



US YOUTH SOCCER
WORKSHOP
LOS ANGELES • 2017

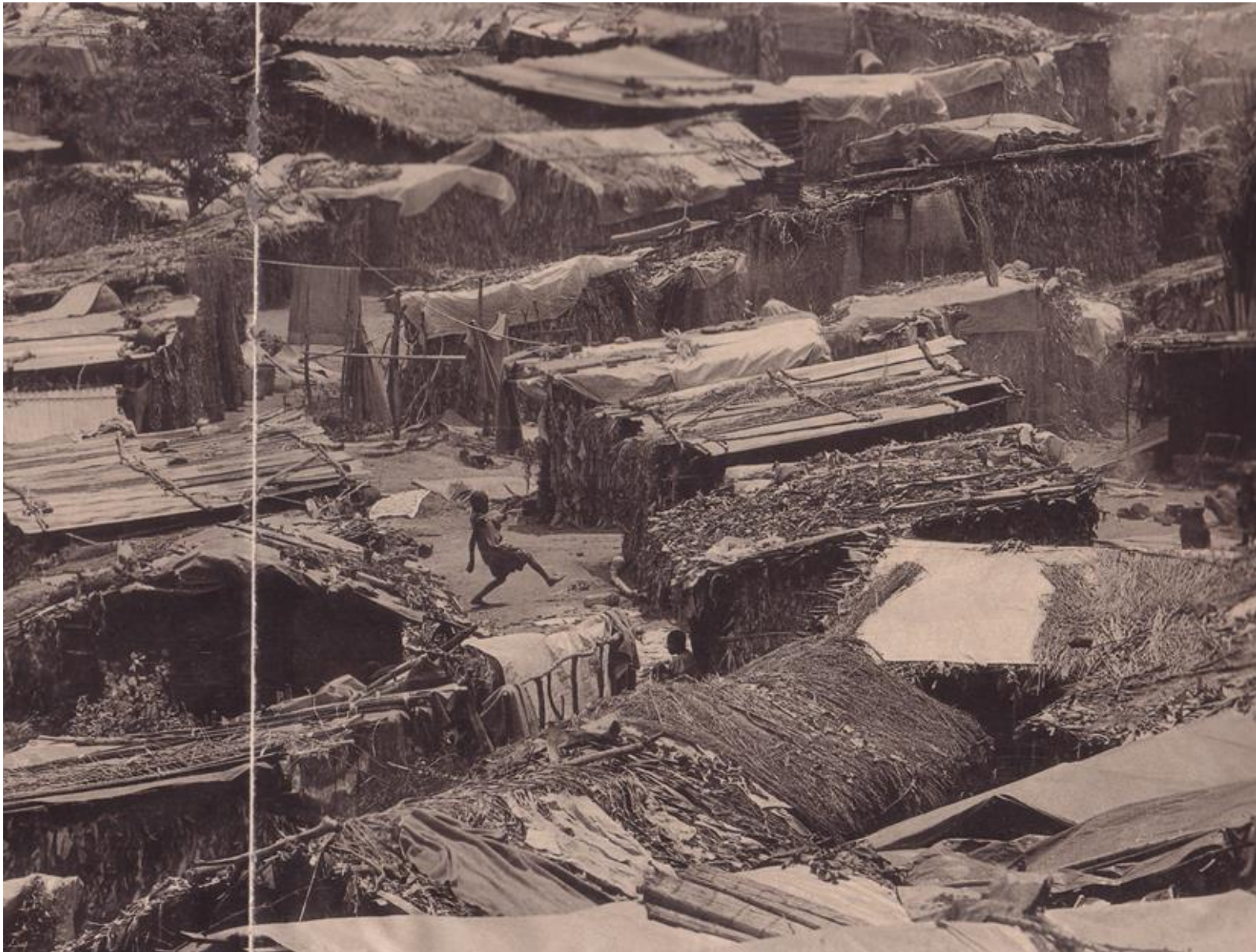
Soccer for Social Change



Official Art Print
JAMES RIZZI
A Fun Time To Be A Fan 1995

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LOOK AFTER YOURSELF
LOOK AFTER ONE ANOTHER

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*Creating a healthier
and safer world for
children through
the power of sport
and play*

**When Kids
Play**

featured links

**Right To Play
In the News**

Ghana hosts conference
on sports development



Today, around the globe, international humanitarian organization Right To Play is using sport and play programs to improve health, teach life skills and foster peace for children affected by war, poverty and disease.

About Right To Play

Right To Play uses specially-designed sport and play programmes to improve health, build life skills, and foster peace for children and communities affected by war, poverty, disease. Working in both the humanitarian and development contexts, Right To Play has projects in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Right To Play is a global-scale implementer of Sport for Development and Peace

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Movement**
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Sports [according to Right to Play]...

“put children on a positive path to healthy development...
teach important values and life skills including self confidence, teamwork,
communication, inclusion, discipline, respect and fair play....
has psychological benefits such as reducing depression and improving concentration...
improve health and well being, extend life expectancy and reduce the likelihood of
several non-communicable diseases including heart disease...
improves a child's ability to learn, increases concentration, attendance and overall
achievement...
contribute to the economic development of communities and nations...
provides us with a powerful tool for reaching people and communicating important
messages -- including messages of health and peace...
brings people together and has the potential to cross boundaries and open new
dialogue. Many of the core values of sport parallel those necessary for peace, such
as respect, justice and honesty...”

