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Grassroots
Programme

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GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER





Karel Navaro/AP/Keystone



After helping Spain to victory at EURO 2008, Iker Casillas headed for Peru as part of a humanitarian project.

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An unfamiliar sight: football on the Red Square in Moscow. The Champions Festival took centre stage as the city hosted the UEFA Champions League final.

Photo: Getty Images/T.E.A.M.

GIVING SOMETHING BACK

EDITORIAL

**BY ANDY ROXBURGH,
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

Former Portuguese internationalist Paulo Sousa, who won the UEFA Champions League with two different clubs (Juventus and BV Borussia Dortmund), has been a UEFA grassroots ambassador for many years. Paulo and fellow professionals, such as Sergei Aleinikov from Belarus, Hansi Müller from Germany, Zvonimir Boban from Croatia, Dariusz Dziekanowski from Poland and Gabriel Calderón from Argentina, have helped to promote UEFA's grassroots programme by attending courses, conferences and events around our major finals. For these elite former players, investing in the foundation level of the game has been a genuine commitment, and Paulo speaks on behalf of other stars when he says: "It is all about responsibility – top players have a responsibility to give something back to the game, because the game gave everything to us." There is no doubt that professional players, former and current, have the power to energise the footballing dreams of the next generation and to influence the development of young people. With the involvement of legendary players (eg Pelé, Platini, Beckenbauer), or even local heroes, the impact can be even greater.

Zinédine Zidane comes into this special category and his willingness to use his name and reputation to support worthy causes and to appear at grassroots events is admirable. As an ambassador for the European Leukodystrophy Association, the former FIFA World Player of the Year was in Monaco a few months ago to collect a cheque from UEFA for CHF 1 million (€619,000) for a children's charity which he has represented for the last eight years. In addition, the French playmaker has

assisted the United Nations with humanitarian projects which target the needs of children. But social responsibility is only part of the equation – there is also an engagement in grassroots events, and the former Real Madrid maestro was in great form prior to the EURO 2008 final in Vienna when he took part in a small-sided game with starry-eyed youngsters at an adidas fan park. Meanwhile, across town, a former team-mate was preparing for European glory and a grassroots trip to Peru.

Iker Casillas, the captain of Spain's championship winners in 2008, was on his way to play football with disadvantaged children in the remote mountain region of Patabamba, Peru, just ten days after his EURO triumph at the Ernst Happel Stadium. In the company of former Real goalscoring great Emilio Butragueño, the humble Spanish goalkeeper presented 100 signed footballs to the local youngsters and offered his backing to much-needed community projects. The importance of using grassroots football as a vehicle for both sporting and social causes cannot be overestimated, and clubs and associations, not just individuals such as Iker Casillas, must accept that they have an obligation to "water the grassroots".

Bundesliga club Werder Bremen provides an excellent example of club-initiated community work. "Professional football is unimaginable without grassroots football" and "if we help grassroots football we help ourselves" are just two of the statements which the side from northern Germany proclaim in support of their philosophy. The Bremen players and coaching staff regularly visit schools and local clubs (100 of each) in order to promote the game and to contribute to social and educational studies.

Meanwhile, the Turkish FA, through its village grassroots festival (500 children from 81 cities), has mixed social integration with football development. The

national coach, Fatih Terim, and former national team players have provided the star quality and raised the profile of the programme. Many in football are active in the grassroots field, but much more needs to be done.

At UEFA's recent National Coaches Conference, the chairman of the Development Committee, Per Ravn Omdal, used the opportunity to seek help for grassroots football. "I am convinced that future generations of footballers would improve their skills substantially if small-sided games were used more frequently. If you share that opinion, it would be a wonderful message from you, the national team coaches, and a way of inspiring grassroots programmes and player development schemes in your respective countries," said the UEFA Executive Committee member from Norway in his closing speech. Coaches and players have a major role to play in fostering the game and motivating young players. In referring to the top level of professional football, Walter Smith, the head coach of Glasgow Rangers, said at a recent coaches' forum: "Today the head coach takes all the responsibility – we need to get players more involved." This also applies to the stars and their willingness to give something back to the game; a game which, in the view of the exceptionally talented Paulo Sousa, "gave him everything".



Zinédine Zidane in action during a grassroots football demonstration in Vienna.



THREE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL
IN MANCHESTER BEFORE THE
UEFA CUP FINAL.

THE RED SQUARE SHOW

ON THE MONDAY BEFORE THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL, THE ATTENDANCE FIGURE AT THE LUZHNIKI STADIUM IN MOSCOW BARELY REACHED THREE FIGURES.

