



OPEN FUN FOOTBALL SCHOOLS



Photo: Per Fløng



BE ACTIVE BE HAPPY

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CROSS CULTURES FOOTBALL PHILOSOPHY AND FUNDAMENTALS



Photo: Carsten Snebjerg



Cross Cultures is a Danish politically independent, non-profit, organization that was founded in 1999.

In Cross Cultures we are firmly convinced that **DELIBERATE GAMES**, **DIALOGUE** and **COLLABORATION** are the best *learning tools* and the best tools to facilitate *bridging* and *bonding* between children and adults living in divided communities.

Today Cross Cultures is considered among the world leading organizations that has specialized in using community sports and our Open Fun Football School program as mechanism to

- facilitate friendships and sports-cooperation between children and adults living in divided communities;
- building communities – i.e. community sport and youth associations that are based on voluntarism, gender equality, parent support and the basic principle of “Sport-for-All”;
- developing Cross-sector Crime Prevention networks in local communities

Since 1999 the Open Fun Football school program has reached out to over 1 million participants in 22 countries around the world and over 75,000 coaches has volunteered our program.

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Photo: Kenneth Havgard

Anders Levinsen,
Founder & CEO

This manual is an introduction to the Cross Cultures Football Philosophy and Fundamentals

The basic idea of this manual is based on a unique approach, developed in the Open Fun Football School program and formed in cooperation and inspiration with ten-thousands of leaders and coaches around the world. The approach has proved very efficient, impacting and popular.

The Cross Cultures approach to children's football is easy to understand but at the same time also unique. It has passion, fun and playfulness at its core. It offers children a safe haven to do what children do best: Play, make friends and learn new things. It is designed to use the best of human nature as its driving force. Neither the children, nor the adults who train them, are ever asked to do anything, which is not motivating, engaging and meaningful. Further the specific "Head-Heart-Action-approach", which is developed and applied to all Cross Cultures activities, is inspired by protreptical (philosophical) coaching methods, and is a holistic approach to motivation by turning knowledge, passion and desire into tools for action and change.

I hope this manual will serve as inspiration that can help you to further develop your child-centred and holistic approach in your daily training.

I Sincerely wish to thank all stakeholders who have made the Open Fun Football School program and this manual a reality:

- More than 1 million colleagues, volunteers and children who have participated the Open Fun Football School program
- Football associations within our partner countries and thousands of local football clubs and municipalities.
- Our core sponsors – UEFA and the governments of Sweden, Norway and Denmark – for substantial and long lasting support
- Foundation FC Barcelona, SOCAR, Velux Foundation, Novo Nordisk, Rockwool Foundation and other important CSR-partners

Of course also love and warm thanks to Tine Hansen and all our families who have provided good ideas, back up and made our dedicated efforts possible.

Yours in fun football
Anders Levinsen,
Founder & CEO

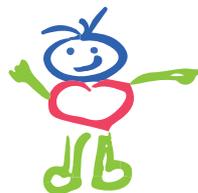




Photo: Carsten Snebjerg

Magic

»»MAGIJA««

»»MAGIC««

1 December 1999 Cross Cultures organised a fun festival in war-torn Srebrenica for 400 kids.

It was an un-forgettable day to all of us that taught us that the Open Fun Football School program is much more than football, and it helped us to express some of the qualities and the feeling inherent to sport – qualities and feelings we consider fundamental in the Open Fun Football Schools program today

SREBENICA 1999

In December 1999 the Open Fun Football Schools organized a fun football festival for 400 children in the Bosnian town of Srebrenica.

Never before had we prepared a festival so meticulously in advance. So much pain and symbolism was associated with the event that we had to hold three preparatory meetings with the parents of each child from Vogosca in order to agree what should happen and how events should proceed, as well as setting up a telephone “hot-line” run by a parent couple in Vogosca prior to the event. We also held a series of parents’ meetings in Srebrenica, and had numerous meetings with each of the local mayors and chiefs of police.

Here we were in Srebrenica on a Saturday morning in the beginning of December 1999 on the sports ground in front of the school in Srebrenica, waiting for the busses with the Bosniak children to arrive. Our inflatable football pitches were ready for action. Already the first curious spectators had gathered, along with some of the local children who were going to participate in the event.

My old colleague Zoka blew his whistle to rally the children. He lined up the children in four columns and gave them each a T-shirt. Then we heard the throbbing penetrating sound of approaching helicopters. We looked up and saw two helicopters belonging to the International Stability Forces (SFOR) circle the sports ground and fly away. Then two SFOR cars appeared leading the bus from Vogosca with our Bosniak refugee children, and behind the bus an entire motorcade of SFOR vehicles. From the markings on the vehicles we could see that the cortège included soldiers from USA, Holland, Ukraine and Sweden. We were all speechless and upset to put it mildly. Given all the pain and symbolism associated with the town of Srebrenica, we had prepared a state-of-the-art event. But even before we got started and despite our thorough preparations the international stability forces found our activities sensitive and barrier-braking that they decided to provide armed escort of the

Bosniak children regardless that we have all agreed in writing that only the Bosnian-Serb police was to take responsibility of the escort and the security of the children.

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It was as if past and present met in the ambiguous motif of the “battle” in Srebrenica, when the best and when the worst and paradoxically it was the event in Srebrenica that helped us to express some of the qualities and feelings inherent to sport

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However we quickly calmed down. As the Bosniak children got off the bus the local Bosnian-Serb children, still patiently lining up in four long columns, spontaneously started to applaud. So did the 300-400 spectators. It was a completely unexpected reaction. Esko, my good friend and colleague and the man behind the event, wiped away a small pearl from the corner of the eye, shook his head with a smile and gave me a big hug. “Magija” he said to me in Bosnian while holding me in his strong arms.

It hardly took 15 minutes to get all the 400 children mixed and formed into groups, evenly divided among the 21 stations we had prepared. Esko blew his whistle to signal the first rotation. We had prepared the best and funniest games we could think of and after only a few minutes we were totally absorbed by the children’s activities, the atmosphere and performance.

The ambient was just great. Every single game had been given its own designated area, its own little intimate stage and collectively they provided a good, well-organized and joyful arena for the festival. It was as if the sports ground generated its own RHYTHM in time with the music we had brought along, streaming from the sports ground's loudspeaker system. Now the trainers and former enemies played with and cheered the children in a way that sometimes made it difficult to distinguish between them and the kids. All the children were in non-stop motion at the same time. One hundred and forty footballs, 30 hula-hop rings and skipping ropes were hanging in the air and 400 happy children fought and laughed and clapped their hands and gave "high-five" to one another as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

To me it was children's football for kids when best. It was as if past and present met in the ambiguous motif of the "battle" in Srebrenica, when the best and when the worst and paradoxically it was the event in Srebrenica that helped us to express some of the qualities and feelings inherent to sport. In other words it was this Saturday in December 1999 in Srebrenica we all learned that the Open Fun Football School program and children's football is much more than football.

Anders Levinsen, CEO & Founder

Photo: Cross Cultures



As the Bosniak children got off the bus the local Bosnian-Serb children, still patiently lining up in four long columns spontaneously started to applaud. So did the 3-400 spectators.



