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www.streetfootballworld.org
I was at the beginning of my career when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established. For 15 years, they followed me and I followed them. In early 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new goals that universally apply to all, the 193 United Nations member states have pledged to mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

The members of the streetfootballworld network, and many more friends and fellows across the globe, have intrinsically adopted such an attitude already during the establishment of their organisations. In fact, the very reason they initiated their programmes in the Mathare Valley, the streets of Dublin or the favelas of Rio was because governments had failed to address the needs of those on the margins of society.

Many of my friends and colleagues know the MDGs and the SDGs by heart - literally! They recognise in them their own struggle for recognition and a life in dignity. They follow the rhythm of their hearts while implementing programmes that are contributing to the goals. And they are finding respectful and trustworthy partners in the first and second sector interested in keeping time to the same rhythm. Jointly, we are changing the world through football.

It strikes me that the SDGs are not legally binding and that any given countries currently “committed” can tomorrow decide not to invest, monitor and follow them. But, after all, we live in a complex world. This complexity is perpetuated by the fact that different stakeholders have different objectives. We at streetfootballworld follow only one objective: to empower and improve the lives of young people.

Dear “countries”, these young people are watching you. And they count on us all. Let us jointly prepare a path for them that will make another bucket of goals obsolete in early 2031. To achieve that, we simply need to listen to our hearts and follow their rhythm.

Dr. Vladimir Borkovic
Network Director, streetfootballworld
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coming soon

mass force for social change
Inspirational leaders from sport, business and social impact meet in L.A.

get involved

DONATE!
Gavin’s story: How one man cycled 400 km to raise 800 Euros in aid of football for good.
FROM 26TH – 28TH JUNE REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE FOOTBALL FOR HOPE COMMUNITY, FOOTBALL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS GATHERED IN KAZAN, RUSSIA, TO DISCUSS THE NEEDS AND CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FOOTBALL AND EXPLORE THE CONTRIBUTION OF FOOTBALL AND FOOTBALL FOR GOOD TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

“The name of the city of Kazan has a direct connection to our purpose and our meeting. It comes from a giant cauldron that has so much energy that it makes water boil. This energy is still here. I think it will enable us to have interesting discussions over the next few days,” Milana Verkhunova, from FIFA World Cup’s Local Organising Committee, noted in her opening speech.

What better place to stage the third edition of the Football for Hope Forum, taking place in parallel to the FIFA Confederations Cup Russia 2017 and culminating in a visit to an exciting semi-final match between Chile and Portugal.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE FOOTBALL FOR HOPE FORUM 2017 WERE:

1. to help determine the way forward for Football for Hope
2. to explore the contribution of football to social development
3. to allow NGOs from Russia and abroad to exchange best practices on development through football
DAY 1: EXPLORING NEEDS, REALITIES AND CHALLENGES OF FOOTBALL FOR HOPE-SUPPORTED ORGANISATIONS & HELP DEVELOP FUTURE IDEAS TO FURTHER SHAPE FIFA’S FOOTBALL FOR HOPE INITIATIVE

The first day of the Football for Hope Forum 2017 kicked off with words of welcome by Federico Addiechi, FIFA’s Head of Sustainability & Diversity, and Milana Verkhunova, LOC Sustainability Director, to the representatives of the Football for Hope-supported organisations attending the Forum.

The main goal of the first day was to explore the most important needs of Football for Hope supported organisations and to develop future ideas to help solve those through the Football for Hope initiative. “You have a bit of a job to do,” said moderator Andy Caldwell, “because you need to represent yourself and your organisation as well as the views of all the other Football for Hope-supported organisations who are not in the room. Part of the reason you are here is because you’re very connected to that world of football for development so in all the conversations we’re having today, always be asking yourself: ‘What’s my perspective on this and who is not here?’” He further stressed that the main objective of the day was “about idea generation and not necessarily about decision-making.”

WHERE HAS THE SUPPORT OF FOOTBALL FOR HOPE (FFH) MADE A DIFFERENCE TO THE WORK OF YOUR ORGANISATION?

As a prelude to exploring how to bring the Football for Hope movement forward, Caldwell prompted the assembled group to recognise “the successes and values created by Football for Hope,” asking the group to “reflect on what difference Football for Hope is already making to the organisations. Where has the support from Football for Hope made a difference?”

He did not have to wait long for a response. Steve Fleming from Kick4Life (Lesotho) jumped up from his seat to relate the impact on his organisation of being granted to host a Football for Hope Centre in Lesotho:

“Football for Hope really opened up a whole range of opportunities for us to grow the organisation, particularly around social enterprise. With that initial investment in the pitch and in the education and health building, we were able to leverage additional funding from some local companies to build another building on the same plot where we could run some social enterprises and the idea of this is both to create some sources of financial sustainability but also to provide training and employment opportunities and a safe space for young people.”

Further comments on the important contribution of Football for Hope to the community organisations followed. Overall, the group agreed that the main gains of being part of the Football for Hope initiative were: financial support, learning opportunities and networking.

“FOOTBALL FOR HOPE REALLY OPENED UP A WHOLE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR US TO GROW THE ORGANISATION, PARTICULARLY AROUND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE” - STEVE FLEMING, KICK4LIFE, LESOTHO

To extend the focus from individual organisations, streetfootballworld’s Founder and CEO, Jürgen Griesbeck, followed with a speech reflecting on the movement as a whole, and mentioning some of the most important milestones of the last 15 years: 3 Forums, 2 Festivals, 20 Football for Hope Centres, more than 30 exchange programmes and programme support of at least 50 million US Dollars.

Addressing the Football for Hope community, he said: “I think many of us wouldn’t be here if all the rest of us weren’t here (…) We have managed to not only survive over the last decade, which in the field of NGOs is already remarkable, but we also grew and we built a collective identity. We gave birth to something that didn’t exist before: a universe of solutions, millions of young people empowered to follow their dreams, and we have made of football a powerful force for good. All together. But what is needed now?”

Jürgen Griesbeck encouraged the rest of the participants to think about the importance of the collective effort in order to take football to the next level: “I believe that we can make it happen. But what’s the ‘it’? (…) I think this ‘it’ I’m talking about refers to the importance of moving from a ME- to a WE-perspective, it’s moving from an ego to an ecosystem thinking that reaches far beyond our individual organisations and brands. We can only make it happen together.”

ABOUT FIFA’S FOOTBALL FOR HOPE PROGRAMME

The Football for Hope Forum is part of FIFA’s Football for Hope initiative. Launched in 2005, to help improve the lives and prospects of young people around the world, it offers funding, equipment and training to organisations running such projects, and provides opportunities for experts and young leaders so that they can meet, exchange ideas and learn from each other while sharing their experience of working in this field.

Since its inception, Football for Hope has worked towards developing and implementing programmes to achieve the following objectives:

1. Investment into sustainable community development
2. Raising awareness on and celebrating the power of football for good
3. Building capacity through facilitating a platform to exchange best practices and transfer knowledge.

In 2017, there are 182 non-governmental organisations eligible for Football for Hope in 79 countries, serving hundreds of communities and tens of thousands of people throughout the world. HIV/AIDS education, conflict resolution, gender equality, social integration of people with intellectual disabilities, peace building, youth leadership and life skills are just some of the many objectives pursued.

Of the participants that community organisations are reaching with the support of the Football for Hope programme around 40% are female and 68% are young people between the ages of 13 and 18.
After Jürgen Griesbeck’s contribution, moderator Andy Caldwell introduced the working session of the afternoon, focusing on two main topics: 1) Main needs, realities and challenges that Football for Hope-supported organisations encounter in their day-to-day work; 2) Opportunities they see for Football for Hope to add further value to their work.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN NEEDS, REALITIES AND CHALLENGES THAT FOOTBALL FOR HOPE-SUPPORTED ORGANISATIONS ENCOUNTER IN THEIR DAY-TO-DAY WORK?

In preparation of the event, FIFA had sent an online questionnaire to all 182 Football for Hope eligible organisations asking for information and input to help determine the way forward for Football for Hope and explore both the football and football for development industries’ contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals to which 80 responded. An “insight wall” with the data resulting from the survey had been set up in order for participants to engage with the information collected.

The first part of the group work focused on analysing and commenting on the data resulting from the survey, relating to the four main challenges for the daily operation of the Football for Hope-supported organisations: financial security, lack of human resources, local politics, and adequate access to beneficiaries.

In addition to the problems highlighted through the survey, some of the participants raised additional questions, especially on the topics of capacity building, knowledge sharing and curricula development.

One interesting reflection came from Allan Garratt from Street League (UK), who recognised the importance of financial issues but also commented: “There’s a lot about finances, but aside from financial issues, how do we harness the knowledge in this room and go about sharing ideas?” He added that by reflecting on past accomplishments, his organisation had been able to save money.

Next, Caldwell encouraged the participants to work together in groups and become more specific in how these challenges affect their organisation.

As well as reaching many common denominators, such as: capacity building, maintaining the balance between organisational vs. funding needs, recruiting and retaining staff, achieving financial sustainability, these challenges in turn raised important questions and comments by some of the participants referring to the relation between the world of football and the world of football for good: “We are fighting against the values of the sport – we’re fighting against the very sport we’re using. How do we involve the game and system itself?” – Kirk Friedrich from Grassroot Soccer (USA) questioned.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU SEE FOR FOOTBALL FOR HOPE TO ADD FURTHER VALUE TO THE WORK OF YOUR ORGANISATION?

The second part of the group work went from analysing the challenges and realities of Football for Hope-supported organisations to exploring the opportunities for the future.

Participants were asked to use their creativity and expertise to provide valuable input in the areas where Football for Hope could further or better support them in the future, among them:

- Provide access to other funding opportunities
- Provide direct capacity-building for Football for Hope eligible organisations
- Further develop the Football for Hope adidas exchange programme
- Support networking and collaboration across Football for Hope eligible organisations
- Support Football for Hope eligible organisation to develop positive relationships with Member Associations
- Support Football for Hope eligible organisations with equipment

A recurring theme of the day, that also arose during the last session, was how to further engage the football industry and create a systemic relation between the world of football for good and the world of football. On this topic, Steve Feming, from Kick4Life, highlighted the key role of FIFA through the Football for Hope programme.

“Football for Hope has a role to play in achieving systemic change and this is not something that affects our group of organisations but the wider industry. We have this idea of changing the DNA. You can think of it as an atom, a nucleus in the middle, which is the industry which has got all the power and influence, the sport for development organisations are the electrons spinning around on the outside. How do you release that energy to spread out to all the people, the organisations that are beyond that inner circle?”

KIRK FRIEDRICH
GRASSROOT SOCCER (USA)

“Football for Hope enables us to bring together topics and youth from different parts of the world, to learn through one another. The programme always focused on our needs, so we define what our need is and not what the funding opportunity defines as the topic. And that’s very unique.”

STEFANIE BIESTER
KICKFAIR (GERMANY)

“We had Football for Hope funding in two regions: First in the US and then in Uganda. I can say unequivocally that I don’t know if we would still be here if we hadn’t got it when we did. When we first received funding in 2013, we were a much smaller organisation. We had a much smaller group of full-time staff and volunteers. We were able to leverage a lot of relationships and funding through Football for Hope and I think one of the big things we’ve gotten out of it is the network of Football for Hope partners, streetfootballworld network as well and what we’ve learned from other organisations. I think that’s probably the biggest value.”

MARY MCVIEGH
SOCCER WITHOUT BORDERS (USA)

“It’s the football that keeps the magic going, and it’s the football opportunities for our young people that keeps them coming back and coming together. Without the Football for Hope funding that would suffer. That’s the passion that started and the passion that keeps going.”