BUT IT WAS A HIVE OF ACTIVITY AS THE PERIMETER BOARDS WERE INSTALLED, THE GROUND STAFF TENDED THE NEWLY LAID TURF AND THE STANDS WERE DRESSED IN THEIR UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE LIVERY. LIKE THE CAST OF A THEATRE SHOW PREPARING FOR A MAJOR PREMIERE, THE STRESS AND TENSIONS WERE BUILDING UP BACKSTAGE.

BUT, DURING A COFFEE BREAK, NEWS FROM THE RED SQUARE HELPED TO CALM THE NERVES AND SPREAD A SENSE OF WELLBEING. FANS, APPARENTLY, WERE WILLING TO QUEUE FOR AS MUCH AS THREE AND A HALF HOURS TO GET INTO THE CHAMPIONS FESTIVAL.

The sense of wellbeing, of course, didn't stem from the queuing – which isn't everybody's favourite pastime. It stemmed from the fact that the magnetism of the UEFA Champions League was being effectively used to pull the fans into a grassroots event. It fitted nicely into UEFA's philosophy of making sure that the tree tops are securely anchored by strong roots. In financial terms, the relationship between the world's top club competition and the broad base of the game

can be illustrated by the €43,635,000 of UEFA Champions League income distributed among all 53 member associations and leagues as part of the solidarity scheme for youth development at clubs. But, although levels of resources are undoubtedly relevant, there's more to the subject than money. Moscow was one of the major events to be staged during the spring and summer of 2008 which demonstrated the potential and the social value of pegging grassroots events to the most important matches and tournaments at the professional cutting edge of the game. Not everybody enjoys the same resources – but models can be scaled down.

But first things first. The spectacular Red Square Show in Moscow had been preceded by grassroots activities pegged to the UEFA Cup final in Manchester, a city which, hand in hand with Glasgow, had set benchmarks while hosting UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup finals within a relatively short time span. In the

series of three-a-side grassroots football tournaments for local youngsters, known as the *UEFA Cup Final 2008 Manchester 3v3s*, around 600 girls and boys played in four categories (boys Under-16, disability, primary schoolboys and primary schoolgirls). With the UEFA president, Michel Platini, making a special appearance and Paulo Sousa, UEFA grassroots ambassador, on hand to assist, some 130 contested the finals on the day of the UEFA Cup final, with the players then invited to the City of Manchester Stadium to watch the big match, at which 30 girls selected via a school cheerleading competition carried the UEFA Cup centre-circle emblem on to the pitch prior to kick-off. The city's major evening newspaper and radio stations also contributed by organising contests.

During the run-up to the final, Albert Square, right outside the City Hall, had been the focal point for 3v3 games – as it had been for the Star-ball Match prior to the 2003 UEFA



Michel Platini, accompanied by grassroots ambassador Paulo Sousa, presents prizes to one of the winning teams in Manchester.

THE UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TROPHY DREW A CROWD IN MOSCOW.



Champions League final. In Moscow, the venue was, once again, especially relevant to the success of the grassroots event.

We say “once again” because the first Champions Festival had been staged at the Trocadero, in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower, in Paris in 2006 and at the ancient Kallimarmaro Olympic stadium in Athens in 2007. Moscow’s Red Square provided another stunning, emblematic venue – and much credit goes to the city authorities, led by the lord mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, for giving the green light to the Red Square show. He regretted the prior commitment which prevented him from raising the curtain on the Saturday before the final, leaving his deputy, Valery Vinogradov, to join Vitaly Mutko, president of the Football Union of Russia, to kick off the event along with legendary Russian goalkeeper Rinat Dassaev, who, during the run-up to the final, had operated as ‘ambassador’ for the final and all the events pegged to it.

The role is important in attracting people to grassroots events. In Manchester, Denis Law had performed it and Rinat Dassaev’s presence in Red Square was made all the more pertinent by the educational side of his current life as patron and coach of the Rinat Dassaev academy for young talents. He was by no means the only footballing legend to appear ‘on stage’ during the Red Square show. Once the superstars of Manchester United FC and Chelsea FC had flown into town, Bryan Robson and Graeme Le Saux conducted autograph sessions and, on the afternoon of the final, players such as Michael Laudrup, Davor Suker, Dmitri Alenitchev, Viktor Onopko and Aleksandr Mostovoy took part in a legends’ match between Russia and the rest of Europe.

Their presence added pulling power to a Champions Festival that also, in the so-called Champions Gallery, featured a 28-minute five-screen cinematic experience covering the history of the competition, displays of memorabilia related to its 53-year lifespan and opportunities to be photographed with the UEFA Champions League trophy. In other words, the grassroots activities were showcased by high-profile events that attracted whole families over a long, five-day period during which the doors were open for between nine and eleven hours. It offered UEFA a golden opportunity to transmit social messages – the Respect and Unite Against Racism campaigns were highlighted – and also created a virtuous circle, within which the large numbers of fans and the presence of superstars attracted TV cameras – and the consequent news bulletin coverage on television encouraged even more people to attend.

