IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

UEFA PRESIDENT
ALEKSANDER ČEFERIN
on his recent commitment to Common Goal

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Team play, however, will. And this is precisely what we brought to the World Economic Forum in January 2018. We wanted to demonstrate that, to change the world, we need to play together – on one team – and we need to do it now. And that football is an enabling force to achieve it.

And how does football enter the equation?

Twofold. Football has proven to be a catalysing tool when it comes to tackling social challenges and empowering young people to become agents of change. And, football reaches every corner of this world, it embodies the meaning of team play and its narrative is widely understood. A huge opportunity to make the Global Goals a project of every single person.

Football was – for the very first time – part of the Davos conversations, giving testament to the beautiful game’s unique ability to unite people around the world, with half of the earth’s population revolving around a shared passion and to the fact that, for many years, football has served as an effective tool to improve the lives of millions of children and young people, rolling out the turf of a better future.

For over 20 years, we have seen how grassroots organisations, all over the world, have been using football to improve their realities. They wake up each morning to tackle the most burning social issues in their communities, every single day.

We know that we need to go further. We need to connect the dots. We need to create the team. The biggest team of all times; this team now involves everyone, from global leaders at the World Economic Forum, to institutions and professional footballers to young people in the most desperate situations, all of us contributing our very best. It’s a huge opportunity to walk the endless talks and to finally get our act together as humanity.

Football will not change the world on its own, but it has what it takes to develop a shared vision in a fractured world.

Jürgen Griesbeck,
streetfootballworld Founder & CEO
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THE THIRD HALF GOES TO IRELAND
Six months after the launch of Common Goal, the movement’s founder Jürgen Griesbeck and Manchester United star Juan Mata, the first player to make the pledge in August 2017, travelled to Davos on the occasion of the World Economic Forum’s annual meeting.
This year, The World Economic Forum focused on the theme ‘Creating a shared future in a fractured world’ and took place from 23rd–26th January 2018. The event brought together some 3000 global leaders from the worlds of politics, finance, diplomacy and business, including Kofi Annan, Narendra Modi, Christine Lagarde, and Bill Gates, along with heads of international organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations, and well-known artists like Sir Elton John and Cate Blanchett.

Since 2000, the meeting has also evolved as an important platform for leading social entrepreneurs who, through the collaboration between the World Economic Forum and the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, have the opportunity to participate in the invite-only event. This development is testament to the pivotal role of social entrepreneurship in the advancement of societies and its acknowledgement as a successful tool with which to tackle the most pressing global challenges of our times.

Awarded Social Entrepreneur of the Year in Europe by the Schwab Foundation in 2011, Common Goal and streetfootballworld founder Jürgen Griesbeck, was invited for the third time to take part in the World Economic Forum annual meeting. This year, he journeyed to Davos with the special mission of bringing Common Goal to the Forum, and positioning football as a key player in the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

“We are in Davos,” said Jürgen, “to demonstrate the importance of team play to the future of society. Common Goal is a powerful example of how collective action can significantly contribute towards achieving the Global Goals and the enabling role football can play.”

Jürgen was joined by Juan for a series of events focused on presenting the Common Goal movement and emphasising its significance to the attainment of the Global Goals.

“To represent Common Goal at such a forum with the world’s leaders is an honour and a great opportunity to explain the evolution of the movement. It’s great that people are starting to understand football as a force for scalable social change and that this has a voice at the World Economic Forum. I’m very excited to connect with many people and organisations that share our commitment to improving the state of the world,” commented Juan.

One of the highlights of the week was the Global Goals Gathering, organised by the Gates Foundation in the evening of 24th January. Over 200 illustrious guests attended the event that included speeches from business magnate and philanthropist Bill Gates, and Pakistani activist for female education and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai. Both Gates and Yousafzai stressed the importance of further action to accelerate progress in meeting the goals concerning health, education, poverty and gender equality. The gathering spelled a unique opportunity for Juan and Jürgen to meet Bill Gates, introduce the Common Goal movement to him and other guests and, in between, casually play a round of table football on a Global Goals customized table.

Both Jürgen and Juan acknowledged that being present at the World Economic Forum was another milestone for the thriving movement that used the context to announce its alignment and commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, during a Facebook Live Chat broadcast in the evening of 24th January, Juan shared his particular interest in championing SDG 5 – Gender Equality: “If I have to choose one Global Goal, I am very interested in female empowerment and gender equality. I think women have a real power, strength and role to play in this world and I think the situation should be more equal in many aspects for any of them, not just in football but more generally the position of women in society. I am very interested in that matter but obviously, we speak about the 17 Development Goals, they are all very important and very crucial to make this world a better place.”

Set in motion in August 2017 with the commitment of Juan, Common Goal has since grown rapidly and now already boasts a squad of 40 football players of 18 nationalities who have pledged at least 1% of their salaries to community-based organisations championing social change through football.

Six months after its launch, Common Goal has raised close to €500,000 that will be invested in high-impact local initiatives in the field of football for development. In 2018 the movement aims to generate over €2.5 million and take a further step towards becoming a systemic part of the global football industry.

Like Juan, the other players who have joined the movement will also be supporting initiatives that are contributing to the achievement of the Global Goals. The allocation of the pledges from the first 40 will be finalised during the month of February and Common Goal will soon begin announcing which projects and organisations are being supported by the fund.
PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

PREMIER LEAGUE
streetfootballworld and the Premier League have joined forces to strengthen the cooperation between Premier League Clubs and the streetfootballworld network through an “International Development Fund”.

We are thrilled to announce a new partnership with the Premier League, which officially kicked off on 29th November 2017 in London. streetfootballworld has been contracted to support the Premier League in restructuring their existing small grants programme for development projects in football beyond the borders of Europe. The new “International Development Fund” will support collaborative projects between the Community Organisations of Premier League Clubs and community based organisations like streetfootballworld network members, as well as selected individual projects led by streetfootballworld network members in the areas of sports participation, education and life skills development.

Selected streetfootballworld network members will receive the unique chance to partner with a Premier League Club Community Organisations to use the quality seal of the streetfootballworld network to find a trusted first-class international partner for a collaboration project that will enable knowledge and skill exchange.

In addition, the community grants for individual projects will further enhance the support of the Premier League for the field of football for good. The new fund received very positive feedback from the heads of Community at the kick-off meeting in London as many see it as a great chance not only to strengthen their international outreach, but also to receive new input to further develop their own domestic programmes.

“The Premier League has long been a great supporter of football for good,” streetfootballworld Associate Dr. Vladimir Borković noted, “It is a role model for all professional football leagues with regard to social commitment. The International Development Fund promises to be a catalyst for excellent new collaboration projects between Premier League Community Club Organisations and streetfootballworld network members, further enhancing the quality of work on both sides.” The International Development Fund’s first phase will run until 2019 with two funding windows currently planned.

Founded on 20th February 1992, the Premier League superseded the first division of the English Football League (EFL) as the highest rank of professional football in England. The league, comprised of 20 football clubs that compete from August to May each year, operates on a system of promotion and relegation with the lower tiers of English football.

Bringing together some of the best-known clubs in the world, such as Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal, the Premier League draws huge crowds to stadiums with an average match attendance of just over 36,600 – the second highest of any professional football league in the world.

The Premier League is also the world’s most-watched sports league with large fan bases across the globe. Its matches are broadcast in 212 territories to 643 million homes with potential TV audiences of 4.7 billion people.

This massive global audience enables the Premier League to generate significant broadcast and sponsorship revenues. In the 2016–17 season, The Premier League accrued over 4 billion Euros making it the richest football league in the world.

The popularity and financial strength of the Premier League have drawn many of the best players and managers in the world. Top players such as Eden Hazard, Juan Mata or Harry Kane and high-ranking managers like Pep Guardiola, Jose Mourinho and Jürgen Klopp all ply their trade in the Premier League.
On 29th November 2017, just one week after he had been elected Chairman of the UEFA Foundation for Children, President of UEFA Aleksander Čeferin publicly announced that he would be joining the Common Goal movement, therefore pledging 1% of his salary to support the work of football charities that are driving social change through the use of football.

After announcing his commitment, President Čeferin sat down with streetfootballworld to share his vision of the future of European football and his personal commitment to social change.
Aleksander Čeferin is a Slovenian lawyer, football administrator, and a married father of three. Between 2011 and 2016, he was President of the Football Association of Slovenia. In September 2016, he was elected President of UEFA.

Čeferin started his mandate with a strong commitment towards protecting, promoting and developing European football. In early 2017, only a few months into his term as UEFA President, Čeferin launched a series of good governance reforms that were approved at the Ordinary Congress in Helsinki in April of that year. These reforms aim at strengthening UEFA in the coming years and represent the kick-off of a new era of, as Čeferin expresses it: “stability, hope, balance, and friendship”. These reforms include: term limits for the UEFA President and Executive Committee members; the requirement for all Executive Committee members to hold an official position in their national football association; and the inclusion of good governance and ethics as statutory objectives of UEFA.

In addition, Čeferin has put financial fair play at the forefront of his agenda at UEFA, aiming to build upon and enhance the system put in place as Čeferin expresses it: “stability, hope, balance, and friendship”. These reforms include: term limits for the UEFA President and Executive Committee members; the requirement for all Executive Committee members to hold an official position in their national football association; and the inclusion of good governance and ethics as statutory objectives of UEFA.

