-- Closing remarks from Vladimir Borkovic, streetfootballworld Network Director, at the FIFA Foundation Festival 2018 --

“We have together enjoyed another spectacular festival. Let me start by thanking our colleagues and friends at FIFA for their tireless work and for finding a smart strategy to make this festival happen. There will be more opportunities for gratitude, so let me focus on YOU!

We welcomed at the FIFA Foundation Festival 2018, here in Moscow, three groups of participants: delegation leaders, young leaders and players. You all had a particular role during this festival and you ALL did a fantastic job – but I did not doubt this ever.

When I asked my friend Ahmad, one of the young leaders, to do something the next day, he responded: why tomorrow? This reminded me of a famous quote that perfectly reflects your situation today.

You arrived here 10 days ago in a particular position but I believe that you are leaving this festival enriched by experiences that will enable you to grow. Trust me, you have the power to step up. For this, the delegation leaders need to open the path – for the young leaders to become leaders of the organisations. Like this, the players will take their place… it is a life cycle that we need to facilitate in order to refresh our energy and to continue changing the world.

We often highlight that with our work we are enabling the “NEXT generation”. This excuse stops here! You are THE generation that will change the world! Players: you are young leaders now! Young leaders: as of today, you are LEADERS.

In order to emphasize this and let you remember this message, let me come back to the aforementioned quote: if not you, WHO? If not now, WHEN?”
Spotlight

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Common Goal Movement

WORLD CUP CAMPAIGN

Partner Highlight

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MACRINA ACHIENG ODHIAMBO, MATHARE YOUTH SPORTS ASSOCIATION

AN AMAZING VISION FOR THE FUTURE
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Football4Good in History

FOOTBALL FORGING FRIENDSHIPS: 2006 WORLD CUP IN GERMANY

From Berlin to Battambang
REBECCA SUHNER WRITES TO US FROM CAMBODIA, WHERE SHE IS VOLUNTEERING WITH OUR NETWORK MEMBER SALT ACADEMY
FIFA Foundation
Festival 2018 in Russia
For over 3 billion football lovers all over the world, the FIFA World Cup is, every four years, a much-anticipated highlight, where football once again proves itself as one of the biggest social phenomena worldwide. The most popular sport on the planet brings together people from all walks of life to celebrate and enjoy their common beloved passion.

In parallel, another “World Cup” has been taking place; one that we witnessed already in Germany in 2006, in South Africa in 2010, in Brazil in 2014 and, this year, in Russia. One where boys and girls play together, where all the participants have the same opportunities, where all cultures are celebrated and where, at the end, everyone wins. This year, the FIFA Foundation Festival 2018 united over 300 participants from 37 countries to celebrate the transformative power of football for good, and bring the experience back to their communities.
The FIFA Foundation Festival 2018 brought together 48 delegations from community-based, development-oriented organisations that use football as a tool for social development. Taking place in Olympiets Park Hotel, a sports complex built in 1980 before the Olympic Games in Moscow, the festival gathered over 300 participants from 37 countries for a journey of football for good, cultural exchange and personal development.

Equality, teamwork and fair play became the motto of the festival, which united participants on and off the pitch over 11 days full of exhilaration and learning opportunities.

“Football is much more than a game. It is a fantastic tool to contribute to making our world become a better place. The FIFA Foundation Festival was a unique showcase of the commitment, experience and amazing work that the NGOs we support around the world are doing through football.”

Federico Addiechi, FIFA Head of Sustainability & Diversity

The festival provided an opportunity for a wide group of participants, from young players to young leaders to senior representatives from the organisations, to exchange at many levels and experience the power of football for good.

Gender equality was one of the cornerstones of the festival. Delegations attending the event were comprised of the same number of men and women, including: two girls and two boys between the ages of 15 and 18, one young leader aged between 18 and 30, and one head of delegation.

YOUNG LEADERS’ SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Festival kicked off with the Young Leaders’ Skills Development Programme: A three-day journey that involved only the young leaders from each delegation and allowed them to engage in exchange, gain skills and prepare the implementation of the festival. This group of 57 young leaders landed in Moscow ahead of their delegations and embarked upon a mission marked by the three following objectives: acquire new skills to support the development of their projects and their role as community leaders, provide a platform for young leaders to network, share their projects and exchange knowledge in the future, and become prepared to be part of the implementing team of the festival.

The Young Leaders’ Skills Development programme included three main components. The first day focused on introducing young leaders to the football3 methodology and training them as mediators. The second day was implemented in collaboration with Impact International and included workshops on the areas of personal development, mediation, mentoring and communication for social change. The third day of the Young Leaders’ Skills Development Programme consolidated all of the lessons learned and skills gained into a training-of-trainers journey where the young leaders prepared themselves to support the implementation of the festival over the next seven days.

The programme for young leaders included a number of other activities that enabled this group of participants to mingle, engage in exchange and strengthen their relations. Among the greatest highlights: the boat tour and the excursion to the FIFA Fan Fest in the centre of Moscow!

CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME FOR DELEGATIONS

On 26th June, 48 delegations landed in Moscow to take part in what many of the participants described as “some of the best days of their lives”. The programme for delegations included a number of activities to enable exchange between participants, allow them to gain knowledge on the field of football for good, become immersed in Russian culture and, of course, play football. During the cultural exchange programme, over 40 football for good workshop sessions were implemented by delegation leaders, more than 150 Matryoshka dolls were painted by participants, and 24 football3 training sessions took place, to name but a few of the activities.

The cultural exchange programme for delegations proceeded into the evenings, when participants were able to experience elaborately staged performances of traditional and modern Russian dance, freestyle football shows and dancing opportunities to the pulsating beats of the official World Cup anthem ‘Live it Up!’

One of the highlights of the programme were the evenings set aside for Cultural Performances, during which 26 delegations from all corners of the world performed traditional dances from their home countries, sang or created football-based performances related to the World Cup.

EQUALITY, TEAMWORK AND FAIR PLAY: THE MOTTO OF THE FIFA FOUNDATION FESTIVAL 2018
FOOTBALL3 TOURNAMENT

The spotlight of the festival was the football3 tournament, which illustrated, one more time, the unifying power of football. The tournament included 24 mixed-gender teams of eight players, always with the same number of boys and girls, and members of four different delegations, hailing from four different countries and, very often, four different continents. The teams were formed based on a set of criteria to promote cultural exchange, enable communication and foster equal participation.

The tournament was played using the football3 methodology, with a focus on fair play, equality and teamwork. Football3 is played without referees and in a game of ‘three halves’. During the first half, participants come together to agree on their own rules, promoting fair play and equal participation; in the second half, the players take to the pitch for the match and solve their disagreements with the support of mediators; for the third half, the teams meet to discuss how fair they felt the game was and give each other fair play points. These fair play points and the match points for goals scored are added up to determine the final result.

The final of the tournament was to be an encounter between the teams Electico Lomeea and Kid FC, who were met and greeted by FIFA Legends Roberto Carlos da Silva, Stipe Pletikosa and Dimitry Sennikov. However, a thunderstorm interrupted the proceedings and participants had to leave before concluding the tournament final. The end of the day was marked by the rain but also by the energy and passion of 300 participants who were dancing and singing while evacuating the venue.

The final of the tournament was then played at Olympiets on 2nd July. This time with the sun shining, the final was yet another exhibition of fair play and football at its best. The winning team was Electico Lomeea, a team that included players from the delegations of Sport Against Racism Ireland (Ireland), Single Leg Amputee Soccer Association (Sierra Leone), Tiempo de Juego (Colombia) and America SCORES (USA). Upon the final whistle of the game, all of the festival participants charged onto the pitch to dance for over one hour to celebrate a thrilling match.

ATTENDING THE RUSSIA FIFA WORLD CUP 2018

One of the most exciting moments of the festival took place on the 1st of July, when participants had the chance to visit some of the most emblematic places in Moscow in the morning and attend the Russia-Spain match during the Round of 16. It was a truly unforgettable moment for the 300+ participants who experienced the contagious energy at the stadium and celebrated the historical Russian triumph with the other 80,000 spectators witnessing the game.
Thrilling encounters on the pitch, a trip to Luzhniki stadium to watch the Spain vs. Russia World Cup match, the football tournament on Moscow’s Red Square, exploring previously unfamiliar cultures through performances and workshops, a boat trip through the heart of Russia’s capital, the dinner gatherings, impromptu dance sessions…the list goes on. Choosing a single highlight from over 240 hours of football for good at the FIFA Foundation Festival 2018 is a near impossible task. But no task is too great for the wonderful participants who attended. Over the following pages, 11 of the 57 young leaders share their experiences and let us in on the magic…

23 June

SANA, RIGHT TO PLAY, PAKISTAN

After a two-hour drive from the airport, I along with a few other young leaders, finally reached Olympiets hotel. As we pulled up in front of this sweeping set of enormous buildings in the middle of the woods, I wondered what the next ten days here would bring…

Welcomed enthusiastically by staff and volunteers in black T-shirts, I remember thinking to myself, ‘Why is everyone so overexcited?’ But over the course of a few hours, I had had good conversations with amazing people from across the world, and I was already beginning to understand why…

At our informal opening ceremony in the evening, I realized there were people from 38 countries in the room – some having travelled 20 plus hours to get to Moscow! But, most interestingly, I noticed how everyone was getting together; ‘blacks’ and ‘whites’, Muslims and non-Muslims - people from diverse backgrounds all on one playing field with powerful stories to share. From that moment on, the festivities were officially underway, and these inspiring young leaders who brought an electric energy and painted Olympiets in new colours allowed me to see it in a whole new light. Olympiets became home and, very quickly, I too was among the ‘overexcited’, loudly cheering and celebrating the true power of football!