Photo: Per Fløng

Contest
Deliberate play
Movement
Improvement



● **Rythm/Quality of Sport**



QUALITY OF SPORTS

It is the special feeling of
WHOLENESS and RYTHM that gives
sport special qualities, and to
Cross Cultures RYTHM has become
our synonym for QUALITY



Photo: Cross Cultures

As sports enthusiast one is never in doubt when experiencing something extraordinary. Who doesn't remember Zlatan Ibrahimovic' stunning stunt when he scored on a tremendous bike-cycle-kick in a friendly against England? Who else than Zlatan could ever dream on making a bike-cycle-kick on goal from 30 meters distance? Or what about Rodriguez and his brilliant volley against Uruguay during the World Cup in Brazil where he perfectly controlled the ball with his chest and within the same movement he made a wonderful goal on a 180-volley? As spectator one never forget those kinds of moments where the breath, movement, coordination, time and space are merging into one WHOLE and discovering one unique RHYTHM.

Exactly that feeling of WHOLENESS and RHYTHM gives the sports special qualities, and what is fantastic in sports is that one does not have to be a world famous star to feel RHYTHM. We are sure about the fact that everybody practicing sports, no matter their skills, sex or age can speak about the experiences where the time space and situation are merging into one metaphysical whole. Just try to dig down in your own memories and see how many situations you remember from your sports career or from your childhood – situations where the details or a game with your peers became one fantastic whole.

At Cross Cultures, we are very determined on the discussion about the Quality of Sports. We all agree that it is the special feeling of WHOLENESS and RHYTHM that gives sport special qualities, and to us RHYTHM has become our synonym for QUALITY.

In this context we believe that RHYTHM in sport is building on four fundamental dimensions:

CONTEST – All great sport comprises elements of contest. – The Ritual Contest, where players compete against each other and against themselves. And CONTEST when players are trying their strength out of sheer fun and comparing themselves to others, themselves, and the environment.

DELIBERATE PLAY – All great sport also contains an element of DELIBERATE PLAY that is fun (rewarding) and whereby players are constantly faced with challenges of doing new things, playing new games, finding new ways to pass or kick the ball or playing different roles.

MOVEMENT – All great sport also contains an element of MOVEMENT – alone, or with others. It does not necessarily have to be Laudrup's or Messis aesthetical balance or perfect dribbling; it is the joy of movement, the experimental dimension, and the connection between breathing and physical movement that adds to the quality of sport.

IMPROVEMENT – All great sport also contains an element of IMPROVEMENT, i.e. a suitable amount of time to work on details and the impression that one becomes a better player through trainings.

It is easy to describe and measure a result, a score or a record: e.g. 2-1. But it is very difficult in words to describe the feeling of RHYTHM. However, it only takes three deep breaths to feel RYTHM. It is the impression one gets when every individual game on the pitch creates a well-organised and entertaining framework for the whole event. It is when watching coaches playing together with children in such a way that it become difficult to distinguish between children and adults. It is the warm feeling in New Delhi when three beautiful girls greets you with the words: *Thank you Sir. I didn't know that football was so much fun!* It is when happy children compete, laugh, applaud, and greet each other with a "high-five" as if it were the most natural thing in the world. It is the feeling we all experienced in Srebrenica that Saturday morning in December 1999. It is when CONTEST, DELIBERATE PLAY, MOVEMENT and IMPROVEMENT are merging into one whole and the sports activity find its own pace and expression and move in tune with the music at the stadium. – And the stronger the RYTHM is, the higher is the chances that children will associate to our game and fun football activities, take it home and cherish it for lifetime together with their peers.



Photo: BVB Dortmund

Henrikh Mkhitaryan, BVB Dortmund

Henrikh Mkhitaryan has participated in the Open Fun Football Schools program as

- player,
- assistant coach,
- coach.

Henrikh has further assisted our operational office within the Football Federation of Armenia.

CROSS CULTURES DEVELOPMENT IN SPORT

Cross Cultures approach to Children's Development in Sport is building on the experience from workshops with thousands of leaders and coaches in the Open Fun Football School program around the World. However, our development approach is strongly anchored and confirmed in research made by the Canadian sociologist Dr. Jean Côté, Ottawa University. Further our pedagogical approach is amongst other inspired by ass.prof. Helle Rønhold and ass. prof. Birger Peitersen at the Copenhagen University, Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports.

DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Today many leaders, coaches and parents would like their children to become famous footballers like Messi, but the fact is that only very few children will make it from the grassroots level to the top-elite, and nobody is able to spot an upcoming world star at an age of only 6, 8 or 10 years. Of course one can see if a boy or a girl got talent. But there are so many other crucial factors that matters. Of a group of approx. 1,000 kids it may only be 5 kids that will take it the whole way from grassroots to the top-elite. And in Denmark the Danish Football Association estimates that in average only 1.5 player of a whole age group will succeed to take it the whole way to the National A-Team! Hence rather than focusing on the selected few from the earliest stage and breaking dreams of small kids and make them feel that they are not as interesting as their peers, Cross Cultures find that it is crucial to build children's football as an open and solid platform in local communities, with the purpose to associate as many kids as possible to our game, to introduce kids to the fellowship they can enjoy with their peers in football and to improve their skills and their own and other's well-being.

Consequently in Cross Cultures we have a saying that it is the ENVIRONMENT that associates children to our sport, and our main focus is to study, discuss and explore how to create the best possible ENVIRONMENT for our children where all children feel happy, confident and secure while trying-out different elements of football together with good friends.

THE 10.000 HOURS RULE

Many researchers and experts are interested to know what makes champions? E.g. what made the sisters Serena world champs in female tennis? What made Tiger Woods outstanding in golf? And why is it Messi and not I or my son or daughter that is considered the best football player in the World?

Does it require special genetics, talent or heritable individual differences to become world performer? Or is the success also determined by other denominating factors such as effort, commitment, training methods, learning environment, fun, living conditions, nutrition, physiological and psychological parameters, parents support etc.?

The American psychologist Anders Ericsson has conducted a series of studies to explore what makes a world performer. One of his main findings is that there is a magic number of 10.000 when fostering true expertise: It takes 10,000 hours of specialized/structured training within 10 years to make a world performer. Or to put it different, the talent, genetics and heritable individual differences is secondary to the effort and investment constituted in "the 10,000 hour rule".

Ericssons findings has provided lots of inspiration in the world of sports, and several sport development schemes is today building on "the 10,000 hour rule". E.g. the Danish Football Association has published a very inspirational and manual in age-oriented training, which is also providing a scheme of how young players can reach 10,000 hours of specialized training within only 10 years.

"The 10,000 hours rule" is easy to understand but also easy to misunderstand and abuse. Even Ericsson himself sometimes complain that he is being misinterpreted and simplified by experts and practitioners that suggests that anyone who has accumulated sufficient number of hours of practise in a given domain will automatically become an expert and a champion. The talent development process is a process that is much more complex than just "the 10,000 hour rule", and further "the 10,000 hour rule" is a term Ericsson has never used in his papers, but a term that has emerged on the internet.