Is this realistic? How does it jibe with other perspectives on sports?

Sports (including soccer) are *not* an automatic social good...

SPORTS



SUCK!



WELCOME SPORTS HATERS!

Not everyone is a brain-dead sports fan. There are *millions* of us who can't stand professional sports or loud, ignorant sports fans.

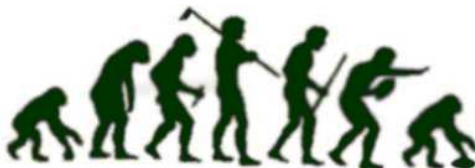
You Are Not Alone!

Most people really aren't interested in sports! We receive hundreds of [letters](#) from people all over the world who can't understand the mass hysteria or sheep-like behavior of sports fans. If you don't like sports, you will enjoy these letters of support.

Free Our Schools!

We believe [schools](#) should be sanctuaries of learning and education, not state-sponsored gymnasiums! Sports teams are not required fixtures at school! They have nothing to do with learning! Remove mandatory physical education and sports teams

We are not unreasonable or intolerant people. We are your neighbors and friends and relatives. We are completely normal people who live completely ordinary lives except for one thing --we cannot understand the attraction or value of sports. Don't misunderstand us -we believe in fitness and staying healthy. There's nothing wrong with a neighborhood softball game or shooting hoops in the driveway. But we think there *is* something wrong when people base their lives on the outcome of a game. We think there *is* something wrong when grown men collect baseball cards and are willing to pay for the opportunity to watch other people play and have fun. We think there's something wrong when people think we're unmanly or not a true patriot because we don't follow sports! And we especially think there's something wrong when our favorite show is interrupted for a **&@!^%\$#@!!* sporting event!!! This site is dedicated to free-thinking people everywhere who have enough self-assurance to resist the influence of the common herd.



Evolution takes a turn for the worse

What does participation in sports teach your child?

- That you're either a winner or a loser
- That whoever yells the loudest is the person to listen to
- That whoever is strongest is the leader of the group
- That being a loud-mouthed bully will increase your stature much more than being quiet and supportive.
- That rude and boastful behavior is acceptable



What about the growing
“Sports for Social Change” /
“Sports for Development and
Peace” movement?



SPORTS SAVES THE WORLD

In grassroots programs involving tens of thousands of participants around the globe, visionaries are using athletics to tackle the most pressing problems of the developing world—from AIDS in Africa to violence in Rio. Can such projects make a lasting difference, or is the dream of salvation through sports too grandiose? SI senior writer **Alexander Wolff** set off on a yearlong journey to find the answer

Photograph by FABIO SEIXO



BLOOD INTO GOLD
Castillo turned to boxing to avenge his father's murder, but Lucha Plata Paz charmed his anger into discipline and purpose. His slow-motion fight with a former champion and a London 2012 hopeful.



The Homeless World Cup as a Soccer Example...

The emotional appeal is great;
the evidence is mixed...

OUR MISSION & VISION

The Homeless World Cup is a unique, pioneering social movement which uses football to inspire homeless people to change their own lives.

We envision a world where anyone and everyone who is or becomes homeless can gain access to one of our National Partners' transformative programmes. Our mission is to inspire homeless people to change their lives through the power of football.

We operate through a network of more than 70 [National Partners](#) to support football programmes and social enterprise development. We provide a focus for—and celebration of—their year-round activity by organising and delivering an annual, world-class, international football tournament for national teams of homeless men and women.

To learn more about the problem of homelessness around the world, browse our [global homelessness statistics](#) page.

The Homeless World Cup Foundation is a charity registered in Scotland. Our Charity Number is SC037091.



[DONATE TO THE HOMELESS WORLD CUP >](#)



(Re)engaging marginalized groups through sport: The Homeless World Cup

Emma Sherry
La Trobe University, Australia

Abstract

Marginalized groups, such as those experiencing homelessness, are largely excluded from participation in, and the benefits provided by, sport programs and events. This study uses the case of the 'Street Socceroos', the Australian Homeless World Cup team, to argue that participation in sport can provide beneficial outcomes for participants, and through a process of (re)engagement, develop social capital. Drawing on interviews and observations with team members before and after the Homeless World Cup, this study found both intrinsic benefits of sport participation, and broader social capital outcomes. Although sport participation alone cannot account for these beneficial outcomes, this study demonstrates the role that sport programs can play in the (re-)engagement of marginalized people within the broader community.

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Previous research has identified the importance of social capital in contributing to a sense of community solidarity (DeGraaf and Jordan, 2003). Some respondents indicated that their participation as a member of the Street Socceroos Cape Town HWC team helped to develop a sense of community, and for some, a sense of family. This sense of community and shared experience provided a source of both support and reflection.

I enjoyed it thoroughly and it gave me the sense that I wasn't the only one experiencing hardship . . . I could see that others were experiencing predicaments the same as mine but were willing to change their life too. (Interview with Terence)

This finding concurs with that of Spaaij (2009), who noted that the friendships between participants of sport programs such as these provide social and moral support in times of hardship.

Through regular contact with team members and support workers, the participants were able to link into a community that was able to provide an interface for them to share their experiences, build relationships, or seek help.

