

European Football for



Development Network

EFDN



**A PRACTITIONERS'
GUIDE FOR
PLAYER INVOLVEMENT IN
COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY**

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH FOOTBALL

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FOREWORD



Tony Higgins - FIFPro

Dear CSR practitioners, dear players,

The growth of Community and Social Responsibility (CSR) in professional football has been a welcome development, particularly as there is a widespread public perception that football is awash with money, with vast sums circulating amongst our elite clubs. Those of us who work in the industry know that, whilst there are a few genuinely global clubs, the overwhelming majority are locally based and they rely on their communities for support.

As clubs and leagues develop their CSR strategies, it is important for them to consider the role of the players.

To maximise player participation, FIFPro supports the work of the European Football for Development Network (EFDN) and my colleague Erlend Hanstveit of the Norwegian Players' Association (NISO), who has done interesting research on the benefits of CSR work to players and beneficiaries. The research is very useful in helping to persuade players to become involved in CSR work. This Practitioners'

Guide contains many useful examples and scenarios that I'm sure many who work in the field of CSR will recognise.

Based on our own experience and the research of Erlend Hanstveit, FIFPro recommends the following:

- Where possible try to ensure that players have an interest in the cause or charity the club wishes to promote.
- Provide players with pre-visit information so that they are prepared and know what to expect.
- Hold a de-briefing session with players after the visit and ask whether they felt comfortable, were adequately prepared and if the visit was beneficial.

I would like to congratulate EFDN on this useful Practitioners' Guide, which I hope will help involve players more closely in community outreach programmes that will benefit both them and the programme participants.

Tony Higgins
FIFPro

FIFPRO

FIFPro is the worldwide representative organisation for all professional footballers; more than 60,000 players in total, male and female. The World Players' Union currently has 63 national players' associations as their members. Five candidate members and seven observers hope to join FIFPro in the near future.

The mission 'FIFPro supports players' and our mission statement 'FIFPro is the exclusive collective voice of the world's professional footballers' are key principles. These are the two guiding foundations that underpin FIFPro's activities.

FIFPro offers tailored services for professional footballers, such as legal and career planning advice, via a global network of 63 affiliated player associations.



Hubert Rovers - EFDN

Since the game of football has existed, the players have been the centre of attention. Especially since the sport became the world's biggest game, it is the players that people look up to, who can be natural role models and who can epitomise the good that can come from having such a large media influence.

Since the millennium, a great number of clubs and players have set up their own foundations to make an impact in their communities. They fight against racism, visit sick young people in hospital, and visit schools to promote a healthy lifestyle or help kids to stand up against bullying. With the growth of these Community and Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes in European football, the number of activities in which players are involved to make a bigger impact on the participants or attract greater media attention have grown tremendously. And fortunately, player appearances and involvement are not restricted to clubs' first men's teams. The involvement women's teams and academy players is rising fast and contributing to a higher impact in communities.

And with good reason: the influence that players can have as role models is widely recognised. One study from the Netherlands asked children between 7 and 12 years old who they would believe when it came to advice on certain social topics – their parents, teachers or a professional footballer. The majority said that they would be more likely to accept the advice of the footballer than that of their parents.

But not every programme or target group is suitable for player involvement and not every player has the right skills to be the perfect role model in specific programmes. In recent years, there have been good examples of player involvement really making a difference for everyone involved. Unfortunately, however, there have also been a lot of bad practices, where player involvement did more harm than good. Players who don't speak the language well were sent to schools to speak about anti-bullying programmes, or young academy players went to speak to young people of the same age or even older to discuss life skills and life choices. With all that has happened so far, it sometimes seems that

we are still just starting with this practice and are trying to find the winning formula. In the past year, we received valuable feedback from our EFDN members that, although a lot is going well, an EFDN Practitioners' Guide with good practices and practical tools could be a great support in further improving the impact of player involvement in CSR in European Football.

So we conducted research amongst EFDN members and used their feedback to create this Fourth EFDN Practitioners' Guide on Player Involvement in Community and Social Responsibility. I would like to thank FIFPro and the PFA for their contribution to this guide, which will provide you with useful insights and practical tools on how to better prepare your player appearances and player involvement in community programmes that will positively influence lives throughout Europe.

Hubert Rovers
CEO EFDN Foundation



INTRODUCTION

Becoming – or at least meeting – a professional football player is a dream of many children around the world. Football clubs, and in particular their charity institutions, make these dreams come true on a daily basis. An appearance by a player in a community programme can definitely have an impact on the participants: excitement and increased motivation among school kids, greater self-confidence among young people and gratitude and recognition among elderly people are just some of the visible effects of the day-to-day work with players. A lot of clubs are already making good use of the impact of players as role models, while others are struggling with the idea of getting players off the pitch and into the classroom.

Not all player visits leave the beneficiaries satisfied. Some clubs will have experienced player appearances that have ended with a stressed player and disappointed participants. There can be many reasons for this. A player may not speak the language and is unable to answer simple questions or is uncomfortable interacting with people with disabilities due to a lack of experience. Sometimes the timing or the circumstances are just not optimal. The aim of this EFDN Practitioners' Guide is to provide clubs with practical tips and tools to avoid worst-case scenarios.

A HANDBOOK OF BEST PRACTICES – “A GOOD IDEA”

Such negative experiences can make players unwilling to participate in community work in the future. On the beneficiary side, the consequences are probably much more serious. In his research for the Norwegian Players' Association (NISO) and FIFPro, former Norwegian national player Erlend Hanstveit concluded that this should be avoided if possible. The study also came to the conclusion that it “would be a good idea to make a handbook of best practices for how player visits could be arranged in the best possible way” (NISO, 2018, p. 44).

With this recommendation in mind and as EFDN had already had feedback from some member clubs that they were not confident organising player visits, we started to develop this Practitioners' Guide. The aim of the guide is not to teach community management, but to inspire you and to facilitate cooperation between clubs, leagues and FAs with players and their foundations. The guide is directed at community managers, players and player foundations, as well as sponsors who wish to support the community work of professional football clubs, leagues and FAs.

COMBINATION OF RESEARCH, PRACTICAL TIPS AND BEST PRACTICES

The guide looks at the scientific literature and the results of an online survey and presents ideas and best practices from all over Europe. Statements by experts and players give you an insight into the organisational challenges and the potential of player involvement. Finally, the guide provides you with an outlook and concrete tools, including a questionnaire, and an example of a player involvement evaluation.

In the first part of this guide, we briefly explain what is meant by player involvement. That is followed by an overview, based on the literature review and the results of the online survey, of the benefits of player engagement for clubs, leagues, FAs and of course the players and the beneficiaries. We also highlight some of the challenges for the organisations within these community outreach programmes.

BACKGROUND: EFDN CLUB SURVEY

- 28 CSR practitioners participated. They are regularly involved in player appearances and have various roles at their foundations/clubs, including:
 - Head of foundation
 - Project manager
 - PR manager
 - Head of partnership
 - Teacher, etc.
- 25 clubs (out of 51 members) from 11 European countries participated
- The most frequently represented country was England (6 clubs)
- The questionnaire comprised 20 questions and covered in particular organisational aspects and attitudes regarding player appearances

BEFORE WE START POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES

Players can play different roles in their clubs' community work. In the European Football for Development Network, every club includes its players in its CSR activities in some way. The possibilities for player involvement are as numerous as our clubs' community programmes: discussing bullying in schools, playing with children with disabilities, empowering youth through dialogue or talking to elderly people about their football memories. Due to various challenges the extent of the activities with players as role models is limited.

The Norwegian Players' Association (NISO) describes player visits as "meetings where a professional footballer meets beneficiaries and an arranged meeting takes place" (NISO, 2018, p. 3).

As the best practices from all over Europe presented in this guide show, the commitment of players to clubs' community work varies not only in form but also in intensity. Before setting up a project that aims to include players, you probably ask yourself:

- Why should my club include players in its community work?
- Why should players participate in community work?
- What are the benefits for the clubs, the players and the participants of the programmes?

Benefits for the clubs

High impact of the community work: smiling kids, empowered elderly people

100% of the participants in our online survey among European clubs agreed that they involve players because of the positive impact on the beneficiaries of the programmes. Player appearances result in smiling faces among children, increased self-esteem among young people and a feeling of inclusion and recognition among elderly people. That creates inspirational memories for participants and players. Leandro de Almeida, a player at Ferencvárosi TC said, **"Sometimes we have to travel long distances for the Fradi School Programme but when we see the happy and delighted audience, the enthusiasm of young kids, then I always know it is worth all the effort."**

A study by former professional footballer Erlend Hanstveit and the NISO on behalf of FIFPro concluded that "player visits can have a large emotional impact on individuals as well as groups". The study

found that hospital patients, and people with drug problems and intellectual disabilities particularly benefited from the visits.

John Hudson, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), backs the research findings, saying **"Players make a difference. They break down barriers easier than teachers, the police or other authorities."**

MEDIA COVERAGE

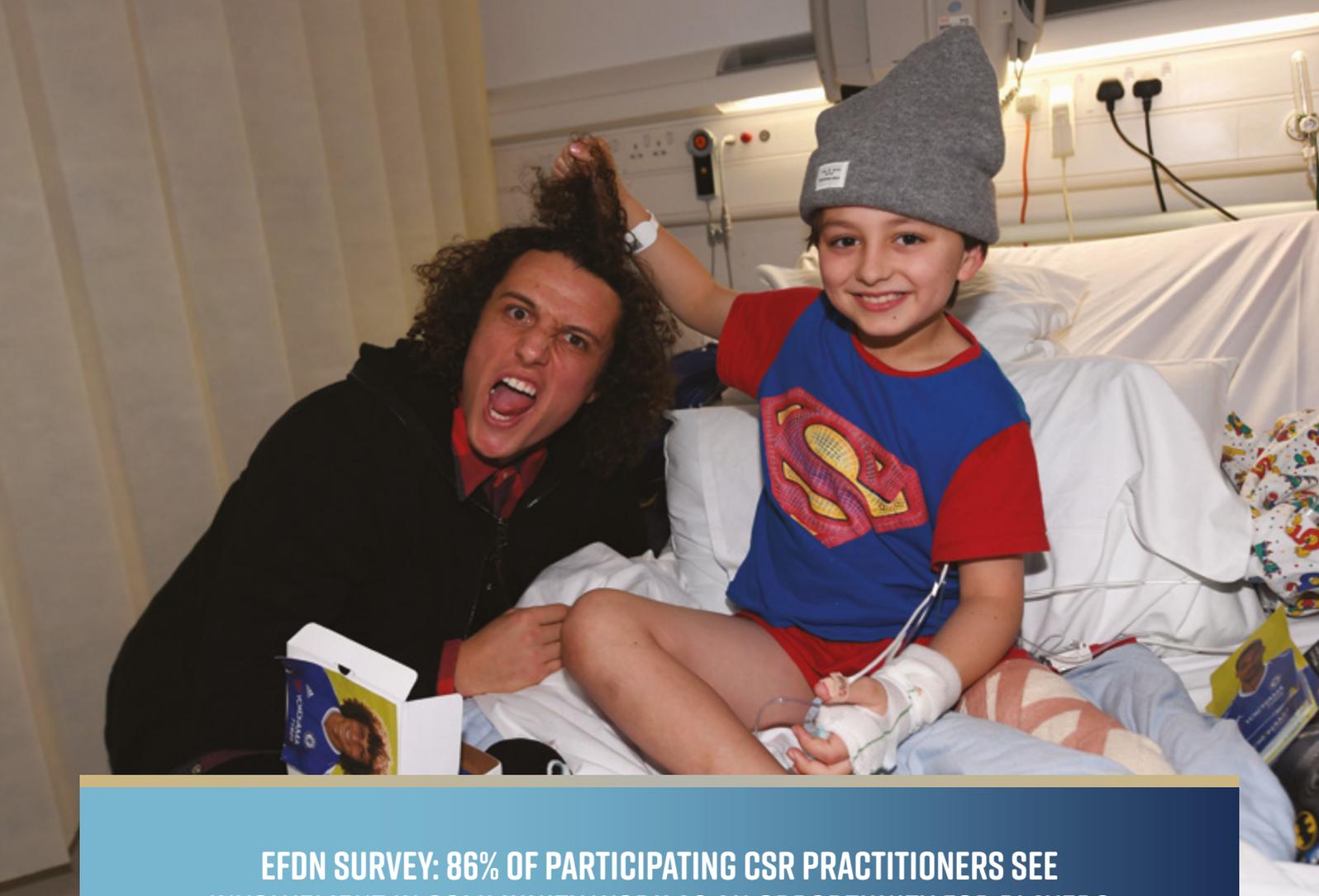
Another major motivation for clubs is media coverage and widespread awareness of their CSR work. Nearly all of the clubs that participated in our survey include player appearances to attract media attention for their social projects. "By using players, it is easier to get an interest in our stories and our community work", explains Guy Rippon from the Aston Villa Foundation.

