



**AMBASSADORS**  
FOOTBALL

# 2020 Impact Report



# OUR VISION

“ I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it.” Matthew 16:18



FOOTBALL CAMP IN KENYA

Discipleship and building the church. These are the two pillars upon which Ambassadors Football must build as we move into the next decade. There are so many opportunities to share effectively about Jesus in communities today. It is our job as an organisation to inspire, model and train churches to work through football to reach out to their neighbourhoods. Through these programmes we can also invest in volunteers and leaders to see them grow in their personal walk with Jesus. As a result we will see dotted around Britain and the world, football programmes that reflect God's love into their communities in a special way.

After 30 years of service, Ambassadors is ready for the next 30! If we get this right, we can get churches to move out of their buildings and onto the fields and touchlines in the communities where they are located. They can teach, preach and train up people to be true disciples of Jesus through the football programmes we help them develop. These programmes can never function in isolation from other ministries within the church. An adult football team can feed into the men's ministry. A children's football academy

can link with Messy Church. A zumba class can complement a women's football session. Walking football can directly minister to those working with the Third age. This is our vision: football ministry embedded and integrated into the life of the local church. Mission at home and abroad through football can be a vital part of many churches' ministries. This is our gift. It is what we can give to the church and to the world in the years ahead.



**FOOTBALL CAMP IN NEPAL**



**FOOTBALL CAMP IN BOLIVIA**

# INVESTING IN PEOPLE: DARIUS



**DARIUS ON THE SPAIN TOUR**

Darius arrived in the UK from Romania. He started working in North London and it was during this time that we got to meet him. Ambassadors Football was running a local football project every Friday night with the Salvation Army that reached out to around 60 young men aged 16 – 24. One Friday Darius arrived with a group of Romanian friends and they formed a five a side team to take part in the tournament.

That evening, Darius shared to staff member Gareth about his journey to the UK. When Darius heard about Ambassadors and the Salvation Army he was immediately interested. He told us he had

asked God to reveal himself to him that very week and he felt that this conversation was from God.

Darius started to volunteer with Ambassadors and built up a strong friendship with the team. He had started to attend a local church in Tower Hamlets run by the Salvation Army and eventually moved into a mission house run by four churches in the Stepney area.

Over eight years Darius has been involved in almost every area of Ambassadors work. He has captained a team in our tournaments and been on a playing tour to Spain. His faith has deepened and he even worked for a while for a local charity focussed on the most vulnerable in East London. In December Darius got married, with all our London staff in attendance. It has been great to be part of his journey of faith and life.

Find out more about how to get involved like Darius in volunteering, working or touring with Ambassadors Football GB.

“When my mum first saw me after I’d lost 40kg – she was so proud of me, she was in tears. It was a huge transformation. I now come to Genesis every week and wouldn’t miss it for anything.”

## MO’S STORY

When Mohammed started coming to the Genesis Homeless Football Project he weighed 120kg and was fighting an ongoing battle with depression and poor mental health. He hadn’t exercised in some time, so Dan advised him to start out with Walking Football. After the first session, Mo decided he was going to try out Genesis instead.

Playing at Genesis was a real challenge, but he came week after week and built on the progress he had made. He soon found that he was losing weight and was able to keep up with the other guys. This motivated him to be more conscious of his physical health and so he joined a gym and started cooking balanced meals.

As well as helping his fitness, Genesis offered Mo a positive community and he formed strong friendships with the people he met on the project. He began meeting up with them outside of Genesis and it meant that after time his mental health significantly improved.



**MOHAMMED**

Mo said that the Talk Football discussions really helped him, particularly the ones focusing on the topic of identity. The chats encouraged him to open up more and share his life with the other men who came along.

Mo now weighs 80kg and said his mum was in tears after seeing his transformation. He is now one of the most regular attendees at Genesis and is a leader on and off the pitch.

# OLDHAMS' DISCIPLES

John grew up in Manchester before leaving to join the military in 2004. When he left the army he settled on the Oldhams estate in Bolton. An Anglican church started meeting in the community centre and John started going along. After making a commitment to follow Jesus he realised that a football team could help him connect with more men from the estate. Oldhams' Disciples FC was born.

"The church really embraced the idea and became the biggest supporters," John said, "The team is a friendly environment where all feel welcome."

"We are part of the local 'Power League' that plays every week." John continued "Our aim is always to remember that faith is part of our football life, as well as our everyday life."