ANNE BUNDE-BIROUSTE
FOOTBALL UNITED (AUSTRALIA)

“Football for Hope has a role to play in achieving systemic change and this is not something that affects our group of organisations but the wider industry. We have this idea of changing the DNA. You can think of it as an atom, a nucleus in the middle, which is the industry which has got all the power and influence, the sport for development organisations are the electrons spinning around on the outside. How do you release that energy to spread out to all the people, the organisations that are beyond that inner circle?”
DAY 2: EXPLORING FOOTBALL’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

The second day of the Forum was devoted to assessing the contribution of football and football for good to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To help them do so, the Football for Hope-supported organisations were joined by representatives from the world of football and from the United Nations.

In order to make the most of the day, and given the complexity of the topic, it was determined that the discussion would focus on the following three SDGs, by order of importance for the Football for Hope-supported Organisations, according to the results of the survey: #4 Quality Education, #5 Gender Equality, and #3 Good Health and Wellbeing.

These three SDGs were considered by over 50% of the respondents to be the most relevant for development through football.

The day started with opening words by Federico Addiechi, who spoke about the organisation’s commitment to sustainability operating across three dimensions: social, economic and environmental. Referring to the progression of the sport’s engagement with the SDGs, Addiechi admitted: “What is not yet clear: How big the contribution of football can be. How we can align the SDGs with the complexity of the topic, it was determined that the discussion would focus on the following three SDGs, by order of importance for the Football for Hope-supported Organisations, according to the results of the survey: #4 Quality Education, #5 Gender Equality, and #3 Good Health and Wellbeing.

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Underlining their responses in the pre-Forum survey, the participants commented that the SDGs were already incorporated into the following areas of their day-to-day work: fundraising, organisational strategy, programme development, and impact monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

It became clear that a substantial amount of work is already being done by the Football for Hope-supported organisations in line with the SDGs. On that topic, Jürgen Griesbeck commented: “It’s good to see that we didn’t need a declaration of SDGs to work towards sustainable development.” For him “football is the glue that has put us in the position we are in now.”

When assessing the role of the Sustainable Development Goals on the work of their individual organisations, many in the group again voiced doubts and concerns. Candelaria Lucero Dente from Tiempo de Juego (Colombia) uttered the sentiment shared by others that the SDGs were often perceived by representatives of local NGOs as detached from their daily realities: “Our problems are that one kid hasn’t come to practice for a month, we don’t have enough food to feed people who are going to practice football.”

Despite these doubts and concerns, the conversation also explored how the SDGs can be an asset to the organisations concerned. A general consensus was that the SDGs could:

- play a key role in bringing sectors together
- provide the possibility to give structure
- bring local and policy levels closer together for further development
- facilitate organisational development through a long-term vision

At the end of the sessions, the group shared their thoughts on what the day’s conversations had told them about football’s role in contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the significance of the past two days of exchange to them.

“You implement the SDGs every day, you are the champions, the role models.” - Asger Ryhl, UN Women

The conversation then shifted from how the football for good NGOs contribute to the SDGs to how this global framework can actually support the work that many NGOs are doing on the ground. Including topics such as providing specific tools to track the impact of their programmes.

On this topic, Lindita Xhaferi-Salihu encouraged the third sector to communicate more openly about the challenges that they encounter at a grassroots level in order for UN organisations to increase their support: “As the UN we are very happy to work with organisations in order to take this agenda forward but the problem is that we ourselves don’t know how to do this, so it is very useful to come up with ideas that help us better understand how to take this forward.”

The panel offered a very vivid discussion relaying a myriad of opinions and concluding on an encouraging note from Asger Ryhl: “You implement the SDGs every day, you are the champions, the role models.”

Following the panel discussion, participants were asked to work in groups on one of the three selected SDGs in order to 1) reflect on how the world of football for good is already contributing to the SDGs, 2) prioritise the targets that are more relevant to their work, 3) identify additional ways in which football and football for good can contribute to the SDGs.

The panel first addressed the paradigm shift from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals. When the world united behind 17 Sustainable Development Goals on 24 August 2015, the MDGs were replaced by a set of targets with a global focus, aiming to make the world a more sustainable, equal place by 2030. The SDGs can be considered as a progression from the MDGs through their universal framework, engaging first, second and third sectors, and in their more specific approach, as the three UN representatives on the panel explained.

Vladimir Borkovic voiced the scepticism of many local organisations in the room and invited everyone to reflect on the relation between the SDGs and football for good from a different perspective: “We ‘survived’ the MDGs, now we have the SDGs,” he said and asked the question: “What can the system give back to local communities, to those who are following this path of sustainable development even without anyone telling them. (...) What is the support of the first and second sector to the already valuable work of the organisations?”

“You implement the SDGs every day, you are the champions, the role models.” - Asger Ryhl, UN Women

The next step,” Stefanie Biester (KICKFAIR, Germany) felt was “harnessing our collective impact to change changing football to be more than just a sport for champions, but a sport for everybody.” Her specific demand of the football industry was to make engagement in the football for development sector mandatory in the contracts of football players.

All attendees acknowledged that the Forum was a starting point for further contribution to the SDGs and that, following it, it should be determined whether to maintain the objective of working towards just three targets or to broaden the focus.
DAY 3:
PRESENT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FOOTBALL IN RUSSIA AND ABROAD

On the third day of the event there was a change of scene – from workshop room to auditorium – as well as further additions to the vibrant and energetic group. The Football for Hope Forum opened its doors and the conversation to representatives from Russian NGOs who came to share their experiences of social development in the host country and learn more about how football can be integrated into the work of initiatives in Russia.

To inform the new attendees about the experiences of different stakeholders in the field, the conference agenda contained keynote speeches by FIFA Legends Karina LeBlanc and Alexey Smertin, as well as two panel discussions including Russian NGOs already implementing football for good.

To ascertain the main social issues in Russia and how these are addressed by local organisations through football a panel spanning different sectors entered the stage with Elena Kiryushina representing the United Nations (UNAIDS), Mickael Vinet from Coca Cola the corporate sector, while Olga Alexandrovna Kotova (Perspektiva) and Ekaterina Traneva (Russian Children’s Fund) offered the perspective of Russia’s Third Sector.

As a further preparatory stepping stone on the way to the afternoon’s networking session between Russian and international participants, a second panel discussion gathered four representatives from Football for Hope-supported organisations and a member of the football world, to share their expertise on establishing social development programmes through football.

This sense of community did not escape FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura who delivered the closing speech of the Forum, saying: “There is something particularly touching when so many different people gather to promote social development. To look for the best way to transform the lives of those who need it the most. For me, this is what this Football For Hope Forum is about. And it is why I am truly honoured to be here talking to you,” she said before adding: “I want you to stop for a second and think of the meaning of bringing all these people together - exclusively to discuss social development through football. “We tend to start taking these things for granted, but the truth is that this is incredible. This event, in itself, sends a powerful message to the world.”

NETWORKING SESSION

After a morning brimming with ideas and inspiration, the vibrant gathering had plenty of food for thought for the afternoon networking session which was doused in the same community spirit as the preceding days. The networking session aimed at facilitating an exchange between NGOs from abroad and Russia on the topic of development through football.

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Though the objectives of the Football for Hope Forum were ambitious, making for a full schedule, participants had time to cast the flip charts aside and explore the host city of both the Football for Hope Forum 2017 and the Confederations Cup 2017™ and visit the Semi-Final match between Chile and Portugal that had the group on the edge of and jumping out of their seats with a penalty shoot-out.

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FOOTBALL4GOOD TALKS

FIFA’S SECRETARY GENERAL
FATMA SAMOURA
SPEAKS FOOTBALL FOR GOOD WITH STREETFOOTBALLWORLD FOUNDER
JÜRGEN GRIESBECK

During the Football for Hope Forum 2017 in Kazan, Russia, Jürgen Griesbeck met with FIFA’s Secretary General Fatma Samoura to reflect on and discuss the three following topics:

• With over 3 billion fans, football is the largest social phenomenon on earth and there has never been a better time to get involved. What are the responsibilities of the Football Industry?

• Football & SDGs - where do they meet? How can football contribute to the UN Global Goals?

• What is the role of football for good to reshape the image and understanding of the planet’s most popular sport?

“TO ACHIEVE A GLOBAL REACH THROUGH FOOTBALL, WE CLEARLY NEED TO POSITION OURSELVES, FIFA, AS A MAIN PLAYER IN BUILDING THIS SYNERGY BETWEEN FOOTBALL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. WE KNOW WE CAN COUNT ON STREETFOOTBALLWORLD.”
Jürgen Griesbeck (JG): You came from outside FIFA, from outside the world of football; looking at the social phenomenon of football, where more than 3 billion people are passionate about the game, where do you see the responsibility of the football industry?

Fatma Samoura (FS): I would say that the football industry has to do its job and it has to do it well. And the primary responsibility of FIFA - the government body of football - is to make sure that we respect governance principles but, more especially, that we develop and grow the game and make it accessible to all. Through the FIFA Vision 2.0 we have clearly defined where we would like FIFA to be in 5-10 years. How many people we would like to see being part of the fans’ experience, how many coaches, how many referees we would like to see in training. What we want to do through the Forward Programme is take a very strong stand in terms of diversity, by funding women’s competitions and by creating a division fully dedicated to women’s football with a strategy that will be available, hopefully, by the end of August. Through the reform we are also pushing for a more, let’s say, gender diverse football.

In the years to come we will be supporting our Member Associations more and more to abide by the highest standard level when it comes to football governance. This is really a part, not only because it reflects the ambition of the programmes of FIFA, but it’s the right thing to do.

JG: Over the last three days, we have actually been discussing the developments in the field in the framework of the Football for Hope Forum and, looking at the numbers, one of the aims of the FIFA Vision 2.0 is to invest 4 billion US Dollars into football over the next 10 years. Now, if we look back at the last 10 years in the field of football for good, more than 1 billion US Dollars of investment were generated outside the football industry by community-based organisations that are using football as a tool for social transformation. Taking into account that the world of football for good is driven mainly by NGOs that are not connected to the football industry, this is quite an impressive figure to say the least. Do you see that in the future there might be an interesting opportunity for a more systemic connection between, let’s say, the associated football industry and the world of football for good?

FS: Well, I think that the Football for Hope Forum, that the Sustainability and Diversity Department of FIFA, led by Federico (Addiechi), is supporting is really fundamental to consolidating the relationship between many stakeholders that are operating at the social front using football as a tool for development. The reference during the Forum to the UN Sustainable Development Goals is the right way to do it. We need that generic and global framework in order to really align ourselves with the international community’s commitment to really improving the life of billions of people around the globe.

I am aware that through the discussions of the past three days you have established a clear link with at least three of the SDGs. This means that not only through FIFA you will be leveraging additional interest but most probably also funding will come from other stakeholders from the global community. After this meeting I will visit the pavilion where UNAIDS is launching a campaign to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS, and this is a good example of partnerships that FIFA can help in bringing on board in order to have additional revenues generated.

When we talk about the funding that FIFA puts into development or into the education for football, it is already close to 90% of our yearly resources. In a cycle of 4 years we invest 3.6 billion dollars into the training of coaches, the organisation of competitions, the development of youth and youth tournaments and the overall overarching aim of the new FIFA leadership is really to bring back football into the core of the activities that we are conducting by dedicating the largest portion of our revenues through football.

With regards to Football for Hope, I cannot promise that there will be more funding available to FIFA because I think for this year we have dedicated 4.3 million dollars to this programme, out of which more than 3 million have already been disbursed.

We hope that by bringing on board other partners, through NGOs, through the local communities, through the UN, through our sponsors, we can really leverage additional revenues. To achieve a global reach through football we clearly need to position ourselves, FIFA, as a main player in building this synergy between football and social development. We know we can count on streetfootballworld and, through the publication of your magazine, we can really feature the job that football for development organisations are doing, for example, making people from Kenya identify with Fatuma (Horn of Africa Development Initiative, HOAIDI). Through football you can really promote social well-being, you can promote better health and you can promote better working conditions for young people and for women. This is something that we can sell, not only to FIFA, but to everybody that thinks that sport, especially football, represents one unrivalled tool to make social promotion.