On 29th November 2017, President Čeferin announce that he will be pledging 1% of his salary to support the work of football charities that are driving social change through the use of football. In order to announced his commitment publicly, Čeferin invited Manchester United star Juan Mata and Common Goal Founder Jürgen Griesbeck to the House of European Football in Nyon. The gathering was a milestone for the Common Goal movement as, for the first time, representatives from football institutions, the professional league of football players and the football for development field came together for such an impactful concerted effort in driving social change through football.

“It’s not about that 1%” Čeferin said, “That’s not much, but it’s a big sign and I hope others will follow. As Juan said to directly address Čeferin, “as a football player it’s great to see the President of UEFA taking his time and his commitment to Common Goal or to such a movement like this. We are so proud and, again, we are so happy to have you with us and I’m sure that this will be a massive step in our commitment to the movement.”

streetfootballworld’s founder Jürgen Griesbeck joined Juan Mata in welcoming Čeferin to the Common Goal team and marked the UEFA President’s pledge as a historic moment of the movement: “We are sitting here with the representative of football government and a representative of the players, where the movement started, and then us representing football for good with 20 years of history in this space.” He added that, while historic, the occasion also felt “very natural. It’s where we believe Common Goal should develop towards.”

Commenting on his decision to join Common Goal, Aleksander Čeferin explained that he had been inspired by both his belief in the power of football to change the world and by Juan Mata’s pioneering role in kick-starting and driving forward the movement. “I always say that football is much more than top competition,” the UEFA President commented, “Top competition is very important, but if you generate so much money, you have to allocate some money to the good cause, for the better world.” He went on to mention a recent visit to Za’atari refugee camp in Jordan that had confirmed this conviction. Watching the happiness the beautiful game had brought to the children there had been a powerful testament to how “we can do a lot of good things with football or through football.”

Done indeed was the operative word – “It’s important to show with your example. It’s easy to speak,” Čeferin said, emphasising that actions were the true indicator of the meaning behind words. By publicly committing to Common Goal, he also hoped that many of his colleagues would follow suit. “If they join, I will be very happy,” he smiled.

Juan Mata and Jürgen Griesbeck stood up to shake hands with and, once again, thank the UEFA President, handing him a football shirt bearing his name and the number 8. “I thought I have to give 8%,” Čeferin joked. “If you want, you can,” came the playful response from Mata, “but number 8, because it’s my number.”

After announcing his commitment, President Čeferin sat down with streetfootballworld to share his vision of the future of European football and his personal commitment to social change.
2017 has been an important year for UEFA that, under your leadership, has managed to put in place a number of good governance reforms that have won back and will win back lose trust in the integrity of European football of millions of fans. If you could put a headline to the year 2017, what would that be? Perhaps I would pick “A year of significant progress”. I think that would be accurate to say. We have worked on many matters and we are on the right track and moving forward at a good speed. It’s great that we have great relationships with our national associations and our key stakeholders and this is key so we can continue to protect, develop and promote football in Europe.

Many people regard you as a role model and wonder what it takes to become UEFA President? What led you to stand for election?

One could say that my rise in the world of football was quite meteoric and surprising, to most people and even to myself, to be honest. I was voted President of the Slovenian Football Association in 2011 and was doing my best to develop football in my home nation. Then, with all the changes happening around UEFA as a result of the FIFA scandal, an opportunity arose to become a candidate for the elections. People saw me as a reformer and someone who went against the image of old politicians and I started getting a lot of support from member associations. I think people liked my manifesto and my vision for UEFA and I was elected in Athens by quite a significant margin... the rest as they say, is history. It is a privilege for me to be in this position and I am doing my best to serve the organisation in the best interests of football.

In April 2017 you proposed a series of good governance reforms that were unanimously approved by the 41st UEFA Congress. Among them, the inclusion of a specific article in the UEFA Statutes to set ethics and good governance as a statutory objective of UEFA. Can you explain what this article is about and how it affects football?

Even though UEFA historically always aimed to act in an ethical way and to follow good governance principles, this was never part of its statutes and I felt it should be clear and visible for everyone to see. Our conduct should always be ethical and this move adds accountability and credibility to our organisation.

Are we experiencing a pivotal moment in football history? Is everyone ready for a new era of football?

I think everyone is ready for a new era in the world of football. The era where one person was all powerful in football. The era where all forms of match-fixing, manipulation and doping. Then we must protect its future and this means investing in grassroots which is the lifeblood of our game. Without safeguarding the grassroots, youth and amateur levels of football, participation will be threatened and therefore so will the elite game at many levels.

Earlier in 2017, you visited Za’atari Camp and had the opportunity to experience first hand how football is helping young people affected by forced migration. Later that year, in November 2017, you also became Chairman of the UEFA Foundation for Children. What does this role mean to you? What is the significance of holding this double-role?

It’s an honour for me to be chairman of the UEFA Foundation for Children. The foundation has so many amazing projects around the world where it is helping disadvantaged children and football plays a big part in it. One of these projects is in the Za’atari camp in Jordan where over 1 million refugees are as a result of the conflict in Syria. It was an incredible experience to visit the camp, I will never forget the expression of joy on the kids’ faces when we inaugurated a brand new pitch and played football together. I could see how our sport can inspire people everywhere, even in the toughest places on earth.
Football is a powerful sport and social phenomenon followed by over 3.5 billion people worldwide. Many people say football can actually change the world, for good. Do you believe in this statement? And if so, how, specifically, do you think football can inspire and drive social change?

Football is played from Albania to Australia, from Benin to Costa Rica to China... it is truly global and it can impact people like no other sport. It is for this reason I believe that football has the potential and the power to change the world for the better. It can teach important values like teamwork, fair play, dedication and discipline; it can also set an example for society by promoting equality, inclusion, accessibility... I have seen the happiness this game can bring to people of all ages and all backgrounds and with the right programmes and the right projects we can all make a meaningful change.

When did you first experience the social power of football? Can you take us back to the moment?

From a young age I was able to see how football brings people together. When I played as a kid I saw how people who had nothing in common off the field could fight for the same objectives on it. I think football can be a great unifier between people of different backgrounds, cultures, religions... it’s quite amazing actually.

At the end of 2017, you joined Common Goal, pledging 1% to support organisations that are using football as a tool for social development. Why?

When I found out about Common Goal, I was really impressed about the fact that this movement was started by players. Players who wanted to give back to society. It seemed to me like a very worthy cause and I was interested in finding out more about it. I spoke a few times with Juan Mata and Jürgen Griesbeck and I was then convinced that this was a programme that I would like to support. Hopefully, my decision will inspire other football administrators to do the same and pledge 1% of their salary to football causes around the world.

You personally believe that football has a responsibility to give back to society. Do you think that, apart from yourself, the world of football (governmental bodies, stakeholders, players, football fans) is ready to make this commitment? What do we need to do in order to push the movement forward and engage the entire field in “giving back to society”?

I think there is increasing momentum in the world of sport where the big organisations and clubs are becoming aware that they need to have more social responsibility programmes. With all the information that is around us about how many people need help, it is the duty of the fortunate ones like ourselves to give back. I feel that more stakeholders are aware of this and hopefully this trend will continue.

After making the pledge, Common Goal offers pledgers the choice of earmarking their donation for one of the high-impact football charities from the streetfootballworld network, a social topic or a combination of both. Where would you like to see your money go and what causes are particularly close to your heart?

I have picked my donation to go to a project in the Balkan region. It is close to my heart because it’s close to home. I am passionate about projects connected to children because they are the ones who are the most vulnerable and need our support.

Where do you see the Common Goal movement in 10 years’ time and how do you see UEFA and the UEFA Foundation for Children playing a role in the movement?

It would be great if in 10 years, time there would be a significant amount of players, coaches, executives and organising bodies supporting a movement like Common Goal. There is strength in numbers and the momentum needs to be sustained to ensure that we help as many people as possible. Who knows, perhaps one day it could be mandatory that every person working in football would have to give 1% of their salary to social responsibility causes?

A football or football for good resolution for 2018?

More unity and more tolerance on and off the pitch. We live in a world where there are too many polarised opinions and too many heated discussions where people have stopped listening to each other. I would love football to continue to promote understanding between people around the world.
CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
Last November, FIFA and adidas organised once again a capacity-building workshop in Johannesburg, South Africa. The event brought together 33 participants from 15 countries across Africa for three intense days of discussions, developments and refinements of their social enterprise models.

With increased competition for funding and rapidly changing donor preferences football for good organisations are increasingly under pressure to find alternative ways to generate additional and sustainable income in order to run their programmes and further their social mission. Corresponding to a growing market of socially conscious consumers and impact-minded investors the social enterprise model has become a trend that can reduce the dependency of NGOs on external funding. In general, a social enterprise adheres to the principles of an income generating product, service or organisation with primarily social objectives, whereby profits are also invested in that social purpose. Several of the organisations participating in the workshop have already embarked upon this journey and are actively running social businesses.

The event in Johannesburg was hosted by Grassroot Soccer, a football for good organisation with a strong presence in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia, that uses the power of football to connect young people with the mentors, information and services they need to thrive, and empowers adolescents to make educated choices.

“THE UNRESTRICTED FUNDING THAT COMES WITH SUPPLYING YOUR OWN FUNDING AND TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR WHAT YOU NEED TO DO IS IMPORTANT. IT ALLOWS YOU TO FOCUS ON THE KIND OF SOCIAL IMPACT AND PROGRAMMING THAT YOU TRULY FEEL WORKS BEST IN THE CONTEXT THAT YOU’RE WORKING IN.”

