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As long as I can remember, football has played a leading role in my life.

The football pitch was the first stage where I performed. First, without an audience, as a young boy in the streets of Marseille. Later as a professional at Old Trafford.

Like no other sport, football brings people together. Frees their minds, ignites their passion. The game reaches billions, all over the world and it has the power to make an incredible difference in people’s lives and communities.

The world, that is frayed at the seams, that has burning issues we need to tackle...This world needs football more than ever before.

Together, let’s play for change. For the better of our world.

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Football Legend
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the third half
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Eric Cantona: An In-Depth Interview

BEFORE MY CAREER AS A FOOTBALLER, I LOVED FOOTBALL. MY DREAM WAS TO BECOME A FOOTBALLER, BUT I KNEW THAT I WOULD DO SOMETHING ELSE AFTER THAT.

Eric Cantona, Football Legend & Common Goal Mentor

All the world’s a football pitch
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts...
“Ooh, ahh. Can-to-naa” echoes through the pulsating crowds of football enthusiasts. Even today, over 20 years after the subject of this chant left the stage of professional football to take on other roles, Eric Cantona is tightly woven into the fabric of football like few other professionals – past and present. The former star footballer is a man who has indeed played many parts throughout his life – whether on or off the pitch; whether taking his teams to victory with technical prowess and fierce determination or posing as a candidate for the French Presidency in 2012 to raise a flag about the country’s housing plight, one of the many social issues the 52-year-old has taken a stand on.

We meet Eric in his current home city Lisbon where he recounts his journey kicking “everything that looked like a ball” growing up in Marseille, turning his football pastime into passion and profession, rising to the peak of his career at Old Trafford, retiring at the young age of 30 to pursue other projects, while retaining his love of the sport, and how he today hopes to shape the future of the game in his newly acquired role of Mentor for Common Goal.
It is hard to imagine an Eric Cantona without football. But there was, of course, a time when playing football was a new experience to you. When did you first play? And how did football develop from a pastime into a passion?

My grandmother used to say that as soon as I started to walk I kicked everything that looked like a ball. I lived in an area of Marseille where football was the most important thing, all the kids played football: we played around the house, in the street, everywhere. We had a great club called Caillols, an amateur club but a wonderful football club. They had a stadium in the city centre of Marseille, and there was a wonderful football scene. You had to compete with the scouts, the recruiting staff from the professional clubs, they came to see all the players and then I started to think about being a professional.

In the book 'Cantona on Cantona' you say: “No matter what the situation, I always think I have a chance of winning.” Starting out as a professional footballer, were you always this confident – and competitive?

It was a long time ago... but I think we don't change a lot. From when I was a kid until now, if I play cards I want to win, I play pétanque, I want to win and when I was 10 it was exactly the same. I hated to lose. I play against the idea of losing. I think we are all competitive, all the people who become professional, they are competitive. You cannot reach this level if you are not.

What makes a good footballer, talent or training?

So many kids play football and there are so many talents, you have to work hard. We all have a talent, some footballers have more talent than me, but talent is, what, 50%? We have to work very hard. Mentally, it's very hard to find the confidence to enjoy the game. My philosophy in sports – not only in sports, today it's the same as an actor – is that we need to work hard to find the confidence and with confidence we can enjoy it. Winning is all about enjoyment: working hard, it's an enjoyment, too. I love to work. I love to go to the training session, I love the shower after the training session, very tired, and to be in my car driving back to the house on the motorway after a job well done. I have been lucky to play with good teams who play wonderful football and to play wonderful football is not only about skill. Yes, you have to have skilful players, but you need to move a lot, you have all the players moving around you and you have to move around the players, so physically you need to be fit, really fit and the harder you work in training the more you can enjoy the game.

You retired from professional football in 1997, just before your 31st birthday. On JOE’s ‘Unfiltered’ podcast you told James O’Brien that it was because you had lost your passion for the game. How did that happen?

Before my career as a footballer, I loved football. My dream was to become a footballer, but I knew that I would do something else after that. I think the priority was to play football first, because you finish your football career at the age of 30, 35, and then you have plenty of time to do things. I have been lucky to have many passions, I knew for a long time that I would do something else after football, I was prepared to do something else. But this is not the case for all footballers.

I think that an important thing in life – in football and in life – is anticipation

We should prepare the footballers, who don’t have other passions besides football, for their life after they retire. We should prepare them, because it's very difficult after football. Football – it's an adrenaline rush, it's like a drug and when footballers retire most of them are depressed. They are depressed because physically your body is in demand of the drugs that you were giving it every week or two times a week. For the players who, after football, become a manager, it’s ok, but for the ones who don’t have a goal, what do they do? From the age of 14 or 15 they went to the academy in a professional way, trained two times a week, and then played two times a week and then suddenly: nothing. Most of them are not even prepared for not being recognised in the street six months or one year after they retire.

When the players stop playing they fall into emptiness and depression. As long as you are a footballer it’s full of great things but they don’t realise they should be prepared for what comes after. I think that an important thing in life – in football and in life – is anticipation, to anticipate. Anticipate everything, to anticipate your relationship, anticipate in business, in football. Before you receive the ball you need to know exactly what you will do with it and not start to think when you receive the ball. And during my career it was exactly the same, I anticipated what would happen after football. And the players should anticipate it, they should be prepared.

Though you say you were lucky to have other passions, were they sometimes a distraction when you were still playing professionally?

Sometimes, when I was a player I had to concentrate very hard on football because my mind went to other things. I said: ‘No, no, I have to concentrate on the game’, even sometimes the day before the game, the night before the game or the morning before the game, I was thinking about something else. I still love football but you need to work hard and mentally it is very demanding. So, to be at 100%, you need to make sacrifices; be careful of what you eat, what time you go to bed, what you think, how you are concentrating. If you have 100% of the passion you can do that, you can deal with that. If you lose 10% of your passion, you cannot do it. Of course I could have played longer, I had the passion for playing the game, but to play the game and enjoy the game you need to work hard and to work hard you need to make all the sacrifices around. And I just lost a bit of the passion to make those sacrifices, so I said: ‘I prefer to retire’.

Eric Cantona: An In-Depth Interview
If you could relive any day or moment of your professional football career which would that be and why? It was the time I spent at Manchester United. I’ve been lucky because I spent from the age of 25 to 30 at United. Being in your 30s is the best moment, they are the best years for a footballer, because you have experience and physically you are still good. I spent these years with a great manager, Alex Ferguson, who understood me like he was my father, he helped me a lot, and with wonderful players around me. I played with two generations of players, the first one when I arrived and then a new generation of players coming through the academy of United so they knew exactly the philosophy of the club and the identity of the club.

You want to reach perfection, which is impossible, but you want to get as close as possible
Ferguson was the manager of the first team, but he knew all the players from the age of 14. He knew all their names, he knew all their qualities, all they need to work, everything, he spoke to them. It was, I think, like Cruyff when he was in Barcelona. It’s like the players of Barcelona: they played together since the age of 15, they can play together with their eyes closed. I am lucky to have been with Manchester United then.

Any specific time to highlight?
Of course I loved when I came back from suspension after 9 months and we won the double. We had ten games to go, we were 9 points and one game ahead of Newcastle and we won the league. It was with the new generation of players and it was their first season. At the beginning of the first season we lost and one of the old players [Alan Hanson] said: "you cannot win with young players". And we won the league and then we won the cup against Liverpool in the last second of the game, I scored in that game, and I had only come back in October because I was banned for 9 months. The game when I came back was against Liverpool and I scored...and assisted. We drew 2-2 at home. When you cannot play for 9 months you need time to fully get back to your level. It took me 2 or 3 months to come back to my level and I did so thanks to Ferguson, who kept me on the team at the time. There were other footballers better than me, but he knew that I needed time and he gave it to me. Then, the next five months we were just unbelievable. We won away against Newcastle. We won so many games, the important games...it was more than football, it was more than only winning things, it was winning with a new generation of player, with young players who were 18, 19.

If you were starting out again, aged 15/16, with football the way it is nowadays, would you still be the player you became? Would you still have the same passion?
Yes, I think so. When you see most of the players, they are passionate about the game, they are really passionate because it is like a bit of an obsession, a bit crazy. You want to reach perfection, which is impossible, but you want to get as close as possible and all the footballers are like this, they are passionate about the game, but they want to always do something better, and better and better and better. It’s an obsession, which is good for some things but it’s bad for others. Because when you are obsessive, you are obsessive about everything.