Based on her experience at the Rangers Charity Foundation, Linda Shields goes a step further: "The player involvement is the backbone of our work. We raise awareness for our projects through the popularity of the players."

Posting pictures and publishing articles about the activities informs fans about the social programmes and encourages them to participate, volunteer or donate in the future. With the rise of social media and the increasing influence of sports personalities, the players' own media channels offer new potential.

A BOOST FOR THE PLAYERS' PERFORMANCE

We are certain that well organised appearances in the community can have a positive influence on players' performance on the pitch. According to our survey, 79% of CSR practitioners see a positive impact



EFDN SURVEY: 86% OF PARTICIPATING CSR PRACTITIONERS SEE INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY WORK AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PLAYERS TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.

on the players during and after the visits. Greater self-confidence, a good mood and improved personal skills were among the effects they mentioned during the interviews.

Kim Birtwistle, who works at the Northampton F.C. Community Trust, said **“It gives players a boost, if they do not have a great week and they see that they can make a change to the week of another person.”**

It is therefore important to recognise the potential benefits for players, especially because mental health issues among players have become more common in recent years.

INTERESTS OF SPONSORS

46% of our respondents said that player involvement contributes to a higher interest of sponsors to support the community

activities of the club. This is very likely related to the increased media outreach that players generate.

CLUB IDENTIFICATION

Lastly, involvement in the club community can help players identify better with the club and the fans. Robin Joop, who works in the CSR Department of VfL Wolfsburg, underlined this, saying **“Social projects provide the opportunity to connect players with the club and its region.”**

Greg Baker from the Saints Foundation, however, pointed out the limited influence of community work on players’ decisions on their future careers: “No player is likely to stay at a club because of the good community work.”

Benefits for the players

ENERGY BOOST

It feels good to do good. Acting to the benefit of others generates a feeling of happiness and gratitude. Especially if players are suffering from an injury or excessive pressure, participating in a social activity can be a positive distraction and, in Hanstveit’s words, can “make the players proud of having the power to make a positive difference”.

David Cornell, player at Northampton Town F.C. and ambassador of the club’s Girls’ Programme, confirms this: **“I always find myself enjoying the time spent out in the community. It’s great going to schools to take part in their events especially if**



we do a Q&A session because you never know what questions could come up, there's always something that makes me laugh and it's great to see the enjoyment on the faces of the pupils."

Andreas Luthe, player at FC Augsburg, who works with children from different backgrounds, says **"I take a lot out of the project, like the different perspectives and opinions of the children. I try to use that to adjust the focus of our team, which includes players with different characters, different nationalities and different religions, to achieve one goal"**.

TEAMBUILDING

Players make a difference in the community, and team spirit makes a difference in football matches. It is best to combine the two. There are a lot of opportunities for players to have fun with the participants in social programmes. The unusual environment can strengthen their team spirit off the pitch.

Marcel Schäfer, former player and currently Sports Director at VfL Wolfsburg, has experienced the power of community work at his club's *Gemeinsam bewegen* (Moving Together) Day. **"The Moving Together Day is a great opportunity for the entire VfL family to come together and work on something together"**, says Schäfer.

OWN BRANDING

Doing good can undoubtedly have a positive effect on a player's image. In the past, some players have responded to

personal failures by becoming involved in funding events or setting up charities. This is certainly not a bad thing, as long as the engagement is sustainable and the player is not just playing a role.

This point was raised by some of the beneficiaries and the people in their environment who were interviewed in the NISO study. They emphasised that players should be genuine during visits. Community work then provides opportunities for the players, as Jan Ryrlén from IF Elfsborg said:





“Participating in community work is a way for players to place their trademark and become known by supporters and other people in the neighbourhood.”

SELF-DISCOVERY

Community work can lead to self-discovery. While visiting programmes, players discover that they and their teammates have hidden skills and interests. Hanstveit’s study also reported that several players were surprised to see that teammates have other personal qualities than those they show in the dressing room, during training and in games.

Discovering new sides of themselves during social work can take some time, as Linda Shields from the Rangers Charity explains: “Footballers are not entertainers. But once they realise that the events and the people are nice, they come out of their shell.”

Personal development

Visits can be valuable experiences for players. Speaking in front of a class, talking to people with disabilities and learning about various issues can help improve their life skills. This is especially valuable as very few players can stop working after the end of their playing careers. Their experiences in community work are very helpful in their life

after football. In the words of Ib Rasmussen of Randers FC, “the players should learn about social activities and CSR, also for their future careers”.

For John Hudson of the PFA, personal development is one of the main motivations of the Association’s programmes. “Our education and community programmes aim to make footballers not only good players but also good individuals and that they take over the experiences over to life after football,” says Hudson.



WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES

1. LACK OF TIME / LOGISTICS

For more than 64% of the participants in our club survey, players' lack of time is a major challenge. Matches, training and often media and sponsoring events have a higher priority than community work. And of course, players need their free time. That makes the timing and preparation of charity activities and effective use of opportunities even more important, especially for clubs playing in international competitions.

2. LACK OF MOTIVATION

"No, thanks" is an often heard answer when players are asked to take part in community work. For one in three participants in our survey, lack of motivation among players is an obstacle in their daily work. And this can only partly be explained by players' (lack of) ability to connect with programme participants. Only 18% of respondents saw this as an important factor in successful player appearances.

At the same time, 36% of respondents see players participating voluntarily in club projects. This shows that there is a lot of interest among some players for community work.

Clubs could change their procedures or include community work clauses in players' contracts to make sure they take part in programmes or face sanctions. But as mentioned before, research shows that it is crucial that players are genuine during their visits. If not, there may be no effect – or even a negative one – on the beneficiaries.

Luckily there is a way to solve this problem: get players involved, or more intensely. Practitioners told us that contact with the beneficiaries motivates players in itself. Hanstveit's research reached the same conclusion: "A joyful experience at being involved in activities to help others will have a high degree of prosocial motivation in later stages".

3. ACCESS

The priority of professional footballers is sporting success. And the overarching goal of every club is to win matches and trophies. To avoid distracting from this main goal, access to the players is naturally limited. That varies from club to club, depending on the viewpoint of the management. Luckily, for most EFDN clubs, the management and the head coach of the first team do not restrict the involvement of players in community work.

In only two of 25 clubs that participated in our survey, practitioners complain about lack of support from the club management and the head coach.

To ensure the long-term support of the club management, they must be aware that player visits are of high quality and have a positive impact on the beneficiaries and the players.

4. MISMATCH BETWEEN PLAYERS AND ACTIVITIES

Sending the right players to the right activity is essential for a successful player visit. Besides players' preferences, which should be identified in interviews or a questionnaire at the beginning of their engagement for the club, other factors can play a role:

- Language: 14% of the EFDN survey participants said that this a challenge.
- Culture: players who are new at a club and in a country in particular might have difficulties dealing with situations outside the football environment.
- Character: for example, it is not a good idea to send introvert players to a children's dance class.
- Age gap: players may not be experienced in dealing with elderly or very young people.
- Personal background: due to family issues, a player might not want to experience a specific situation again. On the other hand, players with children of their own may be more interested in community programmes with children.

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“WE TRIED SOMETHING NEW. WE WROTE PERSONAL LETTERS TO THE PLAYERS THAT WE WANTED TO TAKE PART IN OUR ACTIVITIES. WE EXPLAINED WHAT WE WANTED FROM THEM AND DESCRIBED WHAT A DIFFERENCE THEIR ATTENDANCE WOULD MAKE. BECAUSE OF THAT, THE LATER VISITS WERE EVEN BETTER THAN BEFORE.”

- PAWEŁ WILIŃSKI, LEGIA FOUNDATION -

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR PLAYER VISITS

This section offers practical tips for developing a strategy for player visits, based on the academic research and practical tips suggested by CSR practitioners at EFDN member clubs and other organisations included in the best practice section.

A strategy for player involvement could pass through the following phases:

PHASE

1

START OF THE SEASON

- Set requirements for the players
- Profile the players
- Designate a contact person
- Choose a time slot

PHASE

2

PREPARING A PLAYER VISIT

- Choose the right players
- Work together
- Inform the players
- Inform the hosts

PHASE

3

CONDUCTING A PLAYER VISIT

- Pick the players up, and liaison officers or other support staff
- Take more than one player, and let them have fun and talk to participants
- Distribute club items
- Communicate your engagement

PHASE

4

AFTER THE VISIT

- Collect feedback
- Give feedback
- Monitor and measure the impact

PHASE

5

END OF THE SEASON

- Player awards
- Share the good news
- Adjust procedures
- Seek partnerships





START OF THE SEASON

SET REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PLAYERS

Players' involvement in community work should start when they sign their contract with the club. According to our online survey, the majority of clubs regulate involvement in CSR activities in some way in their players' contracts.

“As a multisport club, we have the overall principle that attending a community event is as important as playing matches. Of course, we try to make sure that players do not have to leave the training centre too often, but it is their obligation as employees of the club.” says Bálint Máté from Ferencvárosi TC on the need for players to contribute to community work.

PROFILE THE PLAYERS

Only 70% of the clubs that participated in our online survey said that they profile players before an appearance by talking to them or via a questionnaire. To avoid uncomfortable situations for players and

disappointed programme participants, it is important to know the players' interests and strengths. A standard questionnaire listing the club's programmes enables players to choose their preferences – or at least state what they do not want to do. In

addition, a longer interview or questionnaire provides an opportunity to learn more about a player's background. If the player has experienced bullying, for example, that can be used in education schemes. You can find a standard template on page 46.



“OUR WORK IS WAY EASIER IF WE KNOW WHAT THE PLAYER LIKES. I THINK THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST CRUCIAL THINGS. I HATE IT IF PLAYERS FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE AND IF THEY DIDN'T ENJOY IT, BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT DO ANOTHER VISIT THEN.”

– KIM BIRTWISTLE, NORTHAMPTON TOWN F.C –

23 OF THE 25 CLUBS THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE EFDN ONLINE SURVEY HAVE A SPECIAL EMPLOYEE TO ORGANISE PLAYER APPEARANCES

“I already have a good basis by handing out the questionnaire at the beginning of the season”, says Howard Gould, Community Liaison Officer at the Leyton Orient Trust. Gould is confident using a template that can be adjusted easily.

