

SAVANNAH PRIDE

Program Evaluation Summary September 2018



SUMMARY

The Savannah Pride program was developed by Mayor Chagai a young south Sudanese man who arrived in Australia as a refugee in 2006. Major coaches aspiring basketballers and motivates them with his inspiring life story.

This year, at the request of a youth detention centre, the program was shortened to engage with African youth currently in detention. The program ran over 4 weeks during June and July 2018, culminating in the 4th week with a basketball game between the youth and volunteers from Savannah Pride; the detention centre youth won the game!

The program included a weekly 40 minute "class room" session followed by basketball skills development and practice. Class room sessions covered Mayor's inspiring life story; how to develop resilience and respect through focusing on dreams, goals and passions; developing responsibility through team spirit, family and community and a team showcase basketball game.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

There were eight (8) participants in the program all of African cultural backgrounds, who had arrived in Australia between 2004 and 2012; except for one youth with an Islander background who was born in Australia. All these youths were in a Sydney Youth Detention Centre.

Feedback from the facilitators and the detention centre staff identified that all the participants valued the experience and developed some personal insights. Detention centre staff also saw positive behavioural changes occurring as a result of the program.

The participants all clearly identified that they do have dreams, goals and passions, despite being in juvenile detention. Sport and/or a trade figured strongly in all the responses when writing out their dreams/goals/passions: "to be an engineer; professional soccer player; become a mechanic; have my own electrician bizzo; not get locked up again, to be good; make it into the NBA"

Centre staff observed that most participants increased their incentive stage level during the program** and nearly all wanted to reach out to Savannah Pride once released. Youth feedback included: "great program", "I got a lot from Mayor's story", "I want to continue on the outside", "Made me realize I let a lot of people who cared about me down" he also said he's keen to play again.

** Meaning that youth in the Savannah Pride program demonstrated positive behavioural changes that allowed them to move from a lower to a higher incentive stage associated with increased rewards.

OUTCOMES

- The program was successfully piloted with youth currently in detention
- Detention centre staff noticed positive behavioural changes in youth as a result of participation in the program
- The youth were able to identify and articulate their dreams, goals and passions
- The detention centre would like to continue the partnership and possibly extend it to youth in longer term detention

PCYC NSW

- Participants were exposed to PCYC NSW and a local club, providing them with a safe space and potential community sporting and pro-social activities once they exit detention. Establishing and maintaining these connections will be a strong incentive for these youth to avoid further criminal behaviours and could help reduce youth recidivism.