

IMPACT REPORT

“ **We reached out to kids who never step over our churches doorstep usually...** I think the key blessing for me was serving Jesus to honour his name together. ”

Ali Jensen, St Denys' Children's & Youth Pastor, Cardiff





DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
Matthew 11: 28-30

I think sometimes in life we can feel deflated. In the middle of this year, I watched the unfolding horror of war in the Middle East and the seemingly endless struggle that citizens in Ukraine are experiencing to liberate their nation. The people hit hardest by these situations are always the poor, the vulnerable and children.

So, what can we do?

We are called as Christians to be part of the solution to the crises that we see around the world. But we don't do this alone. Jesus invites us to join with him (as he said in the verses above) as he seeks, through us, to help change situations for the better.

I am pleased that we in Ambassadors Football choose to partner with local churches at home and abroad to help them be salt and light in our world.

We may not be able to stop a war from happening right now. But we have a chance, through football, to bring together people from diverse backgrounds and show them that, firstly, they can get along together on and off the pitch. Then we have a chance to show them that they can change the future for

themselves and their communities by living and working together in harmony. We coach the next generation of leaders, teachers, workers and community builders.

Relationships are the basis for trust and change in society. But of course, the greatest relationship we can have is with God through Jesus Christ. If we can help people get that right, then we have a great opportunity to improve our lives, the lives of others and the society we live in.

These relationships with individuals and people are at the heart of every programme we run at Ambassadors Football and why we also insist on prayer being at the centre of what we do. Thank you for praying. Thank you for giving. Thank you for taking part. May we all know a loving and fruitful relationship with God and one another as we end this year and head into the next.

Yours in His team,

Martin Bateman, GB National Director
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COMMUNITY FOOTBALL OUTREACH

When it comes to faith we are all on a journey. Some are yet to start their faith journey, others have been on it for a long time. For several years Ambassadors has been inviting churches to a 12-month journey in which they launch a football outreach in their community.

This year we are excited that more churches have embarked on this project with us. Like any faith journey there are memorable moments along the way. Here are three memorable moments from three different partner churches– all at different stages:



“We’re excited to kick off this Sunday. We already have seven children not connected to our church who have signed up!”

Zero Months old – Victoria Park Community Church, London

“At Christmas, we will have a social event inside the main church building. This will be the first time all the boys have been in the church (minus the two who already come to our church). Last summer we did a social where we had a BBQ in the church gardens.

Two of the boys (instead of eating pizza or playing FIFA/table tennis) were firing questions about faith and God at a coach called Alex and myself. It was a really encouraging evening with awards and fun.”

Eight Months into the journey – St Saviours Church, London

It was great to see one lad called Khanh get connected to church through Inspire Football. After around ten months of coming, he and his dad decided to come to church for one of the Christmas services. Ever since they have come most weeks which has been amazing, and Khanh and his Mum got baptised (the dad was already baptised)

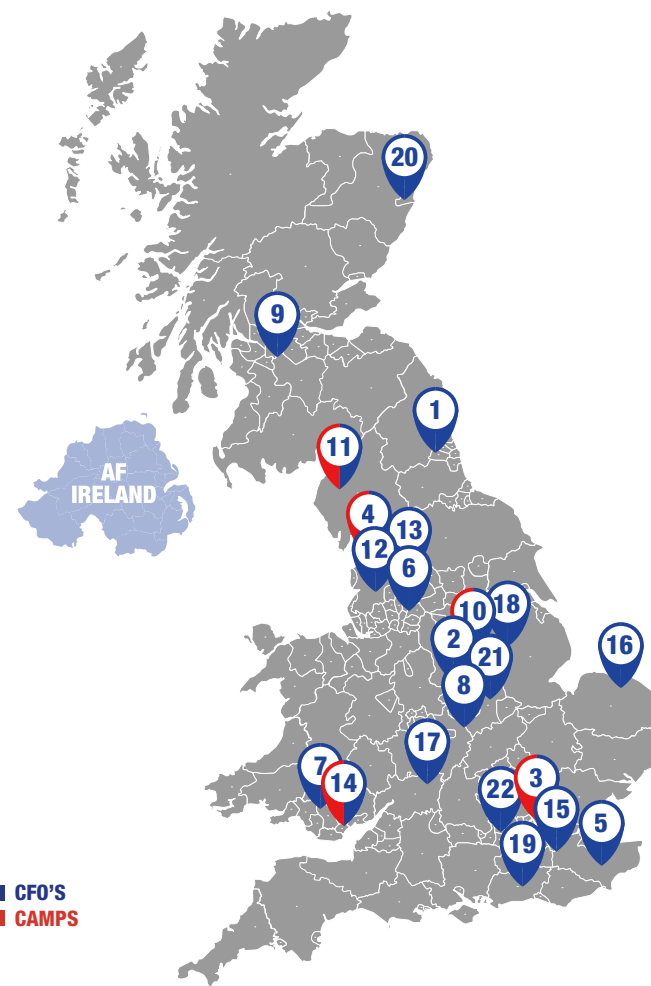
Eight years into the journey – Inspire Football, London

