Editorial by Bernd Appelt, Multisectoral HIV Prevention Program Manager, GIZ

Dear Partners and Friends of YDF,

It is well known that sport and health are closely related - a fact that is sometimes difficult to believe when looking at the injuries many professional or amateur athletes and recreational sportspeople sustain. In general, exercising our bodies regularly is an important prerequisite for mastering the physical challenges of life and ensuring that we give ourselves the best chance of living in good physical shape for as long as possible.

Besides the direct impact of regular exercise on physical fitness and well-being, sport – particularly team sport – teaches social skills that help us master the social challenges life presents us with and in so doing, enjoy our lives. Acquiring confidence and self-esteem, learning group behaviour, exercising self-discipline, adhering to rules, deriving enjoyment from life and assimilating opportunities, challenges and risks - all are important skills which are developed, honed and fine-tuned during training sessions, competitions and tournaments. Consequently, it does not matter if a team has a realistic chance of winning a competition or is simply participating to have fun. And regardless of whether a person is exercising in a team, guided by a technically and socially skilled coach, or preparing for a tournament – be it the Soccer World Cup, the local school football competition or the Oktoberfest football tournament - what is important is that the person is exercising and participating.

Amazingly, these health benefits are also true for some infectious diseases. Regular exercise boosts our immune system and thus protects us better against ordinary viral infections like various strains of the flu and coughs. For most people, this is common knowledge; that sport, and in particular team sport, protects against HIV-infection is not, however. That said, how can the transmission of a viral, sexually transmitted disease be prevented through sport and team sport?

The answer becomes apparent when you look at the epidemiology and understand the underlying biomedical and social factors driving the epidemic. We know that the Human Immunodeficiency Virus is transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse. The biomedical events are well understood and the barrier methods of protecting against and preventing HIV-infection are simple, easy and effective (we are referring here to the male and female condom and to male medical circumcision). The terms and conditions under which sexual intercourse takes place, however, are negotiated between at least two partners, and we sometimes forget that sexual intercourse is not only a mechanical act, but also involves emotions and feelings like love and passion. Where do young people learn about the facts and complex interrelations? How do we influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of young people during very private moments?

Young people cannot ask their parents at home how to practise safe sex. They are not taught at school how to use a condom, even though it is legal for young girls to go to hospital for an abortion from the age of twelve onwards. Instead, they ask their peers, who are as ill informed as they are, or they look for answers on the Internet. Although it is true that the Internet contains all the right information, it also provides a great deal of incorrect guidance and often it is these websites that are more appealing and easier to find. The question therefore remains: who can give additional guidance to young adolescents? Football coaches can play a very crucial role in this context, but in order to be able to do this they need to be empowered. The GIZ-supported Youth Development through Football project has done exactly that with the development of their new training module for HIV prevention through football.

Team sport in general and football in particular strengthens young people’s social skills and prepares them for the challenges in life, including how to manage their social risks if they become infected with HIV. If in future, coaches across the country are empowered to use their positions as elders and role models in their social interaction with adolescent youths in order to increase the youths’ knowledge about HIV, love and sexuality, address stigmas and discrimination around HIV and AIDS, and encourage behavioural change to test and love sport and life, another piece of the complicated jigsaw puzzle of HIV-prevention in South Africa will have been found and put in place.
YDF Manual for Violence Prevention: available for download

First product in a series of short modules now accessible online

 Pretoria, 16 August 2011. The recently published ‘YDF Manual for Violence Prevention’ can now be downloaded from the website section Tools we offer. Although the foundation module – the ‘YDF Manual for Coaches’ – does include an initial introduction to the complex topic of violence prevention, the ‘YDF Manual for Violence Prevention’ takes the topic further by building on the different forms of action that are possible and elaborating in detail on tips for taking action. It is the first in a series of short modules which focus on approaching specific challenges by using football.

Apart from violence prevention, upcoming manuals will deal with topics such as HIV/AIDS, gender equality and the environment.
Orange Farm, 8 September 2011. Dona’s Mates hosted another successful Youth Development through Football Coaches workshop at Tshepana Primary School from 6 September to 8 September 2011. Twenty eight coaches from across Gauteng Province attended the workshop.

The majority of the coaches came from the Sedibeng region and out of the twenty eight coaches, ten were female. Some of the coaches came from different communities and some of them were based in schools and are working as school sport assistants, others as school sport activity coordinators.

