

Promoting Effective Implementation of Disability Inclusive Sports for Development Programmes. Lessons Learnt from Australian Government Programs in the Pacific

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Background

The World Report on Disability estimates 15 per cent of the world's population is living with disability.¹ People with disability in most parts of the world continue to experience discrimination and are frequently excluded from the social, economic and political life of their communities. In many contexts, people with disability do not have equal access to health care, education or employment opportunities when compared to people without disability and are subsequently more likely to experience poverty and be excluded from development processes.²

The global charter on disability rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) conceptualises disability as an evolving concept which includes 'those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'.³ Barriers include those within the built environment, negative attitudes, lack of access to information in appropriate formats, and policies which do not promote equal participation by people with disability.

In line with the CRPD, development agencies such as the Australian government's aid program are increasingly demonstrating a commitment to disability-inclusive

development. This consists of two main strategies: including the perspectives and rights of people with disability in all development activities, while at the same time empowering people with disability through disability-specific projects. Article 30 (Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport) of the CRPD requires States Parties to take all feasible steps to ensure participation and equal access of people with disability to recreation, leisure and sport. Article 32 (International cooperation) requires international development programs to be inclusive of and accessible to people with disability.³

Sports programs have been recognised by the United Nations as having unique attributes which can contribute to the development process.⁴ Sport is universally popular, can play a role in reducing non-communicable diseases, and contribute to healthy childhood development. Whilst having numerous benefits for individual physical and mental health, it can also be an effective platform for communication of health and human rights messaging. When sports programs are primarily driven by development objectives, they may also be effective for promoting inclusive development.⁵

Participation in sport is recognised as a fundamental right, but its numerous benefits are particularly relevant to people with disability. People with disability taking part in sports programs report a sense of achievement and pride, improved self-concept and self-esteem,⁶ better social skills, as well as increasing mobility and independence. Whilst these benefits are similar to those experienced by people without disability, the benefits are thought to be more significant to people with disability given their typical isolation and exclusion from other community activities, especially in resource-poor settings.⁵ Sport which enables people with and without disability to come together in a positive social environment is also thought to promote inclusion and empowerment by challenging negative beliefs about the abilities of people with disability.⁷

In recognition of these attributes, the Australian government's aid program partnered with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in an approach called 'Development-through-sport'.⁸ The Australian Sports Outreach Program (ASOP),

under the management of the ASC, has implemented a variety of disability-inclusive sports for development programs throughout the Pacific region through Country Programs and Pacific Sport Partnership programs (PSP). The aim was to deliver sport-based programs that provided a platform to contribute to development outcomes. The objectives were a) increase levels of regular participation of Pacific Islanders, including persons with disability, in quality sport activities; b) improve health-related behaviours which impact on non-communicable disease risk factors; and, c) improve attitudes towards and increased inclusion of persons with disability.

This paper presents key findings from an evaluation of the ASOP program in the Pacific with the aim of highlighting factors which promote the effective inclusion of persons with disability in sport-for-development programming.

Methods

This research was implemented by the CBM-Nossal Partnership for Disability Inclusive Development, in partnership with the Australian Government's Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and the Fiji Disabled People's Federation (FDPF). The aim of the study was to document the lessons learnt from the implementation of sport for inclusive development programs in the Pacific. The objectives included 1) to explore enablers of and barriers to the inclusion of people with disability within sport for inclusive development programs; 2) to document the experiences of both people with and people without disability participating in the sport for inclusive development programs; and, 3) to explore the impact of sport for inclusive development on the lives of participants with disability.

The research was implemented in Australia, Fiji, PNG and Samoa between March 20 and May 22 2015. Wherever possible, the research team aimed to include a representative across gender, location, type of impairments, and people representing or engaged in a range of sport programs. All participants were asked to participate in an in-depth interview or group discussion which took approximately 60-90 minutes. All participants were 18 years or older.

Key informants included stakeholders knowledgeable on the development and implementation of sport for inclusive development programs which had received funding from the Australian government through the ASOP. This included current and former ASC staff, in-country government stakeholders, international and national sports organisations staff, DPO staff, and other stakeholders involved in the local implementation of programs such as coaches and sport for development staff. A total of 45 key informants were interviewed. Fourteen in-depth interviews were conducted with current participants of sport for inclusive development programs (both male and female, with and without disability); four with people with disability who had dropped out of sport; and three with families of children with disability currently participating in sport.

Ethics approval was gained through the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the University of Melbourne in Australia. Local approval was gained where required, such as through the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Fiji.