We have blown away by the testimonies from the CFO projects around the country and look forward to hearing more stories of transformation in the coming months.

Dan Owen
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SCAN ME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CFO'S



- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Durham | 9. Glasgow | 17. Bloxham |
| 2. Derbyshire | 10. Sheffield | 18. Newark |
| 3. London | 11. Cockermouth | 19. Burgess Hill |
| 4. Lancaster | 12. Preston | 20. Aberdeen |
| 5. Kent | 13. Blackburn | 21. Loughborough |
| 6. Manchester | 14. Cardiff | 22. Hayes |
| 7. Pontyclun | 15. Orpington | |
| 8. Coventry | 16. Walsington | |

WOMEN'S & GIRLS' FOOTBALL

This year we have really seen the Ambassadors women's football network take off. Since 2022 we have gone from informal chats with two or three women to regular contact, projects and even tours, with over 20 women involved this year.



Two new women's programmes have started recently. Both are using a specifically written resource by Lydia and Claire (AFGB staff) that encourages discussions about wellbeing, success and resilience, with the aim of supporting women and sharing the gospel in an informal fun football setting.

These programmes have had over 40 participants, some new to football, some exploring faith, and some who want to play for fun. It has been really encouraging to support the leaders of these projects, and ask for feedback to help us with creating more female-only programmes around the UK.

A particular success this year was taking a group of eight ladies to Uganda for two weeks. There we coached football to primary and secondary schools. We had an amazing time sharing the gospel through adapted football camp material and coaching up to 120 children, with limited resources. It taught us a lot about the realities of life in another country and the faith of people there despite hardships. We were really encouraged by each other and by the young people who we spent time with.

A particular highlight was leading Bible studies at a girls secondary school. We spent a lot of time singing and praising God, using songs that the Ugandans

had taught us whilst also dancing and laughing. It was a time of release, of forgetting stresses and worries, of love and joy, and complete unity in Christ.

A quote from a member of the team:

“

It was a great trip to experience a new culture, see how people live and do things differently. The schools were so welcoming and the children love visitors. A great opportunity to grow in faith with other women, and to get to visit some beautiful locations and see the mountains and lakes.”

Lydia has been chaplain for Cardiff City Women for over a year now. She has spent time recently with the U19 team and been supporting players there as they play at a high level. Working in a team with the player care officer and sports psychologist, she has built important relationships with the staff and team. Lydia is a consistent and regular visitor to the club, listening to lots of different people and sharing her faith by being Jesus' hands and feet to the teams and staff. It is a behind the scenes role that has a great impact on the people around her.

As interest in women's and girls' football increases across the country and world, we are in an exciting time of development. We want to continue to build a network of women who enjoy football as a coach, player or supporter, and also get men involved who want to encourage women to play and participate. Please contact us if you would like more information!

Claire Lunn-Rockliffe
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TOURNAMENTS



Ambassadors has been directly involved in running eight tournaments over the year, with more than 1300 players, 84 churches, and 130 teams playing. This covers tournaments for boys, girls, women and men. Everyone loves football!

The real highlight for us is when the teams tell us why they take part and speak about the highlights of their time with us. Here are some examples:

“**Lads got together to pray before the semi-final in a huddle without prompting by leaders. (Most of them aren't Christians!)**”

“The youth team were inspired by the talk on the day. It was nice to see them being interested in stories about God.”



