Engaging Youth through Sport

Editorial by Liz Longworth, UNESCO Deputy Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences Sector

Dear Partners and Friends of YDF,

As the United Nations specialized agency for education, sciences and culture, UNESCO's comparative advantage is its cross-sectoral approach to global issues. The depth of the Organization's experience in its areas of competence, and its unique ability to leverage this knowledge, become vital to the identification of innovative solutions and to the realization of peace and development objectives. UNESCO is also the only United Nations agency with a historic mandate to focus on sport. As well as seeking to improve the status of national sport and physical education systems, we are using sport as a catalyst for social inclusion and youth development.

There is a natural affinity between young people and sport, which can be used to open dialogue about a range of pertinent issues. Sport can be used as a positive vehicle to advocate UNESCO's ideals of gender equality, tolerance, inclusion, peace-building and democracy. Sport is also a valuable tool to enhance social inclusion and to assist young people with the development of life skills and participation in community projects, which can increase employability. However, young people must be actively engaged in the design of initiatives to enhance their own personal growth. The involvement of young people ensures better outcomes in terms of uptake and the appreciation of knowledge, but it also has lasting benefits in terms of promoting 'active citizenship'.

"Giving a Voice to Youth" was the focus of the 7th World Conference on Sport, Education and Culture, which was jointly organized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and UNESCO. Building upon the Youth Olympic Games and the United Nations International Year of Youth, the event facilitated discussions on integration, inter-cultural dialogue, informal education and youth civic engagement. Within the context of the current crises, these issues are issues of increasing relevance and ones which disproportionately impact young people. To address them, we must think creatively and adopt a multi-disciplinary framework.

On the occasion of the Durban Conference, I had the opportunity to visit a Youth Development through Football (YDF) project in the township of KwaDukuza. It was a truly memorable experience. This informal sport-based education programme reaches out to marginalized populations and uses young people as positive agents of change. There is a strong emphasis placed on empowerment, and the mitigation of negative social behaviours through dynamic exercises, such as promoting HIV/AIDS awareness, gender equality, peace and youth participation. This project has achieved great results and its objectives are directly in line with those of UNESCO. Accordingly, UNESCO would like to strongly endorse the work of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ): YDF.

Despite the existence of good practice examples, more work is required in order to maximize the power of sport. We must work laterally, exchanging information among intergovernmental organizations, government ministries, the sports movement and non-governmental organizations. UNESCO is uniquely placed to drive action in this regard, through its Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS). This Committee, which was established in 1978, has been reoriented recently as a mechanism to promote the value of sport and physical education and to advocate for the implementation of effective sport policies by all governments. By leveraging increasing international recognition of sport as a catalyst for social inclusion and peace, UNESCO can help reshape the policy environment.
YDF Press Release: German football foundation supports blind South African coach

Johannesburg, 16 February 2011. ‘What a fine birthday present!’ Football coach Dumisane Nthombela is beaming as he happily accepts EUR 2,000 donated by the Sepp Herberger Foundation. ‘We are managing quite well as a team, but transport has always been a problem. The costs cut deeply into our tight budget and more than once players have not been able to attend training sessions. The donation from the Sepp Herberger Foundation will now enable us to concentrate fully on our skills.’ The equivalent of nearly R 20,000 was handed over to Dumisane at the Willow Park Conference Centre in Johannesburg by Henning Schick of the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project during a workshop.

Dumisane, who celebrated his 22nd birthday today, is the coach of the Silver Spears in Vosloorus, a township south-east of Johannesburg. What makes Dumisane special is the fact that he is blind. He lost his eyesight at the age of two to cancer, but that did not prevent him from pursuing his passion, which has been soccer ever since he was a child. Dumisane became an autodidact: from the age of seven onwards, he taught himself football skills by listening to players and coaches. Absolute support from his parents and interviews with stars of well-respected teams such as Kaizer Chiefs and Mamelodi Sundowns helped him to use his talent and become a football coach. He formed the Silver Spears in 1996 and has been managing and coaching the team for the last 11 years. Against all odds, he lives his dream and proves those wrong who used to call him ‘Ghost’ when he was still a child. Owing to his exceptional coaching skills, he has become an esteemed member of the community. Not only is he an inspiration for children both on and off the field, but he is also capable of conveying the importance of teamwork, fair play and mutual understanding.

