

Soccer Without Borders: Summer 2008 Update

Girls in the Game



SWB Begins Girls Program in Granada, Nicaragua

By Mary McVeigh

In the Spring of 2008, Soccer Without Borders extended its growing girls program to Granada, Nicaragua, where it had previously worked with groups of primarily boys and men. Cultural barriers throughout much of Central America deter girls from pursuing sports, and financial barriers make their participation that much more unlikely. As a result, few opportunities and even fewer resources exist for girls to play. Without role

models, encouraging coaches and parents, and proper equipment, most girls lose interest in sports at a time in their development when the physical, mental, and social benefits would be most powerful.

The Nicaraguan Football Federation officially recognized the Women's National League for the first time in 2008, due in large part to the hard work of **Dalia Lopez**, a former player and strong female figure. Still, even at the highest level of women's soccer in the country, players lack appropriate footwear and clothing, coaches are untrained or unpaid, teams practice with a single ball, and games are canceled for lack of resources to travel. While these financial obstacles are common on the men's side as well, there is a distinct gap between what is available to men versus women.

In an attempt to promote the empowerment of girls and women through soccer, Molly Luft, Mary McVeigh, and Elise Hensen
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SWB Partners with Girls For A Change to run GFC Programming in Kampala, Uganda

One exciting aspect of Soccer Without Borders' work is the ability to take some of the best and most innovative youth development programs from the States and bring them to new audiences. One such example is our recent partnership with Girls For A Change.



Girls For A Change is a national organization based in Silicon Valley, CA that empowers girls to create social change. Through innovative programming, GFC invites young women to design, lead, fund and
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spent six weeks working with local soccer leaders to expand opportunities for girls and reach out to them at a younger age.

With the help of nine other volunteers who represent some of the very best in American female-athlete role models, SWB was able to teach PE classes, coach Saturday open practice sessions, hold a week-long camp and coaches clinic, host a city-wide tournament for high school teams, and work with the U-20 Nicaraguan National Team. All in all SWB was able to train, equip, and befriend nearly 100 girls. We were also able to identify local leaders for SWB Granada, and are proud to have hired Jose, Veronica, Manuel, Leticia, Samari, and Kenyi to carry on the mission. In particular, Jose Largespada will act as coordinator for SWB Granada, and has proven an invaluable asset to the future of the Girl's Program there.

We are looking forward to returning to Granada again in 2008 to expand the program by potentially creating a league, sponsoring some of the premier women's teams, and continuing to train coaches and PE teachers. The benefits of sport mentally and physically for young girls is irreplaceable, and we are excited to continue offering the girls of Granada the chance to explore new feelings of confidence, teamwork, and commitment.



We would like to extend a special thank you to the following people and organizations that made the start of the Granada Girls Program possible: **The Donnelley Family Foundation, Asphalt Green Health and Fitness Center, Allsport Soccer Arena, F.C. Lehigh, Radnor Soccer Club, Ramsey Soccer Club, Colorado College, Cathedral High School, Western United F.C., Lehigh University, Penn State University, Indoor Action Center, Catalyst Soccer Club**



The program was run by an incredible staff of female athletes including some of the top college coaches in the U.S. from Penn State, Colorado College and Dartmouth. Volunteers for the program included: Elise Hensen, Molly Luft, Mary McVeigh, Emily Means, Karri Sicard Lucy Thompson, Katlin Okamoto, April Kater, Ann Cook, Daniela Molina, Annie Gibson, Lea Kiefer

implement social change projects that tackle issues that girls face in their own lives. GFC works in low-income communities in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Phoenix, Arizona and are expanding to two new cities this year.

The partnership between SWB and GFC emerged out of a shared commitment to empowering girls to make positive changes in their lives and communities. The GFC program complements SWB's soccer activities by asking students to go deeper into the lessons learned on the field (like teamwork, conflict reduction, and health.)

In April 2008, Ben and Lauren of SWB were trained to implement the GFC program with international groups of young women and girls. Beginning in May, SWB began the first international GFC program at our project site in Kampala, Uganda.

The program was met with great enthusiasm by the sixteen young refugee women in the GFC-Kampala group. It is currently being run with a team of 14-20 year old refugee women, a team which SWB helped start in September 2007 in partnership with Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID). YARID is a grassroots group of refugee youth from the DRC, Rwanda and Brundi living in the Kampala area. YARID has played a key role in providing advice about adapting the program to adapt the material to the situation the girls face in Kampala.