~~ERICSSON: 10.000 HOURS SPECIALIZED TRAINING~~

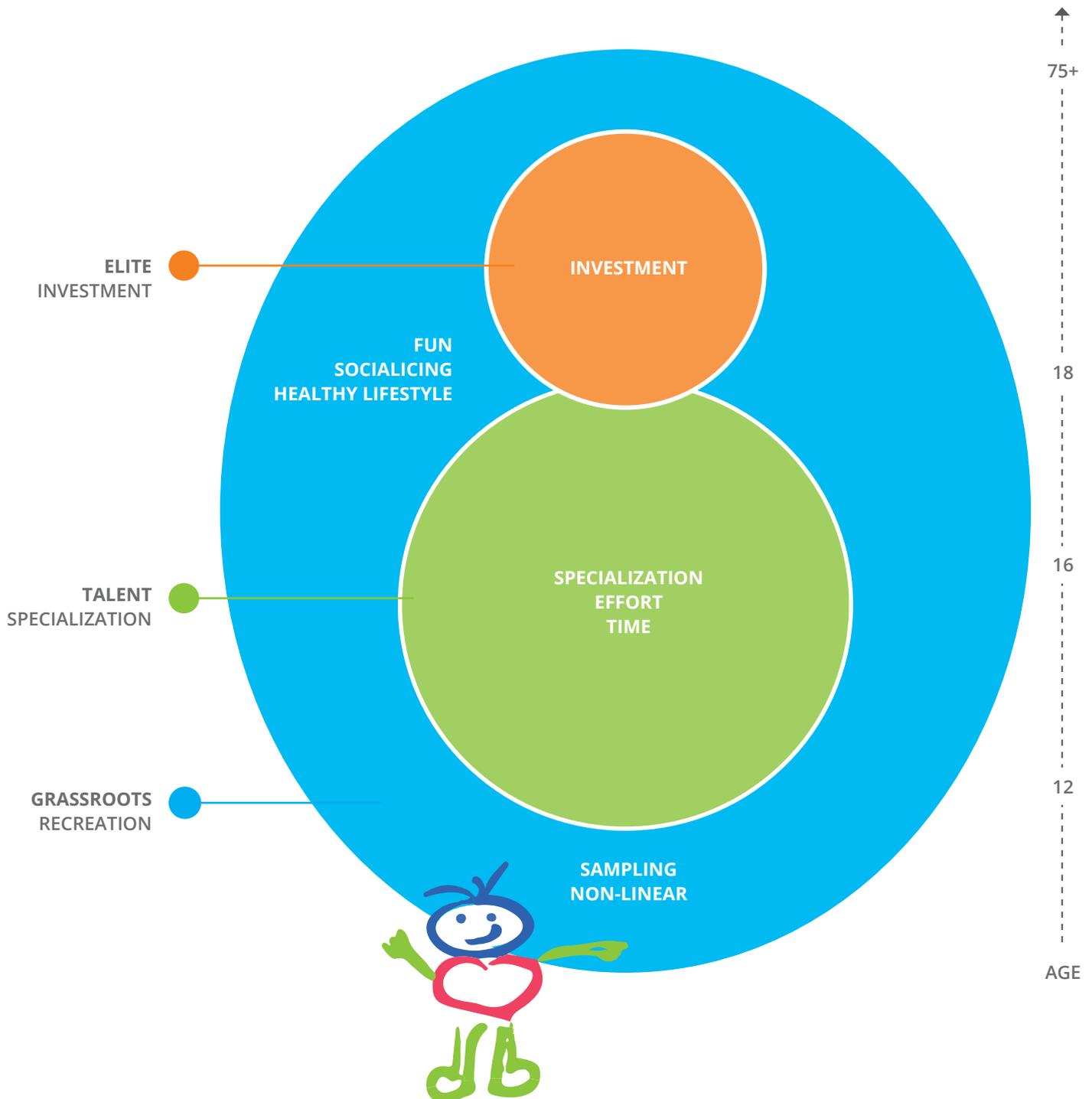
10 YEARS

Wherever one go in the world today one will meet coaches and parents training children like if they were adults or small soldiers, repeating boring drills again and again and again, hours after hours after hours. Of course it is unfair and wrong to accuse Ericsson for other peoples ignorance and mistakes, but it is obvious to Cross Cultures that instead of selecting and discarding children while focussing on their results and score we should

rather focus our efforts on giving children the best we know: the LOVE to do sport with their peers. In this way children's football must first of all be FUN and it must be adapted to fit children's needs and not the ambitions and dreams of the adult coach, the scouts or the parents that sometimes tend to regards the child more as a commodity rather than a little personality.

Cross Cultures development model in sports participation

Dr. Côté and his colleagues provides a framework/model for Participation, Personal Development and Performances through Sport with a pathway in three stages.



CÔTÉ'S 3 STAGES

The Canadian sociologist D. Jean Côté, Ottawa University, has also dedicated his research to explore what makes a world champion? Dr. Côté's research has mainly been about Athlete Development, in particular looking retrospectively at elite-level athletes, their background, their path, their different type of activities and the different things they did when they were kids. From this research Dr. Côté and his team has described a kind of pathway for top-athletes in sport and has come up with some clear characteristics of what the environment should be at a young age to reach a high-level performance on a later stage – a development model Cross Cultures consider much more constructive, meaningful and inspiring than Ericsson's 10,000 hours pathway.

GRASSROOTS

From the kids starts in sport at the age of 5-6 years and until approx. 12 years of age the majority of top-athletes highlight analogous memories of how they all enjoyed many different sports at the same time and the key role of playing DELIBERATE GAMES with their peers at home, in the school yard and on the streets – deliberate games designed to maximize inherent enjoyment that are regulated by flexible age-adapted rules, that are set up and monitored by children or an involved adult/coach and that are games where the rules typically are modified to a point where they most resembles the actual sport, but still allows for play at their level.

DELIBERATE GAMES ARE DESIGNED TO MAXIMIZE INHERENT ENJOYMENT THAT ARE REGULATED BY

- FLEXIBLE AGE-ADAPTED RULES
- MONITORED BY CHILDREN OR AN INVOLVED ADULT/COACH
- GAMES AND RULES THAT ARE TYPICALLY MODIFIED WHERE THEY MOST RESEMBLES THE ACTUAL SPORT, BUT STILL ALLOWS FOR PLAY AT THEIR LEVEL
- IMMEDIATE REWARDING – FUN

In this way Children's Football is not about winning or losing; selecting or discarding; or a game for the selected few or an activity for boys alone. Children's football is a game that must offer ALL kids good and successful experiences with their peers while developing their talent and teaching them different life-skills they can build on and benefit from inside and outside the football pitch and for the rest of their life.

TALENT FOOTBALL

Initially at the age of 12+ many kids choose their path in sports. Some want to continue to play football for recreational purposes. To Cross Cultures the main focus in this sense is on fun, socializing and healthy lifestyle. Others would like to play football and explore their talent. Dr. Côté names this stage as the special-

DELIBERATE PRACTICE IS A HIGHLY STRUCTURED ACTIVITY THAT REQUIRES EFFORT, GENERATES NO IMMEDIATE REWARDS AND IS MOTIVATED OF IMPROVING PERFORMANCE RATHER THAN INHERENT ENJOYMENT.

ization stage. It is at this stage the children choose to specialize in one or maybe two sport disciplines and Côté emphasizes that dedication, time and effort are denominating factors. At the specialization stage there is a general advance in the games played from deliberate play to deliberate practice.