24 June

NUNO, CAIS, PORTUGAL

So many emotions in just one day! It was the first official day of the FIFA Foundation Festival 2018. Like all first days, it was full of adaptations to a different context and people. I felt overwhelmed but, as we were introduced to the festival team coordinators, I started to lose my shyness and get involved in knowing different people, cultures and ideas, and the level of exciting and good vibe rising through the day.

We went through the festival games and got to know each other and become more involved in the spirit of the festival. I was amazed to see how different perspectives can turn into a unique goal: making this festival the best one!

At the end of the day, we were surprised with a big welcome party, a freestyle demonstration and a speedfriendship activity for us to get even more involved and united.

I experienced this first day as a beginning of a journey, but I didn’t even imagine the impact that the festival had and will have in my life.

25 June

JOAN, SPORT IN ACTION, ZAMBIA

The festival taught me a life-time lesson as a young leader… I have to be a role model to myself before I can become a leader to others. On the 25th of June, we attended a number of workshops, focusing on personal development, mentoring and mediation, and Communication for Social Change. The importance of mentoring upholds not just values, or passing on information to the next generation, but it shapes new minds, brings new ideas, inspires, motivates and builds
confident in a way that the impact provides a platform that drives change towards inclusion and sustainability. Among other topics, we had the opportunity to better understand our role as mediators. Working with other great young leaders from different backgrounds from all over the world helped me learn, share expertise, and experience. The last workshop of the day brought up the importance of communication at different levels for social change in behaviour, attitudes and sustainability.

The boat excursion was awesome, relaxing and getting social on a personal level with other young leaders. The excursion to the Fan Festival was amazing; it was great to other young leaders. For the FIFA Foundation Programme which exhibited the implementation of Festival games and football3. Whilst having fun and plenty of laughter, I had opportunities to learn through open communication with my peers to allocate roles and collaborate in pairs and groups. At the same time, having observed and documented from the activities implemented by peers,

I was aware of the self-improvement in confidence, flexibility, organisation, and mediation for upcoming activities. I hoped that through my experience and passion, I would be able to make a positive impact on the young players in the next few days. I looked forward to seeing them achieve the best possible outcomes from the festival and enjoy their once-in-a-lifetime journey.

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Heavy clouds of tension and emotions covered most of the players who were hoping to win the matches. Players and some delegation leaders from losing teams wept creating an uneasy moment for me and my colleagues during the post-match discussion. Thanks to the power of football, the tension was neutralized.

The robot goalkeeper, the winter experience zone, other organised games and meeting FIFA Legend Roberto Carlos kept my momentum of the day. Have you ever seen a strong football-stimulated group? You couldn’t miss it when energetic football players and their delegation leaders were in the rain singing the song of the day as they watched the final match of the teams Electico Lomeea and Kid FC. Much appreciation of the teams Electico Lomeea and Kid FC. Much appreciation to the organisers for providing warm raincoats, but they were not enough to withhold the heavy rain.

During the game, I took a short moment to have a look around me... and the proof was here, football is magic! That twinkle in everybody’s eyes, smiles, hugs, support, the wave... One of the Russian stewards was even praying! That moment will be etched on my mind forever, thank you!

The rollercoaster of emotions poured from the young participants as the day was coming to a close, seeing 200 participants from around the world form such a strong friendship within a week was powerful.

This was also apparent during the medal ceremony to officially conclude the festival, the clapping, whistling and cheering echoed through the field as each delegation received their medal. 48 organisations from 38 countries all with one goal. What an honour it is to share the ‘common goal’ with everyone: Football for social change.

“At the FIFA Foundation Festival was an unforgettable event hosting a remarkable group of young people who are committed to changing their communities for the good. It was a privilege to meet them and be able to offer them an opportunity to further develop their skills.”

Irina Schlossarek-Dhowtalut, FIFA Foundation Community Programme Manager

Saying goodbye to everyone and returning back to our homes. At that time I really didn’t want to leave all of those beautiful and sweet people. We became a family and all of those people mean a lot to me. But I had to return. Now I am sharing the lessons about fairness and honesty with my team. Though I am not a good player I can say with certainty now that I became a good leader and I am leading a girls’ football team as well as kids’ football team. And, as I had wished, I became a source of inspiration for all of those children.
The World Cup is not only one of the biggest moments in sports, but one of the biggest events in the world. In 2014, more than three billion people watched the tournament and one billion tuned in for the final match. Worldwide, the football community has only grown, and pre-tournament projections for this year’s competition forecast almost half the world’s population tuning in.

With this being the first World Cup since Common Goal launched last August, it was undoubtedly an unmissable opportunity to spread the message of using football as a tool for social good. Ultimately, with the help of a number of partners, that is exactly how it panned out, and Common Goal made a strong showing in its debut World Cup!
Juan Mata scored yet another Goal: He visited Colombia from the 18th to the 20th of June to spend time with Tiempo de Juego and see first-hand the programme he is investing into that fosters female empowerment through football and is also helping to mobilise the country towards its own ‘common goal’ of building peace through the power of the sport.

Colombia has a rich football for good ecosystem: Several organisations and social enterprises in the country have put football at their core and understand it as a key catalyst to achieving the pursued peace in the country. They have worked together and attracted the attention of both national and local governments as well as the private sector, which have consequently invested into the system. Together, they have begun strategising around the idea of attaining the country’s ‘common goal’: Building peace through football.

Juan’s visit to the country was much more than the endless list of incredible things he was able to do in only a few days. In sum, it also left the country with many stakeholders aligned around this idea and committed to next steps in order to achieve it.

On the first day of his visit, Juan, his girlfriend Evelina Kamph and co-founder of Common Goal, Jürgen Griesbeck, joined Tiempo de Juego’s staff to visit their programmes in Cazuca, a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Bogotá. With his donation to Common Goal, the Manchester United Midfielder chose Colombia as one of the places he wished to support. He also stated that he wished to support streetfootballworld network member Tiempo de Juego and its programme to promote women’s empowerment through football. The visit got off to a perhaps unexpected start: in a bakery, one of several local enterprises powered by Tiempo de Juego in the search of sustainability and new productive lives for the young adults they work with. The group also visited the T-shirt lab – Pongale Color – that not only provides Tiempo de Juego’s participants with uniforms, but also many of the children from football for good projects across the country. There is also a computer lab where children learn basic computer skills and have internet access. They ended the first part of the visit at Labzuca, a media enterprise where Juan and Jürgen were asked to record the chorus of a song that young adults from Tiempo de Juego composed to support their organisation at the FIFA Foundation Festival in Russia. They may not have hit all of the high notes, but the enthusiasm of both amateur singers more than made up for it.

“It’s been fantastic to see what the organisation that we are collaborating with through Common Goal is doing. I’ve always been keen to visit Colombia, and now to see all these children that are improving their lives thanks to football is very gratifying,” Juan enthused. “To come here allows me to know that there are people working...”
and caring for these communities, because there are many things in this world that we need to improve. It is necessary that we share the high revenues of the football industry with people that really need it, because they see in sport a way to achieve incredible social transformations,” he added.

Juan, Evelina and Jürgen were signed as new Tiempo de Juego team members and had time to have lunch prepared by mothers of children who attend the organisation’s programmes and wanted to give back for the opportunities their children receive through the sessions designed to teach them values and life skills using football as a tool.

Esteban Reyes, Director of Tiempo de Juego, said: “We are impressed by Juan’s personality, his ability to understand our work and the way he has interacted with the children in Cazuca.”

The second part of the visit took place at the Tibanica field, where Juan jumped onto the pitch and played with Cazuca’s children and then listened carefully to their life stories and how Tiempo de Juego has offered them an alternative to dangerous, violent lives.

Juan’s charismatic personality struck the Colombian team the most when he said he would sign the T-shirt of each one of the hundreds of children on the pitch, which he then proceeded to do! One by one. On the second day of his visit, Juan and Jürgen participated in a workshop with opinion leaders and media representatives with the objective of aligning forces and having them commit to the Common Goal idea. Attendees worked together and came up with tangible next steps to support the movement’s growth in the country both by inviting players and the industry in general to join, as well as telling stories around what is being achieved in the country thanks to Common Goal’s investments.

Jürgen, co-founder of Common Goal, shared with the group that, “the impact of Juan’s visit to Colombia will continue to grow over the coming days. I am sure it will help to catalyze the interaction of the stakeholders needed to build on the idea of sharing a Colombian ‘Common Goal’, that aligns with our global idea, at the same time as helping Colombia advance in achieving peace.”
PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

SPORTRADAR
PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

SPORTRADAR

SPORTRADAR ZEROS IN ON FOOTBALL FOR GOOD

On 2nd May 2018, Sportradar and streetfootballworld embarked upon their new CSR partnership. The two organisations are teaming up to use the power of football to bring young people and Sportradar’s employees together, creating an environment of learning and exchange. The underlying drivers of this partnership are Sportradar’s and streetfootballworld’s shared passion for sport and the two organisations’ global reach – aspects that are key to this new, innovative collaboration.

