



**11<sup>th</sup> EFDN Conference Report  
CSR in European Football  
Hosted by KAA Gent, Gent, Belgium  
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## KAA Gent Foundation

Ivan De Witte, Director of KAA Gent and Wim Beelaert, general manager of the KAA Gent Foundation, KAA Gent.

The 11<sup>th</sup> EFDN “CSR in European Football” Conference was opened by Ivan de Witte, director of KAA Gent. In 1999, Mr. De Witte became president of KAA Gent and through a partnership with the general manager of the club, Michel Louwagie, he realised an impressive transformation of KAA Gent – at the time, the club had a huge debt. In 2010, KAA Gent became free of debt and is now a very healthy, professional and profitable club. Mr. De Witte was also in charge of the new Gent stadium which was finalised in 2012 and served as the president of the ProLeague between 2007 and 2011.

Wim Beelaert has been the general manager of the KAA Gent Foundation since November 2011. Since then, he has developed the foundation to become the largest community foundation within Belgian professional football. The KAA Gent Foundation counts with eight employees and a budget of half a million euros. The KAA Gent Foundation received the Pro League+ Award for best CSR organisation in Belgium in 2014, 2017 and 2018.

The KAA Gent Foundation presents a unique public-private collaboration between the professional club, the local authorities and the KAA Gent Supporters’ Federation supporting a large number of projects. The basic mission of the KAA Gent Foundation is to support and organise social and emancipatory projects for underprivileged groups. Using the power of football, KAA Gent and the Ghelamco Arena, the KAA Gent Foundation brings together and strengthens a wide range of skills that people need to function in society. Some of their projects and campaigns include the following: Buffalo Cup school football tournament, social football for the homeless, employment care for psychiatric patients, campaigns against homophobia, discrimination and racism, among many more.





## UEFA Equal Game – *Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion in European Football*

Peter Klomp, Head of Corporate Communications at UEFA

The Equal Game campaign is the latest respect campaign put forth by UEFA and it has been developing and changing since its inception. This campaign officially started as the Say no to Racism campaign in 2001 with the partnership formed with the FARE Network. Then in 2008, the RESPECT programme was launched. In 2013, there was an anti-racism resolution adopted at UEFA Congress which later was updated to include all forms of discrimination. Also in 2013, the no to racism campaign kicked off and in 2017 was upgraded to all forms of discrimination.

In order to have the best campaign possible, UEFA asked fans what they expect UEFA can do for them. The main answers that they got include fair play, anti-doping, ensuring the sport is clean, and accessibility and inclusion for everyone. From this, accessibility and inclusion took over as the main programme. Another change that occurred was to go from the saying no to racism or discrimination to saying yes to inclusion. There are so many ways that someone can be discriminated against so this new approach meant that by saying yes to inclusion, the scope of the campaign was larger and it was looked as quite a positive step.

The equal game campaign considers that everyone is entitled to enjoy football; no matter who you are, where you're from, or how you play. This message has become one of the main messages UEFA aims to get across with the campaign. Because there are so many different definitions and ways of thinking who you are and where you're from, this step meant moving into a bit of a controversial area which was a risk they were willing to take.

The steps taken in the shaping of the campaign meant that instead of telling people what to do, it became more of a platform for people to give their voice. There are lots of stories which need to be told – these will show diversity in a way where you are not explicitly telling someone what to do or what not to do. They are very visual stories, that are told through videos as well as articles on the websites. One of the ways to make them more successful is to localise the stories. Sending the stories through the media outlets of the local community works really well. For example, with Macedonia, the story really got viral and had a huge impact in the country. The small localised approach can have a huge social impact and the people featured on the stories can become role models. There have been 14 stories told so far all across Europe.

In order to promote the Equal game campaign, UEFA uses advertisements in stadiums, on the training bibs for substitute players, and even in the FIFA video game. Apart from this, Equal game holds live events or uses live events to further promote the message. Additionally, such things as the ICRC check handover has gone from just handing over a check to having a little extra to it; this year there was a player from the male and female team of the year skyping with the recipients of the check in Afghanistan.

Moreover, UEFA Equal Game has reached festivals and award ceremonies. The European award is very glamorous, now there is an equal game award included. This goes to someone who did something



special to increase inclusion and diversity. Guram Kashia from Vitesse (now playing in the MLS) received it this year. He wore the rainbow captain armband and received a lot of negative feedback, especially from people in Georgia. The action incited conversation on all media, all over his country. There were demonstrations at Georgia's game following the equal game award but there were also people supporting the LGBTQ society.

The campaign isn't just about UEFA so it is important to share and spread all over. It should be more of a movement across football. Players and clubs can be a source of spreading the message and can then become part of the movement. National associations already do a lot of great work so UEFA can come in and give them a greater platform. There are also NGO partners and they can help reach audiences that were not reached before.





## DFB Foundation – *Disability Football in Germany*

Nico Kempf, Deputy Manager of the DFB Foundation Sepp Herberger

There are different branches of the DFB Foundation and Nico Kempf gave a presentation on the DFB Foundation: Sepp Herberger which was established in 1977 and it was the first German football foundation. Sepp Herberger was a well-known national coach between 1936 – 1964. The foundation was founded on Sepp Herberger's birthday.

This foundation has four pillars which are as follows:

1. Disability football – Consisting of an inclusion initiative, blind football league, German championships of workshops for disabled people, united football friends cups.
2. Reintegration into society -Kick off for a new life.
3. Schools & clubs – Sepp Herberger Days (go into schools, playing with the kids) and Sepp Herberger awards – which is a big award to get.
4. “Sozial werk” – Help for football players in need through no fault of their own. For example, someone who had an accident and need help getting back into football; this helps them in a long term perspective.

The intended message from the foundation is that football is accessible for everyone – as players, referees, volunteers, fans and coaches. It is important to be open minded and to want to integrate someone into the football family. The inclusion initiative started in 2012 using the integrative power of football and there are 21 representatives with a remit of disability football in every Regional Association. They transmit knowledge, qualify teams, build up teams, offer competitions in which groups can participate in.

When it comes to disability football, there are several categories. The first category is cerebral palsy football which is quite popular. In Germany there is a national team but there are no special football teams and they follow a strong unified approach, bringing the players together as much as possible. Another form of football is deaf football and the DFB Foundation is looking to integrate people with hearing disabilities in as many ways as possible; in fact there is a deaf goalkeeper in the 4<sup>th</sup> League in Germany. One of the big categories is blind football which can be hard to imagine it but it really works and it is a great sport with great performances achieved. From this, there is the blind football league. It started in 2008 for blind and visually impaired people. There are 7 teams from across Germany and matches are played in central locations in major German cities carrying the message that “Middle of the city means being in the middle of society”. Every month, the DFB promotes the Goal of the month, and the “Goal of the month August 2018” was won by someone in the blind football league out of all the goals in all leagues in Germany. The goal was promoted on a lot of football media channels in Germany. Additionally, there are national and regional partnerships and there is a recruiting platform for Blind Football National Team. Other disability football categories include amputee football, sitting football and wheelchair football.