The aim of the YDF Toolkit workshops that Dona’s Mates is conducting is to teach life skills through football. Some of the disciplines that are taught are teamwork, tolerance, trust, fair play, violence prevention, responsibility, HIV/AIDS awareness, life skills, to mention but a few and all there are taught using football as a tool. Dona’s Mates director James “Maradona” Shabangu says that they ensure that the participants are enjoying themselves, while educational messages are conveyed.

"We wish to thank YDF/GIZ for their undivided support as we have now reached over 140 grassroots and semi-professional coaches through this programme. Dona’s Mates are still continuing with the workshops and others will be coordinated in the near future," he concludes.
Europeans hold us accountable for the money spent in Africa. The YDF programme is a strong advocate for aid as it has a high impact on young people, I was impressed to see the skills and values they learn through sport. This is crucial as the youth will be the driver of development in South Africa.'
First YDF Workshop for Instructors on Violence Prevention

Johannesburg, 29 September 2011. The period between 26 and 29 September saw the first group of YDF instructors trained on violence prevention in Johannesburg through the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project. The 'YDF Manual for Violence Prevention', published in April 2011 as the first short module based on the YDF Toolkit, forms a crucial pillar in the future of German-South African cooperation for youth development. YDF has been called upon to play a vital role in this for its sister project, the Youth Development against Violence through Sport (YDVS). The first two phases of YDVS – a joint project of the Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) and the German Development Bank (KfW) – envisaged the construction or upgrading of sporting facilities at community level, as well as the provision of basic football equipment to children and youth in the townships and rural areas around South Africa. Its third phase encompasses the implementation of life-skills training and education, particularly violence-prevention activities on the constructed facilities. YDF strongly supports YDVS and has therefore concentrated its attention on developing the YDF Manual for Violence Prevention.

An additional group of 20 YDF instructors will be trained on violence prevention in November 2011.
YDF Manual for HIV Prevention through Football launched and published!

Port Elizabeth, 11 October 2011. After piloting the ‘YDF Manual for HIV Prevention’ earlier this year, YDF trained the first group of 15 YDF instructors from 9 to 11 October on how to integrate education sessions on HIV prevention into football exercises.

The workshop participants, previously trained as basic YDF instructors, witnessed the launch of the new YDF Manual for HIV Prevention in Port Elizabeth, where a Public Private Partnership (PPP) between YDF and Volkswagen was formed in 2010 to equip young boys and girls of the Eastern Cape Province with life skills, mainly focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention through football.

With the YDF Manual for HIV Prevention having now been printed and published, and the first ‘YDF Coach Workshop on HIV Prevention’ scheduled to take place at the end of October in the Free State, all the necessary requirements to implement the new tool are in place.

A second workshop on HIV Prevention through Football is planned for January 2012 and will target an additional 15 YDF instructors on facilitating workshops for coaches interested in using football to fight the epidemic.

The YDF Manual for HIV Prevention will soon be available for download on the YDF website.
'What boys can do, girls can do too!'  

Mabopane, 13 October 2011. October 2011 saw a delegation of ten young journalists from Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Chad, Uganda, Sierra Leone and South Africa visit YDF partner Lesedi la Batho, a community centre whose Setswana name means ‘light to the people’, in Mabopane. In 2010 YDF welcomed, for the very first time, journalists participating in the two-week training workshop offered by the Pan-African Parliament and supported by GIZ’s Support to Pan-African Institutions (SPAI) project. With YDF becoming something of an institution, the visit to the GIZ project offered the young African journalists the opportunity to see a lively example of the cooperation between the European Union and Africa.

Although this time only two (South African) journalists hailed from a country where YDF is being implemented, the journalists’ interest in the project was huge given that the youth represents an often-neglected asset in many African countries. After watching a girls’ football game, won 2-0 by the hosting team of Pelatona High School, they encouraged the young girls to keep on showing what they are capable of. ‘Remember, whatever boys can do, girls can do too!’ was the central message conveyed by Tshegofatso Maake, a young South African journalist who grew up just a few blocks away from Pelatona High School, and who was very excited about the chances children from his area are getting through Lesedi la Batho and YDF.

Photo: © GIZ/YDF
A football coach from Lesedi la Batho explaining the impact of YDF on her soccer players.

Photo: © GIZ/YDF
Chrisna Groenewald, head of Lesedi la Batho, with female participants.

Photo: © GIZ/YDF
South African soccer players and a young journalist from Egypt posing for a team photo.
YDF Toolkit on Football and Life Skills under the patronage of UNESCO

Paris, 17 October 2011. The formulation of sport-for-development methodologies and tools is one of the most crucial cornerstones of the Youth Development through Football (YDF) project. Through expertise and years of committed work, YDF - and in particular one of the project’s former employees, Henning Schick - created what is today known as the ‘YDF Toolkit on Football and Life Skills’.