It gives us confidence that we are one people and that just 'cause we're homeless, [it] doesn't mean we're helpless. (Interview with Brad)

The changes undergone by participants through their experience in the HWC have been assimilated and continue to inform their decisions as they progress through their daily lives. These changes have led to incremental transformations in their personal situation, resulting in some tangible outcomes for participants, including access to stable housing, access to education and training programs, employment and physical health benefits.

For some, selection into the HWC team was confusing and confronting; they were not confident of why they were chosen for this opportunity. However, after participating in this sport event, the participants reported that their sense of self had altered and they wanted to create a legacy of their own. They proposed to create this legacy by passing on their experience to others who need help, and through a sense of obligation to the CSS program. One example of this is demonstrated by the quote below:

. . . so after the trip I want to study community development because I want to bring the community together . . . because of my background I know that a lot of young teenagers have problems like drugs, gambling, homelessness. If I can get into this course, then I'm going to help the community . . . (Interview with Terence)

Football's coming home: A critical evaluation of the Homeless World Cup as an intervention to combat social exclusion

Jonathan Magee
University of Central Lancashire, UK

Ruth Jeanes
Monash University, Australia

Abstract

A key feature of government policy in the last 30 years is the use of sport programmes as a vehicle for social change aiming to benefit and improve the lives of marginalized and vulnerable members of society. Sports policy-makers and practitioners have sought to use the 'power of sport' through sport-based intervention programmes to tackle key social issues. The Homeless World Cup is an example of this, comprising a football tournament held annually since 2003 aiming to re-engage marginalized, vulnerable and socially excluded homeless people. This article focuses on a group of young male homeless players from a United Kingdom squad that attended the inaugural Homeless World Cup. Drawing upon observations and interview material, the findings centre on the benefits of engagement in the programme but also the challenges and difficulties specific to the circumstances surrounding this group of players. The article concludes with a preliminary assessment of the appropriateness of the HWC as a mechanism for assisting homeless people to overcome the multi-faceted and complex issues they face.

Another player, who started the tournament as the goalkeeper was publicly humiliated during the first two games that the team lost 1–10 and 0–9. The commentator and crowd enjoyed the opponents' unnecessary goading of this player by seeking to score spectacular goals but it humiliated the player to the point that he requested to have no further part of the tournament. The player was upset and angry at both the co-author and the social workers for placing him in the situation and during the interview towards the end of the tournament, he reflected on this incident:

Here is what I thought. I was like, Why am I doing this? To experience that? I was made a fool. This is supposed to be a good thing, making me feel better about myself, so I can sort myself out. Well it isn't. It's making me feel like crap. I thought I'd been doing really well in practice but then the teams here are like professionals, you see how they back-heeled past me and laughed. It was just humiliating and I did not want to put myself through that again. At the time I blamed you and the social workers for that.

The player was later encouraged to remain in the squad but as an outfield player. Again it was evident that for some players the competitive nature of the tournament was overly stressful and inherently difficult for them.

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The squad ultimately responded to the difficulties they were facing through 'street' coping mechanisms of withdrawing from interaction with anyone other than themselves and began drinking large quantities of alcohol each night, ignoring repeated requests not to do so from the social workers and co-author. The intensity of sharing a room and the impact of their defeats encouraged several players to start drinking excessively, which quickly broke the resolve of other players attempting not to drink and their aim 'not to let the team down' dissolved as the tournament progressed, culminating in a 30-hour long drinking binge at the end of the tournament.

Of the Graz 2003 HWC, all players reflected that despite the challenges throughout the tournament they had enjoyed being in a different country and away from some of the reality of their day-to-day lives for a short period. Rookwood and Palmer (2011: 195) question whether football programmes with development objectives are 'just an opportunity to put on-hold life's troubles' rather than fostering significant change for the participants. In this context, it is questionable for this squad whether their time at the HWC offered that much escape from the wider challenges they faced in their lives but it was at least a change of routine for a short period of time:

Well it's been some time away I suppose, not having to deal with all the day to day stuff, seeing this person or that person about getting support, then just drifting about and sitting and drinking that's mostly how I spend my days so this has been different . . . spending time with the boys has been good, although it's been a bit much at times . . . but I guess it's back to reality now.

The general consensus for this squad was that whilst the preparation programme had been beneficial the tournament itself had done little to alter their situation, confirming their concerns that they were not capable of surviving within mainstream society and reinforcing the negative views they already held of themselves as worthless and failures.

The complications of a ball, a shirt, and good intentions...

Indianapolis Colts championship gear to get new life -- in Haiti

By Sarah Talalay
February 8, 2010 06:23 PM



T-shirts, caps and towels touting the Indianapolis Colts as Super Bowl XLIV champions were boxed up and shipped Tuesday to a distribution center near Pittsburgh where they will be sorted for eventual delivery to Haiti.

There was a moment Sunday night, when it became clear in the closing minutes of the game that the New Orleans Saints would be champions, the Colts' gear was returned to the "secret room" in the bowels of the stadium. The four bags of Saints gear was rushed onto the field at the end of the game and shared with victorious Saints players.

For years, the league would destroy the losers' items after the game.

"We would literally incinerate it or shred it," said David Krichavsky, NFL director of community affairs. "Then it dawned on us, it probably wasn't the best use because others around the world could use it."

