

## Chapter 8

# Advancing Equality and Inclusion through Sport

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**E**quality and inclusion are core values for the Commonwealth and underline its formal commitments to protecting and advancing human rights. The Commonwealth regards ‘equality and respect for protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all without discrimination on any grounds, including the right to development’ as the foundations of ‘peaceful, just and stable societies’<sup>7</sup>. The Commonwealth works to ensure that all people enjoy equal rights regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief, and benefit from sustainable development.

The diversity between and within Commonwealth member countries makes issues of tolerance, mutual understanding and respect for difference of fundamental importance. The Commonwealth’s leading role in the struggle against apartheid was significant in demonstrating its commitment to eradicating ethnic, cultural or religious racism and racial discrimination. It recognises that growing advances in technology and communication, cultural, ethnic and religious cross-fertilisation is inevitable, and can bring risks of conflict and discord. The Commonwealth aims to manage diversity so it becomes strengthens citizens to feel safe, valued and equal (Commonwealth Secretary-General 2001).

Issues of disability are also a prominent concern for the Commonwealth. An estimated 80 per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, and having a disability increases the risk of poor educational outcomes, unemployment and poverty. Sport can contribute to the mechanisms that support people with disabilities, and other excluded groups.

### 8.1 Policy priorities

The Commonwealth’s work on equality and inclusion is informed by the international legal framework on human rights and is also underpinned by a number of Declarations by Commonwealth Heads of Governments such as the Harare Declaration and the Kampala Declaration (Commonwealth Heads of Government 1991; 2007). Examples of rights established in international law are the right to life, the right to vote, to food, to education, to decent work, to housing and to freedom of expression.

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The Commonwealth's commitment to racial equality is longstanding and follows the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). ICERD, which came into force in 1969, is one of the oldest international human rights treaties and builds further upon the non-discrimination provisions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Countries party to ICERD must not engage in, defend or support racial discrimination in any form and must encourage means to eliminate barriers between races. The Commonwealth has additionally recorded its commitment to racial equality through the 1971 Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and the 1979 Lusaka Declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice issued by the Commonwealth Heads of Government.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises that people with disabilities face particular difficulties in obtaining full human rights; for example, children with disabilities are less likely to attend school and more likely to leave school without the qualifications and skills required to find employment and lead an independent life. People with disabilities are therefore a policy priority within the Commonwealth's work to address equality and inclusion. The Commonwealth supports the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and explicitly aims to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities.

## **8.2 How sport can contribute**

Sport is used to support and promote equality and inclusion in two ways. Sport programmes can engage and provide inclusive sport environments for those who are not supported by other structures or institutions. It can provide inclusive activities that are available to all groups and uphold the rights of individuals by ensuring they are protected when taking part. There is a fundamental requirement for sport interventions to incorporate robust protection and safeguarding mechanisms. People from minority groups and those with disabilities may be especially vulnerable to abuse as a result of their less powerful status, making such provision particularly important.

Sport has also been used effectively to reinforce the values and practices of equality and inclusion by supporting groups that are vulnerable to discrimination and violation. Such groups include ethnic, religious and cultural minorities, people with disabilities, and people suffering from the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS. Sport programmes provide opportunities for social engagement, and also offer teaching on equality, inclusion and human rights.

The use of sport to support minority groups is widespread in sport and has been applied to a number of situations. These include the use of sport to contribute to facilitating inclusion for minority communities, and providing social support to recent immigrants (Amara et al. 2005). Sport programmes can also contribute to wider inclusion by ensuring the provision of equitable access for minority groups.

The use of sport to address issues surrounding disabilities is well established in many countries and is demonstrated globally through the quadrennial Paralympic Games. The Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group has identified five ways in which sport can foster well-being for people with disabilities: empowering them; reducing stigma; providing opportunities for independence; and acting as an agent of socialisation and/or a mechanism for inclusion (SDP IWG 2008).

Table 8.1 sets out how sport can be used to support equality and inclusion through empowerment and inclusion and by addressing stigma and discrimination.

