

CASE STUDY

ABU DHABI ENTERTAINMENT
شركة أبوظبي للترفيه

MUBADALA TENNIS IN SCHOOLS

STAKEHOLDERS



OVERVIEW

Mubadala Investment Company has had a longstanding association with tennis and views it as a vehicle to grow their brand through both commercial and ESG opportunities. Within Abu Dhabi, the company had commissioned a project to reach Emirati youth. Called Mubadala Tennis in Schools (MTIS), the programme either needed an overhaul or cancellation by 2016. Abu Dhabi Entertainment Company (ADEC) presented a concept and structure that allowed the project to achieve greater success in the community; this concept was ultimately selected later won regional awards.

OBJECTIVES

A simple set of goals was set forth for the project - to create growth in tennis among youth in Abu Dhabi with an interactive and sustainable programme. The company wanted children particularly Emiratis, to participate and enjoy tennis as part of establishing a healthier future for the nation. ADEC identified that the success of the project would need to ensure that the kids not only had fun in the classrooms, but that tennis opportunities became more accessible and that teachers would be supported and encouraged to become tennis role models.

STRATEGY

With the assets of Zayed Sports City and Zayed Sports Academy in its portfolio, ADEC was uniquely positioned to extend the reach of Mubadala Tennis in Schools beyond the classroom. The team created a revamped plan to implement a 360° approach, investing in both teachers and students to integrate tennis into student's life with more frequency. Rather than focusing solely on the students as had been done in the past, the ADEC strategy included administrators, teachers, students and families as key stakeholders to the project's success. Healthier future for the nation. ADEC identified that the success of the project would need to ensure that the kids not only had fun in the classrooms, but that tennis opportunities became more accessible and that teachers would be supported and encouraged to become tennis role models.



EXECUTION

Classroom Visits

Working with the Ministry of Education, 14 classrooms in government schools were selected to receive the programme each school year. The classrooms included male and female students aged 6 - 9. Throughout the school year, a certified tennis coach from Zayed Sports Academy would visit nine PE sessions. On initial visits, the teacher will assist the coach to deliver tennis lessons; as the teacher gains skill and confidence, the role shifts. The coach was also available by phone and email throughout the project to provide ad-hoc support.

Educator Support

To create more tennis role models, buy-in from the educators was paramount. The ADEC approach focused on providing guidance so the instructor can feel confident and knowledgeable leading a potentially unfamiliar sport. ADEC arranged for international tennis educator Mark Tennant to lead two-day training sessions for PE professionals employed by the Ministry of Education. This workshop included classroom and practical guidance, compete with bespoke, bilingual guides that include creative visuals and lesson plans to implement in school lessons. Two levels of study were offered. ADEC was also invited to attend conferences of the Ministry throughout the year. Practical sessions with Zayed Sports Academy coaches trained teachers from around the country at the annual PE workshops. At the annual conference for principals, MTIS was showcased, increasing buy-in of administrators which would allow the programme to grow more easily.

Equipment Provisions

An immediate need to provide equipment for the classrooms was identified, and the Mubadala Tennis in Schools programme set out to resolve the equipment shortage. On the first classroom visit of the year, ADEC delivered a kit valued at AED 9,300. Leveraging ADEC's partnership with Wilson, the kit included tennis rackets, balls, a portable net and floor markers; later a collapsible rebound wall was brought in. These items stayed at the school, under the stewardship of the designated PE teacher, and could be used throughout all MTIS lessons as well as with other students in the school. Teachers received a tennis racket and can of tennis balls for their personal use as part of the Mark Tennant training sessions, enabling them to play more.



Extracurricular Opportunities

Both students and teachers were offered a number of tennis experiences outside of the school setting. ADEC hosted these sessions at Zayed Sports City in order to expose participants to a professional tennis environment, both location and operations. These were achieved through:

The annual **Mubadala Tennis in Schools Festival**, a field trip where children could try different training aids, interact with new tennis role models (coaches), participate in more structured tennis lessons than can be provided by the PE teacher, and witness world-class facilities that are used by professional players;

Self-led weekly **Open Play** sessions allowed the students and teachers to use tennis courts for free during scheduled times, with equipment provided. Participants were encouraged to bring family or friends. Student sessions were supervised by a MTIS coach who provided tips for improvement.