The NFL now designates the losers' product for a new assignment. International relief organization World Vision has been sending the gear to needy populations in developing countries since 1994. Product is also collected from the retailers, such as Sports Authority, which order it to have on hand once the game is won.



World Vision typically receives about \$2 million in donated NFL apparel from the Super Bowl and conference championship games, organization spokeswoman Karen Kartes said.

This year, the league and World Vision had chosen

Haiti -- the poorest nation in the western hemisphere -- before the Jan. 12 earthquake rocked the country. In the next few months, as the post-earthquake needs in Haiti grow, the critical nature of shirts and caps will make their way

One Million Soccer Balls! Dream Balls for Africa!

GLOBAL PUBLIC SERVICE MARKETING FOR THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NEED IN AFRICA

One Million Dream Balls for Africa is a public service program where Hyundai Motor Company, in celebration of the 2010 World Cup South Africa, is sending Soccer balls to children and youth in need who have made soccer the dream and hope of their life. One ball will be sent for every Hyundai sold, or every member of this site joined with the goal one million soccer balls. Even just one ball can bring tremendous hope to children. We hope all those who love Hyundai cars participate.



Balls?

Fifa's scheme goes flat

The World Cup bidding race at Fifa is apparently not the only area of its operations that is contaminated: the World Cup legacy is also said to be a toxifying influence. According to *Alive & Kicking*, a sports-and-education charitable enterprise that focuses on Africa, the programme set up by Fifa and its sponsor Hyundai to donate 1m footballs to Africa is wrong from every point of view. "On a practical level the balls being distributed are made of plastic, which will soon deteriorate in the dry African conditions," said *Alive & Kicking*. "Apart from leaving millions of children with a useless burst ball within days, *Alive & Kicking* [estimate] the environmental impact of 1m plastic footballs being dumped on the continent ... will amount to 450 tons of plastic littering the landscape." And there is more. "From a development perspective, the ball dump does nothing to encourage local enterprise and actually undermines efforts to boost hard-hit sub-Saharan economies," it said. Fifa did not respond to a request for comment.

ONE WORLD FUTBOL PROJECT

Home About the Ball Buy Now Blog



A Child's Right to Play

Posted by Dustin Farivar on 01/28/13

It was about this time two years ago when I began preparing for my second *Semester at Sea* voyage. I had sailed once before in the summer of 2009 as a student, and was invited to be on staff for the spring of 2011. A journey like *Semester at Sea* is unrivaled – from the people you meet, communities you visit, and stories you are able to share. Between organizing all my clothes and luggage, finalizing my doctor appointments, and anxiously waiting the approval of my visas, I was introduced to One World Futbol Project.

I fell in love with One World Futbol Project and their vision recognizing a child's right to play. Somehow their story seemed reminiscent to me. It reminded me of Kevin Carroll, a change maker and catalyst who I had spent some time with in college. Kevin attributed his success in life to the power of a red rubber ball and tells his story of how learning to play sports saved his life. Kevin now trades new balls for tattered and make shift balls children were playing with in some of the most underserved communities around the world. He has made it his mission to spread the power of play around the world and that message rang true through the One World Futbol. It just so happens that Kevin is now on the Advisory Board of One World Futbol Project. This memory of Kevin instantly made me recognize the power that a virtually-indestructible ball would have on these communities we would be visiting on our voyage.

We arranged for 36 soccer balls to be sent to the *MV Explorer*, and I carried the One World Futbol balls around, telling their story, which very quickly became a part of my story. On our voyage we were taking more than 600 college students around the world to visit 14 countries as we engaged in an unrivaled learning experience. We visited the historic sites we read about in books and the families in often forgotten corners of the earth. The balls came with us as a way to break down barriers and provide a bit of lasting good after we had left our volunteer projects and homestays.

My favorite homestay was in South Africa – I remember arriving in a small village outside of Cape Town and seeing the kids in the neighborhood gather around. We didn't speak the same language, we were of different ages and cultures, and yet we began to play – wrestling and jumping and embracing our surroundings. I didn't have to learn how to play with them, and I didn't have to teach them how to play.

You don't have to teach a child how to play. Have you ever thought about this? You don't need instructions, you don't need practice, you don't need anything except for someone or something to play with, or even just imagination. You just play. Growing up, I don't ever remember anyone teaching me to



Photo by Mark Collier, *Semester at Sea*, Spring 2011



Good Intentions
are not enough

Home About Services In The News

Sending sports equipment to needy children may seem like a good idea, but is it...

Posted on April 12, 2009 at 5:30 pm

Sending donated items can undermine the local economy

Recently the local news featured the story of an aid group seeking donations of slightly used soccer balls and shoes to send to children in Afghanistan. Although this sounds like a great way to get involved and help out sending donated goods can actually undermine the economic recovery of the people you are trying to assist. By importing items and then giving them away for free, instead of purchasing them locally, you out compete the local shop keepers trying to sell similar goods. They, in turn, do not purchase more these items from local manufactures and farmers. If enough goods are given away for free it can bankrupt the local businesses that are struggling to survive.

Would we allow goods that would compete with items made in the US to be shipped in and given away for free?