Do you think that money and fame are more important for footballers than they used to be in the past?
My father, my parents, never spoke to me about money, never, only about the passion for the game, only about the game, the enjoyment of the game and winning. But I heard that now for some kids, their parents want them to become famous and earn a lot of money. I heard that it is like this now. Not everyone, no, but a lot of parents. Now we live an era that’s all about being famous, even just for five seconds, and one artist anticipated that. It was Andy Warhol, who said seventy years ago that in the year 2000, everybody would have their minute of celebrity, of glory. He said that then, and now it is all about becoming famous. But (when I started out), I didn’t care about becoming famous, I didn’t play football to become famous, I didn’t play football to earn money, I would have paid to play football and I’m sure that if I offer you the chance to play in Wembley, to play at Old Trafford in front of 70,000 people for United, you would pay for that. You ask 99% of the people, they would pay for it, and I would have done the same. Of course, it was a business and I took my share of the money but I didn’t play for that, I never thought about that. I think most of the players are the same.
What is your opinion on how the football industry has changed since you retired as a football player? I think most of the journalists speak about how the players earn too much money, and all the people say that also, not just the journalists but also the people who read the newspapers and the ones in front of the TV. But why do they earn so much money? Because there are so many games on TV, because all the newspapers speak about football and they pay the rights for English football or for French football or Spanish football, billions. Because so many games are on TV you have the sponsors, all the sponsors around the pitch, the ones on the shirts. Back in the day, when there were only three channels, when I was a kid, we could see only the matches of the national team, the French Cup final and the European final, the Champions League, it was the ‘League of Champions’ at the time, and that’s it. But now there are so many games, if you organise an event the sponsor will ask you: ‘Is it on TV? Will the journalists will be there? Who will speak about it?’ And the prices are not the same. So, if you say it’s on TV Channel 1, they will say they will pay one hundred thousand for example. So, the business is built by the media.

The federations have a responsibility. I think, to provide part of the stadium to middle-class or poor people. I think, as a result, in the future we will have different players. It’s like a manager who never played football, you are a great manager but you are missing something, because you never played, never felt what it is to be a player. You will have a player who will be great, but something will be missing, something magical will be missed by the ones who cannot go to matches today, they cannot watch a game in the stadium, live, but only on TV or PlayStation.

Do you see a way for football to shift back to a more purely sporting experience? It’s impossible, it’s just utopic. You can’t go back to having ten matches on TV a year. It’s like if you ask someone if they can live without their phone, it’s impossible now. TV pays the billions because they will earn money, they will sell to the sponsors and everyone. Nobody invests money to lose money, if they pay a billion it’s because they think they will earn two.

The positive side to this is football’s enormous reach. Do you think that, as a result, the beautiful game has the ability to change the world for the better? I think that football is so important to the people that you can use football for anything. When I was in Medellin I worked with displaced people, it was displaced people but it was nearly like a city, 50,000 people lived there. There was a foundation that simply built a football pitch and helped the kids to go to school. They told them: ‘You need to work well at school and then you will be allowed to play football’, which is great. Football, it’s so popular, people love football so much, you can use football to achieve so many things.

Football, like arts, can be a very positive tool to access, for example, education. Can you imagine if we did not have football in the world? In the favelas in Brazil? In this area here in Portugal? In the poor areas in India, Mexico or Colombia? Football and arts, or sports in general because it differs from country to country – in the United States, for example, it’s basketball, can have a great impact... in most countries it’s football but also music, arts... the poets of the street. This is why I believe that what Common Goal does is great, and I think you found the right angle, because with football you can do so many things.
You yourself have always been open about your opinion on a number of societal issues, in 2012 even launching a faux candidacy for French presidency to mobilise the public over France’s housing crisis. What are the social topics you currently feel most passionate about; that get your blood boiling?

I am involved with Fondation Abbé Pierre in France. It is for homeless people, it is a big foundation, created by Abbé Pierre, who died a few years ago. He worked a lot for homeless people, he was fighting alone, with a team around him but he was alone leading it. When he knew he would die he reached out to 20 people who are well-known, in cinema, sports, etc., and I then became one of them and we did a lot of things. For me, helping the homeless people is the most important thing, because you have families that live in a car. I think that to have a roof is the basis of everything. Of course to have good health is a very important thing, but if you don’t have a roof over your head, you are on the street, you lose confidence, people don’t even look at you. Now, what can football do? We have people who take care of these homeless people, taking them to training and then, if they work well in training, they will play for the national team and in the Homeless World Cup. This is very positive as they then have a goal, every day. As I said, for me the most important is having a home and football can help a lot.

To take action is very important. Right now, you have a lot of refugees in Europe without a roof. You sometimes have actors or singers who speak a lot, but often do nothing. The government should do more. I have a small house in Marseille, I gave it for 2 years to a family of refugees. I did it as an example and help people instead of just speaking. I didn’t do it for the public image, I didn’t care, but I wanted to set an example for others.

As narrator of the 2015 arte documentary ‘Les rebelles du foot’ you paid tribute to five former professional footballers (Didier Drogba, Sócrates, Rachid Mekhloufi, Predrag Pašić, Carlos Caszely) who took a stand for political and social justice. Which currently active football players would you highlight and why?

I think Juan Mata does a lot. You also have players who do things and don’t say it. Just like you have the people outside of football who give money. Someone may send (money) to many areas, but they don’t even want to give their names. I think in football it’s not more difficult to find somebody human than in another business. The problem today with the players, because we speak about the players, is that before reaching the players you have to speak first to the agent. And sometimes the players don’t even know that you sent the email, they don’t even know it. I think if you have time to spend with the players around the table then it will be different...not for all of them. But I don’t think you have more bad people in football than the rest of society. Also from the age of 15 there are a lot of demands in football, the concentration, to be concentrated on football, only speak about football. But what is important to note is that in football you have most of the players coming from poor areas; So, they should be connected. They should be connected, but I think it’s the business around them (that is the problem).

Common Goal encourages players, managers and football industry members to donate 1% of their wages to a cause of their choice. Do you think that the idea of giving can be implemented in the football world?

I’m sure that if you ask all the players they will be paying, depending on the country, around 45-50% in taxes. In Spain it’s what? 45%? In England it’s 40%, in France it’s nearly 50%, let’s say 45% on average... If you ask the players if they would prefer to give 45% to the state or to foundations, they will give to foundations. I say maybe even more. If you ask people: ‘Do you prefer to give 45% to the state or 50% to a foundation?’ they will prefer to give to the foundation. But people increasingly need to know where the money goes. We see all the work the foundations do, and as I said before: ‘Imagine if we didn’t have football, but now imagine if there were no foundations...in France, or in Spain, or anywhere. There are players who want to change the world, the players are not different from the rest of humanity. I hope society will erase the need for these kinds of foundations and football will help, but unfortunately, right now, we need these foundations. It’s also all about reputations, you work well, you are honest, but it takes time. I think most of the people trust you and it will be even more and more and more in the years to come. But you do a great job and I will not say only Common Goal but all these people who work for society are examples.
One of the biggest names in the gaming world, Alex Hunter, made his debut in 2016’s FIFA 17. Introduced in the popular new game mode ‘The Journey’, fans can follow Hunter’s journey through the world of football, from playing on Clapham Common as a young boy to becoming Real Madrid’s latest Galactico. The gaming mode has always placed an emphasis on how the player’s decisions both on and off the pitch impact the storyline, as the gamer negotiates the challenges of being one of football’s brightest up and coming stars.

“I AM DELIGHTED TO BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE THIS AGREEMENT WITH EA. AS ONE OF THE LARGEST COMPANIES OF ITS KIND, WITH AN IMPORTANT ROLE WITHIN THE BROADER FOOTBALL INDUSTRY, THIS PARTNERSHIP REPRESENTS AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OF US HERE AT COMMON GOAL.”

Jürgen Griesbeck, streetfootballworld & Common Goal Founder

The latest edition of the game, FIFA 19, released at the end of September, marks the third and final instalment of Alex Hunter’s story. He is now at one of the biggest clubs in the world, Real Madrid and still has many challenges to face and choices to make. One such choice, thanks to a new partnership with EA Sports, is the opportunity to take the pledge and become a member of the Common Goal team, with the aim of increasing awareness of the movement. Gamers may even spot the familiar faces of other Common Goal members welcoming Alex to the Common Goal team in game. They will also be given the option of using the new Common Goal branded shirts – debuted in this month’s Bilje 2018 charity match – in the popular Ultimate Team game mode.

It is a partnership that Common Goal are very excited about, as co-founder Jürgen Griesbeck explained, “I am delighted to be able to announce this agreement with EA. As one of the largest companies of its kind, with an important role within the broader football industry, this partnership represents an exciting opportunity for all of us here at Common Goal. EA has an incredible reach, with fans of all ages across the world.”

