

Press clipping

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FEVERPITCH

Can football change the world? Christine Fenzl believes so after she photographed soccer-crazy disadvantaged children around the globe - some of whom are coming to our shores during the FIFA World Cup to play in the Football for Hope Festival

Words S  verine Harzo Photographs Christine Fenzl South African photographs Braam Lammers

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Tauane in Parque Veredas, São Paulo.

To some, football is just a game. But German photographer Christine Fenzl has a different viewpoint. Commissioned by an organization called Street Football World, she documented NGOs around the world who are using soccer as a tool to help the most disadvantaged and underprivileged of children. To these soccer-crazy youngsters, football is so much more than a sport; it 'presents a way of hope and the possibility to change,' says Fenzl. The project took Fenzl around the globe to places such as the Republic of Macedonia, Brazil

and Kenya, and made her realize the power of soccer. 'The destructiveness of the conflicts [these children are facing] is so overwhelming that I am in awe of these young peoples' power to withstand that force,' she says. Fenzl was struck by the self-confidence and motivation that the game gave the players; the sport became an opportunity for them to truly be part of a community and have a genuine role to play. 'The sport is a form of communication and gives people the strength to keep on going.'

Some of the teams she photographed will be taking part in the Football for Hope Festival

BRAZIL

ORGANIZATION Craques de Sempre (Craquesdesempre.com.br). Supports football in São Paulo as a tool against drugs and crime.

'When you are 12 or 13 and living in the favelas, the simplest way to earn a living is to deal drugs. Most adults who live here have drug-abuse problems or are related to the crime world. Football gives their children a new motivation. They start to think differently; they change their outlook on life.' - Christine Fenzl

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Almir in Sutka, Republic of Macedonia.

in Alexandra, Johannesburg, from 3 to 10 July. The festival - an official event of the 2010 FIFA World Cup organized by FIFA, Street Football World, South Africa's World Cup Organizing Committee and the City of Johannesburg - will see 32 teams of players, aged between 15 and 18, taking part: from Rwanda, Colombia, India and Ireland to Mauritius, Australia and Mali. There's 'The Peace Team' made up of boys and girls from Israel and Palestine, whose aim is to 'break down negative stereotypes'. Then there's a team brought together by the organization

Football Friends, with players from Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia - areas that were previously devastated by racial hatred and war. All of the contestants have faced extreme challenges throughout their daily lives, from social unrest and violence, to prejudice and poverty; and are all united by a common passion: their love for soccer.

The teams will play in a street football stadium in Alexandra, which will provide spectators with an up-close view of the five-a-side action, and there won't be

a referee in sight - fair-play rules mean that any disagreements between the teams are resolved through dialogue. 'I'm extremely excited to be part of this,' says 15-year-old Thumeka Mabayi, who is part of Team Alexandra. 'It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to empower myself and learn more about other cultures.'

■ These pages display a selection of Fenzl's photos taken from her project, 'Street Football - Looking Forward'.

■ Tickets for the Football for Hope Festival are free. For info go to Streetfootballworld.org.

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Limed in Gazi Baba, Republic of Macedonia.

REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (FYROM)

ORGANIZATION Street Football for Peace and Tolerance. They aim to encourage communication and integration in a country torn apart by war and ethnic cleansing.

'The situation is difficult in this country because so many different communities have to live together in a comparatively small space: Gypsies, Kosovars, Albanians, Macedonians... The cultures

are varied and the language barrier prevents children from communicating and playing together: instead, they play one against the other. To counter this, coaches organize

tournaments between city teams and mountain teams. The enthusiasm is there and the children will not hesitate to walk three hours to be present on the day of the match.' - Christine Fenzl

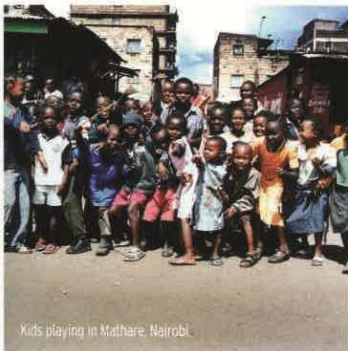


Barbara in Sutka, Republic of Macedonia.

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Doreen in her street, Kairobangi, South, Nairobi.



Kids playing in Mathare, Nairobi.

KENYA

ORGANIZATION Mathare Youth Sports Association, or MYSA (Mysakenya.org), links football with environmental clean-ups and HIV/AIDS awareness in Nairobi.

'The Mathare Youth Sports Association is important here. It has existed for over 20 years and has about 70 000 members in Nairobi alone. It is renowned, almost a local landmark, and the

children are naturally drawn to it. Some of those who were involved from a young age, back when it started in 1987, are still involved today and have become trainers there. It is extremely active

and influential, and gets very concrete results. For example, it has raised the funds to put streetlights in some of Nairobi's slums, to reduce the number of rapes.' - Christine Fenzl

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Women's team in Catford, London.

UNITED KINGDOM

ORGANIZATION Street League (Streetleague.co.uk) encourages the integration of young homeless people and former drug addicts through football.

The teens in Street League have to prove they want to better their situation. Some were homeless, slept in parks, on benches... When they discovered the organization they met other teens with

problems like their own, and felt less alone. The players have to show determination. Street League helps the participants find somewhere to live and provides support towards education and

employment - so they have to make sure it's going to those who will use it well. One of the players said to me: "I never had a life before. I simply existed."
- Christine Fenzl



Fernando in Stratford, London.

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Catherine Skhosana.

SOUTH AFRICA

ORGANIZATION Play Soccer (Playsoccer-nonprofit.org) aims to empower children and youth to lead change in the world's most underprivileged communities.



Alexandra kids playing street football.

Alexandra may be the birthplace of soccer boss Irvin Khoza, deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe and struggle heroes Alfred Nzo and Sam Buti, but not much has changed since the 1960s, when family accommodation was demolished in favour

of single-sex hostels. Now, the community's hopes rest on a new generation represented by Team Alexandra at the Football for Hope Festival. Photographed here by Braam Lammers, the eight team members include Thumeka

Mabayi and Lebogang Ngwako. Lebogang is the soccer captain at his school and was nominated by a teacher for his compassion and helpful nature. With high achievers like these, the future certainly looks brighter for Alexandra. **mc**

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Team Alexandra (from left): Katlego Malaka, 18, Thumeka Mabayi, 15, Catherine Skhosana, 18, Dimpho Matsoso, 15, Ayanda Kunene, 18, Victoria Masonga, 17, Lowyard Mokalapa, 17.

GAME ON! How soccer can help make dreams come true

In 2007, South African journalist John Perlman launched The Dreamfields Project, an initiative that aims to provide disadvantaged schools with DreamBags filled with football equipment and find low-cost, low-maintenance solutions to field building. 'I started Dreamfields because there are children who love soccer and lots of South Africans who love children,' says Perlman.

'This is not about finding great players but encouraging kids to dream so they can be great - whether they become doctors and lawyers, electricians or hairdressers.' So far, Dreamfields has built 12 soccer fields around the country. More than 1 300 schools have been supplied with DreamBags, and Dreamfields has staged more than 100 DreamEvent tournaments.



To make a donation, which goes to children, schools and the communities, visit Dreamfieldsproject.org or deposit donations into the following account: Account name The Dreamfields Project Branch and code Nedbank, Rosebank Mall, 197705 Account number 1977058345 Swift code NEDSZAJJ