JG: I’m happy to hear that you frame it within the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also a thing to be proud of and I think it adds to what should be on the agenda of FIFA to promote very proactively. Football for Hope has been instrumental to the development of football for good as what it is today. I’m really happy to hear that you say: “Yes we can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.”

FS: And, to be honest, I don’t need to be convinced that the experience we had through the Football for Hope programme really was a solution to everyone. I just had a chance two hours ago to listen to four different testimonials from participants of this forum, representatives from Football for Hope-supported NGOs. Honestly, seeing how the little money that FIFA is putting into it is changing the lives of the communities, that’s a really strong sign that for me to say: “Okay maybe we should be doing more.”

And definitely, knowing from my past experience how the power of football can really shape society and bring quality changes, you can count on my full support, no doubt.
“I THINK THAT THIS SHOULD REALLY BE THE WAY THAT FIFA IS POSITIONED IN THE FUTURE – NOT TRYING TO SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS, WE CAN’T DO IT WITH THE LITTLE MEANS WE HAVE, AND NGOS LIKE YOURS HAVE STRONGER CAPACITIES AND MORE EXPERIENCE DOING IT, BUT TRYING TO BRING IN AS MANY PARTNERS AS POSSIBLE.”

JG: Wonderful. During the last three days we have become very aware that the financial input of FIFA is important and it has been key, as I said, to the development of football for good as a field. What we saw is that we’re not exclusively looking at more investment but probably into more penetration within the football industry of the understanding that FIFA has, in a way that everybody contributes to a shared vision towards contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. So I think a lot of the responsibility could also be the advocacy within the industry to actually make it not just a “FIFA thing” but a “football thing.”

FS: Well, definitely, and I think that this is the kind of partnership that we are also promoting. I think that this should really be the way that FIFA is positioned in the future – not trying to solve all the problems. We can’t do it with the little means we have, and NGOs like yours have stronger capacities and more experience doing it, but trying to bring in as many partners as possible. For example, partnering with the big European leagues that have a strong programme and really want to invest in football; also partnering with the Ministries of Education and Ministries of Sport in order to really be part of the strategy of what the countries would like to use sport for, and the youth to really reshape society. I think that the missing link is that the football stakeholders are, most of the time, absent during the strategic decisions. For example, when a country decides to allocate the budget to sport and the majority of the countries who love football don’t have the means to invest in sports and education at the primary or secondary level, it is a big mistake that needs to be corrected. This is something we have discussed through the FIFA executive summit on football worldwide and we are now really trying to push the member organisations to get closer to the government. When it comes to developing football or using it as a social development tool the heavy lifting is done by the government. It’s the government who is building the infrastructure, who is maintaining the infrastructure, and who is funding the federation when the national team goes to a national or international competition.

We should be using that government power in order to, for example, work on the curricula, have football as a tool to promote health, to promote better social behaviour, to share values on discrimination, on racism, on intolerance. I believe we will be able to expand this work through our social responsibility programmes. This is the kind of new value we clearly have to contemplate, not only working with NGOs but working with big football stakeholders, working with sponsors, working with governments in order to really have a holistic understanding of how football can restore hope, can consolidate peace and can, for example, really prevent young people from joining extremist groups and give them the opportunity to be better citizens of the world.

JG: That’s what I wanted to stress when I was mentioning the 4 billion looking forward and the history of the 1 billion that has been raised by the NGO field. I think there is a huge potential to leverage the impact exponentially by connecting the two in a way that every part can play its role to their best capability. There are things FIFA, and only FIFA, can do and there are things only the NGOs can do and obviously the governments are a key component in order to scale, but I think there is a bright future ahead of us if we honestly join forces.

To finish, I would like to share my dream - and maybe we can continue this conversation in another moment: I wish all the football stakeholders acted towards a shared vision that is based by the collective ambition of maximising the impact of the power of football for good.

FS: And you can count on me to support you.
MEET PASIÓN PETARE, Caracas, Venezuela

PASIÓN PETARE WAS FOUNDED IN 2010. WITH 800,000 INHABITANTS, THE PETARE NEIGHBOURHOOD IS ONE OF THE LARGEST SLUMS IN LATIN AMERICA. IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST VIOLENT. UNSTABLE FAMILIES ARE COMMON AND YOUTH LACK OCCUPATION ALTERNATIVES.

Pasión Petare’s goal is to improve each participant’s psycho-social condition, promote gender equality and social inclusion, while providing vulnerable youth with social and motor skills in an adverse setting that is only worsened by broken homes and governmental neglect. It aims at supporting the physical, social and emotional development of its participants, and works around five projects: (i) training sessions, (ii) tournaments and leagues, (iii) the donation of football gear, (iv) training and development sessions for both coaches and parents, and (v) summer camps. These activities ensure that beneficiaries (aged 5-17) remain engaged year-round, thereby reducing participants’ idle time. Each initiative is free of charge and open to all children and teenagers. Pasión Petare’s vision is to be recognized globally as a replicable model of social integration through football.

Pasión Petare organises 2 Cups (Plumrose and SOMOS), 1 district tournament, sports clinics, regular training sessions, coach capacitation and Summer Camps. Among their activities, they manage the only girls’ league in the community. Mixed gender leagues are established for children aged 5 to 10. Additionally, the NGO is in charge of managing and planning the operations of 24 community schools’ football training sessions, spread across 7 pitches of their own.

Participants attend training lessons four times per week; matches are held every weekend. Youths train at six separate pitches. On an annual or biannual basis, Pasión Petare provides football gear to schools within the communities in which they implement their activities. Their main partners (CAF and Plumrose) sponsor the donation of gear.

The organisation leads development training and leadership building sessions for both coaches and parents. Teenagers from the older categories (i.e. 17 and older) are invited to participate in these training and leadership programmes.

Since 2012, Pasión Petare has organised sports activities as part of a Summer Camp (Plan Vacacional), which takes place during academic breaks, with the goal of keeping these children occupied during such breaks with fruitful activities to keep them off the streets and out of trouble. All of these activities are free of cost.

Pasión Petare’s work mainly focuses on children and teenagers from the inner-city (Sucre municipality) ranging between the ages of 5 to 17 years of age, including children with disabilities. With a lack of public spaces meant for cultural, leisure, or athletic activities, the importance of this project is highlighted by the abnormally high rates of juvenile delinquency in these neighbourhoods, and the fact that the majority of local children experience violence regularly while lacking familial support. As such, the average life expectancy for males in the community is shockingly low at 25 years.

Since 2010, Pasión PETARE has reached 2,275 participants, including children and teenagers of both genders. Over the last four years, around 70 coaches have been trained.
sixth annual east africa meeting

streetfootballworld operates throughout the entire African continent with subdivisions in West, South and East Africa to more adequately address the challenges specific to each region. The East Africa network, consisting of 17 organisations from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, came together from 23rd - 25th April to review and adapt the existing strategic plan to map a mutual path for the next three years.

football4good magazine caught up with streetfootballworld’s Africa Regional Manager, Paul Kelly, and some of the delegates after the meeting to find out more.
For the sixth annual East Africa Meeting, 16 people representing 10 East African network members travelled to Addis Ababa to attend the event hosted by their Ethiopian counterpart Sport the Bridge, an organisation that uses football to help street children resocialise, reintegrate with their families and get an education. As well as showcasing Sport The Bridge’s own work, CEO Lilyana Ahmed stressed the importance of the meeting as an opportunity for exchange: “To be part of the network is not the same as learning from others far away – it feels like all the members are so near in terms of geography and historically, so it makes it easy for Sport The Bridge to share with others.” Simply put: “Being together is stronger than being alone.”

The overarching vision of the East African network is to create a peaceful society where all young people can be empowered and have equal access to opportunities, health resources and education. These goals reflect the underlying challenges faced by the East African region, which has been hampered by conflict and instability for many years. The East African Community (EAC), a regional grouping of countries, acknowledges that the promotion of safety and security is key for regional prosperity, economic growth and poverty alleviation.

THE 2017-2019 REGIONAL STRATEGY

The first point on the agenda was to review and adapt the current 2012-2016 strategic plan, which serves as a framework for network development and will guide the process of cooperation between network members for the following three years.

As Johnny Nkoma, Executive Director of Tanzanian network member IDYDC (Iringa Development of Youth, Disabled and Children Care) stressed, one of the focuses of the past few years has been to increase the implementation of football3. Paul Kelly, pitched in to emphasise its importance: “East Africa is a region which has suffered from conflict for a number of years. Football and its message of peace promotion and gender equality is widely used by network members in East Africa to address these issues in a fun and engaging way for youth. In the future, it would be great to see a shared regional football3 project to which all network members are contributing.”

The new strategic plan spanning 2017-2019 therefore pledges to provide more opportunities for such joint projects. It also encourages network members to continue supporting each other’s work by sharing information around social topics of particular interest and delivering at least one knowledge exchange learning moment with another organisation. Several network members have also committed to aiding others organisationally through capacity development and workshops on Monitoring and Evaluation and financial management. A coordination team that oversees the engagement of the regional network saw its current members – TYS3A, HOID, Esperance and STB – re-elected.

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THE NEW STRATEGY’S MAIN FOCUS: PEACE PROMOTION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Thematically, the new strategy focuses first and foremost on the promotion of peace and social cohesion, as well as addressing further regional challenges, such as education and employability, disease burden, particularly with respect to HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and the effects of poor water, sanitation and hygiene practices as well as malnutrition.

During the discussions, the participants spoke about the most pressing issues of their local environment in order to exchange knowledge with which to form a regional approach.

Lilyana Ahmed, CEO of Sport The Bridge, noted that the host country of Ethiopia was particularly affected by educational and employment opportunities: “The literacy rate is very low and not even at 50% (…). Many children are not sent to school, but rather to participate in income generation for the family. To date, through partnerships with the BMZ and WASH United, network members in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda have benefited from capacity development programmes that promote advocacy, behaviour change, communication and human rights with respect to ‚Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene‘.

Unemployment or low wage employment has also become a challenge to the urban and rural community which results in a lot of young people leading difficult lives like street life in the cities and migration.”

Reflecting on the entire region, she identified unemployment and drug abuse as the main challenges currently affecting youth in East Africa: “Drug abuse is increasing, many are starting from high school time.” This, in turn, has a detrimental effect on education and employment through its inevitable increase of drop-out rates.

As a solution, she asserted her conviction in the power of “life skill education using sport as a teaching tool,” commenting that “although unemployment is the result of a macro-economic problem in each country, we believe that by bringing young people to a full competence of life skill, they will win back their life and become self-reliant.”

Enouce Ndeche, Executive Director of VAP (Vijana Amani Pamoja), added that: “Unless training is comprehensive to include complementary soft skills (leadership, communication, interpersonal relations and team work), on the job training, mentoring and job matching, it will have insignificant to no impact. We need more vocational training institutions that would provide employability and entrepreneurial skills to the youth so that we can curb the skyrocketing youth unemployment rates in East Africa.”

His own organisation, which operates in Kenya and is run entirely by dedicated volunteers, tackles another challenge affecting many others in the region: High disease burden with respect to HIV/AIDS and TB, malaria, effects of poor water, sanitation and hygiene practices and malnutrition. VAP’s “StopTB” programme offers a series of interactive activities to explore issues related to TB and gain skills like “critical thinking, communication, self-esteem and decision-making” to lead healthy lives.

TO BE PART OF THE NETWORK IS NOT THE SAME AS LEARNING FROM OTHERS FROM FAR AWAY – IT FEELS LIKE ALL THE MEMBERS ARE SO NEAR IN TERMS OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORICALLY, SO IT MAKES IT EASY FOR SPORT THE BRIDGE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS.”
YOU NG LEADERS WORK PLAN

Joining the network member delegates was Anthony Gitei, Youth Council Member from TYSA, who presented the Young Leaders Work Plan and received further guidance for its implementation. The plan sets in motion a regional youth leadership strategy building on initial discussions at Festival 16 in France and the previous East Africa Festival held in Rwanda.