A blind coach teaching football techniques - does that work? Dumisane’s answer is as simple as it is impressive: ‘I know the game and the players so well that I don’t need my eyes’. In November 2010, Dumisane was one of the first two disabled coaches to be trained on the YDF Toolkit. The Toolkit capacitates football coaches to integrate life skills such as HIV/AIDS and violence prevention into their football training and also become positive role models for the children and youths they train. ‘I am eager to learn new things and want to make a difference in my community. It doesn’t matter whether you can hear, see or walk. It’s all about the love for football,’ says Dumisane, explaining his motivation to participate. ‘YDF is a project implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Government and in partnership with the Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa. It is co-funded by the European Union. ‘Besides young girls and boys from previously disadvantaged areas, we also want to empower people with disabilities,’ explains YDF Project Manager, Gerald Guskowski. ‘We believe that it is their fundamental right to participate equally in society.’

Impressed by Dumisane’s unique situation and inspiring determination, the Sepp Herberger Foundation spontaneously decided to support this extraordinary young man. The Foundation was originally established in 1976 by the former German National Coach to advance the social and socio-political role of football in Germany.

Conceived as a medium to support the development and social standing of football, it has provided assistance and relief not only to players in need and their families, but also to countless others who have ‘fallen on hard times’, as the saying goes. Sport for the disabled is a key area of the Sepp Herberger Foundation’s activities.
Members of German Parliament visit YDF

Johannesburg, 16 February 2011. Members of German Parliament, Ulla Schmidt and Dagmar Freitag, led a two-hour discussion on 16 February 2011 with the participants of a workshop about their experiences in implementing the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project which GIZ is executing on behalf of the German Government in South Africa and in nine other African countries. Apart from the YDF team, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations and YDF instructors and trainers from South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Zambia also came together at the Willow Park Conference Centre in Johannesburg for this purpose. This was already the third visit to the project for the Chairperson of the Sports Committee in Parliament, Dagmar Freitag: ‘Unfortunately, up to now, there has never been time for detailed discussion with the project partners. I am pleased that the opportunity for this has finally arisen’.

YDF uses football for extracurricular education and for the involvement and integration of socially disadvantaged youths in their communities. In addition, it uses the sport to strengthen civil society and as an opportunity for people to meet. The number of socially disadvantaged youths in South Africa is considerably higher than in countries in the northern hemisphere, with many coming from difficult familial relationships. Almost 50 per cent of 15- to 24-year-olds are unable to find work after they finish school and struggle to achieve recognition in their communities. These are figures with an enormous potential for social conflict, which schools alone have little chance of countering. Fortunately, the situation is one that the South African Department of Sport and Recreation (SRSA) has also recognised, consequently integrating the YDF project into its national Mass Participation Programme.

The ‘YDF Toolkit’ – which comprises manuals for training instructors and coaches – focuses on the role-model function of coaches. It illustrates how social competencies (so-called ‘life skills’) can be integrated into football, and underlines the responsibility of the coach towards his/her players. In the YDF project, the emphasis of the life skills, which are conveyed through the playing of football, is placed on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and violence, and on strengthening environmental awareness. The success of the Toolkit was confirmed by the participants of the workshop. Gerd Potgieter, Director of the NGO Altus Sport and a role model himself, was full of praise: ‘I have worked with a great deal of educational material, but as yet I have not come across anything approaching the quality of these manuals’. Coach Lovejoy agreed: ‘As a young woman, I do not find it easy to train young people, especially young men, in the art of football and, moreover, to get them interested in social topics. The Toolkit has helped me to do this; I know it inside and out and feel I have achieved success as a coach’. The Toolkit is currently undergoing an accreditation process and will subsequently be integrated into the South African Mass Participation Programme as official educational and training material – a great achievement for YDF Project Manager, Gerald Guskowski, and his team. A former teacher, Ulla Schmidt agreed: ‘I have a deep conviction that you are on the right track with YDF and that the project is a success’.