This also made the event a great success for the UEFA Champions League’s commercial partners who,

for the first time, joined adidas in promoting activities for the fans. Adidas had helped UEFA to pioneer the core grassroots features of the Champions Festivals and in Moscow they were also prime movers in the skills clinics and, especially, the Young Champions’ tournament for boys and girls in the 10-16 age bracket, which opened at lunchtime on the Saturday and reached its climax with the finals played on the day of the big match. Rinat Dassaev, Graeme Le Saux and UEFA’s technical director, Andy Roxburgh, presented the prizes at lunchtime and, after the legends’ match, visitors were invited to take part in the spontaneous football sessions on mini-pitches which brought down the final curtain on the Red Square show just a couple of hours before the reds and the blues kicked off the final at the Luzhniki stadium. It was a classic and highly successful example of how grassroots football can be married to a high-profile event at the very peak of the professional pyramid and how thousands and thousands can be invited into the footballing family.



Moscow’s Red Square was transformed into a giant hub of football activities.



Action Images/John Sibley

**FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL
AT THE FAN ZONE IN VIENNA.**

GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES AT EURO 2008

**MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE SPAIN LIFTED THE HENRI DELAUNAY TROPHY
AT THE ERNST HAPPEL STADIUM IN VIENNA. BUT EURO 2008 MADE A LONG-TERM IMPACT –
AND NOT ONLY ON ACCOUNT OF THE HIGH-QUALITY FOOTBALL THAT WAS PLAYED.
THE TOURNAMENT IN AUSTRIA AND SWITZERLAND UNDERLINED THAT THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP
FINALS AMOUNT TO MUCH MORE THAN 31 GAMES OF FOOTBALL
AND THE SUPPORTERS WHO WERE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO GET TICKETS FOR THEM.**

The 4.2 million people who flocked into fan zones highlighted a new social phenomenon – and it was a significant fact that, on the few days when there were no matches to watch on the giant screens, the population in the fan zones still averaged more than 200,000.

It's easy to understand why. A typical day at the adidas village in the enor-

mous fan zone in Vienna, for instance, started at 09.00. Four sessions between 10.00 and closing time at midnight offered visitors the chance to play 5v5 spontaneous football on mini-pitches; there were continuous skills, shooting and goalkeeping competitions and all sorts of contests. OK, some supporters went to the fan zones to enjoy the entertainment, soak up the atmosphere and watch games with a beer or two

and some good, cosmopolitan company. But the fan zones were also the focal points for intensive grassroots activities similar to those provided at the Champions Festival built for the UEFA Champions League final in Moscow and similarly supported by the event's commercial partners.

The tremendous success of the fan zones and the festive atmospheres they created were a surprise to the Austrian and Swiss hosts who, before the tournament, had feared a lukewarm response from the home public. Their predictions could hardly have been wider of the mark. What's more, the grassroots activities pegged to EURO 2008 also proved to be highly successful.

In 2007, the Swiss Football Association (SFV) had, for example, launched three projects intended to get clubs and schools in the mood for EURO 2008. The smallest – but by no means the least – was a Clubs Find Coaches scheme aimed at boosting medium and long-term support for clubs by helping them to recruit and train managers, coaches, assistants and coordinators. The other two



Euroschools2008.org

EUROSCHOOLS focused on fair play.

**VICTORY IS
ALWAYS SWEET.**



Euroschools2008.org



Euroschools2008.org

EUROSCHOOLS tournament in Zurich.

projects were specifically related to grassroots activities.

Between April 2007 and the tournament kick-off, 40 one-day tournaments were played in a kids festival project aimed at the 6 to 10 age group, split into Under-8 and Under-10 competitions. Clubs interested in organising a kids festival applied directly to the SFV. They received financial support for the event along with 20 children's footballs per team and a complete team kit of shirts, shorts and socks. A kids festival mascot was created, pro players acted as ambassadors, and the result was a great experience for 12,800 children.

Another 16,000 – including children with disabilities – benefited from the Fussball macht Schule project which was carried out during the same period of time. When it was launched, more than 200 schools applied to be part of it. The list was whittled down to 40 for logistical reasons – and the following data explain why. Almost 500 teachers were involved in a project

that covered 10 football-days per school and required an entire event village to make it tick. The footballing 'main square' of the village comprised two or three inflatable 20x13m mini-pitches for 3v3 or 4v4 games and a 30x30m skills circuit. These were accompanied by equipment such

as footballs, prizes and medals, posters along with a podium and PA system for the 'meet and greet' sessions involving national team players Martina Moser and Tranquillo Barnetta, who acted as ambassadors for the project.