Regional Manager Paul Kelly noted that: “the network members were impressed with the initiative shown by the young leaders and it was widely agreed that their contributions should be reflected in the East Africa strategic plan. They also suggested how the youth council could support networking by taking a lead in learning exchange programmes and by supporting more directly with the planning and delivery of the East Africa festival.”

The streetfootballworld youth coordination team was formed in December 2016 during the 1st Youth Summit in Kigali, Rwanda. It consists of 3 other young leaders from different streetfootballworld organisations in the East Africa Region:

- Henry Ssentamu – The Kids League, Uganda
- Jamila Mwinuka – IDYDC, Tanzania
- Hussein Badege – HOODI, Kenya

Anthony Gitei summarised that during their first planning meeting held on 12th April 2017 and hosted by TYSA in Kitale, Kenya, “We deliberated on youth issues within the region and came up with a draft framework for networking young people within the region and giving support - volunteering - to member organisations in their activities carried out during the year.”

In an overview, he presented the main outcomes of the meeting (see box right).

1. streetfootballworld organisations in the East Africa Region to create space for young people to volunteer and offer their expertise.
2. The sfw organisations to identify a “buddy member” responsible for working directly with the East Africa region youth coordination team for a period of time (e.g. 1-2 years).
3. The youth coordination team to develop a fundraising strategy for the Youth Programmes in the East Africa region and in close relationship with the “buddy” network member organisation.
4. The youth coordination team to create partnership opportunities for young people in the East Africa region through collaboration with corporates, organisations and institutions.
5. The youth coordination team to take a leading role in the planning and running of the East Africa Festival.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Beyond the board room, the participants also managed to fit a site visit and some cultural activities into their brimming schedule. According to Paul Kelly: “This meeting is also an opportunity to exchange, to get to know each other better and understand each other’s cultures.”

As well as seeing some sights during a bus tour and visiting the African Union Headquarters, the team literally got a taste of the place by trying traditional Ethiopian ‘Injera’ - a sourdough-risen flatbread.

The site visit included a training session with one of STB’s football teams composed of former street children and a life skills session with current street children. For Wenceslas Nyabenda, engaging and exchanging with these young individuals was one of the highlights of the entire meeting. He himself was once an “enfant des rue,” a “child of the streets,” as he phrased it and currently works as Technical Director at Griyjuja. The Burundi-based NGO uses football as an important tool for psychosocial support activities as well as for reintegration and to combat social stigma. “People forget that no one is born a street child – you become one and it is society that is responsible,” Nyabenda said emphatically.

To celebrate two productive days of exchange and strategising, the group gathered one last time for an evening of ‘Tibs’ - stir-fried beef cooked over an open fire - and traditional Ethiopian music, which had everyone dancing and fuelled their anticipation of the upcoming East Africa Festival scheduled for December 2017 and – as just agreed – to be hosted by the Centre des jeunes pour la Paix - Grand Lacs in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

PAUL KELLY
REGIONAL MANAGER
AFRICA

“At all East African Network events there is a general feeling of togetherness. The organisations in the region have been working together for a number of years and there was a fantastic spirit. The workshops were full of interesting feedback, challenging questions and new ideas.”

Paul started his football for good journey in 2008 by joining network member The Africaid Trust, which runs an innovative health promotion and youth empowerment programme called Whizkids United. “It was during my time at Whizkids that I learned that football can have the power to change communities and create impact in the lives of young people,” Paul noted. After a move to Cape Town and a short stint with an NGO called Operation Smile, Paul joined streetfootballworld in 2014.

He was initially involved in the delivery of the 20 Centres for 2010 project, which saw the construction of 20 education and health centres across Africa, each with its own 40 by 20 metre synthetic field. The Centres project has created a lasting social legacy following the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™ by building high quality safe spaces that enable network members to carry out their social development programmes.

In 2015, Paul completed a Masters’ degree in the Philosophy of Development Finance at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, having previously studied in the United States for his undergraduate degree. “Having worked in over 20 African countries I can say that I have a passion for the continent. Many young people I have met are creative and resourceful, trying to figure out new ways to overcome challenges and support their communities. It is fulfilling to know that the football for good movement can contribute to these efforts.”

In his current role as Africa Regional Manager he now supports streetfootballworld’s activities in 22 countries and over 40 partners across Sub-Saharan Africa. He is interested in measures which support network members to become more financially sustainable, particularly around socially-minded business and social enterprise development.
IN THE FIRST WEEK OF MAY, STREETFOOTBALLWORLD VISITED ‘CHILDREACH NEPAL’ IN SOUTH ASIA. THE TRIP WAS PART OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL FOREIGN OFFICE’S ‘SOUTH ASIA SPORT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAMME.’

Through streetfootballworld, 13 organisations in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have received project funding to support football for good in the region. Childreach Nepal is one of two organisations in the country to benefit from the programme.
OUR FIRST DAY IN NEPAL: ARRIVAL IN KATHMANDU

The landing in Kathmandu is spectacular: the Himalaya Mountains fly past the window as the plane begins its descent through the hills towards Kathmandu – a valley 1400 metres above sea level. Shortly before we hit the runway, a football pitch comes into view – it belongs to the army stationed at the airport. A promising start to our search for football in the country.

The airport itself is tiny and cramped; all baggage arrives on just three belts, but the travelers wait patiently for their bags to arrive. We are given a warm welcome by Prateek and Shamsher from Childreach Nepal, the organisation that will host us during the coming five intense days.

At their office, we meet the team and receive an introduction to their work – but not before we have read and signed their Child Protection policy, which is mandatory for all staff and visitors.

WE MEET CHILDREACH NEPAL

Childreach Nepal aims to transform public schools into community hubs, not only supporting teachers with capacity development, but also by organising football for good programmes once a week, run by young leader teams. The organisation has just recently started to use football (through a training session by streetfootballworld network member Slum Soccer) and is otherwise using the Coaches Across Continents curriculum. The organisation runs projects in three different districts – one of them high up in the mountains. Unfortunately, our visit to that site was cancelled because of security risks linked to the upcoming elections (the first in 20 years).

The main social challenges that Childreach Nepal aims to address are: Gender inequality, especially in terms of education; unsafe migration and trafficking; the authoritative, non-engaging educational system based on rote learning from books.

One of the first things we learn is that physical education in school does not actually involve physical exercise. Instead, it is about teaching the different rules of the games. The same applies to science – labs and science experiments are few and far between at Nepali schools. Most lessons are theory-driven and taught through books alone. This is the reason why Childreach Nepal invented the “beyond the books” campaign that helps teachers to improve their classes. Bringing football into schools is one aspect of it.

WE DECIDED TO MAKE THE SCHOOLS OUR MAIN AGENTS OF CHANGE, TURNING THEM INTO COMMUNITY HUBS.

For the football initiative, which is run in 12 public schools, Childreach Nepal has developed a multiplier approach: Two staff members act as Training Monitoring Officers – they oversee the whole project. From the community, youth mentors are recruited, who coordinate the implementation of activities within the schools. At each partner school, two “young leaders” are selected: one student and one young teacher. They receive training to run football for good sessions at the schools, which have set Friday afternoons aside for the activities.

Project Manager Prateek explains more about the approach:

“We decided to make the schools our main agents of change, turning them into community hubs. Creating separate community centres would have been a competition to the schools; in addition, the schools are already a contact point for all the parents; there is an existing relationship between the students, the teachers and the parents that can be utilised for their community outreach.”

Furthermore, the mentors act as agents of change beyond the school walls. They have been recruited from the community and feel a strong responsibility for it. The mentors are the first point of contact for the youth leaders of the schools; they monitor the implementation of activities and advise the youth leaders in programme implementation. On a personal level, the mentors have gained the respect of their communities. CRN deliberately selected young people who had finished school, but were not yet engaged in further education or employment. Through their new role and responsibilities they have now become role models.

The activities help the students to, quite literally, find their voice – on the football pitch and beyond. All sessions include an even number of boys and girls. Gender equality is at the heart of their work.
SECOND DAY: VISITING FOOTBALL TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN BHAKTAPUR

IN FOCUS: ASIA

IN BHAKTAPUR

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

VISITING FOOTBALL

Our second day brings us to Bhaktapur, a city an hour away from the capital, a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to one of Childreach Nepal’s programme sites.

On the schedule: A refresher training session and meeting with mentors and youth leaders from all partner schools, finishing with a football tournament between two district schools.

The sports ground belongs to the local football club. It is not clear if they actually use it for training; the ground is not in good condition, changing rooms cannot be used and the sanitary facilities would benefit from an upgrade. We meet the mentors and the youth leaders, some of whom have travelled far to get to the training. At first, it is impossible to tell the teachers and students apart, as the schools made sure to pick their youngest teachers for the projects.

Malali, 26, teaches English, science and physical education. Kamalchandra, 23, is a teacher at Shree Thangpal Dhap Secondary School in Sindhupalchok; his main subject is accounting.

“I was chosen because I am the youngest and most active teacher in my school, also in sports,” Kamalchandra explains, “and because I have a Child Protection workshop that they have given after the earthquake in Sindhupalchok. I really love the new curriculum as the usual teaching is only happening inside and through books. But if you go out on the field, it’s much more active for the students and the teacher. In a classroom, it is sometimes hard to speak about difficult topics, like HIV awareness. The students just shy away. But if you use a game, it is easier for them to understand the issue and to listen, because it is not embarrassing anymore.”

The training session kicks off with a warm-up from the Coaches Across Continents curriculum. It is not only a warm up for the bodies, but for the voices, as all activities encourage the players to either call something out or to introduce themselves to the person to whom they pass the ball.

In a short break, we speak to Angmo, 16, Sunita, 15, Anjana, 15, and Hasina, 14, all of them young leaders at their schools.

Hasina and Angmo both want to become scientists. Sunita would like to start a career in social work, with an organisation like Childreach Nepal, and Anjana would like to become both a doctor and a pilot. As she couldn’t decide what she liked more, she decided she could be both as, if there was a medical problem on one of the planes, she could help there, too.

When asked about what they liked about youth leadership they answered that it was good to teach the younger kids and their siblings and make them aware of problems and how to solve them. They all agreed that it is very helpful that they can teach without books, which is the common teaching method in Nepal, even for physical education. They enjoy spreading awareness with the help of sport.

When asked about the biggest challenges the girls in their community face, all of them mentioned the inequality between girls and boys, especially regarding education.

The parents say: Why should we invest in a girl and send her to a private school? She will marry and move to her husband’s family afterwards,” Anjana explained. “Boys can choose what to do, girls cannot.”

Sunita shared another common disparity in the treatment of each sex: “If a boy has a girlfriend, the family is very positive and starts teasing him about her, calling her the soon new daughter-in-law. But if a girl has a boyfriend, it’s taken up very negatively and the boy is suspected. It’s not seen positively by the family of the girl.”

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When the youth leaders like most about football are team-work and being active. “When you play, you have to be active and take quick decisions – this is also true in life and if you know how to do it in football, you will learn how to do it in life.”

At the end of the training, we join Anamika from Childreach Nepal on a stroll through Bhaktapur, a beautiful city full of old temples, which was badly hit by the earthquake in 2015.

It becomes clear that this natural disaster carved out a new era in history with the entire country affected. If you speak to people, their stories are either “before the earthquake” or “after the earthquake.” The violent tremors destroyed 800,000 houses and killed more than 8,000 people.

Almost exactly two years later, we still see many streets where the houses have not been rebuilt. At the UNESCO World Heritage site Bhaktapur, which holds the most important temples in Nepal, the reconstruction seems only just to have started. Outside the big cities, construction is still manual labour - and much of the hard work is done by women, carrying loads of bricks on their backs.

Anamika tells us that students are being offered jobs in construction, so that they drop out of school, not realising that these employment opportunities will terminate upon the completion of construction, leaving them without the necessary education to enter the very competitive (and mostly based on scholarships for those who can’t afford it) secondary education sector. Childreach Nepal strives to get these students back into school and also lobbies with the construction companies not to employ students.

