holiday camps. All activities are designed to foster maximum mentorship between coaches and players, between older and younger players, and between other volunteers and participants. The Saturday program is managed by a combination of volunteers from partner organisations involved in the study: students, Sydney FC (SFC), Blacktown District Soccer Football Association (BDSFA) football clubs and coaches, referees, managers, MRCs and the CRC. The after-school programs are managed by the local IEC school in collaboration with partner groups including football clubs, community groups such as PCYC, and youth groups.

6.2 Training: Youth and family members from the communities will have opportunities to participate in courses in the following areas: coach, referee, mentoring & life-skills, first aid, project management & volunteering. Football United partners BDSFA and Sydney Football Club (SFC) as well as local club, district and state football associations and TAFE are engaged in the development and implementation of all courses.

6.3 Fostering involvement with local football clubs: FUN partner BDSFA works with FUN to connect with local football clubs to increase registration and playing opportunities for refugee youth and families, thus fostering a valuable community linking and bridging function.

7. Football United Sites



7.1 Football United has programs running at the following schools:

- Evans IEC (ARC intervention site)
- Miller IEC (ARC intervention site)
- Lurnea IEC
- Granville South High School

7.2 The following schools are identified as being potential sites for future Football United involvement:

- Bankstown IEC
- Fairfield IEC

7.3 The following schools have been identified as potential sites for control group research in South West and Western Sydney:

- Beverley Hills IEC
- Cabramatta IEC
- Chester Hill IEC
- Holroyd IEC
- Kogarah IEC

8. Research study design

Intervention group: Participants in the Football United Program in two local government areas in Sydney. A range of qualitative and quantitative measures will be undertaken with all consenting participants. Participants will be allocated to low or high levels of participation at the end of the study before survey impact measures are undertaken. Criteria for allocation: High - participation in both playing and training opportunities; Low - attending one program activity regularly.

Control group: Recent arrivals (within last two years) to Australia who are attending an Intensive English Centre in non-participating schools in demographically similar local government areas. The control group will be matched to the intervention group on demographic variables and their health, well being and experiences of belonging recorded in surveys and interviews as for the intervention group.

In the study, the research team will specifically follow one after school program in each LGA, as well as a Football United/TAFE Pathways development and training program. The study design will allow comparison of experiences and key measures of psychological well being, resilience, ethnic identity and sense of belonging, community participation and social inclusion across 3 groups: Control, Low & High level participation. It employs what could be termed a 'dose response' model, comparing those with no intervention (at a single point in time) with those with lower or higher levels of the intervention.

9. Research methods

The research will utilise a mixed-methods approach including 1) observation, 2) interviews and 3) surveys to measure the impact of the program on the participants. The study will also utilise 4) Key Informant interviews with key stakeholders about their experience of the program and of related community issues and 5) analysis of media coverage.

In order to assess the effects of Football United the research project is measuring the individual health/ wellbeing and sense of social inclusion amongst Football United participants (the intervention group) as well as refugees who have arrived in Australia within the last two years, and who have *not* been involved in Football United (the control group).

9.1 The researchers will observe program implementation and participants' involvement in Football United at after school training and scheduled football games.

9.2 The research will include 'friendship pair' interviews (where two young people participate together in an interview). The friendship pairs will provide a comfortable and supportive environment for the participants during interviews, and encourage them to speak freely without undue peer pressure often apparent in focus groups. The questions will be open and flexible to enable the

young people to explain their experiences in their own words and from their own unique perspective. The kinds of questions which will be asked to prompt young people to “tell their stories” include:

- How have you found living in Australia?
- What is good about living in Australia?
- What have you found difficult about living in Australia?

For Football United participants, they will also be asked about their experiences of the program itself:

- How have you found being involved in Football United?
- What is good about Football United?
- What have you found difficult about Football United?

At the first interview, following a ‘self-reporting’ approach, the Football United participants will be given scrapbooks in which they will be asked to write, paste images or draw about what they like and dislike, and other observations on key themes discussed in the first interview as well as a disposable camera. In the second interview researchers will collect the scrapbooks and explore the narratives in the scrapbooks and photographs.

9.3 The research includes a quantitative component. Participant’s psychological well being, resilience, ethnic identity and sense of belonging, community participation and feelings of social inclusion will be measured using validated and culturally appropriate survey instruments which will be piloted in early 2010.

9.4 Key Informant interviews will be held with people in designated positions in key organisations such as schools, councils, youth and refugee government support agencies, relevant NGOs, football clubs, civic and religious community groups. The interview will examine views about social cohesion and community capacity in the study sites and the program itself again using open-ended questions which will elicit their stories.

