

Refugee Youth Soccer Development Program

Anne Bunde-Birouste, UNSW - SPHCM : May, 2006

Vision

Refugee Youth Soccer Program

Develop and implement a soccer program which contributes to:

- building social cohesion in refugee communities
- empowerment, leadership development, resilience building with young refugees in NSW area
- building racial harmony and social integration
- growth, development of soccer in Australia

This innovative program seeks to assist young refugees in their immigration and integration to Australia through a soccer development program. The program combines a number of approaches that have had documented success such as the use of sport to bring people from differing communities together.¹

Building social and community cohesion through Soccer

Soccer provides one of the best sports with which to build such programs. It is relatively inexpensive, it enjoys worldwide enthusiasm, it is designed as a non-violent, non-contact sport, and very importantly it is played by both genders, thus is not exclusive.

Overall concept

The program is designed around two pillars of activity : creating opportunities and enhancing existing opportunities (see page 2).

Background

Youth refugee situations

The difficulties of refugee situation are well documented. Any transition to a new country includes practical challenges such as learning new languages, cultural and societal values. Refugees from conflict impacted areas often are also carrying emotionally traumatic experiences with them, such as loss of, or separation from, family members, torture or life-threatening events.²

When these conditions are combined with the 'normal' challenges youth encounter in development (sense of self, belonging, desire for emotional and financial independence), young refugees are in situations of particular vulnerability, which can greatly affect their capacity to trust and form relationships with family, teachers, peers and the broader community.

Aims

- To contribute to building social cohesion in refugee communities through a youth soccer program;
- To promote social inclusion and address issues of disaffection amongst young refugees; and
- To contribute to building racial harmony and social integration across communities within the New South Wales area, through support for youth soccer development.

“ . . . cooperation and participation through sport, fair play, and leadership, and the ordinary person's capacity to be extraordinary”



UNHCR Australia press release, 2002

Innovation

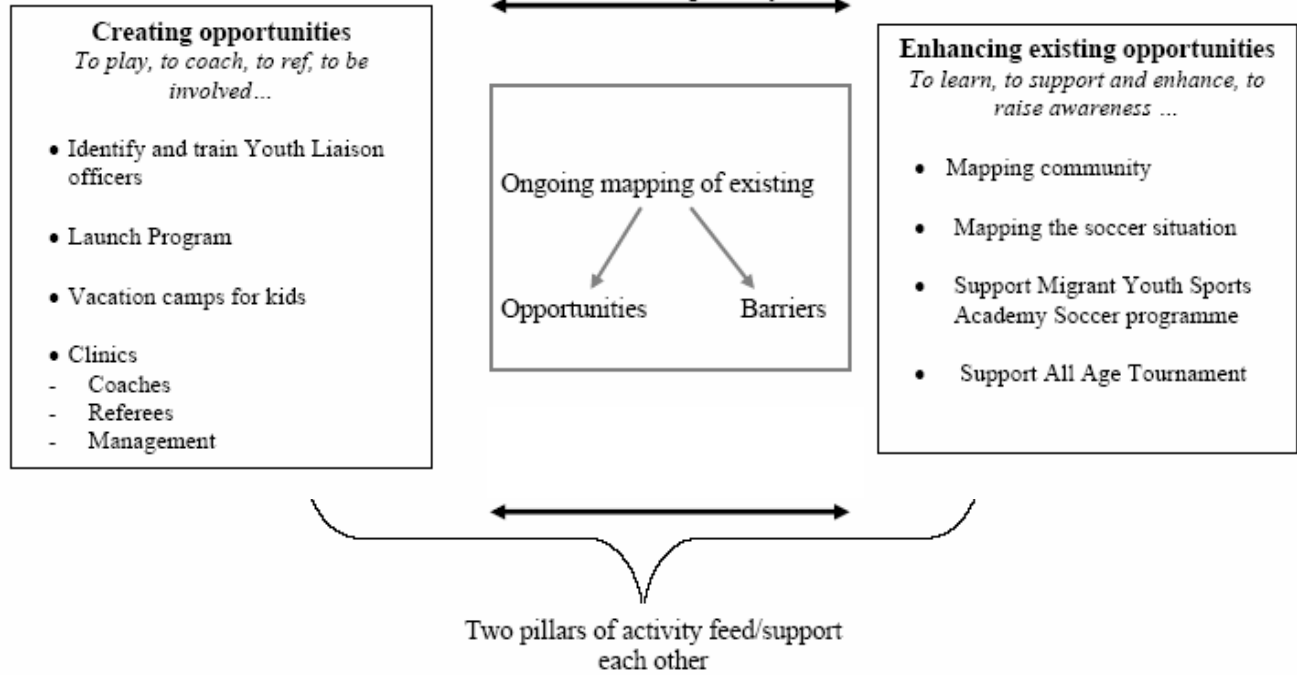
Many sports initiatives however tend to be built as one-off events. Much energy is put into the development process but once the event has come and gone, often nothing much is left but good memories. This program is designed to build on current fledgling initiatives such as the African-Australia all-age cup, to support the communities in their development of their local clubs, but also to assist them in their integration into the current world of soccer in Australia, thus build sustainability.