DESIGNATE A LIAISON OFFICER

Having a contact person for player appearances brings a lot of benefits for the day-to-day work. It does not matter whether the contact is part of your foundation, a first-team staff member or someone else. It also depends on the club. But having such a contact, with detailed knowledge of the players' schedules, preferences and skills, is key to high-quality player appearances in the long term. The action of the contact person during the preparation and implementation of the programme is critical and can largely determine the success of an appearance.

“We always ensure that we have a senior member of our management team and members of the player liaison team present, to provide support to players whilst they are attending our schemes”, says Guy Rippon of the Aston Villa Foundation. As you can read on page 26, the Leyton Orient Trust successfully increased its number of player visits within a short time after naming Howard Gould as Community Liaison Officer.

Positive effects of a contact person on player appearances:

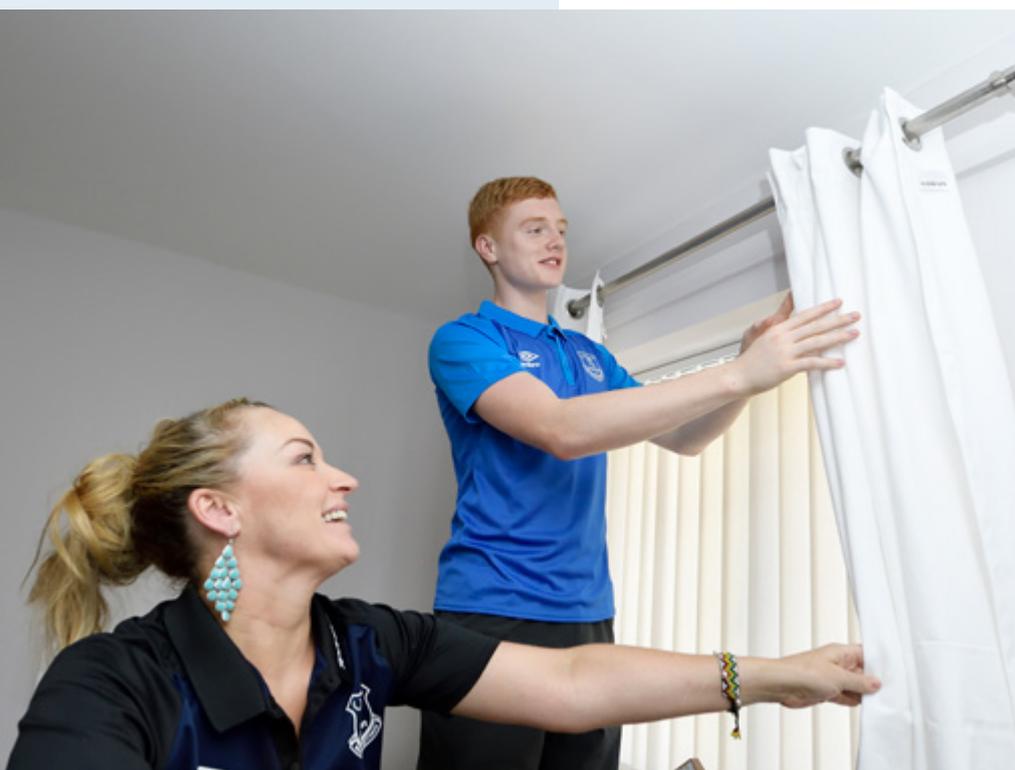
- relationship of trust with players
- detailed knowledge of their character, skills and preferences
- easy communication, including with external partners
- continuous monitoring and evaluation player appearances

CHOOSE A TIME SLOT

As you read before, time and access are main challenges in working with players. After the preseason, most teams only train once a day or have a day off during the week. You can agree with the manager and staff of the first team squad on a specific day when player appearances should happen. This is a strategy that John Hudson of the PFA supports: **“Timing gets more and more important in the higher leagues. Time is a constraint in the football world. If the players have free time every Thursday afternoon then we recommend building community activities around this time.”**

Once you have a slot, you can inform your project leaders and your social partners. That long-term planning is a lot easier and prevents last-minute requests to players. We advise starting the planning as soon as possible. Vitesse Arnhem developed a concept for providing players with information long before visits. **“Our players have a schedule for the whole year,”** says Robin Janssen, project leader of the Vitesse GOALS programme. **“The schedule marks the days when they have to attend marketing, business club or social activities. We can ask for players on these days.”**

“Every player should have the opportunity to participate in community activities and to open their mind to it”, says Ib Rasmussen of Randers FC. The majority of EFDN member clubs feel the same way. Player visits will be unequally distributed due to various factors, including injuries, requests from hosts or the marketing department, or the availability of a player. Schedules or regular meetings can help avoid some players feeling stressed while others are missing out on the club's community work.



PREPARING A PLAYER VISIT

A good player appearance depends on good preparation. The following steps are important in the days or weeks before the visit:

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLAYERS

Your club has received a request from a school or you have a special event in one of your community programmes. Now it's time to choose the players best suited to the visit (if the selection is not limited and there are no wishes from the hosts). You should know the players' preferences from the preseason talk and/or questionnaire. As mentioned before language, culture, the age gap, character and personal background should be considered.

“We hold a meeting about player appearances every month. The community, commercial and marketing department – all of them attend this meeting. Normally, each player does one activity for one of the departments every month. We discuss which player fits which activity”, says Greg Baker of the Saints Foundation.

WORK TOGETHER

Getting players involved is most often a team effort. The head coach has to be informed, the player liaison officer or the foundation has to be the link between programme and player. Furthermore, the media and marketing team has an interest in joining the activity. Communication between the departments is crucial to avoid misunderstandings and can at the same time offer great potential. “We are in a close dialogue with the players and other departments. The players know about the effect they can have,” says Steve Bond of Chelsea F.C., who contributed to development of the ‘Say No to Antisemitism’ campaign (see page 44).

INFORM THE PLAYERS

Players are more likely to participate in community work if it is easy and well organised. That also means that everything should be clear before an appearance. **“We try to equip players with as much knowledge as possible so that it feels like easy work for them”,** says Greg Baker of the Saints Foundation.

Valuable information for players:

- address of the location / meeting point
- date, time, duration of the visit
- activities and topics during the visits; possible questions
- information about the participants (age, expectations, aim of the programme)
- dress code
- phone number of the programme manager / Player Liaison Officer

INFORM THE HOSTS (AND THE PARTICIPANTS)

It is important to inform hosting institutions and/or community programme leaders so that players do not experience unpleasant surprises. The procedure should be clear, as well as what is possible and what is not; for example, that certain player visits will not take place or only rarely. **“We make specific requirements for sponsors and other hosts. Our players should not only sign autographs but should play an active part”,** says Ib Rasmussen of Randers FC. **“We want the visits to be something that the players look forward to and are**

”

“IF WE ARE GOING TO A SCHOOL TO SPEAK ABOUT BULLYING AND WE KNOW THAT ONE OF OUR PLAYERS EXPERIENCED BULLYING, WE SEE IF HE IS AVAILABLE.”

- TOBIAS TORGENSEN, STROMGODSET IF -





“WE HAVE TO BE HONEST WHILE PREPARING AND ANNOUNCING OUR PROGRAMMES. IF WE DON’T EXPLAIN THEM PROPERLY, CHILDREN CAN BE SAD BECAUSE OF UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS.”

– AISHA AL-SAID, BARÇA FOUNDATION –

comfortable doing. We don’t want to do them for the sake of it”, adds Guy Rippon of the Aston Villa Foundation.

We also recommend developing personalised info materials about the players. The players may not be known to all the participants. Especially in education schemes, players’ backgrounds can be interesting for the social partners. It is up to you to decide what information to provide about visiting players, depending on the circumstances. “For children, a surprise visit has a bigger effect”, says Bálint Máté of Ferencvárosi TC.



CONDUCTING A PLAYER VISIT

PICK THE PLAYERS UP

Players should be picked up before the activity starts - at the training centre, or perhaps in the car park of the hospital or next to the school. A drive can be used to give them a small briefing, to answer questions or to erase any doubts ahead of the appearance.

LIAISON OFFICERS OR OTHER SUPPORT STAFF

Players should 'never walk alone'; they should always be accompanied by the liaison officer or someone from the community programme. That makes it easier to introduce the players and, if something is unclear or the player feels uncomfortable, help and advice is available.

TAKE MORE THAN ONE PLAYER

If possible, try to send two or more players to each activity. They can help each other and it will encourage the positive effects mentioned above (teambuilding, self-discovery). **"We always send the young or new players together with older ones. Like that, they can rely on the more experienced ones"**, says Jan Rylén of IF Elfsborg.

LET THE PLAYERS HAVE FUN AND TALK TO THE PARTICIPANTS

If the topic and goal of a visit is not too serious, let the players have fun. One CSR practitioner described the players as "young boys" that love to have fun.

If the topic is more serious, like a discussion on bullying at a school or a visit to a hospice, appropriate behaviour is of

“WE ARE ALWAYS WITH THE PLAYERS DURING A VISIT. IF SOMETHING HAPPENS WITH THAT THE PLAYERS ARE NOT COMFORTABLE, WE CAN DIRECTLY INTERRUPT.”

- LINDA SHIELDS, RANGERS CHARITY -



course necessary. Especially in hospices or hospitals or when fulfilling a personal wish, it can be valuable for players to have the opportunity to talk with the participant in private.

DISTRIBUTE CLUB ITEMS

Players can distribute signed items as presents for hospital patients, rewards and incentives for students, or memorabilia for elderly people. Items that could be brought in a gift bag by players:

HOSPITAL PATIENTS

Cuddly toys (mascots), colouring books, pillows, tooth mugs, scarves

STUDENTS

Pens, notepads, autographs, stickers

ELDERLY PEOPLE

Keychains, badges, pins, CDs, flip flops, card sets

COMMUNICATE YOUR ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned in the section on potential and challenges, player appearances can attract a lot of media attention to the programmes. The visits should therefore be documented with photos or videos that can be shared later on. Positive reactions are also confirmation for the players.



AFTER THE VISIT



COLLECT FEEDBACK

It is important to evaluate the visit afterwards. The first feedback can be collected during the visit by observing the reaction and behaviour of the participants and the players.

“If we are able to inspire the younger generation to support and take part in sport and make good lifestyle choices then I believe the visit has been a successful one”, says David Cornell, player at Northampton Town F.C.

Take the opportunity to collect feedback after visits by asking the hosts and the beneficiaries. You will probably get suggestions for improvement or find some inspiration for your future community work. The feedback of the players is important to adjust processes and learn more about the individual perspective.

GIVE FEEDBACK

It is also important for hosts and, in particular, players to receive feedback. Feedback to hosts can improve quality on

subsequent visits, while the feedback to players can increase their motivation for future appearances. As John Hudson of the PFA notes: **“The more feedback players receive, the more they are interested in the community work.”**

MONITOR AND MEASURE THE IMPACT

Player appearances should be continually monitored to assess their impact. The visits should be analysed critically through talks or – even better – questionnaires and structured interviews. **“Evaluation is important to be accountable”**, emphasises Aisha Al-Said of the Barça Foundation. But not all clubs conduct evaluations. Four clubs that participated in our online survey do not measure the impact of player visits on players and participants. John Hudson of the PFA believes that this needs to change and wants to increase and improve the evaluation of English clubs in the future: **“We want to empower clubs to develop their own questionnaires and studies.”**

For monitoring and evaluation, it would be interesting to analyse not only facts and figures – like the number of visits and participants – but also the players’ perspectives. Questions could include:

- How did the player feel before / during / after the visit?
- Would the player do it again? If not, why not?
- How can the organisation of the visit be improved?