In this context Cross Cultures find great inspiration in the Croatian Football School as well as in the German football professor Mr. Horst Wein.

Horst Wein argues that in a full game of football the average time on the football for any outfield player is less than 90 seconds or 2% of the game. Correspondingly most of the game is about what the player does off-the-ball rather than with-the-ball, and the player must realize that any given moment in a game he/she must assign himself/herself a definite task or role in either attack or in defence. Consequently the process of decision-making is an important part of the game, which demands that the player has learned step-by-step how to read the game.

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»In a full game of football the average time on the ball for any outfield player is less than 90 seconds or 2% of the game.«

Mr. Horst Wein, Grandmaster

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In other words, football is made up by many different technical and tactical situations. The solutions to the situations/challenges faced have to be experienced/lived, discovered/perceived and finally implemented in the game. First once the player become proficient in experiencing and perceiving the challenges, only then good technique is required for proper motor execution, Horst Wein claims.

The Croatian Football School has also its main focus on the development of game intelligence, in particular on the player ability to create time and space for himself/herself and his/her teammates. In this way the Croatian FA asserts that the player with good perception skills always have better time to choose the better game decisions.

And the player with time and space will also be the player with most ball contact during the game and therefore the one who by the time will develop the best technique required for motor execution.

ELITE FOOTBALL

The transition from talent to elite is considered the most difficult stage in the talent development process. In order to manage the transition from talent to elite successfully one really has to work structured and professionally with the details. Hence Côté name this stage as the investment stage. Correspondingly, at the age of approx. 16-18 years the best of the talents must enhance time and effort in football to specialize.

In this context of the investment stage Cross Cultures is using a tailor-made approach using top-coaches and other specialist as tutors.

GENERAL ABILITIES IN CHILDREN'S FOOTBALL

Birger Peitersen and Helle Rønholt, emphasize that several studies in the field of Sports Pedagogic and Didactic that sport has the potential to accomplish important abilities in children's development, which the children can build on and benefit from inside and outside the football pitch and for the rest of their life. For example:

- a. Sport programs have long been considered important to the development of SOCIAL ABILITIES, providing children and youth opportunities to learn different life-skills such as communication; being together; cooperation; role flexibility and team spirit.
- b. Sport programs are critical for learning BODY ABILITIES – motor skills – such as body communication, body imitation, coordination and “whole body”. These body abilities also serve as foundation for recreational adult sport participants as well as the future national sport stars.
- c. Sport programs can provide children and youth opportunities to develop their PERSONAL ABILITIES, i.e. providing children and youth a positive self-image; empathy and successful experiences.
- d. Beyond providing general FOOTBALL ABILITIES such as game intelligence, technical skills, tactical skills sport/football programs also provides children and youth other important abilities and learning insights such as trying out, playing, practising, competing and training.

In this context it is obvious that the good children's coach must understand that good football training for kids also contribute to the development of the children's learning insights and general abilities.

GENERAL ABILITIES IN CHILDREN'S FOOTBALL

Children's sport has the potential to accomplish important objectives in children's development they can build on and benefit from inside and outside the football pitch and for the rest of their life.



Cross Cultures approach to children's football is child-centred in the sense that it has passion, fun and playfulness at its core. It offers children a safe haven to do what children do best: Play, make friends and learn new things.



Photo: Kenneth Havgard

ACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Children's football is more than teaching children to become skillful football players. It is also about EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN, which means that we must teach and support children to take responsibility and act for themselves and with respect of the whole (the community). Instead of taking the dignity away from the children managing them like animals or small soldiers by demanding or dictating what to do or how to do, we wish to give them strength and tools to help themselves to learn and to do things in a better way. In this way empowerment is both a bottom-up process and a goal at the same time that in our context provides the children important insights in

- **Methods of learning**
- **Relationships**
- **Healthy lifestyles**
- **Playing football**



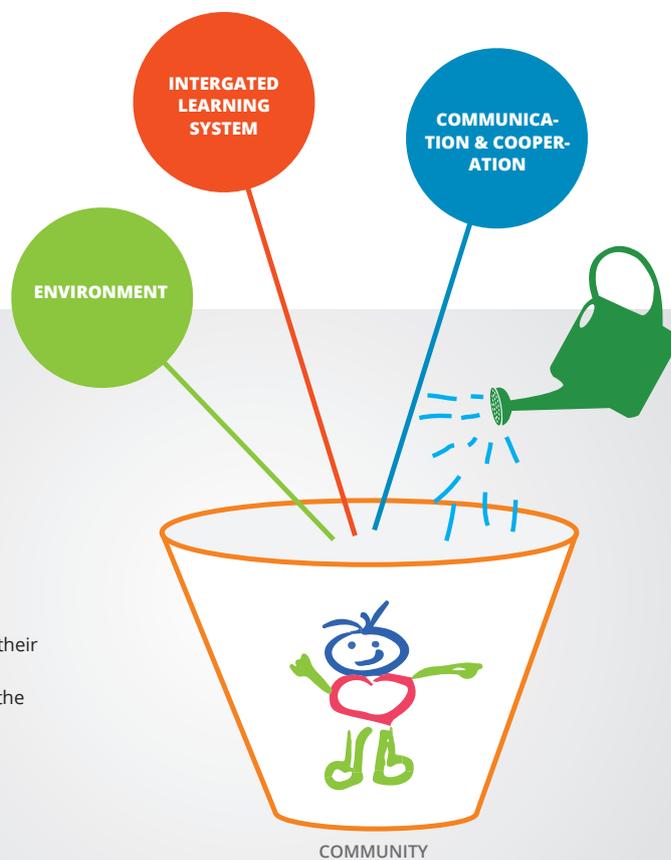
ACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Every child is unique. Therefore it is important for our coaches to have focus on each child's area of interest to take maximum advantage and to stimulate the children's learning potential. Correspondingly the good children's coach must have an eye on the WHOLE rather than only focusing on a single exercise, a single detail or a single player. To Cross Cultures it appears not to be sufficient only to explain the position of a player's standing foot; the children's coach must simultaneously pay attention to every single child in the group and take into consideration the existence of various factors influencing the learning situation. Of course the football details are important, but they only make up a part of the WHOLE!

Hence the good children's coach is responsible for creating an ACTIVE AND POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, which is a complex concept:

From the coach's perspective it includes the the totality of physical conditions, plans, curriculum, coaching materials, organizing classes, work, social relations and attitudes to learning.

From the player's perspective it includes the atmosphere, social interactions, attitudes, target structure, which the players learn and experience in the classes.



Children are like small seeds.
If you want to take advantage of their full potential you have to care for them and provide them with the best possible conditions to grow.

Cross Cultures use to say that it is sometimes more difficult to become a good children's coach than a skilled football coach because on one hand you need to know your "Football ABC", but at the same time you must also have attention on the **WHOLE ENVIRONMENT**, **YOUR COMMUNICATION** and the **LEARNING APPROACH** and you must know how to twist a certain exercise to make it fun and adapt it to the children's age.