Announcing the new partnership to the public, Sportradar’s CEO Carsten Koerl stated: “Sportradar has had the chance to support a range of charities and initiatives in previous years, but I am particularly excited about this new collaboration with streetfootballworld because its global network reflects our own global network of over 30 offices worldwide. Leveraging our in-house technology, expertise and enthusiasm to make a real impact on both local and global levels is something that really inspires me and I know will be embraced by our employees, who have already shown a desire to help and give back time and time again.”

Streetfootballworld and Sportradar collaboratively designed the new, global CSR programme, in which Sportradar has pledged to engage its employees around the world and connect them with streetfootballworld’s local network members – organisations across the globe that use the beautiful game to affect social change each and every day. Creating new perspectives lies at the heart of these exchanges, where professionals meet young people from their neighbourhoods to gain a new understanding of their cities and communities as well as about how football can be and already is used as a force for good.

During the first year of the partnership, the CSR programme will be rolled out in three initial locations – Munich, Minneapolis and Montevideo – where local Sportradar employees can team up with community organisations belonging to the streetfootballworld network (KICKFAIR in Germany, Asociación Civil Gurises Unidos in Uruguay and Sanneh Foundation in the United States).

Sportradar’s staff members will be introduced to the field of football for good by receiving training sessions in the ‘football3’ methodology, giving them a taste of this unique version of the game, which places a particular emphasis on cooperation, fair play and team building.

KICK-OFF WITH KICKFAIR

On 24th May, our network member organisation KICKFAIR invited Sportradar staff from the Munich office to experience the power of football first-hand. In Munich Milbertshofen, 10 employees met representatives from streetfootballworld and KICKFAIR to learn more about how both organisations use football to empower young people locally and globally. The kick-off day was a mixture of exchange and experience. Next to understanding the KICKFAIR concept and impact in theory, KICKFAIR Youth Leaders introduced the football3 methodology to the Sportradar employees.

“It was fun working with Sportradar and I guess we brought across what role football3 can play and how we use it to foster the development of young people on and off the field,” said Salim, former participant and KICKFAIR Youth Leader. After lunch, it was more about thinking than kicking when the employees sat down with KICKFAIR to develop collaboration ideas for the Munich office. “We have been working on different ideas how to collaborate. Currently we are putting this into concrete formats that we will realise in the coming months,” said Ferdinand Keidler, Project Manager for Querpass Zukunft and KICKFAIR in Munich.

Steffen Loew, Sportradar’s HR Manager at the company’s Munich office reciprocated: “It was a great event and we finally got to know KICKFAIR better and the concept of football3 and their very kind staff. Having the opportunity to educate and influence the development of teens is very impressive and it makes me proud that Sportradar is willing to put a lot of effort and time into it to make it happen.”

Streetfootballworld and Sportradar are looking forward to two more workshops this year and to continuing and expanding this exciting partnership over the coming years. By leveraging the two partners’ expertise and passion for football, we hope to spread the word about football for good programmes, reaching professionals and young people alike to facilitate understanding and collaboration in communities worldwide.

IT WAS FUN WORKING WITH SPORTRADAR AND I GUESS WE BROUGHT ACROSS WHAT ROLE FOOTBALL3 CAN PLAY AND HOW WE USE IT TO FOSTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE ON AND OFF THE FIELD.”

Salim, KICKFAIR Youth Leader

Sportradar is a global leader in understanding and leveraging the power of sports data and digital content for its clients around the world. Sportradar provides cutting-edge solutions and services to media companies, bookmakers, sports federations and state authorities. It is a truly international organisation, employing over 2,000 people in more than 30 locations around the world.
FEDEX EXPRESS DELIVERS FIELD IN A BOX™ TO COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA & BRAZIL

Since teaming up in 2016 to deliver the first game-changing Field in a Box™, FedEx Express, the UEFA Foundation for Children and streetfootballworld have been busy rolling out the turf in a number of locations worldwide to ensure that local children and youth have a safe space to play.

As Main Sponsor of the UEFA Europa League, FedEx Express (a subsidiary of FedEx Corp) joined forces with the UEFA Foundation for Children and streetfootballworld in a bid to use its engagement in professional football to connect young people to new possibilities through the game.

“Field in a Box™ is part of our ambition to invest over $200 million in more than 200 community projects by 2020,” said Bert Nappier, President of FedEx Express in Europe and CEO of TNT, referring to FedEx Cares, a broader pledge by FedEx Express under which the programme is being funded.

Through the Field in a Box™ project easy-to-install, artificial-turf sports fields are delivered to underserved communities to provide children and youth with ripe ground for the development of life skills. These pitches serve as hubs where football for good projects can be implemented often on the basis of streetfootballworld’s football3 methodology. Since the beginning of the CSR initiative, communities in four different locations worldwide have received Field in a Box™ pitches – with one more scheduled for later this year.

“It has been a pleasure to see the expansion of Field in a Box™ on a global scale beyond the borders of Europe. So far this year, the initiative has reached underserved communities in South Africa and Brazil. We look forward to continuing this journey and soon announcing the location of the next pitch,” said Urs Kluser, General Secretary of the UEFA Foundation for Children.

Following the inauguration of the first Field in a Box™ in Cañada Real Galiana in Madrid, Spain, and its subsequent positive impact on the local community and beyond, the three organisations set about expanding the programme to reach further communities across the world. With its global network of football for good organisations, streetfootballworld was able to identify regions most in need and designate local organisations as implementation partners with on-the-ground expertise to facilitate the installation of the pitch and its later use by the community.

Only a few months after celebrating the first anniversary of the Field in a Box™ near the Spanish capital, the next pitch arrived in Mrągowo, north-eastern Poland. (Read more about the inaugural event in FOOTBALL4GOOD magazine, Issue 4, November 2017).

A SUCCESSFUL FIRST HALF: TWO FIELD IN A BOX™ PITCHES DELIVERED

In 2018, the Field in a Box™ programme has stepped up the pace with two deliveries already in the initial six months of the year. The initiative also quite literally went further afield with the opening of the first pitches beyond the European continent.
On 16th April, the Field in a Box™ programme was officially launched in Philippi, a low-income suburb of Cape Town. The pitch was assembled and officially inaugurated at an event attended by Albert Fritz – Member of Executive Committee: Social Development, Cape Town (Provincial Minister of Social Development); Anroux Marais – Member of Executive Committee: Cultural Affairs and Sport, Cape Town (Provincial Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport) and Lucas Radebe – Former National Team Captain of South Africa, amongst others.

To roll out the project, streetfootballworld was supported by local network member OASIS, a registered non-profit organisation founded in Cape Town in 2000 that uses sports as a driver of social change. OASIS will coordinate the sustainable use of the field in the local community. “This initiative will uplift the community of Philippi and positively impact the youth by creating a foundation for personal, social and economic development that can be enjoyed by all,” said Mike Higley, Vice President Sub-Saharan Africa, FedEx Express.

Founder of OASIS, Clifford Martinus, welcomed the programme with the words: “We are excited that this project has come to Philippi as it is an area that requires great support for the youth. We are positive that this will make a meaningful impact on the lives of the children that reside here by affording young community members the opportunity to develop life skills, focusing on teamwork, respect for one another and that creates a positive dialogue through sport.”

Just two months later, the next Field in a Box™ arrived in a community in Brazil, taking the programme to a third continent. At the opening ceremony on 26th June 2018, some 200 locals from Rio Doce, Olinda in Pernambuco gathered to celebrate their new pitch. Amongst others, they were joined by members of local authorities, media outlets and a very special guest – former Brazil National Team player, Juliano Beletti, who attended the event as UEFA Ambassador. The 2002 world champion with Brazil held a football clinic with youth from the community, participated in the ribbon cutting and an autograph session.

Also present were, of course, representatives from FedEx Express, streetfootballworld and its network member organisation love.fútbol. Since its establishment in 2006, the global non-profit has dedicated its work to providing children and youth with safe and inclusive places to play, empowering communities by engaging local stakeholders in the construction of football infrastructure and redefining football pitches as centres of community and platforms for sustainable social change. Co-Founder of the global non-profit, Drew Chafetz commented that: “We are inspired by our friends in Rio Doce and proud to contribute our community-driven approach to this collaboration with FedEx Express, UEFA Foundation for Children and streetfootballworld. All communities have the power to be agents of their own change. This collaboration represents an important step toward a solution for the Sport for Social Development sector.”

The pitch, that will become a training centre for programmes based around the football3 methodology, is located in an area where 60% of the population live below the poverty line and the average income amounts to less than 100 US Dollars per month. love.fútbol’s local implementation partner, Pazear, will use the football field as a hub for implementing its football activities focusing on the use of sport as a tool to promote peace building, gender equality and social transformation. As part of this programme, Pazear will offer a football session on site twice a week to local children and youth aged 7–18 years.
With the successful completion of the fourth Field in a Box™, the initiative has reached communities on three continents, offering sports facilities and development opportunities to underserved children and youth.