“WE TAKE FEEDBACK ON OUR PLAYERS AND OUR WORK FROM SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE NOT STRONGLY CONNECTED TO FOOTBALL. IT’S GOOD FOR US IN ORDER TO CORRECT AND CHANGE THINGS AND TO GET AN IMPRESSION HOW OTHER NON-FOOTBALL PEOPLE SEE OUR PROGRAMMES.”

– ANASTASIOS PAPADOPOULOS, PAOK SALONIKI –

END OF THE SEASON



PLAYER AWARDS

The English Professional Footballers' Association (PFA, see page 27) has already established an award system, together with other football bodies. English clubs announce the club winners, who then become eligible to win the league award. An award is a form of recognition that has a positive impact on motivation for future participation on CSR activities.

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

The majority of the clubs that participated in our online survey publish articles about the involvement of players in their CSR-work. In addition, an annual review of the players' CSR activities can sensitize fans to the community and the players' good work. Besides stories and case studies, the annual reviews should contain facts and figures.

ADJUST PROCEDURES

Negative feedback or the end of the season are good opportunities to rethink the programmes and the procedure for appearances. This is a good way to solve practical problems, like an unbalanced distribution of visits within the team.

SEEK PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are important for community work. Institutions like schools and hospitals, as well as player foundations and other NGOs, are always happy to receive a player but also offer opportunities to change the portfolio of appearances and programmes. Among the best practices presented in the following part of this guide are two examples of club-player foundation cooperation.



“WE ORGANISE A READING DAY EVERY YEAR. IN RECENT YEARS, THE SAME GERMAN PLAYERS HAVE ALWAYS PARTICIPATED. WE WANT TO SEARCH NOW FOR A BILINGUAL SCHOOL.”

– ROBIN JOOP, VFL WOLFSBURG –

“COOPERATION WITH PLAYER FOUNDATIONS OR OTHER NGOS CAN BE VERY VALUABLE FOR CLUBS, BECAUSE EACH PARTNER CAN CONCENTRATE ON ITS STRENGTHS. FC AUGSBURG FOR EXAMPLE, DOES NOT HAVE A BIG CSR DEPARTMENT AND THEREFORE DOES NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO CONCEPTUALISE, CONDUCT AND EVALUATE PROJECTS. BUT THE CLUB HAS A BIG AUDIENCE, WHICH GIVES THEM A WIDE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.”

– JONAS ERMES, IN SAFE HANDS E.V –

PLAYER FOUNDATIONS A PARTNER IN THE COMMUNITY WORK



WHAT TOPICS ARE PLAYERS INTERESTED IN?

Hillebrandt's study, which focuses on players who competed in the UEFA Champions League in the 2009/10 season, identified 19 foundations. The study shows that more than half of player foundations 'target education and further initiatives for children and youth'. 42.1% focused on 'recreation and sport' and 21.1% on 'social welfare'. Others focus on a specific issue, like fighting racism or a disease.

The drivers for players to set up a foundation can vary. Promoting their own image and financial benefits certainly play a role but there are other motives that are more ethical. Earlier research has shown that the presence of a club foundation and identification with the club have a positive effect on encouraging players to set up their own foundations.

HOW CAN CLUBS AND PLAYER FOUNDATIONS WORK TOGETHER?

Each partnership has to be set up on an individual basis, but there are various models possible. The two models described in the following section differ in how their know-how and resources are arranged.

WHY SHOULD CLUBS AND PLAYER FOUNDATIONS WORK TOGETHER?

Hildebrandt's study discovered that player foundations are most likely interested in long-term programmes, that not only increase the probability of a sustainable impact but also allow their staff to work on their concepts constantly. For clubs, this offers the opportunity to create a long-lasting partnership and extend their CSR portfolio without financial risks. Another major benefit of collaboration is the possibility of combining resources and thus ensure that joint projects are of a high quality. Clubs can provide support by, for example, sharing their stadium,

network and communication channels. Player foundations can then focus on fundraising and conceptual work. The two best practices described in the next section showcase individual approaches suitable for clubs and player foundations.

The Foundation of the German Bundesliga examined the work of ten player foundations of current and former Bundesliga players. The key results were as follows:

- The engagement of the foundations in 2016 had an overall value of 3.3 million euros.
- Donations and grants make up the biggest share of this value.
- The foundations focus on projects. Most of them are long-term oriented.
- The projects focus on employment, education, social inclusion and teaching values.

ONLY FIVE OF 25 CLUBS THAT PARTICIPATED IN OUR SURVEY WORK TOGETHER WITH PLAYER FOUNDATIONS

A NEW TREND IN THE FUTURE?

The number of player foundations in the football sector has increased in recent years. A 2011 study by Hillebrandt suggests that social engagement by setting up a foundation became popular at the end of the 2000s. In comparison to the number of charities founded by American football players, however, the number of foundations in Europe is still low.

EFDN MEMBER FC SCHALKE 04 WAS NOMINATED FOR THE 2018 ECA CSR AWARD 2018, TOGETHER WITH ITS PARTNER, THE MANUEL NEUER KIDS FOUNDATION. BOTH PARTIES COMBINE THEIR DIFFERENT RESOURCES FOR A PROGRAMME THAT GETS CHILDREN PLAYING MUSIC INSTRUMENTS. THE JOINT PROJECT HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR MANY YEARS, DESPITE MANUEL NEUER LEAVING THE CLUB IN 2011.

Cooperation between clubs and player foundations

IN SAFE HANDS E.V. AND FC AUGSBURG

BACKGROUND

Two goalkeepers, one goal: Andreas Luthe and Jonas Ermes started the first project of their charity "In safe hands e.V." in 2015. The non-profit organisation chose to focus on children between 6 and 12 years old as a target group. It aims to use sport as a tool for fostering social-emotional skills and integration processes as well as to teach values like tolerance and solidarity. Since the initiative started, the number and scope of programmes have evolved continuously.

ACTIVITIES

The organisation recently started its fourth long-term programme. It runs the following four programmes in the area of Bochum, where Luthe played until 2016 and Ermes ended his career early, and Augsburg, where Luthe is currently playing for the Bundesliga club:

- Strangers become friends: Bringing 8-12 years old children from different backgrounds together through football training, using a sport for development approach.
- School dialogue: Presentations and dialogue with young schoolchildren on migration, integration and human rights.
- Integration school: Combining a project week including workshops on racism and migration with a football tournament in three different high schools.
- Colourful ball: Promoting the social and emotional intelligence of primary school pupils. The programme will be monitored and evaluated by the German Sport University in Cologne.

In safe hands e.V. also cooperates with VfL Bochum and FC Augsburg on other projects and activities, including the most recent Bundesliga-wide campaign against stereotypes and racism.

RESULTS

Only three years after its foundation, In safe hands e.V. has built up a broad portfolio of programmes and partners. The cooperation with VfL Bochum and FC Augsburg has been intensified in recent months. All partners have experienced significant benefits from combining the programme conception and delivery of In safe hands e.V. with the clubs' network and communication resources. The organisation was awarded special funding by the German Football League (DFL) and was nominated for the 2017 Peace & Sport Award in the category "NGO of the year". For Ermes, who works for In safe hands e.V. full-time, the decision to set up the organisation was a right one: "Andreas and I want to show that footballers can

use their model role to have a huge impact on society. The joy of the children motivates us and it doesn't feel like work when we hold an event or training. It is an unbelievable fulfilment." He thinks that charity work can help to maintain players' passion for football, especially in difficult periods of their career. Manuel Baum, Coach of FC Augsburg, supports Luthe in his engagement and sees major benefits for the whole team: "The experiences and values that Andreas brings into the team are more valuable than using the time to occupy himself even more with footballer matters."

“I TAKE A LOT OUT OF THE PROJECT, LIKE THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND OPINIONS OF THE CHILDREN. I TRY TO USE THAT TO ADJUST THE FOCUS OF OUR TEAM, WHICH INCLUDES PLAYERS WITH DIFFERENT CHARACTERS, NATIONALITIES AND RELIGIONS, TO ACHIEVE ONE GOAL.”

– ANDREAS LUTHE, IN SAFE HANDS E.V. –



THE FEYENOORD FOUNDATION AND GIOVANNI VAN BRONCKHORST FOUNDATION

BACKGROUND

“I am very grateful to have experienced so many highlights in my life. That’s why I want to give something back”, says Giovanni van Bronckhorst on his foundation website. The former player started and ended his very successful career at the Dutch club Feyenoord Rotterdam. Van Bronckhorst initiated the cooperation between his own foundation and the Feyenoord Foundation many years ago. Giovanni said that he wanted children to achieve their dreams too and that he wanted to set up an educational programme. “We have the facilities and the teachers, so we made it happen together”, explains Gaby Hoogenboom, teacher in the S.V. GIO programme. The S.V. GIO project was established after talks with the municipality and is supported strongly by Giovanni and his wife Marieke, herself a former footballer and now a teacher. The cooperation between Feyenoord and this player foundation is another good example of how to combine different resources.

ACTIVITIES

Since 2012, 500 children have participated in the S.V. GIO programme each year. The programme consists of 20 lessons over 20 weeks. The lessons combine practical sports and formal education. The education lessons have been designed specifically for the programme and focus on three subjects: reading, mathematics and spelling.

“Giovanni is not only head coach of Feyenoord but also of S.V. GIO. He meets every participant at least twice. He shows up at the beginning and the end of the programme. He welcomes the participants to the club when they sign their ‘player contracts’ and visits the

sport day at the end of the programme”, explains Hoogenboom. She says that van Bronckhorst’s visits and the Feyenoord stadium have a big impact on the motivation of the participants. The programme itself is mainly delivered by the club, which has the facilities and the necessary know-how. The Giovanni van Bronckhorst Foundation contributes to the funding.” The Feyenoord Foundation does nearly all the field work. We have the facilities and great teachers who know the children from their work at schools in Rotterdam. We are happy with the cooperation and trust them with our project. They (Giovanni van Bronckhorst Foundation) focus on the funding and finding new partners and locations”, says Frans Dietvorst of the Feyenoord Foundation.

By setting small achievable goals in the lessons, the children have many opportunities to experience success. Feyenoord teaches the children different

sports like boxing, football, hockey and athletics. The lessons are based around Feyenoord’s stadium De Kuip, with the football club as the context. The programme uses the football environment, for example when kids have to create their own team with a specific budget.

RESULTS

The Feyenoord Foundation collaborates with the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. Studies have shown that the programme has a concrete impact. Increased self-confidence and improved school grades have been observed among participants. The support of Giovanni van Bronckhorst helps to motivate and inspire the kids while they try to reach their own goals. He has this advice: “You have to do what is in your heart and what you know about because then you really have something to give. When we heard that nearly a quarter of the children in Rotterdam started secondary school with a weakness in reading and writing, we knew we wanted to do something about it.”





Involving Young and Former Players

EDUCATING YOUNG PLAYERS LEGIA FOUNDATION, VITESSE ARNHEM, NAC BREDA

Another valuable option is to involve academy players in visits to community programmes. While the impact on the participants may not be deep as that of a club icon, participants in school projects can engage with young players who are more closely connected to their social reality. This interaction can also help the personal development of the academy players. It teaches them the responsibilities of a professional footballer and they will be more accustomed and open to being involved in community programmes later on, if they make it to the first team. Cultivating these relationships early is always valuable.

1 LEGIA WARSAW

The Legia Foundation contacts academy players through the coaches. Recently, young players have helped to maintain graves in a WWII cemetery and planted flowers in Warsaw. Some of the youth players also went to a kindergarten and took care of some of the pupils, to leave the teachers free to do other tasks.

