AUG 2026

SPORT UNITES!

Empowering the youth through sports

SINT MAARTEN



Presented to

SAMENWERKENDE FONDSEN CARIBEN:

ORANJE FONDS & STICHTING KINDERPOSTZEGELS

oranje fonds NSI NATIONAL SPORTS INSTITUTE ST.MAARTEN KINDERPOSTZEGELS voor kinderen door kinderen SMSF SINT MAARTEN SPORTS FEDERATION

1. BACKGROUND & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

1.1 WHY SPORT UNITES?

Sport Unites! was developed in response to interconnected challenges affecting children and young people on Sint Maarten, including physical inactivity, unequal access to structured activities, social exclusion and the need for positive environments and role models.

Sport Unites! was created to encourage young people not only to become more physically active, but also to strengthen their social position and participation within the community. Through sport, the program aims to provide young people with the resources, skills, and self-confidence needed to gain greater control over their own lives and decisions, while creating safe and inclusive environments in which they can develop.

The program therefore targeted young people aged 6–18, particularly those who could benefit from greater access to structured sport, mentorship, positive social interaction, and a stronger sense of belonging.

1.2 TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- *November 2024 – Funding proposal submitted*

NSI and SMSF submitted the Sport Unites! proposal to Samenwerkende Fondsen Cariben.

- *April 2025 – Funding approved*

Funding from Oranje Fonds and Stichting Kinderpostzegels was approved, allowing implementation planning to begin.

- *May – August 2025 – Preparation & summer break*

Participating organizations and coaches were identified, agreements prepared, equipment requirements collected and ordered, and the monitoring and administrative structure developed.

- *August - December 2025 – Heroes of the Cruyff Courts launched*

In partnership with the Johan Cruyff Foundation the Cruyff court Heroes program was executed where 5 community events were organized by the youths “heroes” for the youths

- *September 11 & 12, 2025 – Cruyff Coaches Workshop*

Participating coaches received a two-day workshop combining theory and practical activities and introducing coaches to the wider developmental role of sport.

- *September 26, 2025 – Official Sport Unites! launch*

Sport Unites! was formally launched at the Melford Hazel Sports Complex.

- *September – November 2025 – Phased start of sports*

Tennis and netball began first, followed by athletics and boxing, with basketball joining in November.

- *January – July 2026 – Full implementation*

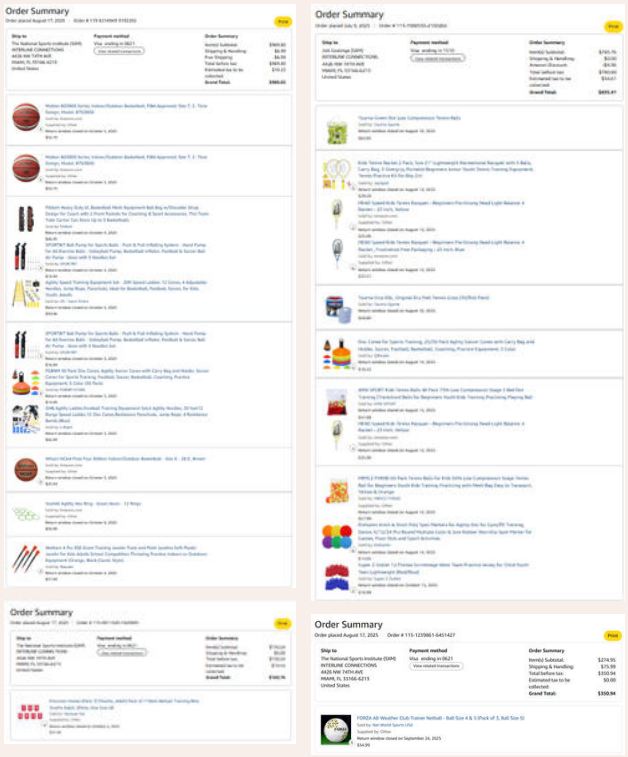
Activities continued across the participating sports while the Youth Empowerment component was further implemented and coaches received additional training and support.

The original proposal focused on four sports: netball, athletics, boxing and tennis. These were selected because existing coaches and organizations were already reaching young people but required additional resources, structure and support. Basketball was later added when suitable community coaches became available.