To date the project – which began in 2007 and which will still run until the end of 2012 – has directly reached around 30,000 young people in South Africa and a further 30,000 in the nine other African countries. More than a third of the participants are between 13 and 16 years old and almost 40 per cent are girls. Approximately 100 instructors function as multipliers and messengers’ for the concept of youth development through sport. Over the same period, more than 500 coaches have been trained in the use of football coaching as an extra-mural learning platform to effect social change.
First YDF Western Cape Network Newsletter sent out

Cape Town, 10 April 2011. The YDF Western Cape Network enhances its public perception by regularly releasing a newsletter dedicated to the YDF activities in this province. Soccer4Hope, the convener of the network, has put together information for the first edition.

Please find the newsletter here.
The 'Youth for Change' project

A field visit to YDF’s partner, SASDA, in Mamelodi

Mamelodi, 15 April 2011. ‘Let’s give him a big hand,’ repeats Carol Ngang with his powerful and encouraging voice. Dozens of girls and boys follow the social worker’s example, showing their appreciation for their fellow participants’ comments. We find ourselves in one of the classrooms at Mahlasedi Masana Primary School in Mamelodi. 58 girls and boys from Mahlasedi Masana, Legora and Emanasangweni primary schools are attending an HIV/AIDS workshop for youth peer educators and are paying close attention to Carol’s explanations.

Carol Ngang, founder of the Southern Africa Social Development Agency (SASDA), is the facilitator of this ‘Training of Youth Peer Educators’ workshop in Mamelodi. As a YDF partner, the non-profit organisation is implementing its ‘Youth for Change’ project with children from the Mamelodi 8 League, a football league established by eight primary schools in collaboration with YDF.

SASDA’s goal is to add an informal educational component to the football league: ‘We aim to spread life skills by linking our activities to sport. The project consists of two general elements: the training of youth peer educators who will spread their knowledge, and the organisation of youth forums,’ explains Carol. ‘We consider it important not only to teach important life skills to the youths, but also to let them develop their own thoughts and reflect on their behaviour themselves.’ As statistics indicate that girls are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS-infection in South Africa than their male counterparts, at least 60 per cent of the participants of SASDA’s project are female.

During the first sessions of the 5-day training, Carol focused on raising the youths’ awareness of HIV/AIDS and passing on basic knowledge about the topic. He first listened carefully to the youths’ existing beliefs and ideas, then gave them further advice on how to increase their understanding of HIV/AIDS. Using methods such as ice-breakers and sketches, the teenagers worked intensively on getting a clear view of HIV/AIDS and its impacts. Further rounds focused on the transmission and prevention of the virus.

On this particular Thursday afternoon in Mamelodi, the participants - who range between 10 and 15 years of age - are learning about what it means to be a peer educator. Their awareness of this role is vitally important to the success of the approach. Although the topic is somewhat theoretical in nature, Carol finds a way to present it in a lively and easy-to-understand manner. What is my role as a peer? What are appropriate ways in which to disseminate the life skills I have been taught? Hands are raised quickly as the youths are impatient to show what they have learned so far. A glance into the handbooks which SASDA has provided helps them to find the correct answers. When Carol points out the key messages on the board, the youths carefully take notes in their exercise books. After the final round-up of the lesson, the afternoon is closed with enthusiasm: the boys and girls run to the schoolyard to show the visitors their singing and dancing skills.