Reflecting on the past three years of the collaboration, streetfootballworld Network Director, Dr. Vladimir Borković, stated: “We are thrilled to witness what can be achieved when organisations like FedEx Express use their involvement in professional football to make an impact in the world of football for good. With our ongoing collaboration, we look forward to seeing the programme spread to further locations, providing game-changing infrastructure to communities across the globe.”

Before the year 2018 is out, FedEx Express and the UEFA Foundation for Children have committed to building one more Field in a Box™. After reaching communities in Europe, Africa and Latin America, could the next destination put another continent on the initiative’s map? We will keep you posted.
60 minutes before the World Cup Semi-Final match kicks off between Croatia and England, we sit down with Common Goal player, Daniel Didavi to not only share predictions – he is confident about a Croatian victory – but to hear how his own struggles with injury and a visit to his father’s home country, Benin, completely changed his outlook on life. Ever since, the 28-year-old midfielder who recently transferred from VfL Wolfsburg back to his home club VfB Stuttgart, has been searching for the right opportunity to “make the world a better place.”

Daniel Didavi,
Football Player
VfB Stuttgart

“The world won’t suddenly become perfect because of us, but if we help every child that we can help, it’s worth it for me.”

Daniel Didavi,
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Oh, you mean the post with the group of refugees? I think it was less me and more the refugees who were talented. I grew up with music, I like listening to music and being able to play music with people... I find it fascinating to observe such moments. Like with the refugees, who have nothing here, but as soon as music is playing, they start laughing, having fun. In that moment, they are happy. I love that. That really fascinates me.

What moments in life make you happiest? When do you feel in your element? When are you most “in flow”? For me number one is my family, my closest friends. When I spend time with them, then everything is great. My faith is also very important to be. I have gained so much from it, it has changed me a lot and my view on life. I’ve always said that I believe in God, but really living according to your beliefs, that’s something you only do when something happens in your life that changes you. Ever since then, I have seen many things differently. When I look back now at what I used to think of as a problem, I don’t even see a problem. That view on life helps me a lot and has made me much happier. I am able to appreciate the many small things. I think that I am generally a very happy person.

You just alluded to a pivotal moment in your life. What exactly was that for you? For me, football was always the main focus of my life. When you play as a young boy, it’s just about fun, but then, at some point, at the age of 15, 16 you see that it could also lead to a professional career and that’s how it happened to me. Then, things just came easily to me. I don’t mean to imply that I became arrogant, but I took a lot for granted and, when that happens, you may subconsciously think that because everything is so easy that you are something special.

Then, when I was 21, I was already playing professional, but a short time earlier, I had failed out on gaining my Abitur (Editor: highest school leaving certificate in Germany) as I quit school when I got my first professional contract.

Anyway, at 21, I got so badly injured that I was out of the game for two years and had to be operated on twice. Then, a pivotal moment when the doctors said that I probably would never be able to play professional football ever again.

In that phase of my life, I let things really get to me. I kept asking myself: ‘Why is this happening to me? What did I do to deserve this?’ I was stuck in a rut. Though, I wouldn’t say I didn’t see any more meaning in my life, I was definitely in a rut and didn’t know what to do next.

Though I did believe in God, I believed in the wrong way. I only saw the hardship and thought: ‘Hey God, do something! I believe in you, so please make me well again!’ But I simply didn’t recover and then came the second surgery and the moment that changed me. It was before my second operation that my father, who is from Benin in Africa, said: “Come on, I’ll take you to Africa for a week” and so we went and I saw the people there. Benin is a poor country, there are probably countries that are even poorer, but there is certainly a lot of poverty.

Then I saw people who had nothing compared to us here, but I still had the feeling that the people there, though and that’s how it happened to me. Then, things just came easily to me. I don’t mean to imply that I became arrogant, but I took a lot for granted and, when that happens, you may subconsciously think that because everything is so easy that you are something special.

reason to be sad!’ I loved playing football ever again.

When was the first time you ever kicked a football in your life? Can you take us back to your first football memory? At the time my dad was a football coach in Germany for an ‘youth’ team and I had no interest whatsoever in playing football. I was five or six and had never felt like playing football. I was a car fanatic, I mean toy cars, of course, like match box... I cruised around with those and did not want to play football.

Then my dad dragged me along because he wanted me to play as he was crazy about football. That’s how it happened. The first few times I just stood in the corner, not daring to do anything, but eventually I played and I realised I had talent. I was able to play right away and immediately became one of the best. Things developed from there and, from then on, football was top of the list for me.

Would you call football a passion? If so, what makes it so special? Yes, absolutely. The World Cup shows it clearly: football connects people, football is fun. When, years ago, I went to the local football pitch people came along who did not know each other, but in that field together, no matter where you came from, no matter what you looked like, you just played. Football also gave us freedom. I would go to school – reluctantly (laughs) – but as soon as school was over, I would head to the football field. Of course, many things are different, now it’s a bit more business and a job. Things have changed a bit, but football will always be football. I don’t think much needs to be said about that. To me, it is not just a profession, but a passion and I feel so fortunate that I am able to do this as a job.

Who do you think will win the Russia FIFA World Cup 2018? From the very beginning, I said France. There were moments, when I wasn’t that convinced by them, but also in the World Cup, but also in

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France are going to do it. They have earned it. I think they are an amazing team.

With so much buzz around France, do you think they will win the World Cup, too? I still feel that they have a lot of strength. They are a very experienced team. When I wasn’t that convinced by France, there were moments, when I simply didn’t recover and then came the second surgery and the moment that changed me. It was before my second operation that my father, who is from Benin in Africa, said: “Come on, I’ll take you to Africa for a week” and so we went and I saw the people there. Benin is a poor country, there are probably countries that are even poorer, but there is certainly a lot of poverty.

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Then I also started reading the Bible myself because I hadn’t really studied it before. Reading the Bible gave me a lot of strength and, at some point, the pressure to recover disappeared. I was just positive-minded and believed that I would recover, because God is by my side. I thought: ‘No matter if it takes two, four years, I will get well again. And if not, that’s ok, too.’ That mindset completely changed how I dealt with the matter. It changed me in general.

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Daniel Didavi

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

For the young people engaged through the organisations belonging to the streetfootballworld network, football is so much more than a sport. It changes their social realities and teaches them important life lessons and skills. What has the beautiful game taught you? I learned a lot through football because I played in a club quite early on. First of all, it taught me discipline, how to behave in a group in which you have to fit in. I played for the youth team at VfB (Editor: VfB Stuttgart), where I learned lessons of discipline. It helped me a lot in life to learn that such a young age. That was probably the most important thing football taught me for my life.

Earlier, you described yourself as an introvert. In the stadium you are literally in the limelight. I can imagine it’s quite nerve-wracking to step onto the pitch with so many people watching. Do you get nervous before matches or are you used to it?
I can separate the two completely: my private life and professional football. They are completely different. That’s the way it is when I give an interview on TV. You learn that with time, I’m 28 now, so it’s becoming routine. I’m not really nervous and I can articulate myself. I don’t stutter then and don’t hesitate to be myself as introverted. But my private life is a different matter…what may I mean by being introverted is that I am also a guy who also enjoys spending time alone, listening to music. I don’t have to be with people all the time but I like being around with my family, with my girlfriend. It’s a happy mixture. For example, I transferred back to my home club because it was also important to me to be close to the family, to be with my friends. Being introverted also had more to do with being, at first sight, not the kind of guy who approaches you directly or who seems quiet to those who do not know me. But I can go up to people, as in the videos you saw on Instagram. I just saw the refugees and I felt for them, I felt sorry and I approached them and just went to visit them in the refugee reception centre…As I said, it is not that I can’t get a word out in my private life. It is more a first impression people have. I can be very different. Sometimes, it is also a kind of protective shield, I think.

What are the greatest challenges about being a professional footballer and how do you tackle them?
On the one hand, it’s just football, but with so much money involved and so much pressure from the media, you have to be mentally strong. The competition is high so there is a lot of pressure that if you don’t perform, you won’t be needed. In the football industry, the individual person doesn’t count. It means you have to be strong, but if you have support, be it from friends, family or religion, then you can handle it and for me, what outweighs everything, is simply the love of the game and that I enjoy playing it. There are also things that aren’t so easy, of course. It is physically demanding, you have to battle with injuries. There are many difficult phases but, as I said before, for me the fun and the love of football override everything.

For example, if you take the interview with Mertesacker, more and more (footballers) are raising their voices and showing that there is a lot of pressure in the business. You are simply seen as a machine that earns a lot of money. You have to function and if you don’t, then you get a lot of pressure from the outside.