1.3 PREPARATORY PHASE

Upon confirmation and receipt of the granted funds in 2025, the focus shifted to the preparatory phase leading up to the official program launch in September. Key activities during this phase included:

- Finalizing agreements with seven community and youth-driven sports organizations;
- Identifying and confirming 17 participating coaches across five sporting disciplines;
- Structuring coach stipends to acknowledge their role as both trainers and mentors/role models;
- Procuring sports materials and equipment to allow program implementation;
- Establishing monitoring and coordination mechanisms through the appointed Program Coordinator.

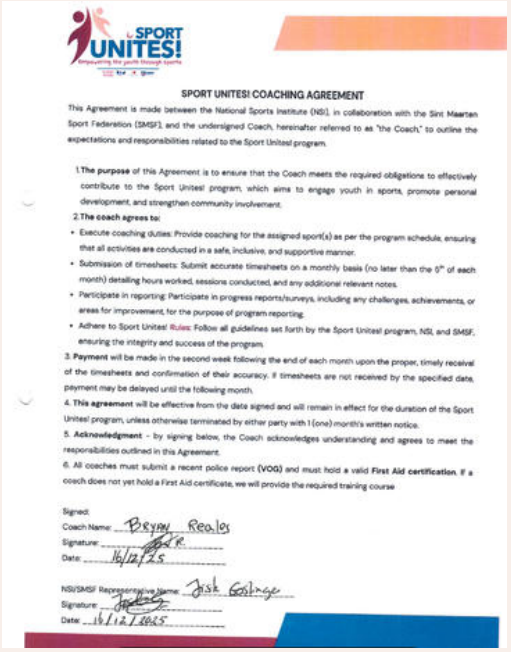


As part of the realized budget, materials were purchased to support the implementation of the Sport Unites! activities. All participating coaches were invited to submit a list of required materials necessary for the execution of their programs. These requests were reviewed and approved by the project team to ensure alignment with program objectives and cost efficiency. Following approval, the materials were ordered from Amazon during the months of July and August. The total value of the materials purchased amounted to XCG. 4,235.38, as detailed in the list (excl shipping cost).



SPORT UNITES! TIME SHEET — DECEMBER

DATE	COACH	START TIME	END TIME	SCHOOL	START TIME	END TIME	SCHOOL	START TIME	END TIME	SCHOOL	TOTAL HRS		
DECEMBER 1 2025	Florisca Larocque	14:00	15:00	Sister Regina	15:45	17:15	St Dominic High				2.50		
DECEMBER 2 2025	Florisca Larocque	13:00	14:00	Sr Magda	14:30	16:00	vocational				2.50		
DECEMBER 3 2025	Florisca Larocque	11:00	12:00	Sr Marie Laurence	12:00	13:00	Ruby Labega	15:45	15:45	MAC High	4.00		
DECEMBER 4 2025	Florisca Larocque	13:00	14:00	Genevieve de Weever	14:15	15:15	Oranje school				2.00		
DECEMBER 5 2025	Florisca Larocque	10:00	11:30	Sr Borgia	11:45	12:45	St Joseph	13:00	14:30	vocational	4.00		
DECEMBER 7 2025	Florisca Larocque										4.00		
DECEMBER 8 2025	Florisca Larocque	14:00	15:00	Sister Regina							1.00		
DECEMBER 9 2025	Florisca Larocque	13:00	14:00	Sr Magda							1.00		
DECEMBER 10 2025	Florisca Larocque	11:00	12:00	Sr Marie Laurence	12:00	13:00	Ruby Labega				2.00		
DECEMBER 11 2025	Florisca Larocque	13:00	14:00	Genevieve de Weever	14:15	15:15	Oranje school				2.00		
DECEMBER 12 2025	Florisca Larocque	10:00	11:30	Sr Borgia	11:45	12:45	St Joseph				2.50		
DECEMBER 16 2025	Florisca Larocque	13:00	14:00	Sr Magda							1.00		
DECEMBER 17 2025	Florisca Larocque	11:00	12:00	Sr Marie Laurence							1.00		
DECEMBER 19 2025	Florisca Larocque	10:00	11:30	Sr Borgia	11:45	12:45	St Joseph				2.50		
											32.00	ANG	576.00
DECEMBER 4 2025	Kathrina Gumbs	13:00	14:00	Genevieve de Weever	14:15	15:15	Genevieve de Weever				2		
DECEMBER 7 2025	Kathrina Gumbs										4		
DECEMBER 11 2025	Kathrina Gumbs	13:00	14:00	Genevieve de Weever	14:15	15:15	Genevieve de Weever				2		
DECEMBER 18 2025	Kathrina Gumbs	13:00	14:00	Genevieve de Weever	14:15	15:15	Genevieve de Weever				2		
											10	ANG	120.00
DECEMBER 5 2025	Mineiva Maduro	10:00	11:30	Sr Borgia	11:45	12:45	St Joseph	13:00	14:30	Sundial	4		
DECEMBER 7 2025	Mineiva Maduro										4		
DECEMBER 12 2025	Mineiva Maduro	10:00	11:30	Sr Borgia	11:45	12:45	St Joseph				2.5		
DECEMBER 19 2025	Mineiva Maduro	10:00	11:30	Sr Borgia	11:45	12:45	St Joseph				2.5		
											13	ANG	156.00
										TOTAL	55.00	ANG	852.00



SPORT UNITES!

