Developing quality community coaching to improve children and young people’s experience in sport
Introduction: The importance of quality community coaching

High profile, elite coaches dominate the sporting public’s attention meaning that often their approach to coaching is at the forefront of perceptions about what a coach does. This can lead to community coaches, parents, administrators and sport system builders confusing the work of the elite coach, who is charged with preparing high level sportspeople for intense competitive environments, with that of the community and grassroots coach, who has a different role. While all children and young people taking part in sporting activity should be supported to develop their talent, they should also have the opportunity to take part in safe, rewarding and broader developmental activity. The community coach is crucial in helping children and young people access this type of experience.

One of the key challenges faced by coach educators, sport administrators and sport system builders is supporting the development of these community coaches.

> What is the best way for these coaches to develop so they can meet the needs and entitlements of the participants?
> Who are the leaders and experts in this area of sport?
> How can these experts support a wider number of children and young people to access quality sporting experiences?
> How can this focus on quality community coaching be supported?

The International community Coach Education Standards (ICES) project is focused on helping to answer these questions across grass roots school sport, community sport and sport for development agencies, institutions and programmes.
OBJECTIVES
The objective of the ICES project is to contribute to improving the sport and physical activity experience for children and young people. The project aims to achieve this by providing an international platform for advocacy, organisational support and quality assurance of the training and development of community level coaches.

“The ICES project fills a major gap in ensuring that we standardize coaching programs, ensuring that they are designed to meet internationally accepted standards that provide children and young people with meaningful sport experiences that add value to their overall lives”
- Mark Mungal, President of the Trinidad and Tobago Alliance for Sport and Physical Education

APPROACH
The ICES approach is based on a participant centred framework focused on:

1. The needs of the participants
2. The role of the coach in meeting those needs (relevant to the level of the coach)
3. The activities conducted by the coach at each level
4. The capabilities required to deliver those activities
5. The education and development system that develops these capabilities
Implementation

ICES is implemented through a context specific approach and is designed to ensure sustainable local ownership. This is achieved through:

**PHASE 1:**
Interactive development
Planning a context-specific, fit-for-purpose strategy for the quality assurance, improvement and recognition of community coach education and development. This includes formulating appropriate, context-specific standards, benchmarks and reference points.

**PHASE 2:**
Mapping
Mapping education and development systems against context specific standards and benchmarks. This process guides further development and highlights the potential for agencies delivering good practice to support other agencies and programmes.

**PHASE 3:**
System development
Capacity building and agency support focused on sustainable improvement to coach education and development systems. This can be on an agency, local or regional level.

**PHASE 4:**
Recognition and advocacy
Establishment of a system to recognise education and development at standard and promote good practice on local, regional and international level.
What is ICES

ICES IS
> An advocacy platform for the development of community coaches
> A framework to support quality assurance, collaboration and the recognition of good practice
> A tool for organisations and agencies to identify and support coach education and development needs
> A network of expertise focused on community coach development

ICES IS NOT
> An accreditation scheme or award for coaches
> A training course or curriculum
> A training manual
> Promoting one particular approach or system

Why be involved in ICES?

INNOVATION
Participate in an innovative project focused on community level sport.

NETWORKING
Have the opportunity to network and promote your organisation on a national, regional and international level.

MAPPING & QUALITY ASSURANCE
Map coach education and development systems against collaboratively developed benchmarks to identify good practice and support development needs.

ADVOCACY
Gather further evidence for advocacy and policy development.

RESOURCES
Source additional fit-for-purpose resources to support community level coach education and development.

SYSTEM BUILDING
Support for building or improving existing community level coach education and development systems on a local, national or regional level.

RECOGNITION
Recognition from a network of sport organisations and agencies that young people in your community are getting the opportunity to develop through sport in a safe environment with well trained and supported coaches.
ICES Framework

Common reference points for understanding community coaches’ role and pathway.

Provide a Safe Environment
Develop Community Life Skills
Improve Physical Literacy
Lead Quality Sport
Plan & Evaluate
Mobilise & Sustain Activity

ii. Role & Pathway

Standard activities the coach undertakes to meet participants’ needs and entitlements.

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Development of coaching systems to the agreed standards through capacity building, organisational development and networking with other community sport organisations and agencies.

Mapping of coaching systems against the agreed standards.

The system that develops coaches’ capabilities encompassing:
- Coach education curriculum and delivery
- Processes for the ongoing development of coaches
- Policies and procedures that impact coach development and delivery

Platforms for recognising organisations and agencies that meet the agreed standards.

The capabilities that coaches require to successfully undertake these activities.
Trinidad and Tobago, Bangladesh, Brazil, India and Zambia are diverse and unique countries with vastly different sport systems. One thing these countries do have in common is that there is a range of successful agencies and programmes focused on community sport. Each agency whether from the government, sport federation or the non-government sphere have different strengths and areas of focus. International Inspiration, the international sport and physical activity legacy programme of the 2012 Olympic Games, has been able to support links between these agencies focused on community level coach education and development. Interactive planning and seminars have provided opportunities to collaborate, share good practice and identify standards throughout the country and in other international contexts.

ICES aims to bring this collaboration together in a fit-for-purpose, agency or country level framework that can be referenced against international benchmarks. The framework provides a platform for recognising good practice and supporting further development of community level coach education and development.
FAQ

1. Where can I buy the ICES training guide?
   ICES is not a training manual or training course. It is:
   > A framework for recognising and supporting existing community coach education and development systems against agreed standards.
   > An opportunity to promote the importance of quality, ethical and holistic coach development at the community level.

2. It has taken a lot of time and resource to develop my organisation’s training methods, surely this is a duplication of these efforts? ICES is not a training method, it is a quality assurance and recognition platform for existing practice.

3. My organisation is based in south-east Asia, how can our training methods be compared with the methods of organisations elsewhere in the world? ICES takes a flexible approach to ensure that frameworks are context-specific. The frameworks are not dictated by a central body but developed by localised agencies and authorities.

4. I am part of a very small NGO specialising in community sport for young people with disabilities. Can my organisation be involved in ICES? Yes! ICES is accessible for any organisation working in community sport and encourages local partnerships for sharing good practice and capacity building.

5. If my organisation’s training programme does not meet the Framework benchmarks, what next? Resources are available to support organisations engaged with the ICES project to develop areas highlighted through the benchmarking and mapping process.

6. Will you give my organisation a grant to develop our coaches? ICES is not a grant-giving programme. Instead, the strategy is to utilise the ICES platform as a support mechanism to mobilise resources to assist you in building community coach education and development systems.

7. If ICES has been constructed around a four-tier pathway, my organisation’s 3-tier approach will not fit. Does this mean I cannot be involved in ICES? This is not the case. While ICES has been developed around a four-tier model, the most important aspect of this is common reference points to ensure that it can be applied to different models, as per the diagram below:

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ICES Developing quality community coaching to improve children and young people’s experience in sport
ICES development

The development and on-going improvement of ICES is through a collaborative approach with a number of different internationally-based agencies. Formal and informal consultation, interactive seminars and framework development have taken place in the following locations:

The implementation and further development of ICES is to be focused on targeted countries within International Inspiration, the legacy programme of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. There are also opportunities to engage with the ICES project outside this core programme and potential collaboration on linked initiatives. If this concept could benefit the quality of community coaching and coach development in your organisation, or the services your agency provides, please contact the ICES project team on the details opposite.
For further information

Contact a member of the ICES project team.

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“Through the (ICES development process) our organisation's contributions become part of the wider project. The approach supports us in establishing focus points to ensure the quality of our coaching and build our coach development capacity”

- Sport for Development, Rwanda

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