Coach-led weekly **Open Coaching** sessions were offered exclusively to students and run by a qualified coach from Zayed Sports Academy. These lessons mimicked the regular curriculum of the academy. The teachers were invited to observe and assist in delivery of the lessons.

A **Teachers Tournament** was developed as a one-day event for teachers in the programme. Led by the coaches, it would allow them to learn more of the specific rules of tennis while also improving their skills as players and socialising with others in the programme.

Tie-ins with **Mubadala World Tennis Championship** offered a clinic with ATP-ranked player Stefanos Tsitsipas, a behind the scenes tour, and free match tickets to participants.

Scholarship

A scholarship programme called **"Najem Al Tennis"** was established in association with Mubadala Tennis in Schools. Initially, two students had been awarded AED 40,000 grants earlier in the programme; in executing them, a number of challenges were identified. ADEC explored these barriers to success and created a revised scholarship programme that better screened interest of the player, and, critically, the commitment of their family. Plans to award AED 2255,000 in tuition to young Emiratis were postponed as community sports closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic set in.



ACHIEVEMENTS

1 BEST YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
SPORT INDUSTRY AWARDS
MIDDLE EAST

RACKET SPORTS ADDED TO CURRICULUM
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION CITED
DIRECT IMPACT OF MTIS

81.8%
EMIRATI NATIONALS

7:3
BOYS GIRLS

1,296
DIRECT STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

504
HOURS OF COACHING

201
PE PROFESSIONALS TRAINED

46,750+
LEGACY & EXTENDED REACH

31
SCHOOLS

45
CLASSROOMS

AED 305K
TUITION AWARDS

43
نجم التنس
NAJEM AL TENNIS APPLICANTS

4.7/5
OVERALL EXPERIENCE

EDUCATOR RESPONSE

- 82% MORE LIKELY TO INCLUDE TENNIS IN FUTURE LESSON PLANS
- 91% MORE LIKELY TO RECOMMEND STUDENTS PLAY TENNIS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM
- 91% MORE LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO TRY TENNIS



TESTIMONIALS



We have been impressed by the evolution of the Mubadala Tennis in Schools project under Zayed Sports City and their academy, and by the energy that they put behind developing young athletes, particularly Emiratis, in the sport. Feedback is overwhelmingly positive, from the teachers, school leaders and participants. Abu Dhabi Sports Council is excited to support their continued growth and ensure longevity of this unique project.

TALAL AL HASHMI
Executive Director - Sports Development Sector
Abu Dhabi Sports Council



This fantastic sporting project really does make a difference within the Emirates Schools Establishment. The programme supports both students and teachers on their pathway of learning and developing through Physical Education and tennis in particular. The positive impact from the mixture skills incorporated in this programme is something that we want to preserve, as this will help us to engage all and develop Physical Education further within the UAE.

THOMAS NELSON
PHE Coordinator & PHE Academic Support Specialist
Emirates Schools Establishment



We're proud to sponsor the Mubadala Tennis in Schools program, which aligns with our vision as a responsible investor to make a positive impact in communities where we operate. This initiative is especially important to us with our long legacy of supporting tennis, which promotes a fit and active lifestyle. We look forward to continuing work with Abu Dhabi Entertainment Company to build on the community-focused program's long-term successes.

UMAYMA ABUBAKAR
Dir. of Executive Communications & Corporate Center
Mubadala Investment Company



I've been very impressed with the Mubadala Tennis in Schools project from all perspectives. The team is passionate about this programme. It's a great example of what can be done when organisations come together with a common goal. It's a concept that can be benchmarked among the best in the world, and one that deserves to be recognized and lauded.

MARK TENNANT
Director
inspire2coach