The FIFA series from EA Sports is a global phenomenon with tens of millions of players worldwide. FIFA has been used by coaches to simulate in-game scenarios and has even been credited with the growth of football in North America. Whether played on a football pitch or gaming console, Common Goal aims to make pledging 1% an industry standard across the whole sport, giving back to football for good organisations around the world and making the world a better place through the beautiful game.

EA Sports is well placed to recognise the power of football for good and as such, in addition to placing Common Goal in FIFA, has donated $200,000 to streetfootballworld in support of the movement and its capacity to drive progress towards achieving the UN Global Goals with the aid of football.

Celebrating its first birthday only last August, Common Goal has had an eventful initial 12 months. With players from Argentina to Uganda, coaches of teams from the German Bundesliga to the Afghan National side, to the UEFA President and varying organisations from a professional football team to an international bank, Common Goal has assembled a diverse range of members, all making the commitment towards changing the world for good through football. Their latest signing however, marks another first for the movement, a virtual star of the renowned video game series; EA Sport’s FIFA.

Electronic Arts (NASDAQ: EA) is a global leader in digital interactive entertainment. The company develops and delivers games, content and online services for internet-connected consoles, mobile devices and personal computers. EA has more than 300 million registered players around the world.

In the fiscal year of 2018, EA posted a GAAP net revenue of $5.15 billion. Headquartered in Redwood City, California, EA is recognized for a portfolio of critically acclaimed, high-quality brands such as The Sims™, Madden NFL, EA SPORTS™ FIFA, Battlefield™, Need for Speed™, Dragon Age™ and Plants vs. Zombies™. More information about EA is available at www.ea.com/news.
Discover the World, Change Lives

The third half is an adventure football travel company with a social purpose: helping grassroots organisations scale their social impact in underserved communities. The third half offers passionate travellers the chance to see the world through the game they love - whilst making a difference. As the third half moves from an idea to an independent business, co-Founder Mike Geddes, explains how the initiative – powered by streetfootballworld – first came about and how it plans to address one of the biggest challenges facing the football for good sector: how to create sustainable revenue.
The impacts of the tours was obvious – both in generating unrestricted revenue for Kick4Life and in turning the visitors into lifelong supporters. The challenge, as so often in the non-profit space, was how to take this idea to scale.

Our solution was to start a new kind of business. Together with Definition XI, a travel company specialising in overseas football tours for clubs and schools, we created a social enterprise that would use football – often called the world’s only common language – to educate people about global issues whilst addressing the biggest challenge in our sector – how to create sustainable revenue.

Tourism is one of the world’s biggest industries, contributing over 7 trillion dollars to the global economy annually and growing every year. When we started to look into trends within the industry we saw a gap in the market at the intersection of three large and growing segments: Sport tourism, student tourism and ‘responsible’ (or ‘volunteer’) tourism are all multi-billion dollar industries and growing all the time. This growth is driven by the millennial generation, that is also driving an important shift towards ‘conscious consumerism’, where people gravitate towards brands that have a purpose and can “make a difference”. (In fact, 70% of Millennials report that they would be willing to pay more for a product that makes a difference on issues they care about). We started to think that we could combine the world’s biggest industry and the world’s biggest sport – football – and create a ‘level playing field’ between traveller and local community, what is often termed ‘poverty tourism’.

This is why the streetfootballworld network is so important to the third half. By working with trusted local organisations with deep roots in their communities we can ensure the solutions are locally-owned. We quickly found that many network members were either already experimenting with tourism as a potential revenue stream or were keen to try – we just had to give them the model. It was also important that we addressed what we knew was the biggest need – to help these organisations generate their own revenue. That’s why each third half experience includes a guaranteed financial investment in the local host and, where possible, engages and employs local people to deliver the programme.

As well as seizing the opportunity we were driven by something more fundamental – the growing division and inequality in human society. Hatred, discrimination and nationalism are on the rise and public discourse is becoming more and more polarised, driven by social media. Studies show that many people believe empathy – the ability to understand and share the feelings of others – is disappearing from our lives. If we are to have any hope of solving the challenges ahead, we need to all be playing on the same team and speaking the same language. And there is only one global language.

For us, football is the way we create a ‘level playing field’ between travellers and the local community. It’s also the medium through which we deliver a curriculum – designed by one of the world’s leading experts on sports-based education – that teaches transferable skills like teamwork, critical thinking, conscious leadership and empathy (something studies show is a largely learned trait).

Since that first trip we have organised further third half experiences for travellers of all ages in Ireland, South Africa and Colombia, learning a lot in the process about how we should improve our model to be of maximum benefit to the local organisations. We have also begun to explore a whole new dimension when we organised trips for members of the Common Goal initiative to experience first-hand the impact of their support. After proving the model on a shoestring budget with a tiny team and very few resources, we also managed to secure a seed round of investment that we are using to launch the organisation as an independent business. Today, we’re proud to welcome to the beautiful game.”
This summer, Common Goal member Alexander Esswein visited football for good organisations KICKFAIR and Delta Cultura. KICKFAIR, based in Southern Germany, uses football as a way of giving all young people, regardless of income, sex, or disability, an opportunity to succeed in life; Delta Cultura, based on the small island of Cape Verde, is using the game as a tool to get young people off the streets and educate them for a better future.

Originally from Worms, Germany, Alexander began his footballing career with the youth team of FC Kaiserslautern. He has since played for several renowned clubs in the Bundesliga and is currently with Hertha BSC. Alexander has long felt a calling towards supporting and empowering disadvantaged youth, and with Common Goal, he found an impactful way to do it.

Alexander explains why he wanted to join the movement: “I joined Common Goal because it offers a solution to what I’ve wanted to do for a long time: to give back and to support kids in disadvantaged and difficult situations through football. From when I was a young kid, I could never put the ball aside. This passion and my support network have brought me a long way. Through Common Goal, I want to make sure that more kids with this passion are able to also access this kind of support network.”

Alexander started his trip in Speyer where KICKFAIR organised a tournament between two schools. The tournament was an opportunity for pupils of both schools to show off the confidence and skills they have gained through football. From when I was a young kid, I could never put the ball aside. This passion and my support network have brought me a long way. Through Common Goal, I want to make sure that more kids with this passion are able to also access this kind of support network.”

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Alexander Esswein,
Hertha BSC Player & Common Goal Member

I WAS REALLY IMPRESSED BY THE CHILDREN. WE DIDN’T EVEN SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE BUT ON THE COURT, WHEN WE PLAYED FIVE-ON-FIVE FOOTBALL, IT JUST WORKED. WE DEFENDED TOGETHER, WE CELEBRATED TOGETHER, IT WAS JUST EASY. THAT’S TRULY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING ABOUT FOOTBALL.

Alexander Esswein,
Hertha BSC Player & Common Goal Member

THE COMMON GOAL MOVEMENT
Alexander Esswein in Germany and Cape Verde

Alexander Esswein Meets Football for Good in Germany and Cape Verde
During the second part of his trip, Alexander travelled with his mother Renate to experience the work of Delta Cultura in Cape Verde. The trip was organised by the third half, a Common Goal partner company that specialises in football themed travel adventures with a social purpose. “I was really impressed by the children. When I stepped into the centre, their faces lit up with smiles. I didn’t do anything, just came here to play football with them. And even without the same language, on the court when we played five-on-five football, it just worked. We defended together, we celebrated together, it was just easy. That’s truly the most beautiful thing about football,” Alex says of his first impressions at Delta Cultura.

Renate and Alexander spent one week with the organisation where they learnt about Delta Cultura’s different education programmes and spent time getting to know the kids and staff. They got to see first hand Delta Cultura’s educational programmes around music, languages, school tutoring, art and, of course, football. “Marisa and Florian (the founders of Delta Cultura) were incredible. They took amazing care of us, showed us around the organisation and welcomed us as if we were part of the family. It really exceeded our expectations,” Renate Esswein reflects on the trip. “It was a complete change of perspective seeing what children in Cape Verde have to struggle with compared to our daily lives back in Germany.”

But the Essweins were not the only ones who were glad they embarked on this visit. Florian, co-founder of Delta Cultura, and the staff at Delta Cultura were just as thrilled about the footballer’s visit: “We had a fantastic time with Alexander and Renate, they are such lovely people and were so interested in supporting the children but also the rest of the team. It was a truly special week for the whole organisation.”