Following the workshop, the participants form peer groups for sharing their acquired knowledge and information. Once a month, the youths meet with SASDA to discuss the challenges they face as a peer educator. Carol Ngang is happy with the project’s progress: ‘The participants are very enthusiastic and want to encourage their peers to have a positive attitude and modify their behaviour.’
'Four Countries 4 Peace' - Bringing Youth Together

Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace attended the event in Kigali

Kigali, 15 April 2011. ESPERANCE, YDF’s partner in Rwanda, hosted the second edition of the ‘Four Countries 4 Peace’ event on 17 and 18 March in Kigali. The core element of the four-day festival was the ‘Football Amahoro Tournament’, which took place at the Kimisagara Youth Centre with participating teams from Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda.

‘Football Amahoro’ is a socio-pedagogical instrument developed by ESPERANCE to promote social inclusion and mutual understanding by way of encounter and exchange, through the medium of football. According to the game’s rules, three female and three male players are in the same team and only the girls/women are allowed to score. There are no referees involved and the players are supposed to guarantee fair play and, if necessary, to solve occurring conflicts themselves.

The participating teams were from the Congolese cities of Bukavu and Goma, Kirundo and Kayanza (Burundi), as well as the southern Ugandan communities of Cyanika and Kisoro. Rwanda was represented by host, ESPERANCE, and a selection of young people from the Gihembe Refugee Camp in Byumba.

Additionally, more than one hundred young boys and girls from the four countries participated in a civic-education workshop on ‘Active Youth Participation in Promoting the Millennium Development Goals’. Willi Lemke, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace and guest of honour at the opening ceremony, inspired the focus on this topic. The results of the workshop were handed over to Mr Lemke by Sarah Ingabire, the participants’ speaker, in the form of a petition.
NEWSLETTER: APRIL 2011

Manual on Violence Prevention through Football piloted

Workshop participants assist in improvement of structure and content

Pretoria, 20 April 2011. The Youth Development through Football (YDF) project has entered a new implementation phase. The recent publishing of its Manual on Violence Prevention marks a major step forward for the project, as it is the first in a series of so-called ‘Short Modules’, which focus on how specific challenges can be approached by using football: apart from violence prevention, upcoming issues will deal with topics such as HIV/AIDS, gender equality and the environment. After extensive research, structuring and writing, YDF Toolkit Manager, Henning Schick, is happy with the result: ‘We can now offer our partners an excellent guide on how to use football as a tool for the prevention of violence. The manual can either be used as an addition to the existing basic training, or as a direct point of entry into methodology.’ In order to test the usefulness of the manual, YDF conducted a pilot workshop in Cape Town from 4 to 8 April 2011. 19 participants from South Africa and Namibia, most of whom were coaches who had already undergone the basic YDF training, attended the workshop. Besides learning about violence prevention and how to integrate it into football exercises, the coaches were encouraged to develop the manual further by giving feedback and adding new ideas to the approach.

A first step in preventing violence is defining the term: What do we perceive as violence? What kind of violence do we experience in our personal environment? How does violent behaviour affect players and teams? After some intense sessions, the workshop participants concluded that the violence they experience within their football teams mirrors the problems faced by their communities; however, it also became clear that the participants’ experiences are highly diverse. Whereas Capetonians are regularly exposed to severe cases of violence in and around the football pitch, coaches from rural areas reported that violence here occurred mainly within families. As coaches, they must be particularly aware of the need for them to act as role models, thus steering clear of behaving violently themselves. Cebisa Noludwe, who supports ‘Soccer4Hope’ as a community coordinator, explained: ‘I regularly experience violence in the areas where I work. But instead of being afraid and accepting this, we have to take the first step.’ Coaches need to intervene as early as possible in cases of conflict and adhere to the level on which they can actually prevent violence, namely the team.

In line with the new manual, the workshop continued with lessons on how coaches can understand the causes of violence and how they can intervene in incidents of violence. The so-called ‘conflict triangle’ is a way to analyse and understand conflicts comprehensively by identifying the issues and parties involved in a conflict, while also considering its context. A practice session, where the participants staged a conflict, showed them how mediation tools can be an appropriate means of intervention. This lively lesson was greeted with much appreciation by the coaches, who put a great deal of effort into simulating reality as far as possible.

