Make ‘sport for development’ an integral part of civil society!

Editorial by Gerald Guskowski, YDF Project Manager

Dear Partners and Friends of YDF,

The FIFA WC 2010™ already feels like part of history even though the final whistle was blown only four months ago. I enjoyed the games, loved the atmosphere and it felt great to be part of that wonderful event. With the successful organisation of the World Cup on African soil, South Africa proved that it is able to host and organise the world’s largest event. For four weeks, the country was the centre of the world and South Africa successfully utilised the event to convey a positive image of itself beyond crime and poverty, which will certainly pay off in the long run. It is not only South Africa that will benefit economically from this new perception that contradicts the former Afro-pessimistic perception, however, but the continent as a whole.

Football is primarily a sport that involves masses of young people. The crucial question is therefore whether these girls and boys got involved in the FIFA WC 2010™ and if so, to what extent it changed their lives. YDF played a major role in bringing the World Cup to the youth of South Africa and selected other African countries, and to disadvantaged areas in particular.

After the final whistle, our team had to breathe deeply and get used to not working 24/7. We also missed the exciting daily football matches. Our real work and purpose started long before the World Cup, however, and did not end with the tournament itself as the World Cup was only a means of highlighting and promoting the YDF approach. Now our task is to deliver on the aspects below.

‘Sport for Development’ can provide girls and boys with essential life skills and thus contribute substantially to their education. It can provide structures for engagement and thus necessary participation in important elements of society. Last but not least, it can also contribute to the development of a strong element of civil society. YDF supports the South African Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) in using sport for this purpose and in creating a legacy that lasts far beyond the tournament.

What does that mean for the future?

Firstly, we will be running training courses on different levels that combine life skills and sport. The aim of these courses is to develop competent coaches and teachers who know how to develop sporting skills and who are also educators and role models in the respective communities. Within the YDF team, Henning Schick is working on modules and manuals that target educational topics in particular. Soon we will provide specific modules in the fields of violence prevention, HIV-prevention and event design that will complement the core manual on football and life skills.

Secondly, YDF will support NGOs by means of conditional grants. These grants will be used for running coaching courses to spread activities relating to youth development through sport, and to enhance the capacity of the NGOs with regard to structures and competencies. In short, they will serve as a capacity-development tool. Smaller grants will be assigned locally via direct awards and larger grants via international tenders. We hope that the NGOs will use this instrument extensively and we strongly encourage them to apply for these grants. Through this, we want to realise our vision of a strong sport-for-development world jointly, and play an important role in civil society in the future.

Lastly, YDF will furthermore support the development of SRSA’s mass-participation programme. This support will be even stronger than in the past, and will also use conditional grants for South African provinces in order to develop community sport, school sports programmes and respective capacities.

The end of the FIFA WC 2010™ also brought some changes with it where the YDF team is concerned. Melanie Langefeld returned to Germany, Vumisa Mayisela started consultancy services in South Africa and Olaf Handloegten will soon move to Bangladesh and take over the role of GTZ Country Director there. Good luck to you all. We wish you only the best for your future!
A blind coach with a vision

Vosloorus, 24 August 2010. Dumisane Nthombela stands motionless at the soccer pitch, his eyes not following the players; however, every now and then he calls out to them in a low voice and adjusts their play. They change it accordingly and without hesitation. Dumisane is the football coach for the Silver Spears in Vosloorus, a township situated in Boksburg, east of Johannesburg. And Dumisane is blind. A blind coach teaching football techniques? What seems hard to believe at first sight is simply a reality for Dumisane and his success speaks for itself. Only last weekend, his team beat the Spring FC 5:0 in a match, nothing out of the ordinary for the club that plays in the East Rand League. YDF visited the blind coach to get an idea of the key to his success.

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.” Like many other visually impaired and blind people, he has improved his remaining senses and developed skills that compensate almost fully for his lack of eyesight.

Dumisane lost his eyesight at the age of two following eye cancer. That did not prevent him from indulging in 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.

Despite all odds, he lives his dream and proves those who used to call him “Ghost” when he was still a child, wrong. 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 - and he does this without saying much at all.

YDF's Toolkit Development Manager, Henning Schick, was impressed with the performance of the team. “It’s amazing how disciplined and technically skilled these kids are. They respect one another and the coach. It’s an elation to watch Dumisane on the pitch.” Dumisane explains: “I listen to the members of my team and take their problems seriously. And they reward me with their respect”. Combining football with life skills will be a future challenge for the ambitious coach. As a result, he will soon be the first blind coach and handicapped person to join YDF's instructor-training toolkit. Dumisane's cousin, Teboho, will join him in this undertaking and serve as his 'eyes' should this prove necessary.