Many of the women on the team are playing soccer for the first time, and they describe the experience of being part of a team and playing

together as extremely powerful. The GFC program has built upon the personal connections forged through playing soccer, and has helped participants develop a sense of community despite their living in exile.

Classes have been held Tuesday and Thursday after practice. Most of the members of the soccer team lack access to formal education, so the opportunity to study in a classroom and share their opinions and ideas has been very welcome. So far, over 11 girls attend each session, and the discussions have been lively and engaged. We look forward to providing a further update about the course as it finishes this July.

An Interview with Christine Siamukole, Girls Sports Coordinator with Beyond Sport Inc. in Monze, Zambia

By Deirdre Murphy

Over the past year, Soccer without Borders (SWB) has partnered with **Beyond Sport Inc** (BSI) to help build their girls soccer and life skills program called Girls Got Goals Global. Chris-

tine was selected by the Director, **Francis Nakonje** to be trained to take over the program once the SWB volunteers left. The project ended up being moved to her hometown where she had already formed 4 girls teams and volunteer coaches for each one. Currently, Christine and her team of volunteers are coaching 6 girls teams ranging in age from 8-18, as well as 7 boys' teams, ages 8-22.

The rural area is called Sinazongwe where there is no electricity or running water. In order to buy food people have to walk up to 5 kilometers to the market. However, there are plenty of soccer pitches! One challenge is the pitches are miles apart and there is very little transportation in the area. Christine has to walk up to 7 kilometers just to get to one field.

Christine is 22 years old and has experience coaching and leading life skills or movement games through her work at BSI and Right to Play. She completed high school and looks forward to learning more about agriculture and business one day in college. For now, she is the first woman in her community to develop a girl's soccer and life pro-



gram for all its youth. As the Coordinator, she organizes games and tournaments for all the teams, leads life skills workshops and trains the coaches. She is also trying to get an income generating project off the ground to sell chickens. The money raised will be used to buy balls and trophies for the tournaments. The following interview is her reflections on the impact of the

get girls to come out and play?

“Well, it helps now to have a woman managing the program. But in order to get girls to come out, I first went to schools to talk to the teachers. Then I went to the girls’ homes and spoke with their moms. I gave them information and talked to them about how the world has changed. We live in modern times

they are off working-boys don’t help the parents as much.

Also, less girls get pregnant because now they have something positive and fun to do. Before they would spend too much time with boys after school.”

Do you see any changes in the girls?

“Yes, a lot. You can tell their self esteem is stronger and they can stand on their own.”

How has your program made an impact on you personally? How do you see yourself as a role model to the girls in the community?

“I see a lot of changes in these girls. You can tell their self-esteem is stronger and they can stand on their own”

- Christine Siamukole, Girls Sports Coordinator, BSI

program and the collaboration with SWB as well as the challenges it still faces.

What kind of impact do you think the girls soccer program has made on the community?

“It was very difficult in the beginning because girls are not allowed to spend time alone. Parents are really protective of girls. And they were afraid girls would be alone with boys. But they started to understand that the girls will be together in the program, so it was safe. Girls are also needed to be at home to do all the housework. Schools in my community are now asking me to provide programs for them in the coming months. People are approaching me and telling me what a great job we are doing. When people are constantly coming up to you and saying how much they like the program, it shows that you are doing a good thing.”

Was it difficult in the beginning to

and girls can do what the boys can do. I also explained the whole gender issue and that they need to create more time for girls to do other things besides working at home. Finally they came to understand. However, at the school the teachers who were supportive were all women. If they had been men it would have been more difficult.”

So how do you think your program will change the lives of these girls?

“Boys are given preference to go to school and girls are supposed to get married when she matures, which is when she becomes 14 years old. This time around, girls go to school and college. But even though they go to school or work, they still are the main ones taking care of their parents. Girls always think of their parents even when

(She laughs and pauses for a while) “It was very difficult in the beginning. But now I’m very free and very happy with what I’m doing. Girls are open to talk to me about what is going on in their life. A lot of people are getting to know me—even big people. I’m being recognized in the community for the small job I’m doing, and they really appreciate me.”

