

A Study on Climate Action Communication through Football:

Exploring the ways Pedagogy in Football can be Mobilized
to Engender Sustainability, Climate Change, Gender Equality
and Fair Play

Report on Spirit of Football's Implementation and Delivery of Training of Teacher Workshops
using the One Ball, One World Handbook during 'The Ball 2023' Journey

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OBOX - 'The Ball 2023' Workshops Report

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Introduction

Climate science is unequivocal in its call for immediate and direct action on a global scale (IPCC 2023). Sport, as both a global institution and referencing its local clubs and governing bodies, has been slow in adopting climate change strategies. The effects of climate change for sport are well outlined in Goldblatt's (2020) recent report, which emphasizes the necessity for all levels of sport to change or cease to exist. Sustainability, particularly ecological sustainability in the form of Climate Action (SDG#13), is critical to this transition and equally of prime importance to sport fans globally. The forms and extent to which sustainability is foregrounded in conversations amongst sports fans oscillates and varies over time (FuturePlus and Relative Insight 2023). Yet the volume of climate related conversations amongst sports fans have been increasing in recent years. Football and football fans have become more vocal about climate action, a few examples being the pressuring of FIFA to move the dates for the World Cup in Qatar due to extreme heat risks, and the latest introduction of mandatory cooling breaks and air quality indexes for safe play in MLS Soccer (MLS Soccer 2023). It is within this frame that the *One Ball, One World* (OBOW) project was envisioned. Spirit of Football, the lead developer and implementer of the *One Ball, One World: Football for Climate Action Handbook* conducted workshops throughout their 'The Ball 2023' journey from Battersea Park in the UK to Australia, the host nation for the 2023 World Cup. The educational focus of the teacher training workshops conducted with local partner organizations during The Ball 2023 journey was on sustainability, climate action, and gender equality. This report focuses on workshops conducted as part of that journey between March and August of 2023.

Football is a driver of popular culture being one of the most played, watched, and engaged with sports globally. As such, it offers a foundation from which to address climate change and institute climate action at all level of the sport, from grassroots community organizations all the way through to the high-performance clubs and transnational governing bodies. Two such football clubs which have positioned themselves as pro-environmental and sustainable entities are the Forest Green Rovers in England and Real Betis Balompié in Spain. They have both embedded emissions reductions within their policies and operations. Another club who has worked closely with partners of the OWOB project are Whitehawk FC, instituting the first study directly addressing fan engagement in climate action and emissions reduction through Pledgeball initiatives (Amann and Doidge 2023).

Amman and Doidge (2022) have argued that climate change is an environmental and social problem that requires deep transformations in local lifeworlds and whole societies. Any small- or large-scale behavioural change within a group of people needs to connect with local

cultural values and people's identities. Football has one of the world's largest fanbases constituting a huge diversity of peoples globally. Working from the base and involving fans and grassroots players to mobilize around climate change pressures governing bodies and clubs to enact structural change.

Emotional engagement of football players and fans is an important part of communicating climate change (Amann and Doidge 2022). In a social media landscape rife with messages of apocalypse, 'doom scrolling' predominates. Campaigns focused on the negative aspects of climate change have not led to increased action, rather they have spawned whole series of new terms and conditions related to 'eco-anxiety' (Coffey et al. 2021) and 'solastalgia' (Albrecht 2020) to describe chronic fears of environmental doom and anxiety associated with the worsening environmental conditions globally (Albrecht 2011). Football is a sporting arena where, despite the disappointments, there is always a glimmer of hope, be it that 90th minute goal, an errant deflection, or stunning save. Offering forms of climate change communication which seize on messages of 'hope' offers a more positive way forward to enacting change. Communicating climate change appropriately, addressing local values and worldviews of fans and players, requires a 'dialectical process of individuals enacting pro-environmental lifestyle changes and socio-political transformation' (Amann and Doidge 2022).

Directly building off the scholarship that attends to the political mobilization of football fans (Cleland et al. 2018), 'One Ball One World' links climate change to the passions of football, in order for people to experience that change does not necessarily have to be something unpleasant and difficult, but can be fun and exciting, especially when collectively experienced by a group of like-minded people and/or inspired by one's favorite club/player. Even without prior knowledge of football its ubiquity and (initial) simplicity is an excellent vehicle for communicating values-based pedagogy (Sugden and Tomlinson 2018). Challenging the use and practice of unsustainable resources is as easy, or as difficult, as sourcing sustainably produced footballs, such as the ones produced in Kenya by the not-for profit organization Alive & Kicking for the OBOW project.