Despite his team's success on the pitch, Dumisane and his Silver Spears are facing a major obstacle; “I am proud of what we have achieved. But our biggest challenge is transport. Not all the kids can regularly participate in training sessions or come to matches because they can't afford transport. We can still achieve the extraordinary as a team,” Dumisane concludes, “but we are desperate for a sponsor who will cover our transport costs and fund our soccer boots.”

Dumisane is a living example that vision is more important than eyesight. His life story has inspired YDF to strive towards empowering disabled people from disadvantaged communities because individuals like Dumisane deserve recognition and appreciation for the work they do.
Youth leaders for social change

Mabopane, 11 September 2010. “I am astounded by the passion of these young people who applied for voluntary soccer coaching in their communities. They are highly motivated to go into schools and teach soccer in combination with valuable life skills,” explains Chrisna Groenewald after selecting 21 youth leaders for soccer training in Mabopane, a township in the Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality. Chrisna is the Community Development Facilitator of SA Cares for Life, a non-governmental organisation working with orphans and vulnerable children who are infected with the HIV virus and affected by AIDS in rural communities largely in Gauteng and the Western Cape. The organisation has been part of NIKE’s Sport for Social Change Network since June 2009. A major focus of its programme is on providing life-skills training with regard to the prevention of HIV/AIDS and capacity-building. Like YDF, SA Cares for Life utilises soccer to impart life skills to youths, which they can then use to help them achieve their goals. This has now led to the establishment of the Lesedi Striker Sport and Life Skills Academy - an initiative to educate and train young community leaders with YDF’s assistance. The Lesedi Striker Sport and Life Skills Academy was launched on 11 September 2010 at the Matsepa Teacher’s Centre in Mabopane with the selection of the prospective youth leaders.

YDF-Africa Team Manager, Christiane Frische, was part of the selection committee. In a discussion panel young girls and boys between the ages of 16 and 17 exchanged their ideas on good youth leadership and were selected accordingly. “I am impressed by how qualified and dedicated the girls and boys are. They really want to contribute to their communities and do this on a voluntary basis,” explains Frische. The selected youth leaders will participate in the YDF Toolkit training and then go into seven high schools in Mabopane to equip children with advanced life and football skills.

At the end of the youth-leader selection day, Chrisna Groenewald expressed the importance of the day clearly: “There is without doubt an immense need for further investment in the lives of these hopeful teenagers because the more you educate young people, the more they will give back to their community.”
Orange Farm, 16 September 2010. Christian Leffler, Deputy Director-General for Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States of the European Union (EU), received detailed information on YDF when he visited the Dona’s Mates project site in Orange Farm during his visit to South Africa. Orange Farm is located only 45km outside Johannesburg and is home to around one million people. It is one of the largest informal settlements and arguably one of the most disadvantaged areas in South Africa. The cooperation between Dona’s Mates and YDF in the township aims to develop the local youth to become responsible, tolerant and healthy members of their community. They achieve this through a combination of football training and life-skills education.

On the occasion of Christian Leffler’s visit, young girls and boys demonstrated how they integrate life-skills sessions on HIV/AIDS awareness and violence prevention into their soccer training. Coaches from Orange Farm were recently trained on these topics and introduced to the YDF Toolkit. “Our soccer pitch is a legacy project for the FIFA World Cup 2010™,” explained Dona’s Mates founder and chairperson, James ‘Maradona’ Shabangu. The pitch was facilitated by GTZ in partnership with the Department for Sport and Recreation South Africa and funded by the European Union. It is built on land for which Dona’s Mates received a 99-year lease. Here, they also plan to establish a football-development academy, among other projects.
BMZ Head of Division for Southern Africa visits YDF Project

Mamelodi, 22 September 2010. "The soccer pitch is not a white elephant; the children and the community derive equal benefit from it," explained Joe Vuma, Principal of Mahlasedi Masana Primary School during a visit of BMZ’s Head of Division for Southern Africa, Dr Ingolf Dietrich, to Mamelodi. Appropriate to South Africa’s upcoming Heritage Day on 24 September, Dietrich was welcomed by the staff members and children in colourful traditional wear. Approximately sixty young girls and boys demonstrated that the soccer pitch built by GTZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is well used and that football has the potential to convey life skills.

Dietrich was obviously impressed when Deputy Project Manager, Olaf Handloegten, explained how YDF uses football to teach youngsters how to resolve conflict through means other than violence, among other things. He pointed at girls and boys playing a kind of hockey on the pitch with a shortened broom. The coach introduced this fun activity as broom hockey, a combination of hockey and soccer in which a broom is used to score goals. The rules are simple: fair play, honesty and discipline and no beating with the broom. The session emphasised, in particular, violence-free strategies for resolving conflict. One girl standing off the soccer pitch attracted the attention of the delegation and the coach explained: "She didn’t obey the rules. That is why she had to leave the pitch". After a while he called her back to the team. "Watching the team, she has learned that there are better ways to solve conflict than by using violence. Prevention starts on the field."