Common Goal is uniting the football community to change the world. Thinking about changing the world, where should we start?
Bob Marley is my number one role model and he put it very simply: love and peace! It sounds so easy but it would make life so much easier if everyone strived for love and peace. We would have fewer problems. But I know it’s not quite that simple. There are many things that you can change, but there are a lot of negative things going on in the world, there’s a lot of hate and I think it’s such a shame, as it’s really unnecessary. We live in such a beautiful world and there is enough to go around for everyone, but because of the struggle for power things have gone out of control. And then there are things like Common Goal, which I think is great, because people like us players, who have the privilege of making a lot of money, can help people who are worse off. Because we are also in the public eye, there are many people who look up to us. I know, it’s probably not much what we’re doing, but it’s going in the right direction and that’s how Common Goal appeals to me because I thought: ‘Come on, what can you do? You want to do something!’ But I am more the kind of guy who, before I support an organisation I don’t feel connected to and when I don’t know where the money will go, does small things like, for example, just going to the refugee reception centre and helping people when I see they are in need. One person alone cannot change the world, but when I see a person I can help, then I feel I’ve done something good even if it’s just for one person. That makes me happy. In the case of Common Goal, as a footballer, it’s great that we can team up. As professional footballers, we can generate a little more publicity, because we have a large reach and, at the same time, we can decide what we can do to play a part, that’s what appealed to me. I think the concept is good, because we make a lot of money, we work hard for it and we are, of course, allowed to spend it. Everyone is free to do as they please with it, but one percent of their salary - I think anyone can handle that. And if every footballer did, so much would come out of it. So, I think the concept is awesome and I didn’t have to think twice about participating.

How do you see the Common Goal movement evolving in the upcoming weeks, months, years?
The ideal scenario would be that at some point every professional footballer would donate one percent of their salary and that we then somehow can make the world a little bit better, especially in countries where there is a lot of poverty and where young people have no access to education, that they get a school education, that they can play football there with real footballs, with proper kits. The world won’t suddenly become perfect because of us, but if we help every child that we can help, it’s worth it for me. So, my hope is for this to be as big as possible so that we can help children, in particular, to have a better life.

Common Goal is about harnessing the power of football to change the realities of millions of youth across the world. When you have the opportunity to meet some of these young people, what would you like to ask them? I would ask them how they see their situation. I think that the answer is often surprising. When I was in Benin, when you look at it from the outside, then you think ‘Man, how can they even laugh in their situation?’ I gave a football shirt to the people I met and I have never seen such a joy. When I left they said, even though it was in the middle of the night, they really want to go with me, because I gave them a shirt and they wanted to say goodbye.

It wouldn’t be so much about asking a question, I would just try to take part in their lives, I would show them that people like me, who are footballers and are, I think, also role models for them and might be seen as out of reach, are also one of them and that we are ordinary people, that we are there for them, that we will help them and that they should stay strong and always stay on track, because it’s not easy, you can quickly fall by the wayside. It’s just that you’re there for them and I think that would help them as well.

Can football drive significant change in the world? If so, how?
Football is quite simply the number one sport in the world. When the World Cup is on, everything else comes to a standstill, everyone is watching, and so, as I said when you go to Africa, the kids there all know Ronaldo, they all know Messi, everyone has a shirt from Real Madrid or Barcelona or Bayern. Not VfB Stuttgart yet, but I’m working on that! (laughs) But you just see what football is about, and that’s why I say it should be normal for us for do something in football for the people who look up to us. We have such a power, we could do much more, we could do a lot more to help, so I think football connects and that’s why football is a huge opportunity for making a difference in less affluent countries.
MEET OUR 3 new NETWORK MEMBERS

PALESTINE: SPORTS FOR LIFE (PS4L)

PS4L is a non-profit sports for development organisation that empowers children, youth and women by responding to the developmental needs in marginalised Palestinian communities through sports and life skills, operating in global context by aligning its developmental activities to the UN SDGs.

A LIFE TURNING-POINT WAS WHEN, AT 16, I TOOK PART IN A VOCATIONAL SUMMER CAMP AND A LEADERSHIP SPORTS CAMP THAT WERE ORGANISED BY PS4L. BEING PART OF THE FOOTBALL AND BASKETBALL SESSIONS DEVELOPED MY SELF CONFIDENCE AND MY DECISION-MAKING SKILLS.

Akram Abu Fayyeh
Palestine

Country: Palestine
Main social topics: Education, Employability, Gender Equality, Health, Peace Building, Social Integration, Youth Leadership
Number of beneficiaries/year: 1,450
Age range of beneficiaries: 10–25

MSIS

MSIS is a non-profit organisation that was founded in 2009 in Mrągowo. Its activities are aimed at young people. The vision of the association is to create new and creative thinking about the organisation of sport and its use in Polish society.

BEING FAIR ON THE PITCH AND IN LIFE IS THE BASIS OF EVERYTHING. IT TEACHES YOU TO BE A GOOD, BEAUTIFUL AND HONEST PERSON EVERY DAY AND IN EVERY LIFE SITUATION. OUR PARTICIPANTS LEARN SUCH LIFE VALUES THROUGH THE FOOTBALL3 METHODOLOGY.

MSIS Team
Poland

Country: Poland
Main social topics: Education, Employability, Health, Social Integration
Number of beneficiaries/year: 230
Age range of beneficiaries: 10–25

ALIVE AND KICKING

Alive & Kicking’s vision is of an Africa where every child can play with a real ball, where thousands of jobs are sustained in the production and distribution of balls, and where sport significantly contributes to the health and quality of life of young people.

ALIVE & KICKING HAS MEANT BEING ABLE TO EDUCATE MY CHILDREN FOR THE FIRST TIME - I HAVE PAID MY CHILDREN THROUGH SCHOOL AND INVESTED IN A FARMING PROJECT. MY LIFE IS BETTER AND I KNOW OTHERS ARE HELPED THROUGH OUR HEALTH PROGRAMMES.

Alive and Kicking Employee
Kenya

Countries: UK, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia
Main social topics: Employability, Health
Number of beneficiaries/year: 5012
Age range of beneficiaries: 18–30
PLAYING PROUD DURING THE WORLD CUP

CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF TO CHAMPION LGBTQ+ YOUTH INITIATIVE

*LGBTQ is the international abbreviation for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer”. LGBTQ+ people are often referred to by using a single, generic term that doesn’t reflect their own definition of their sexuality.
Responding to a need first identified within the North America and Caribbean region of the network, streetfootballworld has taken aim at an important goal: to transform football teams around the world into safe spaces and help LGBTQ+ youth feel supported both on and off the pitch. To kick start the project, a campaign was launched with the onset of Pride Month and throughout the duration of the World Cup.

Each and every day, the programmes that streetfootballworld network members implement demonstrate that the beautiful game can give children and youth respite from the challenging social circumstances many are born into. The pitch is their safe space.

With LGBTQ+ youth twice as likely as their peers to be physically assaulted in school, such a safe space is precisely what they are in urgent need of. But LGBTQ+ youth are only half as likely as their straight peers to participate in organised sports. Further statistics tell us why: In the USA, for instance, 73% of the population believes that sports programmes are not safe or welcoming to LGBTQ+ youth. While 42% of young people who identify as LGBTQ+ feel their community does not accept them.

But, by not participating in youth sports, these young people often lack a positive outlet to express themselves. Additionally, they are not able to receive all of the positive benefits that sports can have. Even those who play do not feel safe to come out in these unsupportive settings. 83% of gay men and 63% of lesbian women are in the closet while playing youth sports. Too many LGBTQ+ athletes do not feel safe being themselves.

By equipping football for good organisations, coaches and players with the right knowledge, this reality can be changed. The Play Proud team will create a toolkit to enable those people engaging directly with and mentoring LGBTQ+ young people to address their concerns, tackle discrimination and assist them in using their strengths on and off the pitch.

About the Campaign
Play Proud originated in response to requests from streetfootballworld’s North American network. In that spirit, the crowdfunding campaign was a natural evolution to ensure Play Proud remained a grassroots movement. Play Proud is a unique LGBTQ+ campaign not only for its grassroots heritage and for its football-application, but also for the way it brings together global experts from sports-based youth development organisations, LGBTQ+ advocacy groups and high profile athletes.

This leads to an extraordinary level of expertise going into the toolkit’s development.

To accumulate the support and funds necessary to implement its goals, the Play Proud initiative launched a crowdfunding campaign at the beginning of Pride Month and in conjunction with the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

The Big Kick-Off: A Pride Night to Remember
To get the ball rolling, Play Proud staged an event with New York City Football Club (NYCFC) at New York’s Yankee Stadium on 2nd June, the evening of NYCFC’s Pride Night match. Immediately before the teams took to the pitch, a group of invited guests gathered at the stadium to learn more about the initiative and follow a discussion between former USWNT star Lori Lindsey and Ethan Zohn, Co-Founder of Grassroot Soccer. The conversation focussed on LGBTQ+ athletes in sports and Lori Lindsey’s own personal experience. In addition, the attendees watched an exclusive teaser about Melina De La Cruz and her story of how a young athlete can be supported to “Play Proud.”

Afterwards, the group proceeded to the stands to watch the game together. At half-time they and the other spectators in the crowd of over 22,000 people watched another exclusive clip on the large stadium screens featuring Melina De La Cruz and her story of how a young athlete can be supported to “Play Proud.”

Fox Sports Proudly Presents...
After hitting the big stadium screen, the Play Proud initiative was brought to viewers in their own front rooms thanks to a collaboration with Fox Sports. As part of their World Cup coverage, Fox Sports broadcast a series of inspirational films featuring the stories of LGBTQ+ youth from across the United States. The stars of these films are young individuals from streetfootballworld network member organisations City in the Community Foundation, Street Soccer USA and Starfinder Foundation, who have experienced the power of football for good in the LGBTQ+ context first-hand and are already working towards making their communities welcoming places.

What’s Next for Play Proud?
The money raised will contribute towards the development of the Play Proud toolkit that is due to be produced in late 2018, early 2019.