As the workshop’s halfway mark approached, the training focused on the two major parties of a conflict: the victims and the perpetrators. What symptoms do victims of violence display? The group learned how to identify such symptoms as well as how to use football exercises relating to this topic. These exercises should be applied to strengthen communication, self-confidence, teamwork and trust; however, the other side of a conflict, the perpetrator, must not be disregarded either. A child or youth who exhibits violent behaviour should not have this behaviour sanctioned, but rather given attention by the coach. Both parties must be supported in appropriate ways: coaches can apply exercises to strengthen the players’ ability to express and deal with their emotions. Further training can focus on developing individual agency, social skills and rebuilding trust in players. In any case, the coach must recognise when his or her limits have been reached and when a conflict escalates. The coach must also learn how to separate the task from the person and how to deal with the conflict itself. How do we deal with incidents of violence in the context of football-related behaviour? The group learned how to identify such symptoms as well as how to use football exercises relating to this topic. These exercises should be applied to strengthen communication, self-confidence, teamwork and trust; however, the other side of a conflict, the perpetrator, must not be disregarded either. A child or youth who exhibits violent behaviour should not have this behaviour sanctioned, but rather given attention by the coach. Both parties must be supported in appropriate ways: coaches can apply exercises to strengthen the players’ ability to express and deal with their emotions. Further training can focus on developing individual agency, social skills and rebuilding trust in players. In any case, the coach must recognise when his or her limits have been reached and when a particular case needs to be referred to a professional. The coaches who participated in the pilot workshop contributed greatly towards improving the manual,’ explained Henning Schick. ‘We really needed the input from people who actually work at grass-roots level. The manual will now be edited once again,Page(s) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10© GIZ/YDF© GIZ/YDFThe outcomes of the group work were then presented and discussed in the plenum.© GIZ/YDFThe workshop participants expanded on the most important topics relating to violence prevention in small groups...© GIZ/YDF© GIZ/YDFThe outcomes of the group work were then presented and discussed in the plenum.
YDF Manual for Coaches - revised edition released

Pretoria, 21 April 2011. After an extensive process of review and constructive feedback by coaches and experts in the field of sports and development, a second edition of the YDF Manual for Coaches has been released. With the publishing of this new edition, one of the core tools of YDF’s approach is now available with improvements based on the needs of its users. Several YDF partners contributed with their experience during the assessment process.

The revision of the Manual for Coaches became necessary owing to the importance of including new aspects and adjusting existing lessons to the environment that coaches face daily.

YDF Toolkit Manager, Henning Schick, is grateful for the effort that YDF’s partners put into reviewing the manual: “For the editing of the second edition, it was crucial to get frank feedback from people who work with the manual on a regular basis. YDF greatly appreciates the hard work and dedication of every one of the partners who contributed to the revision of the Manual for Coaches.”
One ball, one game - two winners

International football game fosters South African-German ties

Mabopane, 21 April 2011. A rather pessimistic English football player once claimed: ‘A football match lasts 90 minutes and in the end it’s always the Germans who win.’ A friendly game in Mabopane on 15 April once again proved this assertion to be wrong. The Lesedi Strikers from Mabopane, who are supported by YDF’s partner ‘SA Cares for Life’, tied at three goals each with their German counterparts from FC Union60 Bremen. The 16 youths from Germany came to South Africa to cooperate with local youths in the construction of a community sports facility in iSithumba, a village 45 kilometres from Durban. Before heading for their project in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, the team visited Mabopane for the friendly game with the Lesedi Strikers. A special guest highlighted the match: South Africa’s famous referee Ian McLeod led the game. The official, who refereed in the 1998 FIFA World Cup™ in France, was pleased to participate in this occasion as he feels a great sense of responsibility for fostering sports in disadvantaged communities in his country.