After the earthquake, CRN was commissioned to help with the reconstruction of 12 schools; they had received financial support through Childreach International and international individual donors. The goal is to rebuild 100 classrooms, 16 of which have already been completed. CRN works closely together with the schools to construct the new classrooms according to their needs in terms of size and equipment.

That evening at the hotel, the football rules for the upcoming tournament are eagerly discussed among the youth leaders with mentor Sange, a 22-year-old young man from Sindhupalchok taking the lead:

“Before I met Childreach Nepal, football was only the usual game for me. 11-a-side, on a big pitch with a lot of competition. And never with girls. At first, I felt awkward playing with the girls, but that changed when I realised that girls can play, too! And now I really enjoy the mixed teams. Before we even started with football, I thought, why don’t we play together? In my role as a mentor, I really enjoy the work with the students, particularly working with the girls to encourage them to play.”

The young teacher Kamalchandra says: “With football, I like it especially that the students can make their own rules. That’s very new for them, because normally in sports, you have fixed rules you must follow. And the same is true in the schools. But here they have a choice.”

The group decides on the fixed rules for the games and writes them up in detail on two large sheets of paper to be pinned to the wall at the tournament. The additional rules will be decided upon by the players before the game. Roles are assigned before traditional Dhal Bhat dinner is served and everyone retires to their rooms.
THIRD DAY: FOOTBALL3 TOURNAMENT IN BHAKTAPUR

THE FOLLOWING DAY IN BHAKTAPUR GREETS US WITH SUNSHINE AND HEAT – CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR THE PLANNED TOURNAMENT.

We are up early to join the preparation of the field. Miraculously, the dusty pitch is being transformed into two football3 fields just with the help of some quickly purchased charcoal and a few cones. The teams arrive and are divided into mixed teams by their youth mentors. The challenges about being heard in a big group, which the girls mentioned the day before, become obvious, but they all manage to set up their teams.

The atmosphere at the tournament is very positive, teams don’t cheer just for their classmates, but for all participating teams. The girls lead the cheering, singing and shouting at the top of their voices throughout the entire game.

During the semi-finals and finals, the crowd of students erupts in never-ending choruses and at the end the lucky winner, second and third placed teams receive their trophies. But, as is usual at a football3 tournament, the biggest trophy is received by the team that wins the Fair Play Award.

While watching the games, Project Manager Prateek tells us about the change the programme brings. One of Childreach Nepal’s first initiatives was the “my school, my voice” student parliament, that regularly brought together student representatives from the partner schools to discuss common issues. Today, all of these representatives are also part of the sports initiative. One of the biggest challenges they identified was the fact that corporal punishment is still common in schools all over Nepal. For this reason, these young people launched a petition to convince their head teachers to ban corporal punishment. Their lobbying was successful and, today, corporal punishment is banned at all of Childreach Nepal’s partner schools.

FOURTH DAY: RETURN TO KATHMANDU

Back in Kathmandu, we welcome representatives from the other Nepal organisation supported by the German Federal Foreign Office funding programme, Lalitpur Sports Training Centre. The two organisations had previously met at the kick-off workshop held by streetfootballworld in India.

LSTC teamed up with streetfootballworld network member Mifalot to add a social component to their training. The decision was taken to focus on disability, as a topic that is still taboo in Nepal. “The exercises are an eye-opener for the children,” Naresh Byanjankar from LSTC explains. “They have experienced that it is possible to play football even with a disability.” LSTC hope to introduce the curriculum at many youth clubs across the country.

Both organisations compare notes about their projects and it becomes clear that there is ripe potential for collaboration with Childreach Nepal, that represents the side of social work and LSTC bringing in football expertise. We hope that this meeting will spark further exchange in the future.

On this last day, we visit Swayambhunat, commonly called the monkey temple, which overlooks Kathmandu and its valley. On clear days, you can see the Himalayan mountain range from here, but clear days are rare since road construction work covers the city in dust at all times.

We take a moment to reflect upon our visit and all of the positive impressions we have gathered. While football might not be very strong in Nepal (the country’s FIFA ranking is 173 of 211), football for good seems to have strong potential. Football won’t rebuild the houses that were destroyed by the earthquake, but it can help to create a future society, where students don’t have to work at construction sites and girls are not sent abroad to work due to lacking opportunities in their own country. Both of the organisations we met have developed a replicable intervention model, one for schools and one for clubs, which could help to spread the approach to the rest of the country.

On the way to the airport, a giant football on a pillar comes into view – nobody knows what it stands for. We take it as the final sign that football for good is literally being put on a pedestal in Nepal.
It all began in 2010, when streetfootballworld conducted a study on the most diverse actors involved in the football for development sector in Brazil, the results of which were published in 2012 as the ‘Mapping of Civil Society Organisations, Public Policies, Donors and Scientific Contributions in the Field of Football for Social Development.’ The study helped to identify a scenario with great potential for the exchange of knowledge, debates on relevant themes and other levels of partnership. This marked the beginning of the Learning Community of Football for Development (LC).

Since then, the LC has grown to become the largest national network of organisations that use football for development purposes, bringing together nearly 30 institutions from all over Brazil that regularly cooperate, share information, and seek out new opportunities for collaboration. According to the LC, football and human rights are inextricably linked. The practice of football – and sports in general – is a fundamental human right that should be guaranteed by law. Football itself is used by the LC to promote human rights: in particular, the rights of children and adolescents, the right to development and rights related to health, education and employment.

From 24th to 26th May 2017, the Learning Community of Football for Development held its 10th meeting in the city of João Pessoa, in the northeast of Brazil. Local network member Beira da Linha helped to host the event, which brought together 20 representatives from all across the country.

The meeting provided the opportunity for organisations to exchange best practices, discuss internal challenges, visit local projects and learn more about relevant social development topics, such as international fundraising for NGOs. Participants obtained valuable information on a variety of strategies for funding in a seminar led by Concern Internationals’ staff member Angela Bright.

During the meeting, the network members visited two different programmes offered by Beira da Linha, the organisation that helped to host the event. In these programmes, football and other sports activities are implemented on a regular basis, in combination with IT sessions, classes for the improvement of school performance, and workshops on employability (e.g. CV writing). Their work engages both female and male children and adolescents.

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Since the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in March 2011, more than 11 million people – roughly half of the pre-crisis population – have fled their homes, according to United Nations statistics. Almost five million have found shelter beyond the borders of their country, most of them seeking refuge in neighbouring states. In Jordan alone 650,000 displaced Syrian nationals were registered by UNHCR. Here, the majority of Syrians lives in urban regions, the Northern provinces, in Amman and its urban sprawl. The large number of refugees entering Jordan, a country with a population of only around 8 million, has posed an immense strain to economic, educational, infra- and social structures. The resulting tensions have hit disadvantaged groups like children, youth and young women particularly hard.

To promote social cohesion, peaceful relations and trauma relief, it is necessary to create an environment in which the most fundamental human rights are granted. This is where sport – and football, in particular – can serve as an effective tool to positively transform the roles of young refugees in society, offer them fresh perspectives and pave their way to an independent future.
TO DATE AZRAQ REFUGEE CAMP HARDLY OFFERS ANY PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH. WITH THE KICK OFF OF ‘PLAYING FOR A COMMON FUTURE’ IN JUNE 2017, THIS IS SET TO CHANGE.

streetfootballworld and two local implementing partners joined forces in 2014 and continue to employ efforts that are fostering the medium- and long-term resilience of refugee children and youth through football, working in refugee host communities and camps. ‘Playing for a Common Future: Dialogue Through Football’ follows in the footsteps of the ‘Kick for Hope 2014’ programme which had been instigated with Asian Football Development Project (AFDP), and Cross Cultures Project Association (CCPA) to contribute to peace-building, conflict-solving and the life skills of the inhabitants of Jordan’s Za’atari refugee camp.

In FOOTBALL4GOOD Magazine’s January 2017 issue, we reported on our visit to Za’atari, during which we were happy to learn that a football league had mushroomed since the project’s initiation to span all of the camp’s 12 districts and had improved gender relations with the inclusion of numerous girls and women. Back then, it was our hope to engage further with local NGOs to expand the project to Azraq, the second largest camp after Za’atari. In the second half of 2016, the population of Azraq increased by almost 20,000, with more people arriving daily. To date such facilities do not exist in Azraq or in most host communities.

With the kick off of ‘Playing for a Common Future’ in June 2017, this is set to change. Together with local partners, regional priorities have been developed to implement programmes in Azraq refugee camp but also in 72 host communities spread across five regions. Over a two-year period – until May 2019 – 16,610 Syrian, Iraqi and Jordanian children and youths between the ages of 6 and 17 will be reached through activities in Azraq refugee camp but also in 72 host communities and camps.

Specific learning methods will be employed to help these young people overcome trauma and to teach them how to identify destructive patterns of behaviour. The activities will connect participants beyond the project’s scope through shared play and laughter and in overcoming common challenges. By means of this project, young people will be empowered and inspired to become leaders, value respect and peaceful dialogue and to strive for a better education.

PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING

Fundamental to the methodology of the project will be the involvement of youth leaders. With the conflict-solving and dialogue-promoting football3 method, 610 young coaches between the ages of 18 and 30 will be trained as volunteer peace leaders. They, along with their peers, will work hand-in-hand with the project coordinators to plan, develop and implement impactful youth-oriented programmes.

FOCUS ON GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

For girls and young women to be able to participate, “cultural issues must be taken into consideration,” explains Carine N’Koue, Project Coordinator for AFDP: “female instructors will be employed and the places where they play will be separated and covered from view. The scheduled time of training sessions will also be taken into consideration, Carine adds, as “they will need to walk back home and could not do so at the end of the day.” To date, such facilities do not exist in Azraq or in most host communities.

SAFE ZONES

Developing safe zones will increase the social impact of the project in the communities by strengthening the programmes through providing infrastructure and a base from which to deliver these programmes for both boys and girls. This will take place in cooperation with partners such as AFDP and the Jordanian Football Association (JFA).

Project Coordinator Carine N’Koue looks forward to following the progress and effects along the two-year trajectory of the programme that will “engage children and young Syrians – boys and girls – in an appropriate, safe and supervised environment” and – in addition to teaching them football skills and the values associated with the sport of respect, fair play, team spirit and solidarity, the programme will also offer them a place “where they can remain children and have some fun.”
THE GOOD GANG OF NEW YORK

New York. The city of 8.4 million people with a combined wealth of over $300 billion is commonly referred to as the world’s capital for the ultra rich. While the metropolis is recognized for its cultural wealth, economic prowess symbolised by majestic skyscrapers stretching proudly up into the clouds, and iconic tourist attractions, another image reveals itself beneath the city’s glossy veneer. This is where the side of New York City lies that doesn’t make the front of postcards, with its thousands of stories, many of which remain untold.

Nestled in the corner of one of the world’s most bustling and thriving cities lives a community of immigrants, refugees, and those looking for a better life. We had the opportunity to take a look into a neighbourhood yearning for change and demonstrating true resilience. East Harlem, more commonly referred to as “El Barrio,” quite simply “the neighbourhood,” is comprised of residents from across the globe, a diverse melting pot of cultures. Over 50% of its total population is of Hispanic descent. The neighbourhood’s energy is electric, on every block or store front there is a different cuisine and culture represented.

We had the pleasure to talk with Stephen Lee Costa, a 17-year-old young leader from ‘City in the Community’ (CITC), the charity proudly supported by New York City FC. Stephen is involved in CITC’s Saturday Night Lights (SNL), a violence prevention and youth development programme in East Harlem that is funded by the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office. New York City has the largest public housing authority in the United States and East Harlem hosts the second highest concentration of public housing projects in the nation. These housing complexes breed some of the city’s most violent gangs. In one of New York city’s most complex and diverse neighbourhoods, CITC is using football to provide safe places to play during times when crime levels are at their highest.