The school elements featured data-packs for the teachers, free didactic material for sports classes and a range of inter-disciplinary middle and secondary school workshop material produced in conjunction with a specialised publishing house.

The synergies between football and schools were also crucial ingredients in the recipe for one of the other great EURO 2008 success stories – EUROSCHOOLS 2008.

It was a far-reaching project supported by UEFA in conjunction with a group of other stakeholders including the national associations of Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, with the streetfootballworld organisation playing a coordinating role.



Euroschools2008.org

A pre-match discussion in St. Pölten as part of the EUROSCHOOLS project.



EUROSCHOOLS ACTION IN ZURICH.

The scheme was launched during the One Year to Go event in Innsbruck, carried on right the way through to September 2008 and, it is hoped, will live on via long-lasting international school partnerships established during a project which fell nicely into the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The prime objective was to use EURO 2008 as a motivation to learn. Thousands of children from 200 schools in Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland took part in the project by adopting one of UEFA's 53 member nations and focusing not only on its footballing traditions but also its history, society, economy, politics, language and culture. One of the obligations was to organise project days, when parents, local authorities and media were invited to join forces with students and teachers in 'discovering' the adopted nation.

Once again, ambassadors played a major role in pushing the event into the limelight. Alfred Gusenbauer, the Austrian chancellor, raised the political profile of the event, while the Austrian

and Swiss FA presidents, Friedrich Stickler and Ralph Zloczower, emphasised the project's importance to grassroots development. Star players such as Andreas Herzog, Stéphane Chapuisat, Alexander Frei, Philipp and David Deggen, Sebastián Martínez and Johan Djourou were on hand, while the patrons included former international referee Urs Meier and TV presenter Mirjam Weichselbraun. Their presence helped to give the project a sense of occasion.

There was also football, of course. During the run-up to EURO 2008, eight-team local and regional tournaments were organised – and they were no ordinary tournaments. Teams comprised three boys and three girls from the 12 to 15 age bracket and matches were 4v4 on 15x10m pitches with neither goalkeepers nor referees. Two girls had to be on the pitch at all times and the goals scored by the boys were only declared valid when one had been scored by a girl. The other unusual feature was the pre-match dialogue zone in which each

team proposed three fair play ideas (to add to those already written into the competition menu). After the game, the teams returned to the dialogue zone and awarded points according to how well the fair play concepts had been respected.

The result of the qualifying campaign was a 53-team line-up (one team representing each of UEFA's member associations) at a tournament played in Austria while EURO 2008 was in full flight in June and, while Spain were winning the Henri Delaunay trophy in Vienna, it was RG Salzburg who, playing under the banner of Latvia, who emerged as the winner of the final six-team tournament played in Innsbruck.

But that was not the end of the story. In September, there was another international get-together for a festival in Liechtenstein, where UEFA vice-president Senes Erzik was among the crowd to watch the matches and to tell the students at the closing ceremony "participating is more important than winning and goals are the most beautiful thing in football – not trophies or money."

UEFA's president, Michel Platini, summed up the success of EURO-SCHOOLS 2008 by saying "UEFA is proud to have been a funding partner of a project that has underlined that Europe is a culturally diverse entity in which football is the common language." The Austrian chancellor, Alfred Gusenbauer, also highlighted "a crucial contribution to curbing discrimination and encouraging better cultural understanding in the world." EUROSCHOOLS 2008 may have been an enormous project, but some of its elements and concepts will surely provide inspiration for grassroots activities far beyond EURO 2008.



Former Swiss international Stéphane Chapuisat with the winners of the EUROSCHOOLS tournament in Bern.



UEFA-pjwoods.ch

**UEFA President
Michel Platini and David Taylor,
General Secretary, signed
the Charter in October with
the federations of Armenia,
Azerbaijan and Cyprus.**



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Armen Minasyan,
general secretary of the Armenian
Football Federation, signs the charter

CHARTER HITS MORE TARGETS

OTHER PAGES IN THIS PUBLICATION OUTLINE SOME OF THE MAJOR GRASSROOTS PROJECTS WHICH HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT DURING 2008. THEY REFLECT A GROWING AWARENESS IN MANY WALKS OF PUBLIC LIFE THAT SPORT IN GENERAL, AND GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL IN PARTICULAR, HAVE GREAT SOCIOLOGICAL POTENTIAL. AND, IN TURN, THIS HELPS TO EXPLAIN THE GROWTH OF THE UEFA GRASSROOTS CHARTER, WHICH CAN JUSTIFIABLY BE DESCRIBED AS EXPLOSIVE.