¹ More Than Just a Game: The Role of Sports in International Relations, Conference report; accessed 2/3/06; http://www.sportanddev.org/en/bulletin/november_2004_latest_edition/conference_review/.

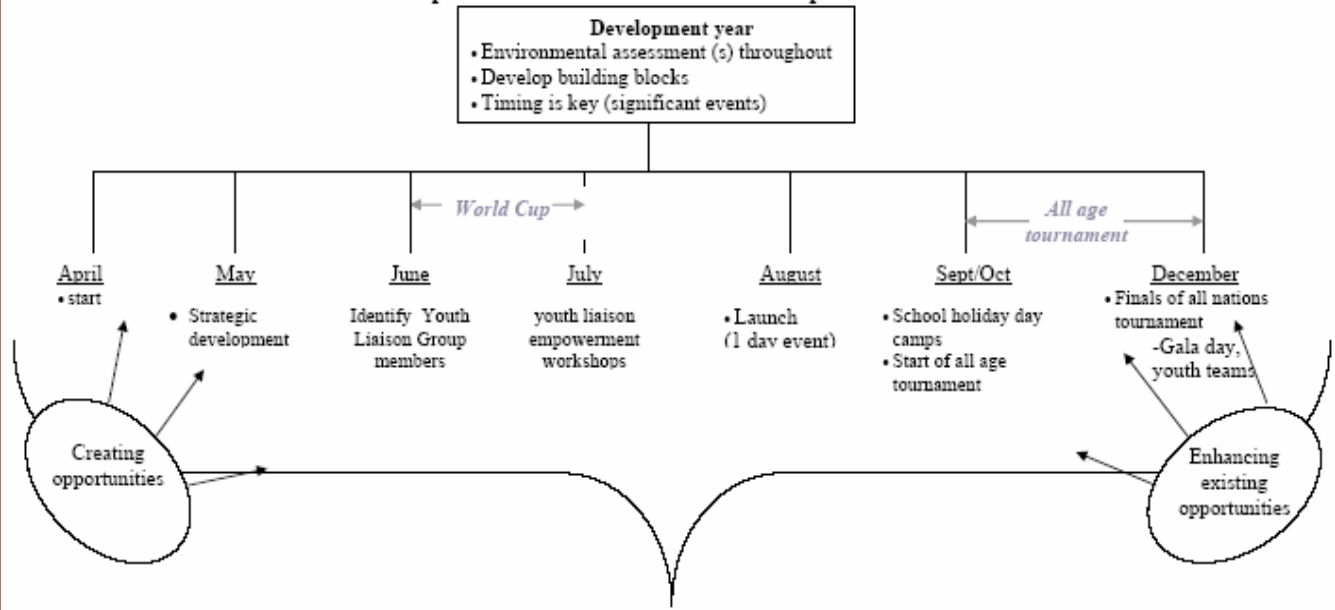
² Strategy for Refugee Young People, report of Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council, © Refugee Resettlement Advisory Council 2002.

Refugee Youth Soccer Program

Two Pillars of Activity :
1) Creating Opportunities 2) Enhancing existing opportunities
Year one: Development year



Refugee Youth Soccer Program Proposed Time Line: Year One- Development Year



Environmental scan: ongoing

Mapping the community demographics (e.g. age, sex, nationality, who lives where)
 Mapping existing soccer opportunities, and barriers to participation (e.g. who plays where, local competitions, why kids/aren't aren't involved)
 Exploring funding opportunities and generating funds
 Exploring/investigating the current soccer situation at local, state and national level

