Volkswagen South Africa and GTZ South Africa enter into a Public-Private Partnership

Editorial by Percy Smith, Director Human Resources Volkswagen South Africa

Volkswagen South Africa and GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) through its Youth Development through Football (YDF) project have signed a contract for a Public -Private Partnership (PPP) that will focus on education and life skills including HIV/AIDS prevention. The agreement was signed on 15 October at Volkswagen South Africa in Uitenhage in the Eastern Cape.

HIV/AIDS is a major challenge threatening the development of the Eastern Cape with several communities showing a prevalence rate of above 40%. Still the majority of young people do not know their HIV status.

Access to adequate nutrition, sanitation, health care, housing and educational facilities remain a challenge for most children growing up in the region’s communities. This living environment for young people generates a high potential for violence and social destabilisation.

The PPP project aims at making a major contribution to youth development and better future prospects of adolescents through providing tools on life skills including HIV/AIDS education for boys and girls. This is done by using football as a tool to access these young people and their communities.

Therefore the joint VW – GTZ project will make use of two VW ‘soccer buses’ to reach out to the youth in the Chris Hani, Alfred Nzo and Nelson Mandela Bay municipalities. Through the use of these mobile units even young boys and girls in remote areas can be reached. Football is very popular among disadvantaged young people and therefore can be used to target a part of the population not reached by common measures to fight HIV/AIDS and improve their life skills.

Aboard these two buses will be young soccer coaches who will act as peer educators on life skills and HIV/AIDS. Hence the coaches will be trained in advance in football training methods, youth development and HIV/AIDS prevention. In addition the VW Health Unit will provide free condoms aboard the buses. A local non-governmental organisation will help to implement and monitor the project and mentor the coaches and peer educators.

At the signing of the PPP contract GTZ was represented by Gerald Guskowski, manager of the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project.

The VW - GTZ partnership was initiated within the framework of the PPP programme of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), develoPPP.de, and is jointly financed by VW South Africa and BMZ. GTZ’s ‘Strengthening the German Contribution to the Global AIDS Response’ programme contributes further expertise. The project is designed to run until mid-2012 and will reach out to at least 25,000 young boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 20.

Photo: © VW South Africa
From left to right: Melanie Langefeld (YDF), Dr. Carsten Krebs (VW Coordinator Soccer World Cup 2010), Olaf Handloegten (YDF), Weza Moss (Head of Human Resources, Corporate & Government Affairs, VW), Dr. Alex Govender (VW’s Head of Health Unit, VW).
Making an impact on children’s lives

German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development visits YDF

Pretoria, 7 August 2009. The German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, visited the ‘Youth Development through Football’ (YDF) project on 7 August 2009. The visit was part of her two day stay in South Africa. Wieczorek-Zeul spent a whole morning at the Mahlasedi Masana Primary school in the township of Mamelodi where she engaged in talks with YDF staff members and project partners. After being escorted to the entrance by the schools drum majorettes she received a warm welcoming by Vernie Petersen, Director General of the South African Department for Sport & Recreation and Joe Vuma, principal of the school. The minister showed eager interest in the practical presentations given by YDF’s partner NGO’s Green Feet, Karos & Kambro and Altus Sports Vuma. Stations were set up on the school grounds of Mahlasedi Masana - one out of eight partner schools of the YDF project which is financed by the German Government and implemented by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in close cooperation with the Department of Sport & Recreation South Africa (SRSA).

The minister who was accompanied by the German Ambassador to South Africa, Dieter Haller, GTZ Country Director Peter Conze and YDF Project Manager Gerald Guskowski, enjoyed Green Feet's presentation on football and environmental education. Her interest in the concept was rewarded when the kids provided her with self-made presents that were created from waste material. An energetic and cheerful Wieczorek-Zeul also took part in the practical presentation of Karos & Kambro a non-governmental organisation that uses the performing arts to develop and equip the youth with life skills. She was ‘markedly impressed by the enthusiasm of the coaches and volunteers to make an impact on children’s lives.”

On the school’s sports grounds Altus Sports Vuma promoted the idea of fair play, solidarity and gender equality through football. The minister took her time to talk to young ‘Weltwaerts’ volunteers – a programme that she initiated to get young Germans involved in development work and social institutions all over the world. Last but not least she watched a match on the school’s artificial football pitch which was financed by the German Government. The pitch is mainly used for practical sessions and tournaments of the ‘Mamelodi 8 League’ – a street football league where the participating girls and boys not only receive points for goals, but also for social behavior. After watching the match and gaining some insight view on the rules and regulations of streetfootball Wieczorek-Zeul handed out footballs and world maps to the kids and thanked all involved parties “for the wonderful time and for their effort and passion in their daily work.”
Taking home the ‘Golden Shoe’