Photo: © GTZ/YDF
Henning Schick (right) introduces BMZ’s Head of Division for Southern Africa, Dr Ingolf Dietrich, to the manual for coach training.

Photo: © GTZ/YDF
No beating with the broom allowed: young girls and boys play broom hockey on the soccer pitch in Mamelodi.
Let’s "wash united!"

Lusaka, 24 September 2010. "Do you know that sanitation and hygiene are often still taboo topics? For many people it is difficult to talk openly about this essential issue. We can use the positive power of football to break persisting taboos and convey valuable hygiene education to the youth,” explained YDF Africa Team Expert, Lebogang Tlomatsane, during a training workshop for coaches in Zambia. The workshop, which took place in the capital of Lusaka, was part of the toolkit-implementation initiative that YDF is pursuing in its partner countries, and was the first to be held outside South Africa. The YDF Toolkit uses football as a means of imparting life skills and focuses on water- and sanitation-related health and hygiene in Zambia, where sanitation and the supply of safe drinking water are key issues.

In total, twenty-eight participants from YDF’s partner NGOs - EduSport and the Breakthrough Sports Academy - attended the workshop. Both partners operate predominantly in the area of Lusaka, but also cover the southern and north-western parts of Zambia. The course kicked off with a water and sanitation workshop which introduced the group to simple intervention activities that prevent water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea. In group work and role-play the coaches learnt how to use the enthusiasm of the youth for soccer to combine hygiene with sanitation education. The seminar also stressed the coaches’ important and responsible function as role models for their players. The remaining days were specifically dedicated to training and the planning of training sessions. All the participants used the opportunity to test and apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge with a group of twenty young people from a local football team.

At the end of the coach training, Tlomatsane commented proudly: “All in all, the workshop was a success and the coaching was of a high standard. I am confident that they will successfully pass on to the youth what they’ve learnt.”
"Football unites Africa"

Mamelodi, 15 October 2010. “From what I have seen today, the YDF programme needs to be extended to all countries across the continent to capacitate African youths through sport,” stated Ghanaian journalist, Joana Mensah, from the Daily Searchlight after visiting YDF’s project site at Mahlasedi Masana Primary School in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Mensah was one of ten journalists representing media houses from all corners of Africa, and who participated in a two-week training workshop offered by the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and supported by GTZ’s Support to Pan-African Institutions (SPAI) project. The training accompanies the biannual parliamentary sessions. The hands-on workshop reached out to journalists who aim to carry out best journalism practice in Africa, who are passionate about their work and who want to learn more about Pan-African issues. On 15 October the journalists seized the opportunity to learn more about the European Union and its Parliament during a visit to the European Commission Delegation in Pretoria. The EU Parliament has maintained close ties with the Pan-African Parliament since the latter’s creation in 2004. After the panel discussion with EU representatives, Zambian journalist Anthony Mulowa concluded: “We need a strong Pan-African Parliament like the European Parliament to carry out the political will of Africa’s people; however, Africa has its own model and its own solutions. We can learn from each other.”

The YDF project in Mamelodi was the second destination for the journalists that day and closely connected content-wise, as the EU co-funds the project which GTZ is implementing on behalf of the German Government. After two weeks of parliamentary sessions, the project visit was a welcome diversion and even more exciting for the journalists, as the project is active in some of their home countries. For YDF it was the first time that the project was simultaneously exposed to media representatives from ten African countries, representing the many voices of people across the African continent. They advocate the idea of a Pan-African approach, an issue which YDF also pursues consistently and which it animated through its Peace Caravan and the Strong Youth, Strong Africa tours.

Journalists followed a presentation of YDF’s Toolkit along the soccer pitch in Mamelodi: young girls and boys learned in a playful manner why HIV infections cannot be transmitted by playing with someone who carries the virus. In another game, and obviously not an easy one, young girls and boys were blindfolded and guided by their partners to dribble a soccer ball towards a goal. Learning to listen and to trust the partner was the main objective of this game. From watching the children on the playground, the African journalists were convinced that people in Africa need to know more about youth development through sport and that they should make it their collective issue.

At the end there was still time for the journalists to prove their football skills. In a sweaty and hard-fought football match, the YDF team finally claimed a 3:0 victory over the journalists. “Indeed, football brings Africa together and what makes it even greater is that Africa’s youth can benefit from it,” concluded a laughing Mulowa after the match.