“The young players are always happy when they can do something in their Legia kit. Especially those who probably have a future in football. They want to be a representative of Legia, want to make an impact and see the smiles of the children. This is a win-win situation”, says Paweł Wiliński of the Legia Foundation.

2 VITESSE ARNHEM

The Dutch club Vitesse Arnhem is trying to increase the involvement of youth academy players. Some of the players visited a special school for children with disabilities. “The kids were very happy because they received unexpected attention. And the players saw that they have a lot of advantages and were directly aware of the fact that they can have an influence and are role models”, says Robin Janssen, on the first steps towards a club-wide commitment to the community work.

“IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT PLAYERS LEARN HOW TO BEHAVE AND HOW TO SPEAK WHEN THEY ARE OUT IN THE NAME OF THE CLUB – ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PLAYERS.”

– JAN RYRLÉN, IF ELFSBORG –



“PLAYERS AT OUR YOUTH ACADEMY, LA MASIA, VISIT ELDERLY PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES. THEY STAY WITH THEM, TALK TO THEM AND SEE THAT THEY THEMSELVES HAVE A LOT OF PRIVILEGES. WE WANT THEM TO SEE LIFE OUTSIDE OF BARÇA. WE HOPE THAT THEY WILL THEN BE MORE COMMITTED TO SOCIAL PROJECTS IN THE FUTURE.”

- AISHA AL-SAID, BARÇA FOUNDATION -

3 NAC BREDA

The youth players at NAC Breda follow an educational curriculum. They learn not only about media and communication but also about their own potential social impact. “We make them aware of their impact and their role model function by including them in social programmes”, says CSR Manager Greetje Derks. Besides the personal

development of the young players, the programme has the benefit that they become familiar with the community work and more interested in making appearances. “I already see a difference between our youth players and players who came from other clubs. It helps and I am sure this will have an impact in the future”, says Derks.

“FOR OUR LOCAL PLAYERS ITS VERY COOL TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY WORK BECAUSE THEY GREW UP NOT FAR AWAY FROM THE PROJECTS”

- TOBIAS TORGENSEN, STRØMSGODSET.IF -

FORMER PLAYERS

Player’s engagement in their club’s community work does not have to stop when their careers end. Former players can be included in social programmes, especially if they still work for the club. With their more flexible schedules, wide experience and large football networks, former players can fulfil various roles:

- working as a permanent ambassador for your charity
- taking over appearances from players who are unable to attend
- participating in charity matches
- playing an active part in a project (e.g. Walking Football coach, Football Memories programme, FutbolNet, Inter Campus)
- representing the club’s community work on match days
- acting as a contact person for sponsors and social partners



“THERE ARE A LOT OF PLAYERS THAT COME BACK AND THAT ARE HAPPY TO BE WELCOMED BY OUR FANS. FOR THEM IT IS ALWAYS A SPECIAL TIME AND THEY HELP FOR EXAMPLE IN THE HOSPITALITY.”

- LINDA SHIELDS, RANGERS -

Involving Young Players

EVERTON IN THE COMMUNITY HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

BACKGROUND

On a cold November night in 2016, Under-23 (U-23) coach David Unsworth, his staff and the squad grabbed their sleeping bags and slept out at Goodison Park to help raise funds to combat homelessness in the local area. After taking part in the Goodison Sleepout in temperatures below freezing point, Blues favourite Unsworth and Everton CEO Professor Denise Barrett-Baxendale launched 'Home Is Where The Heart Is', a fundraising campaign to support young adults on the cusp of homelessness in Liverpool.

ACTIVITY

"The sleepout was a tough night and temperatures plummeted to minus four but we were all wrapped up with layers of clothing on. There are people out there doing this for real and that is the scary thing. That is why we are doing this - because we want to stop it", explained Unsworth about the motivation for the initiative.

A fundraising target of £230,000 was set with the objective of purchasing and operating a house that would offer vulnerable young people a place to live and benefit from the wraparound care of Everton in the Community (EitC). Over the course of nine months, the U-23 players and their staff participated in different fundraising events and received huge support from the fans.

From spending time with families at the Belvidere Family Centre on Christmas Day - preparing and cooking a full Christmas lunch for people who access the facilities of the Whitechapel Centre - to hosting the inaugural Everton Ultimate Chef event and



dedicating two U-23 Goodison Park fixtures to the campaign, Unsworth and his players helped to raise a total of £244,400. The campaign inspired the world of football and was boosted by significant cash donations from Everton Chairman Bill Kenwright, Blues giant Duncan Ferguson, Toffees right-back Seamus Coleman and the Everton Board of Directors.

RESULT

Fast forward two years. Everton CEO Barrett-Baxendale, Unsworth and a handful of U-23 players went along to visit the house that their fundraising efforts helped to purchase and renovate. "The success of this programme has seen David, our U-23s, our staff and our fans all actively engage with 'Home Is Where The Heart Is' to raise funds", said Professor Barrett-Baxendale.

"Modern-day footballers are in an incredibly privileged position and are supported by their club with everything, including dietary and fitness support and psychological matters," said Unsworth. "'Home Is Where The Heart Is' will see us offer that same level of support to the most needy across Liverpool and draw upon all areas of expertise within Everton in the Community to ensure that those young people accessing the facility will be given tangible life skills to set them on the right path in life."

"To be able to finish the project and help the people in Liverpool who need it most, it's the best and most rewarding thing I've ever done", said David Unsworth who was very proud and grateful after reaching the fundraising goal.

One contact for all

LEYTON ORIENT TRUST COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER

BACKGROUND

A report of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) some years ago was a shock for Leyton Orient F.C. and especially for its management. The club in the East of London found itself in the bottom two in the ranking list for Player appearances! This was an occasion for the management to question its strategy and to look for a solution. The club found it in the form of Howard Gould who took over the job as the Club Community Liaison Officer.

ACTIVITY

Gould developed a clear system to facilitate the cooperation between the club's charity, the Leyton Orient Trust, the Club itself, and the players in the community commitments. Although the club is not required to use the PFA player protocol anymore due to its relegation to the National League, the player liaison officer sticks to the formula used in the English Football League. "The player support questionnaire is a good practice. It is important to know what the players would like to do and to make them not feel embarrassed during visits. I have already a good base by handing out the questionnaire to each player at the

beginning of the season", explains Howard. Besides the filing of the players' interests before the season, the long-term preparation is an important component for him. The social institutions that would like to have a visit, are urged to hand in their request at least one month before and are informed that the chances for a player appearance are the best on Wednesdays in the afternoon. Therefore, Gould recommends the partners to build their activities around this window of opportunity. After Gould receives the request, he just has to match the activities and the players.

To avoid any uncertainty, Gould posts a plan with the marked days in the changing room and in the club facilities. By texting the manager and reminding the players via a message, both a week before and also the day prior to the visit, the Player Liaison Officer ensures that the player shows up and knows about the activity.

RESULTS

Only by using one afternoon every week, the numbers of player visits increased more than 150% during the first season in office. During the 2017/18 season, the O's players made more than 200 appearances in the community, engaging with over 1,500 people, including schoolchildren and hospital patients. They also came out in support of a number of national awareness days and were involved in "Coping through Football", a mental health project using football as its nucleus. These engagements were recognised by the The National League Trust with the award for the 'Best Project with Player Involvement'.

"We're very proud and pleased to receive this award for our work in the community. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to ensure players are matched with relevant community projects, and this has proved highly successful", said Gould after receiving the award.





Regulating Player Engagement

THE PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLERS' ASSOCIATION

The Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) is one of the key institutions in English football. The PFA can be seen as a driving force for the structuring and continuous improvement of player involvement in community work in English clubs. Building on best practice scenarios, the PFA has been able to raise standards of support and disseminate information to other clubs and players around the country.

BACKGROUND

In the 1980s football in England was in a state of crisis: hooliganism, vandalism, the Heysel Stadium and Hillsborough disasters – the government reacted with regulations and blamed the sport for societal problems.

Clubs and associations tried to put a stop to these negative tendencies by testing the first community schemes in the northwest of England. The PFA was involved in employing former players to engage in local schools. This was just the first step towards bringing communities and clubs together. Since then, the PFA has evolved as an organisation and in terms of the involvement of players in English football. Today, even funding depends on the organisation of player appearances. Therefore, the PFA and the 92 Premier League and EFL clubs have agreed on standard recommendations for achieving Capability Status, which is necessary for project funding.

ACTIVITIES

The PFA has strengthened its engagement for good governance over many years and can look back on various achievements in terms of organising player visits. The standard contracts of the English players include a provision for a contribution of three hours per week to the club's community and CSR work. Proper preparation starting with questionnaires during the preseason is one of the key requirements for good quality player appearances. "It is important to send the right player to the right activity to maximise the effect of a visit", explains John Hudson, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility at the PFA.



For Hudson, explicit feedback and a responsible contact person, like a Player Liaison Officer (see p. 13), are also necessary to guarantee the continuous participation of players: “The clubs should choose their Player Liaison Officers individually and should make sure that everyone knows who it is. For the players, it is more comfortable if there are similar structures and no changes in the processes when they move from one club to another. Then it’s more likely that they will be happy to work in the community again.”

The PFA itself supports organisations like The Princes Trust, The National Literacy Trust, Kick it Out and Show Racism the Red Card financially, along with a number of player foundations. It also evaluates player involvement in its activities. The aim of

collecting this extensive data is, according to Hudson, not to compare the clubs with each other, but “to make the most impact”.

RESULTS

“We have experienced that players can break down barriers more easily than teachers, the police or other authorities”, says Hudson. He also sees a clear benefit for the players in their participation: “The players can see an effect in the eyes of the participants. Community work is empowerment for the players as footballers and as individuals. They get more out of it than they invest in it.”

2017 PFA EVALUATION

As mentioned before, the PFA conducts evaluations with case studies and presents statistical analyses of player

appearances. Within the context of the evaluation, a player appearance is defined as a player (Men, Women & Apprentices) who participates in a community activity or event in support of one of the PFA’s designated themes or in support of another charitable initiative on behalf of the club.

- 92 Club Community Champions
- 37,532 Total number of player appearances
- 4,600 Training ground visits
- 4,126 Soccer schools
- 2,993 Supporting education
- 2,360 Presentations
- 1,684 Social inclusion projects

SHARING BEST PRACTICES

This part of the guide presents best practices of player involvement in the community work of EFDN member clubs and other organisations that use football as a tool for development. According to the Cambridge dictionary, a best practice is “a working method or set of working methods that is officially accepted as being the best to use in a particular business or industry, usually described formally and in detail.” This handbook includes best practices in different areas:

DISABILITY

- PAOK Action: Training with Jesus
- NAC Breda: Rabo G-Day

EDUCATION

- Ferencvarosi TC: Fradi School Programme
- Stromgodset IF: The Blue Hour
- Vitesse Betrokken: Vitesse GOALS
- Brentford FC: Learning Languages via Football

AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

- Northampton Town F.C.

CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF:

- Aston Villa Foundation: Toy Trolley Dash

FUNDRAISING

- Legia Foundation: Rowing Marathon
- Saints Foundation: A Game of Two Halves

CLUB ACTIVITY

- VfL Wolfsburg: Moving Together

HOSPITAL VISITS AND COOPERATION

- Rangers Charity Foundation
- Randers F.C.
- IF Elfsborg

AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS:

- Barça Foundation: Sign and Pass
- Chelsea F.C.: Say No to Antisemitism

To ensure a better overview, the descriptions of the best practices are divided into the following parts:

1

BACKGROUND:

provides information on the origins and inspirations of the activity.

2

ACTIVITY:

explains how player appearances are organised and implemented.