SPORT UNITES! COACHING AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made between the National Sports Institute (NSI), in collaboration with the Sint Maarten Sport Federation (SMSF), and the undersigned Coach, hereinafter referred to as "the Coach," to outline the expectations and responsibilities related to the Sport United program.

1. **The purpose** of this Agreement is to ensure that the Coach meets the required obligations to effectively contribute to the Sport Unites! program, which aims to engage youth in sports, promote personal development, and strengthen community involvement.
2. **The coach agrees to:**
   - Execute coaching duties: Provide coaching for the assigned sport(s) as per the program schedule, ensuring that all activities are conducted in a safe, inclusive, and supportive manner.
   - Submission of timesheets: Submit accurate timesheets on a monthly basis (no later than the 6th of each month) detailing hours worked, sessions conducted, and any additional relevant notes.
   - Participate in reporting: Participate in progress reports/surveys, including any challenges, achievements, or areas for improvement, for the purpose of program reporting.
   - Adhere to Sport United Rules: Follow all guidelines set forth by the Sport Unites! program, NSI, and SMSF, ensuring the integrity and success of the program.
3. **Payment** will be made in the second week following the end of each month upon the proper, timely receival of the timesheets and confirmation of their accuracy. If timesheets are not received by the specified date, payment may be delayed until the following month.
4. **This agreement** will be effective from the date signed and will remain in effect for the duration of the Sport Unites! program, unless otherwise terminated by either party with 1 (one) month's written notice.
5. **Acknowledgment** - by signing below, the Coach acknowledges understanding and agrees to meet the responsibilities outlined in this Agreement.
6. All coaches must submit a recent police report (VOG) and must hold a valid **First Aid certification**. If a coach does not yet hold a First Aid certificate, we will provide the required training course

Signed:
Coach Name: Breyny Reales
Signature:
Date: 16/12/25
NSI/SMSF Representative Name: Josh Gastinge
Signature:
Date: 16/12/2025

1.4 CRUYFF THEORY OF CHANGE WORKSHOP

As part of the preparation for Sport Unites!, a two-day Cruyff Coaches Workshop was held on September 11 and 12, 2025, led by trainers from the Johan Cruyff Foundation in the Netherlands. During the workshop, 7 Sport Unites! coaches participated in a combination of theoretical and practical sessions based on Johan Cruyff's 14 Rules and Theory of Change.

The coaches were introduced to the Cruyff Foundation's Theory of Change and learned how sport can be used to contribute to three key areas: Physical & Mental Health, Empowerment, and Inclusion. Particular attention was given to the coach's role beyond teaching sports skills, emphasizing their responsibility as mentors, team players, and positive role models for young people.

Through practical exercises, discussions, and reflection, coaches learned how everyday sports activities and interactions can be used to build confidence, responsibility, healthy behavior, inclusion, and personal development. A recurring theme was "know yourself as a coach to better support your athletes," with special emphasis placed on the number one rule: Team Player.

At the conclusion of the workshop, 7 Sport Unites coaches received certificates of completion - acknowledging their dedication to using sport as a tool for youth development, leadership, and inclusion







2. CRUYFF COURT HEROES PROJECT

As part of the program, the Heroes of the Cruyff Courts project was implemented as a complementary youth leadership trajectory developed by the Johan Cruyff Foundation. The project empowered **22 selected ("heroes")** from the Sport Unites! coaches to organize a community social event from start to finish. The heroes received a budget of $550 for their event.

Under the guidance of the trained coaches, the heroes participated in a series of structured sessions in which they learned how to plan, organize, budget, and execute an event. Five events were held by the heroes.

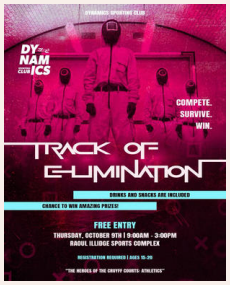
Throughout the process, the heroes developed key life skills such as leadership, self-confidence, accountability, and cooperation. By being trusted with real responsibilities, they experienced personal growth and gained a stronger sense of ownership and pride within their community.