While the methods for communicating the SDGs and engaging people in direct climate action are targeted at a grassroots, or individual fan level, 'taking a stance on climate change can become a symbolic marker' (Amann and Doidge 2023, 12) for a club or community, which in turn can attract sustainable investment from governments and companies. Partnering with Pledgeball, Whitehawk football club in the UK piloted Pledgeball's innovative method which track fans' pledges, the changes they purport to make in support of climate action, that are tallied up and presented as carbon dioxide emissions reductions in match-day league charts. By

combining climate change engagement with a game-based intervention Pledgeball's model creates an engaging gameful experience (Galeote et al. 2021), a 'gamification' of climate action combining the competitiveness of sport with balanced education/communication of climate science, mitigation, and adaptation. Using a league table to visualize the impact that football fans were having through their participation in Pledgeball is a symbolic form which is familiar to them, translating climate change actions into a cultural form easily understood. According to Amann and Doidge, "the CO₂e-savings were translated into numbers of cars taken off the road. This provided tangible way of quantifying fans' actions in a way they did not have before" (2023, 10).

For the individual participants, making a pledge can be understood as a form of 'consciousness-raising' as 'being aware of mundane regular acts helps reinforce those acts and put them into practice' (Amann and Doidge 2023, 11). Insofar as workshop participants follow through on their pledges, made the necessary behavioural change and instigated their repetitive action towards completing the pledge, communication of pro-environmental lifestyle changes, once internalized, are indeed consciousness-raising and can have lasting effects on individuals and communities.

Methodology

This report is based on an analysis of SoFs implementation of the One Ball, One World Handbook toolkit as an educational toolkit developed in partnership with several partner organizations during the lead up to the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The project and educational toolkit are underpinned by several years of educational pedagogy, resource development, and workshop implementation both individually and amongst the OBOW network partners.

Educational workshops were delivered in 11 countries (Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia). Upon completion of the workshops delivered in collaboration with local community partners participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire at the site using SoF iPads and laptops, or they were asked to complete the questionnaire at a later time convenient for the participants. In total, 134 questionnaire responses were received (Thailand [n=8], the Philippines [n=14], Cambodia [n=11], Vietnam [n=3], Malaysia [n=11], Singapore [n=15], Indonesia [n=30], Fiji [n=6], Kiribati [n=5], Aotearoa New Zealand [n=27], and Australia [n=3]). Questionnaires were a mix of short answer, open-ended, pledge, and Likert scale questions. Questions focused on participant's knowledge and understanding of climate

change, sustainability, fair play, and gender equality. Questions also asked which methods of delivery (the toolkit activities) were likely to be mobilized by participants in the future.

A thematic analysis was used to identify thematic issues within the collected questionnaire data. This involved an inductive process of reading, coding, memoing, re-reading, re-coding, and further memo writing, to produce the final analysis (Braun and Clarke 2019; Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2019). The SoF team worked closely together during the process of coding and identifying themes to generate an analysis which accounted for the experiences of the SoF staff delivering the workshops, the educational intentions of those workshop activities, and the questionnaire responses of the participants. Tacking back and forth between data and analysis provided key insights into the ways knowledge about sustainability, fair play, and gender inequality was generated and communicated in the various geographical regions the workshops were delivered.

The data presented below is organized thematically rather than geographically. The SoF team considered this the best strategy for presenting the findings of this project in a holistic manner. Like the workshops themselves the analysis is iterative, that is, in each iteration there is further knowledge developed and new considerations in analysis which are then applied to the next cycle. Due to the varying response rate from the participants in each geographical region separating the findings into geographical regions would not present a representative sample of the places and communities where workshops were conducted. As such, we chose to focus on the thematic areas of the educational efforts of the project. While each of the participants and each community The Ball travelled to had differing levels of knowledge concerning sustainability, climate action, fair play, and gender equality, the handbook resources were designed to be an accessible toolkit to introduce knowledge or expand on trainers' knowledges in these critical areas. The limits to this approach, as well as further notes of geographical data are addressed in the *Findings* and *Actionable Recommendations* sections.

Analysis of Data

Pledges

The following word cloud was generated from the pledges of participants collected in the workshop questionnaire surveys.

within global societies broadly for us to realize the SDGs, and tackle sustainability, gender inequality, and fair play. Using less water, eating less meat, eating vegetarian, using less plastic, sharing knowledge, and supporting women, are just some of the ways respondents imagined caring for their communities, their environments, and each other.

Many of the pledges collected through the questionnaire mentioned or were focused on sharing knowledge on climate change, sustainability, and gender equality that participants had learned and developed during the workshops. Participants engagement in knowledge transmission, discovery, and reinvention were directed towards close relations, including family, friends, and their local community.

I'm sharing [with] my family and children.

My pledge is sharing the knowledge of climate change to my family, friends and all people.

Share knowledge for my children [and] around my community.

To help promote Gender Equality to my friends, families and to my community.

What these pledges point to is that sustainability, gender equality, and fair play, far from being lofty ideals or ideology, are personal. It is at the community and family level where knowledge from OBOW Training of Teachers (TOT) workshops will initially circulate. It is in interpersonal conversations and interactions where change will begin to gain momentum. Now, the grassroots organizational strategy alone will not solve the global problems of sustainability or gender equality, and this is why The Ball also seeks to confront politicians, football federation presidents, national coaches, and star players. Change needs a top down and bottom up approach and the pledge shows that even from those in positions of power, pledges often take the form of interpersonal interactions (see the story of [Martin Tofinga](#)).