3

RESULTS:

describes the effects on the clubs, players and participants.





Disability

PAOK ACTION TRAINING WITH JESUS

BACKGROUND

PAOK fan Jesus is 8 years old. He came from Bulgaria to Thessaloniki in 2013 with his parents and his three step-siblings. Jesus was born with a very rare deformity described in medical terms as ectrodactyly of the hand, ipsilateral bifurcation of the femur and tibia agenesis.

He started attending a Greek school and in May 2014 he underwent surgery. Both legs were amputated from the knees down, in order to be fitted with prosthetic calves. After surgery, Jesus was crying and asking for his legs. From that moment on, getting back on his feet and being able to play football became a life mission.

ACTIVITY

PAOK was aware of Jesus' situation and helped him in his mission by donating the gate income from their home match against FC Olimpik Donetsk. The club also contacted its partners. Thessaloniki

Vice-Prefect Voula Patoulidou, President of SEEDA (the association of athletes of acknowledged excellence) Rabea Iatridou and the Chronopoulos Rehabilitation Centre all contributed to Jesus' recovery. In addition, Jesus was invited to the training centre. The whole squad were informed about the action in advance. The PAOK players formed a 'pasillo' (a guard of honour) to welcome Jesus, who was accompanied by the media team. The players were impressed by the young fan's passion and joy. Jesus even helped coach Razvan Lucescu during his team talk and was able to play a little with his favourite players.

RESULT

"It was a real good break and good for both the players and the child", said CSR Coordinator A. Papadopoulos, who recognized major awareness among the players. "The players saw that life is not always smooth and easy. Jesus had paid

money to play with them just for few minutes while they get paid much money for playing. The goal was that that they see this disbalance." PAOK also used the video material for the last #Morethanfootball campaign. The story quickly went viral. The image of Jesus reached more than 13,000 likes on Instagram. The players felt gratitude because of the strong and positive feedback.

The club and Jesus are still in contact and he has conducted an interview with a player. This action is just one of many PAOK initiatives focused on disability and social inclusion. The club gives financial and other support to the association for people with Down syndrome, and organised a training session in blind football for its players, led by visually impaired athletes. The players enjoyed this completely new experience and raised awareness for another important issue.

Disability

NAC BREDA RABO G-DAY

BACKGROUND

The Rabo G-Day is a special event in many ways. Teams of players with mental or physical disabilities compete in a tournament at Dutch Eredivise club NAC Breda's Rat Verlegh Stadium. Not only the whole staff but also the whole first team is involved in this day.

ACTIVITY

The players play a special role during the tournament. Each of the 24 competing teams is allocated a NAC first-team squad player as supervisor and coach. The players are given a briefing before the competition starts. "I explain to them what their tasks will be and what we expect from the day. I brief them on every detail", says Greetje Derks, CSR Manager at NAC Breda. The highly motivated players from the 'G-teams', who come from clubs in the Breda area, then welcome their new coaches. The NAC players have clear tasks, as Derks explains: "The players have to guide their team during the tournament. They should cheer for them and make sure that the participants have a good time." If the NAC players need any help or additional advice, the 'real' coaches or the staff of the clubs CSR department can help them. But, in general, the professional players take over the responsibility and give their team very helpful tips.

The '4 vs. 4' tournament starts around noon and, in 2018, the final was around 5 pm. Traditionally, the final match is refereed by NAC's head coach and all the first-team players motivate the participants.



RESULTS

The teams participating in the last few G-days were always happy if they could take part again the following year. The players also enjoy the day – at least most of them. "Most say that it was a great day and the best social activity of the year", says Derks. "But some of them found it difficult to deal with the mental disabilities of some participants".

That the Rabo G-Day is a regular and well organised event is a result of the positive feedback and of the experience of the staff: "We are fortunate that two of our staff members are former footballers", says Derks. "They are already familiar with this event from their own careers." Sponsor Rabobank is also convinced of the value of the G-day and has supported its organisation since 2010.



Education

FERENCVÁROSI TC FRADI SCHOOL PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

The Fradi School Programme was launched in the fall of 2015 and has so far reached more than 45,000 pupils in 150 schools. The aim of the programme is to teach kids about life as a professional athlete and other specific topics, like nutrition or physical activity. In addition, the club tries to reach the next generations, who may later become athletes or supporters of Ferencváros.

ACTIVITY

After a briefing at the training facilities, most often two athletes - one footballer and one athlete from another section of the club - go to a school, together with the moderator, the photographer and the mascot. Sometimes the minibus even crosses borders: Ferencváros also reaches out to Hungarians living abroad. At the schools, often hundreds of enthusiastic pupils are waiting for the players. The schools can set preferences in terms of which players visit and the club tries to fulfil their wishes. To avoid

over-dependency on the players and to guarantee high quality, Ferencváros has elaborated a clearly structured programme that includes the following elements:

- Q & A about Ferencváros
- A funny quiz about the club with prizes for correct answers
- Image film about Ferencváros
- Launch of a drawing competition about Ferencváros
- Funny exercises
- Live chat with elite athletes & players, legends and the mascot
- Dedications and photo shootings
- Distributing club-branded products:
 - stickers
 - school sets
 - scarves
- Invitation for pupils to attend a Ferencváros match for free

The key topic of the presentations and discussion is always related to current issues or ongoing action/awareness events like the European Week of Sport.

RESULTS

The Fradi School and the contribution of the athletes had a positive impact on the popularity of Ferencvárosi TC. The results can be seen in two specific statistics: more than 8,000 of the pupils used their free tickets, and more than 2,000 returned to the stadium at least once after their first visit. Motivated by the success of the basic model, the club is working on a Fradi School Programme 2.0 that shifts the focus from quantity to quality.

Education

STRØMSGODSET IF THE BLUE HOUR

BACKGROUND

Strømsgodset started the Blue Hour (*Blåtimen*) community programme in the summer of 2016. In the programme, first team players and coaches visit local kindergartens, primary schools, high schools, universities and clubs on a regular basis to share their experiences and expertise through Blue Hour lectures, group work or practice sessions. Strømsgodset aims to use its role-model power to inspire, motivate and help children and young people in the community to work towards the main goal: making Drammen a better city to grow up in.

ACTIVITY

What makes Blue Hour unique is that the participants can choose their own topic for discussion. The club offers several Blue Hour topics on its website, including integration, racism, team-building and

internet/social media behaviour guidelines. By offering this variety, Strømsgodset ensures that interested hosting institutions can choose a topic that is relevant and interesting to its daily work. Together with the players, the staff of the community programme present exercises, explain topics, lead group work and share views and tips on how to behave in problematic situations. The players are actively involved in the delivery of the Blue Hours. The audience of the visits varies from a few dozen to around 300 children. The main target group is children between 6 and 12 years old. Sometimes the players also bring the children free tickets for a Strømsgodset home game.

RESULTS

Last year, there were 200 Blue Hour visits in total. Club captain Jakob Glesnes has participated in the programme the most.

The 23-year-old was named "Role model of the year" in Norwegian football in 2017 – a testament to his efforts and recognition for Strømsgodset's community work.

The overall feedback on the Blue Hour visits is positive, according to coordinator of the social department Tobias Torgersen: "Most people really appreciate it. That's great because we want to be supported by the whole city of Drammen." Due to the good performance of the programme in recent years and the participant's relationship of trust with the players, participation in the Blue Hour is not an issue: "The players have had a couple of pleasant experiences and are always interested in more", says Torgersen. "For them it's always fun and the participation is part of the culture in the team."



Education

VITESSE BETROKKEN VITESSE GOALS

BACKGROUND

Vitesse GOALS is a social health initiative of Vitesse Betrokken, the foundation of Vitesse Arnhem. The innovative programme focuses on children aged 6 to 12 years old from low-income districts. It complements the work that Vitesse delivers through the school and after school programme which focuses on child obesity and improving



physical activity, involving parental engagement whilst providing pathways to join local sports clubs within the districts of the five partner schools.

ACTIVITY

Children with severe obesity or low physical and sporting engagement participate in an eight-week school programme. Health improvements are monitored throughout the course of the programme. Players are used as role models within the programme. The participating children can, for example, compare their results in the fitness tests to those of the first team players. When the kids fill in their own results they can directly see what the players achieved. They can also, for example, read in their Vitesse GOALS brochure about the favourite healthy dish and the weekly schedule of their sports heroes.

Vitesse players visit both the theory and practical sessions, demonstrate exercises and talk about their lives as professional

athletes. At the end of the eight-week programme, the participants can ask first team players questions in a press conference. The Vitesse players always get a memo and a short preparation before the press conference. The children ask questions related to the content of the lessons.

RESULTS

“The players are always motivated when they meet the kids”, says Robin Janssen, Project Manager at Vitesse Betrokken, who sees the participation of the players as an important component of the programme: “It can be seen immediately that they have a big influence on the way how children think.” The data collected during the programme showed that Vitesse GOALS had a significant impact on the participants – one of them even announced he would eat three apples a day to become as strong as his favourite player after the player revealed this information during one of the press conferences with the children.



EST. 1892



Education

BRENTFORD FC LEARNING LANGUAGES VIA FOOTBALL

BACKGROUND

To the delight and awe of the pupils, the two Brentford players Sergi Canós and Yoann Barbet ran a football session entirely in French and Spanish, showcasing their talents as they taught their pupils new football and language skills. The event was held to mark the European Day of Languages, which celebrates the 200 languages spoken in Europe.

ACTIVITY

“Dribbler comme Maupey” and “zigzag hasta el otro cono y hacer un pase a su compañero” were just some of the French and Spanish phrases that filled the air as the championship players coached the youngsters during the football session.

After the football session, the pupils’ linguistic skills were tested by quizzing the players in a mock bilingual press conference. Acting as journalists, the pupils asked the players what food they liked and the cultural differences of living in the UK. The pupils were also put through their paces as they learnt key football phrases such as ‘red card’ and ‘free kick’ in French and Spanish.

RESULT

“The session at Ealing Fields High School is an example of how we try and be innovative both on and off the field. We certainly inspired young people to enjoy sport and reach higher levels of educational attainment”, said Lee Doyle, Chief Executive

of Brentford FC Community Sports Trust. “We were here to show young people the importance of learning another language”, agreed player Yoann Barbet. “It has certainly helped me in my football career and it can help these pupils in the wider world”. Ben Bird, Head of Modern Languages at Ealing Fields High School, said: “It is exciting that our students are able to see how foreign languages can really play an integral part in their futures. It is often difficult to get students motivated by foreign languages, but an event like this can really inspire pupils.”

Ambassador Programme

NORTHAMPTON TOWN FC COMMUNITY TRUST

Northampton Town Football Club uses its ambassador programme to ensure constant engagement of players with participants of community programmes. Along with the numerous player visits (351 in the 2017-18 season) the club uses the ambassador programme to mobilise the potential for beneficiaries and for the players themselves.

For Kim Birtwistle, Community Operations Manager at the Northampton Town FC Community Trust, the benefits of the programme are obvious: "It is also good

for the players because they can build up a good rapport with the participants. We have for example players that are ambassadors for the disability programmes. The participants might not know them as Northampton Town FC players but when there is not a different player at every appearance, they get to know them as a person. The players can build a relationship with the participants, share a laugh with them and be an inspiration to them."

"I believe the work the players do in the community is beneficial for both the players and the local community as it brings

the club and the local community closer together", says David Cornell, player and ambassador of the women's programme at Northampton Town. "And hopefully it inspires the younger generation to take part in sport and develop an interest in Northampton Town Football Club".