The Heroes of the Cruyff Courts project strengthened the overall impact of the program by transforming **145 participants** into positive role models and active contributors within their neighborhoods.









Aliana Scafe

I would recommend the Heroes of the Cruijff program as I got an opportunity to learn new skills and form new friendships.

Kisherno Webster

The program has helped me develop in critical areas such as the ability to connect with others in an engaging and effective manner, but also my organization skills. experience involving the communities and seeing other kids participate was amazing







3. PROGRAM EXECUTION

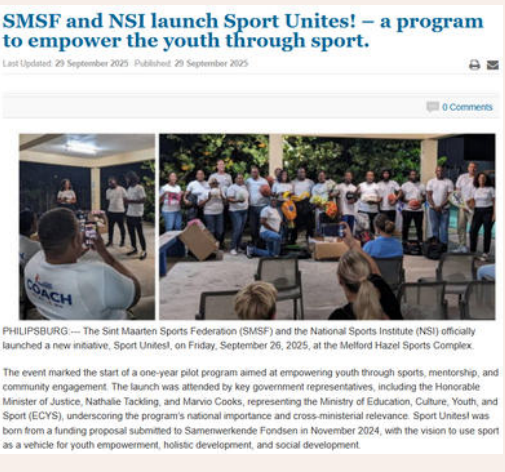
3.1 OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF SPORT UNITES!

The Sport Unites! program was officially launched on Friday, September 26, 2025, at the Melford Hazel Sports Complex. Although the facility is normally closed at night due to ongoing challenges involving youth in the surrounding area, this location was deliberately chosen to place the launch at the heart of the community and within the context of the issues the program aims to address. By doing so, the launch highlighted the reality on the ground and reinforced the purpose of Sport Unites! as a community-based intervention. The event marked the formal kick-off of the program.

The event was attended by key stakeholders, including representatives from the Government of Sint Maarten, notably the Honorable Minister of Justice Nathalie Tackling and a representative of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth & Sport (ECYS), underscoring the program's cross-ministerial relevance and national importance. Local media outlet SXM Sports was present to document and share the launch with the wider community.

During the launch event, the Sport Unites coaches received sports materials and equipment, enabling them to begin program activities within their communities. Live demonstrations in tennis, netball, and boxing showcased the diversity of the program, while testimonials from local athletes highlighted the transformative role that sport can play in young people's lives.

Speakers from SMSF and NSI emphasized that Sport Unites! aims to strengthen the social position of young people and encourage greater participation within their communities. The Youth Empowerment component, delivered in partnership with A Fresh Start Foundation, was highlighted as an important part of this approach, focusing on a youth empowerment program to further develop life skills, mental well-being, self-confidence, and positive decision-making. We also discussed the program with the Minsiter of Justice in order to utilise the Crime-Fund for additional support to get kids of the street and into Sport Unites.



SMSF and NSI launch Sport Unites! – a program to empower the youth through sport.

Last Updated: 29 September 2025 Published: 29 September 2025

0 Comments

PHILIPSBURG:— The Sint Maarten Sports Federation (SMSF) and the National Sports Institute (NSI) officially launched a new initiative, Sport Unites!, on Friday, September 26, 2025, at the Melford Hazel Sports Complex.

The event marked the start of a one-year pilot program aimed at empowering youth through sports, mentorship, and community engagement. The launch was attended by key government representatives, including the Honorable Minister of Justice, Nathalie Tackling, and Marvio Cooks, representing the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth, and Sport (ECYS), underscoring the program's national importance and cross-ministerial relevance. Sport Unites! was born from a funding proposal submitted to Samenwerkende Fondsen in November 2024, with the vision to use sport as a vehicle for youth empowerment, holistic development, and social development.



Daily Herald

MICHIGAN CHURCH SHOOTING P. 25

US Revokes Visa Of Colombian President Page 28

SCS

DON'T WORRY – WE HURRY!

AVABERRY

THANK YOU FOR LOYALTY & SUPPORT

September 29, 2025 US $1.- / Cg. 1.80

Lively debate at opening of IPKO



3.2 CHALLENGES

As Sport Unites! was a new program, implementation did not always develop exactly as anticipated in the original application.