“In the mornings, the kids waited for us to go back to play football and we hardly ever stopped kicking,” Alex remembers laughing and with a smile in his eyes. “It was really like some of them became my younger brothers and sisters. Now that I have seen the work of this organisation, I feel like I have even more of a responsibility. I have experienced what I can do with such small things: just by giving my time and being here. I will never forget the smiles in the children’s faces when we played together. It is definitely not the last time that I will have visited an organisation like this. I’m very happy to have had this experience.”
MEET OUR 2 new NETWORK MEMBERS

KARACHI UNITED FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

Karachi United was established in 1996 with the aim of promoting football at the grassroots level and achieving football excellence in Pakistan. In 2010 Karachi United launched their not-for-profit youth programmes, evolving to usher in a new era of community development through football, and for football itself. They operate 12 community centres through which they engage underprivileged youth in and around Karachi and Southern Pakistan in inclusive, open for all, non-talent-focused football for good programmes.

Country: Pakistan
Main social topics: Education, Gender Equality, Social Integration, Youth Leadership
Number of beneficiaries/year: 5000
Age range of beneficiaries: 8–18

WATOTO WASOKA

Watoto Wasoka is a community-led NGO based in Bakuli, the largest slum of Kampala, in Uganda. Its programmes are focused on slum and street children. The vision of the organisation is to change the lives of children in the slums of Uganda by using football to provide access to schools, as well as promoting access to water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH).

Country: Uganda
Main social topics: Education, Employability, Health, Social Integration, Youth Leadership
Number of beneficiaries/year: 8000
Age range of beneficiaries: 10–18

WE USE THE VIBRANT PASSION FOR FOOTBALL AS A VEHICLE FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE LIVES OF SLUM AND STREET CHILDREN. OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE PURPOSEFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT. WE AIM TO CHANGE THE LIVES OF SLUM CHILDREN IN UGANDA THROUGH FOOTBALL - ONE GAME AT A TIME.”

Watoto Wasoka
Uganda
EMPOWERING 2,200 GIRLS IN INDIA TO HAVE #NOMORELIMITS
Common Goal, WASH United and Slum Soccer have teamed up to develop, test and implement a Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Education Guide. The project will provide girls with the information they need to manage their periods safely, hygienically and with confidence.

Every day, roughly 800 million girls and women around the world have their period. Nevertheless, in some parts of the world, this normal bodily function is viewed as taboo and the consequences of that—from the loss of educational and economic opportunities, to social exclusion and a number of possible health complications—are potentially dire.

A topic like menstruation is met with silence in India. Over half of all girls have no knowledge of what is happening to their body during their first period, and as many as 1 in 4 girls do not attend school due to menstruation. It is only with the knowledge of what menstruation entails, and how to manage it hygienically, that girls can act accordingly and take charge of themselves.

Thus, the answer for many working in the field is simple: education.

In light of these challenges, Common Goal has teamed up with WASH United and Slum Soccer to develop, test and implement a Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Education Guide in India; to build the capacity of community organisations in India working on female empowerment; and to provide education to 2,200 girls in India.

The Common Goal project on Menstrual Hygiene Management was selected in April 2018 as one of the two signature projects that Common Goal is supporting throughout this year. Among the many reasons the project was selected, is because it encapsulates the spirit and philosophy of the Common Goal movement, involving four community organisations in India, all members of the streetfootballworld network. The shared skills, resources and expertise generated in the project, will amplify both the impact and the reach of the project in India. The project is supported by 20 Common Goal players and managers that have pledged 1% of their salary to Common Goal.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project on menstrual hygiene management in India is led by WASH United. After successfully creating a similar product through a human-centered design process in East Africa in 2016, WASH United will adapt, develop and test this tool, together with Slum Soccer, in Nagpur, India, to ensure that it is effective in the specific cultural context.

Following the developments in Nagpur, the guide will be shared with three streetfootballworld network members: Yuwa, Dream a Dream, and OSCAR Foundation. All three organisations share the same goal, yet take divergent approaches; while Yuwa works directly with girls in rural India, Dream a Dream works with teachers, and OSCAR with young leaders from the local community.

This diversity in approach among the different organisations benefits the project as a whole, as each organisation will provide feedback and tailor the programme to their specific contexts. Moreover, qualitative data is collected from every instance of implementation, providing additional information, which can be used to further refine the guide.
IN FOCUS: ASIA

Empowering 2,200 Girls in India to have #nomorelimits

THE CHALLENGE

Which Sustainable Development Goals the project addresses

Over 50% of Indian girls are completely unaware of menstruation when they get their first period.

Over 50% of Indian girls consider menstruation to be abnormal.

2 out of 3 girls are unaware that the uterus is the source of bleeding.

2 out of 4 girls face restrictions when on their period.

(Typical restrictions are: not entering temple, not playing with friends, staying in the house, sleeping separately from family, not touching certain food)

Almost 1 in 4 girls are reported to miss school when on their period.

THE SOLUTION

Common Goal, WASH United and Slum Soccer team up to develop, test and implement a Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Education Guide. The project will provide education for girls on MHM and capacity development for community organisations in India.

APR.–JUN.

Completion of the MHM Education Guide

MA Y 26–28

Menstrual Hygiene Day Festival

JULY

Schools selection & Training of Trainers workshop for community organisations

AUG.–NOV.

Monitoring and Evaluation

SEPT.–NOV.

Implementation of MHM sessions in 20 schools

OUTCOMES

MHM EDUCATION GUIDE TESTED AND ADAPTED FOR INDIA

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR ORGANISATIONS IN THE REGION

RECEIVE EDUCATION ON MHM IN INDIA IN THE YEAR 2018

2,200 GIRLS

IMPACT: #NOMORELIMITS FOR 2,200 GIRLS

All in all, the programme will reach over 2,200 girls across India, using the power of football to empower young girls to become change-makers in their own community. One of the results of the implementation so far has been that the girls are eager to spread the knowledge they gain to friends and family. The benefits of MHM education are immense: girls are able to participate fully in public life, they no longer face the risk of falling behind in school, or to suffer from preventable infections. It is a problem, that, when approached appropriately, can improve the lives of young women in so many ways. It is why improvements in menstrual hygiene management contribute towards the fulfilment to three of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (3, 4 & 5).

A world in which every girl and woman receives adequate education regarding their menstrual hygiene, and has access to the products and facilities to put that knowledge into action, would be a better world for all. Beyond the economic, health, and educational benefits, millions of girls and women gain the ability to live their lives with dignity, on their own terms. To enable girls to reach their full potential and fulfill their dreams, with #nomorelimits.
FOOTBALL LEGENDS LINE UP FOR A COMMON GOAL IN SLOVENIA
Football legends Luis Figo, Alessandro Del Piero and more lined up for Common Goal in Slovenia. In a match organised by UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin, Common Goal teamed up with UEFA initiative Equal Game and Slovenian charity Zavod Vozim to take part in ‘Bilje 2018’. In the small Slovenian village of Bilje, home to just over one thousand inhabitants, two teams prepared to take to the pitch: one representing Common Goal, the other Equal Game—with both sides made up of a mix of veteran Slovenian players, international legends and other notable football names.

Organised by UEFA President, and Common Goal member, Aleksander Čeferin and hosted by Slovenian side ND Bilje, the game was played for the benefit of Common Goal and Zavod Vozim—a Slovenian charity dedicated to establishing preventative programmes tackling road traffic accidents and youth substance abuse. On show was an astonishing array of talent. Legends of the game, with countless honours to their names—from World Cups to Ballon D’ors—that added up would put most club sides to shame. As the game approached, heavy rain and thunderstorms were the order of the day, and fears increased that the weather would perhaps put a damper on the event, or worse, put the game at risk of cancellation. Thankfully, fortune favoured all involved, and with kick-off fast approaching, the clouds broke and set the stage for a wonderful game of football.
With the attacking talent of Robbie Keane, Dimitar Berbatov, Gaizka Mendieta, Nuno Gomes, Toto Schillaci and Alessandro Del Piero lining up for Common Goal facing off against an Equal Game team with a defence consisting of Frank de Boer, Ricardo Carvalho, and Nemanja Vidic—spectators knew they would be in for a treat.

They say, “form is temporary, class is permanent”—well, all involved showed that to be true. The years were rolled back as players showed all the talent that made them among the best in the world: from a simple drop of the shoulder by Luis Figo wrong footing an opponent, to Nemanja Vidic reminding everyone why he was the nightmare of strikers all over the world for almost a decade.

**MATCH REPORT**

As the game began the crowd of almost 4000 watched on in anticipation. With all the attacking talent on the pitch, surely the first goal would come from a familiar source; perhaps a deft chip by Del Piero? A jinking run by Figo? A silky touch from Berbatov? Rather, it would come from an altogether less likely individual, though one crucial for this day to come together—Aleksander Čeferin, the President of UEFA for the Equal Game team. Never a professional player himself, the former lawyer turned football executive was the one to break the deadlock.

