

Appendix F

Active Communities Project: a Case Study of Best Practice in Tertiary and Community Partnerships – East Hamilton Sport and Recreation Hub Project

Background information:

The East Hamilton Sport and Recreation Hub project has provided a platform to investigate and implement a number of different approaches to engaging participation and increasing usage of facilities within the local community.

This project is based in and around the University of Waikato and the Eastlink multisport complex, approximately half a kilometre from the university grounds, and focuses on increasing participation from the local community.

The East Hamilton area as a whole offers a fantastic range of traditional, non-traditional sport and recreation opportunities all year round. There are also some great facilities and community groups in the area. In the past there has been a distinct lack of collaboration between organisations. The purpose of the project is to create a new East Hamilton Sport and Recreation Hub that is operational with University of Waikato and Eastlink clubs and facilities, while working towards the growth and development within the hub.

The focus of this case study is to showcase best practise and look at the processes undertaken to work towards developing relations between a tertiary institution and the wider community. Highlighting the progress made to date, the challenges faced and key goals / milestones which will be the focus for the coming months.

What is the East Hamilton Sport Hub?

The East Hamilton Sport & Recreation Hub project is a partnership between Eastlink, Hamilton City Council, Sport Waikato and the University of Waikato and is also supported and primarily funded by Sport NZ. The goal is to attract stronger participation and increase utilisation of the facilities within the East Hamilton community. To achieve this, the project steering group has engaged with local providers to encourage a more collaborative approach in providing services to the community.



Lugton Park Combined Sports Association (Eastlink)

Eastlink is a Community Sports Hub, formed in 2003, from a collection of clubs and associations that are all based at Lugton Park in East Hamilton. Discussions were held with the committee who readily agreed to be involved with the East Hamilton Sport and Recreation hub project. They are keen to increase memberships for each of the Eastlink clubs, increase usage of the current facilities and have the opportunity to share administration services. Eastlink is an incorporated society, with delegates from and supported by:

- Tennis Waikato-Bays Region and Clubs
- Waikato Badminton Association and Clubs
- Hamilton Wado Kai Karate Club
- Hamilton Inline Hockey Club
- Lugton Park Squash Club
- Eastlink Cricket Club
- *Hillcrest Bowling Club (currently based off-site)*

University of Waikato

As a part of the University's sport strategy, an objective is to develop further partnerships with schools and sport organisations to deliver positive interactions and outcomes between the University and the community. Another objective of the University is to create pathways to external facilities for the benefit of student access, learning and experience. The University's Sport and Leisure Studies Department are one of the faculties that can benefit from the hub due to the multitude of placement opportunities for their students.

Hamilton City Council

As part of the consultation process towards the Council's new Active Hamilton strategy, it became evident that an active community is built on strong partnerships, a motivated community, willing volunteers and fit for purpose facilities. It was agreed the opportunity to develop a sport and recreation hub can only strengthen the delivery of sport and recreation in the East Hamilton area and maximise the partnerships between the sport and recreation sector, university, schools and local agencies. Better local collaboration.

Sport Waikato

As a regional sports trust each person is a potential client of Sport Waikato, its role being to get and keep the communities of the region active. Sport Waikato programmes and services are available for all communities in the greater Waikato region.

Our Key Priority Areas:

- Healthy Active Lifestyles - physical activity and recreation for health, fun and a lifelong habit
- Young People - a lifelong involvement in sport, recreation and healthy active lifestyles
- Community Sport - strong and capable delivery of community sport
- Regional Leadership - a professional organisation providing regional leadership and influence

The Approach Undertaken-

The following refers to the tertiary and community partnership component of the East Hamilton Hub project. This project has been the catalyst for;

- **Building relationships and collaboration:**

Relationships have developed where there was previously no or little interaction between partners. 'Key' people have been identified ensuring that the correct personnel are informed and processes followed if necessary. Through having a central liaison, we have been able to offer opportunities to work together and support one another. The University of Waikato Community Open Day and the 'Orientation Week' Clubs Day are great examples of this, where Eastlink Clubs and the East Hamilton Hub Project Manager were invited and had a presence.

As an organisation, Sport Waikato now has stronger links with the Eastlink Clubs, Waikato Student Union, Hamilton City Council and University of Waikato, as well as various faculties and departments at the University of Waikato.

- **Utilising resource:**

The University of Waikato offers a wide range of courses and with this brings knowledge and resources. Faculties such as the Waikato Management School and Art and Social Science have provided the East Hamilton project with some key human resources, through the use of students.

Two projects have been completed by students from the Waikato Management School. The first being the development of the Eastlink strategic, marketing and communications plan. This plan has given the Eastlink clubs, clear direction and will support with sustainability of the hub. The second project was that of a tertiary student participation survey around sport and active recreation. This was the first survey of this kind at the University of Waikato, with 1859 students participating. Findings of the survey will help with future planning and research, as we look to establish focus group interviews to further investigate the needs and wants of school leavers that are now in this tertiary sector.

A third project took place with the assistance of a postgraduate geography student. The student was tasked with designing a map which highlighted existing walks and pathways around the campus. Distances were measured and a map was put together to encourage not just students but the local community to actively utilise the university grounds.