To put it differently in our fun approach it is a fundamental principle that we always put the "CHILD BEFORE FOOTBALL". Therefore you will have to focus on the **WHOLE child** and the **WHOLE LEARNING SITUATION** rather than just a specific football detail.

In order to help the coach to maintain a holistic approach in his/her training, the Cross Cultures coach is responsible to create an **ACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** where every child feels confident and secure and by that open and ready to learn. The responsible leaders and the good children's coaches must especially pay attention to three areas of concern:

THE ENVIRONMENT

The leaders and coaches must be vigilant to create a good physical, social and psychological environment on the stadium where the players feel secure and confident.

THE INTEGRATED FOOTBALL APPROACH

The content of the training must be age-oriented and build on the specific Cross Cultures "head – heart – action – approach" or the 3-dimensional way of learning.

COMMUNICATION & COOPERATION

The coach must use a Child-centered approach and deliberate games as main their tool to stimulate children's motivation to play and learn.

We like the venue to welcome participants with open arms. Therefore we always divide the pitch in designated areas and prepared for the players prior to the training and we often pipe it up with flags, banners, music etc. to give it a certain "festive mood".





ENVIRON-
MENT

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Cross Cultures place great emphasis on the VENUE on which we organize our activities. It is very important that it is organised in a way that makes everyone feel confident and safe. We like the venue to welcome the children with open arms and therefore we often pipe it up with flags, banners, music etc. to give it a certain “festive mood”.

At Cross Cultures we also pay great attention to the pitch that must be clearly divided in designated areas and prepared for the players prior to the training because it always stimulates the players attention and reflects great professionalism. If the venue is prepared and ready to use, the players will automatically be curious to try out what the coach has prepared for them – maybe it is funny? On the other hand, if the players are left to wait in a corner while the coach prepare the field, they will get the impression that the organization is poor and they will start entertaining them selves. It is a general rule that poor organization affects the player’s attention and concentration negatively. Consequently with bad organization of the venue the coach initially has to put great effort and energy just to call the attention of the children – effort and energy that could be used much better on the games and exercises he/she had prepared for the children.

That aside, our experience also tells us that especially good mood is contagious. If one of the groups is doing well, their good humor spreads onto other groups on the pitch. If we play some music on the loudspeaker, we get an incredibly intense, engaged, and festive atmosphere in which we can host up to 200 children at only one football pitch if necessary. – It is all about preparations and organization. In this way the physical environment and the way we organize the pitch become a crucial issue for creating a constructive an ACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.



Cross Cultures consider it a main task that the adult leaders and coaches creates the best possible environment where the children feels confident and secure in order to become open for our messages and motivated to learn new things.



At many football schools it is a characteristic that children feel insecure at the beginning. Maybe there are many new friends to relate to at the football school. Maybe the player does not feel as skillful in football as he/she is dreaming of.



Photo: Carsten Snejbjerg



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Relationship, fellowship and social life are some of the most important dimensions in sport, and our fun football activities are no different. Children enjoy playing football with their friends. Getting along with friends on and off the pitch is frequently more important than the game itself. Subsequently we have to place emphasis on the positive socializing – it is our goal to provide children with a sense of collectiveness, fellowship, trust and development, and to make them realize that the game is not only played against but also with their opponents.

One of the values that help develop the sense of collectiveness and fellowship in children is the ability to co-exist in a “positive way”. Everybody has the right to participate with the skills they have. Therefore, in our football activities we must insist on the social dimension of our fun football activities. This, among other things, is done by INCLUDING children from all ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds, and by creating an environment in which children are trained to:

- Listen to each other
- Show that they care for each other
- Make compromises with each other
- Rely on others
- Take responsibilities together with other people

It is important that the players have to change partners in the game, so that no one is left without a partner and that everyone feels part of the team – that is how a group can function ideally. At the same time, it is very important that children should not be separated from their “best friends” every



Photo: Cross Cultures

time a new team is created. The task is to make the group function as a team, e.g. invent a cheer with which to begin and end each training, create some fun events for children which they will enjoy: (relay races, catching games, a cheerleader training, etc.) because, at that very moment, while laughing and having fun together, children open up to each other and all the barriers/resistances between them disappear and a new identity – “ME & YOU”, “WE & THEM” – is formed.



PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

It is important that the coach has attention of the attitudes of the player's, both as individuals and as group member. How do the kids thrive? And how do they contribute to wellbeing and cohesion of the group/team?



THE PLAYER'S ATTITUDE

Being open-minded	<i>contra</i>	Being closed
Expressing feelings	<i>contra</i>	Disapproving feelings
Listen to and accepting feedback	<i>contra</i>	Don't listen
Reacting spontaneously	<i>contra</i>	Protecting themselves
Solving conflicts	<i>contra</i>	Avoiding conflicts
Trustful and honest	<i>contra</i>	Building barriers

THE GROUP MEMBER'S ATTITUDE

Deeper discussions	<i>contra</i>	Weak discussions
Group cooperation	<i>contra</i>	Competition within the group
Transparency and sharing of information	<i>contra</i>	Hiding information
Showing feelings	<i>contra</i>	Suppressing feelings
Supporting friends	<i>contra</i>	Underestimating friends
Responsibility and loyalty towards group goals	<i>contra</i>	Resistance or unconcern towards group goals
Drawing on group resources	<i>contra</i>	To use small group resources
Honesty	<i>contra</i>	Dis-honesty

To be a coach within Cross Cultures one must understand that you are not only a football coach but also cultural and relationship mediator.

Photo: Carsten Snebjerg



THE INTEGRATED LEARNING APPROACH



Modern science tells us that we all have several intelligences (seven or eight) which all serve different functions and which is developed during different life stages (Gardener et al.). Other scientist's also speak about the right and the left part of our brain, which we are using for respectively creative and logical functionalities and one is also talking about short-term and long-term memory – e.g. the short-term memory help us to learn easy but also to forget quickly. In contrary it takes longer time to learn new things with our long-term memory, but when learned the new knowledge usually stay with us for a longer period. In this way the brain is one on the most complex organs on human beings and consequently there are several different theories on how kids and humans are learning.

In Cross Cultures we adhere to the theory saying that the more centres we are able to open up for in the brain at the same time, the better we learn (conscious and un-conscious) and the better we remember with body and head!

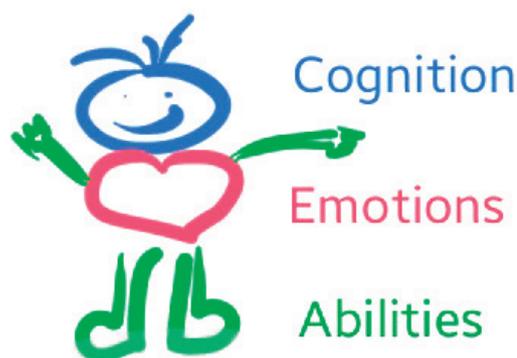
This also corresponds with the research confirming that physical active children in general are learning better at school than their inactive peers. They can better concentrate, and they are learning with both Body, heart and head rather than just the head.