Let's look at this from a different angle. Suppose instead of soccer equipment being shipped by the US to Afghanistan, China, concerned about a prolonged economic downturn in the US, decides to donate fuel efficient cars to California to help the world's 6th largest economy recover. Would the US allow China to import donated cars? Think of the effect this would have not only on the car dealers in California but also to the car manufactures and parts manufacturers throughout the US. To protect our own markets the US has import restrictions and tariffs, other countries have similar regulations.

Importing goods often costs more than buying them in country

Shipping items is also very expensive. Costs that need to be considered include air or sea transport, custom fees or tariffs, and overland transportation once in country. It is often cheaper to buy the goods in country which would put money into the local economy. Shopkeepers who are struggling after years of war would welcome the business, they may then buy more soccer balls from the factory. With increased orders the factory would have more work for their staff, which may lead to increased wages with which workers could feed their families and buy soccer balls for their own children.

"I like *Alive & Kicking* because their pay is prompt and with this money I pay school fees for my sons" - Angelica, stitcher

Alive & Kicking is an African social enterprise that manufactures sports balls to provide balls for children, create jobs for adults and promote health education through sport. Based on the principle that trade will help communities in the long term, *Alive & Kicking's* workshops in Kenya, Zambia and Ghana are run as not-for-profit businesses. [What we do](#)

See footballers and celebrities supporting the charity in Africa and elsewhere. [Gallery](#)

Support our new operation, A&K Ghana, towards a sustainable and financially secure future. [Read more](#)

Where we work

Learn about [Where we work](#)

Six months in, the first balls roll out of A&K Ghana

NEWS

At the six-month stage A&K Ghana is on time and under budget, having secured a factory space and trained a dedicated and motivated team. The focus is now moving towards increasing productivity and sales.

Read the full story

Partners

See our partners

So, can sport really ‘save the world’ (including the USA)?

“Sadly, the single-minded purpose and confidence that sport instills in champions, a commendable attribute when transferred to many other settings, militates against inter-cultural sensitivity and needs-based programming in development. There is a fear that SDP simply imposes the values of the first-world middle class on the disadvantaged...” – Kidd (2008)

NEEDS ASSESSMENT IDEAS

1

WHY CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

A needs assessment is the process of collecting information about expressed or implied needs. You can try and figure these out on your own, but the best way is to seek feedback from all parties involved.

BRAINSTORMING

-  **Define the key issue(s) & player(s)**
List of some of today's biggest issues → bit.ly/S2tAxd
-  **Map community resources**
@HandsOnNetwork's worksheet → bit.ly/Pw8WqW
-  **Brainstorm project ideas**
Generate as many ideas possible (don't debate...yet)
-  **Evaluate and prioritize ideas**
Based on needs of community and collective interest
- #1 Select and focus on top idea**
You may want to consider a 2nd if multiple parties
- More brainstorming resources**
List of brainstorming games → <http://bit.ly/SYLDew>

CONDUCT A SURVEY

-  **Ask what greatest concerns are**
Open-ended. Use a diverse or representative sample
-  **Ask them to rank a list of problems**
This gets difficult to do if more than 5 items listed
- Guide to creating smart surveys**
View SurveyMonkey's guide → <http://bit.ly/PDCn99>

60-MINUTE SEARCH

-  **Divide map of area into sections**
Ideally these are small enough to thoroughly explore
-  **Groups walk or drive through areas**
Send people out in groups (keep safety in mind)
-  **Identify "hot spots" for improvement**
Mark these on a map and discuss area needs

HOLD A COMMUNITY FORUM

-  **Ask people to voice concerns**
People close to the issues should be included
-  **Write them down on whiteboard**
Also consider an anonymous method for shy people.
-  **Give each person 3-5 votes**
These can be check marks, tallies, or stickers.
-  **Everyone places votes next to issues**
Will you let them use more than 1 vote on an issue?
-  **Select top 5 issues & revote**
Everyone gets 2-3 more votes.
-  **Record results**
Take pictures and tally results for future reference.
-  **Caution: Be representative**
If you are not, concerns of majority may dominate

OTHER IDEAS

-  **Ask your legislators**
They should be aware of the greatest needs
-  **Research what others are doing?**
What are others trying to do. How? What works?
-  **Compare to favorite towns**
What is your favorite city? How is it different?
-  **Three wishes for community**
What would they want if power & \$ weren't an issue.
-  **Watch/read the news**
What stories anger you? Write these down.

CREATING A VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM A COLLABORATION BETWEEN



The importance of needs assessment and community involvement...



If you share this resource please link to <http://topnonprofits.com/needs-assessment>

topnonprofits.com handsonnetwork.org pointsoflight.org
[@vankorlaar](https://twitter.com/vankorlaar) [@HandsOnNetwork](https://twitter.com/HandsOnNetwork) [@PointsofLight](https://twitter.com/PointsofLight)



The importance of monitoring and evaluation...