Different sports and coaches became ready at different moments, resulting in a phased start and lower expenditure under some budget components. Rather than rushing activities to match the original schedule, NSI and SMSF prioritized working with suitable coaches that adhere to the criteria and allowing the different programs to develop according to circumstances on the ground.

The Youth Empowerment component also required adjustment when the original trainer from A Fresh Start Foundation relocated to the Netherlands. The component consequently started later and was continued with another trainer.

Scheduling the Youth Empowerment training sessions also proved challenging. With 17 Sport Unites! coaches involved in the program, it was difficult to identify dates and times that accommodated the different work, family, and coaching schedules of all participants. As a result, seven of the 17 coaches participated in the training but did not receive a certificate because they were unable to complete all required modules, generally missing one or two sessions. These coaches will be given the opportunity to complete the outstanding modules during the new program year. This experience has highlighted the need to review how the training sessions are scheduled and organized so that they can be better accommodated within the coaches' existing responsibilities, while still maintaining the quality and requirements of the Youth Empowerment training.

A further challenge arose when the Program Coordinator was unable to work for approximately three months due to illness. Coordination responsibilities were absorbed internally during this period so activities could continue, although this placed additional pressure on the implementation of a new program.

These experiences became part of the learning process. The central objectives remained unchanged, while implementation was adapted to ensure Sport Unites! could continue throughout 2025 and 2026.

3.3 COACH DEVELOPMENT & YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

The Youth Empowerment component of Sport Unites! was delivered in partnership with A Fresh Start Foundation and focused on strengthening coaches in their wider role as mentors and positive role models.

The training was structured around four themes: “See It” – Building Awareness, “Believe It” – Building Confidence, “Speak It” – Building Communication, and “Live It” – Becoming Champions in Life. Coaches learned practical ways to help young athletes become more self-aware, confident, resilient and responsible for their own development and actions.

Emphasis was placed on giving the youths more voice and ownership. Coaches learned to involve children in goal-setting and decision-making, ask reflective questions rather than always providing answers, create leadership opportunities and treat mistakes as opportunities for learning.

The training also focused on confidence and communication. Coaches practiced using positive and specific feedback, recognizing effort and progress, creating a safe environment for making mistakes and adapting their communication to individual kids. These approaches were intended to develop young people who can think, communicate and make decisions independently rather than relying solely on instructions from their coach.

The sessions connected these coaching practices to daily life, using discipline, resilience, responsibility, teamwork and leadership as skills that children can also apply at school, at home and within their communities

3.4 Creating a personal coaching vision

As part of the training, each coach developed a Coach Vision Board. Coaches reflected on their purpose, vision and mission, the impact they wanted to have on their kids, their core values, coaching identity, personal goals and areas for continued growth. The exercise encouraged coaches to think beyond sporting results and define the type of coach and role model they wanted to be.





3.5 Monitoring the coaches in practice
Following the training sessions, the trainer attended regular Sport Unites! activities to observe whether the tools and principles were being applied in practice.

The observations showed several positive changes. Coaches were increasingly discussing sportsmanship and behavior, using more compliments and positive feedback, and providing greater individual attention to the kids. Coaches were also observed engaging with participants experiencing difficult situations at home and offering encouragement and guidance beyond the acitivities.

Another noticeable development was coaches becoming more conscious of their position as role models. Many actively participated in exercises and demonstrated the effort, behavior and attitude they expected from their kids, which the trainer observed was reflected in the motivation and engagement of participants

3.6 Impact
The trainer concluded that the Youth Empowerment training had a positive influence on how coaches interacted with their kids, with the tools becoming increasingly visible in everyday coaching. The clearest improvements were seen in sportsmanship, positive communication, personal guidance, and coaches acting more consciously as role models.

Of the 17 Sport Unites! coaches participating in the Youth Empowerment training, 10 successfully completed all required modules and received their certificate. The remaining seven coaches participated in the training but were unable to complete all modules, generally due to scheduling conflicts, and will be given the opportunity to complete the outstanding modules during the new program year.

The experience demonstrated the value of continued investment in coach development: strengthening coaches helps create a positive environment in which young people can grow, build confidence, and strengthen their social position in life.



4. EXECUTION & IMPACT

The Sport Unites program has been implemented as a community-based intervention, with coaches recruited directly from the communities in which the activities take place. This approach has enabled coaches to actively engage children who were previously spending time on the streets and introduce them into a structured, safe, and positive environment while doing a sport. Through their existing relationships and local presence, coaches have been able to reach youth who are often difficult to engage through traditional programs.