In addition to all the categories for different ways of playing disability football, there is also unified football where people with and without disabilities make up the teams, and these include different forms of disability. When it comes to unified football, there have been tournaments but they are searching for a way to fully integrate these teams into the football community in Germany. There are five tournaments played on football pitches of professional football clubs. There is no pressure to perform and it is an attractive framework programme. Finally, the foundation organises the German championship for disabled people. This is a highlight of football for intellectually/mentally disabled people; it is a five day event at Sportschule Wedau.

Within the foundation, there is also a networking platform that helps people find the football team which they want to be a part of and that meets their needs. Teams can also invite each other for friendly games and organise tournaments. It is important to work together since inclusion means don't do it by yourself, share your knowledge, find ways of integrating human beings.

The success factors from implementing disability football projects include working together with partners, bringing disability football to the people, implementing disability football projects within the organised football structures, looking for creative approaches, using the emotions transmitted by disability football as well as focusing the opportunities of disability football projects for different groups.

“Nothing about us without us”.

Additionally, it is important to integrate the people with disabilities into the planning system. They know their needs so they should be involved in planning tournaments, games, etc. It is better to integrate them into the whole system.





## Breakout sessions #1:

### 1. Feyenoord Rotterdam – *Fancoach Project*

Maarten Van Holstein, Fancoach for Feyenoord Rotterdam.

This presentation began with Mr. Van Holstein talking about himself and how he became a SLO at Feyenoord Rotterdam. One of his first assignments was in Rome when he talked about how it is a great day but then the fans started riots and fights with the police leading to many fans getting arrested, injured and bleeding on the streets. The issue was that fans had problems but they are still their fans so the club took responsibility afterwards. Fancoaches travel every game, go to the stadium, the pubs, and sightseeing locations to find and talk with the Feyenoord Fans. A video impression shown to participants: “The other side of the white red heart”: Showing Rotterdam, the stadium, the supporters in De Kuip and on the street.

Maarten told that he later heard that the only reason that they took him was that the boss thought he would not run away if there is trouble but the job was hard and he wanted to quit after two months. Now he feels proud that he didn’t do that and that he himself and the Feyenoord fancoach project are both successful.

The mission of the Fancoach project is aimed at helping the young supporters aged 13 to 24 to develop themselves in a positive way through intensive guidance and within the network of Feyenoord. The Vision: stimulating personal development and teaching young supporters the right standards and values. Everyone gets a second chance, even after a stadium ban. Some supporters got to reduce their sentence to a quarter, by working for the clubs (around 30 hours); fan coaches talk to them during the work. They talk about their background, since you have to invest in a relationship. At the moment there are 280 stadium bans, with 60-70 new ones every year. If you do not invest as a club, the supporter will come back angry when the ban ends and if you do your job right, he will tell the other supporters about the programme. There is an investment also in other supporters, that could or are making troubles. Feyenoord is in close contact with police and they work with them before supporters get violent. You have to reach out to fans that you want to help.

The Project Goals are to decline incidents in football hooliganism and violence among supporters aged 13 to 24, reduce recidivism for first football offenders aged 13 to 24. Only two percent of supporters that make a mistake, do it again now. Supporters want to belong somewhere, so as a fan coach you have to show that you care. Guiding young supporters with a football-related sanction: the alternative route. Only talks in person in order to make contact. Young people do not know the consequences of a stadium ban and they do not know how to defend themselves. By obtaining background information; a supporter told Mr. Van Holstein that his mother killed herself; one can talk to the people and find out what they need. It also becomes easier to estimate problems and create a guidance that will work for each supporter. Benefits include that you are always in contact with your fans with a stadium ban;



the love for the club never goes away. There are less problems on the stands and it is easier to solve problems. The project is co-financed with government funding; if there is misbehaviour in stadium it is also in society, funding to solve problems in the stadium also works for outside the stadium.

Additional projects include a matchday league: Useful, indoor football games. There are 300 participants in one season (players/ visitors). It helps with being active before a game instead of drinking or doing drugs, it's important that you participate in the games/pitch. Furthermore, Eurofanz exists as an annual supporters tournament (in Lviv) with 50 teams from different countries. There are four intense days to build a relationship with supporters. There is also the fire brigade Day which involves the prevention of pyrotechnics, classes in schools where there are a lot of Feyenoord supporters with connected health risks performing firemen drills. It is a very tough day with a chance for unique experiences, time for talking and meeting new supporters.

A big problem for the club, media and press is antisemitism with Ajax as a rival, of which the supporters see themselves and promote themselves as a Jewish club; and Feyenoord fans insult them with songs and banners that are targeted at Jews. Not because they hate Jews but because they hate Ajax. The stadium ban for antisemitism is five years: Which means 150 hours to get to know the supporter. Feyenoord does a lot of work against antisemitism; there are workshops in Rotterdam involving a new cooperation with Jewish people, seeing real people. A documentary was produced and shared of a Jewish woman who loves Feyenoord and that lost her father in the war. Together with fans, they travelled to Auschwitz where it was filmed. This shows the realities of the fans, showing Rotterdam is for everybody.

There are supporters liaison officers inside supporter groups, always working as a team with other fan coaches such as a disability access officer, a former rioting fan from Rome who had a complete turnaround, and is now part of the SLO team of Feyenoord.





## 2. CSR in Eastern Europe

### a. Legia Warsaw – Karolina Kalinowska



Karolina Kalinowska opened the session by talking about Legia Warsaw and three of the main educational projects. She began by briefly introducing the organisation; it's the first foundation of this type working with a professional football club in Poland. They create and implement programmes and projects of support, education, integration, and building community. These projects are aimed at children and adolescents, disabled, sick people and those at risk of exclusion. The Legia foundation

works in underprivileged areas of Poland primarily. In three years of work there have been 252 projects and activities that the foundation organised or took part in with over 3000 beneficiaries.