**Table 8.1 Sport and the Commonwealth’s equality and inclusion priority areas**

<i>How sport can contribute</i>	<i>Considerations for policy formation and development planning</i>
<b>Empowerment and inclusion (equality and inclusion priority area)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As sport and physical activity can be modified to suit diverse cultural requirements (e.g. by modifying clothing to accommodate religious requirements) and ability levels (Black et al. 2011) it can be a valuable platform to promote inclusion and empowerment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and champion the rights of marginalised groups, including racial minorities and people with a disability, in relevant sport policy frameworks and delivery strategies.</li> </ul>

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**Table 8.1 Sport and the Commonwealth's equality and inclusion priority areas (cont.)**

<i>How sport can contribute</i>	<i>Considerations for policy formation and development planning</i>
<b>Empowerment and inclusion (equality and inclusion priority area) (cont.)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, many people with a disability are excluded from mainstream social institutions from an early age and deprived of opportunities to fully participate in their communities. Similarly, in several countries young women have more restricted opportunities for social interaction than other groups. Inclusive sport programmes can provide one avenue to address these forms of exclusion.</li> <li>In situations where platforms for engagement and support networks are lacking, sport can include rights-based education and provide connectivity with other people. Sport programmes can provide spaces for people who experience disadvantage through discrimination to exchange information, develop and share skills, and take collective action.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>Many sports activities require communication between team mates and participants and more broadly provide opportunities for relationships with friends, team mates, opposition players, coaches and other community members, which can contribute to the development of social interaction and networks for people excluded by race or disability (McCain-Nhlapo 2007).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ring-fence resources to support inclusive sport programmes.</li> <li>Initiate special projects and programmes to enhance access to sport for people constrained by disadvantage, including those with a disability.</li> <li>Address access issues for people with a disability through inclusive design of sport facilities and in the creation of accessible spaces to play.</li> <li>Conduct targeted monitoring to identify current inclusion of targeted groups within sport and physical activity programming.</li> </ul>
<b>Addressing stigma and discrimination (equality and inclusion priority area)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stigma lies at the root of much of the damaging and exclusionary treatment meted out to marginalised people by others and can also cause people to undervalue themselves. Inclusive sport can help combat stigma by breaking down stereotypes and generating shared experiences that emphasise common interests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enact legislation to eliminate discriminatory practices within sport and physical activity provision.</li> <li>Facilitate partnerships between sport organisations and pro-disability and inclusion groups.</li> </ul>

(Continued)

**Table 8.1 Sport and the Commonwealth’s equality and inclusion priority areas (cont.)**

<i>How sport can contribute</i>	<i>Considerations for policy formation and development planning</i>
<b>Addressing stigma and discrimination (equality and inclusion priority area) (cont.)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sport can be especially powerful in challenging stereotypes of people with disabilities by placing them in a position where their skills are highlighted (Walker 2007).</li> <li>• By playing a role in reducing the stigma and stereotypes surrounding persons with disabilities, participation in sport can contribute to the promotion of more inclusive communities (McCain-Nhlapo 2007).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on inclusive sport in public awareness and anti-stigma campaigns and engage sport role models to support messaging.</li> <li>• Incorporate equality and inclusion training in sport and physical activity education and capacity building.</li> <li>• Strengthen mechanisms that safeguard and protect people with disability in sport and physical activity programmes.</li> </ul>

### 8.3 Case study examples

The following initiatives promote the inclusion and empowerment of people with a disability.

<b>National Action Plan on Disability Sport – Uganda</b>	
Initiative	The Uganda Disability Sport Summit brought together relevant stakeholders to design and develop a national action plan for disability sport in Uganda. Organised by the Kids League, with support from Motivation and Comic Relief, the Summit was convened to promote increased co-ordination between organisations working to promote disability sport in Uganda. It involved representatives of schools, NGOs, sport organisations and the Uganda Paralympic Committee, who produced a detailed national action plan. It was agreed that the Uganda Paralympic Committee would organise a task force to take forward the plan.
Policy context	National Policy on Disability in Uganda (2006)
Further information	<a href="http://assets.sportanddev.org/downloads/uganda_disability_sport_summit_report_1.pdf">http://assets.sportanddev.org/downloads/uganda_disability_sport_summit_report_1.pdf</a>