Lining up in the opposite goal for Common Goal was the equally unlikely figure of Borut Pahor, serving President of Slovenia. Standing at a striking 1.87m with an athletic frame, however, President Pahor looked every bit at home amongst the ex-pros. Sandi Valentinčič—manager of host side, ND Bije—capitalised on his home advantage and doubled the scoring, to put Equal Game two up. Luis Figo, Milivoje Novaković, and Pierre van Hooijdonk would go on and add to the scoring before Alessandro Del Piero fired home a second half consolation, to make the final score 6–1 to Equal Game.

As the game came to an end both sides retired to their dressing rooms, enjoying the facilities at the V Dolinci Stadium, usually home to ND Bije of the Slovenian Second League. Nonetheless, there were smiles all round, and soon the players and fans were mingling to their mutual pleasure—a far cry from the usual distance enforced between them.

**POST-MATCH CELEBRATIONS**

After leaving the ground, the players then went on to a dinner with a select group of fans. Over a meal of local food, the players had a chance to catch up with each other—some old teammates, others old rivals—swapping stories about the good old days to the delight of the fans lucky enough to be in attendance.

As the sun set on the September afternoon, everyone involved could be happy with a job well done. While Equal Game ran away with the win on the pitch, in truth, it was a win for all involved as tens of thousands of euros were raised for both Common Goal and Zavod Vozim.

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**IN FOCUS: EUROPE**

Football Legends line up for a Common Goal in Slovenia
HOW FOOTBALL FOR GOOD IS CHANGING THE GAME FOR GIRLS IN NIGERIA
In the last week of September, streetfootballworld headed to Nigeria to visit local network member YEDI, gain a renewed pitch-level view of the organisation’s work and visit some of the sites of one project, in particular. The trip was part of the SKILLZ Girl programme funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through streetfootballworld. The initiative aims at providing girls between the ages of 13 and 19 with the support they need to make self-determined decisions about their health and other important life choices.

Located. Established in 2011, the organisation with a local board and all Nigerian staff, began as a pilot programme to bring the Grassroots Soccer (GRS) methodology, originally developed in South Africa, to the country. Following its initial success, YEDI has since expanded its work to reach children and young people in four states focusing predominantly on providing them with information and support on health-related topics most relevant to them, gender-based violence and discrimination. To ensure the sustainability of its programmes, YEDI engages local people and structures and puts a strong emphasis on youth development. With over 90 million people below the age of 18, Nigeria hosts the third-largest youth population in the world, following India and China: this is clearly ripe ground for youth empowerment.

BMZ EMPOWERS 2000 GIRLS AND WOMEN
One of YEDI’s most recent projects – ‘SKILLZ for Girls and Young Women – HIV/AIDS Prevention and Empowerment’ – is what has brought us here. Launched in November 2017, football-based activities have been taking place in four target regions across the country: the states of Lagos and Ogun in the south-west, Akwa Ibom in the south-east and Abuja in the north of Nigeria, to reach girls and young women between the ages of 13 and 19 in school and out-of-school settings. Young adult coaches called “SKILLZ Coaches” visit the girls in their habitual environments – whether at school, their workplace or youth groups – to deliver a curriculum consisting of 10 practices using football drills and metaphors to spread information vital to the healthy lives of these young women and to give...
Changing the Game for Girls in Nigeria

24th & 25th SEPTEMBER- AKWAI IBOM STATE, SOUTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

Momentarily leaving lively Lagos behind, we set off the following morning to visit a SKILLZ Girl programme site in the southeastern corner of the country. Akwa Ibom, a state close to Nigeria’s border with Cameroon, where YEDI has reached a total of 499 young women and girls.

After our brief Lagosian sensory overload, the state capital of Uyo, with only 500,000 inhabitants, is dwarfed in comparison. But even here, people line the streets, many more of them on the go on smaller vehicles or on foot, balancing all manner of goods on their heads.

Together with YEDI’s regional state Coordinator, Regina Igwubor, we proceed from Uyo to the village of Oron. Along the way, Regina tells us about some of the challenges the girls in the region face. Teenage pregnancies are high, with some girls falling pregnant as early as 13. They consequently drop out of school, many stigmatized for bearing children as unmarried women. Regina also explains that young girls often have several boyfriends, because they believe that having many relationships mean having many men to support them—often by financial means. Here, the man is expected to provide. It would be easy, but too simplistic, to label this behaviour ‘prostitution’. Teenage pregnancies are high, with some girls falling pregnant as early as 13.

Our first stop is one of the schools where YEDI has been carrying out sessions. Engaging with the girls on their home turf makes it easier for them to participate, not having to find time and resources to travel elsewhere.

In one of the classrooms we witness a so-called ‘intervention’, a session run by YEDI coaches. The girls first take turns to recount and refresh some of the lessons they have learned during the programme, then gather in a circle to pick up a football and engage in the active learning methods typical of the Grassroots Soccer model. During one of the activities the ball is used to symbolise an ‘AIDS attack’—the girls must defend themselves (through safe sex or by bolstering their immune system) from being struck by the ball posing as the immunodeficiency disease.

“These girls have not been exposed to safe practices regarding sex,” YEDI Master Coach, Imeobong Favour Inuasiet, tells us. The activities not only make the lessons literally more easy to grasp, but also help to retain them to memory—though the girls may forget the actual lesson, they remember the football-based activity, that then revives the memory of the lesson’s content. “You are passing the right information but in a fun way,” Favour continues, “It makes them get it more easily, it makes them get it more than just sitting in a classroom.”

MARY’S STORY

As the rest of the group files out of the class towards home time, 16-year-old Mary Sunday stays to talk to us. She lives locally in Oron, a sprawling village of entangled houses and huts. Having lost her parents at the age of 8, she has grown up with her grandmother. Feeling in need of extra support, she began socializing with a group of friends that “led her astray,” she says. They encouraged her to have several boyfriends simultaneously. “They will help you,” they told her. With the help of the YEDI coach, who “came down to our home, told us the facts,” she realised that having four boyfriends, as she did at the time, made her vulnerable and more at risk of not just an unwanted pregnancy, but of contracting HIV.

To also reach girls who have dropped out of school for reasons such as lack of finances or teenage pregnancies, YEDI coaches did rounds in the wider community, often going from house to house to include other girls in the programme.

20th SEPTEMBER- OGUON STATE, SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

Our return to “base camp” Lagos is brief before we head to the next SKILLZ Girl programme site: Ogun State. The region is nicknamed the ‘Gateway to Nigeria’, which is slightly puzzling, as it lies not on the country’s periphery but in the heart of Lagos’ vast hinterland. After leaving the main passable road, Lagos’ rolling green and certain behavioural tactics to enable her to refuse sex when she doesn’t want it.

MEETING THE SKILLZ GIRLS IN OGUON STATE

We continue our journey and steer towards one of the region’s schools to meet a few of the 600 young women engaged here through the SKILLZ Girl programme. The Head Teacher of Community Grammar School Owu, Mrs Omolara Iwayemi welcomes us and explains proudly that there has been a single teenage pregnancy over the past year. Whether the drop in numbers is a direct result of the programme is yet to be determined. What she can tell us with certainty is that the coaches who ran the sessions were able to establish bonds with the girls and that the demonstration role which the teachers, she tells us frankly, are often unable to fulfill in their positions of authority. One of these coaches is 26-year-old Olaniwaju Titilope Sarah. Her own story has helped her to earn the girls’ trust. She discovered that when she was born, her father, who didn’t want another girl in the family after her older sister, stopped giving her mother money to pay for the children’s food. When her mother gave birth to Olaniwaju, her father didn’t even pay the hospital bill. He believed that boys would stay to take care of the family, while girls would later leave to get married.

Cecilia Hope Johnson, a 16-year-old participant at the school has learned from her coach and mentor Olaniwaju to contest traditional gender stereotypes. When asked what she would like to change about the current situation of men and women she responds: “Men should cook, too, and women should also contribute money to the family.”

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT WOMEN MAKE UP OVER 50 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN NIGERIA.

Tomisin Ojo
Head of Programmes,
YEDI
IN FOCUS: AFRICA

Changing the Game for Girls in Nigeria

YEDI has cooperated with a number of businesses in the community where potentially at-risk girls are receiving vocational training.

As well as meeting some of the in-school participants, we make two more stops to listen to how the programme has affected young girls not currently in education. Not all of these girls can be considered as ‘drop-outs.’ Some of them are currently undergoing professional training. To reach these girls, YEDI has cooperated with a number of businesses in the community where potentially at-risk girls are receiving vocational training. Two of the most popular job preferences are hairdressing or tailoring. We meet 18-year-old Aderinikole Adegoke at the shop where she is currently training to become a tailor. She tells us how she became pregnant without intention and only learned through the programme how to now practise safe sex. Her story is one of the more fortunate: the family of her child’s father has taken her in and her boyfriend has acknowledged his fatherhood. However, there is still much she wishes to change about gender relations: firstly, she says, the perceived fact that girls don’t have the right to say no to sex, the fact that money is part of the relationship; that women are at risk of pregnancy.