The first project participants heard about is: Tutoring sessions with Legia – polish name: Korki\* Z Legia. It was developed to provide appropriate educational support for young people (17-19) to pass the secondary school-leaving examination. The pilot edition was started in 2016 and less than a year later, the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the programme took place with an evaluation at the end. All the classes took place in one location in the school and not all participants made it to the end of the programme. Because some sessions were free, the kids didn't feel like they were obliged to go, not a lot of effort put in. The second edition of the program took place in 2017-2018. The classes were taken outside of school, integration workshops were included to make the kids feel safer. There was regular contact with the beneficiaries- every time they missed a session, they were contacted by phone call or some other form of contact was created. The evaluation was a lot more positive than that of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Extra classes were organised for those who didn't pass the first time which resulted in everyone passing the second time. The third edition is going on now; it's still open so there is a possibility of adding more participants.

The second project mentioned is the language school which consists of free English and Spanish classes for children and teenagers from the daily support centres and socio therapeutic community clubs located in the Praga district of Warsaw. The pilot edition took place in 2016. 1<sup>st</sup> edition was 2016-2017 organised with local partners, it was 9 months long and there were 2 groups. There were 27 participants and 110 class delivery hours which resulted in positive feedback from the students. They were not sure what a foreign language could do for them, since they never thought they would be able to leave the area so the kids went on a trip abroad to Budapest. The second edition took place in 2017-2018 and it was similar organisation as the first edition. There was an additional 28 hours of individual consultation with the teacher and an introduction of Saturday meetings which aimed to integrate the participants even further. Another five day trip took place, this time to Barcelona and after the Barcelona trip, the kids said they could also learn Spanish. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition taking place this year with a similar organisation but there are more groups and there are students who are also learning Spanish.



The final project mentioned was lessons with Legia which aims to develop mathematical skills. Using mathematics on the example of the stadium and football. Classes are conducted at the Legia Stadium which is good because it shows the kids that maths can be interesting and gives them a new approach to take on. There are now other subjects other than mathematics and it gives an awareness of what they can do. The program is evaluated by teachers as an innovative way of teaching mathematics.

### *b. Shakhtar Social – Yuriy Sviridov*

Following Legia, Yuri Sveridov spoke about the Shakhtar Social foundation. Their aim is to be the ambassador of Ukrainian football in the world, and of international football in Ukraine, driving the development of football in the country. He briefly introduced the landscape of football in Ukraine and how Shakhtar has evolved as a club as well as how Shakhtar Social has been working. With Shakhtar social, they focus mainly on health, education and gender equality. They have programmes running which aim to work with football for development, football for children with disabilities, and girls football with UNFPA and Shakhtar Coaches.

One of their main projects is ‘Come on, let’s play’. This project is aimed at the development of grassroots football and its popularisation throughout Ukraine. It is delivered in 16 Ukrainian cities with 32 playgrounds and 1700 participants. The statistical goal for the end of the season is to get to 3000. The project counts with several training sessions every week. Come on, let’s play! Is aimed at the kids and what they can get out of football rather than being a project aimed at developing professional footballers. With this project, there have also been several football festivals. Furthermore, Shakhtar talent day has been aimed at popularising grassroots football in Ukraine and inviting best talents to the FC Shakhtar Academy where they can later on go and become a part of the Shakhtar Donetsk first team.

This year there was also a project aimed at working with kids with disabilities. This project inspired the foundation to start running all their current projects not only as they are now, but also for kids with disabilities. The special Come on, let’s play, that was run for kids with a disability was a = great success. Finally, one of the main areas of work is girls football. In Ukraine, girl’s football has a very low percentage of participation which is why one of the objectives of the organisation is to get those numbers up through different programmes.



### 3. Aston Villa – Aston Villa CSR Strategy ‘Supporting our own’

Andy Taylor, Aston Villa Foundation

Andy Taylor spoke about the Aston Villa CSR strategy. He mentioned that it is important to include players in community working with the target to re-engage in the community. He then went on to speak about the area where Aston Villa works. It is a poor neighbourhood: among the top 5% poorest communities in UK. The club localizes itself in the heart of the community, while other (newer) clubs are mostly located in industrial areas. It's hard to find a balance between the world brand “Aston Villa” and the will to do give back to the local community. There is already a lot of good work being done by local organisations so it is imperative not to take over these projects, but to really get into the community and support these projects. They try to find a way to become a “better neighbour” for the people in the community (since they possibly experience some nuisance living near the stadium).

Their goals include getting more people more active, getting people to have healthy & fulfilling lives, helping people reach their full potential and building safer, stronger communities – one way is using the club’s brand and be #Part of the Pride. When speaking of the club’s slogan: “Supporting our Own”, Mr. Taylor argues that it is important to ask yourself (as an organisation) the question: “what do we want to support as a club?” and “if not, why not?”.

Their funding comes from the sharing of gate receipts from Aston Villa pre-season friendly fixture, a 50/50 Lotto Draw on match day, “Friends of the Foundation” company donations, fundraising events organised by the Foundation, supporters organising their own fundraising events and donations and sponsorships. At the moment, in the UK, there is a lot of attention focused on funding, especially since it is getting harder and harder to keep the legal character of certain funding streams. In this day and time, funding has got to be more transparent and an organisation must be able to show where the money is going and clubs should realise that this could be a full time job. The Foundation tends to do a lot of charity donations, food donations, match activities, among other activities, for the club. These kinds of funding also make it possible to give free tickets for youth groups. As well as funding, volunteering and internships have a great role in the Foundations operation. Unfortunately, the legal restrictions regarding these items obstruct what you would actually want to do.

Moving on, Mr. Taylor spoke of concepts they have in Aston Villa. He states clubs should do something else, not only projects and more projects. They can create an overseeing brand and philosophy about everything related to the community, connect with the fans, create a family feeling, make the connection between the club and the locals. Nowadays the distance between club and locals is too far and they are not involved. It is important that all projects and programmes are supported by the club through marketing, media, partnerships, ticketing & hospitality, human resources and staff. Clubs should be made aware of what is happening with their money by working in a transparent and cooperative way. Foundations should be making themselves invaluable to the clubs.



When it comes to club winnings, the foundation is leading in all aspects of community engagement. The identity for all of the little things they do to help individuals, as well as the local community plays a big part in this. The philosophy of the supporters is, as previously mentioned, “Part of the Pride”. There is also a decent amount of player involvement where the goal is to put a smile on the faces of the target group, even if it is just for a moment. Mr. Taylor provided an example of player involvement where two players who went to buy Christmas gifts for the children of a deceased steward. You can ask the question in how far this is “doing something for the *community*”, but actually it is the foundation who opened the door to make something like this possible.