To strengthen outreach and participation, formal connections were established with community councils, which support the identification and referral of children to the Sport Unites! activities. In addition, a collaboration was initiated with the youth probation officer, resulting in two youths being successfully placed into the basketball program as part of a structured and supportive intervention. The program has approximately 250 children actively participating across the different communities.

4.1 IMPACT STORIES FROM THE COACHES

After one year of Sport Unites!, the program has provided clear examples of personal and social development among participating youth. To better understand the impact beyond participation numbers, coaches were asked to share individual examples of how Sport Unites! has contributed to the development of children and young people within their programs/community. Below are several of these stories:

Coach & teacher Jamal Basketball - Improved behavior at school “We are using basketball as a structured behavioral and educational intervention for students with behavioral, communication, and engagement challenges. Through providing weekly sessions, clear team rules, and consistent accountability, the kids have been demonstrating measurable improvements in self-discipline, respectful behavior, and classroom engagement. One of the most significant outcomes observed from the school was the growth in social and emotional skills. Kids showed improved communication, stronger teamwork, better frustration management, and increased respect for peers and authority figures. Students who were previously labeled as “problematic” began taking responsibility for their actions and showed greater confidence and self-belief”.





Coach Martel & Daniel St. Peters Ballers - Turning community courts into safe spaces
The Sport Unites program started within the St. Peters community, where coaches regularly saw young boys spending their afternoons around the basketball court and on the streets with little structure, supervision, or mentorship. The coaches approached these youth directly and encouraged them to become part of the program.

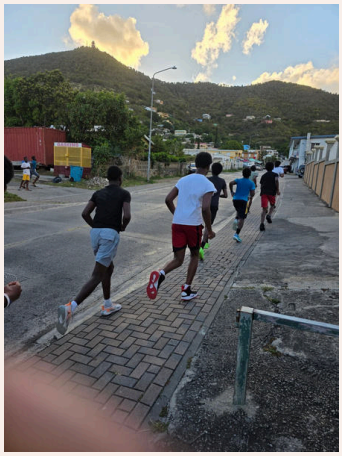
For many kids, the first steps were not about basketball, but about developing basic life skills: showing up consistently, arriving on time, listening to instructions, communicating respectfully, managing frustration, and functioning as part of a team. This required patience and consistency from the coaches.

Over time, the training sessions became much more than basketball practice. Youth stayed after training to talk about their lives, ambitions, frustrations, and personal challenges. The court became a safe and structured environment where they could express themselves, receive guidance, and develop trust with their coaches.

The Youth Empowerment training provided the coaches with tools for these situations. It helped them look beyond behavior, better understand personal circumstances, communicate more effectively, and guide young people toward taking responsibility and making positive decisions.

For example, many kids initially known for challenging behavior within the community, demonstrated this development particularly well. Through continued guidance, clear expectations, and accountability, coaches observed improvements in their self-control, confidence, and communication with other kids.

SP Ballers demonstrates how a community basketball court can become much more than a place to play. Young people recruited directly from the streets of St. Peters became part of a team, gained structure and trusted mentors, and developed skills that extend beyond the sport.


Coach Brian Community boxing - Discipline, trust and a positive outlet



Coach Bryan Reales reported increases in confidence and discipline among the young people training with him at his home in Dutch Quater. He observed that kids were staying away from conflicts involving violence and bullying and learning to channel their energy through training instead.

Kids who had initially been shy or socially withdrawn also began interacting more with others. The Youth Empowerment training influenced Bryan's own approach. He began paying greater attention to what was happening in the lives of his kids outside the sport and how this could influence their behavior during training.

Brian observed that the kids increasingly viewed him not only as their boxing instructor but as someone they could trust and approach as a friend and mentor. This reflects one of the central principles behind Sport Unites!

Coach Tim Tennis – From criminal activity to a stable environment

The Sport Unites! tennis program takes place at the Melford Hazel Sports Complex, in a neighborhood that has faced challenges with youth violence, criminal activity and incidents involving young people. These challenges contributed to NSI closing the facility during evening hours in 2024.

Despite this, Coach Tim continued introducing tennis to young people on the outdoor court. Initially, many of the youths hanging around the facility showed little interest, particularly because tennis was unfamiliar to them. Progress started with one boy joining the program, which gradually encouraged others to participate.

Since then, NSI has observed a positive change around the facility. There are fewer youths simply hanging around on motorbikes, smoking and becoming involved in incidents, while more are engaging with the program. Although not everyone has joined, the overall atmosphere has improved.