Hana Taiji, Kick4Life, Lesotho
about pressing health challenges such as HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and gender-based violence. The ‘Journey to Social Enterprise’ workshop was conducted by the Social Enterprise Academy South Africa, a learning and development organisation that works directly with start-ups and established social enterprises, as well as NGOs that are looking to become more financially sustainable.

As the participants had already been introduced to the social enterprise concept during a previous workshop in 2016 they were now able to share their own experiences, challenges and solutions with the social enterprise approach. Hana Taiji, Country Director at Kick4Life, a Lesotho-based streetfootballworld network member and social enterprise pioneer, stressed the importance of additional income for the sustainability of her organisation: “Relying on outside donors and outside funding can be number 1 unreliable and you don’t want to stop the impact that you’re doing and let down a lot of people if suddenly the funding disappears. Number 2, the unrestricted funding that comes with supplying your own funding and taking accountability for what you need to do I think is important. It allows you to focus on the kind of social impact and programming that you truly feel works best in the context that you’re working in.”

While the social enterprise model can help NGOs to become more sustainable, independent and relevant it also became apparent that no single business model was suitable for all organisations and contexts but must rather take into account individual circumstances and originate from real life needs within the communities, an issue also highlighted by Gilson Da Costa from Delta Cultura Cabo Verde: “Our main concern so far is basically that we don’t want to put at risk the social impact that we have by creating a social enterprise that might take from us too much focus from what we do already. So far, we are trying to find a balance between these two aspects and see in which way it is best to implement a social enterprise in Delta Cultura. We realise it’s needed, it’s necessary and it’s something important, because it is the only way you can guarantee sustainability. We are 100% donors-dependent and we can’t just be like that forever.”

Another challenge many organisations face on their way towards a social enterprise model is convincing stakeholders, inside and outside the organisation, of the benefits of the new venture. As change is inevitable but often connected to feelings of pain, discomfort and fear, the group also addressed change management processes that require thorough planning, co-creative approaches and the development of a clear communications strategy.

Matahare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), streetfootballworld network member in Kenya, has already begun generating additional income by renting their fitness centre and attached sports cafeteria for a fee. Richard Muchiri, Social Enterprise Manager at MYSA, points to the growing competition for donor funding and MYSA’s plans to step up their social enterprise activities: “We have been having donors giving us money for the last 30 years, but if you check what we used to be having and what we are getting now, the competition is high, there are so many NGOs that are coming up and even the donor priorities are changing. We want to maintain the impact we have in the community, so we thought it was wise for us...
APART FROM OBVIOUSLY OFFERING THE KNOWLEDGE ON HOW WE CAN GO ABOUT CREATING OUR OWN SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, THIS WORKSHOP ACTUALLY GIVES US AN OPPORTUNITY TO INTERACT WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE ALREADY IN THE SYSTEM AND WE CAN LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES THAT THEY HAD TO ENCOUNTER ON THE WAY TO DEVELOPING THEIR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE.

The workshop served as a starting point to transition organisations from donor-dependency to developing a sustainable and impactful enterprise and took learners on a journey from understanding social enterprise and identifying income-generating opportunities to business planning, change leadership, marketing and finance. It provided participants with the chance to practically discuss opportunities and challenges and to develop and/or refine their organisations’ business models including value proposition, unique selling points and external market analyses and served as a platform for capacity building within the streetfootballworld network.

“Apart from obviously offering the knowledge on how we can go about creating our own sustainable social enterprise, this workshop actually gives us an opportunity to interact with other organisations that are already in the system and we can learn from the mistakes that they had to encounter on the way to developing their social enterprise,” concludes Kelvin Mengo, Director at streetfootballworld network member Chiparamba Breakthrough Sports Academy (CBSA) in Zambia.

Nhlanhla “Mookie” Dube, Centre Manager at Grassroot Soccer Alexandra and host of the event now wants to implement the newly attained knowledge in his organisation: “During the workshop we’ve learnt a lot about social enterprise and I’d really like to thank FIFA, streetfootballworld and all the partners for making sure everyone gets this social enterprise training because it’s very important to us. This knowledge will stick with us through those difficult times where we will now have a better plan because we’ve learned how to develop our ideas. Now it’s on the people who attended the workshop to pass on the knowledge to the rest of their organisations.”
ARGENTINA

2ND–6TH NOVEMBER 2017

CELEBRATING INCLUSION AT FESTIVAL LATAM 2017

ARGENTINA
The participants hailed from 16 different non-profit organisations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela that use football programmes as a tool for social change, promoting the values of fair play, inclusion and respect in children and young people from their region’s most vulnerable communities.

Festival LATAM 2017 was hosted by streetfootballworld and local streetfootballworld network member Asociación Civil Andar – Granja Andar. The focus of the organisation’s work is on providing opportunities to people with disabilities. Through a combination of work experience, sports, arts, culture and health-related activities, Asociación Civil Andar paves the way out of exclusion for this vulnerable group of people. With their “Liga de Fútbol Inclusiva” (Inclusive Football League) the non-profit uses the inclusive power of football to promote and foster the active participation of people with disabilities in society, while also addressing stigmatisation and prejudice.

“We are really proud to host the Festival LATAM 17 and receive representatives from 11 Latin American countries, because we understand that these young people will transform society in the coming years and achieve a better world,” Raul Lucero, Founder of Asociación Civil Andar, enthused, “Today Latin America plays only one game: the game of the football for inclusion.”

The festival took place thanks to funding from adidas Argentina, Secretaría de Deportes Argentina, Fundación Estudiantes de La Plata and Club Atlético de San Lorenzo de Almagro with further generous support from Asociación del Fútbol Argentino, Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel, Weber Saint-Gobain Argentina, Fundación Flechabus, transportation La Perlita, Municipalidad de La Plata, Sindicato Satsaid, Racing Integrado, River Sin Barreras and FIFA.

YOUTH FORUM
Preceding the official tournament a group of young leaders from the delegations participated in a Youth Forum for the exchange of knowledge and to receive training and instructions for their roles in the days to come. At the festival, the 33 young leaders acted as mediators during the tournament and coordinated a variety of different activities for the younger participants.

The young leaders from different participating organisations gathered in the auditorium of the Sheraton Hotel in Buenos Aires and shared their personal stories about how football had allowed them to overcome life challenges. Gender violence, discrimination of disabled people, marginalisation and lack of opportunities, were a few of the problems members of the group had faced. Through the work of football organisations in their home countries, they had been able to change not only their own life stories, but also positively influence their communities.

Motivational speaker Juan Roman Aguiló, known as “Juanro”, joined the group to give a talk about his passion for sports and facing the challenges of life head on. Born without arms, he trained himself to use his feet to replace them. He told the group how he had managed to conquer his fear of being different and used creativity to surmount the barriers in his life. His positive attitude and positive outlook were what made him a winner, he said. The young entrepreneur...
IN FOCUS: LATIN AMERICA
Celebrating Inclusion at Festival LATAM 2017

became an Art Director at Prolam Y & R, one of the most renowned advertising agencies in Chile. He also became national champion of freestyle football in Chile (2013) and was an adidas ambassador for five years.

KICK-OFF FOR FESTIVAL LATAM 2017
One of the main activities during the four action-packed days of Festival LATAM was the football tournament hosted by the Argentinian Football Association and San Lorenzo de Almagro Sports Club (Club Atlético San Lorenzo de Almagro). The teams with a mix of male and female players from different organisations took to the pitch for some football3, a unique way of playing the beautiful game based on the principle that the values of fair play, gender equality and respect are just as important as football skills and scoring goals.

On the opening day, the gathered crowd watched as the participating delegations paraded proudly onto the green lawn of San Lorenzo Sports Club waving the flags of their respective nations to the rhythm of traditional song “La murga Estacatto”. Following their grand entrance, budding young stars, Ludmila Mina gave an emphatic rendition of the national anthem. From 10 in the morning on Sunday, 5th November, the “Olympic torch” was lit that would stay aflame throughout the festival.

On the second day of the tournament, the festival-goers had a change of scene and moved to Julio H. Grondona stadium in Ezeiza, home turf of the Argentinian Football Association. On the pitch where the country’s best players train, the young footballers were able to demonstrate the power of the sport for social change. After some exciting matches, the tournament day was officially closed by the President of AFA, Claudio “Chiqui” Tapia, who received a plaque for his outstanding commitment to social inclusion.

TODAY LATIN AMERICA PLAYS ONLY ONE GAME: THE GAME OF THE FOOTBALL FOR INCLUSION.

Raúl Lucero,
Asociación Civil Andar, Argentina

FOOTBALL FOR INCLUSION MATCH
A highlight of the festival was the football tournament friendly match staged in partnership with the Estudiantes de la Plata Foundation for which celebrities, players and beneficiaries teamed up, all sporting the especially created “fútbol por la inclusion” team kit. “Sport, and especially football, has an important power, which takes away difficulties, removes all divides, gender differences, enabling all to be equals,” commented Juan Sebastián Verón, President of Club Estudiantes de la Plata and former Captain of the Argentinian National Football Team.

From 10 in the morning on Sunday, 5th November, the activity was held in La Plata, capital of the province of Buenos Aires, at the “República de los Niños” (Republic of Children), the first educational theme park in Argentina dedicated to the youngest members of society.