Campaign Kick-off

ASTON VILLA FOUNDATION TOY TROLLEY DASH



BACKGROUND

The Aston Villa Foundation has been active in its local community for 30 years. The club from Birmingham is described by many of its supporters as a second family. After

the tragically early death of a club steward who left a wife and six children, Aston Villa demonstrated what it really means to be a member of the 'Aston Villa Family'.

ACTIVITY

Steward and Villa fan Jermain Hayden sadly passed away in early December 2017, leaving young widow Michaela and six children facing the prospect of Christmas without their father and husband for the first time. As part of the club's 'Supporting Our Own' initiative, two members of the playing squad had expressed the wish to help a deserving family in the local community and support them with a Christmas surprise.

The Aston Villa Foundation worked alongside the human resources department and the communications team at the club's Bodymoor Heath training ground to demonstrate to the Hayden family and Villa fans what it means to 'Support Our Own'. On a crisp December morning, the Hayden family were picked up from their house close to Villa Park and, to the surprise and delight of the children, were taken on a tour of Bodymoor Heath, where they watched the team train and met boss Steve Bruce. Bruce treated wife Michaela and her sister to a spa day at the world-famous Belfry Golf Course and Spa, as well as handing over vouchers for a festive food hamper. Aston Villa players Neil Taylor and Gabriel

Agbonlahor surprised the kids by welcoming them to the training ground and proceeding to tell them that they were taking them to a local toy superstore to fill some trolleys with toys as a special Christmas treat.

Guy Rippon, Head of Foundation & Community explained “This was about a number of departments coming together from within the club to do something special for one of our own. Jermain was a popular member of staff who was very proud of his family. He was a big Villa fan and it just felt right that we as the club should make Christmas just that little bit more bearable for the family.”

“It didn’t change anything for them, but it showed Michaela that the club genuinely cared. We had launched the ‘Supporting Our Own’ corporate social responsibility strategy a few weeks before, and Neil and Gabby making this amazing gesture just

showed what can be done when the club pulls together. This really encapsulated what we were trying to do with connecting the club to the Aston Villa Family through Supporting Our Own.”

“A really important part of the ‘Supporting our Own’ campaign is actually the player and manager involvement and the support of the wider staff. This is not only about one or two people who want to do this, it is about good people across the club wanting to give something back”, said Andy Taylor, Foundation & Community Manager. The Foundation carefully prepares for player visits, with the focus on ensuring the players are aware of the projects they are attending and are carefully hand-picked.

“There is also a ‘less is more’ approach to player visits.” Rippon said. “We want the visits to be something that the players look

forward to and are comfortable doing. We don’t want to do them for the sake of it and we always ensure we have a senior member of our management team and members of the player liaison team present, to provide support to players whilst they are attending our schemes.”

RESULT

The Foundation team also works alongside the club’s media and communications team to produce excellent content and coverage of the player visits. The players recognised these efforts by continuing to show their support for the Supporting Our Own scheme, with players like Jack Grealish, who was named Community Player of the Year in 2017 for his genuine interest in community work and is one of the faces of the campaign.



Fundraising

SAINTS FOUNDATION A GAME OF TWO HALVES

BACKGROUND

With 'A Game of two Halves', Southampton Football Club's Saints Foundation organises a creative fundraising event. In an entertaining show, a team of current players competes against former players. Fans can buy tickets for the event and constitute the live audience for the show. The special circumstances also mean special requirements in the selection of the players. "We discussed the selection during our monthly meeting on player appearances. We looked for players who are willing to talk in front of a live audience and to sit on a stage. It should not be someone who would not feel comfortable because, for example, English is not his first language", said Greg Baker, Head of Saints Foundation and Community Partnerships.

ACTIVITY

Charlie Austin, Jack Stephens, Cedric Soares and Matt Targett were the current players who participated in the latest version. The Game of Two Halves saw the two teams go head-to-head in a series of entertaining challenges. Quickfire question rounds about the club and football in general were part of the programme. But the players also had to guess special guests by touching them blindly or from a drawing by one of their team members. Charlie Austin's team of Superstars were the winners for the second time against Matt Le Tissier's Legends, with a winning score of 58-56. In the meantime, the guests had the opportunity to obtain Saints memorabilia.

RESULTS

The 2018 edition raised over £9000 for charity. The event left not only the Saints foundation very happy, but also the players: "Some of the players told me that they enjoyed it way more than they had expected beforehand", said Greg Baker. "They said that they would not mind doing it again."



SAINTS
FOUNDATION



Fundraising

LEGIA FOUNDATION ROWING MARATHON

BACKGROUND

The Legia Foundation supports the community in Warsaw and its surroundings. The first rowing marathon – over 2,300 km rowed on ergometers located at the Legia Stadium in 24 hours – was supported by hundreds of people. The money raised was used to help people with disabilities.

ACTIVITY

Another rowing competition followed later. This time, the players were involved and had to show their power and strength. Their motivation was even higher, as the fundraising activity was organised together with the most fanatic supporters. Legia gathered as many players as it could. Their challenge was to row the length of the River Vistula, 1,047 km.

About 400 people participated in the grand rowing event, including footballers, basketball players, members of the Legia Warsaw board, supporters, representatives of the Legia section, Olympic and World Championship medallists and other sports stars, leading sports journalists, actors, and representatives of sponsors and event partners. Two teams of four rowed for 15 minutes at a time, and were then replaced by another eight rowers. For every kilometre rowed, they raised a specific amount of money from the sponsors. After 12 hours – from 10 am to 10 pm – they had rowed 1.317.7 km, 270 km more than expected.

RESULTS

In total, more than 50,000 euros were raised for a new ambulance for the Children's

Memorial Health Institute, which was celebrating its 40th anniversary. As one of the biggest children's hospitals in Poland, the Institute treats over 200,000 severely ill kids every year. Its ambulances cover 800,000 kilometres throughout Poland each year, transporting sick and disabled children, including babies in incubators and dialysis patients. "Thanks to the supporters, the partners and all the participants for their great commitment. Together we achieve more", said Anna Mioduska, President of the Legia Foundation, after the fundraising event.



Club Activity

VFL WOLFSBURG MOVING TOGETHER

BACKGROUND

Hammering, drilling and sawing for a good cause: on Moving Together Day, a total of 200 participants, including players, employees and fans of VFL Wolfsburg, were busy all over the place to celebrate “11 for 11”. Equipped with green overalls, they went to eleven places to support eleven specific projects.

ACTIVITY

The organisation of Moving Together Day started several weeks before the players and other participants visited the projects. The club announced that the activity would take place for the third time since 2013 and made a call for project proposals. The applicants had to present their ideas in front of a jury of club employees, former player Pablo Thiam and current players Pavao Pervan and Paul Verhaegh from the men’s team, and Almuth Schult and Lara Dickenmann from the women’s team. “It was very valuable including the players in the selection of the projects”, says Robin Joop, Project Coordinator in VFL Wolfsburg’s

CSR Department. “They found it interesting and took the topic into the locker rooms.”

After the eleven projects had been selected, the players were asked for their preferences. Club staff members or players were designated as project patrons. On the morning of Moving Together Day, all players and staff met at the Volkswagen Arena for a joint breakfast. That gave the players the opportunity to chat with their project group about the upcoming activities. Afterwards, the players had a training sessions while the staff and fans started work. “That the players sat and worked together with the staff was great”, says Joop. “They got to know each other and it was a good teambuilding activity”.

The eleven projects covered the entire spectrum of social engagement. Some players renovated the garden of a retirement home. Others helped construct a football pitch, worked in the garden of a manor house, and sewed clothes, blankets and stuffed animals. Bruno Labbadia, the men’s team coach, led a training session

for the refugee team Ehra-Lessien.

Another group, including Jörg Schmadtke, helped build a rabbit petting zoo in the animal enclosure at Wolfsburg. Defender Robin Knoche and his teammates Jeffrey Bruma, Marvin Stefaniak and VFL women Joelle Wedemeyer and Pia-Sophie Wolter redesigned the garden of an elementary school together with pupils.

RESULTS

“It’s great to see how pleased the children are with our efforts,” said Robin Knoche. “And it’s also fun to work together with the staff, fans and teammates. That brings the region and the team together.” An aspect that project coordinator Joop, who is happy with the tremendous support of the club management, also highlights: “It was important that the players could go out of the stadium and become familiar with the region, the fans and the employees. They took a lot out of this day and we got the feedback that we should do it every year.”

Hospital visits

RANGERS CHARITY FOUNDATION

BACKGROUND

The Rangers Charity organises several hospital visits throughout the year. Sometimes only two players are part of a visit, but at Christmas the whole squad comes and brings presents and joy to the patients.

ACTIVITY

The visits are organised in close collaboration with the staff of the hospital. "For us it is already a big deal to get all the players together", says Linda Shield, Senior Executive at the Rangers Charity. "In the hospital, the staff takes responsibility. It is a team effort". The players get a reminder from the Charity in advance of the event. The hospital organises the parking for the players and, during the team event,

divides them into groups of four or five. The hospital staff ask the patients beforehand if they would be interested in a visit and if they have any preferences. The players are always accompanied by staff members of the hospital and the Charity.

RESULTS

"The players are definitely affected when they see the happy patients. They get immediate feedback in the hospital. The comments from relatives of the children and fans on shared photos on social media are lovely", says Linda Shield. She emphasises the importance of the visits for the beneficiaries: "The hospital is always happy that we come back. They know that these kinds of treats are very important – especially during Christmas time."



RANDERS F.C.

BACKGROUND

As a smaller club from one of the lesser known regions of Denmark, Randers FC sets a clear local focus in its community work. Therefore, the club visits the local hospital regularly.

ACTIVITY

Sometimes the players bring Lego toys from one of the sponsors, or a donation check.

Randers FC has donated entrance fees and, for example, invited children, their parents and grandparents to matches.

Players are briefed before visits and are accompanied by club employees during the visit itself. Ib Rasmussen, CSR Coordinator at Randers FC, says there is a high level of voluntary participation among the players, especially the ones with children:

“They can relate to their own children, their own family in this situation. We experience huge gratitude from the hospital because they always want the best treatment and best facilities for the children.”



IF ELFSBORG

BACKGROUND

For more than ten years, IF Elfsborg has been visiting the Södra Älvsborg Hospital before Christmas. In addition, for the past four years, the Swedish club has also invited children to its Borås Arena stadium.

ACTIVITY

The visit to the stadium always depends on the children’s health. If there are enough kids willing and able to be a mascot, the

Swedish club makes this possible as well. “That always depends, because the children are fragile”, says Jan Ryrlén, CSR Manager at IF Elfsborg. “We pick them and their parents up with the first team bus”.

RESULTS

“During each year, we players make many visits to schools and associations”, said Kevin Stuhr Ellegaard after one of the visits. “But when we meet sick children and their

families, it is something special. We can really imagine how hard it must be for the children, who have been hospitalized for a long time, and their families, especially when so many people are celebrating Christmas in hospitals. Now that I have children myself, visits like these are even more emotional. But it feels good to be able to help someone just with something as easy as having a chat, giving presents and writing autographs”.



Awareness Campaign

BARÇA FOUNDATION SIGN AND PASS

BACKGROUND

Today, there are more than 25 million refugees all over the world who have fled their home countries due to war and conflict. The Barça Foundation has implemented several initiatives to help transform the lives of young refugees, raise awareness of their problems, and promote their inclusion in the countries that take them in.

ACTIVITY

In 2017, the Barça Foundation and the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR announced a major joint campaign to rally support for refugee children. The goal of the campaign was to change the critical narrative towards refugees. FC Barcelona players Lionel Messi and Neymar Junior were the first to pledge their support for refugees and to join the campaign in an exclusive video. "I am proud to be part of this important initiative in favour of refugees and hope it will help change the dramatic situation that millions of refugee children around the world are currently experiencing. Sign and pass!", said Lionel Messi.

