

# ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES TO FIND THEIR FOOTBALL

## What, When and How to Engage Fact Sheet



**Reaching people that you regularly engage with is easy – you know where and how to find them. But how do you reach people that are new to your organisation and that you haven't targeted before? It's not easy, but our experience can help you.**

- **Go where people are - don't expect them to come to you**

Remember your target audience might not be attracted by your current offer so they are very unlikely to come to you. Find out where they go and what they do.

This might mean attending a local event or setting yourself up in your local shopping centre on a Saturday. Do some research and find out what community groups exist that your target audience attend and ask to go along.

If you are running your own event, consider locating your engagement event at a community venue or public space that is often well attended for other reasons and run it at a time which makes it easy for people to attend.

- **Go where the trust is – find community partners with knowledge and expertise that can help you**

There will be groups and organisations in the community that work and engage with your target audience every day. They will have a deep understanding of your target group and a high level of trust with them. They may be in a specific geographic area that you want to target or work with a specific group. These groups and organisations can be a valuable source of insight into the lives, behaviours, needs and attitudes of your target group. They can also provide valuable help, advice and expertise in how to engage and become a valuable partner throughout your project, helping you to build relationships and trust.

Explore linking into one off or regular events or meetings that these community groups and organisations run. Remember that many community organisations are charities so in return for their help, make sure you provide help with covering costs, make a donation or organise for a well-known footballer to attend their event for example.

- **Think about who carries out the engagement activity**

Consider sharing engagement activities with other organisations. Communities can suffer from 'consultation overload'. Check first if anyone else has asked similar questions and can share insight with you. Check if anyone else is planning to carry out community engagement and see if you can join forces to work together.

Think about whether your team has the right skills and experience to effectively engage with your target groups. What are the qualities over and above their sport qualification that they need to engage? If you don't possess the right skills and qualities are you aware of partners and that do and can provide training or help? Having a coach that is part of the target group helps with engagement and retention.



- **Explore a range of methods to reach people**

Consider the ways that people would like to be reached and how they would like to be involved. Try and be creative and think about how your target audience would like to receive information, be consulted and get involved.

**Take a look at the Different Levels of Engagement Fact Sheet for more ideas on how to reach your audience**