THIS CHECKLIST OF PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DELIVERY QUESTIONS IS INVALUABLE FOR ANYONE PLANNING OR FUNDING SPORT FOR CHANGE



<http://www.comicrelief.com/grants/sport-for-change>

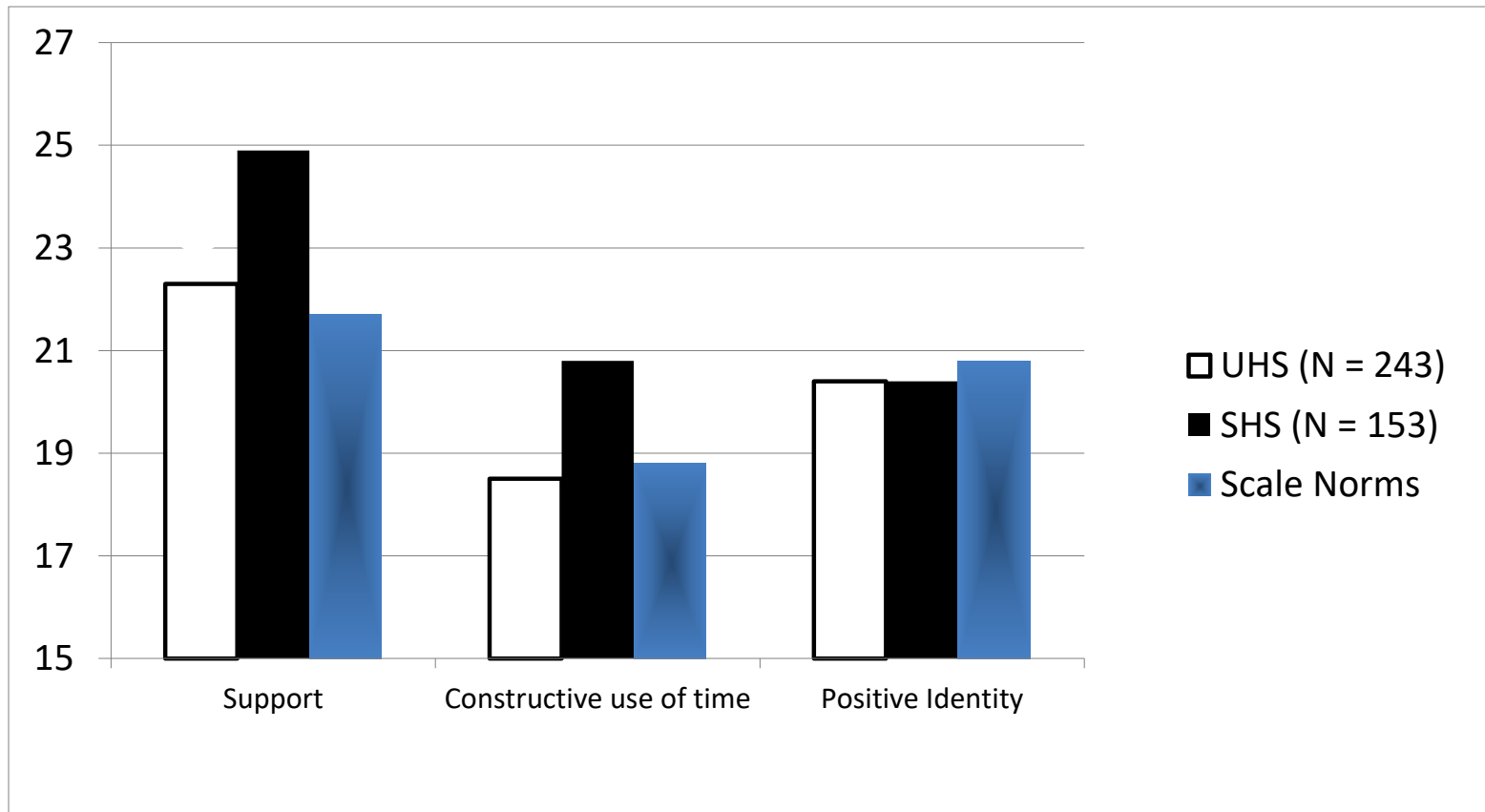


Table 2. 40 Developmental assets (Benson, 1997)

External Assets	Support (1–6)	1. Family support 2. Positive family communication 3. Other adult relationships 4. Caring neighbourhood 5. Caring school climate 6. Parent involvement in schooling	
	Empowerment (7–10)	7. Community values youth 8. Youth as resources 9. Service to others	
	Boundaries & Expectations (11–16)	10. Safety 11. Family boundaries 12. School boundaries 13. Neighbourhood boundaries 14. Adult role models 15. Positive peer influence 16. High expectations	
	Constructive Use of Time (17–20)	17. Creative activities 18. Youth programs 19. Religious community 20. Time at home	
	Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning (21–25)	21. Achievement motivation 22. School engagement 23. Homework 24. Bonding to school 25. Reading for pleasure
		Positive Values (26–31)	26. Caring 27. Equality and social justice 28. Integrity 29. Honesty 30. Responsibility 31. Restraint
		Social Competencies (32–36)	32. Planning and decision making 33. Interpersonal competence 34. Cultural competence 35. Resistance skills 36. Peaceful conflict resolution
		Positive Identity (37–40)	37. Personal power 38. Self-esteem 39. Sense of purpose 40. Positive view of personal future

The importance of thinking systemically (to target social change more than individual change)...