26th & 27th September: The West Africa Regional Meeting

The 26th and morning of the 27th is a time to widen the focus and look at both Nigeria and beyond. Representatives from Ghanaian network members Whizzkids United and Play Soccer Ghana, and two local organisations YEDI and Search and Groom adjourn in Lagos for the first-ever gathering of network members from the region hosted by YEDI and coordinated by streetfootballworld Regional Manager for Africa, Paul Kelly. Lovette Ochicha from Search and Groom said the meeting was a wonderful opportunity to “meet other member organisations of the streetfootballworld network physically, to catch up with friends from the region and opportunities for exchange.” In turn, the attendees explained their organisation’s main programmes so that, at the end, all had a clearer idea of possible overlaps and opportunities for exchange.

The meeting closed with reflections from the group. One of the attendees, the ‘YEDI-BMZ YEDSKILLZ Girl football’ Festival, was the most eye-catching. The following day, the West Africa Regional Meeting, with Paul Kelly the honorary title “Chukwu Emeka Igwe”, which loosely translates from Igbo as “May God be with you”. There ensued a fanfare of ‘Kilo’ flash mobs and cultural performances, Igbo and Yoruba dancers who involved the European guests—much to the crowd’s amusement. ‘Kilos’, we learned, have nothing to do with gaining weight, but are a Grassroots Soccer method of showing appreciation: a synchronised series of finger clicks and different movements accompanied by loud chanting.

“When I got to YEDI, I saw football in a different dimension. They trained us to use football to communicate.”

Some of the girls stepped forward to give testimonials, the YEDI SKILLZ Girl coaches stepped up for an exhibition match, followed by the participants’ football tournament, medals- and certificate ceremony. In parallel to the festivities, the tournament was a further opportunity for girls to catch up with some more of the young girls and women involved in the project. While watching the ongoing match, 15-year-old SKILLZ Girl participant Akinbola Janet Funmilayo tells us that when the programme came to her school, she jumped at the chance to take part: “I wanted to be skilled, I wanted to be talented!” During the sessions, she says: “I got to know that being a girl is not about your face, it is external to the body.” She also realised that “despite being a girl,” she too could play football and that “what a man can do, a woman can do better!”

Previously, the belief was that she was worth less due to her sex. After finishing primary school, her parents only allowed her brothers to go to the better school in their community. When she asked why, they replied: “Because you are female, you will later only end up in the kitchen.”

Isimijola Damilola Ulushola, a 29-year-old SKILLZ Girl Coach, was also once caught in the web of gender stereotypes: “Before, I believed football was just for guys.” Since joining YEDI, she has started to play: “Well, not 90 minutes football,” she adds modestly. “When I got to YEDI, I saw football in a different dimension. They trained us to use football to communicate. It helps you to enjoy what you are doing. You, as a coach, are getting a message while the participants are also getting a message. It’s not just you facilitating, you are also getting something in return.”

Like many other coaches, not only her participants, but herself also benefits from the programme. Experiencing sexual abuse from the community pastor as a young girl, she had similar challenges to tackle: now she is keen to prevent others from having such experiences, and, if they do, to encourage them not to keep quiet like she once did. In future, Isimijola wants to continue making an impact: “I want to be able to say, ‘I can’t count how many lives I have touched. The sky isn’t the limit. The sky is the beginning!’”

After a successful festival, we gather at the YEDI office the following day to meet the staff in their off-pitch habitat and gain an impression of the organisation’s other programmes. Some of the coaches from YEDI’s regular Grassroots Soccer programmes arrive to explain their roles and share their own personal stories. During school term-time, these young leaders carry out activities as part of YEDI’s Grassroots Soccer programmes. They do so voluntarily, many of them dedicating their time each and every day to this work. Though they are all highly qualified individuals, many with degree titles, they are often living from their families unable to find employment. The other side to their unfortunate story enables the young people engaged through YEDI’s programmes to change their life stories into happy ones.

HAPPIL Y EVER AFTER?

THE STORY CONTINUES

After a day full of further remarkable encounters and accounts, we reluctantly tear ourselves away that evening to return to the accustomed stories of our “home grounds”. The story of football for good in Nigeria is, however, not over. To be continued...
Shunned by her father as an infant, Nofiu was raised by her resolute mother and experienced the challenges of growing up as a girl in Nigeria from the very beginning of her life. This year, the BMZ-funded YEDII SKILLZ Girl programme came to her school to use football to teach her valuable lessons about self-determination and health, as well as sparking her resolve to never let anyone snatch away her dreams. It was not the first time the 16-year-old had encountered the revitalising force of football...

100 kilometres north east of Nigeria’s bustling megacity Lagos, lies Ijebu Ife, a village presently clothed in the lush leafy greenness of rainy season. It is one of the programme sites where streetfootballworld network member YEDI, the Youth Empowerment Development Initiative, have implemented the SKILLZ Girl programme funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In May 2018, the project reached Nofiu’s school, Comprehensive High School Ijebu Ife Senior, where YEDI coaches began carrying out sessions each Tuesday and Thursday, turning the school grounds into football grounds.

Shortly before she graduates from the programme, we visit Nofiu between classes to listen to her reflect on the past months of her intensive football for good curriculum and the story that brought her here.

“You have to be aware of what you want to become, so that no one can snatch it away from you.”

As we enter the school gates, we pass a scattering of tree stumps adorned with slogans. One reads: “The way you play today will determine what you become tomorrow.” We meet Nofiu in her school library to discover just how apt this will prove. The façade of the building is also not lacking a motivational statement: “Knowledge is light”.

To inform us of some of the illuminating knowledge Nofiu has gained by participating in the SKILLZ Girl programme, she adjusts the green beret of her school uniform and recounts in an earnest voice: “We learnt about sex and gender, HIV/AIDS... We also learnt about how to know our rights, that knowledge is power,” adding emphatically by way of explanation: “I can’t just let a man violate my rights!”

All of the participants were given a diary including the lessons transmitted, so that they could read up and complete exercises between sessions, during which the information was shared – and engrained in their minds – through football-based activities and drills. Nofiu describes one of the games that particularly stood out to her, ‘Shoot Away’, where the ball has to be defended from other players who try to “snatch it away”. Nofiu explains that: “This represents that you need to protect your goals in life. You have to be aware of what you want to become, so that no one can snatch it away from you.”

Being able to do so is based on another important lesson. Nofiu learned: “I am beautiful because of the qualities in me, what I can do makes me beautiful,” adding with a grave face: “Before I thought: ‘I am nothing’. But with this programme I know that I am beautiful with everything that I do. When people come up to me to tell me I am beautiful, I can say ‘I know that’,” she says her smile returning. But what made her feel like “nothing”? Nofiu looks down at her sandalled feet, her voice falters. “I felt like nothing because of a problem at home,” she proffers tentatively, her previous flow of speech momentarily stemmed.
With some encouraging and softly spoken words from a YEDI mentor, the story erupts from within her. “My real biological father and my mother are not together,” Nofiu begins.

**A CHALLENGING KICK-OFF IN LIFE**

During her pregnancy with Nofiu, her mother suffered regular beatings at the hands of her husband. As Nofiu discovered later, her mother also often slept in the passage because her father would return home with another woman. But, heavily pregnant as she was, her mother accepted the situation. When Nofiu was born, her father wanted nothing to do with her. When the time came to name the baby eight days after the birth, as the local custom requires, Nofiu’s father didn’t appear for the ceremony. Her mother sent one of the family members to go in search of him: he was found in another woman’s embrace. Furious, Nofiu’s mother confronted him. His reaction was to send her and his infant daughter packing.

Nofiu didn’t see her father again until she was 11. Until then, “I wouldn’t have recognised him in the street,” she says, “He said he knew me as a baby. But I don’t understand how he can see me as his daughter but not do anything about it. I don’t have any feelings for my dad.”

Despite her rough entrance into life, Nofiu acknowledges the extra dose of love her mother gave her and all of her efforts as an unqualified tradeswoman to send her to school. “My mother is a kind person with a soft heart,” Nofiu smiles, “I just love her!” Many of her future dreams are associated with her mother: “After my education I am going to take care of her.” Nofiu exclaims, “build her a house, buy her the most expensive car!”

**Defending her Goals to Defend Others**

He asked her what she wanted to be: “A barrister!” Nofiu responded without hesitation. After the encounter with this resolute young woman, the barrister agreed to fund her education up to GCSE level. Though Nofiu attends a state school, education is still not free, with payments mounting up for books, levies and other expenses. Some other schools also require pupils to provide their own desk chair.