“The first time one player thought about Jesus was at the National Christian Football Festival. During the lunch, as the speaker shared about Jesus, he decided for the first time to investigate the Bible and Jesus. He's now a believer and preaches about how it's changed his life!”

“Encouraging to see men from the tournament respond to the gospel”

“**When I offered the New Testaments and explained that the Easter message they had just heard was inside, the girls jumped at the chance to take one away.**”

At our tournaments we have New Testament Bibles that people can have for free. This year we handed out 117.

We had 24 volunteers who helped us deliver the tournaments.

One said, “The message was truly inspiring, and I feel it really resonated with those who came yesterday. I think the applause afterwards, and what I perceived to be the sincerity of that applause, was a delight to see. God was truly at work yesterday afternoon in so many ways”

At one tournament we had a prayer team from the organisation 'No Place Left'. The leader for the day said, “We had a super day with Ambassadors Football, engaging with church teams, having fun conversations, offering prayer and sharing the Gospel.” We had some great feedback about the prayer team walking around and praying.

We are so thankful to God for all He has done through the tournaments and excited for the future ones!

Stephen Read
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SCAN ME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TOURNAMENTS

Since Ambassadors Football first began, we have been playing in or running tournaments. We love all tournaments, from World Cups to local 5-a-sides.

Tournaments always bring teams together and players always get excited when playing in one.

Running tournaments for us is a great way to bring churches and individuals together. They draw people in. Most importantly, we have a passion to make them high quality, to provide an opportunity for fellowship in the teams, and to tell people about Jesus!

We have seen many smaller tournaments take place, where churches organise and run them amongst themselves, and we have a resource that can help every church to run its own.





CAMPS

We are very thankful for another wonderful (and very busy) year of camps! We love partnering with churches to run camps during school holidays, and it's a joy to see so many children and families, who would never usually attend church events, come to hear and experience God's love.

This year we ran seventeen camps across England, Wales and Scotland, attended by 650 children. These included four entirely new camps, two in Cardiff, Hayes and Cockermonth. Crucially, 72% of the children attending were not regular church goers. With only approximately 5% of UK children attending church (according to a recent Scripture Union survey), this statistic is a cause for celebration and points once again to how effective football ministry can be.

This year we learned about Jesus' Friends, focusing on five gospel characters who met Jesus, and the sometimes surprising impact it had on them. The memory verse came from Proverbs 18.24: "... there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." It

was a privilege to point the kids towards Jesus, the friend we can all rely on as we journey through life.

Another real highlight was again the UK Camp Coaching Tour. This year we welcomed Robin from Spain, Martin from Mexico and Jorge from Colombia. All three were real assets to each camp they served at, and a pleasure to get to know. We hope they will be back!

Please pray for the many gospel seeds scattered this year through Ambassadors' camp ministry. Not only the 650 kids, but their families and wider communities.

If you would like to explore running a camp in your community then get in touch with us!

Rob Taylor
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SCAN ME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CAMPS

KIDS & FAMILIES

A lot of our outreach has a massive impact on kids and their families. It is amazing to see how God has used children in the Bible for His plans and how He continues to do that amongst families today.

This is what Ali Jensen, St Denys' Children's & Youth Pastor, had to say about the camp she was part of:

“

It was amazing working with Ambassadors - you guys were excellent, humble, professional and hard working.”

“We reached out to kids who never usually step over our church doorstep. We do a lot in the local school and put events on all the time. This one saw kids take part who we have tried to connect with for a long time. They came and they heard about Jesus. This was a huge blessing.

Several families who couldn't otherwise attend came because of donations from church and I found the generosity of our church towards those they didn't know to be inspiring!

I think the key blessing for me was 'serving Jesus to honour his name together'. Church, Young Faith Matters, Ambassadors and our amazing young leaders working together enabled us to engage with kids who we haven't been able to reach before - all in the name of Jesus.

I loved the football camp. I am not at all 'sporty' and am usually massively critical! I really enjoyed it”

A child attended a camp last year and recently wrote a poem about the leader. The poem was entered into a competition. The poem is an acrostic of the leader's name that lists the qualities the boy saw.