The match was followed by the most emotional moment of the festival: the awards ceremony, during which the winning team was presented with the trophy and the other players, young leaders, volunteers, partners and the organising team received a medal each to acknowledge their contributions and that they had all played important roles in making Festival LATAM 2017 a raging success.

DAYS OF INTEGRATION
Beyond the pitch, the agenda of Festival LATAM 2017 consisted of a series of cultural and integration activities that proved essential to its success. Among the broad variety of activities was the performance of traditional dances by the delegations. Every night, an Argentinian cultural show kept everyone entertained: tango, folklore and Cumbia were performed by prestigious ballet dancers and artists during three galas. Another highlight was the visit to a First Division football match between Estudiantes de la Plata and Argentinos Juniors.

Through collaborative games, the young people were quickly able to get to know each other and establish bonds of friendship and team spirit. Employing the evaluation methodology used by Civil Andar in its sports activities also facilitated in the formation of teams on equal terms.

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PLAYING FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN MUMBAI
From 25th–29th October 2017 Mumbai was the setting of a leadership workshop for 30 female young leaders from six football for good organisations from Myanmar and across India, culminating on the 29th with a football festival, where they were joined by 500 local girls and boys from the slums of Mumbai. The diverse group took to the pitch irrespective of gender, caste, religion or social background.

Both the leadership workshop and the festival were part of the “Girls play, girls lead” project funded by the German Federal Foreign Ministry with a corresponding event held by YFC Rurka Kalan in the Punjab region of India later in the year. The overriding theme, gender equality, brought girls and boys together onto the pitch to give girls an opportunity to participate in a typically male-dominated sport, strengthen their leadership skills but also raise awareness among boys about the issue.

In part, the project emerged in response to common problems that women face in the region with regard to gender. The Indian constitution grants women and men equal rights. However, strong patriarchal traditions persist in many areas of society, particularly when it comes to women in sport. “15 years ago, there were no girls playing football,” said Ajay Sheety, a football coach at OSCAR Foundation. His colleague, Simran Sunita Sanjay, who works as a Project Manager, added: “First their fathers, then their brothers, then their husbands take decisions for girls and women in India.”

OSCAR Foundation has been challenging gender norms since long before the event took place. When the organisation was first established in 2006 and up until 2011, there were no female participants and it was difficult to advocate the programmes the foundation offered and to convince parents to allow their daughters to take part. “It was easier for the boys,” Ashok Rathod, Co-Founder of OSCAR Foundation said. When it came to girls, “it was hard to change the parents’ mindset,” he added. That was until he gave the parents of his male participants an ultimatum: “If you want your sons to continue here, then you must bring your daughters, too.” Because of this, ten female participants joined OSCAR in 2011. Now, almost seven years later, 20% of OSCAR Foundation children are girls. Today, the organisation implements an array of football for good programmes and works towards education not only for the youth beneficiaries of the programmes, but also of the wider community.
YOUNG LEADER WORKSHOP

During the week preceding the festival, a workshop for female young leaders brought together 30 young women from across India and Myanmar to participate in a series of sessions hosted by OSCAR Foundation with support from DISCOVER FOOTBALL, a leading non-profit organisation in the area of female participation and women’s rights in football. Following the successful female empowerment project in Cambodia in 2015, this was the second workshop solely dedicated to female young leaders that was organised by streetfootballworld and a network member in Asia.

Day one began with introductions and ice-breakers as, for many of the girls, it was not only the first time they met, but for many, also the first visit to Mumbai.

The workshop opened on the topic of the Sustainable Development Goals to address pressing social issues in the participants’ communities, one of which being gender equality. Some of the girls spoke openly about their related experiences and about some of the challenges they faced as a result of their gender. For many of them, it had taken time to convince their parents to allow them to even play football back at home, let alone take on a leadership role in the field of football for good.

To address the issue, OSCAR foundation set about determining together with the young women how female leadership within their organisations could be increased. The group of young leaders then participated in role-play activities to discuss their aspirations for the future, to strengthen their leadership skills and the belief in their ability to achieve their goals.

Much to the girls’ excitement, the day ended with the group attending the U-17 World Cup semi-final between England and Brazil. The tickets had been generously provided by streetfootballworld’s partner FIFA.

The focus of the following day was to enhance the participants’ communication and team-playing skills. To do this, each of the young leaders completed a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to better understand their short and long term goals and their overall strengths and weaknesses.

On the third day of the workshop the young women were introduced to streetfootballworld’s football3 methodology. After familiarising themselves with the theory of football3, the young leaders received further training sessions on essential skills needed to work with children and youth, such as an introduction in child protection policy and nutrition. For many of them it was the first time they had ever addressed such topics and a few confessed that they had never thought about the importance of nutrition when working with children.

THE YOUTH IN INDIA NEEDS GUIDANCE. YOU CANNOT COMPLETELY INTERFERE IN SOMEONE ELSE’S LIFE, JUST OFFER GUIDANCE.

Shraddha,
Participant, OSCAR Foundation, India

SHRADDA’S STORY

Many of the young leaders attending the workshop had themselves overcome life challenges on the road to helping underserved children and youth. Each of these young women had their own unique and remarkable story to tell. One of them was 20-year-old Shraddha.

Shraddha first got involved with OSCAR Foundation at the age of 18. At the time, her friends in the village where she lived, about an hour’s distance from Mumbai, were never really active and preferred to stay at home. She did likewise due to her shyness. One day, she saw an advertisement in her school about a weekly event at the school with “inspirational people”. She decided to go. One of those inspirational people was Ashok Rathod from OSCAR Foundation. He told the students about his work and gave a football training session. “His story inspired me and I wanted to play football as well,” Shraddha said.

Shraddha was determined to bring football to her village; however there was no pitch nearby that she could use. There was only one and that was used by the police to practise on. Shraddha recounted how she went to OSCAR Foundation to tell them of her problem and how the staff there taught her how to negotiate with the police. With their support, Shraddha went to the police to ask if she could use their pitch. They agreed to let her do so twice a week.

In January 2017, Shraddha began playing with 15 children. Convincing the younger boys in the streets to train with her was easy. With the girls...
After an intense four days of workshop sessions, it was time to venture outside onto the pitch. The 29th of October may have been the hottest day ever; however that did not curb the enthusiasm of the 500 young girls and boys hurrying off the buses that had brought them to the pitch: It was festival day! During the proceedings the female young leaders took on a variety of roles from handling logistics to taking match scores. They coordinated the allocation of tasks among themselves deciding who was best suited to each particular item on the day’s to-do list.

Every team played three matches in mixed teams and according to the football3 methodology. For many of the children it was the first time they had played this unaccustomed style of football. 13-year-old Dimple from Mumbai exclaimed excitedly: “I love it, because we can make our own rules!” Her fellow participant, 15-year-old Azaz, said that his favourite rule, among those he and his teammates had agreed upon, was to make the goal of a girl count double. “The girls play very well,” he added, “I am proud to see them play.” Another first for many of the participants was playing in a team together with the opposite sex.

As the day drew to a close, who had won the tournament became irrelevant. The participants had learned lessons far more valuable than winning. Boys, who had previously not even believed that girls could play football, were taught otherwise. Dimple, the young female player from Mumbai, highlighted one of the day’s greatest wins: “The boys respect us girls here.”

FESTIVAL DAY: MEETING ON AN EQUAL PLAYING FIELD

Exchanging testimonials helped the workshop participants to not only get to know each other, but also to feel more “confident” and “powerful”, as 21-year-old Shivan from Nagpur commented. “We are facing the same problems. It strengthens me to hear how they deal with them,” she said. This was something she had also experienced three years previously when participating in a UN youth leadership training course through her organisation Slum Soccer in South Korea. It sparked an important realisation: “I had this misconception that other people in other countries do not have any problems,” Shivan recalled.

it was much more difficult. Ashok advised her to speak to their parents and also to persuade the boys in the team to bring girls to the sessions. It worked – only 10 months later 59 children were attending with a mix of girls and boys aged 10-15.

Seeing how, in parallel, Shraddha was becoming more lively and enthusiastic and even improved her performance at school, her mother was thrilled and supported her project. Her father, however, remained critical. “Shraddha was born to do something else.”

When her father realised how Shraddha’s football sessions had turned her into a known figure in the community and earned her much respect, even he was convinced.

ON THE PITCH, THERE IS JUST ONE LANGUAGE: THE BALL.

Pann, Participant, Football United, Myanmar

Playing for Gender Equality in Mumbai
A WINTER’S TALE OF FOOTBALL FOR GOOD:

GIRLS AND WOMEN TAKE CENTRE STAGE IN LEBANON
We travelled to the Middle East to find out how football can foster inclusion and cross gender divides in Lebanon. streetfootballworld teamed up with local network member ANERA to implement a project in cooperation with DISCOVER FOOTBALL and Right To Play aimed at strengthening the position of girls on and off the pitch.

SETTING THE SCENE
Though Lebanon is a truly football-obsessed nation, entering the “stage” can be a challenge for certain members of society. The country may boast a Women’s National Team and amateur female football squads, but girls and women are generally expected to act out different roles in their communities. Playing sport and football is perceived by many as “unfeminine”. Female footballers are more often tolerated than cheered on and their place on the pitch is largely dependent upon the support of their families and the other main protagonists of their communities.

The recent project staged by streetfootballworld and local network member ANERA in cooperation with DISCOVER FOOTBALL and Right To Play brought girls and young women onto the playing field to positively shape their lives and simultaneously challenge societal norms. Further goals were to raise the status of women’s football in Lebanon by promoting mutual understanding, respect and gender equality, as well as increase the number of sports programmes available to girls and women in Lebanon by training young women as coaches.