Some pledges featured loftier goals than others. It is perhaps hard to articulate concise pledges when, as one participant aptly noted “FairPlay and the gender equality issue are so large.” Where do you start when the mountain you are attempting to climb is so high? Some participants lead with larger goals in their pledges:

Help quality education to all for success.

I pledge to save the environment.

To create sustainable ideas that will help for the betterment of the planet.

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I pledge to contribute to achieve an harmonious and sustainable spiritual-social-ecological relations for Indonesia and for the world!

Provide suggestions to the government to create environmentally friendly facilities.

These pledges are less actionable than others, such as reducing plastic waste, taking shorter showers, or to eat vegetarian an additional time per week. Still, they are no less important to the overall goal of raising consciousness about issues of sustainability, gender inequality, and fair play. Pledges of this vein offer a potential goal to reach. Developing practical, actionable ways of reaching these goals is a key issue to reach beyond broad statements of change and begin to realize and demonstrating the impacts steps towards realizing this change can take. Left as a lofty goal, the astronomical challenge of reaching these goals can be paralyzing. Thus, small steps towards achieving these goals is key. This is where the workshop toolkit is particularly useful, for it offers ways to experiment with various solutions within a supportive environment. Follow-up with all trainers, but especially with those submitting broad sweeping goals in their pledges, can help in the cycle of M&E, potentially identifying the impact of those small steps to achieving large goals overtime.

Self improvement

A few of the pledges did not focus on the main topic such as carbon reduction through food consumption, single plastics use reduction, water reduction through shorter showers, energy reduction through consumption of less electricity. Rather, they were aimed at individual self-improvement or self- and community-improvement. The following pledges were focused on self-improvement:

To play.

Push myself to do workouts 4x a week.

Play football.

Do more exercise.

These pledges have an obvious disconnect with the desired outcomes of knowledge transmission/consciousness raising promoted by the workshops. This may not be so surprising when placed in context with further comments from these participants, such as “I originally didn’t want to sign up but I’m happy I did.” For this respondent, football was the driving factor behind joining the workshops, less the focus on sustainability, gender equality, and fair play

aspects. Despite their initial reluctance the participant noted that they “Learned something new [and] got closer with my peers [and] enjoyed it.”

The respondents for these self-improvement pledges also mentioned the fact that they would have liked more time to play football during the workshops. While football and play are the hook for many individuals, providing space for football matches and improving football skills is not the purpose of The Ball project. Still, not isolating or ostracizing those who are motivated by the play of football itself is critical. Developing further movement-based activities, with footballs, could help account for some participants needs to be further physically engaged.

Ethics of Care

Many of the pledges expressed what is often termed an ‘ethics of care’ (Krøijer and Rubow 2022; Black 2018) for self and others. Understandings of care share “an emphasis on relationality and activity: Social activities of care both constitute and are made relevant by morally/ethically framed relationships with others and oneself” (Black 2018, 80). Pledges often reflected participants understandings of moral/ethical care and how those ought to be practiced within community. Yet they also incorporated the information provided in the workshops into their assessment of how a moral/ethical pledge should be sculpted.

I pledge to provide my patients with quality care regardless of race, gender and age.

Love nature, love each other.

Care for others.

Do care for our environment and treat people with fairness and equity.

I pledge to help those who are in needs in my community and I'm ready to help them.

Ensure healthy lives and promote well being for all ages.

Be kind, have a positive mindset.

These pledges speak to the deeply interrelational aspects of the SGDs as practices on a personal level between individuals and other, including non-human others. The first pledge takes an intersectional attitude to care, noting that it is not only gender equality that they will strive for in care but also of race and age equality. The 5th and 6th pledges above apply a collective approach promoting care to all those within their communities. Empathy and love for others is

do with participant's knowledge of specific economic, social, and environmental projects or acts of sustainability. Rather, it more likely has to do with the nebulous and vacuous use of the word sustainability within popular discourse to denote everything from oil companies' business 'sustainability' plans, to having a 'sustainable' diet, to using resources more 'sustainably'. Thus, the nebulous usage of the word sustainable may have led to a lack of imaginable concrete actions for change, only that 'something' must be done.

Climate action, the actionable SDG connected to environmental sustainability, ranked highest for respondents when they were asked to rank the most urgent need of their communities in terms of the three key pillars of this project: Climate Action, Gender Equality, and Fair Play. Climate action received over 70% of first responses, with Gender Equality garnering 60% of the second order importance responses. Fair Play came in last in all orders of importance for the respondents who participated in the questionnaire. Sustainability and Gender Equality are intricately linked and thus data from both will be covered in this section. But first to cover how workshop participants understood the meaning of sustainability, and how these responses can be linked with the three pillars of sustainability (social, environmental, and economic).