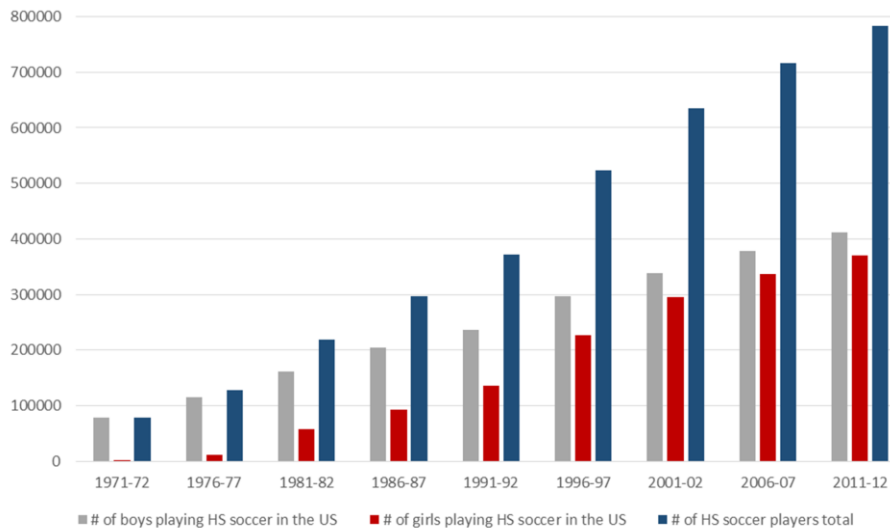
Examples of “external” and “internal” assets (Based on the Search Institute 'developmental asset profile') at a low-income urban high school (UHS) and a high-income suburban high school (SHS)



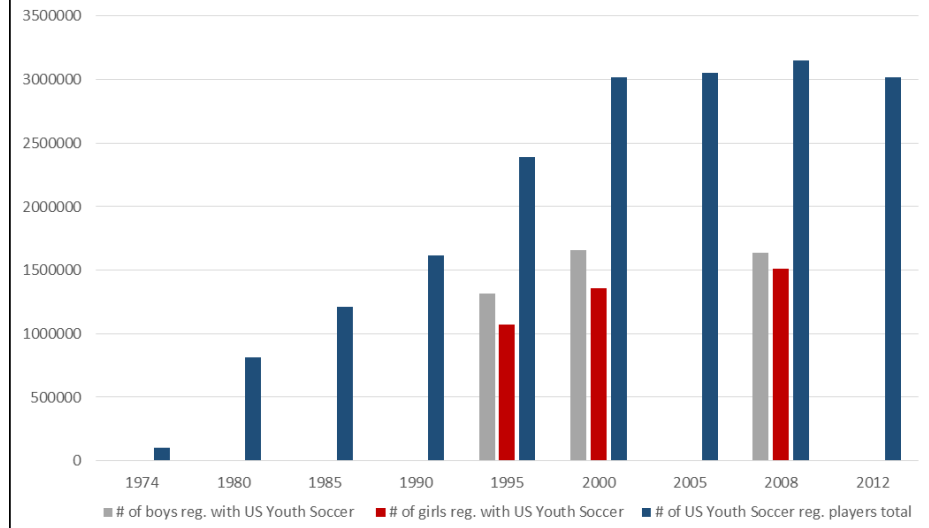
So what makes for soccer and social change?

Title IX?