Local implementation partner ANERA has been working for many years to promote gender equality in sport and has cultivated strong ties with local authorities, universities, schools and other organisations in civil society. With a combination of football training sessions for girls aged 6-17 and regular tournaments, ANERA aims to contest widespread negative attitudes against women in sport and promote the development of its participants into sportswomen.

THE MAIN ACTION
Over the course of three months, more than 120 young women aged 18-30 from across the country, most of them already active at local organisations, schools or sports clubs, were trained in a series of workshops covering the topics “Women’s Empowerment”, “The Empowerment and Inclusion of Disabled People”, the “football3 methodology” to empower them to determine their own lives and positively influence the lives of those around them (family members, friends, and community members). By bolstering their self-confidence and providing them with expertise and leadership skills the project helps these young women to become role models and multipliers within their communities after the final curtain call of the programme.

A Happy Ending to the football4good year in Lebanon with a German Federal Foreign Office staged event in the final three months of 2017.
ALL SUCH ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY NGOs LIKE STREETFOOTBALLWORLD MEAN THAT GIRLS AND WOMEN CAN SHOW THEMSELVES IN PUBLIC. UNFORTUNATELY, THE GIRLS DO NOT GET ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY FOOTBALL. IT EMPOWERS THEM THROUGH THE MANY SUCCESSES THEY EXPERIENCE WHILE PLAYING FOOTBALL. IT PROVIDES THEM WITH THE STRENGTH AND ENERGY TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS, FREEDOM AND, OF COURSE, EMANCIPATION.

Monika Staab,
Former Professional Footballer & Coach,
Germany

In rotation, the trainers from the project partners each took over a workshop for one or two days. Also on the agenda were three football festivals where 300 participants from different parts of Lebanon played in mixed teams and according to the football³ methodology. This provided the perfect opportunity for many of the female young leaders to put some of their newly gained knowledge into practice.

Eva Sperschneider from DISCOVER FOOTBALL, a charitable organisation based in Berlin, dedicated to championing gender equality, emancipation and women’s rights worldwide through football, travelled from Germany to carry out the “Women’s Empowerment” workshops. During the sessions, the group addressed gender stereotypes, exchanged past experiences, used role-play to explore challenges they had faced and drew up “action plans” for how to tackle gender-based discrimination and “mind maps” illustrating how they would like to live their lives. “What particularly struck me,” said one of the young women at a workshop in Kasarnaba, Eastern Lebanon, “was that we first listed the differences between men and women, but that when we looked at them in detail, nothing remained because, for example, men can be sensitive or vain or women are able to do jobs typically associated with men.”

Right to Play offered the expertise gained from their “Abilities First” programme to deliver workshops on the inclusion of children with disabilities in football activities. The sessions were lead by Ziad Kanaan from the international organisation’s Lebanon office who said that, while “at first during the training participants could not imagine children with special needs participating in activities,” by the end – armed with a repertoire of techniques - they realised how they could “adapt the session according to all of the children’s needs in order to ensure the inclusion of all of the children in the practice.”

Former coach of the Lebanese U17 Women’s National Team, Hiba El Jaafil, entered the stage to carry out training sessions in the football³ methodology. After introducing the young women to the theory, Hiba took them onto the pitch: “By playing they will know how the young people will feel when they play the same game,” she explained.

Not all of the young women who joined the course had even played “conventional” football before. At one of the workshops, Hiba was confronted with a group who first needed to be instructed in the basics of the game and were even reluctant to play. “They we wearing jeans and full makeup,” the young football³ coach laughed. During the workshop she managed to turn the tables: “They left the session asking me ‘please, please, can we do this again?’”
WE NEED THE WOMEN IN LEBANON, ESPECIALLY IN REGIONS FAR AWAY FROM BEIRUT, TO WORK MORE IN FOOTBALL!

Hiba El Jaafi, Former Captain of the Lebanese National Team & football coach, Lebanon

STAGE SET
The series of workshops and festivals took place in a variety of locations around Lebanon: from Burj El Barajneh, a Palestinian refugee camp in the southern suburbs of Beirut, the Hezbollah heartland of the Bekaa Valley to Tyre, a town perched precariously close to the border with Israel in the south of the country.

Particularly in more rural areas of Lebanon, young people lack educational and sports opportunities. “We need the females in Lebanon, especially in regions far away from Beirut, to work more in football,” said football coach Hiba El Jaafi, “first it helps them to know what real football is, how to work in football, how to be mediator, teach the young players to have self-confidence, trust.”

GUEST-STARRING MONIKA STAA (PLAYING HERSELF)
Former German National Team Player and Football Manager Monika Staab joined the football for good cast in Lebanon to speak to participants about her own experiences with discrimination and share the tactics she used to push past it and claim her place on the pitch.

During her stay, she attended training sessions and a football tournament and, while visiting a so-called “informal tented settlement” housing Syrian refugees, even organised a spontaneous kick-around with a group of women in lavishly coloured dresses that seemed too restrictive for playing football, and an impromptu match with more than 45 children who wouldn’t leave her side during her entire visit. When she tried to board her car at the end, they pleaded with her to stay.

Driving away also wasn’t easy for the former professional footballer. She said that, while she relished being “able to make the girls and boys happy for a short moment through my activity, the hard part was knowing under which conditions these refugees have to live and, above all, that these people will probably never be able to return home.”

“Her contribution was a real added value, with her enthusiasm, her capabilities to adapt to all circumstances and to include a high number of people,” Loubane Tay, football Programme Manager at Anera enthused.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER?
Though the project officially came to an end on the last day of 2017, the young women will carry the work forward in the coming years as multipliers and apply the knowledge that they gained in, their home communities, like Nour Nasrallah a 19-year-old from Ras Baalbeck in the north Bekaa region where it is not common for females to play football or any other sports. After being introduced to the football methodology through a previous programme in September 2017, she has implemented it with the female team she is slowly building up. We hope many others will soon have similar stories to tell. To be continued...
TEAM UP! TOOLKIT

INCREASING YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH FOOTBALL-BASED PROGRAMMES

IRELAND | UK | GERMANY | FRANCE | HUNGARY
| PORTUGAL | SPAIN
We often blame “the system” if things don’t work out. Indeed, governmental and municipal institutions are often an important factor contributing to the lack of quality and perspective in various spheres of our lives. Surrendering to this situation is one option, fighting for social change another. The question we need to answer in such circumstances is: if not us, who?

The life cycle consists of various stages, one of the most important ones being the step from compulsory schooling into further education or training and, ultimately, the job market. While in most systems education is guaranteed, the attempt to secure a job often becomes an endless spiral of failure. Again, there are two ways to approach this challenge – to surrender or to fight. But fighting alone is not enough. Therefore, we teamed up with well-versed local organisations from eight European countries to support youth in this endeavour.

With youth employability defined as one of the key focus areas of the European Union, combined with the knowledge about the wealth of experience and expertise among our network members, our objective at the beginning of this project was to collect and connect this know-how and create a tangible instrument that will contribute to social progress in communities across Europe. With the game of football at its core, this tool will hopefully become a comprehensive element in the work of local NGOs and an amplifier in the lives of young people.
ABOUT THE TOOLKIT
Over the period 2015–2017, members of the Team Up! project met eight times to share expertise, get to know each other’s programmes and work together to develop as a toolkit that, in 160 pages, provides a comprehensive understanding on how to develop and implement football-based employability programmes.

But, what do we talk about when we say ‘football-based employability programmes’?

Football-based employability programmes are programmes that combine football and employability activities with the aim of helping NEET young people to improve their employability and find a job. There is not one correct model for delivering a football-based employability programme. It can be done in many different ways. For example, one organisation might deliver 52 football sessions a year with a regular employability workshop once per month; another organisation might offer football sessions every morning and employability activities every afternoon; and another organisation might provide employability courses for 30 hours per week with a bolt-on football session for just two hours per week. Sometimes football and employability will be fully integrated into the same activity; in other circumstances they will be quite distinct and separate activities. The possibilities are endless and will vary significantly depending on each organisation’s priorities, experience and expertise, as well as on the demographics and needs of the young people engaged. The aim of the Team Up! toolkit is not to recommend a rigid approach to follow – but to instead showcase different methods used by the Team Up! members.

From a theoretical approach on how football-based employability programmes work to a number of practical examples of activities implemented by the Team Up! members, the toolkit touches upon topics such as how to work with NEET young people, the participant’s journey, how to implement football activities or how to measure the impact of football-based employability programmes.

The Team Up! Toolkit is an unprecedented attempt to both analyze the players and the field at large, as well as identify and disseminate best practices and impact-proven methodologies to key players in the sectors of sports, youth employability and non-formal education.

“Football is a brilliant platform to use to engage young people onto employability programmes because some of the things that you learn in football, such as discipline, communication, team work, are transferrable into the world of work.”

Saad Mohammed,
Sport 4 Life UK,
United Kingdom
MULTIPLIER EVENT IN BRUSSELS

The Team Up! journey came to an end in December 2017, with an official multiplier event to present the outcomes of the project and explore the role of sport to increase youth employability, with a special focus on NEETs in Europe.

“Team Up for NEETs – Youth, Sport and Employability in the 2020 strategy”, as the event was officially named, was hosted by the Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia in Brussels and gathered an audience of over 100 representatives of European grassroots organisations, youth organisations, and non-formal education institutions, the public sector and the corporate world.

