Our PLAY SOCCER programmes continued to make good progress during 2007, with new activities getting under way in several countries, an expansion of volunteer training, and the establishment of new partnerships. In this newsletter, we highlight several interesting recent developments

(The table attached to the newsletter shows the basic structure of our current programmes: how many sites, involved children, and volunteers, in each of the six countries)

Luciano Cadoni is working at the moment on updating both the newsletter format and the PLAY SOCCER website which has not changed since it was first created in 2003. We are also working to revise our brochure and we hope that it will be ready by the end of this year. The improved newsletter, updated website and the brochure will help to keep all our supporters in touch with what we do and the progress we are making towards our objectives, and will support our fund-raising efforts both in-country and internationally.
Partners and donors.

As our Cameroon Programme Director Acha Samuel Acha says in his update for the Newsletter, "working in partnership with other organisations remains an important strategy for increasing our impact". PLAY SOCCER’S partners and donors include major international organisations: FIFA /Football for Hope provided Adidas soccer balls for our children in Zambia, while in Cameroon balls were given by FIFA /Street Football World, and both the South Africa and Cameroon programmes are strengthening their relationships with UNICEF.

Local businesses, large and small, are showing their interest in PLAY SOCCER, including Johnson and Johnson, which provided generous support to the creation of 6 new sites in Gauteng province in South Africa, and the Manasata supermarket, a new contributor to the programme in Cameroon.

Images from the females groups of Finetown and Katilehong. These are two of the six new sites in Gauteng South Africa.
Meanwhile, the Malawi programme benefits from the support of businesses based both in Malawi and in the U.K. A gift of club strips assembled by Dr Bob and Mary Stewart, friends of PLAY SOCCER in Scotland was much appreciated by the children at the Malabada site.

The Richards Bulter legal firm, based in the U.K. sponsored a mini tournament with children from all three sites in Malawi, and the firm donated soccer balls and the tournament prize, the Chairman’s Shield.

Another form of partnership has been undertaken in Senegal, where the PLAY SOCCER programme has become twinned with the football school “Bresil FC de Dakar”. Eurasmo, the Brazilian founder of the school, visited the Louga site for the twinning ceremony. The “twins” share the same commitment to the well-being of children, and children from both programmes joined in the ceremony and played two friendly matches. The Louga children are looking forward to their forthcoming trip to Dakar and the opportunity to meet up again with their new friends from the football school.

Of course, parents and local communities are critical partners for the PLAY SOCCER programme, and country directors work hard to ensure that the objectives of the programme are well understood and supported. One example is Cameroon, where PLAY SOCCER’s programme managers have carried out community sensitisation work with parent-teacher associations at five different sites. These encounters also enable parents to identify problems which they would like to see PLAY SOCCER address - for example, the lack of even the most basic facilities in schools. Our children themselves are the best ambassadors for PLAY SOCCER - parents’ readiness to participate by providing snacks and fruit is a way of recognising the children’s efforts to improve the local environment by clean-up days and by planting flower gardens.

Both in South Africa and Cameroon, ties with central and local government were strengthened, with involvement in the opening up of new sites (in South Africa) and programme partnerships in Cameroon.

www.playsoccer-nonprofit.org
Luciano Cadoni and Judy McPherson attended two international events in Namibia in September. The UK Next Steps conference was a continuation of the Sport for development conferences initiated by the 2005 UN International Year of Sport for Development and Peace (www.UKsport.gov.org). The next conference in this series will take place in South Africa next year. The second event was a NIKE/CARE capacity building workshop aimed at promoting sport for social change in Southern Africa. This initiative may be expanded to West Africa in 2008. More information can be found on the websites www.sportanddev.org and www.sportforsocialchange.org. Attendance at events of this kind provides good opportunities for networking and exchanges with the ever-widening group of organisations and entities involved in sport for development, whether as donors or as practitioners.