GTZ/YDF team wins German Diplomatic Football Tournament

Pretoria, 22 August 2009. The traditional German Diplomatic Football Tournament took place for the 6th time on the grounds of the German School in Pretoria on 22 August. 12 highly motivated teams competed for the trophy shaped like a golden football shoe. The participants included teams from Poland, Japan and Germany but also from South African institutions such as the ‘Department of International Affairs and Co-operation’ (DICO) and the ‘South African Police Service’ (SAPS). The ‘German Technical Co-operation’ (GTZ) sent a team from the ‘Youth Development through Football’ (YDF) project to the competition. The YDF team proved its passion for soccer, when it won the tournament against the German Embassy 1:0 in the final, and took home the ‘Golden Shoe’. Gerald Guskowski, project manager of YDF, stated that he was very proud of the achievement and promised to “find a nice spot for the trophy in the office.”
Empower the Youth to meet the challenges

‘All Star Tournament’ successfully takes place in Botswana

Ramotswa, 23 August 2009. ‘We want everybody to get a chance in life regardless of his or her background’, explained Programme Director Kitso Masi, outlining the objectives of the ‘South East District Youth Empowerment League’ (SEYDEL) during the opening of the ‘All Star Tournament’. The mixed gender football tournament which took place in Ramotswa/Botswana on the 22nd and 23rd August 2009 focused on the newly formed partnership with the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project. It was supposed to showcase SEYDEL’s development through football approach. Botswana is one of YDF’s partner countries.

SEYDEL is a youth-led sports and community development league programme with a focus on HIV/AIDS. It has its roots in the ongoing partnership between the Canadian city of Toronto and the South East District Council of Botswana. The league was formed in 2005. It aims to channel the energy and enthusiasm of young people away from risky behaviour which is regarded as being a main factor for the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in Africa. The disease is one of Botswana’s biggest challenges with an estimated adult HIV prevalence of 23.9%, the second highest rate in the world. “Many youths in Botswana turned to high risk behaviour, because of a lack of sports and extracurricular activities. They took to alcohol, drugs and crime to fill their time”. Kitso, the young Motswana, knows what he’s talking about, when he illustrates the backdrop against which the SEYDEL programme was developed. After losing his parents he lost track in his teenage years. Kitso stopped going to school and became part of a youth gang which roamed the streets and terrorized the community. Sport remained a part of his life and eventually saved him from worse. “One day while I was playing football, my gang mates went out and killed a guy, beating him to death. That day I realized it could have been me if I hadn’t been on the field playing soccer. That’s when I made up my mind. Instead of taking from my community I started giving something back”, Kitso remembers his troubled past. He went back to school and started working as a peer educator.

Today the 25-year old, nicknamed ‘the Sheriff’, has taken on a leading role in his community and has even gained international recognition for his efforts. He not only works as a programme director for SEYDEL but also co-founded a theatre company. Kitso was also the ‘face’ of Nike’s global competition ‘Sport for a better world’, and has been elected to be Botswana’s first and only representative in the ‘Imagine Africa’ television series - an African reality show which sets up pan-African challenges for the continent’s young achievers and promotes the vision of an HIV-free generation. “Young people listen to me because I am one of them and I have faced the same challenges they have to deal with on a daily basis. To me it seems that peer education is the best way to inspire the youth of Botswana to take on the challenges in their communities”.

With its peer education programme and the focus on HIV/AIDS, SEYDEL targets boys and girls of all ages. The programme is channelled through the ‘kick-AIDS’ network, which enhances life skills through sport. It comprises three main approaches: the school outreach programme places peer-educators in the schools where they offer extracurricular activities during the week; the outreach programme focuses on performances for HIV/AIDS infected people in hospitals, and the weekend and tournament programme offers life skills to the youth on the playground.

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Empower the Youth to meet the challenges cont.

The football league is open to girls and boys. It is the largest youth league in the district with 100 teams registered. 26 of the teams are female. Altogether more than 1500 youths are involved in five villages. “The governing committee of the league is composed entirely of participating youths who meet once a week to deal with various issues which arise during the matches. We empower the peers with leadership and other life skills through theatre and active games, but we mainly focus on health education”, Kitso explains further.

This year’s motto of the ‘All Star Tournament’: ‘Youth and Health’ matched these focus areas. A total of 30 teams – 15 female and 15 male teams – participated in the tournament which was divided into U13, U17 and U25 categories. The annual tournament reached approximately 800 youths. It serves to select the best players from all SEDYEL teams, hence it has been dubbed ‘All Star’. They form the SEYDEL United Team which is intending to register in the National Football Federation League. This year’s tournament was the 3rd since SEDYEL started this series of events.