## FC Barcelona Foundation – *Sport for Development: the search of an Ethical ideal*

Yolanda Antin, FC Barcelona Foundation



Yolanda Antin began by talking about how the founder of Barcelona, Hans Gamper, focused on the social part of the club when creating the club. He wanted to focus on the benefits the club would bring to the community. Barcelona is a sports entity open to everybody, that integrates many disciplines. Fans and members of the club are from all over the world and with all different backgrounds.

One of the ways that the club contributes to the social aspect of the club is through donations. Since 2006, the club staff and players have been committed to the foundation by donating a part of their income. They donate 0.7% of the club income to the Foundation. If they choose to do so, players and coaches will donate 0.5% of the salary; all the current players have chosen to do so. The Barcelona Foundation focuses on three main aspects:

1. Prevention of violence
2. Promoting social inclusion and everything that is understood within inclusion.
3. Access to and reinforcement of education.

Yolanda Antin shared a documentary made by Barcelona called ‘A game named hope’. It showed some of the work that Futbolnet does. Futbolnet is a methodology developed by FC Barcelona to show that people can have a better life. It aims to contribute to the integration and inclusion of different disabled people. Inclusion is hard but one can learn every day from it. Football can be used to show someone that little by little they can become what and who they want to be. Football can be used to build one’s dreams. It can unify people.

With their work, one of the main areas is the prevention of violence among young people. For example, in Brazil, physical activity is used to prevent violence. In the area of paediatric illness, first team players are very involved in the paediatric emotional welfare program for children with serious illness. While they know they might not be curing the illness of someone, they are helping them deal with coping with the welfare and the illness they may have. They also work with refugees in order to give them a positive experience. For example, they made a trip to Camp Nou possible for a young refugee from Germany who is a huge fan of the club. Additionally, the Barcelona Foundation also has a scheme for children with disabilities. The methodology that their foundation uses has been created to be as versatile as possible so that it can be applied to multiple topics and various social inclusion programmes.



## Breakout sessions #2

### 1. Burnley FC in the Community – 5 years of inspiring a generation

Neil Hart, CEO of Burnley in the Community

Neil Hart started his presentation by talking about the values of Burnley FC and how the staff of Burnley FC in the Community is a good team with a lot of experience and quite a bit of knowledge. Burnley has a can do approach where the board is very important as well as the relationship within the club. The knowledge and the board room makes the club and the foundation move forward.

In terms of staff, there are 100 people working for the foundation and there has been a snowball effect over the last five years; it has been a terrific journey so far with a lot of time spent on recruitment. The strategic objectives include clear and detailed goals and there is a set strategy which the club will stick to. These goals are important for the daily work of Burnley FC in the Community. There are more than 50 sessions with 800 people every week including soccer schools, health, and education programmes. There are inclusion spaces, strong education, enterprise programmes and a lot of corporate partners.

When talking about the facility strategy, it is important to think about how this can be sustained. Because the local government shut down facilities, there was a need to go into new space which is used now. There are six classrooms, an auditorium and 150 spaces in the stands. The leisure box is a five million pound private investment with partners and funding; it includes classrooms and a whole leisure activity with the highest level facilities. Mr. Hart also spoke about Whiterough outdoor centre.

The government could not hold it, and it was an opportunity for Burnley FC in the Community to step in and it now plays a part in the financial sustainability. Burnley food bank has a teaching kitchen which delivers 200 food parcels a day with support from a lot of corporate sponsors.

When it comes to funding, there are different sources of money such as dinners, facility sponsorships and football schools among others. There is a broad portfolio and because of the diversity, if one source is gone then it is not a problem. Mr. Hart mentioned how the charity income went from 160.000 in 2013-14 to 4.500.000 in 2018-19. The community need fuels the growth of the charity, and there have been over 400 player appearances over the last 2 seasons, with a proper Player involvement policy. The whole squad is also briefed two times a year, there is a feeling of needing to give something back, and the club demands getting involved. The secret to the success is a one club approach with a big campaign, telling stories and bringing about a feeling of togetherness.

There were a few questions following the presentation such as who is their competition to which the answer involved Blackburn Rovers that is being close but its not a real competition because both organisations stay in their own region. There are a lot of organisations in the city, so BFC in the Community has to be careful to not take anything away from these organisations. Another question involved the turnover predicted for the next five years. The answer involved mentioning that the board wants stability, but there are always opportunities and there is always need. Why should the organisation say no? This year, they are close to five million with 250.000 people in the area.



Another question involved asking what the mistakes of the organisation have been, what is still a taboo for them. In his answer, Mr. Hart mentioned that overseas projects are an interesting discussion which causes debate in the board room.

The last question involved the risks of experiencing massive growth. He states that the most important things are having the right tools and the right environment for the staff and making sure they get what they need. He also mentioned that their strategy is to have an evolution rather than a revolution because the strategy should be connected to the need and purposes of the club and partners.





## 2. European Healthy Stadia – *Promoting walking and cycling to football stadiums in Europe*

Michael Viggars, project manager at European Healthy Stadia Network



In the first part of this presentation, participants got some insights on fan health. What was learned was that the focus is still mainly targeted at men. Fans in sport are until today still largely men, and in a sportive environment they feel safer to talk about health issues. In this aspect it's also an option to do health checks. But we can also see a rise in the reaching of children and young people, as we can see more and more awareness campaigns that are being held in schools, regarding sugary drinks and health risks.

Moving on, another important aspect talked about was promoting walking and cycling to stadia. With the help of active travel guidance, people connect to the club. The clubs and their facilities have a lot to gain from encouraging active travel. In general, people still take their cars to go to a sport event, as an automatic choice. However, this also increases air pollution, congestion and affects climate change. It is also remarkable how much trouble people experience when going to games by car, just think about parking space. Car pollution (exhaustion of NO<sub>2</sub> and fine particles) has also gotten a place on the political agenda, as you can see with the sustainable development goals by the UN (nr 13 : climate change). There has also been a lot of research going on, which show health risks connected to this problem; even dementia is one of those risks, curiously enough. Car pollution doesn't only have big health risks, but the lack of physical activity also counts with a lot of risks, such as weight gain and obesity; this takes the lives of 600.000 persons per year, according to the World Health Organisation.

So how can we, as football clubs, encourage walking and cycling to stadia? In these modern times, most people have phone applications and as seen in the women's Euro 2017 in the Netherlands, the "active app" was enrolled by the UEFA and used for the first time. It is pretty easy to use: when you install the app you can click on the matches you are going to attend. The app will then use GPS-tracking to give you the best routes to the stadium by bike or foot, you even get notifications before the game. The results have already been amazing: there were around 1.800 downloads, the users walked/cycled +- 2122km's, burned +80.000 calories and even reduced their CO<sub>2</sub>-emission by 225 kilograms. As this was already a nice result, UEFA plans to develop the ACTIVE APP 2.0 for EURO 2020, which will be held in 13 different countries. This one will be integrated in the UEFA APP, which means expanding the reach even more. These also brings along some challenges, for instance security-wise with bikes that can or cannot be locked. Some cities have very good bicycle options (like Amsterdam and Copenhagen), others less (Bilbao, Glasgow, Dublin, London). The app has also been named in the bid for the EURO in Germany in 2024.