On this basis Cross Cultures has developed our specific “Head Heart – Action – approach” which is applied to all Cross Cultures activities and inspired by protreptical (philosophical) coaching methods and is a holistic approach to motivation by turning knowledge, passion and desire into tools for action and change.

Consequently when playing football we wish our exercises and games we to challenge both our COGNITION, EMOTIONS and ABILITIES at the same time in order to open up for as many centres in our brain as possible.

Football is an open game. That means that the situations that occur during a game is random in the sense that the football is always approaching us from different angels and with different speeds. Consequently we have to read and understand the situation in order to decide whether we pass to the right or to the left, if we should make a short pass or a long pass, how and where to run in order to get the best out of the situation etc. In this way one hardly experience the same situation twice during a whole football game (E.g. we only perform the same kick in the same situation, from the same distance and with the same line-up when the ball begin from a standard situation – goal keeper kick, penalty, corner-kick etc.).

In a nutshell Cross Cultures's fun football approach means that the player engages his/her COGNITION, EMOTIONS AND ABILITIES before he/she acts. In this way football is 3-dimensional and engage both head – heart – instruments.



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Cross Cultures speaks about training as 1-dimensional, 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional

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On this background in Cross Cultures we speak about training as 1-dimensional, 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional:

1-dimensional training: A simple exercise could be a simple relay game running from A to B and back to A again, or a simple passing exercise: pass – pass – pass (so-called “block training”). This training we consider 1-dimensional as it isolate the skill that is trained and it only engage and train 1-dimension of our body.

1-dimensional training is especially useful for the very beginners to teach them how foot, body and ball must work together to perform a certain pass, kick, heading etc. and consequently the learning is neither awarding/fun, game-oriented or functional. Further 1-dimensional training mainly engages learning with the short-term-memory and in this way it is easy to learn but also easy to forget. Sometimes we name 1-dimensional training as “dog-training”, simply because it is usually exercises that are so simple and headless that we can train our dogs with similar exercises! And since humans are not like dogs, dog-training should in general be prohibited in the fun football approach! At least as soon as the players have learned the very basics, 1-dimensional training should be prohibited.

2-dimensional training: When only a) head and feet or b) heart and feet or c) head and heart are engaged in the drill we consider the exercise 2-dimensional. 2-dimensional (so-called “viable training”). 2-dimensional training is of course better than “dog-training”. It could be a drill where the players are passing the ball long – short – short – long etc. Many coaches may know the “Ajax-drill”, a specific 2-dimensional drill the Ajax-school are using in all their categories.

Cross Cultures consider 2-dimensional training much better than 1-dimensional training as there is a variation in the drills and consequently it engages more centres/intelligences in the learning proces.

3-dimensional training is when the drill is integrating both COGNITION, EMOTIONS AND ABILITIES (or head – heart – instruments) in the same exercise and at the same time (so-called random-training). This is by far the best and most relevant way of training football. Because it is fun, it is game relevant, it engages more learning centres and it requires the player to read the situation and make a decision before he/she act/perform.

In 3-dimensional training methods the player are mainly using the long-term memory when learning, but on the other hand it also takes longer time to forget.

In Cross Cultures we name it the “Integrated Learning approach”, and it is our opinion that the more training we provide our children that comprise all 3-dimensions at the same time the better.

There is no doubt that 3-dimensional training is the most difficult training to organise. However it is easy to understand, and it is easy to reflect on the training and the exercises organised by asking our selves:

How does this particular drill/exercise challenge:

1. the head?
2. the heart?
3. the skills?



Photo: Cross Cultures



LEARNING BY PLAYING

The Cross Cultures fun-football-approach comprises the obligation to LEARNING by PLAYING because DELIBERATE PLAYING is the best learning tool and because participation at the Cross Cultures Football School must be fun, motivating and inspiring. Correspondingly fun-football is not just crazy football games in which participants wear “a hat and blue sunglasses” – it is serious but funny business, and it is in full compliance with our philosophy on Cross Cultures approach to the Development Model in Sport Participation.

Joyful playing is earnest, but with another kind of seriousness, which exists outside the repetition and testing. E.g. if you want to learn a specific kick, you won't die if you fail. You have the freedom to adapt the kick to fit your abilities and concentrating upon kicking again and again and again on your own skill level until you succeed.

There is a narrow balance between the PLAYING and the LEARNING, which we wish to be Cross Cultures trademark.

Cross Cultures football activities must be fun and our main goal, besides the development of talented players, is to promote fellowship and compulsory and constructive co-existence, both at football and off the pitch. As sportsmen we know by heart that people connect to each other when we play and make fun together. Hence Cross Cultures consider DELIBERATE GAMES an excellent tool to facilitate bridging and bonding between people. And as mentioned above we also consider the DELIBERATE GAMES as the best learning tool because enjoyment is an important tool to help open up for the head, the heart and the instruments.



FLEXIBILITY

It is not always sure that the kids are willing to do all the exercises the coach has prepared for them. The kids might think there is something more interesting for them to do. A good children's coach is FLEXIBLE and knows how to listen to the kids needs and wishes to be able to redo the training program, to get the best out of it, to stimulate kids' motivation and their constructive and optimal participation.

In Cross Cultures we do believe that a good children's coach is a person that follows this manual and principles up to 50-75%. However, if the coach is running all the exercises that has been planned in a way this manual suggest the coach will miss his/her personal engagement. And it is important to emphasize that the coach is able to run less than 50% of the planned exercises successfully, however there is a risk that the training is made accidentally and without structure.

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**There exist no such thing
as a genial exercise.
The quality of the training
depends solely on the coach's
engagement and work!**

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Photo: Kenneth Hovgaard





THE COACH AND THE VITAL COACHING STYLES

To be a coach within Cross Cultures one must understand that you are not only a football coach but also cultural and relationship mediator. In other words you have to transmit the norms, symbols and values in the sense of constructive living both on and off the playing field, and therefore a good coach to Cross Cultures is a dynamic and dedicated person with a positive pedagogical approach; a coach that understand to support and motivate his/her players and carrying for them; a coach that is able to motivate and inspire the kids. And that is why a good coach must know that is it is very important for us that every child experience the feeling of SUCCESS, AWARDS and IMPROVEMENT.

As adult in a Cross Cultures program your task is to serve as a positive example to children, to be present at all times, and to be a person to whom players can turn to and express their emotions.

FOUR VITAL COACHING STYLES

- HUMAN BEFORE FOOTBALL
- A CHILD-CENTERED AND ACTIVE-LEARNING STYLE
- GAMES RATER THAN DRILLS
- EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING RATHER THAN INSTRUCTIONS ONLY

You should never act as a “manipulator” who easily takes care of everything. Players should sense that you enjoy working with them and receive your positive emotions, i.e. emotions that recognize and accept all players as they really are.

Thus the leader and coaches must be present and conscientious; he/she should be what they really are and not what they “would like to be”. A good coach

should, first of all, stand up and dare to let himself/herself go and know how to pass on positive energy, pleasure, joy, and love to every player.

