

POSITION STATEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FOOTBALL

STREETFOOTBALLWORLD NETWORK

PREFACE

This statement represents the position of the streetfootballworld network with regard to certain core principles central to its work. In stating our position on development, Development through Football, the potential of football to contribute to social change and the guiding principles that underlie our work, we reinforce the values that motivate what we do and how we do it. This statement is intended to work in concert with the streetfootballworld network Statutes and By-laws, representing a common understanding of the purpose, practice and values behind the work of all new and existing streetfootballworld network members. It was developed with the input of the members of the streetfootballworld network and the Network Board, and presented, discussed and endorsed at the first General Assembly of the streetfootballworld network on July 6, 2010, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

1. DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the streetfootballworld network is to promote, encourage, facilitate and achieve sustainable development of the communities represented by its members through the use of football. According to the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and the fair distribution of benefits thereof. It is about putting the focus on people and creating an environment in which individuals can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests. streetfootballworld supports this definition of development and works to tackle development challenges as defined in the UN Millennium Development Goals through its contribution to social development.

The streetfootballworld network supports local community-based development as the most effective means of achieving the particular development goals most required by communities around the world. Individuals and communities can themselves identify the appropriate solutions to address the issues they face. By organising themselves in effective social enterprises, all kinds of people, especially young people and women, can make a significant and positive contribution to their communities and beyond through purposeful networking and international partnerships.

Sustainable changes can only happen locally, through community ownership and engagement. However, international cooperation and peer-to-peer exchanges have the potential to enhance local development through the creation of truly global partnerships for development. It is the role of the streetfootballworld network and its members to shape and promote this global, participatory approach to development that remains rooted in communities.

The streetfootballworld network and its members are focussed on, although not limited to, achieving development in eight specific thematic fields: health, social integration, peace building, gender equality, employability, youth leadership, education and environment. These broad fields represent innumerable challenges for individuals and communities worldwide, the causes of which cannot be isolated or easily overcome. Within this context, the streetfootballworld network strives to improve the lived experiences, opportunities and conditions of individuals and communities by using football to alleviate some of these challenges.

2. DEVELOPMENT AND FOOTBALL

Football moves the world more than any other sport. All around the globe, organisations driven by local social entrepreneurs and activists use the power of the beautiful game to positively transform their communities. The streetfootballworld network is the product of the shared belief of its members and founders, which states that the sport of football can contribute to positive social change if used appropriately and purposefully in the context of development programmes and activities.

2.1 The potential of football

Popularity: The world's most popular sport, football is an international language with local dialects. It is a powerful mobilizing force that crosses cultural divides perhaps more powerfully than any other social activity. Football can be used to attract participants to educational activities and community projects and provides the opportunity for spectators and the wider community to mix.

Health: Participation in sports is an intrinsically good thing for those involved, and using football for development has the added advantage of engaging participants in a healthy activity. Football itself, if played with the right mentality and attitude, can have positive personal and social benefits for participants. Experiencing joy and pleasure and pursuing the activities one loves are essential elements of emotionally and physically healthy growth for any child. Football provides young people all over the world with this opportunity.

Accessibility: Football can be enjoyed at practically no cost, is easy to learn, and can be played almost anywhere. The term 'street football' refers to the informal flexibility of rules that allow the game to be adapted the world over. The rules of the game can be manipulated to produce enhanced social outcomes – for example, using football-related games or modified skills training to raise awareness of specific issues. By emphasizing the traditional idea that sport is a field for developing life skills, rather than an end in itself, the game can be used to promote the life skills most required in contemporary society.

Values: Football is an analogy for life itself. The football pitch can be a microcosm of ups and downs, triumphs and defeats. It is unpredictable, sometimes unfair and often difficult, but through co-operation, teamwork and commitment there are opportunities to succeed, to create and to inspire. When played in a positive way, football generates fair play, team spirit, tolerance, inclusion, and understanding — both of oneself and of others, regardless of whether they are opponents or teammates. Players learn to cope with winning and losing; they take responsibility for their team and actively participate in shaping their community. What they learn in training sessions and matches can be directly transferred to life off the pitch. Football is also a team sport and, as such, it carries the values of co-operation, mutual understanding, collaboration, solidarity in defeat and strength through diversity, and conveys the notion that a functioning team is more than the sum of its parts.