The Oldhams' Disciples FC came to Ambassadors' National Christian Football Festival (NCFF) for the first time in July 2019. The NCFF is a tournament that lasts two days and consists of matches and other social activities. The Disciples lost every game and by the end of the weekend had only scored 1 goal and had 9 fit players left. Despite this they continued till the end, playing with passion and enjoying their time with the other 13 teams.

"It was a such a good opportunity to go away with the men" John said "they often don't get a chance to get out of our estate, never mind Bolton." The sportsmanship award is the biggest trophy of the weekend, given to the one player that impresses the referees and organisers by the way they act on and off the field. In 2019, for the first time, it was presented to the whole Oldhams' Disciples team.

"We are definitely coming back!"

Oldhams' Disciples were the first team to register for NCFF 2020. Ambassadors Football loves to support teams through the tournaments we run. They are always a catalyst for the support we give during the year and over 70 teams like Oldhams' Disciples register for both the NCFF and London Churches Football Tournament. Get in touch if you would like to attend.



**JOHN HOPE BARRY (HOLDING THE SPORTSMANSHIP TROPHY) WITH TEAM (INSET – JOHN WITH HIS WIFE DONNA)**



**MARTIN (SHOWN ON LEFT) WITH TRAINING PARTNER  
(INSET) HOMEMADE CALF TRAINER REHAB DEVICE)**

# FUNDRAISER MARTIN

Ambassadors Football believes in partnership and being an encouragement for those we partner with. Getting involved can take various forms - volunteering in a football outreach, being a prayer or financial partner, or maybe taking part in a sponsored event to raise funds on our behalf. One person we encouraged in 2019 was Martin Casson who took part in Ride London

raising much needed funds for our work. Here's how he told his story on his fundraising page

"Nearly five years ago I thought my cycling days had been taken away for good. For someone who practically grew up on a bike, this was cruel beyond belief. A ruptured disc in my spine caused severe nerve damage in my leg, leading to many of the muscles in my lower left leg simply dying off. It was a horrific experience and something which I'm not too ashamed to admit caused me to sink into quite a deep state of depression. I wrote a diary at the time, detailing my mental struggle and I considered sharing some of it here but thought better of it.

Eventually I started to see the positives and with the support of family and some amazing friends (and of course some serious rehab) I began the steps towards rebuilding my outlook and getting back on my bike. Nearly 5 years later I'm slowly recovering - I still walk with a slight limp - though compared to how it used to be is like night and day. I couldn't walk/stagger further than my own front door at first and I'm still hugely positive it will continue to get even better with time.

So on 4th August 2019 I will be riding the Prudential 100, my first Sportive since the injury. It'll be a challenge, but then every day since has been. Unlike before, I now wake up every day feeling excited about the day ahead, rather than wishing I could just stay asleep and shut out the reality of life. I will ride in support of Ambassadors Football, a brilliant charity who help to transform local communities through the power of football outreach. They organise training, coaching and football camps for kids all around the world. Those who know me well enough might think... Me? Football? But I know first-hand the power of sport and physical activity to heal the mind and body. It's a fantastic thing that they do."



**MARTIN BATEMAN** GB DIRECTOR

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

## **Dear Friends**

The Bible tells us In Luke 10:27 that we have two great things to do in life – love God and love others.

This is needed more than ever in this current crisis. History will look back at 2020 and see it as a momentous time in history. How we all act and react now as governments and individuals will make a massive difference to the future. What is certain is that our lives are interconnected. Right now, because of those connections, we have all been affected by the coronavirus.

So – what can we do? As an organisation we have been given the gift of football. We can bring people together through football. We can build up communities and train individuals through football.

We are adapting to the changing situation and have restarted our projects in line with government guidelines. Though on hold for the national lockdown, we know that if we pray, plan and prepare well, we can continue serving churches, inspiring and leading them into their communities.

This report talks about 2019. But we are ready to do more, with more people, as God allows us to, in the future.

Loving and serving others - inspired by a God who loved us first.

Yours in His team,

**Martin**

# HADI'S STORY

Hadi arrived in Britain from the Middle East after having to flee his country for converting to Christianity. He moved around the UK, from detention centres to shared flats and hostels, making friends and losing them within weeks to deportation. In late 2018 he moved from Swansea to Lancaster and started attending St Thomas' Church where he met Martin Bateman, National Director of Ambassadors Football.

Martin was delighted to meet Hadi, who as an asylum seeker was keen to do voluntary jobs. Ambassadors Football gave Hadi an opportunity to pursue his dream to coach football.