When we are training our kids at Cross Cultures we strive to have an inductive style of coaching, i.e. we want to “coach” rather than dictate. When coaching and instructing with a inductive coaching style we make the kids think and ask questions on each move and exercise, this makes the kids be more critical and self-reflective not only on the pitch but in all aspects of life in general. Hence we are educating the whole person rather than only the next Ronaldo or Messi.

When coaching and instructing the kids on the field in different exercises there is two ways of doing that. When learning the basics in football or any other sports we have to start with the simple things. If we train a inside pass and the kids have never tried it before its important that we split the exercise in to small elements (1-dimensional) e.g. it is important that the player look at the ball when he/she make the pass with the standing food pointing at the direction the player would like the pass to go etc. In that way you must give the kids an idea and instruction of the most important things when making a inside pass, but you must also invite the kids to reflect on the kids by asking questions – e.g. you could ask “what feel better for you?” By this process we encourage the kids to be curious about football, sports and life in general. The kids may even find there own style of passing with the inside of their foot and that’s perfectly fine, if you look at the best players in the world not two players have the exact same style. Remember even the best players in the world started with the basic at some point when they were small kids. After splitting the exercise up in small details/elements we will continue to the whole movement of the inside pass, from the run towards the ball, to the stand food, to the actual pass. Only by making the whole exercise and not in elements the kids will get the feeling of what actually does feel right for them and most important what did they do when they had a successful pass compared to a unsuccessful pass. This makes the reflecting process start all over again and at the end of the day that’s what we strive to influent on the kids.



Photo: Cross Cultures



COMMUNICATION & COOPERATION

Football is a team sport in which leaders, coaches, players and community communicate and cooperate in a number of situations both on and off the pitch. Despite the fact that we all like to exert our individual and spectacular details, there is nobody who can win the game on his/her own. Even Zlatan Ibrahimovic depends on mutual cooperation and understanding with his teammates. A spectacular pass is spectacular only if there is a teammate in the other end who is in a position to receive and control the pass. To send and receive signals, i.e. to “open up”, to signalize where and how you want to receive the ball or to play it, to “run to help making your teammate good”, to kick the ball with your left or right foot, straight or in a run, is very important element for the team game on the pitch. Those elements are not only integral parts of football but of our everyday lives as well.

Good communication begins when leaders, players and their coach agree to communicate. In order for the communication and cooperation to function in the best way possible, it is very important to use an adequate tone of voice and to base communication on the same presuppositions. In this sense, conversation/dialogue and constructive negotiations represent an important pedagogical tool for adults and for

those who are in the process of growing up. Debates, discussions and negotiations on all levels are of great importance to all of us.

It is equally important that the conversation contains features which help develop children’s communication skills and that it reflects the desire to express oneself, and it is therefore very important that both leaders/coaches and children should respect the person talking and at the same time listen and respond accordingly to what is being said.

As for cooperation, the starting point is that football is a team sport in which everybody plays for the common good. Cooperation is a mutual relationship – it is not just about my own benefits. It is also what I can do to help others improve. Cooperation is therefore about mutual understanding and commitment to the game and collectiveness in and outside the game – commitments to which participants and coaches will hold. And in this context it is very important that everyone takes part in the agreements and that no one has the impression that the agreement was “imposed” on him/her.

However, in children’s football the coach are often left alone with the kids. The coach must maintain

the equipment, organize matches, referees and transport of children to away games; the coach must wash the player clothes prior to the matches, remember the medic-care, identifying team sponsors while at the same time care for the kids well being, teach them to play football et. al. Some parents come watching the children in training and matches, but they only see their own child and sometimes they are shouting and pushing the kids beyond what is reasonable.

A good team is often characterized by having a strong "Team-around-the-Team" that can assist the coach in all his/her duties. Rather than draw-

ing "a line in the sand" telling the parents to shut up and stay out, the good coach should rather try to invite and involve the parents and other community stakeholders to become part of the Team-around-the-Team. There are so many different things to do, amongst other welcoming the parents of the opponent team with a cup of coffee and in this way ease the parent tensions during a match.

It is all about communication and cooperation. And the better the coach is to facilitate communication and cooperation with all the stakeholders: players, parents and community the better is the conditions and the LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

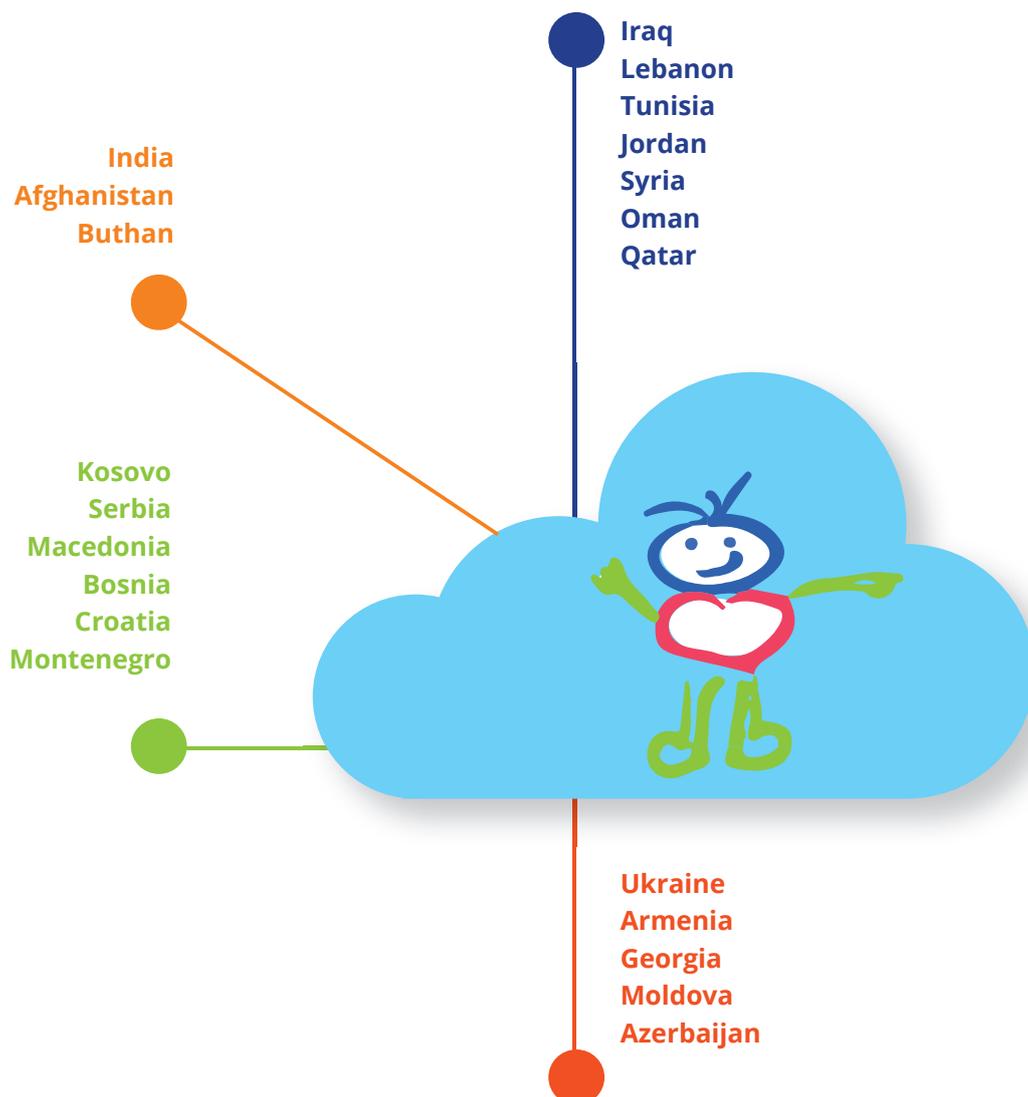




Photo: Cross Cultures

At seminars and workshops Cross Cultures always brings participants, tutors and inspiration from different cultures together to learn from and inspire each other.