Key findings

Improved self-confidence and empowerment of people with disability

People with disability consistently reported that participation in sport had led to a greater sense of self-confidence and self-worth. As highlighted by a male sport participant with physical disability in Fiji- *'[Sport] expose [s] that disabled people have talent. We can compete ... I've noticed it gives you more confidence to expose yourself. No longer staying at home and being quiet'*. All sport participants reflected on these intrinsic qualities of sport, and, that sport enabled them to challenge negative beliefs about their capabilities by providing opportunities to demonstrate their skills and talents to the broader community.

It changed my mindset. It changed how I look at myself, because I was achieving a lot. Participating in the Games ... and also overseas. Being involved in the community, being on TV. It's normal hey, because then they don't see my disability anymore. Those are the changes that it has brought into my life. (Male sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)

Participation in sport was reported to empower individuals to in turn empower others with disability to access sport. Being included alongside people with and without disability, and pushing each other to improve was also reported to promote broader community inclusion.

I think that for some of us who are former athletes ... they tend to be engaged in other activities in the community such as becoming a businessman and sometimes have jobs such as being a cook or working in an office. As they are aware of the problems we tend to face, and through sports, are empowered to work through these problems. It then becomes important for them to drive changes in the community, due to individual experiences of overcoming challenges. (DPO representative, PNG)

Fostering networks to support disability inclusive sport for development programs

A number of important networks and partnerships which support inclusion of people with disability in sport were highlighted during the evaluation. Central to these are the partnerships between DPOs, national sports organisations, and their international or regional counterparts, including organisations for the Paralympic movement. The extent to which these partnerships had been fostered varied across the different organisations and depended on a number of factors. A common theme highlighted was the need for a clear understanding of each stakeholder's priorities; their role within these partnerships; and the capacity of stakeholders to contribute to partnerships.

Disabled People's Organisations

The key stakeholders in networks which support disability inclusion within sport for development programs are DPOs. The importance of adequately resourcing DPOs and building their capacity for partnerships has been acknowledged in the literature and was highlighted throughout this research. The capacity of DPOs to engage in partnerships with sports organisations varies greatly and depends on the availability of their own and external resources. This is especially so when meaningful

engagement is sought, whereby DPOs are involved in all aspects of sport for inclusive development programming - from the capacity building of sports organisations to planning, implementation and evaluation of activities.

Sport activity is more like developing a strategic plan ... you bring in your ideas to the table and you discuss it together with other members. From then you come up with a better plan ... representing different views of different people in your group. So that's what I call inclusive sport ...you design something that includes everyone's idea and make sure that everyone is involved from the beginning, the implementation and monitoring and evaluation as well as reporting ... you don't just ask [people with disability] to join when the program is half way through. You include them from the beginning. (DPO representative, Samoa)

International Sporting Organisations

DPO involvement in sport for inclusive development programs also enabled sports organisations to develop their knowledge on disability and provided links with communities. Sports organisations interviewed who recognised a need to be more inclusive sought out partnerships with DPOs to support their understanding of disability. This process also allowed DPOs to develop their effectiveness around implementing sports programs. Critical to creating inclusive sport opportunities was the time and effort international sports organisations spent in understanding the local context and culture of disability, such as the local enablers and barriers for people with disability to participate in sport. Sharing this knowledge and networks between DPOs and sports organisations was also integral to successful implementation at the community level.

Having a clear objective right from the start is very important I think, and providing more guidance to sports on how to do that to avoid mistakes. I think what we were trying to do was turning sports organisations into disability organisations rather than getting sports organisations to do what they're really good at, and partnering with DPOs to do what they're really good at. (International sports organisation representative, Australia)

National Sports Organisations

National sports organisations play a central role in supporting the sustainability of sport for inclusive development activities. There were some examples identified in this research of national sports organisations which included people with disability in their programs, and encouraged competitive pathways for people with disability in sport prior to the current ASOP. It was also clear the ASOP had encouraged a number of organisations to improve inclusion.

Again, organisational commitment was seen as important and was often reported to be fostered by individual champions for inclusion. Individuals with an understanding and interest in inclusion were recognised for their role in championing inclusion and encouraging and linking in a number of individuals with disability into sport networks. These individuals included coaches, mentors and other sports leaders who identified participants and supported their inclusion through encouraging family support, securing funding, training people with disability to be coaches, and encouraging networking between disability organisations and mainstream sports organisations.