In its initial phase, Play Proud will focus on North America and the Caribbean, where it aims to reach 3,600 coaches and 62,000 young people. As the issues Play Proud addresses are not confined to the NOCA region, the long-term goal of Play Proud is to scale the project and reach coaches and players across the world in the coming years.
IN FOCUS: NORTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN
Playing Proud during the World Cup

MELINA DE LA CRUZ

Melina lives in East Harlem, New York, an area with the second highest concentration of public housing in the United States. During middle school, Melina was ‘in the closet.’ She was struggling academically, joining gangs, and resorting to substance abuse. A friend introduced Melina to City in the Community Foundation’s Saturday Night Lights programme (SNL). Even after joining, Melina struggled with substance abuse and was habitually truant in school. However, Melina gradually began to share with SNL staff the underlying issue: she was struggling with her gender and sexuality. She worked closely with a coach at the SNL site to reconcile her inner battle. “At first I was scared to come out to my family,” says Melina. “I’ve had to use soccer and my coaches to help me come out to my mom.” Two years later, Melina has joined an LGBTQ+ support group, has a 90% average in school, and has developed into one of the strongest leaders in the programme. Additionally, she was recently featured at NYCFC’s Pride Night Match as Ford’s Hero of the Match and attended Play Proud’s kick-off event at the Yankee Stadium.

WILL SIGLER

Will is an 18-year-old gay male who grew up in the centre of Philadelphia’s opioid crisis. Will began working to support himself and his two younger siblings at a very young age. He has always enjoyed playing soccer, but did not feel comfortable enough to come out until high school. He believes that being part of a team made it easier to come out because he had an immediate community and support system. Will is now a recent graduate of high school where he was the captain of his varsity soccer team for the third year in a row. He says: “I support Play Proud because it gives people like me opportunities to be themselves.”

BELLA BLACK

Bella was 22 years old living at a homeless shelter in San Francisco when she discovered Street Soccer USA. Identifying as a lesbian and transgender woman, Bella was searching for a community. She joined Street Soccer USA and was instantly hooked. The community provided her with a refuge from the personal problems in her life and brought a new sense of belonging. “I found something. I found a family out here. This community cares about me,” says Bella. After overcoming her search for community, Bella was able to develop basic life skills that have profoundly changed her life.

PLAY PROUD AMBASSADOR MEGAN RAPINOE

Megan Rapinoe is an American professional soccer player. To date, she has made over 125 appearances for the US Women’s national team. Megan played a pivotal role in helping the US win both the 2012 London Olympics and the 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup. She is a strong advocate for LGBTQ rights and came out as a lesbian in 2012. In 2013, she was awarded the Board of Directors Award by the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center. Additionally, Megan joined Common Goal in September 2017. Megan said of Play Proud: “What struck me so much about this programme is it is reaching kids where they already are, through the people they’re already dealing with. It’s educating coaches on LGBTQ issues so they can create a safe space where these kids feel comfortable and they can really thrive.”

PLAY PROUD CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

1. 2nd June
   Big Kick-Off Event at Yankee Stadium featuring Lori Lindsey, Ethan Zohn, and Melina De La Cruz

2. 6th June
   Anthem Video goes live

3. 6th June
   Media coverage of the initiative begins

4. 14th June
   Play Proud crowdfunding campaign launches alongside 2018 FIFA World Cup

5. 6th July
   Play Proud films debut on Fox Sports

6. 15th July
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THE STREET CHILD WORLD CUP

“WE ARE SOMEBODY, IT IS TIME TO CHANGE OUR STORIES”
Last May streetfootballworld network member Street Child United hosted the Street Child World Cup, bringing together more than 200 street-connected young people from 19 nations. They gathered in Moscow to unite as a team and tackle the negative perceptions and stigma children like them all over the world face. The Street Child World Cup is a football tournament and campaign, creating a platform for street-connected children from all over the world to have their voices heard on the global stage.

On the pitch, Brazil Girls and Uzbekistan Boys won the tournaments. Off the pitch, the young people took part in facilitated workshops to discuss their hopes for the future, barriers to them being achieved and changes that can be made so that street-connected children are better supported. Working with staff from StreetInvest, the Street Child World Cup Official Child Participation Consultant and Facilitator for the Congress, the young people crafted a message to be delivered publically at an event called the General Assembly. There, they appealed to the world: “We are somebody, it is time to change our stories!”

Over the next few pages, we meet some of the teams who tell us what changes they wish for, on behalf of their team, on behalf of street-connected children in their country.
TEAM KENYA
“We street-connected children of Kenya are: Strong, courageous, bright and intelligent, united and supportive of each other. We never give up or lose hope for a better life and we believe in ourselves.

We demand that the government of Kenya end the rounding up of street children and putting them in prison. We also demand that all 12 rehabilitation schools across the country be transformed into education and sports academies. Because we are somebody. And it is time to change.”

TEAM INDIA
“Every street child should have the rights provided to everyone. The present and the future generation of children shall have a society which protects the children from sexual abuse and violence and shall have opportunities for children to go to school and there shall be no discrimination.

Every street child should never be a child labourer and should have the opportunity to go to school, and not have any discrimination of gender, cast or race or any kind of language. The child shall be protected from violence and the child shall have the rights respected. We demand: Everyone should have a house to call a home, and that home should protect them from rain, sun and be safe from fire. Every street child should get a birth certificate, community certificate and all documents with no difficulty to them. To display talents in sports, every street child should have a place to play. Street children should not be subjected to sexual violence or trafficked for abuse. They shall be protected. This society shall understand and acknowledge that street children have good hearts, they are kind, they are helping and want to display their talents when opportunities are provided. They are children like any other children in the world.

We are somebody and it is time to change our stories.”

TEAM MEXICO
“We believe it’s necessary to give commitment as well as trust to every child in a street situation so they can have a dignified life and happy life. We demand to our President, Enrique Peña Nieto*, and to all of the people that want to rule the government and the society, equality for the women, to believe in us, to be supported and guided, to help us raise our voice, to be remembered and to remember our values. We demand an end to the corruption and to have options and opportunities. We are brave, we are capable, we are all the children in Mexico, we are the future, we are somebody, and it’s time to change our story.”

TEAM USA
“Our vision is to be able to attain unity and equality for the human race that will open up a pathway for peace. We demand gun reform, basic life needs for everyone and proper allocation of government resources. We demand education reform, equal treatment to all, and an end to separation of families through deportation. We are the youth holding the world accountable for the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

TEAM NEPAL
“Our vision is to make sure that no child lives on the street, irrespective of caste, creed, religion. All kids, despite their situations, need food, shelter, education, health, family, love and care.

Being a street child is not an identity – it is just an unfortunate situation. Society should respect us and support us. Governments should act like our parents as we don’t have them to care for us and help us create a better future. We are the future of the world, we are positive, we are kind, we are creative. The hands that were raised yesterday to beat us on the street are now raised to honour us. Until a few months back we were termed “khate” – the typical word used to describe street children. We were attacked as criminals but today we have an identity as national players. But today we are the change, we are the voice. Neither borders, colour nor language will stop us. We all are one. To win the football game was our desire, but to win all the hearts was our aim and I hope that we have done that.”

*Editor’s note: Enrique Peña Nieto was President at the time of the tournament. He was succeeded by Andrés Manuel López Obrador during the Presidential elections on 1st July.
MESSI MEETS INCLUSIVE FOOTBALL

DISABILITY CANNOT STOP THE PLAYERS FROM ASOCIACIÓN CIVIL ANDAR

BUENOS AIRES
In the run-up to the FIFA Foundation Festival, streetfootballworld network member Asociación Civil Andar used the momentum of the World Cup to promote the topic of the inclusion of people with disabilities through football and generate awareness for their Inclusive Football movement.

One of the main events putting Inclusive Football on the World Cup map took place on Saturday, 10th March 2018, on the site of the Argentine Football Association (AFA) in the Ezeiza district of Buenos Aires, Argentina. On this occasion, the Argentine Football Association signed a Cooperation Agreement with local streetfootballworld network member Asociación Civil Andar to jointly work towards achieving the goal of generating opportunities for people with disabilities through football and raising awareness for the Inclusive Football movement. This represents a milestone for the development and expansion of inclusive football throughout the country.

It was within this festive and historic context that the 2018 season of ‘La Liga de Fútbol Inclusivo’, the Inclusive Football League, was launched, which embarked upon its 21st edition. With the attendance of the President of the AFA, Claudio Tapia, AFA Secretary General, Víctor Blanco as well as representatives and players from more than 50 social organisations and clubs from throughout Argentina, the event marked a new era in the movement promoted by Granja Andar connecting social, sports and cultural sectors.

As part of this agreement, the Argentine Team of Inclusive footballers, received the official Team Argentina kit from representatives of the AFA – a happy moment for the players and wonderful recognition of Asociación Civil Andar’s work.
A WORLD CUP MOMENT TO TREASURE

The members of the ‘Seleccionado Argentino’ of Inclusive Soccer – the group of young players chosen to attend the FIFA Foundation Festival in Russia on behalf of Asociación Civil Andar – had a unique and unforgettable World Cup experience thanks to the invitation of the Argentine Football Association. The FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour allowed the young players to feast their eyes on the world’s most coveted prize!

