

SuperSports 'Let's Play' Initiative

The Let's Play initiative, supported by United Nations Children Fund, recently linked up with the Department of Education's (DoE) Sport for Development (SfD) initiative and identified 585 of the most vulnerable or troubled primary schools (learners aged 7 -14) in the country to participate in a pilot skills development programme.

This programme offered a unique opportunity to transform schools and school communities into child friendly schools or environments. It has recently been reported that only 23% of all learners across South Africa feel safe attending school!

In 2007, the DoE and UNICEF commissioned the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) to undertake a baseline study of the 585 schools nationwide. The study found that the schools and communities face various serious issues, including:

- The impact of HIV&AIDS
- Teenage pregnancy
- Substance abuse (drugs and alcohol)
- Crime, violence, sexual and gender-based violence
- Poverty
- Gangs
- Harassment
- Discrimination

Various studies have illustrated that using recreation, sport and play to engage young people offers viable alternatives to risky behaviour for young people. Sports and recreation can mitigate violence and crime in schools as the spirit of camaraderie provides an alternative to gang and crime-



related activities, offering an opportunity to positively transform the lives of young people as well as their schools and communities.

Fifty four of these primary schools with a high prevalence to crime across 9 provinces were targeted with the pilot 'Sport for Development' (SfD) programme, via clinics driven by coaches from the local communities. The reach of this carefully managed initiative of 64 800 kids weekly illustrates the sustainable approach of the Let's Play initiative. Each child involved also received a Let's Play a Million soccer ball!

In the pilot SfD phase (January to May 2008) there has already been documented recognition from schools that crime has decreased; levels of learning have increased; and a new found sense of confidence is being built within the schools with increasing levels of participation.

The DoE, in partnership with UNICEF and Let's Play, will continue to implement the Sports for Development project in 27 affected school communities (216 schools of 172 000 learners) in 9 Provinces from August 2008 to July 2009. The project will at the same time be a distribution platform for soccer balls collected through the Let's Play a Million soccer ball initiative.

Make a financial contribution anywhere from R1 to R1million for the purchase of soccer balls to promote recreation, sport and play to mitigate violence and crime in schools. The balls will offer children an opportunity to transform their lives for the better, impacting on their schools and communities.

Please contact Vaughn Bishop
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100%

HOW TO PLAY:
YOU NEED A BALL
AND ANY OLD THING
AS YOUR GOAL.
NO GOALKEEPERS
ALLOWED.

ALL YOU NEED IS YOU

Let's Play
Siyadala

LET'S PLAY ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.
VISIT WWW.LETSPLAY.ORG FOR MORE INFO.