Stephen’s face lights up when he replays one of his first – and certainly one of his favourite – football memories in his mind. He was a shy 5-year-old and had recently transferred to a brand new elementary school where he knew no one and mainly kept to himself.

During his first week, he found the gym down the hall from his main classroom. He immediately took the ball out of his backpack and began to kick around. Slowly one, two, then five of his peers joined him on the pitch. Stephen recalls that moment as pure “freedom.” That was the first time he felt that a football pitch could be a safe haven.

This theme continued throughout his life. 11 years later, Stephen today stands tall at 5’11 and has played in more gyms, fields, and concrete corners of New York City than he can even remember. While most things in his life have changed, one thing has stayed the same - the football field is his refuge.

Even though he is no longer building a community in his elementary school gym, a similar story is unfolding 10 blocks north in a gym in East Harlem. Stephen is a regular at ‘Saturday Night Lights’, a crime and gang prevention programme targeted at 11–18 year olds living in the East Harlem community. At the core of the programme, football sessions are offered on Friday and Saturday nights, peak times for the city’s crime rates. It also hosts a variety of support and wrap-around services off the pitch centered on developing the participants’ physical, emotional and social skills.

Stephen describes his SNL community by mentioning that his friends there come from Mexican, Ecuadorian, Puerto Rican, and Yemeni backgrounds. Stephen reflects that many of his peers from school are divided by race or by housing projects, but that the culture of SNL is a refreshing contrast to the realities existing outside the gym. Stephen shares that: “We are all one. We are a family, there is no other way to put it. When you walk in the gym you just feel it - it’s good vibes all around.”

For the entire duration of his life, Stephen has lived two blocks away from the front door of SNL. His home is an apartment that he shares with his sister, his mother and father. Besides soccer, he claims that his family is his “rock.”
Stephen shares stories about his mother and how he wants to succeed in life to bring a smile to her face.

Stephen used to be closely connected to life on the streets but, once he joined the football programme, he learned that there is a positive community beyond the projects, one comprised of football lovers just like him, “I’d rather be here improving myself, than be out on the streets. These streets aren’t going to lead you nowhere,” he says earnestly.

On a Friday in March of 2016, this message rang loud and clear for the SNL community. Just as the programme opened its doors on a crisp early Spring day, a teenager, Stephen’s friend since elementary school, was shot in the head - simply because he walked through the wrong housing complex. The shooting was just steps away from the SNL programme site.

The tragedy shook Stephen and the whole of SNL to the core. It came as a reminder that there is much work left to be done and underlined the importance of having safe spaces, especially during times in the week when teenagers are most vulnerable.

Sadly, this is not a one-off story in the East Harlem community, but Stephen referred to the SNL community as a positive gang, a gang that empowers you to do better and be a better person: “You grow with your teammates. You get better together. These people are my blood. Every single touch and laugh, I cherish every single moment.”

With mentorship, college readiness programming, and top notch football sessions on offer as opposed to drug trafficking and gun violence, Stephen jokes about being part of a gang he feels proud of; one that actually holds true to its promises and has his best interests at heart.

Stephen is now entering into his senior year of high school and plans to play soccer in college from Autumn 2018. Just as he did when he was a 5-year-old at the beginning of elementary school, Stephen dreams of becoming a professional soccer player. He plans to study Psychology in college, as he is interested in learning more about the human brain. He hopes to be able to better understand what triggers people’s emotions and causes them to react in certain ways.

Stephen is paving his own way to success, and is committed to not veering off the track and to staying on the road leading him forward.
A RAYAN OF HOPE:

HOW FOOTBALL TURNED A TIMID 13-YEAR-OLD INTO A HARD-HEADED GOALKEEPER AND A VERY WISHFUL THINKER.
It is almost as though the clocks in their home strike “football” – Zeinab Atiya Atiye doesn’t need to ask her daughter if she has training. When football is on the day’s schedule, Rayan wakes up especially early, jumping out of bed to finish her household chores in record time. The softly spoken but determined young girl only became acquainted with the sport at the beginning of February but, ever since, she has been addicted.

A “Sports Learning Course” introduced her to the beautiful game where she took part in a workshop of 16 sessions over the duration of one and a half months. Each was divided into two parts, the first dedicated to communication and conflict management skills, the second focused on football implementation. The project was carried out by “Noon Center,” a local partner of streetfootballworld’s network member ANERA (American Near East Refugee Aid), opened by two girls who noticed that many children in Al Maa’shouk were facing educational issues, and that they spent many hours of the day on the street. They responded by creating after-school support and recreational activities.

Rayan Ahmad Atiya lives with her parents and three brothers in Al Maa’shouk, not a refugee camp, but a so-called “gathering” of Syrian and Palestinian refugees, in the town of Tyre, 83 kilometres south of Beirut. Nestled between the El-Buss and El-Shamali refugee camps, it houses around 3,500 people, the majority originally from Acre and Safed.

Worldwide over seven million Palestinians have been displaced. Since the 1948 Al Nakba and exodus which uprooted over 700,000 people, Lebanon has hosted large numbers of Palestinian refugees. Another expulsion in 1967 forced a further 300,000 people to flee their homeland. Figures fluctuate, but a report released by UNRWA in 2014 mentions 450,000 Palestinians residing in Lebanon – most of whom live under critical and hazardous conditions on social, economic and political levels. Lebanon itself has suffered war, economic and political instability, making the country ill equipped to host the largest per capita population of refugees in the world.

Most of the country’s arrivals from Palestine live in one of 12 refugee camps spread across Lebanon’s six governorates. Others live in “residential clusters” or, like Rayan, in a “gathering”. Many of the refugees have already been here for more than a generation. Rayan was born in Al Maa’shouk, as was her mother.

Growing up in the conservative surroundings of Al Maa’shouk, Rayan had been taught to believe that football was “haram” - it simply wasn’t an activity suitable for girls. She only joined the course in February because it was led by an organisation she knew well and she had been involved in their after-school activities.

"On the first day of football I was excited, but also a bit scared," she admits. But once she stepped onto the pitch and started playing, one by one, all of her fears disappeared. Determination and ambition took their place. Her own place in the mixed team was something she and the other girls had to battle for.

When repeatedly forced by the boys to play in defence, Rayan and the other girls decided that enough was enough. “If you force us to play in this position again, we will defend badly,” the girls said. Finding themselves in a proverbial corner, the boys had no choice but to relent.

Rayan had set her sights on the goal and nothing would stop her from taking her place in front of it. She enjoys being a striker and, different from many of her teammates, is also a keen penalty shooter, but her main aim: to be a goalkeeper. “I wanted to prove to the boys that I can also defend the goal not just they can do it,” she says defiantly. After all, she adds: “Football has taught me that girls and boys are equal.”

Her mother says proudly that this isn’t the only lesson Rayan has learned. “She has become more confident, expresses herself much more than before," Zeinab noticed. Since taking up the sport, Rayan’s performance at school has also improved, much to the relief of her parents, as within the Palestinian communities drop-out rates are alarmingly high. At only 14, Rayan’s brother is part of the sad statistic.
Football has given Rayan hope and confidence to believe in a different future. Only a few months ago, she almost allowed community taboos and her father’s reluctance to let her play, block her path. Luckily, her mother can be very persuasive. With some gentle coaxing Rayan’s father gave his consent.

When Rayan’s friends saw her play, they wanted to follow suit and enlisted her mother’s help – if she had convinced her husband, perhaps she could also talk to their parents. Thanks to Zeinab’s powers of persuasion, the group of girls attending football training has since grown.

The boys on the team have come to accept their female teammates: “Now they even choose girls for their teams,” Rayan says, stating that this very fact is noteworthy. Only when new boys join the group, do gender relations have to be re-negotiated. But with the help of their female trainer, Nazha, and a few football’s rules stipulating that penalties must only be taken by girls, they soon fall into line.

Rayan looks up to Nazha as an important role model and aims to be like her when she is older. She too wants to organise training sessions, Rayan says, and educate others.

Her other idol is her father, a DJ and a painter. Rayan has inherited his artistic talent and learned from him by imitating his style. When she isn’t on the pitch she is at her desk producing new “masterpieces” and every time her school hosts a fair, Rayan says, she is commissioned to produce some pictures.

But it is only due to her most recently acquired hobby – football – that Rayan believed she could more seriously pursue her other creative interest: singing. When playing football, she says: “What is most important is to enjoy it and not necessarily to win.” It is a different matter when it comes to singing. She dreams of scoring first place in the television talent show ‘The Voice of Lebanon.’

Perhaps then she will become famous and have the chance to meet her football idols from FC Barcelona, she giggles, momentarily swept away by her daydream. Then, she may also even be able to afford a “real” football kit. For now, she must continue to attend training in jeans and her trusted converse trainers.

Rayan’s dreams don’t end there: Another of her greatest wishes is to join her grandmother in the United States. However, her lack of official papers makes both the country and the realisation of her wish a distant reality.

The young teenager certainly has a ready supply of dreams. Now she finally believes that some of them are within reach and that she can do anything. Apart from, perhaps, riding a bike. Though Rayan may now play football, allowing her to pedal through the streets of Al Ma’ashouk is not something her parents are ready to push.
HOW DO YOU SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO LACK BOTH OPPORTUNITIES AND MOTIVATION IN THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORKING LIFE?

WE MEET RUBEN SWITHA MENDY, A 23-YEAR-OLD FROM BERLIN, WHO HAS FOUND BOTH IN FOOTBALL AND THROUGH LOCAL NGOs HELPING HIM TO KICK START HIS PROFESSIONAL LIFE.
Economic and employment struggles are ingrained in Ruben’s family history. His mother emigrated from Mozambique to Portugal, then later to Germany in search of better job opportunities. Though he was born in Portugal, Ruben was four years old when he arrived in Berlin, and calls Neukölln – a culturally and socially diverse district in the south-eastern part of the city – his home.

Ruben Switha Mendy shares many of the same challenges affecting other people of his age: deciding what profession to pursue, finding the motivation to search for a job, tackling family and societal problems blocking his path. But, different from many of his peers, he has found a network of support through a number of street football projects. Through hearsay he found out about streetfootballworld’s network member RheinFlanke and joined their “Jump Up” programme geared towards supporting young people to gain valuable job experience.

Since I have been at RheinFlanke, my life has been moving on with positivity.

The programme has helped him, Ruben says, to find his strengths, determine where his interests lie and, by combining the two, give him a better idea of what career to pursue. He stresses how devoted his mentors – Eileen and David – have been: “They’re not just there for you during working hours, but you can also reach them when they’re not working. They always cheer you up when you’re not happy and are just there for you,” Ruben smiles. He has gone to them for help with family issues or for advice when he encountered debt.

Ruben says that everyone at RheinFlanke is a friend and that he has come to see them as a small family. “Since I have been here, my life has been moving on with positivity. In my private life I have had bad times, but when I approach Eileen and Daniel they help me to solve my problems bit by bit, and then eventually things start looking up, and suddenly you have an internship and you see people are satisfied with you, and finally, you are also happy with yourself.”
RHEINFLANKE’S COMBINATION OF EMPLOYABILITY AND FOOTBALL IS A WAY FOR HIM TO TRANSFER HIS SKILLS ON THE PITCH TO THE WORK PLACE

So far, Ruben has worked as an electronic technician for three months, in a kindergarten for nine weeks and, most recently, has done an internship as a street football worker at an organisation called buntkicktgut, an intercultural street football league for children and young people. He particularly enjoyed the atmosphere and working together with the people there.

Along his meandering job path, experiences like this have helped Ruben to discover that he would like to work together with children and young people and help them through football. He began to train friends in his free time, who encouraged him in his abilities as a coach. They also praised his style of football and the way he dribbles past his opponents, which was an enormous boost for Ruben’s self-confidence.