After this "theoretical" part of the presentation, participants got to see a case study on Ghelamco Arena and how they manage to get over 2.000 people to come to the stadium by bike. Participants



had a small look at the incentives done by the club. Afterwards, participants were split up in smaller groups and made a SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)-analysis about their home club, which made the presentation much more interactive. Participants had to analyse all the aspects on how one can engage with people more to get them to come by bike or on foot. For different clubs there were different opportunities, such as: the city council that wants to think greener, the student population already bikes a lot, car scandals the last years and more active fans projects that also create a larger awareness. As weaknesses people thought about the climate, the fact that people sometimes steal bikes or the demographics of certain towns.

Sport plays an important role in our society, consequently taking part at various sport events has become an anchored hobby for European citizens. Every day, millions of people take the road to support their favourite team or see their idols defending the colours of their community. Indeed, stadiums facilities unite not only supporters during match days but also volunteers, players and their staff, club's employees working there on daily basis or external stakeholders visiting clubs. In addition, stadiums are often located surrounding the city or in less affluent sections of the municipal territory. Therefore, sport stadiums are excellent facilities to start health initiatives in which benefit multiple segments of the populations as well as the environment.

Healthy Stadia Network was established in 2010. Since then, they work mainly with local government agencies, governing sport bodies, professional or amateur clubs to develop health and environmentally friendly strategies or programmes impacting the lifestyle and habits of their community members.

Healthy Stadia collaborates with UEFA and other international federations to optimise stadium policies and practices supporting fans' health by, for example, modifying the nature of the meals proposed during matchdays through reducing high caloric drinks, promoting active travels alternatives to come to the stadiums or locating tobacco-free areas to name a few of them. Various documents, case studies and tools have been created to support clubs and sport organisations to guide them in following healthier lifestyles in future. Moreover, the organisation cooperates with actors in the sport sector to enhance the design and implementation of health or nutrition programmes for young people and their entourage. This in the optic to intervene on society eating and sport activity habits (e.g. fat decrease, sugar consumption supervision, salt reduction). Healthy Stadia also offers consultations for clubs' employees upgrading their physical well-being and their mobility to their working place.

During the Women Europa Cup in the Netherlands, Healthy Stadia has set up an App with the UEFA to encourage biking or walking towards stadiums instead of using cars. The App offered alerts before each match with suggestions of secured itineraries to reach the stadiums. Furthermore, special bike parking spaces have been organised as well as health tests have been run. This was a first successful attempts to intervene in a fun way to integrate "healthier" reflexes into the supporters' culture and to make a step towards sustainable events.



### 3. La Liga – *LaLiga Genuine*

Elena Montoro



Elena Montoro gave a great presentation on LaLiga Genuine. LaLiga genuine is a ground-breaking CSR initiative which focuses on diversity and inclusion. The LaLiga Genuine initiative has led to the creation of a league which is just composed of teams with an intellectual disability. There are different categories and in order to be able to take part in a specific category, participants must count with a certificate from the doctor and meet the requirements.

The main objective of the project is to organise a league for people with intellectual disabilities which fits within the framework of La Liga. For this to happen, one of the goals is to get all the clubs in La Liga to have a genuine team to be involved. While there is a categorisation system in place when it comes to the intellectual disability, teams from LaLiga Genuine are mixed when it comes to gender and age. Teams in LaLiga Genuine don't only get points when it comes to winning or losing, but they also get sportsmanship points. Since this project represents the values of football such as respect, responsibility & teamwork, among others, the sportsmanship from all the players is very important.

The first season of LaLiga Genuine took place last year (2017-2018) and the second season is set to start on the weekend of November 17th 2018. The first season consisted of 18 clubs and four venues to play in. The venues that were chosen for the first season were Villarreal in October 2017, Tarragona in January 2018, Mallorca in April and Vigo in June. For the first season, it took 12 months preparation for each team before starting the league. The second season will consist of an additional 12 teams who have been preparing for the same amount of time in order to be incorporated to the upcoming season which will count with 30 teams total.

Everything that is involved in the league such as the style of play, the rules and points system is all explained to everyone since day one so that there are no surprises along the way. In addition, for LaLiga Genuine, you get a lot of aspects which are created specifically for this league. For example, there is a trophy which was designed especially for LaLiga Genuine and had not been seen before; there are two trophies: one for the overall champion and one for the fair play champion. Additionally, a Haka dance was created along with an anthem that all participants could learn and dance to. Whichever team wins the whole tournament and whichever team wins the fair play tournament both have the same value for LaLiga.

Furthermore, “Las botas de los deseos” was a Project which came from LaLiga Genuine. They gifted everyone with new football boots for the last matchday which took place in Vigo. These boots had a personal message imprinted on the side which represented the values that football holds which are of great importance in LaLiga Genuine. This gift made the last matchday more than just a closing, but it began the preseason for the upcoming season.



## Panel Discussion: Player Involvement in community and social responsibility

Panel members: Erlend Hantsveit – SK Brann, Pat Nevin - Former player at Chelsea F.C. & Tony Higgins – FIFPro



Thanks to the commitment of EFDN's members in their CSR programmes, EFDN's CEO Hubert Rovers proudly introduced the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of EFDN Practitioners Guide, before providing the panel the opportunity to ask questions about the role of football players in the projects adopted by the clubs in favour of their communities. The full dedication of Marius Stegemann in the creation of the latter, along with the insightful thoughts expressed by three former professional football players allowed

Mr Rovers to promote the best practices and case studies that emphasize an inspiring guidance to follow on day-to-day practices in the different community programmes. Apart from the positive effects that CSR work has on beneficiaries, the presentation also reflected its great impacts on the players involved in it. Being nowadays one of the main issues to address in European football, mental health challenges may indeed be reduced by an active community work, in which players should take part.

Based on the experience of a 20-year long career in professional football, Patrick Nevin firstly mentioned the socially oriented conscious that all players should have. He noted that despite the strict requirements that a professional athlete has during his career, it is of a great importance that players show appropriate behaviours and take some time to be fully dedicated to those social projects.