The two day programme not only focused on achievements on the pitch but also on the performance of the participants in games and activities with regard to life skills. Highly enthusiastic youths tried to score points by answering questions concerning health issues in the ‘Intelligence Show’ which was facilitated by ‘Miss Botswana’, Sumaiyah Marope. A tired but happy Kitso rounded the event off late on Sunday and appreciated the fact that “we have been successful in creating a platform for sharing and exchanging experiences and ideas amongst the kids and we are looking forward to our future cooperation with YDF”.

Photo: © GTZ/YDF.
Marching towards a better future: Children from Botswana participating in the ‘All Star Tournament’.

Photo: © GTZ/YDF.
Asking tough questions: Miss Botswana hosted the Intelligence Show at the SEYDEL ‘All Star Tournament’ in Ramotswa/Botswana.
YDF Video now available!

A video on the YDF project is now available on this website. Click here to watch, or visit:

http://www.za-ydf.org/displaysection.php?zSelectedSectionID=sec1253737738
Spread the word

YDF team members visited Germany

Berlin, 6 September 2009. Team members of the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project visited Germany in order to promote the programme and to exchange ideas and knowledge with experts involved in the fields of development work and football. “The trip was a good opportunity to present our concept, to show the current status of our work and to get valuable input for our ongoing implementation,” Gerald Guskowski, project manager of YDF, explained the purpose of the journey. “It was our chance to spread the word about YDF and to let people know what we are up to.” He was accompanied by Allan Boesak, Liaison Officer German Centre for World Cup Initiatives and by Vernie Petersen, Director General of the South African Department for Sport & Recreation (SRSA), which is the political partner of YDF in South Africa.

The travel schedule included visits to the Head Office of the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ) in Eschborn, to the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in Berlin as well as press briefings and meetings with representatives of the German Football Association (DFB) and with other initiatives. “It is amazing to see the growing interest in YDF. It makes me feel proud to be part of such a well received project and it motivates me to perform at my best in order to live up to expectations”, Allan Boesak described his feelings after a presentation of YDF at GTZ’s Head Office. The presentation was part of a public discussion entitled ‘World Championship in South Africa: Football as an Opportunity for Participation and Prevention of Juvenile Violence’. More than 90 participants attended the discussion.

The highlight of the journey’s additional programme which included guided tours around Berlin and Frankfurt and to the Olympic Stadium, was a visit to Berlin’s football club ‘Union Berlin’. Here the YDF delegation learned about the club’s social projects. “It’s thrilling how the fans and the club work hand in hand. The Union fans even built the stadium by themselves. It is this passion for football which builds the links with YDF”, Gerald Guskowski summed up. The visit to Germany ended with the YDF team members and Vernie Petersen watching the friendly match between Germany and South Africa in the Leverkusen arena.
Creating a frenzy

YDF launches its activities in Namibia

Windhoek, 18 September 2009. The Youth Development through Football (YDF) project in Namibia kicked off its activities with a big launch event in Windhoek’s township of Katutura. The event took place at the Soccer House of the Namibian Football Association (NFA) and included a mix of football, music and fashion. Namibia is one of the partner countries of YDF. The project works in cooperation with the Namibian Football Association (NFA), the Goethe Centre in Windhoek and the GTZ-Office in Namibia. The YDF programme is implemented by NFA. It focuses on life skills education for young football players, on the implementation of youth leagues and on the coaching of teachers.

Ahead of the launch event motivational workshops took place. They addressed topics such as HIV/AIDS and promoted the idea of youth development through football. “The response of the children who attended the workshops was overwhelming. They were really grateful that finally something was being done for them. This is important, as we are currently facing an increasing number of suicides among teenagers, especially in the northern parts of the country. These areas are sparsely populated, few activities are offered for youngsters and many teenagers feel alone with regard to their problems and suffer from a lack of prospects. During the workshops the young people opened up about their problems and concerns“, Isack Hamata described his experience as a workshop facilitator.

YDF Namibia didn’t stop there. Recognizing the needs of the youth to be heard, they set up a crisis hotline. Children can call ‘2047’ and get advice and support from volunteers working with the project. They approached artists and musicians to contribute to the programme and started to work with media all over the country to popularize it. “The involvement of our local YDF ambassadors is incredible. They spend weekends driving together through Namibia to hold workshops, they sit together at night and come up with new ideas, they give interviews and they have created a spreading frenzy for the project“, explained Christiane Schulte, Director of the Goethe Centre Namibia.

The frenzy was visible during the launch event. ‘Gazza’ - one of the best selling musicians in Namibia and a passionate football fan himself, produced the official YDF theme song called “Free”, performed together with singer Tequila. The first public performance of the song, which was very well received, was just one of the highlights of the opening event. Other artists such as ‘Streetkidz’ combined the passion for football and music and kept the more than 500 children who attended entertained. Local designers who created a YDF related fashion line showcased their products with a fashion show, and the Under-17 national team showed off their football skills on the pitch. Guests such as Matthias Hansen, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy in Namibia, Agnes Tjongarero, President of the Olympic Committee, Barry Rukoro, Secretary General of NFA and Rusten Mogane, Chief Administrator of the Sport Commission applauded and pledged to provide further assistance.