(I couldn’t help but interject here and give her some perspective that the ‘small job’ she is doing is actually huge. Because of her leader-



ship and commitment to her community, girls' lives will be changed forever. Less girls will be married off at 14 years old. Less girls will get pregnant before they are ready. More girls are standing up for themselves and discovering their voice. More girls are discovering the strength in their bodies and wanting to respect them and protect them. And, most importantly, more girls will have a future to look forward to. So, I told her, your small job is actually not small at all and she laughed.)

What do you see for the future of the program?

“I would be very happy to have a few of our kids play for the national team. They can then become role models to motivate others.”

What challenges do you face?

“The distances between all the fields. I have to walk long distances to get to each pitch –it takes me an hour and half of walking to get to each site and by the time I reach there I'm already tired. It is also hard that I can not pay the coaches, especially after running a tournament. The tournaments we put on are not sponsored, but they expect something big. It's difficult with coaches-they say I get paid so why don't they?”

Third Annual Campamento Held in Santa Ana, El Salvador

In January 2008, the third annual 'campamento' was held at beau-



tiful Lago de Coaltapeque just outside of Santa Ana, El Salvador. The camp, which is led by **Magicians Without Borders** founder **Tom Werner**, is truly a magical experience. Serving 25 members of ASAPROSAR's youth program, the residential camps provides five days of learning, sharing, creating and community-building.

ASAPROSAR is the Salvadoran Association for Rural Health. One of their visionary programs is the Barefoot Angels Urban Youth Program. Asaprosar's website describes the program in the following way, “Barefoot Angels targets young people 7-18 years old who work in the central market in Santa Ana, El Salvador's second largest city, and in extremely hazardous conditions at garbage dumps in the area. The program is one of the few alternatives to the city's gangs. Among the aims of “Barefoot Angels” —“Angeles Descalzos” in Spanish—are school drop-out prevention and child labor eradication.”

For many of the kids, Campamento is their first extended experience away from their families and immersed in a natural environment. During the camp, teachers from El Salvador, Guatemala the USA and Canada offer classes in yoga, art, theatre, magic, health education, soccer and break dancing. Though

varied, the shared goals of each of these classes are: to promote self-reflection, to build self esteem, to create a fun and dynamic environment, and to impart leadership skills so that students will serve as role models for their peers.

This year, members of SWB led soccer programming, assisted in the health and theatre classes, and ran a poetry workshop for the students. The camp has become a truly special tradition which will be held every January, just before the students begin the new school year.

“The camp motivates the students in the program all year. We know we can only come if we do well in school and in our other responsibilities.”

- Jaime Zumba, 16, Student Leader From the Angeles Descalzos Program

Skidmore College Soccer Teams Connect With Their Community While Raising \$4,650 for SWB

Story courtesy of the Skidmore College Website

Skidmore varsity soccer players **Pete Brownell** and **Chris Markham** were musing about their post-graduate plans this past winter



when Chris pitched the idea of working with the organization Soccer Without Borders, a nonprofit in which his sister is involved. Says Brownell, a senior co-captain from Ridgewood, N.J., “I loved it right from the start, and I figured the best way we could help was to make a financial donation. Doing a camp for kids at Skidmore seemed like the perfect way to raise money.” Added Markham, a senior from Watertown, Mass., “Soccer has added so much to our lives, and we wanted to share that experience with the younger generation. To do something that is good for our local community and raise money for communities elsewhere without our level of resources is a positive thing for everyone.”

Flash forward to the morning of April 15 on Skidmore’s Wachenheim Field, the home turf for the varsity men’s and women’s soccer teams. Brownell, Markham, and a dozen or so of their peers were

there, along with 100 youth soccer players from across the Capital Region (including Albany, Greenwich, Schuylerville, and Saratoga Springs). A regular academic day for the Skidmore student-athletes, it was school vacation week for the kids, who ranged in age from 8 to 14. Laughed Brownell, “Be careful what you ask for, you just might get it.” He and Markham had received so much interest in their camp that they had to halt signups at the century mark a full week ahead of the camp’s start date.

For the next four days, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the young players participated in skills sessions and games under the positive guidance of college players who were suddenly running a full-fledged camp. They had anticipated 30 or so 8 to 9-year-olds. Fortunately, they had a little help. They had recruited Skidmore varsity soccer coaches Sarah Cooper and Ron McEachen and

assistant men’s soccer coach Mick Gregg as special guests.