Connecting resources and their use was one way in which TOT participants understood sustainability:

Sustainability means using the earth's resources responsibly such that future generations can enjoy them as well.

Sustainability means optimising our current resources without compromising the needs of future and current generations.

Sustainability is the use of resources such that development can be continuous.

Sustainability is using our resources responsibly so that we can reduce our impact on the climate and we do not deplete our resources faster than we can acquire them.

It means to preserve our resources and to stop harming our planet in order to secure a better life for future generations.

It is not entirely clear what is meant by 'our resources', whether respondents were discussing their immediate communities or whether they were considering a more global reach of resource use and management. Unfortunately, we do not have the data to follow up on this question at present. What we can see from these responses is an orientation towards the planet and the

environment which takes at its starting point a vision of use-value. The 3rd statement discusses continuous growth and development, using resources 'sustainably' in order to accomplish this. The Earth and the environment become a series of resources for extraction and use for exponential growth in this form of 'sustainability'. What a focus on the SDGs and the pillars of sustainability offer is a way to rethink this extractivist way of considering our relationship with the planet.

The first statement changes the tone slightly and refers to the 'Earth's' resources, offering us the possibility to consider our place on the planet as custodian or stewards, rather than owners. Stewardship of environment, and the rights of nature is a guiding principle in many Indigenous peoples' worldviews from North America and South America, to Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand as can be seen in landmark decisions to grant personhood to rivers in Aotearoa New Zealand and Canada (the Whanganui River and *Metehēkau Shipu* or Magpie River, respectively). These ways of seeing offer alternative possibilities towards thinking longitudinally about climate change but also about immediate action and sustainable principles. Three of the statements above explicitly reference future generations, speaking more towards a vision of sustainability as homeostasis, the maintenance of an organism over time while its environment is subject to change. The last two statements suggest a need to 'reduce our impact on the climate' and to 'stop harming our planet'. We begin to get at a more holistic conception of what sustainability could be for these participants. It is in the 4th statement that we can begin to glimpse something that resembles a circular economy, with the potential for de-growth: 'not deplete our resources faster than we can acquire them.' Sustainability begins to move beyond resource extraction.

Sustainability for a few participants meant considering the planet and our environments as closed systems:

Sustainability means respecting the fact that we only have one earth to live on.

Sustainability means being able to live within the means of the planet.

In this regard, living within the means of the planet forces a reckoning of the homeostasis of all peoples and organisms, those that positively and negatively affect the climate. For instance, the carbon sinks and carbon capture of photosynthesizing organisms versus the extraction and burning of fossil fuels by humans. Striking balance with change is a productive way to consider the interrelationships respondents mentioned:

Able to do something consistently without damaging or draining the surrounding sources.

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An average world with balance between the nature, society, and the economy.

Something that can continue forever and not put a toll on the land and nature.

Having balance between nature, society, and the economy is nothing less than the guiding pillars of sustainability for the SDGs. This balance is not only oriented to the present generation but for future generations. Continuing something 'forever' is quite abstract, but if we consider the reproduction/refashioning of our societies, the revitalization of the environment, and the reframing of economies (another three R's, referencing 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle') to not damage, drain, or place an undue toll on the land, people, and non-human others, these respondents offer a vision of sustainability that writes the human in as part of the solution.

It is an orientation not only towards the present, but also towards the future which offered a promising glimpse into how the participants imagined sustainability:

To live in a world which is good not only in our generations but also for our children's [generation] and the environment.

It means to preserve our resources and to stop harming our planet in order to secure a better life for future generations.

Sustainability means caring for the future that we all live in.

The third statement recognizes the processual nature of sustainability and time. For this participant, we must care and act in the present to create the future that we live in from moment to moment as the present slips away into the past. In this way, social, economic, and environmental regeneration can commence in the present for future generations without sacrificing a commitment to attending to the immediate present. This is what the first statement says explicitly, sustainability is how we live collectively for the good of humans and the environment in the present and for future generations.

In their own ways, the above statements on sustainability can all speak to the local contexts and communities in which they were made. Sustainability will look different for those living in Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Australia. Each community has their own local social, environmental, and economic differences, yet all are interconnected (to varying degrees) through globalization, global supply chains, and most pressingly for this project, through

climate change. Tackling climate action and gender equality looks different in each location, and thus sustainability takes on a local flavour and requires local solutions.

On Gender Equality and Sustainability

Research on gender equality as it pertains to sustainability is unequivocal in its call for greater representation of women and girls in social, legal, political, and educational positions the world over (Hancock, Lyras, and Ha 2013; Hozhabri, Sobry, and Ramzaninejad 2022; Johnsson-Latham 2007). Gender issues have been placed at the centre of recent sustainable development agendas with particular targets set for women and girls (Lindsey and Chapman 2017). The SDGs are a critical policy tool that suggest sport “can contribute to the elimination of discrimination against women and girls by empowering individuals, particularly women, and equipping them with knowledge and skills needed to progress in society” (McDonald 2019). Without specific attention to SDG #5, gender equality, “zero poverty, health and well-being, environment, quality education for all, or any of the other goals” (Hozhabri, Sobry, and Ramzaninejad 2022, 55–56) stands little hope of being achieved (de Soysa and Zipp 2019). Recent high profile disputes within professional sports, particularly women’s football, highlight the continued struggle women still encounter in accessing equal pay and equal access to resources (Tompkins 2023). The great success of the 2023 World Cup, both in terms of viewership, as well as the incredible tournament performance of the Australian squad ‘The Matildas’, continue to place gender equality front and centre within sport contexts.