**THE WORLD’S BEST COACH**

The barrister’s sponsorship is not enough to realise her dream of law school, but it is a first step. Nofiu can’t contain her excitement when thinking about it. “Then I can say: ‘This is my judgement!’” She booms confidently, her body language transformed, pounding her fist on a desk.

Growing up, Nofiu not only found strength in her mother’s support, but also in the beautiful game. When she was eight years old, her grandfather bought Nofiu her very first football. “It was white with black spots,” she remembers, her face lighting up. When she returned home from school each day and had completed all of her school assignments, she quickly picked up her treasured ball and raced to the small field adjacent to her house to meet her friends and play.

As well as being a wonderful way “to keep busy”, football was a pleasurable way to learn – and remember – important lessons.

During the SKILLZ Girl programme Nofiu relished the chance to rekindle her passion for football and discovered a different side to the game. As well as being a wonderful way “to keep busy”, football was a pleasurable way to learn – and remember – important lessons that will serve her well beyond the project term. It also promoted a sense of team spirit amongst her and the other girls attending, and provided them all with a person of trust: YEDI Coach Mary Adekunle or “Coach Marilyn” as she is better known.

“Coach Marilyn talked to us as if she was our own sister,” Nofiu smiles, “Even if we made mistakes, she didn’t scold us. Instead, even if someone should make a mistake and we started laughing she said, ‘No, nobody is right. Everybody is here to learn. If we all already knew everything, nobody would be in this school’. With this encouragement to keep on persevering, the group realised that to get ahead, to close in on their goals, mistakes were part of the game. To show her appreciation, Nofiu says: “I gave her the title ‘WBC’ – ‘World’s Best Coach’.”

This has made Nofiu realise that even the most successful people – like professional footballers kicking their way up the world’s highest ranking leagues – also had to work through failure to get where they are today. Nofiu’s main
Aurio Castro, or ‘Puma’, as he is called by his peers and friends, came to Portugal from Angola with his mother at the age of three. Jamaica, an unfinished neighbourhood turned illegal settlement on the south side of Lisbon, became his home. His family wasn’t alone. Thousands of immigrants from former Portuguese colonies have settled in the area, a place overwhelmed by violence, drugs and extreme poverty.

Aurio Castro, or ‘Puma’, as he is called by his peers and friends, came to Portugal from Angola with his mother at the age of three. Jamaica, an unfinished neighbourhood turned illegal settlement on the south side of Lisbon, became his home. His family wasn’t alone. Thousands of immigrants from former Portuguese colonies have settled in the area, a place overwhelmed by violence, drugs and extreme poverty.

Aurio ‘Puma’ Castro soon drafted bigger plans for his life. Growing up in a difficult area, he was determined to pursue a different path from many of his peers. Football provided ‘Puma’ with an alternative route and helped him find a stable place in society.

“It is a dangerous district,” the 28-year-old says of his neighbourhood. “It is one of the most dangerous ones here.” Even so, Jamaica is inscribed into his heart as a special place – “it’s my home,” he says. “Personally I really like the area and if I have to live there all my life, I will.”

He urges his young peers and friends to ignore any discrimination or racism directed against them because they come from the neighbourhood, or because of how they look or what they wear. “So let’s move on and try to show people that, regardless of skin colour, we can always achieve our goals.”

DREAMING OF FOOTBALL
“My dreams have always been about football,” Puma recalls. “There were no other possible paths. My dreams started on the Jamaica football pitch as I used to miss classes just to play football with my friends. I would even arrive home very late because I had been playing football during the entire day, and my parents were angry. It was really all about football.”

Puma kept himself out of trouble thanks to football. He could have easily lapsed into bad and dangerous habits but he committed himself to a positive life.

Contrary to many of his friends who fell by the wayside, Puma sought stability. “My seven best childhood friends are all in prison,” he says. “They chose a completely different path from mine. They chose that life, but my choice was a different one.”
AFTER RAIN COMES SHINE
At one time, Puma dreamt of becoming a professional footballer, and played for different local clubs. “I even went for trials at Benfica but unfortunately, I didn’t get in.” There was still the possibility of joining the Portuguese third division but in the end it didn’t happen due to the fact that he didn’t have a residence permit. “I was sad for myself that I couldn’t become the player that I could have been,” he adds.

Time managed to heal his disappointment and in 2011 Puma enrolled in a street football programme with CAIS, which is supported by FIFA Foundation, the Portuguese Government and several private companies. Once there, he enjoyed a fabulous experience that had a profound effect on him and his future.

“Our team took part in a regional tournament and won it. Afterwards, we were invited to a national tournament, and I remember being super motivated to perform and show my talent. After we had lost in the semi-finals, the national coach came up and said to me: ‘You’re called up for the national team.’ I started crying tears of joy.”

That same year, Puma travelled to Paris for the Homeless World Cup, having been selected as captain of Portugal’s team. “It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I learned a lot. It is an experience that I will take with me for the rest of my life,” he said about the tournament.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY
Ultimately, a new job opportunity appeared in Puma’s life, as he joined the Criar-T social aid organisation, a partner of CAIS. He now works with people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, developing skills and activities. One of his tasks is to coach the district team for the ‘Futebol de Rua’ National Tournament.

“I believe that the work I do today is the same that was done for me as a boy. Now I have the chance to give back in the same way.”

Puma thoroughly enjoys making use of the chance to give back to the community. “I remember when I was a child, the Criar-T association used to give many things to our neighbourhood and fortunately they’ve always supported me. I believe that the work I do today is the same that was done for me as a boy. Now I have the chance to give back in the same way.”

Puma is seen as a role model and a reference by the young people he coaches, especially because he played in a Homeless World Cup tournament and more recently was awarded the title of ‘Best Street Football Coach’. “It is gratifying,” he says, “and if at least one kid goes on to be successful after having me influence his life one way or another, it would be the cherry on the cake.”

The 28-year-old knows that football can promote the development of values and life skills, like it happens with him and his peers who engage in the educational activities of CAIS’ Street Football Programme. “Football helped me personally in the sense that it allowed me to meet other people and develop my skills,” he says. “I made friends, I interacted with society outside the neighbourhood.”

BEING AN EXAMPLE AND GIVING SUPPORT
Regarding other young people living in his neighbourhood, Puma believes they can have success in their lives and states that, “if they have activities organised by the council or other organisations, they can build a positive life.” But support is needed and “if there are no activities in the neighbourhood, things can get difficult.” Puma wants young people to follow his example but he also considers that “sometimes it is necessary to have further assistance so we can have a path in our life.”

The boy from Jamaica is a shining example of how street football can make a positive difference. He himself states emphatically: “If you ask me whether street football can change a person’s life or not? Of course it can, it definitely can!”

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Win or Lose, but Always with Democracy

Whilst Plato described his master, the Greek philosopher Socrates, as someone who was hugely pessimistic about democracy, millennia later, his Brazilian namesake staked his career and life on it.

In 1962, a Military Dictatorship seized power in Brazil with the aim of restoring financial and economic order, ridding the country of any communist threat and amending the constitution allowing them temporary authority to remove democratically-elected officials from office. Many opposed the regime, but it was a then 10-year-old, named Sócrates Brasiliero Sampaio de Souza Vieira de Oliveira, who would later have a large impact in opposing this dictatorship.

During a coup d’état, Sócrates witnessed his father destroy many works of his beloved book collection in fear of reprisal from the military censorship. “In those days, particularly in those parts of the country; São Paulo, Minas Gerais and more. The self-management style revolutionised by Corinthians was prosperous; they won the São Paulo (Paulista) Championship in 1982 and 1983, a big deal at the time, especially as they had not managed to win the tournament for 30 years. When Corinthians won the Paulista in 1983 against powerful rivals São Paulo, the players took a huge banner on to the pitch that read: “Ganhar ou perder mas sempre com democracia (Win or lose but always with democracy)”, a reference to the diminishing strength of the military dictatorship.

In April 1984, Sócrates even spoke at a ‘Direct Elections Now’ political rally in front of two million people. There he hinged on a Sunday when Corinthians win a trophy. “A minute’s silence was held pre-match and everyone in the stadium had their fists raised in memory of the defiant “Doctor”. Corinthian’s playing professional football for Botafogo-SP in 1974 before transferring to Corinthians in 1978, the club at which he spent most of his career. During his time as a professional footballer in Brazil, Sócrates achieved a bachelor’s degree in medicine from the Faculdade de Medicina de Ribeirão Preto, a rare achievement for a footballer in those days, particularly in Brazil. His medical degree and his political awareness soon earned him the nickname “Doctor Sócrates”, or simply “The Doctor”.