Number of US High School Soccer players

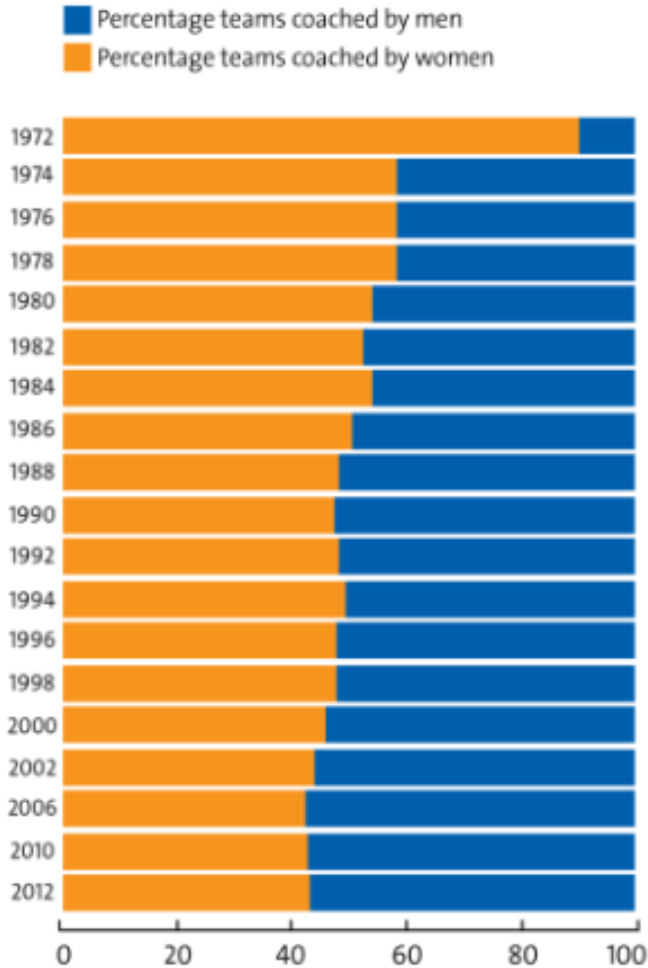


Number of registered US Youth Soccer / Club players

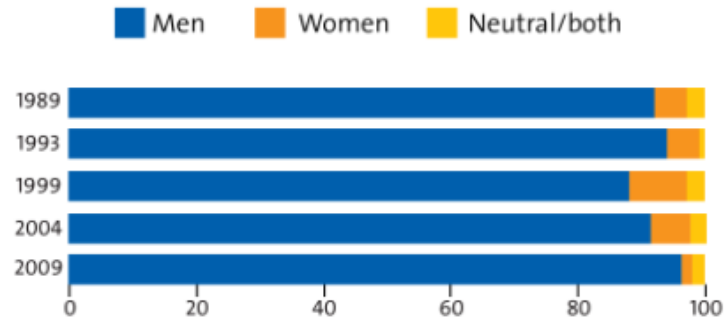


Network Air Time Breakdown for Men's and Women's Sports Teams

<http://old.seattletimes.com/flatpages/sports/40-years-title-ix-graphics.html>



<http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/06/charts-womens-athletics-title>



Coaching jobs, sport by sport

In most NCAA sports, the percentage of women coaching women's teams has decreased since 1978:

SPORT	PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN COACHING WOMEN'S TEAMS
Basketball	79.4
	59.5
Crew	11.9
	36.9
Cross country	35.2
	21.2
Golf	54.6
	41.6
Gymnastics	69.7
	51.0
Soccer	29.4
	32.2
Softball	83.5
	62.1
Tennis	72.9
	29.9
Track and field	52.3
	19.2
Volleyball	86.6
	53.3

NOTE: Numbers are for NCAA Div. I, II and III.

Source: "Women in Intercollegiate Sport. A Longitudinal, National Study," by R. Vivian Acosta, Linda Jean Carpenter, January 2012.

Reporting by BILL READER, Graphic by MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES





ABOUT THE SAFER SOCCER CAMPAIGN

Safer Soccer was launched in 2014 by the Concussion Legacy Foundation, the Santa Clara University Institute of Sports Law and Ethics (ISLE), and led by U.S. Women's Soccer legends Brandi Chastain, Cindy Parlow Cone, and Joy Fawcett. **Our mission** is to educate parents, coaches, and soccer stakeholders on the benefits of delaying the introduction of headers in youth soccer until high school. **Our goal** is youth soccer organizations will not teach or allow heading in soccer for children under the age of 14 by 2017.

On November 9, 2015, the Safer Soccer campaign saw a major victory as U.S. Soccer announced a series of safety initiatives aimed at addressing concussions in youth soccer, including rules that will strictly prohibit players 10 and younger from heading the ball, and will reduce headers in practice for 11 to 13-year-old players. [Read the press release.](#)

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OPERATION PITCH INVASION

SOCCER FROM THE GRASSROOTS UP

BUILD. REVITALIZE. MAINTAIN.

OPI develops soccer fields and futsal courts in parks and schools so that kids of all ages have high-quality and safe playing surfaces to enjoy the beautiful game.

4 PRINCIPLES GUIDE OUR WORK:

HEALTH: Develop safe, attractive, quality surfaces to get kids active in soccer play

ACCESS: Fill "recreation deserts"—areas under-served with athletic facilities—with new play spaces

TALENT: Create the next generation of American soccer players who grow up playing the sport every day right in their own neighborhoods

COMMUNITY: Give the new generation of American soccer fans opportunities to spread their love of the game to the grassroots level in their own towns



Nicole Barker Photography



1

CHALLENGE // YOUTH SPORT IS ORGANIZED BY ADULTS

THE PLAY //
ASK KIDS WHAT THEY WANT



3

CHALLENGE // SAMENESS AND SPECIALIZATION

THE PLAY //
ENCOURAGE SPORT SAMPLING



2

CHALLENGE // OVER-STRUCTURED EXPERIENCES

THE PLAY //
REINTRODUCE FREE PLAY



4

CHALLENGE // RISING COSTS, COMMITMENT

THE PLAY //
REVITALIZE IN-TOWN LEAGUES

Project Play (<https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/>)





5

CHALLENGE // NOT ENOUGH PLACES TO PLAY

THE PLAY //
THINK SMALL



7

CHALLENGE // WELL-MEANING BUT UNTRAINED VOLUNTEERS

THE PLAY //
TRAIN ALL COACHES



6

CHALLENGE // TOO MUCH, TOO SOON

THE PLAY //
DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT



8

CHALLENGE // SAFETY CONCERNS AMONG PARENTS

THE PLAY //
EMPHASIZE PREVENTION

Project Play (<https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/>)



Key questions to ask if soccer programs are going to contribute to social change:

- Are local voices involved and honored, or is the priority on outsider prescriptions?
- Is the effort connected with local organizations and other 'social change-oriented initiatives'?
- Is there an emphasis on 'co-education' or is the program reinforcing unequal power relationships?
- Does the program focus exclusively on individual change or is there attention to broader community and social change?
- How much emphasis is put on independent evidence of effectiveness in contrast to anecdotal public relations (often involving celebrity athletes)?

Some relevant organizations
developing best practices
(offered as resources;
not necessarily endorsements)

- US Soccer Foundation / Urban Soccer Symposium
- Up2Us
- Project Play
- International Platform on Sports and Development
- Street Football World