When the German youths arrived, the South African team greeted them with cheers and dancing. ‘It was wonderful to be welcomed in such a friendly way,’ said Bremen player Tengisz. The local team felt great motivation and excitement about this special visit. ’We were also a little bit nervous though, because we once had difficulties when we were playing a Norwegian team with very tall players,’ explained the Strikers’ captain Gomolemo. The Germans indeed outsized their South African counterparts, but the Strikers applied their excellent technical skills, thus often finding ways around the ‘giants’. FC Union60 also impressed with quick and precise passing, however, and soon led the game by 2-0. Despite trailing by two goals, the Strikers regained their confidence, and were soon rewarded for their persistence: just shortly after the first goal, they equalised the game with a fine combination of play. With ten minutes to go, FC Union60 once again took the lead, but the Strikers came back and tied the game just two minutes before the final whistle-blow.

Both teams were encouraged by the local supporters at the game. Strikers’ team member Gomolemo pointed out: ‘It felt fantastic to have them cheering for us; they really lifted our spirits.’ The team’s confidence was further boosted by their new football outfits, the brand-new black and yellow jerseys’ definitely giving the boys extra motivation. The rough football pitch presented a major challenge to both teams, although Bremen’s players struggled far more with the difficult conditions. Union60’s Lukas tried to take it easy: ‘Playing the pitch was quite funny and it was great to experience the difference between this and what we are normally used to.’ In the end, both sides were satisfied with the final score: ‘It couldn’t be any better. Everybody is content and both teams left the pitch as winners,’ commented Bremen’s project manager, Jens Lohmann, during the youths’ post-match interaction.
YDF Toolkit tackles next short manual: HIV/AIDS Prevention through Football

Experts come together for development workshop in Port Elizabeth

Port Elizabeth, 22 April 2011. The Youth Development through Football (YDF) project is taking another step forward with the creation of its next short manual. Ten experts came together at the Volkswagen South Africa (VWSA) Conference Centre in Uitenhage from 19 to 20 April to develop the YDF Manual on HIV/AIDS Prevention through Football. The chosen venue in the Eastern Cape reflected the ongoing Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between YDF and VW South Africa.

After the successful introduction of two general manuals for instructors and coaches, YDF is now focusing on how to use football exercises for conveying specific life skills. The Manual on HIV/AIDS Prevention will tackle one of southern Africa's most demanding challenges. YDF's intention is to equip coaches with skills that enable them to use football as a tool in preventing the disease.

In order to present consistent, correct and appropriate information in the manual, YDF sought expert advice. Ten HIV/AIDS specialists with different professional backgrounds met for two days in Uitenhage to tackle the task of identifying the manual's structure, its main sections and its contents. Weza Moss, head of the VW Community Trust, welcomed the experts and emphasised that VW was interested in further supporting YDF's approach and fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

After the first introductory sessions, an interesting debate arose about the explicit inclusion of HIV/AIDS-related messages in football training. While one side argued that role models only have an impact when actively communicating a message, the other side stressed that the genuine potential of football exercises should be used to prepare children to solve problems in general – with HIV/AIDS being only one of them. After a lively discussion, independent consultant Helen Tsukudu concluded: 'Both approaches must not be mutually exclusive.'

Throughout the two days, several working groups compiled lists of important information that each section of the manual should include. The focus will be on six issues: the responsibilities and opportunities of a coach; the definition of HIV and AIDS; the transmission of the virus and its prevention; the social drivers of the disease; the possible ways of working with infected or affected persons; and the treatment, care and support of those people. All participants pointed out the importance of showing that the drivers of the virus are social factors such as marginalisation or cultural practice rather than medical issues.

YDF Toolkit Manager, Henning Schick, pointed out that the workshop in Uitenhage was an important step towards creating the new YDF Manual on HIV/AIDS Prevention through Football: 'In the coming weeks, each section will be further designed and subsequently reviewed by the specialists.'