It is only four years since UEFA's Executive Committee asked for the proposed grassroots charter to be converted into reality as rapidly as possible. At that time, they would hardly have believed how rapidly the project has gained momentum after a carefully controlled start. It was barely over three years ago that England, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Scotland put their signatures to the charter in Rome, with Denmark making it six in Nyon just over four months later. In fact, the Danes were the only newcomers in 2006, a year dedicated to a series of regional workshops where the philosophy, requirements and application processes were set out. At that stage, the target of 20 signatories by the end of 2007 was ambitious enough to provide large doses of motivation. A year ago, we reported that the target had been achieved.

That momentum has been maintained during 2008. The year came fast out of the blocks when Andorra, Austria, Belarus, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Moldova and Sweden were ratified as parties to the charter at the UEFA Executive Committee meeting in Zagreb in January, with the applications from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Cyprus receiving Executive Com-

mittee approval during its meeting on the eve of the UEFA Champions League final in Moscow.

It means that another target has been hit. The figure of 30 signatories had been pencilled on to the 2008 calendar and this has now been surpassed. It means that, within two calendar years, the pioneering group of six associations has grown to 33. In statistical terms, 62% of UEFA's national associations are now signatories to the grassroots charter.

This is no excuse for resting on laurels. In fact, it creates clear targets for development in the near future. The obvious one is to give full encouragement to the remaining 20 national associations. But there is a lot of scope for building on the foundations which have so rapidly been laid.

At the time of writing, 23 of the signatory associations have one-star status – which means that a grassroots philosophy, basic structures and training programmes for players and coaches are in place. During 2008, Finland and the Ukraine added four more stars, joining England, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Scotland and Denmark at the advanced level of grassroots

provision; Wales became a four-star member; and Russia, with its efforts in social and disability football, has now put an extra star on the badge to bring the number of associations with more than one star into double figures. An enormous amount has been achieved in the last two years – but such rapid growth has created a healthy appetite for further progress in the grassroots structures at national association level.



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Elkhan Mammadov,
general secretary of the Association
of Football Federations of Azerbaijan.



UEFA-pjwoods.ch

Phivos Vakis,
general secretary of the
Cyprus Football Association.



HIGH-QUALITY FINNISH

IN 2008, FINLAND HAS BECOME ONE OF THE FIVE-STAR MEMBERS OF UEFA'S GRASSROOTS CHARTER, A YEAR AFTER BECOMING A ONE-STAR MEMBER AND ONLY 18 MONTHS AFTER DECIDING TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP. WHAT'S MORE, THE 'NEWCOMERS' HAVE ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES AS A BENCHMARK REFERENCE FOR OTHER ASSOCIATIONS, MANY OF WHOM MIGHT RAISE AN ADMIRING OR ENVOUS EYEBROW AT THE EUR 11.2M INVESTED ANNUALLY IN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION AND THE 12 DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS, WHO HAVE AROUND 50 PEOPLE WORKING FULL-TIME ON GRASSROOTS PROJECTS.

Summarising Finnish grassroots football is tantamount to reducing an encyclopaedia to a couple of pages. A great deal of thought has gone into the elaboration of a clear philosophy and even more thought has been invested in plotting all the details related to its implementation. The thinking goes right through to social responsibilities (including, for instance, a project run in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour to help the unemployed) and even the environmental impact of grassroots activities.

Finnish grassroots football is played under the umbrella of the All Stars programme, whose objective is to give everybody in the country a fair chance to play football at his or her level. Easier said than done. And if you're catering for age groups from 7 to 20, you need to find the right ways and the right time to separate the talents with pro potential from the recreational players. The whole structure evidently needs support, so the national and regional associations take on board courses for club personnel, for monitors, leaders,

coaches, volunteers and the parents who play a big role in encouraging the children to enjoy their hobby.

In terms of club football, the national association organises from the top to division 2; the district associations take care of divisions 3 to 5 and also, in conjunction with the clubs, all the football played from division 6 right down to small-sided games. Clubs are encouraged to apply for the All Stars seal of approval aimed at strengthening club development. Assessments cover coaching, education, fair play, economy and communications and those who attain "quality club" status (46 at the moment and increasing by 6 to 8 per year) receive financial support.

Work starts with events such as kindergarten festivals for the Under-7s and, right through the children's programme, the emphasis is on enjoyment, interaction within a unified football family, behavioural patterns on and off the pitch, and fair play concepts. In all Under-12 football, the only card carried by referees is the green card, a concept introduced many years ago to illustrate the importance of fair play (there are green card awards for volunteers, for instance). In Under-16 teams, one of the obligations is an annual



When is the right time to separate players with real potential from the grassroots game?



meeting involving leaders, parents and players, during which the agenda includes the budget for the following season, policy on activities, the exact roles to be played and any modifications to the team's code of conduct.