10. Research timeline

ACTIVITY	MONTHS												
	2009	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Undertake key literature reviews			♦	♦									
Establish Program Advisory Group & ongoing management											♦	♦	♦
Establish Research Reference Group & web based tool & ongoing management											♦	♦	♦
Develop Information for key groups											♦	♦	♦
Obtain amended ethics				♦	♦	♦	♦						
Refine study design & sampling				♦	♦	♦	♦						
Draft survey instruments							♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Develop and manage Blacktown Site	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Develop and manage Liverpool Site	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Develop and manage training programs	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Foster local club involvement	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦

ACTIVITY	MONTHS												
	2010	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Piloting all instruments		♦	♦	♦									
Develop process measurement and demographic data tools		♦	♦	♦									
Collect demographic data from FUn participants start in Aug.		♦	♦	♦									
Undertake 1 st friendship pair interviews					♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦		
Code and analyse 1 st friendship pair interviews					♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦		
Undertake KI interviews					♦	♦	♦	♦	♦				
Code and analyse KI interviews					♦	♦	♦	♦					
Recruit control group/ demographic data collection							♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Survey control group and 'Friendship Pair' interviews							♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Manage Blacktown Site	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Manage Liverpool Site	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Manage training programs	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Foster local club involvement	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Collect process data	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦

ACTIVITY	MONTHS												
	2011	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Survey intervention group	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦							
Undertake 2 nd friendship pair interviews			♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦					
Code and analyse 2 nd friendship pair interviews, write report			♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦					
Undertake 2 nd KI interviews			♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦					
Code and analyse KI interviews, write report			♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦					
Analyse survey data							♦	♦	♦				
Prepare final reports							♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Draft and consult re best practice guidelines							♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Manage Blacktown Site	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Manage Liverpool Site	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Manage training programs	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Foster local club involvement	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Collect process data	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦

11. Key contacts

If you have any questions about the program, please contact Anne Bunde-Birouste, Football United Director and Founder, on 9385- 2591 or email ab.birouste@unsw.edu.au or Tun Aung Shwe, Project Officer, on 9385 8196, or email tun.shwe@unsw.edu.au. If you have any questions about the research please contact Sally Nathan, Chief Investigator on 9385 1061 or email s.nathan@unsw.edu.au or Dr Julie MacKenzie, Research Associate, on 9385 8675, or email j.mackenzie@unsw.edu.au.

12. References

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2. Delaney, L. and E. Keaney (2005). Sport and Social Capital in the United Kingdom: Statistical Evidence from National and International Survey Data. Dublin, Economic and Social Research Institute, Institute for Public Policy Research.
3. Guerra, C. (2008). Playing for the future: Improving the wellbeing of migrant and refugee young people through sport and recreation. From Margins to Mainstream: 5th World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and the Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders. Melbourne Convention Centre.
4. Henley, R., I. Schweizer, et al. (2007). "How Psychosocial Sport & Play Programs Help Youth Manage Adversity: A Review of What We Know & What We Should Research." International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation **12**(1): 51-58.
5. Høglund, K. and R. Sundberg (2008). "Reconciliation through Sports? The case of South Africa." Third World Quarterly **29**(4): 805 - 818.

Appendix: Selected Recent Media

- SBS TV, The World Game, [Refugee Gala Day](#), June 21, 2009
- ABC TV news and ABC radio, [Blacktown boys living the World Cup dream](#), May 29, 2009
- Liverpool Leader, [Alex Brosque drops in at Lurnea soccer training](#), July 8, 2009
- Parramatta Advertiser, A Socceroo's Sound Advice, May 22, 2009
- Parramatta Advertiser, [Ahmad Elrich returns to South Granville High School](#), May 22, 2009
- Blacktown Advocate, [Boots and All Fun](#), Apr 20, 2009
- Liverpool Leader, [Soccer a Handy Tool](#), Apr 8, 2009
- Blacktown Advocate, [Football United Soccer Refugee Program](#), Oct 20, 2008
- Football NSW website, [Passion + Resilience = Football United](#), May 29, 2009
- Football NSW website, [Alex Brosque named as Football United Ambassador](#) Mar 31, 2009
- Football NSW website, [Blacktown & District Soccer Football Association Inc assists in Refugees coaching promotion](#) Mar 3, 2009
- [streetfootballworld](#) network front page feature, Jun 3, 2009.
- Uniken, World Cup fever, May-June edition, 2009.
- Australian Sports Commission Media Centre, [Young refugees get a kick out of football](#), Feb 19, 2009