By all accounts, the four-day camp was a huge success. With each camper contributing \$50, the organizers raised \$4,650 for Soccer Without Borders, money which will

sustain programming in Uganda for two years as well as a startup for a charter school in downtown Boston.

“The students of Skidmore deserve kudos for all their hard work. They are truly putting all their heart into this charity through soccer. They are wonderful examples for us. They are witnessing firsthand how to give to good causes, while doing something that you love. In the meantime, they are receiving great soccer training.”

SWB would like to extend a special thank you to the athletics department and the administration at Skidmore College for all of the support they provided to the players and coaches to make this great event possible!

SWB Director Named First Ever ‘Social Entrepreneur in Residence’ at Lehigh University

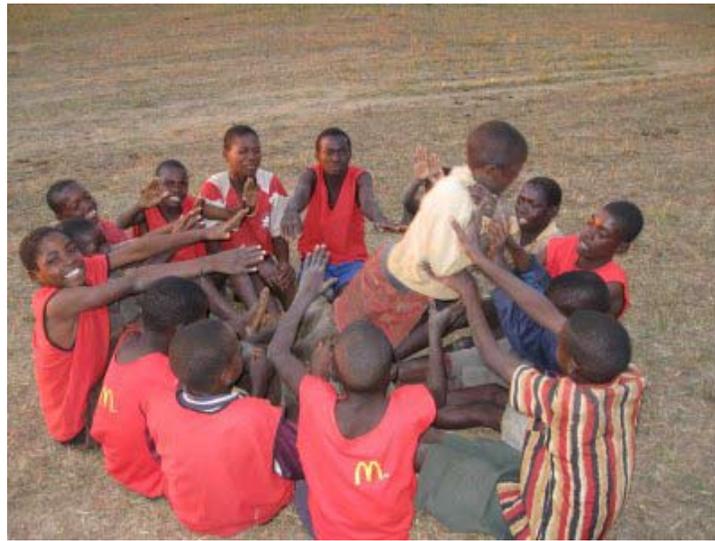
In April of 2008, SWB founder Ben Gucciardi was invited to Lehigh University as their first ever ‘social entrepreneur in residence’.

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- Chris Markham, Skidmore College Varsity Soccer Player and Camp Organizer

Soccer Without Borders received its first funding by entering a student entrepreneurship competition in 2005, and was awarded the Social Division Award. Lehigh is in the midst of an exciting expansion in their entrepreneurship department, and the faculty is seeking to encourage students to see social entrepreneurship as a viable and plausible option.

To promote this initiative, the college of business and economics and the entrepreneurship department hosted Ben and invited him to speak with several classes in the International Relations and Entrepreneurship departments. Professor Bruce Moon of the International Relations department said, "Ben's visit achieved exactly what I hoped it would. He inspired students by showing them that they can take the knowledge they have acquired and think for themselves to make a positive impact on the world." Ben also shared SWB's message of hope with the World Affairs Club and the Mens Soccer Team at Lehigh as well as speaking to an all school assembly at nearby Moravian Academy. SWB would like to extend a special thank you to Lehigh University and Moravian Academy for their generosity and recognition of our work.



An important component of this trip was the inter-cultural exchange between young women from Scotland and Zambia. Several of the volunteers described this experience as life-changing, as they gained

University of Edinburgh, Scotland Women's Football Team heads to Monze, Zambia to Support BSI and SWB Girls Programs

This May, University of Edinburgh Womens Football coach **Kate Schmidgall** and 6 of her players headed to Zambia support the ongoing Girls Program in partnership with Beyond Sport Inc. in the rural areas of Monze and Mwamba. The volunteers spent two weeks running clinics and coaching workshops as well as bringing the much-needed equipment to the programs, which will enable the programs to grow and improve. The Edinburgh crew managed to work with more than 1,000 youth and provided helpful objective advice on the programs' future direction to local SWB staff.

a new perspective on global inequality and the power of sport to effect positive change. Francis Nagonje commented, "It's always exciting to meet people from different countries. BSI is bringing the world to Monze. They share their skills in different sports and help with training our local staff, which in turn improves our program delivery."

People from three continents and five countries came together with the single purpose of helping young people develop their self-esteem by providing them with an opportunity to play and accel in the game they love. A special recognition to **Francis Nagonje**, the director of BSI, for all of his efforts in providing children in his community with the opportunity to play and learn.