Profile: Football in general has an unparalleled level of public interest and media attention and, as an industry, generates significant financial involvement from international corporations. This public profile and the amount of money involved in the football sector make it possible to generate interest in development programmes and raise the opportunity of potential partnerships with professional football and the sports industry. Football can be a conduit and a platform to communicate and build development and a potential source of income.

Culture: Football, as a mass participation sport, has impacted and is impacted by the cultures of those who practise it. Football culture can boost processes which exacerbate competition over solidarity, or just the opposite. Football culture is part of popular culture. Its artistic expressions are born inside and outside the field – from the songs, the flags and the colours to the influence of dance, literature, film, theatre, photography, music and more. The cultural dimension of football is expressed in the social perception of the game and as such constitutes a powerful and coveted political tool. Football culture affects large parts of the population and creates important bonds between people.

2.2 Development through Football

Development through Football makes the most of a global passion for football to create opportunities for young people to fulfill their aspirations. To harness the potential of football in generating positive social change, football must be more than a game – it must be a method and a tool for development, a mechanism through which other goals can be reached in various development areas. The streetfootballworld network recognizes organisations which are active in the field of Development through Football and whose primary purpose is social development.

The streetfootballworld network and its members are committed to Development through Football because of its power to mobilize, its potential to increase participation in socially beneficial activities, its grassroots adaptability and its potential: football can be used as a classroom, a teaching aid, a recreational activity and a reward. The streetfootballworld network and its members believe that Development through Football should be judged on its developmental impact, namely, how football-based development programmes actively improve the lives of participants and their communities in addressing pressing social needs. This is why the development of football, as a sport, cannot be equated with Development through Football; improving sporting performance and identifying and fostering of sporting talent are not primary objectives of Development through Football, nor of the organisations that seek to develop this field.

2.3 Limitations of football

Good Development through Football programmes undoubtedly impact and add positive elements to the lives of participants. However, despite the numerous success stories that are all valid testimonies to football's impact on personal development, there is still a need for scientific assessment that proves the effectiveness and impact of programmes that use football in the community. The limitations of these programmes must also be identified and communicated. streetfootballworld is aware that football is not a quick fix, and that Development through Football cannot readily address many of the institutional inequalities that precipitate a range of social problems. However, the streetfootballworld network and its members are committed to improving the lives of as many individuals as possible, and are similarly committed to researching, monitoring and evaluating the impact of Development through Football in order to maximize the outcomes of their work.

3. THE POTENTIAL OF FOOTBALL TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

The streetfootballworld network supports Development through Football in the thematic fields which best represent the cross section of how network members are using football to make a difference in their respective communities. These thematic fields outline the best use of football in generating positive social change. While football is clearly not a panacea for all the problems in the world, the streetfootballworld network supports the position that football can make notable long-term contributions to critical issues in development, and in doing so can change the lives of participants as well as communities. In all these thematic areas, the first and most obvious contribution that football can make is in its power to attract and collect participants, creating a captive audience for education, information and participation in other activities. Football can also make further specific contributions in each of these fields. The streetfootballworld network is committed to researching, developing and monitoring new methods of achieving impact in these areas.

3.1 Health

The most direct health benefit that sport in general and football in particular have to offer is in the context of physical education and exercise: improving participants' physical and mental health. The streetfootballworld network supports and promotes open access to sporting and recreation facilities and the provision of high-quality coaching as an important element of social development. Moreover, specifically designed football sessions can be a means to address more complex health issues such as general health, the fight against major diseases including malaria and tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns. Coaches and educators can become role models by demonstrating exemplary behaviour and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

3.2 Education and employability

While ensuring boys and girls their basic right to play, Development through Football projects also aim to increase understanding of the vital importance of education for both children and their families. Informal and activity-based learning have been widely recognized as complementary to classroom education. Thus, through participation in Development through Football programmes, the conditions for a gradual process of awareness building can be created. Participants in relevant projects can be exposed to both academic lessons and schoolwork support – from literature and art to computer classes. They can learn about crucial social issues and be encouraged to embrace their basic human rights, thus empowering themselves to become active in the development of their local environments. Additionally, through their participation in specially designed programmes, children and young people can gain valuable vocational training and aptitudes that will help them find a sustainable livelihood and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes on which their employability depends. Football-based programmes can thus also be an alternative or a complementary approach when educational systems fail, do not reach all children, or use outdated and ineffective methods.