YDF project manager Gerald Guskowski was more than happy about the results of the cooperation: “The excitement during the launch event and even leading up to it was incredible. While I was attending the Namibian TV show ‘Soccer Pitch’ to talk about YDF, children were calling in to ask when we would be in their province and how they could get involved.”

The current activities of YDF in Namibia will run until the end of December. “In November we will hold a planning workshop on how to proceed in 2010 “ YDF team member Christiane Frische explained the way forward. “In the long run we plan to establish our toolkit in Namibia. In the meantime we will be holding more motivational workshops all over the country.”
Deep in the heart of Alex

Play Soccer South Africa and YDF offer a football programme in Joburg’s biggest township

Johannesburg, 21 September 2009. Every Monday and Thursday afternoon some 250 children from all over Jo’burg’s Alexandra township make their way to the sports grounds on 13th Avenue. It is here, in the heart of the township, that the Youth Development through Football project (YDF) and the non-governmental organization Play Soccer offer a year-long football programme for children aged between 4 and 14.

The programme started in August and is based on weekly sessions which focus on soccer skills, health development and life skills. “These life skills are conveyed in the form of ‘learning circle’ activities and also take place on the football pitch. They include topics such as the prevention of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, immunization, clean water and hygiene, as only healthy bodies make strong players”, Sibu Sibaca, Programme Director of Play Soccer South Africa, explains the holistic approach of the training sessions.

Play Soccer is an experienced non-governmental organization which started its work in South Africa in 2003. It is active in five other African countries and runs the same weekly football programme in eight different locations in Gauteng. Play Soccer has already partnered with YDF for coaching workshops in Ghana and Zambia. With the implementation of the programme in Alexandra the organization has broken new ground, Sibu recounts: “When it comes to community work and football projects everyone goes to Soweto. Alex has been sort of left out. That’s why we came here. It is a challenging community, highly populated and very dynamic.”

Before the programme kicked off, Play Soccer had selected children from different schools and orphanages to participate. They approached teenagers to volunteer and brought in experienced helpers from the Gauteng sites to assist during the first weeks. The positive feedback from the parents who came to drop off their children at the site and the increasing number of participants proved that Play Soccer was right about their decision for Alex. “The programme was initially designed for 150 children. After the first session more than 500 children showed up. The selected children who had been chosen just brought their siblings or friends along. Some came because they knew that we offered a snack at the end of each session. Others joined in because they felt that they belonged somewhere for the first time,” explained Sibu. She and her colleagues haven’t had the heart to turn the children away. Instead they split the participants and volunteers into two groups, and are now offering two sessions per week.

The programme will be phased out next year. From October onwards the teams will take part in tournaments. Due to the good response and the growing demand for more activities there is discussion as to the opening up of another site in Alexandra.

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Children gather for a training session on the sports ground in Alexandra.

© GTZ/YDF

Breaking new ground in Alex: Olaf Handloegten, YDF Deputy Project Manager, and Sibu Sibaca, Programme Director of Play Soccer South Africa.

© GTZ/YDF
YDF supports football tournament in Zambia

1000 spectators participated in the event

Lusaka, 26 September 2009. The Youth Development through Football (YDF) project and its partners in Zambia jointly organised a football tournament in Lusaka’s Kanyama township. The National Water Supply and Sanitation Council, the Devolution Trust Fund, the Education through Sport Foundation, and the Breakthrough Sports Academy all took part in the event that focused on HIV/AIDS and aimed to raise awareness about the disease. Approximately 1000 children and spectators participated in the event, which included football matches and activities on the side such as educational games, cultural dances and plays.

YDF team member Christiane Frische describes this highlight for the township: ‘The event kicked off with a 20-minute march towards the sports fields. The participating teams carried banners displaying HIV/AIDS messages of their own choice and the Zambian Army Brass Band played along. This created quite an atmosphere!’ The new German ambassador to Zambia, His Excellency Frank Meyke, acknowledged the commitment of all the partners: ‘We cannot praise these initiatives highly enough and should be proud of our Zambian and fellow German countrymen who give of their time, authority and energy to help and support those in need.’

Zambia features significantly in the work carried out by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), or German technical cooperation, in Africa. GTZ and its predecessor have been active in the country since 1966 on behalf of the (German) Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Current areas of cooperation are water, good governance and decentralisation. ‘We want to set up football youth leagues and use our partnership with the National Water Supply and Sanitation Council to implement our toolkit and relate it to topics that are of particular importance to Zambia - water hygiene and HIV/AIDS, for example’, commented Christiane Frische, outlining the way forward.