Moreover, Mr Nevin added that some players sadly make the choice of entirely and uniquely focus on their own careers at the expense of participating to social projects linked with the communities; therefore badly affecting the CSR work within the football landscape. Furthermore, Mr Nevin pointed out that a quite significant percentage of players does sadly not have a real interest in CSR as they mainly choose to focus on three pillars during their careers, which are training, eating and sleeping; whereas the amount of players dedicated to CSR work should be increased in order to provide them a better understanding of the existing issues within the communities. As the presence of the media at a Charity event could become an issue for some players who may not necessarily be comfortable with communicating to the press, it is of a great importance that clubs take this aspect under consideration in order to prevent any potential issue, as well as protecting their players and the clubs' images.

Being involved in CSR work in relation to players during the past 12 years after a 16-year long career as professional football player, Tony Higgins pointed out the great importance that CSR work should be in players' lives once their career ends. It therefore becomes almost crucial to establish a real



interest from the players in CSR work, in order to make them understand what really matters, exclusive of their careers. Mr Higgins however clearly mentioned the key role of education in that matter, which should be allowing the players and coaches to understand how crucial it is for them to actively participate in the community work. When asked about the possible shocking effects that some CSR projects might have on players, Tony Higgins insisted on the significance of appropriately mentally preparing the players through innovating ways, in order to avoid any traumatising impacts that may result from visits in some projects.

In addition to what Mr Nevin and Mr Higgins previously developed, the former professional football player Erlend Hanstveit – who specialised himself for two years on the multiple impacts that community work has on professional footballers as well as on the beneficiaries; valued the importance of visits involving players. Apart from the powerful impacts that a visiting professional football player can have on the beneficiaries, such initiatives may also positively sensitize the players themselves, who generally want to reexperience those unique moments despite the preventions expressed by some coaches, who require the athletes to only focus on their professional careers. Mr Hanstveit pointed out the necessity for a club to be fully aware of every detail surrounding a player's visit at a hospital for example, in order to be able to anticipate and address any potential issue.





## UN Sustainable Development Goals

UNRIC - Fabio Graziosi



Being responsible for the Italian Desk in the Brussels-based United Nations Regional Information Office for Western Europe for 14 years, Fabio Graziosi – along with two of his three UN colleagues; provided some insightful observations on the UNRIC's structure, mission and projects. The multiple stakeholder collaborations with European Union institutions, media or governments allow the corporation to continuously develop its services and therefore have a great impact on the European level. With a

multitude of potential partnerships, the UNRIC aims to efficiently engage them in addressing nowadays' major issues by promoting the 17 SDGs.

The internalisation of the UNRIC is observable on its website, covering 22 countries and translated in 13 languages, making it the third most translated website in the world. The importance of languages is indeed essential for the UNRIC, as it allows them to reach a wider amount of people all around Europe through the 26 United Nations specialised agencies. As the UN sets some communication priorities on a yearly basis, the institution uses several tools such as sport, in order to transmit some specific guidelines and messages across the multiple countries it is implanted in. By pointing out the different international Days throughout the year, the UNRIC promotes several concepts such as Peace & Security, Gender Equality, Accessibility to sport, LGBT rights etc.

Moreover, as the launch of new successful campaigns such as the *UN Blue* event could show – where the UN members were required to lighten their facilities in Blue for the UN's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary; an efficient communication amongst the several partners is crucial in order to emphasize the institution's visibility all around the world. By allowing some influential celebrities – such as actors or sport personalities who defend the UN's causes; to express themselves and promote the several activities initiated by the organisation, the desired concepts or ideas to be transmitted are way more efficiently addressed to the world. Apart from the influence of some celebrities, the United Nations are also using some different types of techniques or tools, as the free online game named LOGOS could demonstrate, as it aims to raise the children's awareness; while being translated in five different languages.

Finally, Mr Graziosi introduced several UNRIC's campaigns and activities, such as *Haba Waba*, which focuses on the development of grassroots; but also the 2015 Marathon in Athens, which was divided in 17 parts – each one linked to one of the SDGs. As the media platforms can nowadays be used to acquire some international visibility, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals have been quite efficiently promoted by the Greek Football Club PAS GIANNINA 1966 before the start of the 2017 Greek Super League game against AEK FC; as it benefited from the coverage of major TV channels, printed and online media; which overall allowed to publicly raise awareness of the 17 SDGs.



## Breakout sessions #3

### 1. CSR Communication in Europe

Tim Breitbarth, EASM



Tim Breitbarth opens his presentation by saying “I love Europe as a concept, Europe is a good reference for CSR.” CSR is the business contribution to sustainable development. In the EU, ecological, human rights, consumer interest, stakeholders are included in the CSR strategy. Europe’s definition already includes some pillars so you’ve conquered CSR but are not doing real CSR. CSR is a much bigger concept because in the EU, you are also defending common values, European space

and market. Most of clubs are doing corporate citizenship, which is fine because it is a part of CSR, however, it’s not the whole picture.

Moving on, the presentation went on to talk about how CSR is still fairly new and CSR is more formalized with reporting standards, and few sport organisations have engaged with it. It is a new ‘animal’, but nonetheless sport has been responsive. CSR is opportunity driven and some organisations felt threatened, as if they have to justify their engagement. An opportunity has emerged to make sport organisations an important stakeholder, meaning that football doesn’t just mean playing on the pitch anymore. Mr. Breitbarth moves on to distinguish management from communication where management are projects and communication are messages and audience with a blurred line between them. A lot of clubs are doing management but have a communication expert. To have a brilliant manager and communicator at same time is difficult, but you cannot not communicate.

He continues by asking the following: Why have a whole congress on communication in CSR? In general, views have moved from financial benefits to reputation and stakeholder benefits. Additionally, organisations are changing all the time and it is understood that while CSR has to be more strict, it should also be open to change. CSR can also be considered a vehicle for listening. Corporate social responsibility, CSR requires a responsiveness when concerned with other issues, more resilient and more ready to respond in the future as a club. Hiding is also a form of communication; if it is not communicated it does not exist.

Communication is not that easy anymore especially since there are more platforms. It is easier to own media channels, streams and pages now. The positives include that communication can lead to credibility, legitimacy, visibility. On the other hand, one can find greenwashing, backlash, scepticism and there is a fine line in between; communication is not science but an art and experience. Club shave to be careful with Whitewashing and Greenwashing. Whitewashing focuses on social issues while greenwashing does so on the environment. One way for communication involves engagement with others, listening and dialogue; discussing with stakeholders in order to find an understanding. This shows a culture of engagement and partnerships; if there is a big openness and a change the communication culture, it will be good for the organisation/s.