The impact is also visible individually. Two participants progressed to training with more experienced players and began helping Tim with younger children. Many boys who initially displayed challenging behavior improved significantly in discipline and engagement, started practicing independently.

The improved environment has contributed to NSI planning to reopen the facility during evening hours. Coach Tim's consistent presence demonstrates how a relatively small sports program can positively influence young people while also helping create a safer and more welcoming community sports environment.





Netball – Confidence through small achievements

For many of the girls participating in the Sport Unites! netball program, the impact goes far beyond sport. Many come from challenging family and social circumstances where basic social skills, structure, communication and positive interaction have not always been consistently taught or encouraged. Through netball, they learn respect, teamwork, communication, responsibility and how to manage disagreements and emotions in a positive way.

The program also fills an important gap. Many sports environments are still largely focused on boys, and some girls do not feel comfortable in these settings. At the St. Peters courts, netball has created a place where girls can be themselves, build friendships and develop confidence.

Importantly, it has also become a safe space for conversations about growing up as a young woman. The girls can approach their coaches with questions or concerns about menstruation, relationships, personal boundaries, friendships and other issues they may not feel comfortable discussing elsewhere. The coaches provide guidance, a listening ear and, when appropriate, help the girls understand where they can seek further support. Many personal examples demonstrate the importance of this relationship, although these cannot be shared in the report out of respect for the girls' privacy.

At the heart of the program are Lisa and Florisca, who have carried it alongside their own jobs and responsibilities. Before Sport Unites!, continuing the program was becoming increasingly difficult. The small stipend provided through Sport Unites! has given them some much-needed breathing room and recognition for the considerable time and energy they invest.

Their experience also highlights why supporting community coaches matters. Programs with significant social impact can disappear not because the commitment or need is absent, but because it becomes financially and practically impossible for coaches to continue carrying them voluntarily.

The value of the program is therefore much greater than netball itself. It has created a home and support network for girls where they feel safe, heard and accepted, while developing the social and personal skills that will support them as they grow into young women.







Athletics - The story of Marc Exantus

After being hit by a passing scooter on the road at the age of 12 and spending 18 months in a coma, Marc faced major challenges upon recovery, including learning difficulties and limited opportunities after school. Living near the training field, he showed interest to join the program, attending sessions to observe, assist with equipment, and support the team, even before he could officially register.



When Sport Unites! was launched, the coaching team actively engaged Marc and his family, enabling his formal enrollment. Since joining, Marc has demonstrated clear personal and athletic growth, including improved discipline, consistent attendance, stronger self-confidence, and better social and academic engagement. He participated in the annual Around the Island relay and was awarded the “Most Improved Athlete” (see picture). Marc’s progress reflects the core mission of Sport Unites!: using sport to provide structure, support, and opportunities for youth who need it most.



4.2 IMPACT IN NUMBERS

PROGRAM	NUMBER OF KIDS	AGE GROUP	GENDER	FROM WHERE?
NETBALL	200+	7 to 17	All girls	• Through the schools mainly • Directly from the community (mainly St. Peters/South reward)
BASKETBALL	40	6 to 17	Boys	• Directly from St. Peters and surroundings community/street • From the school in the community (mostly MAC school) • Entered the program through the youth probation officer
TENNIS	20 to 30	6 to 15	Mix	• Directly from the Suckergarden community/street
BOXING	10 to 15	8 to 16	Boys	• Directly from the community (Dutch Quater) • Kids that fighted in school (high school)
ATHLETICS	30 to 40	6 to 17	Mix	• Directly through school • From the surrounding community

4. LOOKING AHEAD - SPORTS UNITES! YEAR 2

The first year of Sport Unites! demonstrated the potential of sport as a tool for social development, while at the same time providing important lessons about what is needed to operate such a program effectively in the Sint Maarten context. In Year 2, NSI and SMSF want to build further on this foundation. The objective is not simply to continue the existing activities, but to strengthen the structure and methodology of Sport Unites!, improve the quality of coaching and expand the program to reach new groups of participants.

As with any new program, the first year came with challenges. Programs started at different moments, coach availability sometimes affected training and implementation, and participation among young people naturally fluctuated. These experiences have provided a much clearer understanding of what works, where additional support is required, and how Sport Unites! can be organized more effectively in its second year.

A continuous Youth Empowerment learning path
One of the most important elements that we want to further develop is the Youth Empowerment training for coaches. Year 1 showed that coaches can have an impact far beyond teaching a sport. They can become trusted adults, role models and mentors who help young people develop confidence, discipline, communication skills and a sense of belonging.