At the same time, players are nurtured through technique schools during the 6 to 12 age bracket, skill schools from 12 to 15 and, maybe, talent academies from 16 to 19 – which are organised by the technical department rather than the grassroots specialists. Skills are also developed during grassroots futsal tournaments played indoors during the long Nordic winter – and Finland currently has some 20,000 futsal players in 1,361 teams.

But, while talent development for the national teams is an obvious priority, the Finns also work hard on keeping youngsters in the game and making sure that football equals pleasure.

One of their key weapons in the battle against teenage dropouts from football has been the concept of friend leagues, festivals and street football events designed for the once-a-week player who enjoys a kick-around but isn't registered with a club. Emphasis is placed on giving the youngsters what they want. Music, for example, often forms an integral part of girls' football carnivals and the All Stars football carousels rated "most valuable grassroots event" in 2004 and highly successful ever since.

The carousel concept is based on low-cost events which children can take part in very close to their homes. The idea is to squeeze as many matches as possible into a single day, while making sure that all teams play the same number of games and are matched against opponents of a similar level. Different types of skill tests are usually built into the event and all the players receive

the same prizes. The only special awards are made on the basis of fair play or social behaviour rather than results. Whole families are encouraged to attend, meaning that a carousel is a social event at which football is the central feature.

The same concept has applied to Finland's disability programmes since 2004, along with the national championships for disabled players and the football schools especially designed for them.

However, much of the Finnish association's grassroots activities focus on schools. The number of school football festivals organised by the FA has quadrupled in the last four years. The motto is that everybody is good enough to take part. Boys and girls are kept apart in team selection but the performances of both teams are put together to produce a result for the class as a whole. While the pupils are playing, a teachers' corner is set up, where the staff can have a coffee, get informative football material and enjoy a chat. Another useful tool in strengthening school football is the All Stars football week in which some 2,000 of the country's 3,000 comprehensive schools participate every year. 70% of the participants are from school grades 1 to 4, where two-thirds of the teachers are women. The national association produces material and a full schedule for a whole week of football, but it is then at the teachers' discretion whether they prefer to have a week or a day of footballing activities.

It goes without saying that such large-scale grassroots activities entail coach education needs for a large number of leaders. The association organises leaders' courses for volunteers which entail 13 to 16 hours of tuition and which are free of charge. The emphasis here

is on guidance rather than football, in the sense that the key elements tend to be codes of conduct, fair play principles, the organisation of children's activities, parent cooperation and, in general, how best to support the children in their hobby. The next step is a move towards more pitch-related topics – a D-level grassroots diploma based on teaching technique to children (15 hours), teaching tactics to children (15 hours), teaching motor skills and coordination to children (8 hours), and teaching goalkeeping skills to children (8 hours). The grassroots C-licence then takes things further with another 77 hours plus specific first aid tuition.

It adds up to a lot of work for the director of grassroots, Timo Huttunen, and his team. But the recompense is that youngsters in Finland are being offered unprecedented opportunities to use football as a source of enjoyment and social integration.



Girls football is important in UEFA grassroots activities.



SGS WORKSHOP IN SCOTLAND.

THE SHARE MARKET

TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE IS THE PRIMORDIAL AIM OF UEFA'S STUDY GROUP SCHEME, WHICH HAS TAKEN OFF IN A BIG WAY SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN JULY. AND THE SHARING OF GRASSROOTS EXPERTISE HAS BEEN ON THE AGENDA AT THREE OF THE EVENTS STAGED DURING THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF THE PROJECT.

The grassroots component has evident importance in a UEFA Study Group Scheme designed to support football development throughout Europe by helping national associations to visit each other with a view to sharing knowledge and best-practice principles in youth, women's and grassroots football as well as coach education. The structure is for a national association to welcome visiting teams – the maximum number is 11 – from three other member associations for a four-day event focused on a specific area within the guidelines laid down by UEFA.

The four-year project kicked off in the Austrian city of Linz where, although the event was not grassroots-specific, the emphasis was on the related topic of talent development. Youth football was the theme of the event staged in Croatia, while elite youth football was the topic when the Swiss national association acted as host. By the end of October 11 visits had been completed and the plan is for 52 to be carried out by June 2009, when the scheme will have run its first full year. By that time, 23 of UEFA's member associations will have acted as hosts to 149 teams of visitors.

Specific grassroots visits started in the Netherlands, where the KNVB welcomed teams from the Faroe Islands, Northern Ireland and Sweden. Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus then travelled to Norway where the home team was captained by Per Ravn Omdal, chairman of UEFA's Development and Technical Assistance Committee. The Nordic countries' reputation in the grassroots field was further underlined when an event organised by the Finnish FA attracted a group of 30 visitors from Austria, Cyprus and Italy.