"I love football and played to quite a high level in my home country," the 32 year old said. "I found out I could volunteer every week with Martin and Ambassadors gave me the chance to take the FA level 1 course."

Hadi volunteered with Lancaster United FC every Saturday, a football club formed by local churches. Around 40 kids attend weekly, all from diverse backgrounds, with 75% from outside of the church.

By the end of 2019 Hadi was granted asylum in the UK. Thanks to his coaching experience, he decided that he wanted to apply to study football coaching. During lockdown he was accepted to study a degree in football coaching at the University of Central Lancashire in Burnley. "To study alongside a Premier League academy is a dream come true. I am so grateful to Ambassadors in the part they have played to help me continue to pursue my dream."

"This time has been a great investment for me to learn and understand not just coaching, but also how to invest in the lives of the kids that we coach. If you can give joy to a young person, then you will always see joy given back to you."

*If you would like to know more about Ambassadors Football GB volunteer programmes and training opportunities through internships, please contact [gb@ambassadorsfootball.org](mailto:gb@ambassadorsfootball.org) for details.*



**MARTIN AND HADI**



**I had never heard of having a chance to learn and coach alongside others as a volunteer before."**

# OUR CAMPS



1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8

**13 & 4 INSPIRE CHURCH (ISLINGTON)**

**2 SHANE CLAIBORNE SHARES AT THE LONDON CHURCHES FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT**

**5 6 7 & 8 CRICKLEWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH (CRICKLEWOOD)**

In 2017 Ambassadors Football helped to run 10 camps, with 400 children attending them. In 2019 we increased the number of camps to 14, reaching over 900 kids. Each child represents a family and friendship group that was impacted by the experience of the week-long event. Linking with a local church means the attendees can all be followed up effectively by a local fellowship.

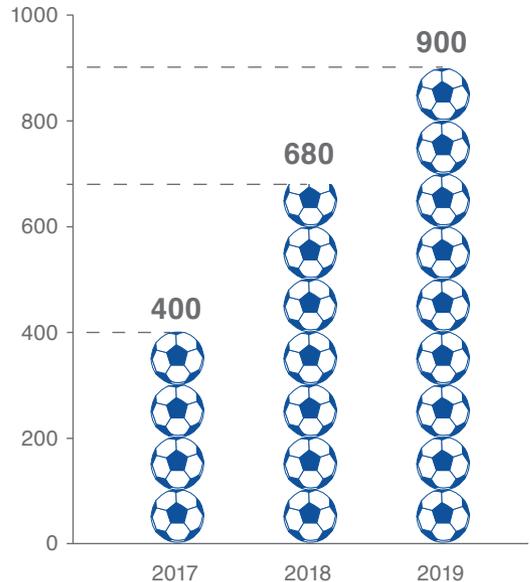
#### 2019 Ambassadors Football Camp

We ran 14 football camps across the UK:  
Ascension Church x2 (*Newham*), Britannia Village

(*Newham*) Hayes Lane (*Bromley*), East End Church (*Tower Hamlets*), St James (*Gerrards Cross*), Novar Christian Fellowship (*Eltham*), Cricklewood Baptist Church (*Cricklewood*), Vauxhall Christian Centre (*Vauxhall*), The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham (*Norfolk*), Inspire Church (*Islington*), Deeside Christian Fellowship (*Aberdeen*), Frinton Free Church (*Essex*), and Emmanuel FC, (*Loughborough*).

“ Thanks so much for all your hard work last week – I’m so thankful to God for the gifts he has given you all, your love for the children and your servant hearts!”  
Inspire Church (inner city London)

Growth in the number of children attending Ambassador Football camps



“ Thanks again for all your help and for running our first successful football camp and we would love to make it an annual thing if possible. Several of the children mentioned how much they enjoyed it.”

Cricklewood Baptist Church

“ Thank you again for all you did for the Youth Pilgrimage this year. We have had a lot of positive comments about the week and I know many of them particularly enjoyed the football.”

Walsingham (a pilgrimage hosted by the Bishop of Burnley, mainly for urban young people)



**(TOP) GOALS SESSION AT ST. JAMES LOWER  
DARWEN, LANCASHIRE  
(BOTTOM) LANCASTER UNITED JUNIOR FC  
(ST. THOMAS)**

# INVESTING IN CHURCHES

**Since 2017 Ambassadors Football have trained 30 churches in Community Football Outreach (CFO) around Britain.**

One church that we have partnered with is King's Church in Durham. Ambassadors staff member Mark Oliver began working with them in June 2019 as a part of their mission week on the Serbian Road Estate. He trained a group of student volunteers in our CFO training. Sam Young is the youth leader there and as someone who used to be on the books of Swansea City FC, he has a real passion for football and a vision for how to use it to reach local families. He now acts as a real catalyst for football ministry in their community.

