

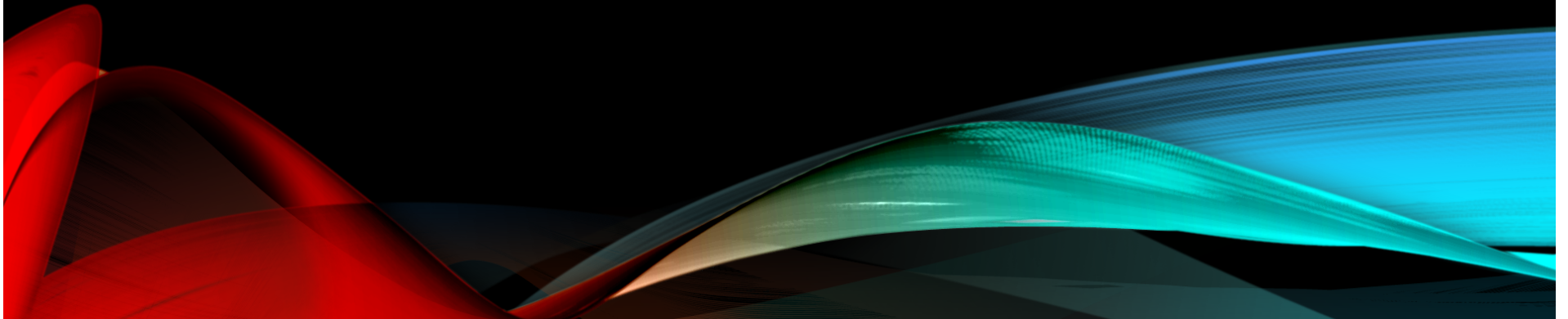


CREATING INCLUSION FOR NEW CITIZENS IN SPORT & RECREATION: A RESPONSE TO *PLAYING TOGETHER* – *NEW CITIZENS, SPORTS & BELONGING*

Kashyap Gosai

“A SPORT IS A SPORT AND A FAN IS A FAN, NO MATTER WHERE IN THIS WORLD YOU WERE BORN. AS CANADA’S DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION CONTINUES TO CHANGE THROUGH IMMIGRATION, SPORTS REPRESENT FAMILIAR, SAFE SPACES TO INTERACT WITH NEW PEOPLE. BY PLAYING TOGETHER, WE BUILD CONNECTIONS, COMMUNITY AND ULTIMATELY, OUR COUNTRY.”

- GILLIAN SMITH, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP





PLAYING TOGETHER – NEW CITIZENS, SPORTS & BELONGING

- Excellent report that will guide sport and recreation leaders as they strive to meet the needs of new citizens
- 4000 new citizens were surveyed and 11 barriers were found to prevent inclusion in sports and recreation programs
- But WHY is this important?



IMMIGRATION

- Canada is the multicultural hub of the world
- By 2030, immigration will account for all of Canada's net population growth (ICC Full Study Report, 2014)
- Not only are cities being transformed, sport systems are also being affected
 - Traditional sports may see their participation levels decline
 - Non-traditional sports may see their participation levels increase
- Although the report focused on new citizens, the barriers can and do affect all Canadians



CREATING INCLUSION

- Developed for sport and recreation organizations, this guide cites the barriers identified in the ICC report and highlights promising practices from several sport and recreation organizations that are making a concerted effort to engage new citizens



NEW CANADIANS

- Immigrants who have been in Canada for at least three years (usually 5-6 years) and have attained Canadian citizenship
- They have established their basic needs (home, work, school for children)
- May not be integrated into their communities
- Sport can be an important vehicle for helping new citizens feel that they belong



CS4L AND NEW CITIZENS

- CS4L movement aims to improve the quality of sport and physical activity for ALL Canadians.
- When establishing quality sport and physical activity programs based on developmentally appropriate sport, ALL Canadians will improve their health, wellness, and sporting experience.



A Venn diagram consisting of three overlapping circles. The top circle is a dark teal color and contains the word 'Excellence'. The bottom-left circle is a medium blue color and contains the words 'Physical literacy'. The bottom-right circle is a darker teal color and contains the words 'Active for life'. The circles overlap in the center and at the intersections of two circles. The background is black with a colorful, wavy, abstract pattern at the top in shades of yellow, orange, and blue.