SoF’s goals in delivering workshops around gender equality and sustainability work within the political and policy frameworks of the SDGs, a top-down approach, while delivering and adapting workshops through a local ground-up approach. They do so by working directly with partner organizations to understand local cultural contexts and knowledges of gender equality and sustainability, attempting to adapt their Sfd toolkit to the local community’s needs.. Still, more work can be done in this area (see actionable recommendations).

The choice of World Cup 2023 for The Ball to travel to was a key choice regarding gender equality. Within the questionnaire responses from the TOT workshops the respondents were asked to reflect on gender equality and its impact for sustainability within one’s community. Several of the responses mentioned the gendered view of football as a ‘boys sport’:

People usually do not want girls to plays football in Bali.

One of the hardest things that I realized is, [gender equality] just like football, because people always think that football is for boys only.

Football is a very male dominated sport in this country.

Most of the time girls are discriminated against in several sports and situations and the only explanation provided is "you're not a boy".

These statements highlight the ongoing struggle of the 'world's game' as a gendered, male oriented sport. This of course is a direct outcome of decades of gender inequality within the sporting world. Perhaps antidotes to these types of attitudes come from those playing football on the streets themselves. As one respondent put it, "When a girl wants to play football with boys they would usually say no. But if a boy wants to join [with girls] they would say yes."

Gender inequalities are deeply rooted with society. And while cultural norms and traditions are processes, meaning they are constantly changing and evolving, this does not make the introduction of gender equality an easy topic to broach or to advocate for when traditional gendered roles and social spheres discount women's participation in sport. When 'sport', and society more broadly, is dominated by male patriarchal authority it is difficult for women and girls to express their desire to play sport or break into these 'male' spaces. As one respondent noted,

The community still remains attached to traditional thoughts that the women should remain at home and take care of the family while men should work and enjoy free time, through our projects we are seeing a change in the community. Women are pushing for their rights to have freedom of choice and their family members are slowly understanding the change and supporting them.

Despite the indisputable evidence noted above that women and girl's full participation contributes to sustainability within and beyond sport, navigating the socio-cultural norms and values surrounding gender roles is more difficult than swapping plastic bags for reusable totes as the above quote attests.

One of the biggest motivators for change in this regard are role models for women and girls:

Lately I saw a lot of women playing male dominated sports like weightlifting, football, etc. In this way, it boosts the confidence of every woman in the world, it inspired them that they can do anything.

Seeing strong women makes me stronger too.

The visibility of women and girls in positions of power and authority was one of the findings to come out of the questionnaires. This is nothing new in the vast corpus of literature on gender

equality. The global football community would do well to pay attention to statements of women and girls, like those above. Indeed, FIFA's language when describing the two world cups, the moniker 'Women's' before 'World Cup' to denote the women's tournament, continues to perpetuate a gendered division, subtly signalling that the world's game is the natural gendered preserve of men. It's not the 'Men's World Cup' but simply called the World Cup. In this regard the propensity to see football as a 'boys sport' is an invasive problem to be found at every level of football. Although things are changing.

By making the choice to kick the ball to the 2023 World Cup tournament, SoF's is making a conscious political statement about the future of football and the future of sport. Gender *inequality* is bad for everyone noted one respondent:

Yes, there is still quite a lot of male dominated activities out there, this is usually due to sports being very gender stereotypical. This has a negative impact on both females and males when wanting to pick up sports especially if it's not a sport dominated by their gender.

There is nothing inherently gendered about football as a sport. It is the discourses that circulate about sport and about gender as well as the social and political environments those sports are practiced which shape how particular sports are viewed as gendered activities. Gender equality is needed to promote sustainability, fair play, and climate action. And gender equality turbo-charges these efforts.

Fair Play

Fair Play as a pillar of the One Ball, One World project falls into a grey area in a similar way to uses of sustainability. The concept of fair play is simultaneously assumed to be an 'intuitive' and 'ordinary notion' within sporting contexts (Motoarca 2015). Yet a few authors have offered further in-depth analysis of fair play as it relates to sportspersonship,¹ moral conduct and interpretations of performance, and notions of fairness and justice in sport (Simon 2010; Loland 2001). It is not within the scope of this report to provide a detailed analysis of the academic work in this field. Still, it is worth noting that the abstract concept of 'fairness' and 'fair play' in sport provides no such direction for instituting a 'level playing field,' particularly within elite sport (Carter 2021, 4). Within the One Ball / One World handbook, the activity 'FairPlay

¹ Sportspersonship is intentionally used here over the usual term 'sportsmanship.' Making the conscious decision to shift the outdated and gendered language which reinforces a vision of sport as a male preserve is required across all sectors if we are to enact gender equality.