Football has always played a significant role in the 23-year-old’s life. Ruben started as a child, using every break-time at school to kick around on the pitch. Back then, he was weighing up his future career options and trying to decide between becoming a professional footballer, a fireman – or a superhero. Football seemed to him the most promising choice in economic terms - a footballer’s salary would certainly put an end to the family’s financial problems.

It was also at school that Ruben was introduced to “Panna” – a style of football where players tackle their opponents in such a way in order to push the ball between their legs. When he was 14, a friend trained him for a year and motivated him to practise even harder and learn more “special moves.” It was the start of his fascination with ‘freestyle football’ and Ruben has since spent hours on the pitch perfecting his skills. Ruben’s particular speciality and favourite are ‘ground moves,’ a series of movements close to the ground – as the name suggests – that distract the opponent. Via social media, he regularly shares photos and videos of himself in action with this “football tomfoolery”. This has earned him a number of followers and even drew the attention of Adidas, who cast him to star in an advert. This has earned him a number of followers and even drew the attention of Adidas, who cast him to star in an advert.

Ruben often freestyles his way across Germany to attend and give workshops in cities like Hamburg and Munich, showing others how to dance with the ball. When he is not “on tour”, he can often be found at the Adidas Base centre in Berlin. However, he says: “you can’t go there too often or people will copy your moves,” adding that it is also important for him to have a few secret tricks up his sleeve to continue being able to dupe his opponent.

After performing a particularly difficult or original move, children often approach him asking for an autograph or to be taught. Being regarded as a role model and as someone who has knowledge that can be passed on makes Ruben smile with happiness. The fact that he has cultivated his own style and earned renown beyond Berlin also fills his mother with pride. That is, when she isn’t worried about him getting injured, Ruben adds laughing it off.

Though the risk is always present, for Ruben, it is outweighed by football’s many gains. The sport helps him to deal with the challenges that life confronts him with. And people. “There are many people I really don’t like, but on the pitch it doesn’t matter, I don’t even think about why I don’t like them, I just think about football.”

For Ruben, everyone on the pitch is the same. There are no differences at all. He says that playing football is not only a distraction from his everyday troubles, the game has also enabled him to more easily cope with his feelings. Being on the pitch helps him to clear his head, he says. It is also a place, where he can just be himself. Ruben does not have a favourite team or player and doesn’t believe in idols: “You can attempt to imitate a favourite football player, but in the end you can’t be him, you are two different people. I want to be my own kind of player.”

“WHEN IT COMES TO FOOTBALL, I AM ALL OVER IT, EVEN IN UNIMPORTANT MATCHES I WILL GIVE 120%.”

Being a professional footballer, as he once dreamed as a child, is something he now realises will never become a reality. His hopes for the future are now similar to those of most people, he says: “a house, a family,” and – above all – a life where he doesn’t need to worry about money. To do so, he must first find a job. For him, RheinFlanke’s combination of employability and football is a way for him to transfer his skills on the pitch to the work place: “When it comes to football, I am all over it, even in unimportant matches I will give 120%.”
The year was 1967, and a brutal civil war had erupted in Nigeria between the federal government and the state of the Republic of Biafra, located along the country’s south eastern coast. The Igbo people of Biafra felt that the Northern-dominated federal government was no longer representing their aspirations, and so sought to secede. What followed were three years of violence and famine throughout Nigeria along ethnic and cultural lines. A country of more than 60 million people consisting of over 300 differing ethnic and cultural groups, finding common ground as a means of ending such atrocities was no easy task. That is, until, Pelé arrived on the scene.

Edson Arantes do Nascimento, more often known as Pelé, needs no introduction, as was noted by former US President Ronald Reagan when he said: “I am Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America. But you don’t need to introduce yourself, because everyone knows who Pelé is.” That was in 1982, years after Pelé had been first been referred to as the “best footballer in history,” and about 15 years after his appearance in Nigeria with his club team, Santos, had silenced Nigeria’s battle fields for 48 hours.

In 1967, the Brazilian was the face of the “beautiful sport,” an expression he has been credited with coining. He had already won two world championships for Brazil and was well on his way to the third. As a result of his global popularity, Santos decided to embark on a world tour, taking full advantage of the fact that there wasn’t a football fan in the world that wouldn’t jump at the opportunity to see their most famous player in action. In January of 1967, their tour had come to Africa, with games scheduled in The Congo, Mozambique, Ghana, Algeria, and Nigeria.

On January 26 of that year, when Santos landed in Nigeria for their game against the Nigerian National Team, known as the Green Eagles, Nigeria’s two warring factions agreed that a 48 hour ceasefire was in order. What’s more, the people responsible for the safety of attendees were the military officers from both sides, lining up around the Lagos City Stadium, weapons in hand, side by side, with the aim of protecting all members of the crowd regardless of ethnic or political division. In other words, everyone who attended this match had only one goal in mind: to enjoy 90 minutes of beautiful football with friends and enemies alike.

There was no violence in the stadium, there were no arrests, only football fans that had been brought together by a shared passion. And so it went. Crowds celebrated as the game ended in a draw with Pelé scoring two goals for Santos, both of which were met with resounding applause. Santos took off for their next match and, within days, the fighting between the Nigerian government and the Biafran soldiers had resumed. Yet it was Pelé and his mastery of the beautiful game that had, albeit temporarily, united people of different backgrounds and mindsets, giving them a taste of peace and companionship in an otherwise dark and dreary period of history.

Football has the power to establish friendships, enable people to build confidence, and contribute to a healthy lifestyle. But it also has the persuasive ability to convince soldiers to put down their guns and gather with perceived enemies in celebration of an athletic artist, one who reminds us that, even in times of difficulty, beauty persists.
FOOTBALL4GOOD & PHOTOGRAPHY

A DIFFERENT PICTURE OF THE REFUGEE CRISIS

In June, streetfootballworld was in Greece to bring into focus the impact of the UEFA Foundation for Children’s Refugee Support Programme with a photo project. Images accompanied by testimonials showcase the power of football to not only empower and give hope, but also promote social integration and conciliation.

The journey was the third part of a series of site visits to supported football programmes that also took streetfootballworld and photographer Fredrik Clement to Ireland and Germany. Join us on an expedition to explore through the lens of Clement’s camera how football has shaped the lives of refugees and their host communities on Lesbos and in Athens...
We arrive at the gates of Kara Tepe to be greeted by Adil Izemrane, “Head of Mission Lesbos” for Movement on the Ground, the Dutch NGO hosting us during our stay. After ushering us past the unambiguous “no photos” signs and taking us for registration (allowing Fredrik to turn a blind eye to the signs when directing his lens towards football-related activities), he gives us a tour of the site.

The first thing we learn: “It’s not a refugee camp… it’s a hospitality centre. We acknowledge that the people here are human capital: they all have talents, a profession, dreams…” Movement on the Ground’s mission is to transform the camp into a “campus,” which Adil defines as a place where life can flourish. One day, he hopes that he and his colleagues can withdraw and that Kara Tepe will then be a “normal” village.

Adil adds: “If you are ill, we don’t send you to a chicken farm to heal, you’re sent to hospital, because that’s where you get the best care. So why are we putting people who come from very difficult circumstances in even more difficult circumstances. To heal, they should have at least the same conditions as we have.”

“We are dealing with a group of sensitive people,” Adil explains. Kara Tepe is the residence of vulnerable people as assessed by uNHCR, among them: large families, single parents, unaccompanied youth, shipwreck survivors, disabled people. We notice the cacophonous presence of a large number of children and youth. The “camp” has a capacity of around 1700 and is currently home to 800 people, the majority from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

At present, the work of Movement on the Ground at Kara Tepe focuses on three main areas: Providing food, using the island’s abundance of sun to generate electricity through solar power, and – of course – football training sessions. Five days a week around 200 children and youth are engaged in football programmes using football3.

ROLL FILM 1: LESBOS

BLURRED IMAGES OF AN ISLAND COME INTO FOCUS

The archaic Greek lyric poet Sappho, best known for her works about love and women, cultivated an alluring image of Lesbos, draping the island in an erotic mystique that exerted a magnetic pull on those keen to take a brazen glimpse beneath the toga.

A more desperate, plight-driven form of longing coupled with the island’s geographic location drew in others seeking a safe haven: Most recently, more than 700,000 refugees fleeing conflict and poverty arrived on the island with a population of 80,000 people. Lesbos lies in the east Aegean Sea only 10 kilometres away from the Turkish coast – a stretch of water with a deceptively calm azure is in self-denial of its deadly currents. The crossing is treacherously tempting.

One who did not make it that far was three-year old Aylan Kurdi, whose body washed up on a Turkish beach on 2nd September 2015. Images that tore a deep furrow through social and news media landscapes, breaking one of the “golden rules” of media publishing – to never print images of dead children – and the hearts of beholders the world over. A potent, yet brutal testimony to the power of photography that sparked political debate and policy change, sent an informal invitation to international aid agencies and to many volunteers to set off for the island that had become the focal point of the world’s perception of the refugee crisis. One of them was Adil Izemrane, now Head of Mission on Lesbos for Dutch NGO ‘Movement on the Ground,’ who exchanged his flight ticket to the party island of Ibiza for a single fare to Lesbos.

After the Eu-Turkey deal came into force on 20th March 2016 many NGOs thought that their work was done and left, but Adil and Movement on the Ground were among those who stayed to help the people whom the treaty had left stranded in free-roaming insular captivity.

FIRST SNAP-SHOT IMPRESSIONS: MEETING ‘MOVEMENT ON THE GROUND’ AT KARA TEPE

One of our first views of Lesbos is Mytilini – the island’s “capital” – a ship in a bottle idyll that every Greek coastal town with any self-respect should offer: a string of seafood restaurants, fishing boats bobbing gently in the harbour, unfortunate octopi draped over washing lines. A top coating of tourist brochure beauty that becomes brittle when a couple of shark-grey Frontex boats (cannons hidden beneath protective sheaths) come into focus at the far end of the harbour, more patrolling in the distance. A taxi ride at breakneck speed takes us further north in the direction of Kara Tepe refugee camp. A blur of brutally relevant graffiti races past the window: “No nations. No borders,” “We are all refugees,” “Freedom of movement.”

We arrive at the gates of Kara Tepe to be greeted by Adil Izemrane, “Head of Mission Lesbos” for Movement on the Ground, the Dutch NGO hosting us during our stay. After ushering us past the unambiguous “no photos” signs and taking us for registration (allowing Fredrik to turn a blind eye to the signs when directing his lens towards football-related activities), he gives us a tour of the site.

The first thing we learn: “It’s not a refugee camp… it’s a hospitality centre. We acknowledge that the people here are human capital: they all have talents, a profession, dreams…” Movement on the Ground’s mission is to transform the camp into a “campus,” which Adil defines as a place where life can flourish. One day, he hopes that he and his colleagues can withdraw and that Kara Tepe will then be a “normal” village.

Adil adds: “If you are ill, we don’t send you to a chicken farm to heal, you’re sent to hospital, because that’s where you get the best care. So why are we putting people who come from very difficult circumstances in even more difficult circumstances. To heal, they should have at least the same conditions as we have.”

“We are dealing with a group of sensitive people,” Adil explains. Kara Tepe is the residence of vulnerable people as assessed by UNHCR, among them: large families, single parents, unaccompanied youth, shipwreck survivors, disabled people. We notice the cacophonous presence of a large number of children and youth. The “camp” has a capacity of around 1700 and is currently home to 800 people, the majority from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq.

At present, the work of Movement on the Ground at Kara Tepe focuses on three main areas: Providing food, using the island’s abundance of sun to generate electricity through solar power, and – of course – football training sessions. Five days a week around 200 children and youth are engaged in football programmes using football3.
FOOTBALL TO EMPOWER AND GIVE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

At Kara Tepe, aid work goes beyond emergency response – one of the main aims is to empower the residents of Kara Tepe and to help them kick start their new lives. “The football programme is a great example,” says Adil, “it’s all about youth empowerment.”