Sports organisations also recognised the importance of including people with disability in their programs, and the role this plays in supporting networks with other stakeholders such as Paralympic Committees.

So that is something we are going to continue to encourage and liaise with your Disabled People's Organisations and the Paralympic Association. Something we can work together on- to ensure interest is maintained and also for participation. That in order to strengthen the Paralympic we need to reach out to the coaches and educate them for proper training and training of development of athletes from the special schools. (National sports organisation representative, Fiji)

Creating different opportunities and pathways for people with disability to participate in sport

Participants with disability reflected on a number of intrapersonal factors which impact their participation in sport. People with disability highlighted they often lack

confidence in their own abilities, particularly when their families lack confidence in them and actively discourage their participation in sport. Participants also identified environmental barriers to participation such as lack of accessible information on available programs; inaccessible facilities and equipment; and difficulty accessing transport to get to training and events. Despite this, a number of factors which facilitate participation of people with disability in sport and the wider community emerged.

Peer-to-peer encouragement through role models

Encouragement from peers with disability who participated in sport themselves was described as a major facilitator of participation and initial entry point into sport, with evidence of this peer-to-peer pathway being built into some programs more formally. In Fiji for example, DPOs helped identify '*Sports Champs*' to be role models and help identify and encourage other people with disability to participate in sport. This concept of role models with disability promoting participation in sport was a strong theme emerging throughout the research.

Most respondents in Fiji for example, reported the achievements of Honourable Assistant Minister Iliesa Delana (a Fijian athlete with disability) at the London Paralympics and through his employment in the Ministry, as a turning-point in changing the perceptions people with disability had of themselves, as well as challenging how the community perceived people with disability. Another example from Samoa highlighted the positive impact of inviting Paralympic medallists to children's sporting events to raise awareness of the achievements of people with disability in elite sport. Similarly, sports organisations reported using videos of people with disability competing at an elite level as a tool to transform community perceptions about the capacity of people with disability to compete in sport.

Encouragement and support through DPOs, sports organisations and family

Sports organisations were highlighted as playing an important role in encouraging participation in sport. Individuals within these organisations were reported as instrumental in identifying people with disability in communities and nurturing their

skills and talents. People with disability were reported to sometimes be *'locked at home'* (Fiji). Organisations acknowledged that because of this and the long history of exclusion, significant time and effort is required to encourage individuals with disability to participate in sport.

Like, they still feel shy. There is still that stigma, that barrier that they have. So we sports people, sometimes we have to go that extra mile, we have to break the ice with them in order to get them to open up and be comfortable. (National sport organisation representative, Fiji)

This support also needs to be extended to families, as absence of family support or active discouragement was identified as a common barrier with many respondents reporting strong cultural and traditional beliefs, particularly in the rural areas, whereby families believe people with disability should stay at home. Key informants emphasized the importance of addressing these barriers and encouraging families to enable their family member with disability to participate in sport.

... [they say] "no my child did not play that game because you know he has a disability, he can't play." So they come and just say that, you know, take away kids from the event ... we have to provide some awareness program ... to encourage the parents to bring in their kids ... because most of the parents here in Samoa believe that people with disability is just to stay home. Not to include in anything. But from what I know is to ... keep encourage not only the parents, but you know, all those relatives of the kids. (DPO representative, Samoa)

Most participants reported that when family support was available, that it was integral to ongoing participation. Different kinds of family support were described, such as practical support like helping people get to training and helping to finance the cost of participation. Families were also central to enhancing the self-belief of their family members with a disability: *'My family embraced it – even when they saw this [disability] happening to me they still kept encouraging me ... I didn't want to listen – I was too ashamed to go around'*. (Male sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)

Opportunities to participate in mainstream or inclusive sports programs

Providing opportunities for people with and without disability to play sport alongside each other is an important approach to inclusion. This approach was being implemented by some organisations, but not all. The evidence also suggests people with disability often participate in mainstream sport due to self-motivation, rather than as a result of opportunities provided by sports organisations.

Schools (special schools in particular) were cited by participants as a common entry point for people with disability into sport. Sport programs implemented in special schools allow for development of skills in a safe and supported environment, which for some children with disability is a pre-requisite to participating in mainstream sport activities. This said a small number of participants felt programs implemented in special schools can actually create barriers too, as it keeps children with disability segregated from playing sport with children without disability. It does however highlight the need to develop the capacity of sports organisations to design and implement more programs outside of disability specific settings.