In addition to presenting the toolkit, the event also provided a platform for announcing another achievement in the field, led by Vrije Universiteit Brussel. In 2016, with the support of streetfootballworld, ENGSO youth and VDAB, Vrije Universiteit Brussel was commissioned by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Union to investigate sport’s contribution to the employability of young people within the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The event took place on the morning of 12th December, with an opening speech by Rainer Steffens, Director of the Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, who welcomed the audience and expressed the interest and support of the Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to host the event.

A keynote speech was delivered by Jens Nymand Christensen, Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture who gave a succinct presentation on the problem of youth unemployment in Europe and the agenda of the EU. He reminded the audience that sport was part of the solution to the unemployment problem in Europe:

“Sport provides a great tool to reach out to young people, particularly those who are sidelined by the education system.”

The event proceeded with the participation of a young beneficiary from RheinFlanke, Atifa Moharam, an introduction to streetfootballworld’s strategy on employability by Johannes Axster, a talk about the EU Study on sport’s contribution to the employability of young people in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy by Professor Marc Theeboom and the presentation of the Team Up! toolkit by Elvira González-Vallés, manager of the project.

During the latter part of the morning participants were engaged in a World Café session, where representatives from the eight organisations that took part in Team Up! presented some specific activities or areas of expertise also included in the toolkit to groups of 10–12 people. Some of the topics covered here were:

- Measuring the impact of sport-based employability programmes, Sport 4 Life UK
- Supporting young people to become entrepreneurs, Sport dans la Ville
- The positive outcomes of playing football, Albion in the Community
- The importance of individual job coaching, Oltalom Sport Association
- Impact story: from participant to community young leader, SARI
- Bridging NEETs with employment opportunities: Referee Course, CAIS
- It takes two to tango – One-to-one mentoring with refugees, RheinFlanke
- The positive outcomes of playing football, Albion in the Community
- The importance of individual job coaching, Oltalom Sport Association
- Impact story: from participant to community young leader, SARI
- Bridging NEETs with employment opportunities: Referee Course, CAIS
- It takes two to tango – One-to-one mentoring with refugees, RheinFlanke

The final section of the event included a panel discussion to reflect on the question: “Youth, Sport and Employability in the 2020 strategy: Where do they meet?” and welcomed representatives from the EU Commission, grassroots organisations and academia:

- Anna Balogi, International Coordinator, Oltalom Sport Association
- Jacob Kornbeck, Policy Officer, DG EAC - Youth, Volunteer Solidarity and Traineeships Office
- Yves Le Lostecque, Head of Unit, DG EAC - Sport Unit
- Saad Mohammed, Marketing & Insight Manager, Sport 4 Life UK
- Prof. Marc Theeboom, Professor of the research Group Sport and Society, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Some of the highlights of the discussion were the importance of the role of coaches, the policy recommendations for the EU institutions to promote football-based employability programmes and the value of developing a holistic cross-sector approach for the field.

The event concluded with a reception offered by the Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia in Brussels.

IN FOCUS: EUROPE

Team Up! Toolkit

A LOOK AHEAD

In January 2018, streetfootballworld will kick off a new Collaborative Partnership to further develop and promote the use of football-based youth employability programmes. The objective of “Scoring for the Future”, funded by ERAMUS+, in the framework of Sport Collaborative partnerships programme, will be to further develop Training-the-Trainer methodology to support organisations that want to establish football-based employability programmes in Europe and beyond. “Scoring for the Future” will create an accessible tool to transfer impact-measured, successful practices to more sport organisations and establish streetfootballworld project partners as knowledge hubs on how to promote skill-development using sport as a tool.

“WHAT’S INTERESTING ABOUT THE TEAM UP! PROJECT IS THAT WE ARE ALL WORKING TOWARDS THE SAME GOAL BUT WE ARE DOING IT THROUGH A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES.”

Mark Slide,
Albion in the Community,
United Kingdom
From kicking a ball in secret at her local beach to becoming captain of the Lebanon Women’s National Team and Head Coach of the U17 and U19 squads, 31-year-old Hiba El Jaafil has achieved some remarkable goals. To do so, she first had to kick societal norms out of the way. As a Sports Coordinator at the National Evangelical School south of Beirut and a football coach throughout the region, she today helps others to also find their place on the pitch. This is her story of perseverance and determination.

A car heaved its metal frame around the corner of the road towards the Lebanese coastal town of Sidon, sounding its horn repeatedly to warn children playing in the road to dash to safety. One young girl pricked her ears for a different reason. 10-year-old Hiba El Jaafil was playing football on the beach with her older brother and neighbouring boys. The driver of the car was her father. For girls, he had told her, football was strictly “haram”. But she couldn’t help herself. Football had become her passion. So she attuned her ears to distinguish her father’s car horn from the cacophony of tooting that incessantly resounds from Lebanon’s roads.

“My father didn’t realise that it was my warning,” Hiba says today, smiling at the memory. As soon as she heard it, she would rush home to avoid the beating for disobeying his orders. But sometimes, in the heat of the game, or when she was just about to score a goal, she couldn’t bring herself to leave the improvised beach pitch quickly enough. “He told me a hundred times not to play football with the boys,” Hiba said. “When I was 10 or 11, he said ‘You have to start thinking about how you cover’. His thinking was I will get married from 16 or 17.” Hiba’s father was concerned about his daughter, his mind full of how to correctly fulfil religious and cultural demands. All Hiba could think about were football tactics.

TRAGEDY STRIKES

Four years later, the car horn ended its warning broadcast. While working on the construction of a friend’s house, Hiba’s father lost his footing and fell from a height of three metres, hitting his head fatally. Hiba was devastated. “For 25 days I was sitting at home crying,” she remembers. She remained absent from school until her teachers, who came to her home every day, finally persuaded her to return.
She had always been a good student, but due to her distress, her grades suffered and, even years later, she only just managed to pass her final exams. Hiba’s father may have been strict and a forceful opponent of her footballing aspirations, but she loved him dearly and the two had a close relationship.

Though she was the most boisterous of his five daughters and the only one who refused to wear hijab, she adored the football. It was indeed he who introduced her to the beautiful game, often taking her to watch derby matches. “It’s his problem not my problem. He made me love football!” Hiba laughs. She regrettably admits that “maybe if my dad was still alive, I wouldn’t play football, I wouldn’t be a coach, I wouldn’t be here now.”

OPPORTUNITY IN CRISIS

A few months after her father’s death, a neighbour approached Hiba and asked: “Why don’t you go and play on a team.” She hadn’t even known there was one. He told her that he had seen a girls’ team playing on a small court. “Please take me!” Hiba demanded. But her mother refused. Her brother Hassan, six years her senior and player on the National Beach Football Team, backed her sister up. As Hiba recalls: “He listened to his friends who were saying ‘Oh your sister is very good at football!’ and he’s like ‘Yeah, she’s my sister!’”

Her brother’s support, Hiba’s unrelenting determination and the realisation that football offered a ray of hope in the gloom of grief over her father, made her mother finally relent. Now all Hiba needed was more appropriate attire. She strode out onto the balcony of their flat and shouted across to a neighbour who was a gymnast. “Please,” she called, “I need some shorts!” – “I don’t have any size,” came the response. She threw a pair over for her to try. They would do. Hiba set off excitedly for the football field.

At Majed were playing the American University team from Beirut. At half time, Al Majed’s coach asked for a couple of her contributors who had hijab. “You stay,” he said. The side were losing 3-1 and needed all the support they could get. Hiba seized her chance. She controlled a pass and scored. At the end of the game the teams tied 3-3. Hiba had won her place on the team. In the following years she played on a number of different football and futsal teams as a midfielder and captained in Lebanon and Abu Dhabi.

BECOMING A COACH

Though her passion for the game spurred her on, being a footballer at the time came with a series of frustrations. In between tournaments, the team only set foot on the pitch for friendly matches and trained for just one month preceding tournaments. Such circumstances made it impossible for players to improve their performance. For all their efforts, the female players were never paid a single Lebanese pound. To make ends meet Hiba took an office job. It was there that she was inspired to drive her football career in a further direction. One day, a colleague told her about the coaching licence. She had never heard about it before. It seemed like a great opportunity. Hiba persuaded her boss to give her 15 days’ leave to attend the course.

She arrived full of enthusiasm but was soon overcome with shyness. 23 pairs of male eyes gazed at her quizzically.

Hiba was the only woman on the course. Then a few of men began asking for her number. Hiba was too intimidated to join them on the pitch when they played football and didn’t dare to raise her voice in the theory sessions, though she knew all of the answers. She was frustrated, convinced that she would have to quit the course. The following day, the instructor took her aside: “The participation on the court gives you more marks” he said and proceeded to encourage her. His words succeeded in helping Hiba’s more characteristic determination triumph over her intimidation. “You know when you are in jail and someone opens the door and you start running, running, running?” From the second day until the 15th day, I did not stop answering and playing on the field,” Hiba recalls.

The effort paid off: she came 2nd in the overall ranking. In 2014, she gained the B licence – again as the only woman – and took first place. Instead of congratulating her, the men on her course showered her with insults: “Hiba is not a good girl,” they said. “She’s a female and she’s taking the first place!” When Hiba later again got first place for her A licence, she confronted them: “What did I do this time? The problem is with you and not with me.” Finally, they saw reason and apologised.