Currently, 10-12 young people from the Kara Tepe community are being taught how to give football training sessions to the children, not just turning them into role models, but also providing them with knowledge and skills that they can take away with them and employ wherever they go.

The football programme is coordinated by 19-year-old David Koning, who put his studies at Nijmegen University on hold to come to Kara Tepe as a volunteer at the beginning of October 2016. Seeing the boats arriving and the situation of those emerging from them changed his life, he says. He spends his days trying to give hope and respite to the children and young people at Kara Tepe with the help of football: “It’s a way to relieve stress. They are not thinking about their situation, just playing.”

We go and find out for ourselves and stroll over to the on-site pitch, already populated with a gaggle of young footballers. The green turf was rolled out here thanks to UEFA Foundation for Children funding with the support of streetfootballworld. It may not be large, but is, as we will discover over the next few days, in almost constant use. Its magnetic pull meant that during school hours a football “ban” has been issued to stop the children from skipping class to play football.

In spice of the 30-degree heat and Ramadan restrictions on food and any form of drink, the players race up and down the pitch, sweaty-faced but unswerving. All the while observing the football rules of fair play that they have noticeably imbied. When one of the players momentarily forgets, another is quick to gently steer their teammate back onto the football3 course.

Talking about what football means to them, many reiterate David’s words that it is a welcome break from the “camp.” For 16-year-old Khalid from Afghanistan football is also “a game of hope. The situation here is not good for us.” When he plays football he says that he forgets that he is a refugee. “Football is something like a brother for me, it’s like a family,” he smiles.

The training sessions and tournaments at the football pitch run by a local Greek couple not only offer the players a change of scene from Kara Tepe, but are also one of the ways in which Movement on the Ground tries to economically engage the local community, simultaneously earning their support.

AWAY GAME FOR KARA TEPE UNITED

We join a group of young boys proudly boarding the “team bus” to take us all ten minutes down the coastal road to Spanos Football Club for training sessions and a football tournament. The group are raring to go; their excitement peaks when Arabic tunes begin pulsating from the speakers and David grasps the bus microphone to shout encouragements in a Babylonian array of languages. This is clearly a regular ritual, for when David calls out “Kara Tepe!” as a finale, twenty adolescent voices boom “UNITED!” in response.

“FOOTBALL IS SOMETHING LIKE A BROTHER FOR ME, IT’S LIKE A FAMILY.”

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GIRLS TAKING THE FIELD

At Kara Tepe, football is not only a sport for boys and young men. “My favourite moment was when we started girls’ football,” David beams, admitting that they faced many hurdles in the beginning and had to work hard to gain the parents’ trust. “But, after a while, more and more girls started coming and the parents got ok with it. Then we suddenly had 35 girls there and we were like: ‘What is going on?’”

Many of the girls and young women spend their days confined to their houses - football gives them the chance, excuse even, to step outside. A particularly impressive member of the group is Dima, a top scorer who shows us how to deliver a powerful header. The 17-year old Kurdish girl always loved football but found it difficult to play in her home country of Iraq. On Lesbos, she jumped at the opportunity when David asked her to join the girls’ team: “A lot of girls say they are shy and can’t play football but it’s not true,” and adds that through playing football she: “saw that girls can do anything.”

David also wants us to talk to Leyla (*name changed to protect her identity) and sets off in the direction of the Isobox-shaped container that is her home. He returns alone. Leyla is nowhere to be found. A neighbour informs him that she left for Athens on a smuggler’s boat.

After experiencing the holiday camp atmosphere of Kara Tepe reverberating with children’s laughter, this is one of the moments when a bitter reality kicks in. Even David looks shaken. Nevertheless, it has been a good day. As the light fades over Lesbos and the sun slowly dips into the Mediterranean, the children’s and young people’s faces have lit up.

David fulfilled his aim of returning his young footballers to the camp smiling. And dancing.
ROLL FILM 2: ATHENS

FOOTBALL AT SUNSET: REFUGEES AND THE HOMELESS MEET ON THE PITCH

After a few long and intense days, we drag ourselves past the security gates of Kara Tepe one last time with heavy hearts and a chorus of goodbyes in our wake, leaving behind our new-found footballing friends to head to the Greek capital, a place where many of them yearn to go, making our freedom of movement in relation to theirs glaringly apparent.

In Athens, the exponential effects of Greece’s two concurrent crises are brought into sharp focus. Not least because we are hosted by local NGO Diogenes MKD that manages the Greek Homeless National Team and is publisher of the city’s street magazine ‘S Hedía’ (Greek: “raft”). The organisation started also working with refugees in 2010, the majority of whom are from Afghanistan and Iraq. Diogenes not only welcomes them into its football programmes, but also collaborates with a large network of other NGOs, state and local governments to provide additional support through shelter, medical services, legal assistance, access to education and Greek language lessons.

We meet Founder and Manager of Diogenes, Chris Alefantis, who takes us to the Sunday evening training session of the Homeless National Team at Rouf Stadium, located in the heart of the city. It is one of only three pitches in the whole of Athens and has become the “home”, as Chris calls it, of the Homeless National Football Team. “It is a very mixed group,” he continues: “People living in shelters, people on drug rehab, migrants, refugees.” Half of the team’s players are refugees. Football talent is not important, Chris stresses, “it would exclude so many other people who are hopeless at football like I am,” he laughs. “We play football not necessarily to become better footballers, but better people,” he explains.

Through Diogenes’ programmes, the two most afflicted protagonists of each crisis meet on the playing field. “We encourage them,” Chris says referring to the entire team, “to become part of life through football.” It is an encounter that is not always easy; a fast-learners’ course in integration and harsh social realities.

42-year-old football coach Yiannis, who battled for many years to with homelessness and drug addiction, admits that he first had to overcome his own racist views to accept migrants and refugees from Africa as teammates. His drug dealers were from Africa and he had come to perceive black skin as inextricably linked to a traumatic past he wanted to leave behind. In time, his outlook was completely reversed. Now, Yiannis says: “I feel a lot of love for these people and I want to help them. Here is a safe place to leave all of your problems behind for two hours, come here, play, meet new people, have friendships. After, when you leave all of your problems will wait for you outside of the door, don’t worry about that,” he laughs, “but when you are here, you are free.”

For Elaige, a 19-year-old player from Cameroon, the football sessions offer him a sense of belonging: “When we play football,” he says, “we feel like we are only one person.”

Before Chris blows the whistle to kick off the match with the Homeless National Team and Eleonas residents, he takes one of his group aside for a heart-to-heart talk. Their heads huddled together, it is clear that something is wrong. “He was late,” Chris explains afterwards. Being punctual is one of the lessons he and his coaches try to teach through the football sessions. The look on the reprimanded latecomer’s face resembles that of a football player who has just been dealt a harsh referee hand.

After the match he and others approach us curious and words, so that their stories can travel beyond many of them of harrowing tales of persecution their home countries. Football gives both the refugees and homeless football players a sense of purpose. Alimamy from Sierra Leone declares: “Football is my job, like someone who goes to the office in the morning.”

A short while later it is once again time to pack up the audio recorder and camera and tear ourselves away. It feels awkward and inappropriate, particularly after being showered with so much trust and being honoured by these young people taking us into their confidence.

As we enter, Fredrik struggles with one of the greatest challenges of the trip: “walking in there and not taking photos – keeping the camera in your pocket and not taking photos – keeping the camera in your pocket and not taking photos – keeping the camera in your pocket.”

“You’ve just had these conversations with really nice people and then you turn your back and walk out and we have that freedom of doing that and getting into an airplane and flying home, but they’re there. And their future is very uncertain and we’re just living a different life. Every time I walk out of those gates, I’m reminded of that,” Fredrik remarks ruefully.

We can’t take the people with us, just their images and words, so that their stories can travel beyond their enforced homes and give more than a snapshot view of how football has shaped their environment.

FOOTBALL IN THE GLARING SUN: MATCH DAY AT ELEONAS REFUGEE CAMP

The following day we accompany the Homeless National Team to Eleonas refugee camp in a western suburb of Athens, present home to around 700 refugees. As part of the Refugee Support Programme funded by UEFA Foundation for Children, the team regularly goes “on tour”, visiting camps and hosting tournaments at refugee camps all over Greece, engaging more than 700 children and young people aged 14 and above. Where there is no football field, they bring their own: the team arrives with a lorry and unloads a foldable mobile pitch.

Eleonas, that has regular football programmes spear-headed by SOS Children’s villages, has a fixed pitch on site. A pitch that serves both footballers and inactive camp residents with its perimeter fence doubling up as a washing line. Diogenes brings its own players here for exchange and matches with the football enthusiasts of Eleonas.

“As football is my job, like someone who goes to the office in the morning.”

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AN INTIMATE DISCUSSION WITH SOME OF THE LEADING FIGURES IN SOCIAL IMPACT ABOUT THE ROLE OF SOCCER IN AN INCREASINGLY DIVIDED WORLD.

VIP GUESTS WILL INCLUDE:

JUAN MATA  
World Cup winner and Manchester United midfielder

JÜRGEN GRIESBECK  
Award-winning social entrepreneur and founder of streetfootballworld

SEBASTIAN BUCK  
Social movement expert and co-founder of ENSO Collaborative

...and more to be announced soon!

Soccer is the world’s most popular sport with over 3.5 billion players and fans worldwide that support a multi-billion dollar industry led by some of the most recognised athletes on the planet. Soccer has also become one of the most powerful tools for tackling social issues affecting vulnerable young people around the world. In South Africa, soccer is a medium to teach young people how to avoid HIV and AIDS. In the slums of India, soccer gives young homeless girls a sense of belonging and a safe environment to protect them from abuse. In Iraq, soccer is helping refugees displaced by ISIS stay safe from landmines and unexploded bombs.

On the evening of Tuesday July 18th top athletes and leaders in social development will convene at UCLA’s Anderson School of Management to discuss this exciting topic and some of the initiatives designed by streetfootballworld to unlock the true potential of soccer. The event will feature a moderated panel discussion with Q&A followed by a networking event.

TUESDAY, JULY 18TH - 7:30PM

SOCCEER: MASS FORCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

LOS ANGELES, UCLA
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DONATIONS: READ THE STORY OF GAVIN FAHY

READ THE STORY OF GAVIN FAHY

ONE MAN’S 400-KILOMETRE CYCLE AROUND EUROPE THAT RAISED 800 EUROS FOR FOOTBALL FOR GOOD.

My cycle for streetfootballworld officially began on June 4th 2016, but it was a journey that started months before that.

I’d been playing football full time in Ireland and, for many reasons, I became disillusioned with the game I’d always loved. In my view, the endless, reality TV-like narrative surrounding the game was diluting what’s important for me about football: its social relevance and its ability to connect people who otherwise would have no means of communication.

During a trip to Berlin in 2014 I accidentally came across streetfootballworld. I was delighted to have found a group whose work aligns with what’s important to me about football. I knew it was an organisation I’d be interested in working with.

When the Irish national team qualified for EURO 2016 I knew I had to be there, but on my shoestring budget the only way I could afford to go was by bicycle. I decided to get in touch with streetfootballworld, as I wanted to make the most of my circumstances by raising funds that would go to the network member organisations and show people what’s important about football beneath the surface of a major tournament.

The cycle for streetfootballworld took six days and 400km, leading me to Paris and to Ireland’s first game of the tournament. For fourteen days, I followed the boys in green and our last minute win against Italy meant we would face the hosts France in Lyon so, in turn, following Ireland lead me back to streetfootballworld and Festival 16.

Although the cycle was tough going at times, for me it was nothing compared to the journeys and hard work put in on a daily basis by each and every individual involved in the network member organisations. However, I am grateful for the opportunity the cycle gave me to spend ten days with those individuals who are some of the greatest minds I’ve had the pleasure of meeting through football.

The highlight of my entire trip in France was engaging with and learning from them by taking part in as many activities as possible. Although I felt like a bit of an imposter at times, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to feel the power of football in its purest form.

Gavin Fahy

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