Excellence

Physical
literacy

Active
for life

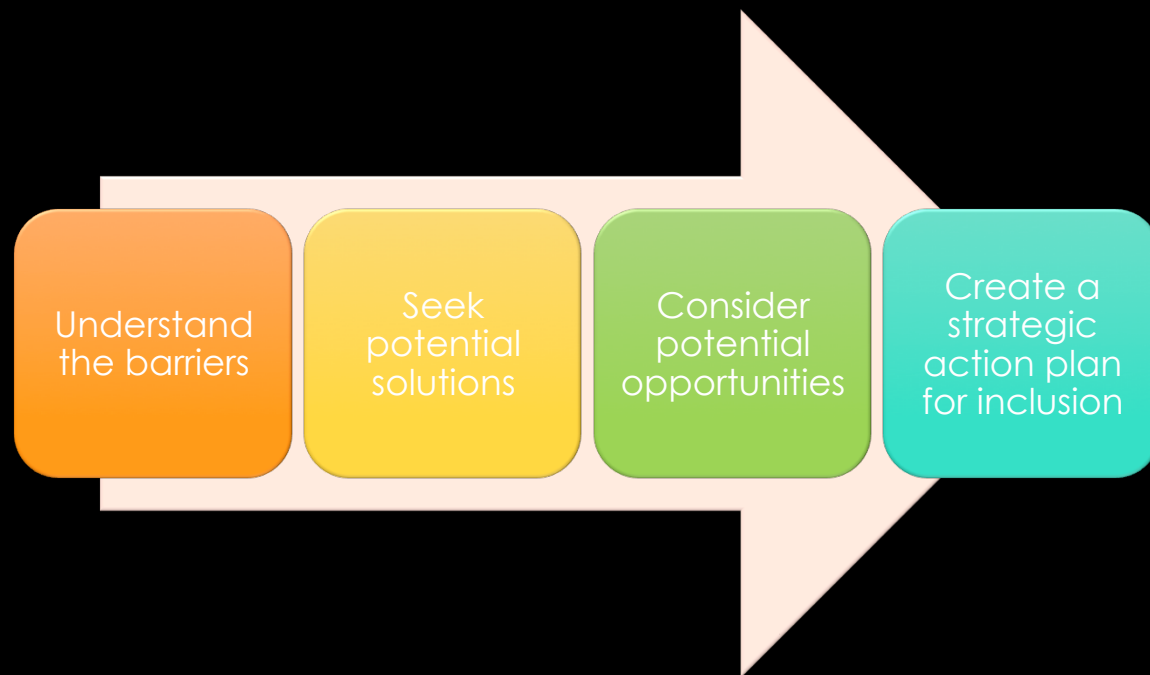


**TRUE
SPORT**
LIVES HERE

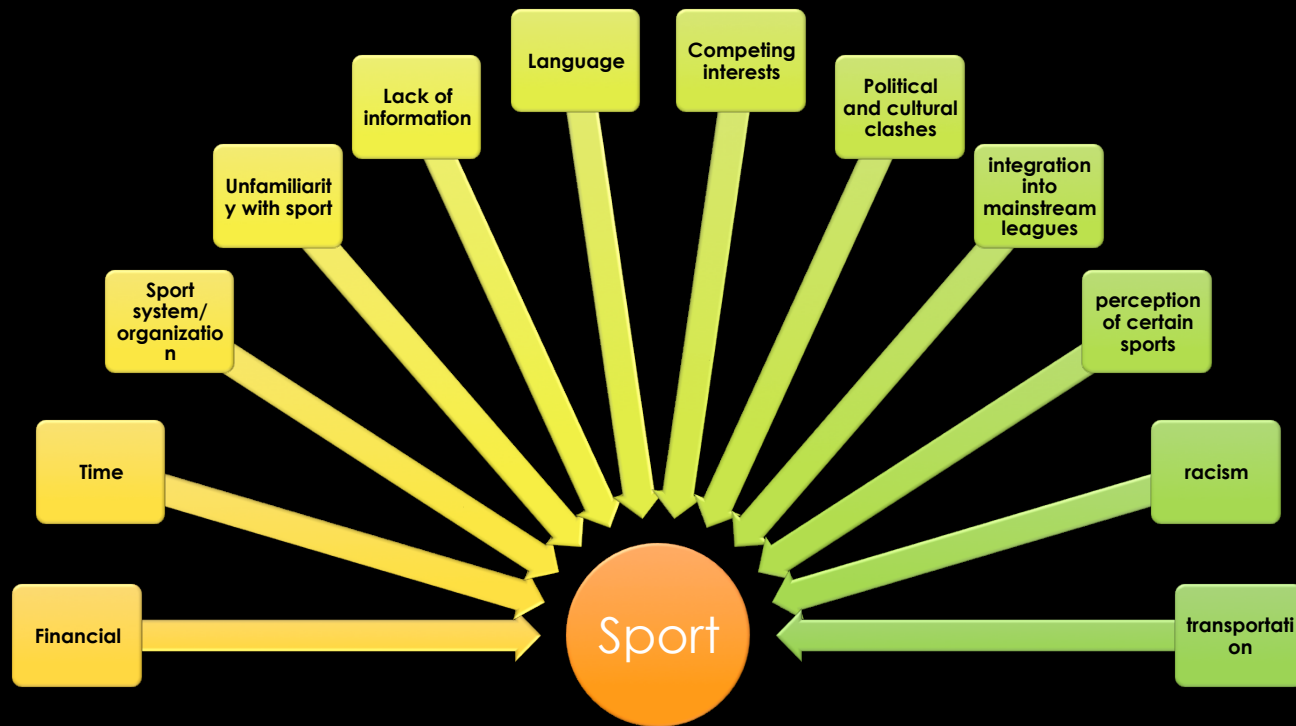


The best way to play™

FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSION



BARRIERS TO INCLUSION





FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

- Many new immigrants come to Canada with very few financial resources
- Often, finances are consumed in other priorities (e.g. getting jobs, homes)
- Certain sports (e.g. hockey) may be too expensive to participate in



FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

SOLUTIONS

- Subsidies (e.g. Welcome Policy – Toronto)
- Equipment supports (e.g. Comries Equipment Bank – Calgary)
- Free programming
- Programs at different price points
- “Try before you buy” model

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can your organization address additional costs (e.g. slush fund)?
- Can you partner with other sports organizations or institutional programs that promote initiatives to help introduce new citizens to sports?
- Can you access funding opportunities? Structure scholarship?
- Can high performance centres provide access to community-based programming at reduced costs?



TRANSPORTATION

- Many families cannot afford a car or have to be at work when games or practices occur
- Public transportation may not always be an option, either due to scheduling or due to costs



TRANSPORTATION

SOLUTIONS

- Buddy-up system
- Utilization of buses by community organizations
- Provision of transit fare (e.g. Toronto Sports Leadership program)

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you encourage a car pool system?
- Can you integrate/subsidize transportation into program costs?