Learning through dialogue.

The three hosts and the nine visiting associations add up to an interesting blend of footballing cultures and provided fertile ground for ideas to be sown. This diversity made for an interesting session in Finland where, for example, the provision of all-year facilities is a major priority. The hosts, who have been using UEFA HatTrick funds to install some 25 artificial pitches per year, obviously have to contend with more severe winter conditions than their visitors from further south (indeed, the heat is more of a problem than the cold in Cyprus, where natural grass surfaces can be costly to lay and maintain). However, pertinent points arose from Finland's use of indoor sports halls all over the country to implant futsal – which

THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE NETHERLANDS.



the hosts consider a valuable tool in terms of developing technique.

The visitors were also interested in Finland's "quality clubs" system, in which grassroots activities form part of the evaluation process. The four days also gave time for player education programmes to be discussed in depth, including the sort of footballing curriculum currently being employed in Finnish schools and the importance given to social values within the grassroots football context. The group was interested in the detailed thinking which had been invested in defining concrete targets in each age group and also discussed various options in terms of how and when to separate the promising talents from the youngsters who will always treat football as a hobby rather than a potential profession.

The importance of a grassroots philosophy was also discussed in depth. The Finns firmly believe that promoting a positive, happy atmosphere is the crucial factor in all grassroots equations. But the philosophical questions were counter-balanced by practical sessions, including some specific training done at the two Lahti-based clubs they visited, FC Kuusysi and FC Reipas. They were shown the sort of work

during the technique-orientated programme for the Under-12s and the special skills training for the 12-15 age group. At the same time, they were given an insight into the relationships between the clubs and the district association – where the Finns feel that maximum cooperation is an essential ingredient for success. Much the same could be said of the plans to recruit a large squad of tutors for the mums and dads who take on monitoring and/or coaching roles during grassroots activities. This is one area where the internet becomes a valuable tool and is currently being well exploited by the hosts.

In other words, the four-day event was an intensive review of the grassroots scene. Each day was concluded by a de-brief session, where everybody was invited to pinpoint the items which had been of most value and those which had been the least relevant to their particular interests.

However, it didn't come to an abrupt end when the visiting teams headed home from Helsinki airport. The principles of the Study Group Scheme insist on the creation of a logbook and the pursuit of follow-up activities, in addition to feedback to UEFA by both the host and visiting associations with a view to upgrading the visits as the project goes on. Indeed, the scheme's mission document makes it clear that the idea is for the value of the visits to last far beyond the four days. "Upon completion of the visit," it reads, "the study group will act as multipliers by disseminating information and ideas to as many colleagues as possible." In other words, the aim is to ensure that the long-lasting benefits to grassroots football endure way beyond the end of the project in June 2012.



Thanking the demonstration group in Finland.



ANDORRA

Children in Andorra experience the tension and drama during a scene they have witnessed so many times on television. With team-mates and spectators anxiously watching, the goalkeeper produces a copybook dive as he tries to keep the ball out of his net. The image is from the ninth edition of the Francesc Vila memorial tournament, held in memory of the founder-president of the Andorran FA, who was tragically killed in a road accident. The two-day event brought together 12 Under-9 and 12 Under-11 teams from Andorra, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Portugal and Spain.

SUMMERS OF GRASSROOTS GROWTH

WHERE'S THE TRUTH? IN SOME QUARTERS, THERE WAS A FEELING THAT EURO 2008 IN AUSTRIA AND SWITZERLAND MIGHT PUT A BRAKE ON GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES ELSEWHERE. OTHERS CLAIMED THAT THE EXCITEMENT AND THE HIGH QUALITY OF THE FOOTBALL PLAYED DURING THE FINAL TOURNAMENT MIGHT HAVE PROVIDED A STIMULANT FOR PEOPLE ALL OVER EUROPE TO GET OUT AND KICK A FOOTBALL AROUND.

The statistics provide overwhelming evidence to support the second theory. The UEFA Summer of Grassroots Football not only set a record but absolutely pulverised the previous ones by registering a participation level of 4.6 million. The idea, born in 2004 as one of the means of celebrating UEFA's golden jubilee, was introduced as a one-off project. But its success has already extended its lifespan to five years – which have been half-a-decade of continuous growth.

Year	Players
2004	500,000
2005	1,300,000
2006	2,200,000
2007	2,500,000
2008	4,600,000

As the table reveals, the number of players has risen nine-fold in five summers. The Netherlands and Turkey had high success rates in terms of getting people involved, along with the



IRELAND

The joy of the young players is a source of satisfaction for their coach, Oisín Jordan, national coordinator of the Football For All project in the Republic of Ireland. The children were taking part in a Summer Soccer School in Kiltimagh Knock organised with Down Syndrome Ireland. It was one of two highly successful events – the other was staged in Dublin – with many participants and families making long journeys to take part. The republic's extensive Summer Soccer Schools attracted 22,000 participants this year.