Football' takes fair play to be synonymous with sportspersonship, that is, an agreement to follow a defined set of rules and abide by those rules, pointing out and owning up to any infractions in play.

Equity

From the questionnaire data we several interpretations of what fair play is and how it affects communities arose. The main interpretation of fair play is that it was connected with equality, inclusion, and sportspersonship. Inequality led one respondent to discuss the need for equity and a useful definition of fair play that could be put in practice:

There is still the huge gap of inequality in many aspects leading to unfair opportunities or life background. So, I see the fair play, but it needs to be more practical in more usable way.

This theme of equity is important to addressing climate action. Many of the communities The Ball visited are adversely affected by climate change well beyond the small impact their nations and communities contribute in terms of CO2 emissions.

Privileges exist. It shouldn't be a burden. Instead it should fairly be accessible to all. Simply connected together and work together.

Some people are excluded because of things they cannot control. Fair play lets everyone play regardless.

Yes, in order to be sustainable, we are giving others opportunities.

In order to play, be it in football or taken more metaphorically, to be a player on the world stage, fair play is mobilized in the second statement above to include those 'players' who are excluded. We all have an equal stake in working towards reducing the impacts of climate change. But smaller nations and communities need an equitable response from larger nations in order to continue 'playing,' or indeed, living.

Sportspersonship

Sportspersonship was another interpretation of 'fair play' that came up in the responses of TOT participants. What fell under the term of 'sportspersonship' and 'fair play' was as broad and encompassing as the following statement:

Fair competition, respect, friendship, team spirit, equality, sport without doping, respect for written and unwritten rules such as integrity, solidarity, tolerance, care, excellence, and joy, are the building blocks of fair play that can be experienced and learnt both on and off the field.

Some of the values represented in the above statement are integral in other sport for development and peace projects (see the F4P International Values: <https://www.football4peace.org.uk/about-us/values/>) such as respect, inclusion, responsibility, trust, and equity. Yet, fair play, as outlined by the above participant, runs the risk of being such an all-encompassing term that it begins to lose its value in communicating specific ideas.

More focused interpretations of fair play and its effects gathered from workshop participants were directed towards the context of the football pitch:

Yes, especially in football. In a sport, fair play is important no matter what is the result of the game.

Team players show respect to each other and toward the referee during the play. All players are working toward rules that their coach already discussed with them.

Yes, it's important to have good teammanship.

Yes. Lots of people don't enjoy sports, groupwork or PE because some people don't play fair, or aren't very encouraging. The use of Fair Play would improve this outlook greatly.

Yes, people learn about the rules of fair play it can help with the other sports they play by learning to respect people and teamwork.

Respect for the rules, respect for others, and the responsibility to play by those rules are all present in the above interpretations. Working collectively towards a problem as 'teamwork' or 'teammanship', such as climate action, shows that the sports metaphor can be mobilized successfully off the pitch.

Inclusion

Inclusion was another interpretation of fair play and its practical application.

Everyone got included even when they couldn't play good.

Everyone is included no matter what.

It [fair play] promotes trust and sense of being a community.

It's learning about building inclusivity in community.

Because we have to help each other.

Within the FairPlay football activity participants considered fair play as a set of values, including responsibility and respect, which gave everyone the chance to participate. By trusting that individuals follow the rules, that they respect the rules, and take responsibility for their actions, playing football becomes more 'fair' in the eyes of the participants. Connecting this again to climate action, by including everyone in the solution, rather than excluding some as the problem, mutual aid amongst the community can be further solidified to enact real change. And while one respondent didn't see the immediate impact of fair play in their community, they did identify its usefulness towards future justice:

Not yet, but during the activity I see so many rules and fair play that could lead to justice in the future.

Justice, from an equitable fair play perspective, requires leadership from those in positions of power and authority, within football and withing global politics to tackle gender equality and climate change. Applying fair play as a value system may be one way to move forward towards positive change, but first, the values of the fair play system would need to be identified.

For another respondent, the fair play activity was eye opening in connecting rules of fair play in sport with more abstract laws within their community:

Fair play: how the rules really effect on the plays can related to the law in any country. Law can shape how the society works.

Fair play may not have had the educational impact sustainability and gender equality had when attached to football and climate action. Local cultural understandings of 'fairness,' or perhaps a lack of focus on fairness, may impact the efficacy of fair play in football being a universally applicable tool for communicating information on climate action. Still, the values that participants mentioned which underpinned their understandings of fair play provide directions to develop football and climate action communication strategies within those specific communities. Those local values may then be tied into more 'universal' values and mobilized in sport for development settings to communicate climate action strategies, and to mobilize football fans to engage in individual and collective climate action.