- Can your municipal transit system help reduce barriers?
- Can you collaborate with local agencies and organizations?



TIME COMMITMENT

- Many sports demand too much time for many working families to manage, especially those who are adapting to life in a new country (*ICC, 2014*)
- Barrier is both perceived and actual – this is a major barrier for both new and established Canadians



TIME COMMITMENT

SOLUTIONS

- Identify actual time commitment (e.g. hidden time requirements)
- Make exceptions to mandatory volunteer requirements
- Explain benefits of sports and physical activity
- Provide recreational and sport opportunities at various times

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you offer drop-in programs at various days/times?
- Can you provide workshops or community information days where you can promote sport and dispel myths?



ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES & PRACTICES

- Immigrants and new citizens may not know how to navigate the Canadian sports system
- Information may not be complete, may not be easily accessible, or be presented in terminology that is difficult to decipher



ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES & PRACTICES

SOLUTIONS

- Collaborative endeavors
- Free programming (e.g. Hockey Canada)
- PSOs acting as a central hub
- Improved marketing
- Sport governing bodies focus on grassroots level exposure (e.g. Ontario Soccer Association)
- Improve access and registration methods

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you improve information dissemination?
- Can you engage municipal social workers to help connect new citizens?
- Can you seek partnership opportunities between PSO, NSO, and community sport/recreation organizations?