Training.
During this year, a number of training courses have been organised for PLAY SOCCER volunteers. Volunteers from Ghana, Malawi, Cameroon and Zambia have now completed the health and social training course, conducted by the PLAY SOCCER international coordinator and programme directors.
In South Africa, almost half PLAY SOCCER’S volunteers took part in the Grassroot’s Soccer Training for Trainers. As well as the training which PLAY SOCCER provides, volunteers also participate in training sessions organised by others. Volunteers from two sites in South Africa participated in a three-day training supervised by Mr. Conti Kubheka, head of the Coaching department of the South Africa Football Association. They were able to put into practice the skills they were acquiring directly with the children on the sites during the training sessions.

The PLAY SOCCER programme in Cameroon expects that its volunteers will be able to participate in the coming months in UNICEF-sponsored trainings on Life Skills, Risk and Vulnerability Mapping and Behaviour Analysis.

In Zambia, two volunteer coaches attended a course organised by the Norwegian Football Federation and SOS Norway, building on courses organised in previous years. An important component of this training was guidance on how to develop relationships not only with the children being coached but also with their parents.

As PLAY SOCCER moves forward, certification of volunteers to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to lead local activities becomes more and more important. Becoming certified as a volunteer will also make volunteering a more attractive prospect since the credentials acquired through PLAY SOCCER will serve as a reference and will be transferable to other youth-related activities. The health and social workshops held this year are one of a series of three which volunteers will be required to attend to gain certification. The other two are the basic football training for trainers (already held in South Africa) and a First Aid workshop. The PLAY SOCCER international umbrella structure has completed a total revision and update of the content and curriculum of these three courses, and translations into French are currently in progress. Training will also be available next year to country offices on the organisation’s revised financial policies and procedures.
**Other activities.**
Building on the positive effect which involvement in soccer is having on communities, PLAY SOCCER is moving out into new developmental areas. **In Zambia,** PLAY SOCCER will soon begin activities in partnership with ASNAPP (Agribusiness in Sustainable Natural African Plant Products), aimed at producing local plant-based products to be used in preventing malaria and other common diseases, as well as plants which promote nutrition and health. Older children at each of the sites selected for this project will be involved in growing the plants using a “backyard” approach. **In Cameroon,** PLAY SOCCER will be focusing on the development of a community-based poverty alleviation programme, in partnership with local organisations active in areas where there is a PLAY SOCCER site. The “back to school fund” established in Cameroon will provide assistance to those PLAY SOCCER children who are out of school, especially orphans and vulnerable children (over 100 of the children involved in PLAY SOCCER in Cameroon are orphans).

At the international level, PLAY SOCCER was once again in the lead in the preparation of the annual Global Peace Games for Children and Youth. These took place in 45 countries with strong participation from SOS Children’s Villages, Right to Play and many local organisations. PLAY SOCCER worked with the UN Office on Sport for Development to distribute Mr. Ogi’s message as well as Mr. Blatter’s message from FIFA. In the U.S., the Global Peace Games were held in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, with the involvement of Metrokids and the Big Apple leagues. More than 1000 children took part and many dignitaries attended. The Mayor of New York sent a special message and was represented at the Games by the New York City Commissioner of Sport.

As we write this newsletter, we are busy planning for PLAY SOCCER’s involvement in a whole range of activities around the Africa Cup which will take place in Ghana in January and February 2008. PLAY SOCCER will be collaborating closely on these activities with Football for Hope and Street Football World. We will be providing more information about this exciting occasion in December as detailed plans are drawn up.
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<th>Country</th>
<th># of Sites</th>
<th># register children</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>% of Age-groups</th>
<th># of Volunteers</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Volunteer Av. Age</th>
<th>National Board?</th>
<th>Year Opened</th>
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| June 2007 TOTAL | 41 in 6 countries | 9,145 | 5,958 | 3,187 |                | 261 | 185 | 76 | 26 | All have national boards |