Impact

The volume of participants in TOT workshops during The Ball's journey attests to the appetite for change within and through football at the grassroots level. SoF's numbers indicate 406

people received training in the Training of Trainers workshops held between June 2022 to October 2023. This may seem a small number in comparison to the global football fan base (approximately 1 billion). Yet it is these local community football leaders and trainers who are now better equipped with scientific knowledge, strategies for mitigation, and an educational toolkit to enact climate action, tackle sustainability, gender equality, fair play, and climate change through football. The goal is that these 406 people generate compounding impact by sharing this knowledge and helping others within their communities incorporate it into their everyday football practice and beyond.

Generating further impact in the community coaches pledged to share their knowledge on the SDGs and climate action with family, friends, and others within their communities.

I'll ask my friends about their pledges and what they can do for the environment.

I'll just pinpoint one, which is pledges. It will help me to remind myself the day I promised and pledged for the change.

I think pledges remind us of the contribution we promised to make to serve a better purpose.

I'd like to pledge to other things too. Maybe I'll make a cute little family tradition after I have children.

Watching everybody complete their pledges and seeing how many of us were inspired by your organisation and efforts.

The pledge in this regard is simply the first actionable step towards tackling the SDGs at an individual level. A pledge is a way to take responsibility for one's actions and to show respect for peers who are also pledging for change. We do not exist in isolation. All of us are connected to communities and places. By asking friends about their pledges, and in paying attention to others' pledges the impact of this activity is in developing broader community consciousness of the climate actions individuals are taking. By hearing and being exposed to a variety of pledges workshop participants are more likely to have a wealth of actions they can easily conduct individually and as communities.

The Ball provides a visible and tangible artifact people can interact with, literally seeing the layering of people's signatures from around the globe all pledging to take climate and gender equality actions. Not only does this indicate the numbers of people reached in this project, but also gives a physical record of the volume of pledges, uncountable as the signatures blur together and layer one atop another. As one participant noted, "Seeing the ball makes me

think about the people around the world that commit themselves to sustainability.” One Ball / One World’s partner organization for this project, Pledgeball, offers an approximate metric for the impact of these pledges, turning climate action pledges into CO2 emissions, and thus cars taken ‘off’ the road. Abstract metrics such as this, when combined with tangible artifacts that layer numbers of actions (e.g., the signatures on the ball), offer powerful symbols to demonstrate the impacts these workshops have at scale. Each individual pledge may not represent a huge change in itself, but when combined, thousands of small efforts make a huge impact.

Participants also discussed how they would use the methods delivered in the workshop to affect change:

We have a project with children, so all of these methods can be adjusted to any event in the school for more understanding on the SDGs.

YSDA is doing camp and workshop to create leaders propelling the SDGs all around Thailand and other Asian countries and we want to give this great activity to local primary school students to use sport supporting the SDGs.

SDG theatre, we have been using it since the workshop as warm up activities among staff. FairPlay football we will introduce it in our training both female and male, and the SDG ball during our clinics and tournaments.

I will do the methods for my education program. It's a leadership program for young people in Indonesia. I will use them to make everyone realize how important the SDG's issues for the community and individuals.

For fair play I can use it during my football games like showing respect to players from my team and players from the other team, etc.

Schools are one area where the activities presented during the workshops can have significant impact. The coaches participating in the workshops aimed to adapt and adjust the handbook activities and information on the SDGs into primary school classes. The activities are not all football related, such as the SDG theatre or speed dating activities. By having activities that can be incorporated into education settings beyond the football pitch and into classrooms, trainers are encouraged to share SDG knowledge widely. In quantifiable terms, if each participant shares a few of the handbook activities and communicates climate action to those in educational programs, schools, and sport programs, we can expect nearly 5000 people to be reached through one round of activities alone.

In areas where The Ball traveled where government and societal initiatives to combat sustainability and gender equality are not as widespread as in nations such as Sweden and Germany, the TOT workshops offered spaces for like-minded individuals to gather. The tertiary impact of offering a forum where those concerned with sustainability, gender equality, and fair play were able to gather, to discuss these globally pressing issues and how they manifest in their own communities, provided space for mobilizing these grassroots football activists. Rather than feeling siloed, gathering trainers together showed local trainers that there were others interested in change through football. According to a participant from Malaysia, “Meeting other individuals who are interested in sustainability and knowing that there are people out there working towards the same mission,” was a key takeaway from the workshop experience. These gatherings thus made tangible connections between local football trainers, helping to spark cross-community connections towards mobilizing football fans and participants through the delivered workshops towards acts of sustainability, gender equality, and fair play. In the short term, this is what was noticed by SoF trainers and communicated to them by the TOT participants.

What has yet to be seen, described, and measured, are the longer-term impacts of this project for the trainers, how the trainers implement and adapt the toolkits for use and dissemination of activities within their communities, and broader community impact for those places The Ball traveled, and for those who pledged for positive change. The actionable recommendations in the next section provide suggestions for how greater impact can be achieved as well as possibilities for future monitoring and evaluating efficacy.