Supporters could digitally sign a football online and then pass it to their friends via social media. By signing the ball supporters added their name to UNHCR's #WithRefugees petition which calls on world governments and fellow citizens to help refugees. While passing the ball in Barça's tiki-taka style via the internet, hundreds of thousands signatures were collected. The campaign was a great success.

The initiative did not require many resources: Messi and Neymar were at the training centre when the Foundation had a time window of one hour to shoot the videos. Foundation staff briefed the players and got their personal agreement. The production of the video took about one week and made an important contribution to Barça's engagement for refugees.

RESULT

The involvement of the players focused the attention of fans and media on the critical situation of refugees around the world. At the same time, the video campaign was

one of the powerful elements of a wider approach. The video was shown during a forum hosted and organised by the Barça Foundation. The event was chaired by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the President of FC Barcelona, Josep Maria Bartomeu and received support from civil society, including humanitarian and sport organizations as well as members of the business, technology and culture communities.

By using the expertise of authorities and practitioners and implementing the proven FutbolNet methodology, the club was able to secure a valuable follow-up. The Foundation has published the first case studies of participants who experienced the life-changing impact of the FutbolNet programmes. In addition, the last Christmas campaign fulfilled the dreams of Syrian refugee Nujeen, who is disabled and travelled in the team bus from Germany to Barcelona and was welcomed by the Barça players.





Awareness Campaign

CHELSEA F.C. SAY NO TO ANTISEMITISM

BACKGROUND

In January 2018 Chelsea F.C. launched the 'Say No To Antisemitism' campaign to raise awareness of and educate its players, staff, fans and the wider community about antisemitism in football. The club started to work together with organisations like the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Jewish Museum, Kick it Out, the World Jewish Congress and the Anne Frank House. The start of the campaign was a resolute reaction to chants of a few Chelsea fans.

ACTIVITY

First-team, youth and former players and coaches supported the campaign by posing for photos and participating in video shoots. Here, Eden Hazard and N'Golo Kante hold a sign with the slogan of the campaign. This photo material was used to spread the message via the club's communication channels. "We had the players on board early", says PR Officer Steve Bond. "We educated them on the issue so that they were aware of it when we organised a whole match day around it".

Some of the players did not know a lot about the issue until they met Holocaust survivor Harry Spiro, who shared his story. Players of the women's and youth teams, as well as supporters, attended talks with Holocaust survivors or visited the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

RESULT

Chelsea F.C. and its players received a lot of positive feedback on the campaign. Robert Singer, CEO and Executive Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress, said his organisation "deeply appreciates the comprehensive efforts being made by Chelsea F.C. to raise awareness of the dangerous manifestations of antisemitism and racism in sport".

The media campaign with the players and the matchday activities were only the start of the club-wide engagement. The Chelsea Foundation extended its equality and diversity workshops in primary schools to talk specifically about Jewish faith and culture. The club also launched

an education programme for supporters banned for antisemitic behaviour and published a guide for safety officers. The players will contribute again to the second part of the ongoing follow-up initiative 'Red Card for Hate' which will include a series of videos to raise awareness. The first component of the initiative is an ongoing art project with young people from the UK, USA and Israel, called 'Pitch for Hope'. The third stage of the long-term project will be a special forum with national football associations, football clubs, players, government officials and representatives of civil society to share best practices and create fertile ground for discussion and collaboration. "It is a long-term initiative and we are confident that we will make a difference", says Bond.

Outlook

FUTURE OF PLAYER INVOLVEMENT FOUR APPROACHES

There is great potential for involving players in community work. Below are a number of suggestions and desirable trends:

1. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF VISITS – BUT ENSURE QUALITY

In some clubs, the number of player appearances would increase considerably if each player participated in one activity each season. In others, a second weekly time slot would have a big impact. As shown earlier, there is huge potential for involving players and it would be very valuable to make use of this potential. Several CSR practitioners mentioned in our interviews that they make every effort to increase the number of player visits. It is, however, necessary to ensure that clubs can deal with more requests, especially with a view to smooth organisation of visits. If they cannot, increasing the number of visits would be two steps backwards instead of one forward.

2. TAKE THE PROGRAMMES TO THE NEXT LEVEL

As the following example shows, it is a good and feasible possibility to rethink or extend ongoing programmes:

Due to the ongoing success of the Fradi School Programme (p. 32), Ferencvárosi TC has already started delivering the Fradi School Programme 2.0. This additional programme (known as the Fradi Gym Class) involves not only the professional athletes of the multi-sport club, but also the coaches. The goal is to deliver intensive but also entertaining sport and education classes in schools that have been visited before. Instead of visits with an audience of hundreds of children, the classes will be smaller. Players and coaches can work and talk directly with the kids and the impact will be sustainable. The second element of the new programme is Fradi Career Management in which interactive sessions with successful former champions and managers of the club will provide young people between 15 and 18 with valuable insights.

“Quantity sometimes kills quality”, says Bálint Máté, International Project Manager at Ferencvárosi TC, who sees the extension of the school programme as an important step in the club’s social work.

3. INCLUDE FEMALE PLAYERS

Women’s football is evolving continuously. Female players might be even more suitable for specific visits and have the same role model function as their male colleagues. VfL Wolfsburg already includes female players on a regular basis. “We are very lucky that we have a women’s team that is very successful”, says Robin Joop. “In recent times, schools and other institutions request them more often.”

4. CREATE A NEW MENTALITY

Active and regular engagement of current, former, youth and female players in the community should be the long-term objective of football clubs. To reach this goal, good organisation, practical tools and support at all levels in the club are necessary. We hope that this guide helps you in your day-to-day activities and that it provides materials, tips and arguments that lead to an increasing contribution by players. And perhaps also financially in the future: 61% of the CSR practitioners who participated in our survey support the idea that players should also contribute financially to the clubs’ community work.

”

“WE HAVE TO REACH THE STAGE THAT EVERY FOOTBALLER TAKES RESPONSIBILITY AND REALISES THAT IT IS NOT AN OBLIGATION TO THE CLUB BUT TO SOCIETY.”

- ANASTASIOS PAPADOPOULOS, PAOK SALONIKI -

APPENDIX I PLAYER QUESTIONNAIRE

Season 2018/2019

*For player completion

Name

Club

Email

Mobile

All information will be kept confidential and only used for the preparation of the activities. This questionnaire will be used to profile your interest in relevant areas of community work therefore it is important that it is completed fully to make sure that you are linked into areas where you have an interest and feel comfortable. This will ensure that you gain a positive experience from future visits. Please tick your choices and indicate your level of preference for the type of themed activity.

THEME	ACTIVITY (FOR EXAMPLE)	ENJOY DOING	DON'T MIND	PREFER NOT TO DO
Sports Participation	Schools football			
	After school coaching			
	Q&A session at schools			
	Schools adopt a player			
	Soccer school awards			
Education	Reading to children			
	Literacy projects			
	Numeracy projects			
	Q&A at the club's study centre			
Health	Q&A on healthy living			
	Mental health events			
Social inclusion	Working with young offenders			
	Working with Police services			
	Estates Based work			
Equality	Kick it Out			
	Show Racism the Red Card			
	Disabilities			
	Girls/Women Football			

YES

NO

Would you like to be an ambassador?

Would you like to have regular updates about specific programmes / the charity work?

Signed

Date

APPENDIX II MEMO

To	Name of the Player
From	Name of the Club / Foundation
Date and time of event	Enter the date and time
Location	Enter the address
Meeting point	Enter (the address of the) meeting point

Dear [Name of the Player],

We are looking forward to your next appearance in one of our community programmes. In this memo we sum up the most important information for you.

If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to use the contact details below.

Topic/ Programme	Enter the name of the programme
Duration	Enter the duration / time period
Activity	Describe the procedure of the player visit
Contact	Enter the name and the contact details (phone, E-Mail) of the Community Liaison Officer and the Project Manager
Outfit	Describe what the player should wear
Details	<p>Enter information about the participants (age, gender, background)</p> <p>Enter information about the programme / event (goals, procedure)</p> <p>Name possible questions that the players have to answer</p> <p>Enter any further information that could be valuable for the preparation of the player</p> <p>Use a language that the player can understand</p>

APPENDIX III PLAYER INVOLVEMENT REPORT

Chelsea F.C.

A report on the player appearances is important to show the contribution of the players to the community work. It is a form of recognition and feedback for them. At the same time, a report strengthens the transparency and accountability of your club's charity.

The report can include the following content:

- Number of appearances (in total)
- Number of the player appearances of the player with the most
- Number of reached participants
- Award winner
- Case studies including statements of players, beneficiaries and partners
- Information about the charity and possible partnerships
- Information about the request procedure
- Future outlook

Multiple examples of Player involvement reports and project impact reports can be downloaded on the EFDN Online Learning platform www.efdn.org/resources.



“AS A DAD I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION SO IT IS ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO TAKE PART AND RAISE AWARENESS. CHELSEA DO A LOT OF GREAT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY AND AS PLAYERS. WHENEVER WE GET THE CHANCE TO MEET WITH KIDS AND HELP IN SOME WAY. ITS IMPORTANT WE DO SO.”

– GARY CAHILL, CHELSEA F.C. –





CONSULTED SOURCES

We conducted an online survey within our network and numerous semi-structured interviews with CSR practitioners. The interviewees know the potentials and challenges in the work with players from the daily work of their club.

Furthermore, we analysed the academic research that deals with the commitment of players in social projects. During this review we identified, compared to other issues, only a small body of academic literature. The author that probably analysed the potential and impact of player visits in greatest detail is former Norwegian footballer Erlend Hanstveit.

ERLEND KALDESTADT HANSTVEIT FROM THE PITCH TO THE UNIVERSITY

Erlend Hanstveit is a former Norwegian footballer and started and ended his professional career at SK Brann. Hanstveit also played for KAA Gent and Helsingborgs IF. He has won the Norwegian Premier League, the Norwegian Cup, the Belgian Cup and Allsvenskan. In addition, he collected five caps for the Norwegian national team. During and after his career, Hanstveit engaged in the Norwegian Player Association. He has worked for 'Street Team', made up of players who are or have been addicted to drugs. Hanstveit recently conducted research on the prosocial behaviour of football players in Norway. He has presented his work at the EURAM18 Conference and elsewhere.

In this guide we refer in particular to two recent studies by Hanstveit:

- Player Perspectives on Prosociality in Norwegian Football.
- Report: Impact from community player engagement in Norwegian Football.

Hanstveit plans to proceed with his research on player social responsibility, for example by conducting another study that includes more quantitative data.

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL FOR DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

EFDN would like to acknowledge the resources and documents referred to and used in this Practitioners' Guide.

Hanstveit, Erlend K: Player Perspectives on Prosociality in Norwegian Football.

Norwegian Player Association (2018): Report: Impact from community player engagement in Norwegian Football.

Hillebrandt (2011): Corporate Social Responsibility in Professional Football. An Investigation of UEFA and the NFL. Shaker Verlag: Herzogenrath.

Professional Footballers' Association (2017): PFA Community Evaluation 2016/17.

Bundesliga-Stiftung (Ed., 2017): Zweite Studie zum freiwilligen gesellschaftlichen Engagement des Profifussballs. Saison 2015/16.

We would like to thank all clubs, FIFPro, the PFA and all other organisations and players that contributed to this guide. A special thanks to EFDN intern Marius Stegemann for all his hard work and to Erlend K. Hanstveit who provided us with an insight into his research.





**Any questions or in need of
further information?**

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