A community-initiated pilot program using sport to address non-communicable diseases, anti-social behaviour, and social inequality: Bese Health Club

Dr Sofia Bartlett¹,², Kila Mala², Tahina Booth², Dr Anne Bunde-Birouste³, Alistair Stolz²

¹UNSW School of Medicine, UNSW, Sydney, Australia, ²Grass Skirt Project, Sydney, Australia, ³UNSW School of Public Health, UNSW, Sydney, Australia
1 What is Grass Skirt Project?

Grass Skirt Project is founded with the vision of empowering communities & individuals through sport.

- Grass Skirt Project collects **sports equipment** in Australia and provides it to **PNG communities and sporting organisations**.
- Grass Skirt Project **partners with local organisations** to deliver **training and education programs**.
- Grass Skirt Project **supports & promotes athletes** who act as **role models**.
- Grass Skirt Project believes that sport can be enjoyed by everyone and that it is a **powerful vehicle** for **social change**.
Hanuabada has rich sporting culture & history
The population of Hanuabada is predominantly Motu Koitabu people, who are customary land owners of the Port Moresby area.

Non-communicable diseases;
- obesity, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes
- ‘Hidden hunger’ (micronutrient deficiency)

High unemployment, particularly among young people, despite high levels of education.

Lack of development
- unsecure water supply, no paved roads, no doctor, no waste collection or sewerage

Some issues with crime and violence persist.
Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand.

— Nelson Mandela

Participation in sport can:

- Improve physical & mental health
- Build self esteem, independence & resilience
- Develop leadership skills in individuals
- Create a sense of community and safe places
- Be fun!!

Barriers to participation in sport in Hanuabada:

- **Cultural**
  - Cultural norm for males and females to train separately

- **Institutional**
  - Facilities outside HB are ‘elite’ (e.g. Taurama Aquatic Centre, Royal Papua Yacht Club, etc)

- **Structural**
  - Insufficient facilities in HB
  - Limited transportation to facilities outside HB, particularly for females

- **Financial**
  - Facilities outside HB are expensive to access
Solution: Bese Fitness & Health Club

‘Bese’ means family in Motuan language

An affordable & accessible training facility in the community, for the community

Space for training & skills development (e.g. strength & conditioning coaching, refereeing, judging, administration)

Tailored physical activity & educational programs aimed at improving physical health for seniors, people with disabilities & other special groups

Phase II will include affordable accommodation for athletes/coaches/officials visiting Port Moresby for competitions, training, selection for national teams, etc.
3 Social enterprise model

Seed funding to establish infrastructure

Infrastructure is used to generate income

Income reinvested in infrastructure & programs

TRADITIONAL CHARITY
Primary driver to achieve social value

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
All profits reinvested into achieving social impact
Alignment with UNSDGs
Kila Mala and Tahina Booth with local recipients of sports equipment procured and donated by GSP for the Bese pilot project, January 2018
Ten Hanuabada community members completed ASCA Level 1 strength & conditioning course in December, 2017. Pictured above are Konia & Linda.
Hanuabada community needs assessment

Responses collected via paper & electronic (Facebook) survey tool

Data to be fed back to the community, then used for program design, plus monitoring & evaluation of activities

**Quantitative data**
- Demographics
- Education
- Health

**Qualitative data**
- Business development
- Community development
- Women
- Youth
- Services
Future directions

Expand Bese Gym pilot
- Phase II (accommodation component- social enterprise)
- Launch Community Hub pilot project
  - Community owned/controlled infrastructure
  - Small/medium enterprise (SME) incubator
  - Training & skills development in tech innovation

Scale-up of pilot model
- Develop model to implement in multiple settings (e.g. urban, regional, remote)
- Roll out Community Gyms in additional locations

Manual for setting up a social enterprise in PNG
- Outline legal requirements & framework used
- Community needs assessment template
- Business development support
Questions

For more info, please:

🌐 Head to www.grassskirtproject.org
✉️ Get in touch at tahina@grassskirtproject.org

Follow us!

📷 @grassskirtproject
🐦 @grassskirtproj
facebook.com/grassskirtproject/

Acknowledgements

Hanuabada community members
Catherine Grawich
Andrew Runawery