It shows that what we display as leaders when running projects or camps has an impact on the children and on the difference you can make. Naturally, this has a knock on effect for family life afterwards and, in this particular example, the result was a poem entered in a competition.

Finally, a story from our Community Football Outreach programme in inner city London where we started working with Inspire Church on one of our first CFO projects, ten years ago.

For the first session, only two kids came along. But now, ten years later one of those kids is 19 years old, has been baptised, is part of the church and is one of leaders at the football project. He also leads Bible studies at church!

It is amazing to see how God continues to do His work among parents, guardians and the families of the many kids who come to football programmes. God is moving through all generations!



GLOBAL IMPACT

Ambassadors United FC (for Christ)

No, it's not the name of a new club football team in the English league, but it was the theme of the Global Gathering of Ambassadors staff in October 2024. This was the first such gathering since 2019 and such a lot has changed in our world since then. Some 130 staff from over 30 nations attended and whilst some had been part of the pioneering group that came to Bolton in 1990 to set up the ministry, others were attending for the very first time.

Highlights of the week included teaching from Graham Daniels, from Christians in Sport, Hannes Schmidts from German sports ministry SRS Pro Sportier, and plenary sessions led by Jonathan Ortlip, our founder and international director.

The one thing that is certain in life is change and that is no different in an organisation like Ambassadors Football. We looked at a global structure going forward that should create a foundation to build on into the future. One recurring statement was:

"If you want to develop into the future, you cannot keep doing things in the same way you have up to this point."

The global board were all present in person. Gui Thomé from Brazil spoke about his role as chair and the challenges we face. He also spoke about the great opportunities to work through football to reach the world with the Good News of Jesus.

In countries such as Rwanda, we have 3000 children hearing the Good News each week. Some nations, such as Zambia and Mozambique, are training up coaches as father figures with few resources. The wide variety of ministries all have an overriding theme: that we have an urgent need to share about Jesus and equip the church to do so. We are pleased that in many ways Ambassadors Football GB is leading the way for our international organisation with examples of helping the church to reach out to its communities through sport.

We have also done this ourselves around the world with tours to Spain, Uganda and North Africa. We are thankful for the opportunities we have to connect with those from other countries and we look forward to more partnerships in the future.



SCAN ME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AF GLOBALLY

FOOTBALL • FAITH • FUTURE



WOULD YOU LIKE TO RUN A CAMP?

CAMPS INCLUDE LOADS OF ACTIVITIES, THESE RANGE FROM TECHNICAL SESSIONS TO TESTIMONIES, BIBLE TIMES, SMALL-SIDED GAMES AND COMPETITIONS.

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT ROB AT RTAYLOR@AMBASSADORSFOOTBALL.ORG OR VISIT GB.AMBASSADORSFOOTBALL.ORG

"TO BE ON A TOUR TO SHARE JESUS AND PLAY FOOTBALL WAS SUCH A BLESSING TO ME AND MY FAITH"

STEVEN MAYSTON, SPAIN TOUR



TOURS

COACHING TOURS 1-6 WEEKS | PLAYING TOURS 1-2 WEEKS

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT US ON GB@AMBASSADORSFOOTBALL.ORG

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ABOUT TOWARDS THE GOAL

Toward the Goal is a curriculum designed to take children aged six to twelve through the story of the Bible. It has a specific focus on the person and work of Christ, helping children to understand how God's redemptive plan of salvation fits into the Biblical narrative.

Toward The Goal follows Jesus' example of using analogies to convey gospel truths to the hearers. Each lesson starts with a colourful story from the footballing world that draws on themes and ideas that will then be made clear to the children in the parallel Bible story.

Following the call of making disciples of all nations, this curriculum design includes disciple making exercises for the children. After going through each lesson, they are encouraged to PRAY, DO, and TELL so they can begin to learn how to share the Good News.

We are carefully creating tools to meet the challenges of doing ministry around the world. The TTG lineup includes videos, booklets, flipchart versions, smartphone flash notes, and an app to manage ministry plans. We hope to translate Toward The Goal into as many languages as possible.

Toward the Goal will be distributed for free, without any cost to the world. Launching in early 2025, God willing. Please go to ttg.ambassadorsfootball.org for more info!



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