The YDF Toolkit comprises several manuals: the YDF Manual for Instructors is aimed at capacitating instructors to train football coaches and social workers in the use of football as an educational tool. The YDF Manual for Coaches is a handbook that coaches can use to implement training sessions with young people and children, and is YDF’s main tool for achieving its youth-development objectives. These two basic manuals form the foundation of more specific short modules: the YDF Manual for Violence Prevention, the YDF Manual for HIV Prevention and the YDF Manual for Environmental Awareness.

After continuously strengthening its ties with UN agencies, YDF is proud to announce that UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova has granted UNESCO patronage to the YDF Toolkit on Football and Life Skills. This patronage represents a huge leap forward, as it endorses the quality and relevance of the YDF Toolkit and creates additional opportunities for close cooperation between YDF and UNESCO.
YDF Manual for Environmental Awareness published

Pretoria, 28 October 2011. The Youth Development through Football (YDF) project has published the ‘YDF Manual for Environmental Awareness,’ another short module in the YDF Toolkit that focuses on a specific topic. This manual shows how the potential of football can be used to raise environmental awareness and contribute to a healthy environment.

What appears at first glance to be an extremely difficult notion is presented in the manual in a manner that is both understandable and extremely vivid. The purpose of the manual is to advise and assist coaches - even those with limited experience in environmental issues - with taking important steps towards a healthier environment.

The first step is to learn about the responsibilities of a coach and how important a coach’s role can be in raising awareness about environmental protection. Through the manual, coaches are equipped with an understanding of environmental matters and the challenges our environment faces today. In particular, it focuses on climate change and global warming as major threats to the environment.

Moreover, the importance of the three elements of air, water and soil and the concept of biodiversity are introduced and highlighted. The topic of their importance to our everyday life is raised, and practical ideas given on how to use the popularity and potential of football for environmental awareness.

There are many ways in which we can all contribute to protecting our environment through both individual activities and actions taken by the football team and community. In light of this, the YDF Manual for Environmental Awareness introduces strategies to address environmental threats and provides encouragement to take action.

All the necessary requirements to implement our new tool are in place. The first workshop on Environmental Awareness through Football will be held in November in Durban. YDF is also pleased to announce that the official launch of the YDF Manual for Environmental Awareness is scheduled to take place during a side event of COP 17 on 5 December 2011. COP (Conference of the Parties) is an annual summit where the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), an international environmental treaty informally known as the Earth Summit, assess the progress made in dealing with climate change. The 17th edition of the summit is to be hosted in Durban, South Africa, from 28 November to 9 December 2011. YDF is proud to be using this highly relevant event as an opportunity to showcase its innovative approach of using football for environmental awareness.
SAHSS takes part in 2011 Homeless World Cup in Paris

From the SSCN Western Cape Newsletter - August 2011

Paris, 28 August 2011. After months of hard work, the 2011 Homeless World Cup is finally, and successfully, in the books. The much-anticipated 2011 Homeless World Cup was held in Paris from 21-28 August. South Africa put together a solid showing at the tournament, winning 6 of their 12 games en route to a 4th place finish in the City Cup.

The long process leading up to this point began when more than 70 players were selected to participate in South African Homeless Street Soccer’s program in Cape Town. The players were invited through partner organizations that work with homeless people as well as youth from informal settlements.

Although only eight young men were selected to the World Cup squad, everyone involved will look at the build up to the World Cup as a positive experience. Even those who did not make the final eight-man team were able to participate in a training camp that focused on life skills, physical training, teamwork and community assistance.

The South African team was well prepared for competition thanks in part to a training session put on by Nike and the former Bafana Bafana striker and current Head of Development for the Orlando Pirates, Tebogo Moloi.

The South African Homeless Street Soccer team jetted off to Paris on 18 August. The team enjoyed some sightseeing before the competition began, but when the first whistle blew, it was all about competing for SAHSS.

The team got off to a hot start in the tournament, propelling them to six total wins. The South African side earned victories over Sweden, Cameroon, Belgium, Austria, the United States, and the Czech Republic during the eight-day tournament, of which Scotland was ultimately named champion.

Now that the 2011 Homeless World Cup has come to a close, all of the players will leave the program having benefited from the many hours of training they received. The team has returned home safely from their journey and would like to thank everyone who showed support for SAHSS throughout the entire 2011 Homeless World Cup process.

More information: www.sscn-sa.ning.com