Hiba’s first place was justified even further when she later led her team to victory as coach of the U17 national team in the U17 Women’s Cup. For Lebanon it was the first international football title. Hiba looks back at this chapter in her life with gratitude and says that she is particularly grateful to the Lebanese Football Federation for the opportunities they offered her.

Hiba was keen to explore how the beautiful game could have an impact beyond professional football. At the International Committee for Streetfootball (football3) she joined “Girls play, girls lead”, a collaboration between streetfootballworld, OSCAR Foundation and YFC Rurka Kalan, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt). She participated in an event staged by YFC Rurka Kalan in Lebanon in September 2017. “It will never work here,” they first said sceptically.

She was eager to get involved and thrilled when she was subsequently invited to attend Festival 16 in France the following year. It was her first taste of football3. Curious to find out even more, she procured a football3 handbook and read it from cover to cover. At the time, she was working on a project in Lebanon with 900 Syrian refugees and Lebanese children from a number of state schools to promote social cohesion and gender equality. She decided to give football3 a trial run and began to instruct the coordinators.

“It will never work here,” they first said sceptically. After witnessing how the young players began communicating in a better way on the pitch and not shouting at each other as before, they revised their opinions. “football3 has taught me that nothing is impossible,” Hiba says, adding that she particularly values its effectiveness at fostering self-confidence, trust and that it promotes reflection on the way the game is played. “You have to be smart in choosing the rules,” she notes.

Meanwhile, Hiba has become one of the leading football3 coaches in the region, after first being approached when streetfootballworld was looking for a suitable person to conduct train-the-trainer sessions for a project together with Beirut-based organisation American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA).

She has since worked on a number of further programmes in Beirut, Southern and Eastern Lebanon and has – as a football3 instructor – been pivotal to my work,” Hiba says, “enabling such projects but also allowing me to travel to Germany.”

COACHING A GOOD

Working towards sustainable standards in sports and facilitating access to football for girls and young women throughout Lebanon – in both in sports education and sport for development.

Being a coach and enabling others to follow in her footsteps goes beyond creating better footballers.

Even when coaching national teams, Hiba states, she was engaged in many other aspects of the players’ lives: “You need to listen to the girls outside the pitch, not just on the pitch,” she says, adding: “For me as a coach in Lebanon I have to be her doctor, her psychologist, her mother, her father, maybe sometimes her boyfriend.” One of her most important tasks in her mentoring role is often simply listening. You can tell her anything.

Hiba says, “She has just one demand: ‘don’t lie to me!’” Honesty is one of the values she most fiercely defends. When her father was still alive, she often found it hard to live by. But when, after his death and at a more mature age, she battled with her mother to allow her to play the sport she so “haram”, she never lied. “I never said I am going to see friends,” she states to give an example.

Hiba fought and fights hard for football, but the battle is worth it: “Football changed my life 180 degrees,” she enthuses. It has helped her overcome grief, has given her confidence, opportunities to travel, and above all: a purpose. It is something she wishes to continue sharing with others in future, as for her: “Football is life.”
From kicking plastic bottles as a moderately talented player to getting his feet on real footballs as a professional for Maltese Club San Gwann FC and the St. Lucian national team, David Henry has a remarkable story to tell. It is one which he hopes will show to others that “if you work hard, you’re going to prosper”. As Youth and Sports Council president and Sacred Sports Foundation’s Youth Mentor and Head Coach, he has also spent the last seven years using the beautiful game to support disadvantaged youth in his local community and beyond.

Before David Henry ever heard the terms ‘football for good’ or ‘sport for development’ he was kicking around for fun on dusty pitches near his home in Canaries, a small fishing village clinging to the west coast of the Caribbean island St. Lucia. With no actual football readily available, he and his friends improvised with plastic juice bottles. “In our town, we are all relatively poor, so I was going to the pitch and kicking plastic bottles around,” David remembers.

Growing up in Canaries, an economically challenged part of St. Lucia, David was faced with two starkly contrasting realities: the paradisiacal Caribbean island idyll with its tropical beaches and translucent sea water and a community stricken by poverty, gang violence and lack of opportunities.

“Growing up as a kid was rough financially and so I was exposed and a victim of verbal more than physical abuse at home and in schools,” David explains. “Physically the abuse I got left a real mark in my life and I never want youth to go through it, so I was always keen on doing good.” He says that today, “one thing that remains disheartening to me is to see kids going down the road I was heading and not finding it in themselves to look past the abuse and remind themselves that they can be an important contribution to society. And so my work with Sacred Sports allows me to do that, in Canaries.”

KICKING BOTTLES NOT FOOTBALLS
It was only seven years ago that David Henry had the opportunity to kick a real football and bin the plastic juice bottles. Ever since, he has used the game to take major strides not only in his career but in his community.

Growing up in a single parent household in a relatively poor community David not only faced hardship at home, but was often bullied at school. One reason was that, though he enjoyed the game, his footballing talent at the time was mediocre. Asked to fill in for a missing teammate one day, he joined a group of players only to be chased off the pitch five minutes later. In floods of tears he realised that he simply couldn’t keep up with the other players and that his technique needed work. Plenty of it.
After being bullied off the football field, he lost interest in sport and didn’t even dribble a ball again until his encounter with Eric Longville in 2008. At the time, Longville had just set up a grassroots programme and coached David in the fundamentals of the game. David continued playing on Longville’s football programme and began coaching the local children when it became time for his mentor to retire. By then, David was the most logical choice to replace him as the head of the programme.

It was on a hot Sunday when he was on the pitch coaching a group of 50 children, that David first came into contact with Sacred Sports Foundation. Representatives from the organisation were going around the island to engage with communities where there were fewer opportunities for people to participate in sport activities. It was then that they adopted the programme that David lead or, as David phrases it: “For them, it was never them who adopted it. Actually, they adopted me.”

Due to lack of opportunities on the labour market many people in the local community lived and still live below the poverty line. This has made a large number of the island’s youth turn to gangs and violence.

The Sacred Sports Foundation seeks to assist these young people by providing them with support and opportunities through football. It is thanks to the organisation that David himself continued to develop further and began to see potential in himself as a football player. Then, one day, Delroy Alexander, head coach of St. Lucia’s national football team, saw the same potential. He trained with David and continued to push him to become a player who would eventually play at a national level.

“He always saw that I had the talent to go further, even when I didn’t have it yet, and the Foundation also always pushed and pushed,” David smiles with gratitude.

The Sacred Sports Foundation helped David to develop into a coach and trained him in new techniques - one of them being football3. In 2016, streetfootballworld hosted a football3 Festival in Lyon, France. Participants came from around the world to take part and learn about the streetfootballworld methodology. Though David himself wasn’t able to travel to France, he learnt football3 upon the return of the members of Sacred Sports Foundation who had attended. He has since been employing it in his work coaching children in football for good programmes.

For David, football for good signifies “football for purpose” and he goes on to explain that: “One of the challenges that a lot of the participants face is that they all have their issues back home, a lot of them come not mentally prepared to have fun.”

David, who was raised around drugs and violence, says that football has helped him to better himself and has given him a sense of purpose. The children David trains live in the same environment. Since the 24-year-old St. Lucian began working as a coach for the Sacred Sports Foundation he has enjoyed renown beyond his successes on the professional pitches. On the island he cannot go out incognito: “I go all over the island and people recognise me as a Sacred Sports coach.”

He hopes his local fame and role model status can help him spread important messages to the young people he works with. “I always say to the kids, you actually have to work for what you want, you know, if people see you’re willing, you’re going to prosper and you have what it takes, then they’re always going to support you. And foundations like the Sacred Sports Foundation are always, always, always going to support, and lend a hand and I’m a little testimonial for the work that they do in St. Lucia.”

When asked about his future plans, David exclaims dramatically: “I actually want to take over the Caribbean!” To explain his initially imperialist-sounding statement, he says that his next step together with the Sacred Sports Foundation is to bring football for good and the football3 methodology to the rest of the Caribbean. In doing so, David hopes to provide opportunities to more people in the region. He aims to continue using the game for the social inclusion of those who are marginalised either economically or as a result of disability. David concludes that an important lesson he himself learned from the Sacred Sports Foundation is to “always be yourself.” His wish is to learn further techniques through the Sacred Sports Foundation so that he can even more successfully deliver the message to others that no matter what race, gender, sexuality, age and ability, everyone can play the beautiful game.
Women’s football first saw its rise in 1971 when the English Football Association lifted the ban on women’s football, but it was only as late as 1991 that women’s football received recognition and a significant boost on an international scale. It was the year of the very first FIFA Women’s World Cup.

To test the waters for an international women’s football tournament, FIFA staged a prototype event of the soon-to-be Women’s World Cup called the “FIFA Women’s Invitation Tournament”. It was held in China in 1988 – 58 years after the first men’s FIFA World Cup in 1930. It was at this time that the President of FIFA, Dr. João Havelange spoke in favour of the first-ever Women’s World Cup. After the tournament was deemed a success, FIFA approved the establishment of a Women’s World Cup and the first official tournament took place in 1991. The event, however, was surrounded by controversy as it didn’t even carry the title “FIFA Women’s World Cup”. Instead, the tournament was called “the 1st FIFA World Championship for Women’s Football for the M&M’s Cup” as it was sponsored by Mars Inc.

