

CASE STUDY

ABU DHABI ENTERTAINMENT
شركة أبوظبي للترفيه

MUBADALA TENNIS IN SCHOOLS

STAKEHOLDERS



OVERVIEW

Mubadala Investment Company has a longstanding association with tennis, viewing it as a vehicle to grow their brand through both commercial and ESG opportunities. In Abu Dhabi, the company commissioned a project called Mubadala Tennis in Schools (MTiS) to reach Emirati youth. In 2016, Abu Dhabi Entertainment Company (ADEC Management) proposed a revamped structure and expanded scope for the existing concept. The changes allowed MTiS to achieve greater success in the community and ultimately become not only an award-winning initiative but also a framework lauded by expert tennis educators.

OBJECTIVES

A simple goal was set forth for the project - to create growth in tennis among Abu Dhabi youth, particularly Emiratis, through an interactive and sustainable programme. Mubadala wanted children to participate and enjoy tennis as a means of establishing a healthier future for the nation. ADEC Management identified that the success of the project needed to ensure that the kids not only had fun in the classrooms, but that tennis opportunities were more accessible and that their teachers were supported and encouraged to become tennis role models.

STRATEGY

With the assets of Zayed Sports City and Zayed Sports Academy in its portfolio, ADEC Management was uniquely positioned to extend the reach of Mubadala Tennis in Schools beyond the classroom. The plan employed a 360° approach, investing in students and teachers to integrate tennis into students' lives with more frequency. Support from administrators and student families were also identified as critical elements of the project's success.



EXECUTION

School PE Sessions

Working with the Emirates Schools Establishment (ESE), each year the project was administered to 14 classrooms in government schools. The students were boys and girls aged 6 - 9, many of them Emirati. A certified tennis coach from Zayed Sports Academy conducted nine PE sessions throughout the year. During the initial visits, the teacher assists the coach to deliver tennis lessons; as the teacher gains skill and confidence, the role shifts. Coaches provided additional support by phone and email.

Educator Support

Gaining buy-in from the teachers was paramount to creating enthusiasm for tennis. The ADEC Management approach focused on providing guidance so the instructor can feel confident when leading this potentially unfamiliar sport. ADEC Management arranged for international tennis educator Mark Tennant to lead two-day training sessions for some of ESE's PE professionals across two levels of study. The workshops offered classroom and practical guidance delivered during lectures and on-court sessions. Bespoke training guides, with creative visuals and lesson plans were distributed in English and Arabic, providing teachers with reference materials to use when implementing future school lessons.

ADEC Management was also invited to present at ESE conferences on several occasions. At the annual PE workshops, Zayed Sports Academy coaches led practical sessions that trained teachers from around the country in basic lesson delivery. At the annual conference for principals, MTiS was showcased as a success story, increasing administrator buy-in so the programme could grow more easily.

Equipment Provisions

Having identified an immediate need for classroom tennis equipment, Mubadala Tennis in Schools gifted each participating classroom with a kit valued at AED 9,300. On the first visit of the cycle, the coach brought Wilson equipment including high-quality tennis rackets and balls, a portable net, and floor markers; a REBO rebounding wall followed for use as the teachers deemed appropriate. These were arranged as part of ADEC Management's partnerships with the manufacturing brands.

Teachers attending the Mark Tennant sessions were gifted with a tennis racket and can of tennis balls for personal use, enabling and encouraging them to play more often.



Extracurricular Opportunities

Both students and teachers were offered a number of tennis experiences outside of the school setting. ADEC Management hosted these sessions at Zayed Sports City in order to expose participants to a professional tennis locations and operations.

The annual **Mubadala Tennis in Schools Festival** exposed to different training aids, new tennis role models (coaches), more structured tennis lessons and the world-class facilities that are used by professional players. The professional environment intended to inspire children's love for tennis through novel and diverse experiences.

Self-led weekly **Open Play** sessions were scheduled so that students and teachers to use tennis courts for free. Equipment was provided and participants were encouraged to bring family or friends. Student sessions were supervised by a MTiS coach who provided tips for improvement alongside lots of encouragement.

Coach-led weekly **Open Coaching** sessions were offered exclusively to students in the programme. Run by a qualified coach from Zayed Sports Academy, lessons mimicked the academy's regular curriculum. Teachers were invited to observe and assist.

A one-day **Teachers Tournament** was developed for the MTiS classrooms leaders. Organized by the academy, teachers would be given a practical setting to become more familiar with the rules while improving their playing skills and socialising with other teachers from the programme.

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

Scholarship

A scholarship programme called **Najem Al Tennis** was established in association with Mubadala Tennis in Schools. The first offers were made to two students as AED 40,000 grants though in executing them, a number of challenges were identified. ADEC Management explored the barriers to success and revised the scholarship programme to 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 closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



ACHIEVEMENTS After 3 Cycles

1st 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 BOYS : **3 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 its 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