The traditional standards in PR are understandable, truthful, frequent, creative, dialogic. When it comes to Global report initiative (GRI), it's comparable, not throwing just something out. CSR practitioners are also agents of change. In sport, sometimes culture prevents change, or at least fast changes which results in a lot of layers and bumps.

Communication can be differentiated in three types:

1. Communicate process: internal, communication is part of CSR implementation process.
2. Disclosure and accountability: directive of reporting, EU initiative 2014, non-financial issues 2014/95/EU directive, more than 500 employees, if standard will be changed could hit you in the future, relates to experts, very evidence based.
3. Impact and outcome: facing the consumer, fans, what you do, break it down to fans, example reducing energy consume, but how is it related to fans? Think of real impact on product, service site; campaigns are more ad hoc, sport is great in this, internal convincing takes longer, time dimension is playing into it.

The success factors include asking critical questions, political questions. People are taking stands nowadays, especially with young people; president election in Austria for example, right wing vs., green party, it was a lot more pronounced. Some business leader like Tim Höttgen from Telekom explained this tactical element of taking a stand. Another approach is the holistic approach, a sort of vision approach, in which people want guidance and it ends up being more personal. A study showed that the first three seconds of a video are important; videos here were a fade in that causes fade out. Emotional vs rational; stories are important, people like stories, bit of information and then stories kick in, we like stories, keep on telling them, that is good and connect facts. It is also important to not tell the wrong audience the wrong message. For example, Patagonia: stands for something, founder is interesting, people told stories about their clothes. If SDGs had a real breakthrough, it would be consuming less, reducing and refusing is powerful.

When it comes to exerting a social listening exercise, many organisations have communication strategies, yet only 50 percent have a listening strategy. Social media is useful, very diverse and dynamic, authentic communication, natural occurring talks nonetheless, it also has a bad side. Moreover, UEFA looked at ten languages, a lot of translators and associations involved, came up with themes that were used for communication. When it comes to semantic analysis of content, Spain seemed to be erratic. However, the effect of social media was much less than expected, and the hype of social media is over. There was a major peek in Germany, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>/ 23<sup>rd</sup> of July with the Özil retirement letter, bringing up talking about integration.

When talking about positive connection of sport and social issues, Mr. Breitbarth looked at news, press releases, traditional media, and pitch websites against each other's. Overall, one can see that there are more negative sentiments in social media than in traditional media. In Italian media: In the news there is a lot of positive; in Germany: in the news there is a balance with negative social media containing a lot of scepticism , and overlaps with other research. It is important to not be afraid of social media but there are for sure differences that one should know.



## 2. Olympique Lyonnais & CSR: *Commitment, Solidarity and Responsibility*

Maelle Trarieux, Olympique Lyonnais



Maelle Trarieux states that: Commitment, Solidarity and Responsibility are the three fundamental pillars of Olympique Lyonnais' CSR strategy.

*Commitment* to the development and the professionalisation of the women football is at the predominant area on which the club is focusing their efforts. The investment has shown great results over the past years as the first team of the club has won five time the Women Champions League. The research of sporting excellence are the consequences of the structure and supervision OL have set up. In fact, the club offers optimal conditions to their female athletes through the access to high quality facilities as well as income ranges allowing them to become 100% professional players in order to focus on the competition and not needing to work aside to be able to live, as it is still mostly the case in the sector. In addition, OL has created a women youth academy so that young players get the same pathway as the men. Finally, OL takes care of the communication and promotion of the various female teams to ensure the brand management and the development of their activities.

*Solidarity* encompass the local impact the foundation has in its community. Their global approach maximises the outcomes of their investments in human resources, time and money. To guarantee qualitative and sustainable interventions, the OL Foundation follow three rules: conclusion of long-lasting partnerships (usually at least three years); the establishment of non-profit ecosystems and the essential involvement of the professional players (men and women). In their community, OL Foundation assist predominantly children and young people in their health & well-being, education or social inclusion processes. In addition, for example employment programmes set up with the cooperation of multiple local agencies help adults in their professional life and enter the labour market.

To support local needs, the Foundation has launched several “calls for proposal” where everyone of the community can submit their project (detail target group and social issues treated). The final choice of the funded project results from discussions between the Foundations’ representatives and the former players, as they are the main investors. Indeed, the players choose personally their favourite project they want to fund. This collaboration permits the high involvement of the player in the CSR activities of the Foundation and allow them to take actively part in the community life.

*Responsibility* states specifically for both academies OL is successfully running. Their sport model covers the sport, education and citizenship areas. This focal points assure the formation of young promising players which can not only play football but are educated (to be able to participate in the training session or the match, player have to attend every day the school programme) and introduced to citizenship through their “open football club” programme organising multiple beyond-football activities such as cultural visits, social work, art workshops, etc.



### 3. Belgian Pro League & Belgian Homeless Cup:

#### *Partners in Sports, Awareness & Integration*

Stijn Van Bever – ProLeague & Bert Ballegeer – Belgian Homeless Cup

The Belgian Homeless cup has recently partnered with the ProLeague in Belgium. Stijn van Bever and Bert Ballegeer gave a great presentation looking at both sides of the partnership. The Belgian Homeless cup has been going on for just over 10 years and as an organisation they support all the initiatives that use football as a means to improve the situation of all homeless people in Belgium. They attempt to work on multiple levels; on the player level, they want to make players feel like they belong.

Bert Ballegeer introduced the Belgian Homeless Cup; It is a local collaboration between the football clubs in Belgium, social organisations and urban services; there are 30 teams all over Belgium and they all work with different languages. Within these 30 teams, all the main clubs in Belgium have become involved. There are weekly training sessions that work with social and sportive coaches since the aim is to use football as a tool to improve wellbeing as well as national events. Multiple organisations work together with each team. Each club needs to partner with a social organisation but as it turns out, each club ends up having a few organisations working with them. A great example of someone who took part in the Belgian Homeless Cup is the grounds master at KAA Gent who was unemployed when he first joined a team and has gone a long way since then. With the Cup, social workers are given a different tool to work with homeless people: football. The football pitch acts as a neutral terrain and no matter where they come from, on the pitch, they are a football player.

The investment for the Homeless Cup includes clothing (for players to keep), training accommodation, providing coaches, communication on social media, fundraising, transport. At the moment, there are four women's teams. It is starting up and building up. There is no winner and no ranking, so there are only friendly games. By eliminating the ranking, it creates more diversity since it isn't about the competition and it's not about wanting to win and be the best which could result in excluding some players from some teams. When it comes to an international level, there is a male and female team who will compete at the Homeless World Cup. The players for this team are put forth by the clubs, not selected based on talent.