## Special Olympics

Initiative	<p>The Special Olympics movement was founded in 1968 to promote sport for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The movement strives to create a better world by fostering the acceptance and inclusion of all people. Its mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community. To do this Special Olympics provides a wide range of training, competition, health screening and fund-raising events. It also creates opportunities for families, community members, local leaders, businesses, law enforcement, celebrities, dignitaries and others to band together to change attitudes and support athletes.</p> <p>Special Olympics works through a range of programmes, including athlete leadership and family engagement initiatives, and a focus on health and the engagement of young participants. The movement also holds 50,000 competitions a year that bring together athletes, coaches, volunteers, supporters and leaders at local, regional and national levels. The flagship events are the movement's World Games, which take place every two years and can be the world's largest sporting event of the year. Special Olympics has the support of governments worldwide and has helped bring about policies to improve education, health care, and employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities all around the world.</p>
Policy context	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008)
Further information	<a href="http://www.specialolympics.org">www.specialolympics.org</a>

## Paralympic Committee of Tanzania – Training Programme in Schools

Initiative	<p>The Tanzania Paralympic Committee aims to 'actively promote sports for persons with a disability in Tanzania by creating a structured, sequential, progressive development and competition structure for athletes, coaches, administrators, and technical officials, from beginner level to the International level'. As part of its work it operates training programmes in schools, which includes the distribution of sports equipment.</p>
Policy context	National Policy on Disability (2004)
Further information	<a href="http://www.paralympic.org/npc/tanzania">www.paralympic.org/npc/tanzania</a>

### Cricket for Change

Initiative	<p>Cricket for Change (C4C) is an organisation that uses cricket to connect with and support the development of young people. The organisation believes that cricket can make a positive impact on the lives of individuals and that cricket and sport for development can make more fundamental differences to communities. C4C uses cricket to create an environment in which young people can flourish, and also uses its expertise to train and build capacity among partner organisations in London, the UK and overseas.</p> <p>C4C sees cricket as being unique in being able to help young people with a disability share in the benefits of competitive team because it is a non-contact game. Its programme, Hit the Top, supports young people with a disability to access cricket in a way that is comparable to their able-bodied peers and play the game at a level that suits them. Hit the Top improves self-esteem, confidence and independent mobility skills. Participants are encouraged to excel and many have gone on to represent their school, local club, county and even country.</p>
Policy context	The United Kingdom Equality Act (2010), including the Disability Equality Duty from the previous Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).
Further information	<a href="http://cricketforchange.org.uk/initiatives/hit_the_top">http://cricketforchange.org.uk/initiatives/hit_the_top</a>

The following initiatives promote the inclusion of indigenous populations.

### He Oranga Poutama – New Zealand

Initiative	<p><i>He Oranga Poutama</i> is an initiative led by Sport New Zealand that supports Māori participation in community-level sport and traditional physical recreation. <i>Oranga Poutama</i> is focused on Māori participation and leadership in sport as Māori. The programme is an example of an effective and decentralised policy framework supporting SDP. It includes methods for linking sport and other policy domains relevant to social inclusion, employment and social capital. Regional sport trusts help to mobilise and access community and decentralised resources. The programme also contributes to Green Prescriptions, a nationally funded initiative supporting doctors to prescribe physical activity for at-risk patients with a sedentary lifestyle.</p>
Policy context	Sport New Zealand Strategic Plan 2012–2015
Further information	<a href="http://www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/He-Oranga-Poutama/">www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/He-Oranga-Poutama/</a>

### Active After-school Communities (AASC) in the Torres Strait Islands – Australia

Initiative	<p>In the Torres Strait islands, the Australian Government's Active After-school Communities (AASC) programme works with Hockey Queensland's Remote and Indigenous Hockey Programme to bring hockey to children. Members of the local community are trained in a hockey-specific Community Coach Training Programme (CCTP). Once certified, the coaches are capable of teaching children core hockey skills, in a fun, safe and inclusive environment.</p> <p>The initiative, which started in 2003, is part of the AASC national programme that aims to engage traditionally inactive primary school children in sport and structured physical activity. Children have access to free programmes in the after-school time slot of 3.00pm to 5.30pm. AASC Regional Coordinators co-ordinate the delivery of the programme in primary schools and Childcare Benefit Approved Out of School Hours Care Services (OSHCS) using local sporting clubs, volunteers, private providers, teachers and OSHCS staff, retirees, senior secondary and tertiary students, and parents, brothers or sisters.</p> <p>The cornerstone of AASC is the involvement of the local community in the delivery of the programme. This involvement offers opportunities to support and strengthen community cohesion and development.</p>
Policy context	The Active After-schools Community programme is an initiative of the Australian Government.
Further information	<a href="http://www.remotehockey.com">www.remotehockey.com</a>