Football in Brazil was being organised in an authoritarian manner, with players not trusted to behave and therefore made to endure ‘concentração’, a period of enforced confinement in the team hotel 48 hours before kick-off. During his time with Corinthians, Sócrates co-founded the “Corinthians Democracy movement”, in order to challenge the club’s management. They began to vote on every decision, no matter how trivial, whether coming from the board of directors or the kit man. The Corinthians Democracy movement also began to protest with, at the time, innovative methods. Corinthians were the first club to use advertising slogans on their shirts and the team began printing political slogans on their jerseys such as “Democracia”, even adding the image of a splash of blood for effect.

The vast majority of Brazil supported the Corinthians Democracy movement and it was recognised as largely responsible for raising the political awareness of the Brazilian people. The movement tried to turn the people in favour of direct presidential elections, encouraging Brazilians to vote, with “DIA 15 VOTE” printed on the back of their shirts. They knew that the more people they convinced to vote, the more they could harm the dictatorship. However, Corinthians didn’t urge people to vote for someone in particular, just to vote.

Corinthians were having a good season on the pitch and the fact that the players were fantastic footballers aided their cause, with each win and goal gaining media coverage, therefore also spreading the messages on their shirts. Seeing the Corinthian players stand up, refusing the dictatorship, inspired the nation and the dictatorship lost in all major parts of the country; São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and Bahia. The self-management style revolutionised by Corinthians was prosperous; they won the São Paulo (Paulista) Championship in 1982 and 1983, a big deal at the time, especially as they had not managed to win the tournament for 30 years. When Corinthians won the Paulista in 1983 against powerful rivals São Paulo, the players took a huge banner on to the pitch that read: “Ganhar ou perder mas sempre com democracia (Win or lose but always with democracy)”, a reference to the diminishing strength of the military dictatorship.

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Austin Ajowi, 42 years old, is a Kenyan football coach living in Mathare, one of the biggest slums in Nairobi. When his football career came to an early and abrupt end after a knee injury, he focused his energy on a new project: clearing the mountains of rubbish lining Juja Road in his local community. Every night people from neighbouring communities would come and drop their rubbish and Austin would have to start all over again. But he didn’t give up and slowly, centimetre by centimetre, metre by metre, cleared the way for a community playing field. After a while, people started helping him to keep the field clean and make it bigger; a sign was erected reading “Do not litter here” and many nights Austin stayed at the field to make sure no more rubbish was dropped. So it came that the dump site slowly but surely became the community field that is now known as Austin Grounds.

Argentinian photographer Sebastian Gil Miranda captures the story of Austin and his work alongside Fútbol Más to improve the lives of hundreds of youth in Mathare, Kenya.
Austin became known as a coach with a strong focus on developing female football players who would go on to become Kenyan champions. He also began to work with more children, the disabled, alcoholics, homeless; anyone who needed help in his neighbourhood.

Austin’s engagement has been so great and powerful that he was baptized by the inhabitants of his community as “Baba Yao”, which means “The father of all.”
In 2016, Austin meets Fútbol Más, a Chilean football for good organisation operating in seven countries and starting a 2-year pilot project in Nairobi’s informal settlements of Mathare and Kibera.

“When Fútbol Más came, it gave me another meaning to football. Teaching life skills and strengthening resilience in the community, gave me a chance to nurture my players completely, imparting life skills in them, teaching them on various social issues that are present in our community,” Austin says.
Together, Fútbol Más and Austin have implemented the Green Card Philosophy. As opposed to yellow and red cards that sanction negative behaviour, Fútbol Más uses Green Cards to recognise and reward positive behaviour.
Austin is the co-founder of two community-based schools in Mathare: Valley View Academy and Destiny Junior Education Centre, with 700 and 300 students respectively. Fútbol Más works integrally, involving these schools in their programmes, promoting the well-being of girls and boys and young people, strengthening resilience processes and community cohesion through play, education and sports.
Sara (12), Alice (14) and Mwikal (16) are three sisters from Mathare. Their mother didn’t have the money to send all of her six sons and daughters to school. The girls got involved with Fútbol Más by playing for Austin’s community team called ‘True Colours’. Thanks to Austin and Fútbol Más, they have been able to return to school.
Mathare confronts a number of challenges: precarious housing, sanitation and high levels of poverty. In a community where over half of the population are below the age of 18, the high level of violence, normalised and accepted, strongly affects the normal development and education of the children and youth.
The community is strongly affected by the brew called Chang’aa, which is infused with chemicals to make it stronger. It is very popular in Kenyan slums and is produced on the banks of the river in metal barrels. Many community members are addicted to it and, as a result, their families also become addicted; an addiction that often has fatal consequences.
In September 2018 Fútbol Más was awarded 2 important prizes, the prestigious Beyond Sport Award in New York in the category ‘Sustainable Development Goal 11: Safer and Sustainable Communities’ and the ‘Best Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative’ at the World Football Summit in Madrid.
Fútbol Más was born in Latin America and is currently operating in seven countries including Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, Kenya, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru.

Fútbol Más Kenya offers a safe learning space for 650 children. The investment needed per child per month is approximately 10 USD, which covers everything needed to run the programme year round, Monday to Saturday.

The pilot project is about to finish in a few months. In order to continue and scale the project in Kenya, Fútbol Más is in the process of engaging in new partnerships.
This summer, young leaders from Tiempo de Juego and SALT Academy headed to the Czech Republic to experience football for good beyond their local pitches, in a different corner of the earth. Together with their hosts, streetfootballworld network member Fotbal pro Rozvoj, they spent a month travelling around the country with four Czech young leaders, visiting the organisation’s local partners, hosting workshops with local children, participating in tournaments and cultural activities. Brayan Castellanos from Tiempo de Juego and Somarey Tim from SALT Academy share their personal accounts of this experience...

**SOMAREY TIM, 22, SALT ACADEMY**

My name is Somarey Tim and I am 22 years old. I was a part of Mighty Girls at SALT Academy, Battambong, Cambodia. After getting a high school degree at Dewey international school, I became a goalkeeper coach, for the Mighty Girls team. This is my personal account about having the opportunity to go on a journey with Fotbal Pro Rozvoj in the Czech Republic.

Football is my best friend. It always inspires me and makes me happy and has also given me a lot of friends. When I was a child, I lived in an orphanage with my two sisters and my brothers in different houses. I was the only girl who used to help the house mother as a good daughter. The house mother never let me play with the boys. I also wasn’t supposed to know what football was. One time, when I was playing football with my childhood friend, I noticed that it was the first time that I was able to smile. Then I started training with the Mighty Girls team which is a part of SALT Academy. But during that time I started having issues with my neighbors that girls weren’t supposed to play football. As a result, I got evicted by the director of the orphanage. After I gave it my all, SALT selected me to become part of the Mighty Girls Programme. Football has changed my life. It isn’t only for fun, it also educated me by, for example, building my leadership skills, my ability to inspire women and men in Cambodia to have the right to play - especially, girls from challenging backgrounds or unsafe places.

I was very excited to get the opportunity with Fotbal Pro Rozvoj and take part in their campaign. On the first day of the campaign we received an incredible welcome. There were so many beautiful buildings with different styles of architecture in Prague, the traffic was so good. The traffic and people’s lifestyles are completely different from what I know!

Next, we had a meeting with all of the participants and each of us had to give a presentation about our organisation. The countries...
I returned from the programme with more knowledge and experiences. It was the best time for me ever.

We divided into three groups to oversee the implementation of a workshop, a football tournament and the management of the programme. It was a great opportunity for us that we could take time to discuss the purpose of the programme from each country’s perspective and to create some methods to work better with disabled people, teenagers and the kids in the next regions we would visit. From week to week, we got a leader from our team to guide us to the new regions until the end of the campaign.

I returned from the programme having gained a lot of knowledge, experiences, with increased confidence to speak in public, motivate others, work in groups, with more ideas and strategies to develop my organisation. It was the best time for me ever.

Last but not least I have just integrated some of those activities into my daily work. From 13th August to 7th September 2018 our organisation carried out a project called ‘Summer camp’. First of all, I selected 50 girls under 16 from different communities, some of whom left school because their parents couldn’t support them. That’s why we decided to take the 2 months of their vacation to educate them by using football as a tool. We held English and computer classes from 8-9am. Then, we gave them a few workshops and they went to training in the afternoon from 4-5pm before returning home. Every Friday we had a field trip with them, we went hiking up mountains and organised a football tournament.

From the 21st to 24th of September, SALT Academy cooperated with World Vision to host a football Festival in Phnom Penh. Together with one of my colleagues, I was working to teach the 20 young leaders about the mediation of football 3. In the future I hope our girls or staff get the opportunity to join this programme again!
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