Competitive pathways

Moving beyond engaging in social sport activities can be very challenging for athletes. Whilst the majority of people with disability interviewed were motivated to play sport for health and social benefits, there were others who were frustrated by the barriers to more competitive pathways. In PNG, a lack of competitive pathways was attributed to a lack of people with disability holding leadership positions in sports organisations; inadequate engagement of people with disability in the design and implementation of sports programs; and, a lack of collaboration between service providers and DPOs, particularly when service providers have 'control' over the implementation of sport programs. Also highlighted was the need for more recognition of the achievements of athletes with disability and better support for these athletes to achieve at a higher level. One DPO representative in PNG reported- *I won three gold medals in the PNG Games, the javelin, shot-put and discus... I also participated in the Arafura Games ... however from then on I was not supported to*

progress on to the next level. (DPO representative, PNG)

Representation of people with disability within leadership roles

Beyond participating in sport itself, a number of participants described pathways which enabled them to engage in sport in different roles. Having more people with disability in positions of leadership in sport was also described as a way to make people with disability feel more comfortable about joining sports programs - *'While I was training for my athletics we used to have a coach who was also disabled so he used to understand us'* (Female sport participant with vision impairment, Fiji).

Accessibility of sport programs for all people with disability

Inaccessible sporting facilities and lack of knowledge on how to modify sports to promote access for people with disability, was seen as an ongoing barrier to participation. This is particularly important when considering the participation of people with more complex participation requirements. It was expressed that some sports currently only cater for people who are more mobile and use common communications methods, and people with more complex physical or cognitive needs were missing out. Some key informants reported that a genuine commitment, time and resources are required from sports organisations to analyse and problem solve as to how their sport can be modified to enable people with different abilities and impairments to participate in sport.

I believe it is a lack of knowledge and information regarding people with disabilities and how to sort of modify ... for us abled people that is something I saw from carrying out these activities, a lot of things are done for abled people. So when we carry out these workshops it has enabled us to see that we need to also include modification of things, activities, or whatever you wish to teach them to do, to modify them to suit the target group. (National sports organisation representative, Fiji)

There is also a need to change the perceptions of the capabilities of people with

disability. One respondent reflected that whilst people without disability are encouraged to 'push your limits' through sport, coaches were observed to treat people with disability with 'sympathy' (International sports organisation representative, Australia), and not provide them with the same intensity and challenge in training. Ensuring training of coaches highlights the importance of maintaining expectations of all people to achieve a standard in line with their full potential, was highlighted as one way to address this.

Access to sport was reported to be better in urban cities as compared to rural areas. Most participants from Fiji for example, reported sporting venues in the country's capital had improved in terms of accessibility, but in communities outside the city this was an ongoing issue. Similarly, limited access to coaches in rural areas was reported to prevent participation. For some participants who live relatively close to urban areas, significant motivation and financial resources were still required to commit to traveling one to two hours to attend daily training. Even where psychically accessible buildings do exist access was constrained by the short opening hours of venues; difficulty getting to the venue; and difficulty mobilising within the venue around equipment.

We have a gymnasium the day but it's always full. It's a small gym and a lot of corporate bodies training [it's] hard for me. And they only open at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. So in my case if someone is to open a gym close to where I am they should open in the morning so when abled people go to work. disabled people like me can access. (Male sport participant with vision impairment, Fiji)

As mentioned earlier opportunities to participate in sport are not the same for all people with disability. In particular people with psychosocial disability, intellectual disability, and people with communication difficulties have less access to participation than people with other types of impairments. These groups of people were reported to often experience additional barriers related to prejudice and discrimination from people with other kinds of disability and also people without disability. One key informant reported staff often don't have appropriate understanding of how to interact with some people with disability – *If they have a physical disability they are more likely to be included, whereas people with a mental disability - there is often*

that fear of well I don't know how to talk to you, because you have a mental disability.' (International sports organisation representative, Australia).

Where participants had experience of representing their country in national or international events and received media attention, they described the experience of becoming *'famous'* in their community and the associated positive interaction with others. Travelling within the country and internationally through sport supported social opportunities.

It's fun, you meet new people and travel around ... you are being exposed to other customs and traditions - you're not closed up, you can open up ... you are more confident with speaking to other people ... apart from your own race and apart from Fijian people. (Male sport participant with physical disability, Fiji)

Disability inclusive planning and design of sport for development programs

Meaningful participation in sport and recreation for people with disability goes beyond being a beneficiary of sport activities. It also encompasses inclusion in sport processes, including planning, design, monitoring and evaluation of programs. The inclusion of people with disability in planning and design was recognised by respondents as contributing to breaking down barriers about the capacity of people with disability to contribute to their communities- *'... we had to let people know who was in the background doing all the work organising the events and how people with disabilities fitted into all of that'* (Male sport participant who is Deaf, Fiji).