THE CROSS CULTURAL WAY OF LEADING AND LEARNING

It is Cross Cultures experience that it is when we bring people of different cultures and backgrounds together to exchange notions, perspectives and ideas new inspiration and initiatives emerge. Thus, what makes our organisation and approaches unique is that they have all been developed in a bottom-up cross cultures process with participants from different countries, cultures and backgrounds with the purpose to bring the best experiences of different cultures together. That it is when we bring people of different cultures and backgrounds together to exchange and share notions, perspectives and ideas new inspiration and initiatives emerge.

Cross Cultures Cloud

Thus, when Cross Cultures organize seminars and workshops we always bring participants, tutors and inspiration from different cultures together to learn from and inspire each other.

In Cross Cultures we prefer to lead and develop our organisation through relationship and dialogue rather than positions, and consequently we consider it our main leadership tool to facilitate cross cultures meetings and processes. Thus, we are leading and developing our organisation by bringing people together, asking questions, putting our ears to the ground and listening to participants' feedback. As soon as they come up with some good ideas or views that make sense in our context, we pick up the best ideas and put them into system. In this way Cross Cultures generate the best and most creative ideas from all corners and cultures of our organization and one can say that this approach is about enhancing and stimulating the coaches' commitment and creative ideas and to make them suit into our purposes.

In Cross Cultures we consider the cross cultural-approach and our international platform a unique strengths of our organization because all our approaches and concepts has been developed bottom-up at our seminars in the CROSS CULTURES CLOUD and on the basis of "best practise".

CHILDREN'S GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL UNIVERSE

COMMUNICATION & COOPERATION



In our approach we actively involve parents, municipalities, primary school teachers, local sponsors, community police, regional and national football associations, the local media, ministries of youth and sports and many others.

Children's Grassroots Football Universe



"The Child in the centre"



1. Galaxy: The children's environment
Football Clubs
Leaders and coaches
Parents
School

2. Galaxy: The local community
Municipality
Local Partners
Local Media
Local Sponsors

3. Galaxy: Important institutions
National Football Association
Regional Football Association
Ministry of Youth and Sports
International Partners

Cross Cultures advocates children's grassroots football as an all-inclusive activity open to everyone regardless of talent, gender, ethnic or social background, religious or political affiliations. To us children's football does much more than building relations among children, coaches and sports clubs. Children's football also constitutes an important platform in civil society where people from different backgrounds can meet and bond while discussing: *children – welfare – future and the development of children's future.*

In our approach we actively involve parents, municipalities, primary school teachers, local sponsors, community police, regional and national football associations, the local media, ministries of youth and sports and many others.

While putting the child in the centre we wish to bring all stakeholders into play in a Children's Grassroots Football Universe. Therefore, when we organize grassroots football activities for children the stakeholders all have a place and uphold a function – like planets turning around the sun.

In other words, we adhere to a civil society approach where strategies and cross cutting workshops are developed for each of our stakeholders to bring them all into play, and herewith establishing a sustainable platform for the stakeholders.

8 RULES IN CHILDREN'S FOOTBALL

1. CHILDREN'S FOOTBALL IS A GAME. GAMES SHOULD BE FUN

Children's football is a child's first encounter with organised football – organised in the sense that children wear jerseys and play on the pitch. The only thing we must not forget is that football is a game and not a compulsory reality.

We must remember that the first impression is what is important if we want children to get the desire to play. Let children have fun, allow them to play together, and pay no attention to the final result. Happy children is the best result we can get; children who have been given the opportunity to express themselves in a great game with their friends and who have therefore opted to take up playing football.

2. CHILDREN SHOULD PLAY FOOTBALL AS CHILDREN, NOT AS ADULTS

Children's football should be adjusted to the needs and predispositions of children individuals, not to the needs and predispositions of adults!

3. CHILDREN SHOULD PLAY FOOTBALL IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

A child's desire to play football is linked with the desire to play in safe conditions and a safe environment. Therefore, it is the adults' main task to create a framework and a pleasant environment in which every single child would dare to speak up and use his/her imagination, where making mistakes is allowed, and where a child is able to learn to take up his/her responsibilities and contribute to the common good. Coexistence is built by people and destroyed by people's indifference.

4. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR SMALL PLAYERS IS TO BE WITH THEIR FRIENDS

Children enjoy playing football with their friends. Playing off the pitch is often more important than the match itself. Fellowship and a positive coexistence are very pronounced features of children's football because they affect the development of happy children with good friends and healthy interests. Therefore, it is important to promote friendship and coexistence and to allow children to realize that they are not only playing against but also with their opponents.

Remember: One does not become a good person because he/she is a good football player. But one becomes a better football player if he/she is a good friend, ready to share responsibilities and engage in matters concerning his/her environment in a critical and constructive way.

5. EVERYBODY SHOULD PLAY

Nobody has ever been able to become a good player by sitting on the bench. Everybody thinks that playing is great fun. Anyway, nobody knows if he/she will become a good player when he/she grows up. Rarely does a “child star” become an “adult star”. Winning a championship is not a goal per se and that is why it is not allowed to use only the best players to win a match.

Everybody should play for the same amount of time. Everybody should try play from the start line-up and everybody should try to play on different positions. However, we must never force them if they do not want to.

6. TEACH THE CHILDREN TO HANDLE BOTH VICTORY AND DEFEAT

All children can participate in children’s football. Nobody is either too bad or too good. That is why it is so important to sustain the principle of even participation during training or in a match.

Nobody likes to lose or score a “double-digit” win. Both victory and defeat should be taken with dignity. If adults can take the defeat, they should also teach children to do the same. Football is a team game – everybody in the team either wins or loses. Victory is everybody’s to take; similarly, defeat is being shared by all.

7. CHILDREN’S FOOTBALL SHOULD COMPRISE OF VERSATILE TRAININGS

Children need to experience various things with their friends from their football club, not just football. A versatile sport experience is an excellent asset for a child’s development and it can also be useful for the development of its football skills. Children should be encouraged to participate in more than one sport. They should be motivated/encouraged to play ball and other games at home, in their yards, streets, and playgrounds.

8. LET’S ORGANISE A FUN FOOTBALL GAME FOR SMALL PLAYERS!

Children’s football should be fun; it should be organised as a shared responsibility of football associations, clubs, leaders, coaches, and parents. Children’s football is focused around the fact that the expression and skills of every single child, his/her personal development, and a positive attitude towards his/her friends are more important than competition and achieved results.



OPEN FUN FOOTBALL SCHOOLS