UNFAMILIARITY WITH SPORT

- Many new Canadians are unfamiliar with Canadian sports
- Difficult to engage without basic introduction
- Once introduced to basics, confidence will come and desire to continue in sport will develop



UNFAMILIARITY WITH SPORT

SOLUTIONS

- Introductory clinics and/or workshops (e.g. Toronto Lightning Lacrosse)
- Recruiting local champions/heroes to help market sport
- Orientation programs to help families understand (e.g. Ontario Soccer Association)
- Tiered-divisions established by age AND skill
- Physical literacy focused development

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you find mentors for new families?
- Can you engage your local schools to introduce sports to new Canadian participants?
- Can sport and community recreation organizations forge relationships to showcase sport?



LACK OF INFORMATION

- Lack of sufficient information on how to get involved
- Lack of information on assistance programs



LACK OF INFORMATION

SOLUTIONS

- Partnering between sports/ recreation organizations and schools to distribute information
- Build relationships with ethnic associations to provide orientation to sport
- Simplify information distribution

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you create a plain language orientation package?
- Can you partner with immigrant-serving organizations and other grassroots organizations?
- Have a central system for disseminating information?



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

- Insufficient language capability, which prevents some parents from being able to participate in sports
- Can involved difficulties finding information, communication, and registration



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

SOLUTIONS

- Seeking local community centres or settlement organizations to assist in providing information in different languages
- Alternatives to web-based approaches
- Find local champions to advocate and help in information delivery

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you develop an online portal to help establish partnerships and disseminate information?
- Can you develop a phone app for mobile connectivity to information?
- Can you identify coaches or athletes within your organization who are fluent in other languages?



COMPETING INTERESTS

- New citizens may see academics as a priority over sports
- This is a perceived barrier and one that requires conversation and discussion



COMPETING INTERESTS

SOLUTIONS

- Inform families of benefits (e.g. Football Hockey League)
- Share research demonstrating benefits
- Engage school boards, important for physical literacy
- Partner with after-school programs
- Have local champions who can advocate

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you build community capacity and provide a mandate for sharing sport experiences within your members or athletes?
- Can you hold community events that promote partnerships with schools, community centres, and sport organizations?



POLITICAL & CULTURAL

- Political and cultural clashes from countries of origin follow immigrants to canada
- This can determine who they are willing to play with and against



POLITICAL & CULTURAL

SOLUTIONS

- Inclusivity
- Promote by education

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you use sport as a vehicle to break down barriers?
- Can you showcase successes and triumphs?
- Can you engage and empower youth?



INTEGRATION OF NEW CITIZENS INTO MAINSTREAM LEAGUES

- Many choose to play on teams composed of others from their country of origin



INTEGRATION OF NEW CITIZENS INTO MAINSTREAM LEAGUES

SOLUTIONS

- Help participants understand infrastructure of organized sport
- Market, recruit, educate
- Establish a mandate to integrate new citizens

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you create alternative and/or modified sports programs (e.g. flag football or flag rugby)?
- Can you help new citizens get involved in coaching aspects?
- Can you partner with gateway associations?



PERCEPTION OF CERTAIN SPORTS

- Perception that certain sports are too aggressive or violent (e.g. hockey)
- Families need accurate information on all the different sports and physical activity programs that are available
- Many new citizens admit they received misleading information about various sports from members of their own cultural community



PERCEPTION OF CERTAIN SPORTS

SOLUTIONS

- Address family concerns about harm to children (e.g. concussions)
- Governing bodies need to be more proactive in creating environments free of flawed perceptions or biases

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you provide clinics and/or workshops to improve exposure to sport?
- Can you provide opportunities to clarify rules of sport and safety concerns?
- Can you provide adaptive/alternate programs?



RACISM

- Racism or a feeling of being not welcome is particularly observed in sports with few immigrant participants
- Living in a multicultural society, sports organizations need to be more proactive in recruiting talent that is diverse



RACISM

SOLUTIONS

- Have zero tolerance policy for racism
- Make concerted effort to market and recruit talent from diverse populations

OPPORTUNITIES

- Can you showcase diversity at sports level by holding special events where community AND sport is celebrated?