Other examples included the benefits of dedicated roles for people with disability in planning sport activities from within DPOs - *'they use [sport] champions from, I think there is one from the Paralympics, one from the Deaf [Association] as well ... we have used them to help us to organise cricket activities for each organisation so the organising is done through the champs'* (Sports organisation representative, Fiji). However, these instances of inclusion in the planning and design phases have not been consistent across sport programs, between or within countries. While there were some examples of people with disability being included in planning at the

provincial level in PNG, there were others that had not been given this opportunity – *'We want to be properly consulted. Take the time to consult with us and take on board our comments and views, please listen to us'* (DPO representative, PNG).

Social inclusion through sport for development

The social aspects of sport were ranked as more important than the competitive aspect by almost all of the participants from Fiji. For those who participated in sports before acquiring an impairment, some reflected that the important aspect of sport changed from being personal achievement before having a disability, to the social elements once they had a disability.

There were some good examples from Fiji where organisations had designed social aspects for people with and without disability into their sport activities and whilst some people with disability felt comfortable participating in these, others required encouragement to join in social activities for the first time. Staff also recognised the importance attached to social sports and encouraged design of activities with the aim of making them fun.

Activities which focus on physical exercise with a fun approach were seen as having particular capacity to draw out people who may face isolation: *'... and also with other members who have been home for long and they have come out because of the dance program and they participate in'* (Female participant with psychosocial disability). These findings suggest social events implemented through sport can be built upon to increase participation as well as to provide social connection where people may be excluded in other aspects of community life. People without disability also valued the opportunity to spend time with people with disability.

'It was the first time for me to participate in sports with persons with disabilities and I really like it, it was a totally new experience for me. For me as an abled body, I just played with friends that are without disability... I learnt a lot and it was fun ... The main reason for getting involved is its totally new hey. Because every day in my daily life I have to be with people without disability. (Male sports participant without disability, Fiji)

Sports programs in schools were identified by DPOs as particularly important for children with disability to socialise and develop skills – *‘what we are seeing in those kind of games we play locally ... most of the kids they don’t know each other when they come and play games they finally make friends with other kids’* (DPO representative, Samoa). This sentiment was echoed by parents.

It has especially [impacted on] social inclusiveness and access to education. Without sports sometimes, she is always idle, but with sport she is learning process, because more children they tend to learn through sports, and some of them they don’t adapt in the classroom. When you get them to play sports that’s when they learn to get engaged. (Parent of child with disability participating in sport, Fiji)

Discussion

Findings from this study support evidence in the literature that sport can be a powerful transformative tool, improving the overall status of people with disability within society.^{5,9} Promoting access to sport for people with disability has the capacity to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities, and improving physical and mental health.¹⁰⁻¹² Further, by providing a platform for people with and without disability to come together, there is an opportunity to challenge commonly held misconceptions about disability and for people with disability to demonstrate their capacities. It also provides an opportunity for people without disability to interact and socialise with people with disabilities. This may help to address negative attitudes towards disabilities, a major barrier to the inclusion in other activities such as education, employment and community participation more broadly.^{1,2}

Realising the rights of people with disability to participate in sport requires governments and sport for development programs to clearly articulate disability inclusion in their strategies, contractual agreements, implementation plans, and as part of their monitoring and evaluation. A strong policy environment for health and physical activity is vital, making sure relevant policies are disability-inclusive would strengthen subsequent inclusion within implementation.¹² Family support is another strong enabler of participation of people with disability in sport. Organisations need

to engage with families to help identify and address barriers to inclusion, including barriers resulting from family attitudes. Building on community outreach programs is one way this could be achieved.

Effective and sustainable sport for development programs require leadership and collaboration.¹³ The same is required of disability-inclusive sport for development programs. This study highlighted a number of important networks and partnerships that support inclusion of people with disability in sport. Central to these are the partnerships between DPOs, national sports organisations, and their international or regional counterparts. People with disabilities are the key stakeholders in sport for inclusive development networks. In recognition of this, programs should determine appropriate mechanisms and adequate resources to ensure people with disabilities can provide leadership and coordination of these networks, support organisational commitment and capacity for disability inclusion, and meaningfully engage in all aspects of programming.