Rather than organizing Youth Empowerment as a single training course, the ambition for Year 2 is to start developing a structured and continuous learning pathway for Sport Unites! coaches. This could consist of fixed modules and different levels. A new coach entering Sport Unites!, for example, could begin with Youth Empowerment Level 1, covering the fundamental principles of using sport for social development and understanding the wider role of a coach. After completing this foundation, the coach could progress to Level 2 and eventually more advanced or specialized modules.

This approach would create continuity within the program. Coaches joining Sport Unites! at different moments would have a clear entry point, while coaches who have already participated would continue developing rather than repeating the same training. Over time, Sport Unites! can therefore build a group of coaches who are not only technically capable within their sport, but increasingly skilled in using sport intentionally as a tool for youth empowerment and social development.

Partnership with the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
An important opportunity for year 2 is a new agreement with the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (Hogeschool van Amsterdam), through which Sport Unites! will partially receive an intern annually. The intern will support the implementation and development of the program, with a particular focus on working with the Youth Empowerment trainer to further structure and develop the training modules and learning pathway.

This additional capacity will help translate the experiences from year 1 into a more structured approach across the different sports, while further exploring how sport can be intentionally used to strengthen confidence, resilience, positive behavior, inclusion and social skills among young people.

Strengthening the selection of Sport Unites! coaches
Year 1 demonstrated how important committed and motivated coaches are to the success of Sport Unites!. Coaches need to believe in the social purpose of the program and be willing to invest in the young people beyond simply teaching their sport.
For year 2, prospective coaches will therefore be asked to apply to become a Sport Unites! coach. This simple application process will focus on their motivation, commitment and willingness to participate in the Youth Empowerment learning pathway. The aim is to build a strong network of coaches who understand and represent the values of Sport Unites!.

Improving retention and consistency among kids
Year 1 also showed a relatively high turnover among participating children. While some fluctuation is expected in an accessible community-based program, greater consistency allows coaches to build stronger relationships and create longer-term social impact. In year 2, NSI and SMSF want to better understand why participants stop attending through improved attendance monitoring and conversations with participants and, where appropriate, parents or guardians. The aim is to identify practical or social barriers and find ways to keep young people engaged, while maintaining the accessible and low-threshold character of Sport Unites!.

Supporting coaches working with higher-risk youth
Sport Unites! is reaching young people who require additional guidance, including participants referred through the Youth Probation Officer and school for fighting. The start of the 26/27 school year has already shown the problem with fights happening at the schools. Some may display more challenging behavior, such as aggression, conflict or difficulties with authority. In year 2, Sport Unites! therefore wants to introduce specialized training to better prepare coaches for these situations. Topics could include de-escalation, recognizing triggers, setting boundaries, conflict management and knowing when professional support is needed. This training would complement the Youth Empowerment pathway and give coaches additional tools to safely and positively support higher-risk youth.

Expanding Sport Unites! – Volleyball
Alongside strengthening the existing foundation, year 2 also provides an opportunity to expand the reach of Sport Unites!. NSI and SMSF intend to explore the addition of volleyball as a new Sport Unites! discipline.
The expansion will follow the lessons learned during Year 1: identifying suitable and committed coaches first, ensuring they understand the social objectives of Sport Unites!, and then developing the program around them. This will allow Sport Unites! to reach another group of young people while maintaining the quality and principles of the existing program.

Sport Unites! in the prison
A development for year 2 is the expansion of Sport Unites! into the prison, where approval has been received (from UNODC) to introduce a program involving two coaches and two sports. Although the setting and target group are different, the principle remains the same: using sport as a tool for personal and social development. Through structured sports activities, the program will focus on discipline, positive behavior, cooperation, responsibility and self-development. Year 2 will also provide an opportunity to learn how the Sport Unites! approach can be effectively adapted to a prison environment.

From a pilot year to a stronger program
The ambition for year 2 is ultimately to move Sport Unites! from its initial implementation phase towards a stronger, more structured and increasingly sustainable program. The first year established the foundation and, importantly, showed where the program can make a difference. It also revealed where improvements are necessary. Year 2 will use those lessons: improving coach selection, creating a continuous learning pathway for Youth Empowerment, providing coaches with additional tools for working with higher-risk youth, improving participant retention, strengthening implementation capacity through the partnership with the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, and carefully expanding to reach more vulnerable youths.

In this way, Sport Unites! can continue to grow without losing the element that has proven most important during its first year: committed coaches creating safe and positive environments where sport becomes a means to reach, support and empower people who can benefit from it most.