After the initial Community Football Outreach training, Mark then helped the church with the CFO 'kick-off', where he attended sessions for 6 weeks – this period helps churches to feel confident in running and organising sessions by themselves.

The main aim of the mission in Durham is to use the football sessions to normalise faith discussions and show how natural it is to talk to and about God. Our resource 'Talk Football', a weekly email on footy and faith, is used to help steer these conversations. At Christmas, Mark was invited to speak at their Christingle service which was held in a community centre at the heart of the estate. He said it was an immense privilege to share that the world has a Saviour and one who knows them by name!

Now Mark is still involved through our CFO Journey: he supports churches through phone calls, emails and visits. It is so encouraging to see a church stepping out into one of the most vulnerable estates in the North East of England.

**Can we help you? Find out more about CFO and our support for churches by clicking [here](#).**



**OLIVER, MARK AND SAM**

# FINANCE



30 years ago Ambassadors Football began in a small office in Bolton, Lancashire. The financial principles then were to build up a team of partners who would pray, volunteer their time and efforts and give financially to enable us to serve anyone through football, regardless of their ability to afford it. These principles continue to this day and the majority of our income comes from regular donations by churches and individuals from all over the world. As we have grown, expenses

have increased. But we are thankful we can look back on the past few years and see that our reserves are healthy and that, despite a small loss in 2019, we have been able to carry through the Covid crisis mainly due to the faithful generosity of our partners. We are increasing our staff team and our locations but we can only do this if our income corresponds to that increased expense. As God has helped us this far, so we trust that he will help us into the future (1 Samuel 7:12).

## Income

Donations	£237,479
Charitable Activities	£67,833
Activities for Generating Funds	£23,705
	<b>£329,017</b>

Activities for  
Generating  
Funds (7%)



Donations (72%)  
Charitable (21%)  
Activities

## Expenditure

Charitable Activities	£288,322
Management & General	£41,787
Development & Fundraising	£1,554
	<b>£331,663</b>

Development  
& Fundraising  
(1%)



Charitable (87%)  
Management &  
General (12%)

**Deficit** (£2,646)

**Balance Sheet** £22,624

# OUR PERFORMANCE

In 2015 we decided to shift the focus of Ambassadors Football from being an organisation that 'does' football ministry, into one that can train up individuals and churches to reach out through football into their communities. Our core beliefs remain the same - to use the platform that football gives to share our faith in Jesus. But if we can inspire, model and train churches to do this more, then we will multiply what we do one hundred fold.

So, we decided to connect and partner with as many churches as we could. We have moved from about 170 to over 400 that are connected in some way to us. Our events and camps are aiming to see long-term football ministry develop as a result. That is starting to happen. Our Community Football Outreach training course has been developed to enable churches to have the confidence to set up outreach through football in their local area. We have trained over 30 churches so far.

We restarted overseas tours, which had stopped after the untimely death of Mark Versey – an inspiring leader of tours in the past. We have been able to support overseas work through welcoming international visitors as staff and interns – building them up to return to their home countries in North and South America, Europe and Africa, to continue their spiritual journey with football as a vital tool for them to use. We have also visited nations around the world with small teams to support ongoing Ambassadors work there.



Just before lockdown we were planning to build upon the success of the London Churches Football Tournament of 2019, which saw more teams than ever taking part, across more categories than ever including Walking Football. We were planning more camps than before in the summer months and another tour to Spain. Despite these events not taking place, we are happy to see that partnerships we have fostered over the years are still bearing fruit. Denominations such as the Church of England and the Methodist Church see Ambassadors as their first port of call when it comes to quality football ministry provision and a focus on faith. We long to do more and are looking forward to helping more churches read out and more individuals to find their true identity in Christ through the programs we lead.

# JOIN OUR TEAM OF AMBASSADORS

**AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL – investing in churches,  
investing in people – why not get involved?**

We would love to see God take you on a journey with Ambassadors Football GB. You can pray for us, or partner with us through financial support. You can also get involved in serving your local community or the worldwide community of football.

*Contact us today to start your adventure!*

-  /AmbassadorsGB
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