ALLIANCE WITH ARGENTINIAN FOOTBALL CLUBS

A number of Argentinian football clubs also pledged their support to the Inclusive Football movement and gave recognition to the team from Civil Andar ahead of their trip to the FIFA Foundation Festival. The Inclusive Football Team entered the field and spread the message of inclusion to a resounding response from the professional footballers and spectators. The sports clubs Independiente, Racing Club, Estudiantes de la Plata and Huracán opened the doors of their stadiums to present to the public and the world the Argentine Selection of Inclusive football. Each of these clubs has already begun implementing activities related to the promotion and development of football for people with disabilities.

“WITHOUT A DOUBT, THESE WERE THE FIRST AND VERY IMPORTANT STEPS THAT ALLOW US TO DREAM FOR MORE!”

Martín Lucero,
Asociación Civil Andar
Argentina

OFFICIAL LIST FOR RUSSIA 2018

The next event on the agenda for the promotion of inclusive football took place back in Ezeiza, Buenos Aires: a press conference with Jorge Sampaoli, manager of the Argentine National Team during the 2018 FIFA World Cup. To the assembled press, the final selection of 23 players who would travel to Russia representing Argentina was announced. Sampaoli proceeded to express his support of another Argentine team that would also be travelling to Russia. He announced that he would also be rooting for of the team of inclusive footballers due to participate in the FIFA Foundation Festival, an official event taking place during the FIFA World Cup.

A MEETING OF “MESSIS”

The day closed with a friendly and joyous encounter of both Argentine teams much to the excitement of the young players from Asociación Civil Andar who were able to finally meet their idols – among them, Messi, Agüero and Di María – in person.

Two of Granja Andar’s star players – Abigail and Fernando – were particularly thrilled. It had long been their dream to meet “the best player in the world”: Lionel Messi.

In a moment of extreme emotion and happiness about such fortune, Fernando, the “Messi” of Granja Andar was greeted with a heartfelt embrace and much affection by “Lio”. But this was not all: since their training had finished, the entire team of professional players who would represent Argentina at the World Cup were on hand to support and posed with the banner of the Inclusive Football Team together with “Fer” and “Abi”.

ONWARDS FOR THE INCLUSIVE FOOTBALL MOVEMENT

Following this exciting series of activities preceding the Inclusive Football Team’s journey to Russia, Martín Lucero from Asociación Civil Andar notes that “Without a doubt, these were the first and very important steps that allow us to dream for more!” As he speaks, his and Granja Andar’s dream is already becoming reality as the Association of Argentine Football has called upon the organisation to stage the first-ever Inclusive Football Tournament for clubs affiliated with the mother of all football entities in Argentina. Watch this space!
Losing her father at an early age and growing up in financially fraught circumstances, Macrina Achieng Odhiambo was faced with an uncertain future. But even uttering the words “life is hard,” is hardly able to break the infectious smile that permanently lights up her face. Her belief “be strong and better things will come” steered her through the difficult times. What then came was football and an organisation – MYSA – that gave her the strength she needed to not only survive, but to flourish.

“When I first kicked a ball, people laughed,” says Macrina, 11 years old at the time. Today, at 26, she is able to laugh about it herself. It was one year before she joined the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), an organisation that uses football to empower children and young people in the most deprived slums of Nairobi.

Macrina grew up in Kayole, a suburb on the eastern edge of the Kenyan capital, where she still lives today with her mother and five siblings. It is a mixed area with a sprawling slum area in its midst.

“How people live here…life is too hard!” Macrina says, explaining that, for many, simply meeting the basic human needs is a struggle. Clean water, she points out, is not available in many homes and must be carried there at some distance from a well.

When she was only 13 years old Macrina’s father fell ill and passed away, leaving her mother without means and alone with six children. Sweeping aside her grief, Macrina’s mother, who had previously been a house wife, quickly set about finding her first paid employment. She had a talent for hairdressing, Macrina says proudly, showing her own tightly braided hair which her mother had laboured over for half an hour. All of the women in the neighbourhood would come to have their hair done by Macrina’s mother, so she decided to turn her hobby into a means of income.

“She is my role model,” Macrina beams. Her mother taught her to be strong and to never give up. But, at the time, for Macrina who was in her teens, life was hard and she lacked direction. She struggled academically, as she, above all, lacked motivation and interest. Many of her peers resorted to drugs and alcohol. “When they use drugs or drink alcohol, they feel like their energy is high,” Macrina remembers them telling her. She says it would have been an easy path to follow, but she was lucky that she steered a different course.
FORBIDDEN FOOTBALL

As a form of respite, football gained increasing appeal. As she raced out through the school gates at the end of each day, her friends would call out to her: “Marcina! Macrina! You have to come, we are having a match!”

Playing football was fun but also an effort, before the game had even kicked off. Litter lines many of the streets in Kayole. The field that was their chosen football ground was no exception. Clearing the pitch in turn provided the group of young players with the materials they needed to make a football, for none of them had money to buy “a real one”.

They crumpled up plastic bags and pressed them into as accurate a sphere as possible, finally binding their materials together tightly with a piece of string. It was an unintentional form of recycling.

Such efforts coupled with an extended match, often meant that Macrina returned home later than planned. Her brother, who played football with her himself on separate occasions, was mad. “I don’t like her playing football,” he said to their mother, “She is playing with boys. I am the only one who should play football with her!” Their mother listened and discouraged Macrina from playing.

Through school friends, Macrina heard about the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYS A) and went along to join one of their training sessions. It was only through her involvement with this organisation that her mother would eventually see the benefits of football and Macrina would herself discover a new side to the game.

At MYS A, Macrina discovered to her delight that she could toss the improvised plastic football into the rubbish bin and play with a “proper kit” and “proper football boots”. But the benefits of joining the organisation exceeded material value. The values and life skills she learned were immaterial.

At first, Macrina and the other girls on the mixed team at MYS A were disheartened. The boys taunted them, calling out: “You girls don’t know how to play!” With more exposure to football and training, they had learned technique and tactics. For them it was literally child’s play to gain possession of the ball from one of the girls.

Boys got to know each other and the girls’ skills improved. “This ball can make us friends”, one of the female coaches told the group. “Without this ball, we would not even know each other!”

Macrina looked up to her coaches and remembers wishing she could be like them. She admits that, at the time, she “didn’t have much interest in learning or getting knowledge. At the tender age of 14, I was getting knowledge through them.” She also saw her friends on the team adopt different roles within the organisation. She too wanted to later run training sessions. “My leadership skills were poor,” Macrina admits. She shared her concerns with her coach who was there to listen and advise her.

As well as coaching teams of young girls and boys from local communities for MYS A, Macrina plays football herself for the Mathare United Women’s team, training twice a week and travelling around Kenya for matches at weekends. While her role at MYS A has changed from participant to young leader and staff member, the beautiful game continues to teach her important life lessons. She persistently works on confronting her nerves before each match. The most helpful approach she has found: “I always make myself believe that we will win.”

But there is one challenge she is still struggling to overcome: how to better deal with failure. When her team loses, “I always have to cry,” Macrina admits. “After crying, I feel ok. I feel relieved.” Nonetheless, when – not “if” – she meets her favourite footballer Neymar, she wants to ask him: “How do you feel when you lose your match? How do you make your self-esteem strong?” Neymar? The ball is in your court.

BELIEVING IN WINNING

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She was already on the right track and with such motivation and support, she eventually became more self-confident and equipped with skills to later carry out sessions as a coach herself.

Much before this, Macrina’s mother noticed the changes in her daughter. MYS A first gained Macrina beams. After volunteering for several years, it was football and MYS A that eventually gave Macrina a source of income and the stability her mother had had to fight for.
We meet Generation Amazing Youth Ambassador Faiza Sultana Syed to know more about her journey as a young leader at the FIFA Foundation Festival 2018 and her role as a Generation Amazing Youth Ambassador: “In my community it’s difficult for the girls to have opportunities such as the festival but Generation Amazing gave me that. Being a Generation Amazing Youth Ambassador makes me feel like I can do anything. Anything is possible in my community and, of course, for me too.”

With no footballing experience nor prior interest in the game, 18-year-old Faiza from Pakistan exemplifies the lasting impression Generation Amazing can have, as she now continues her involvement in football for good activities in her own community. Her community is beset with social problems such as gender inequality and discrimination, religious intolerance, child marriages, violence and many restrictions on the lives of girls. Faiza hopes to stand up to these issues, using what she has learnt from Generation Amazing in the process.

Upon her selection as an ambassador, Faiza embarked on a mission to learn about football, Russia and the football3 methodology, which involved a lot of reading and watching numerous videos of previous festivals. The sight of young leaders surrounded by the happy faces of participants filled her with excitement of what was to come, particularly all the new people she would have the chance to make friends with. The experience itself was just as she hoped it would be and Faiza describes her new acquaintances not just as friends, but as one big family.

Faiza believes that her time with Generation Amazing was a life-changing experience, giving her confidence in her own decision-making and in her ability to lead. She feels her ambassadorship has been a source of inspiration as she looks to the future, stating, “I now have a clear vision and know what I want to do because Generation Amazing has changed me.”