The tournament took place from the 16th–30th November 1991 in China. At the time, the host country was trying to secure an Olympic bid and therefore assured that the event would have impressive turnouts. The tournament consisted of 12 teams and 26 matches with thousands of factory workers attending each game. At the final match, that the US Women’s Team won 2-1 against Norway, the players were cheered on by some 65,000 spectators.

Today, women’s football is still faced with huge disparities in media coverage and wages. However, attendances are growing for female leagues, there are more female sports reporters than ever before and female players are getting more recognition for their success on the pitch. The first Women’s World Cup taking place in 1991 came a whole 61 years after the first Men’s World Cup in 1930 and even before it became a women’s Olympic sporting event in 1996. The tournament faced a considerable amount of reluctance and controversy, but was nonetheless truly a coming of age story for women’s football.

“When people look back, they think we were born on the top of the mountain. We climbed the mountain,” said Anson Dorrance, U.S women’s national team. The Women’s World Cup gaining recognition helped to highlight crucial issues in the sporting community and to push an agenda for equal rights on the pitch.
WITH THEIR OWN EYES

STREETFOOTBALLWORLD TEAMS UP WITH GOAL CLICK

Football means a lot of different things to different people. Goal Click is a global football photography project that provides an opportunity to people and communities from across the world to show what the beautiful game looks like through their eyes.

How? Goal Click sends disposable analogue cameras to people across the world, who are passionate about football. Then, the magic happens.
Today, Goal Click has photographers in over 80 countries, taking photos and telling stories; stories about their communities, their countries and their culture, using football as their common narrative.

During the year 2017, Goal Click engaged 11 members of the streetfootballworld network in the project. From SLASA in Sierra Leone and Spirit of Soccer in Iraq to Soccer Without Borders in Nicaragua, our network members have taken on the challenge. Here, five of them share their stories with us – through the lens of football.

You can follow Goal Click on Instagram @goalclick or Twitter @Goal_Click.
COUNTRY: INDONESIA

ORGANISATION: UNI PAPUA

PHOTOGRAPHER: HARRY WIDJAJA (FOUNDER & CEO)
Football is a language. When we cannot speak a local language, football speaks for us. The Elseng tribe cannot speak or understand Bahasa Indonesia. But when we meet and play football, there is a connection between us. Football is a neutral tool to help development and peace. There are many issues in Indonesia. We cannot use religion for development and peace. We cannot use political parties. But wherever you go with a football the local people will welcome you, no matter what language you speak.”
For us to turn their pain into power, we needed to start this amputee football.
There are times I think about the senseless war that took place in our country, it makes me want to shed tears. One of the main things I was trying to showcase is that disability is not inability. We are not just teaching them about football, we are also building capability, such as giving them loans to do microfinance. We want to see the amputees coming out on the streets, with skills, and then be somebody in society that society will recognise.
The most popular game in Iraq is football, and it is the only game that can unify the Iraqi people. When the Iraqi National Team wins, all the people celebrate regardless of religion, gender and ethnic background. This is the role football can play.
Security is the main challenge. In areas of Kurdistan occupied by Islamic State nobody can play football anymore. Spirit of Soccer has stopped activity in these areas due to the occupation and our coaches have become Internally Displaced People (IDP). But when the Iraq national team came 4th in the Asia Cup in February 2015 all the people of Iraq celebrated together.
Soccer has been growing in this country, although baseball still dominates – but despite that, we show that through soccer we can break down barriers, unite our nation and transform lives.
We use soccer as a vehicle for positive social change with the girls of Granada. We integrate them into society through education and we create girls with the right values so that they become good people in our society.
Football is important for the people of Caboverdiano because it creates bonds of friendship; they develop the spirit of teams, the socialisation of people, the occupation of time with exercises. In the end they unleash the physical and psychological spirit of the person.
In the future football will be important to Cape Verdean people. For example, 10 or 20 years ago football was just played by men, but now if we look at football as a sport it has been promoted to the entire Cape Verdean archipelago. Men, women, and children now play football, and we have competitions that involve everyone.
A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

Football is often called ‘the world’s common language.’ From the crowded favelas of Brazil to the mountain tops of Lesotho: the beautiful game is played and watched by more people, in more countries than any other sport. It has the unique power to cross boundaries of race, culture and religion, turning former strangers into teammates – and friends.

Football is not only the planet’s favourite sport – it’s also one of the most powerful vehicles for positive social change. The third half invites you to travel, play football and change the world! The adventure travel company with a social purpose designs 7–14 day, all-inclusive trips for groups or individual travellers aged 16 and above, who want to experience new countries and cultures, while learning about global citizenship and making a difference. Profits from every trip are invested into local host NGOs allowing them to reach more underserved youth.
EXPLORING FOOTBALL4GOOD ON THE EMERALD ISLE

We turn to the chapter of last year’s third half travel diary when a group of 18 students aged 15-17 and 4 adults from Pace Academy travelled from Georgia, Atlanta to the Emerald Isle and joined us on the pitch and to help unlock the positive power of the game.

Northern Ireland, part of the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland both have a rich football tradition, but also a recent history plagued by issues of racism and social exclusion for minority groups.

The trip was hosted by the local, high-impact non-profit organisation Sport Against Racism Ireland (SARI). SARI was founded in 1997 as a direct response to the increasing number of racist attacks linked to the dramatic rise in the number of foreign nationals living in the country. The organisation’s mission is to support cultural integration and social inclusion in Ireland by using sport, particularly football, as a medium to combat racism, sectarianism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination. SARI organises regular football programmes, annual sporting events, school sports and educational programmes and cultural activities.

Many of the children and young people SARI works with are 2nd generation immigrants with Irish accents, who go to Irish schools, and follow the national teams – they are citizens of Ireland and SARI feels a responsibility towards them.

During their trip, the young football4good explorers got a chance to meet them on the pitch, travelling from Dublin to Belfast to experience first hand how SARI drives positive social change in Ireland with football. It was an itinerary jam-packed with football activities: from playing and coaching with the Hijabs and Hattricks programme for Muslim girls, participating in friendly matches with local teams in Dublin and Belfast, attending a leadership workshop with Brian Kerr, former Head Coach of Ireland Men’s National Team, to joining a night-time training session with the ‘SoccerNites’ youth football and education development programme.

“The local host actually opens up the doors,” German Arguelles, CEO of the third half explained, “They not only let us experience the work they do with the youth in whatever location we are visiting but we also get to interact through the game itself.”

After welcoming the guests from the United States, Executive Chair of SARI Perry Ogden shared his take on the power of football: “Everybody can just arrive in a place, a ball comes out, you’ll get 98 percent of the people wanting to join in.” For the enthusiastic group, the statistic was 100%.

“IT’S REALLY INTERESTING TO SEE HOW QUICKLY YOU CAN BOND OVER A SIMPLE SPORT, LIKE WE NEVER MET THEM BEFORE, BUT WE KNEW EACH OTHER’S NAMES AND EVERYTHING BY THE END OF IT!”

Sam,
Participant, Pace Academy

“I WANTED TO COME AND ALSO PLAY SOCCER AND BE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE THROUGH THE GAME OF SOCCER. THAT’S JUST SOMETHING THAT WAS REALLY APPEALING TO ME.”

Kayla,
Participant, Pace Academy

“It’s like almost its own language, there’s no barriers between us.”

Harrison,
Participant, Pace Academy
WE'RE FROM AMERICA, THEY'RE FROM VAST DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND WE ALL KNOW HOW TO PLAY.

Marina, Participant, Pace Academy

Kayla, one of the students and a keen football player, said that she had heard that Ireland was “an awesome place”, had wanted to visit and jumped at the chance when she discovered the third half trip: “I wanted to come and also play soccer and be able to connect with other people through the game of soccer. That’s just something that was really appealing to me.”

Her class- and teammate, Marina, noted that she hadn’t known what to expect initially but quickly came to understand the power of the game to bring people together: “We’re from America, they’re from vast different countries and we all know how to play.” Sam, also from the United States, pitched in to add: “It’s really interesting to see how quickly you can bond over a simple sport, like we never met them before, but we knew each other’s names and everything by the end of it!”

Beyond the pitch, Brian Kerr, former Head Coach of Ireland Men’s National Team, told the group that, for him, bringing together such a mixed group of people was his recipe for success: “I was always into the idea of diversity and when I was picking teams I would look for someone with it, because I thought that diversity added something to our mix, our team.”

Looking back at the experiences of the previous 10 days, Troy Baker, Athletic Director at Pace Academy, noted how thrilled he had been to witness his students “getting a chance at a universal language which is through sports and athletics,” adding, “I see it play out every day on a local level. It’s really awesome to see the power of sports, to see the power of athletics as a common language for people all over the world.”

Baker’s student Harrison returned to America equally enthused and, reflecting on one of his most important lessons of the trip, he said: “It’s like almost its own language, there’s no barriers between us.”

THE THIRD HALF METHODOLOGY IS COMPRISED OF THREE COMPONENTS: SOCCER, CULTURE AND EDUCATION. EACH TRIP IS CONSTRUCTED FROM A PORTFOLIO OF EXCITING AND VARIED ACTIVITIES REFLECTING SOCCER, CULTURE AND EDUCATION, CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE, SOCCER-BASED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE. EVERY THIRD HALF ADVENTURE IS BUILT AROUND A CURRICULUM DESIGNED TO DEVELOP SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (SEI) AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS. THE FOCUS IS ON 21ST CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS LIKE Grit, Initiative, AND CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH A BLEND OF COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOPS AND HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES WITH LOCAL PEOPLE.