CREATING A STRATEGIC PLAN

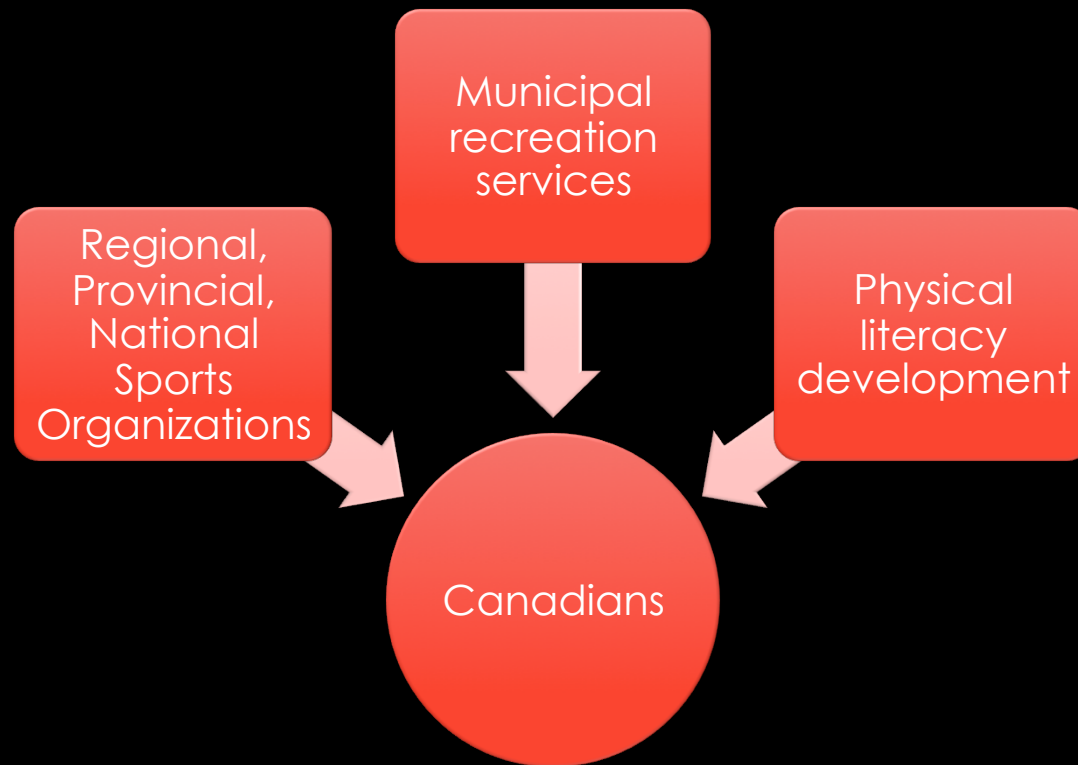
- The intent to become inclusive is ineffective without action
- Canada needs more champions of inclusive sport
- Developing a strategic action plan will enable sport organizations to make incremental changes
- Collaborate with agencies and organizations committed to working with new Canadians will harness the energy and willingness to make a difference.



CREATING A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR INCLUSION

1. Establish a common goal or shared vision
2. Understand the unique challenges that exist in overcoming barriers
3. Selection specific solutions that can be implemented immediately
4. Connect with stakeholders and establish partnerships
5. Actively seek opportunities that are feasible
6. Create advisory committee if possible
7. Find champions that advocate for sports within communities
8. Keep building on successes and empower action through collective impact
9. Share your promising practices!

VISION...



THANK YOU!

- *Canadian Intramural Recreation Association (CIRA) - David Inglis (Learning Coordinator)*
- *City of Toronto (Parks, Forestry & Recreation)*
- *Football Hockey Link (FHL) – Krista Taldorf*
- *Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) – Matt Greenwood (Manager, Membership Services)*
- *Scarborough Masters Basketball League – Basil Mangano (League Manager)*
- *Toronto Lightning Lacrosse – Nino Gaspari (League Manager)*
- *Toronto Skillz FC – Leslie Fitzpatrick (Technical Director)*
- *TriSolutions Toronto – Paul DiSimone (Club Manager & Head Coach)*
- *West Hill Minor Hockey Association – Kevin Mercer (General Manager)*
- *Andrea Carey (Canadian Sport for Life)*
- *Jeff Carmichael (Toronto Sports Council)*



**CANADIAN
SPORT FOR LIFE**