Faiza’s vision is to help create opportunities for girls from her community and inspire them to believe in themselves. Thanks to the support of her family, her fellow youth ambassadors and from Generation Amazing, she is certain she can do it.
In my festival experience, the biggest learning points were to express thoughts confidently and have effective communication and leadership skills, whilst my highlights were football and taking inspiration from special children. I met inspiring youths and mentors from each corner of the world who taught me the lesson of friendship and I just want to say that FIFA is an extended family and I’d love to see them all again.

I really enjoyed being a mediator to the children and teaching them about the football methodology. It helped my personal development through improving my communication skills, learning how to be a good mentor and mediator and boosting my problem solving. From all of this, I have improved my self-esteem because one is forced to plan and evaluate his or her own strengths and weaknesses as well as observe the conduct of others in a similar manner. Generation Amazing has expressed confidence in their ambassadors and made efforts to nurture our raw talent into something better and more dependable. I hope that all the ambassadors from all over the world have become assets to Generation Amazing. It means a lot to be an ambassador as it has given me the opportunity to learn from and communicate with different people from different countries, something I would not have had the chance to do before.

The skills I have learnt are well beyond my expectations so I will be ever thankful to Generation Amazing for providing me with the opportunities to prove myself as a youth leader and improve my self-confidence. I leave with everlasting memories of a wonderful event and festival. In future I would like to continue to promote brotherhood, equality and hope for a better tomorrow, moving positively together for the achievement of a joint goal. I hope to continue my education outside of Pakistan and, if possible, work permanently with Generation Amazing. I would like Generation Amazing to start projects in other disaster or terrorist attacked cities of Pakistan because they need hope and inspiration and, in my opinion, sport can be their inspiration.
“Madness is something rare in individuals — but in groups, parties, peoples, and ages, it is the rule.”

These were the words of German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche on the topic of patriotism. It is a topic that remains contentious to this day and never far away from the headlines in our increasingly chaotic world. But there are occasions when patriotism can take on much healthier forms, as a welcoming national pride bringing openness rather than superiority and tribalism. This proved to be the case when Germany played host to the FIFA World Cup in 2006, a tournament fondly remembered by visitors and organisers alike.

Following the darkest era in Germany’s history, patriotism and nationalism have been associated with racist ideology and one social group’s notions of supremacy over an other. For fear of history repeating itself, displays of patriotism were frowned upon and quickly quelled. As the World Cup approached, debates over flying the German flag re-emerged – and the opportunity presented itself to both reinterpret this symbol of a nation and present a new image of Germany to the on-looking world. What followed was a month-long festival of football, with fans from all over the globe converging on their thoroughly modern, hospitable hosts.

As the then Austrian Football Association President, Friedrich Stickler remarked, “The world’s view of Germany has definitely changed.”

It was not just the image of the German nation which took an upturn thanks to the 2006 World Cup however, but also that of its football. For many Europeans, Germany is their main rival, for historical reasons but also for what has occurred on the field of play. Often they have been cast as tournament-villains due to certain ugly incidents, style of play criticisms and accusations of luck or downright cheating. Going into 2006, this trend appeared to persist thanks to a hoax about a corrupted bidding process that led to Germany winning the chance to host the tournament. Naturally, this did nothing to calm the nerves of German people regarding just what type of show they were about to see and display to the world.

However, on 9th June 2006 when the opening game kicked off, it was a sign of things to come. As Germany’s unfancied side took the field to face Costa Rica in a thrilling, pulsating encounter, the home team was young and inexperienced and, in contrast to German squads of previous tournaments, comprised of players from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. They approached the game with an uncharacteristic flair and vibrancy, running out 4-2 winners over their Central American opponents and scoring spectacular goals in the process. This was a theme that would continue throughout the tournament as Germany unexpectedly progressed to the semi-finals, winning plaudits along the way thanks to their youthful, fearless and exciting brand of football.

Off the field, the adulation continued to pour in for the manner in which the tournament was hosted. The cultural stereotype of efficiency was apparent to all who visited, but also frequently noted was the friendliness and welcoming attitude of the hosts, dispelling previously held misconceptions of being overly serious. “I’m both stunned and moved by the atmosphere and the friendliness,” one visiting fan remarked. Another added, “Everyone seemed to believe Germany was on show and wanted to show the world that Germany was a good country, and frankly they’ve succeeded in that.” These sentiments were perfectly in keeping with the tournament’s official slogan, Die Welt zu Gast bei Freunden – A time to make friends.
Having completed her Bachelor’s Degree in International Affairs at the University of St. Gallen, 23-year-old Rebecca Suhner left her home country of Switzerland for an internship in the Partnerships department at streetfootballworld’s Berlin office and for a first glimpse of the world of football for good. Little did she realise that this was just the beginning of the journey. This is her personal account of how her path then lead her to volunteer for streetfootballworld’s network member SALT Academy in Battambang, Cambodia.

Only one and a half weeks later, I was on a plane, bound for the small and rather quiet town Battambang in the north of Cambodia.
Around the World with Football

From Berlin to Battambang

Football has always been my passion: It all started when I was a child. I loved to watch football with my brother and the other boys after school. After a while, I joined a women’s football team and last year, I started to be a coach for a football project at local schools. Football accompanied me through my whole life and created lots of unforgettable memories. It was the beautiful game that eventually also motivated me to apply for an internship at streetfootballworld. There I discovered that all over the world people play football not only for fun, but to tackle the social issues they face.

I became keen to gain more experience and to get involved further in the area of football for good. Based on recommendations of streetfootballworld’s network team, I got in touch with Heang Ly, the director of the SALT Academy in Cambodia, and finally decided to join SALT as a volunteer.

As luck would have it, SALT Academy has a base in Switzerland – the Founder of SALT Academy Cambodia and the President of SALT Academy’s Association in Switzerland are Swiss. So, I was able to meet them both and discuss the details of my stay with them in person. Only one and a half weeks later, at the end of May, I was on a plane bound for the small and rather quiet town Battambang in the north of Cambodia. Despite already having received some information and stories from a previous volunteer, I was not sure what was awaiting me on the other side of the world. I just knew that flexibility and adaptability would be required and that I felt ready to support anywhere where help was needed.

Luckily, I have had the chance to live with a Cambodian family, which has made the experience even richer and allowed me to get in touch with the local culture and people more intensively. I soon realised how widespread poverty and how difficult the political situation in the Kingdom of Cambodia is. But on the surface, people seem happy with what they have and where they live. Everyone welcomed me warm-hearted and is happy to have me here.

Only a few days after arriving, I already taught English to the girls in the community programme and helped with football training sessions. However, the language barrier was quite challenging at the beginning, especially with the young children who are so happy to spend the weekend at school to study. While I was still sleepy, the children were completely awake and eager to learn English and other life skills that will help them in future.

Besides teaching English and football in the communities, I support the finance team and the fundraising of SALT and I am in contact with the president of SALT Academy Switzerland to tell him about the current news on-site and update him on the financial situation and the budget planning.

This experience and the flexibility of tasks gives me a lot of freedom to come up with own ideas. It definitely helps me to develop myself personally and to get an insight into the whole functioning of a small NGO in Cambodia.

Girls and boys from different communities of different ages were all divided into random teams

On 17th June, SALT Academy organised the Mini World Cup while the official World Cup was taking place in Russia. 350 children from different communities, NGO partners and street children got the chance to participate in this event. In the early morning, the children from the different communities arrived with a truck at the old airport in Battambang, where the football festival took place. As expected, the temperatures were already high in the morning and providing enough water and having sufficient breaks was important. During the morning, the SALT staff and all of the volunteers prepared 12 stations with different activities, such as dribbling, passing, fun games, face painting or life skill sessions about children’s rights or the environment. After the lunch break, the children were mixed into 32 teams to represent the nations participating in the World Cup in Russia. Girls and boys from different communities of different ages were all divided into random teams. By splitting the children into different teams, they had the chance to learn more about “their” country: where the country is located, which language is spoken there and so on. It was interesting to see how proudly all of the children represented their “new” country, even with flags painted on their face. The children learned a lot about different countries and the idea of diversity in our world. For the tournament, the football methodology was applied, with its focus on fair play, equality and teamwork. It was a fully packed and long day in the sun, but at the end of it, all of the children were happy, no matter if they won or not.

Being a football-related NGO, most of the colleagues at SALT Academy are interested in the game and follow the World Cup in Russia. However, one of the main issues is the time difference to Russia – the kick-off of many games is late at night, and therefore, following all of them is quite challenging. Due to this fact, the atmosphere in Cambodia during the World Cup is not comparable with the one in Switzerland or in Germany. There are no huge Fan Zones where matches are shown but, luckily, there are various hostels with international people, where it is usually possible to see all of the games. The next morning at the office, almost everyone watches the highlights and goals of last night’s game and likes to discuss and predict the results and the possible winner. And, of course, since Cambodia is not at the World Cup, I tried hard to convince everyone to support Switzerland!

All in all, this is an incredible and unique experience that everyone working in this sector should witness for themselves at least once. Seeing the network members of streetfootballworld implementing the projects in the field makes you realise the purpose of your work and how your efforts can make a difference for a lot of children and young people. Only little is needed to support them and to make them happy. The incredible happiness and gratitude of the children and young people definitely makes you feel that you are doing the right thing. I believe in the power of football to change the world and I am convinced that football NGOs can use this power to support and educate and unite people all over the world.
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