

Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped

Feedback on Sport Policy

After scrutinizing the 92 pages of the Sport Policy Review, the Executive Committee of our Association would like to make the following remarks :

The integration of the disabled into sports for community

1. Nothing is mentioned on how the disabled can be encouraged to take part in sports for community. It is a large population which remains unattended but worth caring.

The provision of training courses for PE teachers to upkeep their skill

2. Apart from increasing Physical Education sessions from 2 to 3, in-service training course for PE teachers should also be considered to upkeep their professional skills and equip them with different kinds of sports. Physical Education in Universities can play a vital role in improving the current syllabus for PE students and introducing more dynamic refresher courses to PE teachers.

The provision of Coaches of different sports to schools

3. The 2-3 PE sessions are insufficient to train students to elite level as PE teachers have to teach according to syllabus and take care of the other students as well. Most PE teachers in a school need to teach other subjects as well. They are already heavily loaded with their routine teaching and paper work. They cannot afford both in time and effort to take too much extra work in promoting sports. If Coaches of different sports can be allocated to different schools to suit their training needs, a pool of potential elite can be identified to undergo formal training when they are young.

The establishment of Technical Sports Training Schools for elite athletes

4. Grammar Schools are common in Hong Kong which emphasize on academic results. If Sports Training Schools can be established to provide both sports training and academic training to students identified as achieving elite level, potential elite can be absorbed to undergo formal and professional training. These schools can be treated as pools of potentials of National Team for different sports.

Utilization of sports facilities by school students

5. Most of the sports facilities managed by LCSD are idle during office hours as the community at large can only afford to use them after work. Schools can be encouraged to make full use of them with coordinating work shouldered by LCSD. More students can hence be motivated to play different kinds of sports.

Sports facilities exclusively for the mentally handicapped

6. No sports facilities are specially designed for the mentally handicapped who need much supervision and instruction. In Chapter 5, most of the suggested improvements of sports facilities are for the physically disabled.

Resource allocation on district basis

7. As the sole Association in Hong Kong providing sporting activities for the mentally handicapped, we hold the full responsibility of training provided to the mentally handicapped. However, we are confined to the current funding allocation mechanism such that we cannot provide grass root training to the mentally handicapped athletes scattered in different districts of Hong Kong, hence limit the expansion and development of sports for the mentally handicapped.

Competition opportunities for the disabled with mainstreaming schools

8. Competition opportunities for the disabled in the mainstreaming schools should be promoted. Currently the mentally handicapped students are always discouraged to take part in some of the sport competitions with the able-bodied students in Hong Kong.

Expansion of Sports Institute to accommodate more athletes

9. Sports Institute is a well-equipped complex for training athletes with professional standards. However, most of the potential athletes, particularly the mentally handicapped, are not admitted due to the great demand. If all the potential athletes can live in the Institute and receive professional training and fitness care over there, the results of Hong Kong Team in international competitions can be expected.

The promotion of volunteerism

10. Voluntary helpers are crucial elements factor to general the smooth running of our programmes. With only 12 staff in our Association, the number of volunteers needed for our programmes varies from 10 to 300. The promotion of volunteerism should be greatly emphasized.

The allocation of more resources to NSAs for the development of sports

11. Most National Sports Associations (NSAs) in Hong Kong are run in a very low profile. The current subvention mode can only allow NSAs to recruit just a few full time staff with coach service on a part-time contract out basis. It is ironical that resources allocated for training purposes would be at such a minimum level though it is a vital factor in sports development. NSAs have to find their own way to survive if they want to expand. Efforts are spent in raising funds to cope with their development. Resources allocation to NSAs in the following aspects are the most effective way in promoting sports :
 - i) Employment of full-time coaches
 - ii) Living support to full-time elite
 - iii) Employment of full-time supporting staff
 - iv) Administration Expenses

We understand that a periodical review is important for a policy with implications to so many parties. It is the wish of our Association that no matter how the policy is revised, the subvention allocated to our Association would not be hampered. It is already a difficult time for our Association to survive with such limited resources. We look forward to enhancing the development of our Association by recruiting experienced staff and full time coaches who can render professional coaching services for sports development.

Prepared by : Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped
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