Actionable Recommendations

1. Gain an understanding of local cultural context, values, and knowledge in order to better tailor workshops.
 - a. Pre-questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups delivered in communities before workshops to establish baseline of local knowledge.
2. Build into future projects (including grant writing) scope, time, and resources to return to communities and provide follow-up monitoring and evaluation of the ways in which trainers have used and modified the toolkits to local contexts.
3. Link with local organizations and universities who have the skills and tools to conduct on-going M&E of TOT participant’s impact.

- a. Design new tools for collecting information on the impact of workshops, including immediate and longer-term feedback.

Recommendation 1.

Cultural education, as a bi-directional activity between SfD (Sport for Development) organizations and local communities, is vital to developing lasting impact. SfD organizations need to do much more than provide education resources developed in the Global North to communities in the Global South. Local knowledge on the specifics of education needs must first be established through community partnerships and local SfD organizers. From here, adaptability and flexibility in the messaging and resources that are presented is vital for meaningful learning to occur. If a topic is not connected to local values, then there is little hope for having people care to perpetuate change. This cultural education, of the values people hold, the ways they live, and the tangible daily happenings outside the football pitch are key to creating shared learning environments and generating impact through sustained behavioural change.

In this regard, instituting 'Fact Finding Missions' prior to delivery of workshops with Partner Organizations, in order to comprehend the 'state' of local knowledge/practices in connection with education goals of the workshops, is critical. Establishing a baseline of knowledge about sustainability and SDGs in local settings is a starting point. From there, individual TOT workshops can be adapted to present appropriate levels of complexity in climate action and SDG communication. Partner organisations, schools, and sports clubs are key to link with ahead of delivering workshops to begin this process of analyzing the current state of the local knowledge.

Working with partner organization to host and put on the workshops was invaluable. Still, in the future more work can be done on the ground prior to delivery of workshops to ensure a more tangible and meaningful sharing of knowledge. Some wisdom from the participants themselves here provides possibilities for re-shaping the future delivery of workshops during The Ball's journey:

To have a rep from the school to facilitate and inform the target participants. Improve the attendance rate and punctuality of the session.

The audiences might have needed a local mentor to support their learning, it was great workshops but perhaps the audience was not ready or needed a lesson on sustainability prior to this session!

Include more universities and participants if that would be possible. In terms of funding, maybe local organization can help or aid to look for sponsors to allow more participants.

The information given can be better tailored to the age groups of people, for example more complex things we can do to help sustainability beyond the usual methods for older students who would have already learnt about sustainability.

Recommendation 2.

One difficulty with soliciting responses through questionnaires, survey results, interviews, and focus groups from participants immediately following workshops is that these responses may mirror or parrot the information delivered during the workshops themselves. What this measures, then, is how well respondents can repeat information, not necessarily how respondents (workshop participants) might apply this knowledge in their local contexts. Some open-ended questions asking how respondents might apply this knowledge help mitigate this parroting response. Being able to repeat the knowledge through rote memorization is not bad. In fact, it may be the first step in helping local people consider the issues and offering them the language and set of tools for thinking critically about sustainability, gender equality, and fair play within their communities. But how can SoF and other organizations ensure more than rote memorization of facts is communicated? Simply by building into future projects (including grant writing) scope, time, and resources to return to communities and provide follow up monitoring and evaluation of the ways in which trainers have used and modified the toolkits to local contexts.

There are fewer funding opportunities for such extended SfD projects, outside of national research grants, that small to middling NGOs can reasonably access. Within development project cycles more attention needs to be given to securing funds for long-term M&E activities and follow-up with workshop participants. Funding agencies themselves might consider requiring long-term follow-up including setting aside funds within grants specifically for long-term evaluation. Partnering with universities, not only on a one-off basis, but through sustained relationships, offers the possibility for the SfD NGO industry to become more sustainable overall.

Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 3 is intricately linked with the previous recommendations, for enacting a long-term cycle of M&E activities requires intimate partnerships with local organizations and universities who can do the follow-up work regularly. A more sustainable form of repeat M&E

could thus be established by training local partners in the methods of data collection, analysis, and evaluation, and/or by partnering with local NGOs and universities who may already have these skills to conduct this periodic follow-up. Beyond mere named partners for future projects, designing projects with academic institutions offers possibilities for a continual stream of qualified data gathering experts, be they graduate students or staff members. This form of built-in longevity directly addresses the shortcomings of the current short-term cycle of SfD funded projects and instead provides a base for long-term M&E of project impacts.

In addition to these partnerships, repeat visits to key local sites by SoF staff for follow-up and two-way feedback on the uses and adaptation of toolkit methods would help strengthen the overall methodology as well as the networking ties with local actors. The Handbook can thus become a living document, continually growing and being modified, with variations on activities being led by those using these tools to communicating climate action strategies and the SDGs.

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