3.3 Peace building

Football cannot solve an active, violent conflict but it can play a role in addressing the underlying causes of it. In regions that were or currently are torn apart by war and violence, it is often the case that opposing sides are able to peacefully communicate and interact again under the unifying language of football, which becomes a means to 'humanise' the former enemy. Based primarily on football and using specifically designed curricula, a number of high-quality, innovative programmes that promote tolerance, acceptance, conflict transformation, non-violence, co-operation and understanding mainly among young people have been developed by organisations working in such countries or regions, thus demonstrating the role football can play in peace building processes.

3.4 Social integration, anti-racism and gender equality

Programmes working to promote anti-discrimination, anti-racism, social integration and gender equality see in football a strong partner: first, as an initial incentive for social groups who are otherwise marginalised and excluded to regain an active role in their own lives and consequently in society. Second, as football has the power to create analogies to life itself, directly through the implemented programmes. This can be seen in projects which incorporate rules into football games that ensure the active participation of women or people with disabilities, for instance. By becoming 'visible' and active in football programmes, socially excluded or victimised groups can reclaim their basic civil rights and create bridges to other societal groups with which they would

otherwise have no contact. Various educational initiatives can be provided to empower participants to actively address their situations; public activities and programmes can bring specific issues linked to exclusion to the attention of the broader public and the media and spark public discourse on the underlying problems.

3.5 Environment

Environmental problems are directly linked with other global issues such as poverty, a lack of education, destructive production practices, etc. Development through Football organisations have been steering their efforts towards different channels: organising 'green' events and promoting environmental action in theory (awareness-raising concerning environmental issues) and in practice (clean-ups, sewage system improvements, tree-planting actions). Complex issues around current environmental challenges can be addressed easily based on examples from the everyday life of a local community, and then linked to higher scales of impact and more generic approaches. Environmental change is one of the most pressing issues facing humanity today, as the preservation of an intact nature and the sustainable use of resources are the basic capital for any meaningful development. Football programmes can be used to teach basic environmental protection and to offer a new approach to the issue in a community, thereby contributing at the local level to the betterment of the global environment.

3.6. Culture

Culture — the sum of the beliefs, values, techniques, skills and artistic creations (among others), that humans have developed as social beings and through which they have been able to adapt to their environment and survive — provides tools for social transformation through a dialectic process with football. Football as a tool for social transformation comes alive through the revalorisation of local culture, as a means to contribute to a more just, inclusive and equitable society. The cultural aspect of football generates a strong sense of belonging, where a person can be part of a group which contributes strongly to his/her identity. This is reflected in the values highlighted and practised in football. Football serves as a common code of a universal symbolic system. Each people has its specific cultural identity and characteristics which condition, shape and are in turn shaped by the ways they practise and live the game of football. Football is a part of the social construction of reality. The streetfootballworld network empowers young people to appreciate those aspects of popular local culture where the commitment to human rights is practised on the field.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF STREETFOOTBALLWORLD AND ITS NETWORK MEMBERS

4.1 Partnerships and networking

streetfootballworld and its network members actively share knowledge and seek partnerships on all levels, including with corporations, government institutions and non-governmental organisations, to create synergies and share experiences, expertise and resources and achieve a greater impact in communities. In principle, the commitment to developing a democratic and participatory network is a manifestation of the streetfootballworld network's position that development should occur at the grassroots level, be community-driven and be strengthened by mutual exchange.

4.2 Accountability and transparency

As social enterprises working in the civil society sector, streetfootballworld and its network members co-operate closely with external partners to fulfil their objectives. This co-operation can take various forms; in all cases, however, it is absolutely necessary to demonstrate professionalism and commitment through transparent and impeccable operations at all levels. This can be achieved through the development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that account for the correct use of resources, assess the impact of the activities undertaken and demonstrate how the organisation is striving to continuously improve its work and operations.