- **Providing Unique Opportunities:**

Working with the University has allowed us to provide various educational and recreation opportunities for the students. With the upcoming FIFA u20's World Cup coming to New Zealand in May 2015, we have been able to obtain the unique opportunity of utilising a Panna KO (Cage Football). After liaising with the university, they were keen to use this chance to hold events not just on campus but take the cage out to the Waikato districts. This has been made into an official practicum paper for year three students. The students will therefore be responsible for every aspect of the programme, from design, organisation, and marketing to the running of the event. The programme will be run in partnership with the FIFA u20's team; Sport Waikato, University of Waikato, and Waikato Student Union.

In 2014 Waikato Badminton, U Leisure and the East Hamilton Hub Project got together to organise the first NZ Glow in the Dark Badminton Event. 16 Teams entered with a total of 64 adult participants for a very successful event, which was open to both students and the public alike. There was a particularly high intake of students from the university.

With sport and physical activity adapting and consumers are demanding more for their money, they wanting new, exciting and alternative sports, which suit their wants and needs. The 'pay to play' and 'one-off' event concepts are continuing to grow, due to people becoming increasingly time poor. ¹(Sport NZ) All the verbal feedback from the Glow in the Dark evening was extremely positive, supporting the research that there is a need for this style of events.



¹ Future of Sport in New Zealand, Sport NZ (2014)

Working alongside the Waikato Student Union, we are looking at increasing the productivity of university recreational clubs through better collaboration, looking at a holistic approach towards recreation. Although this is still in the early stages of planning, one option is to offer a day of short student focused workshops, partnering with various clubs. Ideas include working with the gardening, cooking, Mind (Mental Health) and yoga clubs to promote how all these aspects interlink and impact on one another. Active recreation through gardening and yoga, healthy eating through the gardening and cooking clubs and increased mental wellbeing through the mindfulness of yoga and nutritional value of healthy eating.

Challenges faced by this project -

- **Building relationships**

Articulating the purpose and aims of the project out to the 'key' people is paramount for successful outcomes to be achieved. With the university being such large organisation it has at times been more difficult than expected finding the correct person to talk to.

- **Tunnel Vision**

The term 'sport' within the title role has at times perhaps caused the project to be labelled without due cause. An example of this is the UoW Mathematics department didn't believe that they would have anyone interested in working with a rugby team on statistics, and pointed me in the direction of the sports department. It has therefore been important to explain from the start, that this project has been created for the benefit of the East Hamilton area, looking at increasing not just sport but a wider range of opportunities for the community. Whether this be for student projects linked with their studies, increased advertising of existing programmes or providing new participation opportunities.

This, however is not the mindset of everyone. The UoW environmental and sustainability manager was an influential partner in the World Car Free Day campaign held on campus. Once approached by the East Hamilton Hub project manager, the environment and sustainability manager was keen to be involved. She was able to source some funding for two second hand bicycles that were won by two UoW students, through an active transport 'selfie' competition on the East Hamilton Hub Facebook Page. This event was also in collaboration with the Waikato Students Union, Environmental Group (on campus) and Cycle Pro, who provided bike maintenance workshops.

- **The 'what's in it for me mentality'**

Along with many other interests, sport and recreation is battling to engage people. Research suggests that people have become increasingly time poor and already have high demands placed on themselves either through work, studies and/ or personal relationships. As a result people often limit the amount of time that can be devoted to additional activities ² (R.L. Purvis). With an increase with the 'what's in it for me mentality' it is important in community projects such as this, we highlight the relevance for those that we wish to get involved. This could be in terms of volunteering or participation. It is about promoting the benefits for people, whether these benefits be health, social, education or psychological.

² What's in it for me? Using expectancy theory and climate to explain stakeholder participation, its direction and intensity. R.L. Purvis (2015)

Where we are currently?

To date we have achieved the following:

- Worked with various students, offering them valuable work experience, while utilising their expertise to achieve key pieces of work such as the campus mapping and Eastlink Strategic Plan.
- Established connections between the UoW Sport and Leisure Studies Department and FIFA u20's to create a student led community and student project – Panna KO.
- The Sport and Active Recreation Survey Report - The survey was sent out to all degree students. This is the first time a survey of this type, regarding sport and recreation has been sent out to University of Waikato students. This survey, not only finds out reasons behind why students do or don't participate in sports and/ or physical activity, but also investigating their awareness of opportunities on campus through clubs, the UniRec Centre and U Leisure.
- Developed stronger relationships between the University, its various departments, Sport Waikato and the local community.
- Facilitated and supported collaboration between clubs, around active participation and well-being, to help enhance the student experience.

What next?

With the foundations of this project in place, it is now vital to keep momentum going. In terms of research, the next step is to run focus group interviews with tertiary and secondary school students to deduce more in-depth qualitative data. Providing insight to what is currently being run well and areas of improvement and opportunity. We will continue to develop stronger relationships with the University and various departments, ensuring that by the completion of the project, that these relationships are ingrained. There will be continued work around building partnerships within the university and with external stakeholders to achieve common goals on this smaller, more localised scale.