ESTONIA

The children, each of them sitting on a ball, are all eyes and ears as a training session at the Kadriorg stadium in the Estonian capital Tallinn introduces them to the game of football and adds joy and excitement to their experience at a summer holiday camp.

Ukrainians, who have established a tradition of involving a high percentage of the population in summer grassroots activities – in a country where five million children take part in school football programmes, where students from years 1 to 12 receive 34 soccer lessons per year, and where 26,000 teachers are being re-trained. Not surprisingly, they are now being considered as role-models by other UEFA member associations and similar projects – chips off the Ukrainian block – are now being introduced in Albanian and Armenian schools.

But not all the summer of 2008 success stories are based solely on numbers. In Moldova, for instance, the Football – Ambassador for Peace project made a significant impact. The aim was to stage demonstration training sessions for children in all the regions of the country, so the core group was converted into a 'travelling circus' which covered over 3,000km waving the Together We Are A Team banner which became the slogan for a project which attracted local and national media coverage. The results were sessions involving some 1,200 children of different origins who played together and made friends. It was such a success that an expanded version is already written into the diary for 2009.

In Helsinki, a new summer competition was launched: the Simo Syrjävaara Cup for teams of friends rather than players registered with clubs. A lot of 20-minute matches were played and

the event attracted 1,500 players in 135 teams. The Unelma Cup was a similar tournament in which over 1,000 women in 120 teams took part – and this event will be in the calendar for 2009 as Finland gets ready to host the European Women's Championship finals.

UEFA has offered constant support for the Summer of Grassroots Football. Each national association received 400 adidas grassroots footballs, 50 adidas grassroots futsal balls and 150 adidas grassroots T-shirts, along with other support material, such as templates for the certificates given to participants. And UEFA has sent certificates to the winners selected by each national association in four categories: most valuable

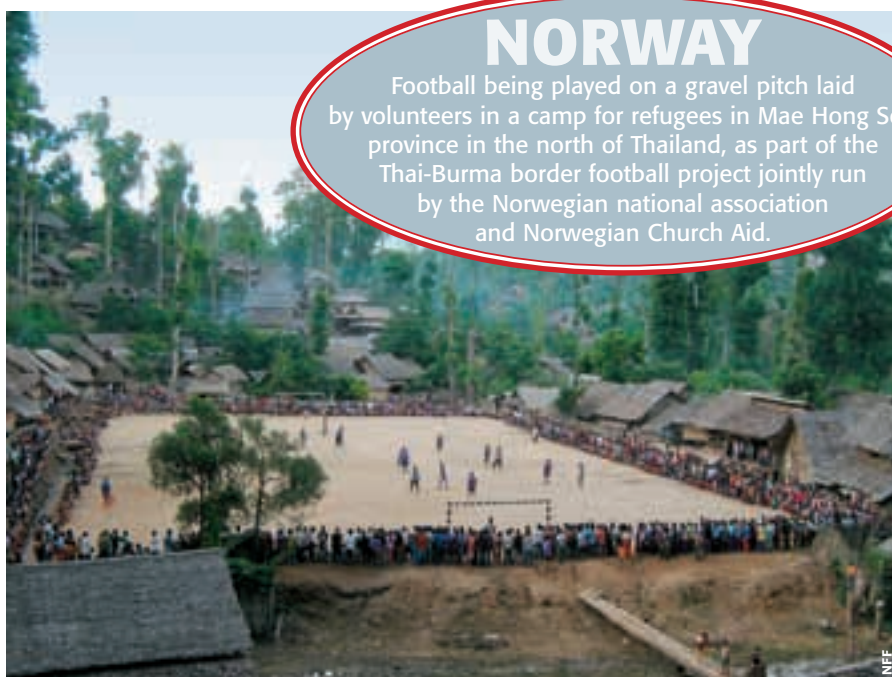
grassroots football event, best disabled football event, best veterans football event and best grassroots futsal event.

Some of these awards have been skilfully used by the winners to further promote the work they are doing. In England, for example, local media reported on the regional Sheffield & Hallamshire FA receiving a UEFA Best Grassroots Futsal Event certificate for a schools programme in which 42 teams took part.

But, if we are looking to reflect the joy and the value of the 2008 Summer of Grassroots Football, the winning pictures from the annual photo contest are worth more than a thousand words...

NORWAY

Football being played on a gravel pitch laid by volunteers in a camp for refugees in Mae Hong Son province in the north of Thailand, as part of the Thai-Burma border football project jointly run by the Norwegian national association and Norwegian Church Aid.





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