Inclusion of people with disabilities in programs not only benefits individuals, but their families and the broader community.⁷ Implementers of programs and DPOs need to continue to work with families and communities to raise awareness of disabilities, and promote an understanding of the benefits of sport including the potential to promote access to other life domains such as social inclusion, education and employment. Similar to other findings in the literature, this study found that drawing on high profile role models and 'champions' such as Paralympians, is key to promoting awareness and encouraging participation in sport of individuals who are more likely to have experienced exclusion and marginalisation.¹⁴

People with disabilities want more choice and options as to how they participate in sport – from intermittent social participation, to participating at an elite level, and engaging in sport beyond playing, in roles such as coaching and other leadership positions. Similarly, as many people with disabilities living in the Pacific do not live in urban areas where many sports programs are implemented, organisations need to continue to build their capacity to provide more opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport in rural and remote areas. Building on community outreach programs and collaborations between DPOs, sports organisations and rural communities is one way this could be achieved.

Linked to this is the positive impact disability inclusive sports for development

programs can have on global disability and sport platforms such as the Paralympic and Special Olympic movements. Increasing the pool of athletes with disability and enhancing competitive pathways strengthens the Paralympic and Special Olympic movements. In turn, strengthening of these movements helps to promote and celebrate the capabilities of people with disability in society more broadly.

Conclusion

Disability inclusion is reaching a critical point whereby organisations are becoming more aware of the importance of inclusion. There have been significant positive changes since the introduction of the CRPD, which are reflected in this research. It is hoped that this trend will continue the explicit inclusion of disability within five of the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁵ The growing recognition of the effectiveness of sport as a tool for development, including in the SDGs, and the importance of disability-inclusive development provides an excellent opportunity to advocate for the implementation of sport for development programs which are inclusive of people with disability. Ensuring people with disability are included within sport for development programs will contribute to the improved quality of life of people with disabilities, and help fulfil the development community's responsibility to ensure people with disabilities are no longer marginalised from the processes and benefits of broader development goals.

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開発プログラムにおけるインクルーシブスポーツ の効果的な推進～太平洋におけるオーストラリア 政府の取組みから

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国連の「障害者の権利に関する条約」(CRPD)が採択されてから10年経つ現在でも、引き続き多くの障がい者が、開発のためのスポーツ活動を含め、彼らのコミュニティの社会経済生活や日常生活から排除される経験をしている。

スポーツが、開発プロセスおよび個人や集団の健康促進のために寄与できる特有な性質を持っていることは認識されている。ただし、開発のためのスポーツが、障がい者の包摂に役立っているか否か、またそれがどのように役立っているかを示す根拠は、ほとんど存在していない。

「障害者の権利に関する条約」は、障がい者のあらゆる人権の完全かつ平等な享受を促進、保護、および確保する国の義務をうたっている。これには、文化的な生活、レクリエーション、余暇およびスポーツ活動への参加(第30条)、ならびに国際協力における障がい者の包容(第32条)が含まれる。障がいのある人もない人も共に集うのことができるポジティブな社会をつくるためのスポーツ・プログラムは、障がい者の能力に対する否定的な思い込みに立ち向かうことによって、より包摂的なコミュニティに貢献するものである。このことは、障がい者が世界の舞台で競うパラリンピックにおいて、とりわけ顕著にみることができる。

本稿では、スポーツ開発プログラムにおける障がい者の包摂を効果的に促進する要素に着目する。ここでは、オーストラリア政府の「スポーツを通じた開発」戦略に関する2015年の評価をエビデンスとして使用する。これは、オーストラリア・スポーツ・コミッションの太平洋におけるオーストラリア・スポーツ・アウトリーチ・プログラムの管理下で実行された評価である。定性的面接とフォーカス・グループ・ディスカッションのひとつは、障がいのある、またない主催者と参加者、スポーツに参加している障がいのある子どもを持つ家族を対象に行われた。

スポーツへの参加が、自尊心、健康、幸福、社会包摂を改善すると報告された。包摂を妨げる主な要因には、偏見、差別、移動時に不可欠なアクセシビリティとスポーツ施設の不足、補助的な器具の不足といった障がい者特有のニーズが含まれる。スポーツ開発において障がいのある人々が最も効果的に包摂されるのは、仲間内での励まし、スポーツ・プログラムの様々な場面における障がい者の意義ある参加とリーダーシップ、社会的かつ競合的な進路が用意されたときである。