4.3 Dialogue, respect and fairness

streetfootballworld and its network members believe that dialogue, respect and fairness are key values that contribute to the positive development of all their relationships, be it with partners, staff, or the direct beneficiaries of their work. Only by openly addressing all pending issues in an objective and open manner can these be resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

4.4 Local ownership and active participation of the community

streetfootballworld and its network members are convinced that social change happens locally, and that therefore the main beneficiaries of their activities must be actively involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programmes. It is therefore important to develop mechanisms to ensure that such input can be integrated in the daily operations and strategic planning of an organisation. This also implies that the served communities or target groups become active stakeholders of the delivered programmes, and play a direct role in all stages of development.

4.5. Youth leadership

Too often, disadvantaged young people are seen as a threat and danger to society and are excluded from opportunities that are available to their more fortunate peers because of the social stigma associated with the fact of being young and poor. These young people are much more than just a target group, and indeed they should form the backbone of organisations involved in Development through Football, as peer educators, coaches, staff members or volunteers. Young people should be considered as essential resources for social organisations and supported to take on important roles and responsibilities in the future. To achieve this, they must be entrusted with responsibilities at the organisational and programmatic level within the organisation. In taking up such responsibilities, they can develop their skills and self-confidence and uncover their full potential.

4.6. Child protection

Most, if not all, members of the streetfootballworld network are working with children, adolescents and young adults who have often been exposed to abuse of various kinds or are in danger of being abused. It is thus crucial to be able to address topics linked to abuse in a sensible and sensitive way, to provide help and support to those who have been abused and to actively prevent abuse of every kind within each organisation and in the communities in which they work. All organisations in the streetfootballworld network should strive to develop policies and tools that will help them to actively and appropriately address these matters.

4.7 Gender equity/equality

streetfootballworld and its network members believe that gender equity and equality must be an underlying principle in all their activities, and that all discrimination based on gender must be prevented, addressed and eliminated. Equal opportunities must be provided for girls and boys alike in running programmes that take into account specific requirements, and equal access for women to the management and decision-making structures of the organisations must be provided.

4.8 Independence from political parties and religious groups

As organisations active in the social sector, streetfootballworld and its network members should be able to work with appropriate partners in all sectors of society for the betterment of the social issues that they are addressing. However, they should retain their structural and formal independence from political parties, religious groups and governmental agencies, especially in their decision-making structures and in the design of their programmes, in order to avoid compromising the credibility and distinctiveness of their work.

4.9 Social and environmental responsibility

In the light of the social and environmental issues faced by today's societies, streetfootballworld and its network members believe that they must act as role models for responsible management practices and thereby contribute to solving these current issues at their own level. This includes being aware of the environmental impact of their work, respecting applicable labour laws and preventing workforce exploitation, committing to develop and empower their staff and personnel, fighting corruption and misuse of funds, working toward scaling and measuring the impact of their work, and holding a general ethic of respect for all people, all forms of life and the natural environment.

4.10 Sustainability

All streetfootballworld network members aim for sustainable programmes and lasting impact in their communities. The organisation of one-off events and ad-hoc, short-term activities and projects should not represent the sole or major purpose of organisations striving to generate development impact through the use of football.

4.11 Advocacy

All network members strive to deliver excellent programmes and services. Moving beyond service delivery, advocating for the value of football in development work, actively working with the media and influencing key decision-makers to have a wider impact should be key objectives for all.

4.12 Cultural diversity

The streetfootballworld network embraces the notion of universal human rights and values and strives to protect and promote a fundamental right to equality in all activities. The network's mission and methods are global and based on unifying values, but nonetheless seek to preserve, develop and promote cultural diversity and recognise the mutually constitutive contributions that different cultures have in forming others. The streetfootballworld network recognises the role that football can play in both celebrating one's own culture and learning about others, as well as the role of football-based programmes in emphasising the positive, enriching and unifying aspects of living and vibrant cultural traditions, especially in the current context of economic and political globalisation.

Developed by the members of the streetfootballworld network, the Network Board and the Network Management Team of streetfootballworld in the course of 2010, and added as an annex to the streetfootballworld By-laws by the Network Board on December 1st, 2010.