Following this introduction to the Homeless Cup, the presentation moved on to Stijn van Bever briefly introducing the Pro League. The Pro League is Belgium's professional football league which represents 24 clubs. In their social policy objectives, they state that the club needs to be local social actors. In order to do this, they hold national auctions and events to enhance the local social activity of clubs and choose a national partner every three years and voted on by the clubs. When they form partnerships, they need to be credible, durable partnerships which need to fit within the DNA and core-business of the Pro League. Their partners need to be relevant, active locally and should be involved beyond merely sponsorship. The latest partner for the Pro League is the Belgian Homeless Cup.

In this partnership, both sides believe in the power of football and the power of the people. The teams of the Belgian homeless cup have been the backbone of some of the clubs so it was an easier incorporation. Durability was a big challenge for the homeless cup. This was the key issue discussed when the partnership began.



When it came to financial challenges there is a gap in the budget at the beginning of each year for the Homeless Cup. The government was reluctant to invest more without more investment of the football institutions and there is uncertain funding (short term subsidies, donations, etc). Financial support from ProLeague came in the form of 90,000-euro sponsorship per year and it is 25% of the budget for this year. The Pro League uses their contacts and tools to organise certain events like tournaments and gala evenings. The partnership provides opportunities to be present with government meetings if needed.

When it came to structural challenges for the Homeless Cup, the homeless teams are vulnerable in terms of continuity, investment of social partners was variable as well as the investment of football clubs, acknowledgement as a tool for social work and as a being integral part of the football world. The Pro League provided structural support in the form of a 3-year commitment between the two.

Communication challenges for the Homeless cup included brand awareness, creating awareness on the issues of homelessness, changing the perception of people struggling with homelessness. Communication support from the Pro League included communication around Christmas fundraising campaign, support in national campaign, social media, website, press releases, etc. Since the partnership's inception the first national campaign came about: My team, my home. The players find in their team more than just teammates, they also find a home.





## Charlton Athletic Community Trust – 25 Years of Community Work

Jason Morgan, Charlton Athletic Community Trust



Jason Morgan gave a presentation on the story of Charlton Athletic Community Trust that just celebrated 25 years. Their vision is to empower communities and change lives.

The presentation began with how the community trust came to be what it is today. In 1992, the PFA came up with funding for 3 years, which was the beginning of it all and the year when it all started. The challenge was to become self-sufficient before those three years were up and luckily, within a

couple of years, the organisation had become self-sufficient.

The Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) was aimed to work on and understand what Charlton could do in the area. With that in mind, in 2003, the club decided to set up the charity and to take a look at what direction they wanted to take it all. Five years later, in 2008, everything moved under the umbrella of the charity which meant all the community programmes were under CACT.

Around 2006 to 2009, CACT didn't want to continue with only using coaches that build programmes. This is why there were partnership agreements with local authorities put in place. In 2012, it was the first football related Charity commissioned to run a local authority's youth service on behalf of the Royal Borough of Greenwich (RBG).

With their growth there has also been an expansion in how they work. For example, the last couple of years, there was a bit of a push out of their comfort zone. There was a concert organised at the O2 which ended up being a great way to raise money. Additionally, young people were able to audition in front of a panel and everything. The concert gave them a chance to feel like megastars and one of the participants in the concert saw great success following the concert.

CACT counts with 96 permanent staff as well as 130-135 casual coaches. There are 7 strands for programmes with 61 programmes total. The expenditure focuses on the investment back into the programmes and projects in the community as opposed to the profit made by the organisation. It is important to demonstrate the impact, their social value and to show why something is being done. The charity looks into getting the social value from each strand of the charity.

Some partnerships have not been planned, they have simply come about. An example of this is RBG's Disability Youth Service and Health and Wellbeing. This came their way, and wasn't necessarily something they went looking for. With all this growth, there was plenty of human and physical resources investment so that the charity could keep up with it all. Something else which happened last year is that there was an affiliation with the LGBT fan group. CACT aims to foster safer, more inclusive communities with several of their projects. They look to programmes having a continuous progression since it is important to keep the projects sustainable.



## Study Visits with KAA Gent

### 1. KAA Gent in de Neighbourhood – Community House ‘Bij Pino’

Ellen De Jans, KAA Gent Foundation

This project takes place in a neighbourhood near Ghelamco Arena called ‘New Gent – Steenakker’. There, KAA Gent is helping to build a beautiful future for the neighbourhood. KAA Gent manages an easily accessible community centre – Bij Pino – in cooperation with local residents and other organisations. Additionally, they organise socially innovative neighbourhood sports and school sports initiatives such as the Buffalo Cup and the Buffalo League. In January, KAA Gent set up the Buffalo Dance Academy which is an initiative for boys and girls between the apartments of New Gent. This initiative won the 2018 ECA CSR & Community Award for KAA Gent.

### 2. KAA Gent in de Neighbourhood – Elk Talent Telt (*Every Talent Counts*)

Filippe Van de Craen, Project Manager at KAA Gent Foundation

The KAA Gent Foundation was awarded an important role in 2014 in terms of support of youth football in the city of Gent. Thirteen football clubs in the city accepted the invitation to work alongside KAA Gent on a programme called ‘Every Talent Counts’. This programme’s aim is to create a pleasant football environment in Gent where the wellbeing of children and young people is key. It also aims to give every young player – male or female - the opportunity to develop on a personal and on a sporting level, since every talent counts. Today, the project involves all Gent football clubs with a youth football department as well as 200 coaches and over 3,000 young players. Having access to training for youth trainers, youth coordinators and club directors only makes the base of Gent’s football clubs stronger.





### 3. Changing Lives Through Football - *Breaking Barriers Through Football*

Pierre Van der Veken, KAA Gent Foundation

The KAA Gent foundation supports and organises social emancipatory projects for underprivileged groups in society as part of their core business. In the programme called 'Gantoise Plantrekkers', the KAA Gent Foundation works with homeless people, people who form part of assisted living projects, refugees, or those who are recovering from a drug or alcohol addiction, based on the football values of diversity, respect, friendship and fair play. The Foundation creates a safe environment where people are given a helping hand in finding their way, in cooperation with 'Straathoekwerk'; a public service of social workers embedded in neighbourhoods and participating Work Services.

Furthermore, KAA Gent has a women's and a man's team participating in the Belgian Homeless Cup, while the 'Geestige Buffalo's' is a team for residents of Gent with psycho-social problems. In cooperation with the cities mental health services, the KAA Gent Foundation lowers the barrier for psychiatric patients to participate in sports. As part of the presentation of this programme, conference participants got to participate in what was described as a one of the highlights of the conference: a game between players involved in this KAA Gent programme and conference attendees.

