

## FOOTBALL3 RATIONAL AND METHODOLOGY

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The origins of football3 date back to July 2, 1994, when Andrés Escobar, a Colombian national team player, was tragically shot by a fan in a parking lot after scoring an own goal during the 1994 FIFA World Cup, which led to Colombia's early exit from the tournament. This act of violence and hatred sparked Jürgen Griesbeck, a PhD student in Medellín, and others to create the "Fútbol por la paz" (Football for Peace) movement. The initiative aimed to use football as a tool to bridge divides, prevent violence, and foster peace. Since then, football3 has evolved through the efforts of various football-for-good organizations, becoming a global methodology designed to promote teamwork, fair play, and peace.

### *A game of three halves*

A football3 match is guided by a mediator and consists of three halves:

First Half: A pre-match discussion where the teams agree on the rules they will play by.

Second Half: The match itself, during which players are responsible for adhering to the agreed-upon rules.

Third Half: A post-match discussion where the two teams reflect on how well the rules were followed and assign fair play points, which are added to the match points to determine the final score.

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At the heart of football3 are values of dialogue and mutual understanding. Through the game, players learn to express their opinions in front of a group, listen to others, and respect differing perspectives. Football3 provides a platform to address social issues and teach life skills using both fixed and flexible rules. In the following sections, we will explore how to incorporate key values and skills into football3, helping players combat racism, xenophobia, and exclusion, both on the field and in their communities.

When football3 is practiced consistently, alongside educational materials focused on relevant social topics and life skills, it can have a lasting positive effect on young people and the communities they belong to.

### *Rules of the game*

Football3 has a specific rules system that differs from conventional football. There are fixed rules and open rules.

#### FIXED RULES

Fixed rules are determined by the organizers of the match, tournament, or league. They are the same for all matches played during that event. Fixed rules can concern the size of the teams, the duration of the match, but also the gender split in the teams, or specific behaviours (e.g. clapping hands every time a goal is scored).

#### EXAMPLES OF FIXED RULES

- › When a foul occurs, the fouled player raises her or his hand to indicate a foul and receives a free kick.
- › Matches are 12 minutes long – no breaks and no change of ends.
- › Two boys and two girls must be outfield players at all times (or, if teams have an even number of players, then an equal number of boys and girls must be on the pitch at all times).
- › If a player goes to ground, the match is stopped and the opposing player should give them a hand up.
- › The offside rule does not apply.

- › Matches are five-a-side.
- › If the ball goes out the teams must decide who has possession.
- › Fair play is a must – no fouls, no slide tackles and no insults; respect for teammates, opponents and the mediators is key.
- › All free kicks are indirect.
- › Substitutions are unlimited and can be made at any time.

## OPEN RULES

Open rules differ from match to match, depending on what the teams agree upon, and are a powerful tool to emphasise fair play and specific social topics. Encourage players and mediators to be creative in selecting the open rules and develop new rules that will enrich the game.

## EXAMPLES OF OPEN RULES

- › Both teams celebrate when a goal is scored, regardless of who scored it.
- › An assist has to come from a player of the opposite gender for a goal to count.
- › Throw-in, kick-in or roll-in to restart play when the ball goes out.
- › Goals can be scored from all over the pitch or only past the half-line.
- › A girl has to score first for the other goals to count.
- › The ball cannot be played above waist height.
- › Each consecutive goal scored by a team must alternate between a girl player and a boy player.
- › Both teams enter and exit the pitch holding hands.
- › There is a fixed goalkeeper, no goalkeeper or the last defender can use their hands in the penalty area.
- › The goalkeeper is rotated after each goal scored (e.g. between a boy and a girl).
- › All players must pass the ball at least once during the match.
- › There are corner kicks or no corner kicks.
- › There is a special joint celebration or ritual after the completion of the match.

### *Point system*

In football3, teams can win match points for a win (3 points), a draw (2 points) or participation (1 point). On top of that, they can win fair play points for how they behave on the pitch and during the discussions in addition to how they respect the rules that were agreed upon in the pre-match discussion. Depending on the emphasis trainers wish to give to fair play, they can vary the number of fair play points. For example, trainers can decide that the teams attribute 0 - 3 fair play points, 0 - 4 fair play points or 0 - 6 fair play points. In the latter two examples, a team that plays very fair, but loses, may beat a team that wins the match by goals but plays unfairly.

### *Mediators*

Mediators are fundamental to the success of football3. They facilitate the discussion between the two teams during the pre- and the post-match discussion, resolve conflicts and support the teams in finding an agreement on rules and fair play points. Mediation is often done in pairs and, as such, the mediators should represent the diversity of the communities in which the football3 matches will be played. Mediators are typically 16-30 years old, but older participants are also welcome. Ideally, there should be a gender balance. A mediator doesn't need to possess strong football skills, although experience leading groups is useful. 1. Preparing and facilitating football3 sessions with participants, 2. Facilitating the pre- and post- match discussions, 3. Monitoring the football3 match and mediating between the players if any issues arise, 4. Completing a match form and evaluating their sessions, 5. Being a positive role model for players and the community.

THEIR ROLE INCLUDES: The role of the mediator can be undertaken by social workers, educators, or coaches in the community. Young leaders that have come through the organisation as well as experienced football3 players can also act as mediators. Like any skill though, mediation requires training and development. It is

important to provide ongoing training so mediators can continue to practice and develop their skills.

## *Trainers*

Trainers play an important role in football3. These are the people who implement sessions, tournaments, programs, run workshops and support ongoing training and education of mediators.

### TRAINERS ARE ROLE MODELS

Youth who lacked accessible role models also reported increased levels of psychological distress in comparison to youth who described having affirming in-person role models or no role models at all. (National Mentoring Resource Center). The football3 trainer can be a role model for young people who lack role models in other areas of their lives. In order to increase identification, it is important to engage football3 trainers with which young people can identify. Make sure to recruit trainers that represent the diversity of the participants (in terms of origins, religious belief, gender, etc.). Successful trainers are people who have a detailed knowledge of football3 – as players and as mediators of football3 matches. They also possess an understanding of the unique needs of their community and understand the power of football3 for creating personal and collective transformation among their peers and community. Trainers also can communicate clearly, listen attentively, and are able to facilitate learning in an open dynamic and interactive way for groups of young adults. football3 trainers are crucial for the implementation of a successful football3 programme. They implement regular football3 sessions with players in which they address social topics and train specific life skills. They accompany their teams to football3 tournaments and are an important person of trust for the players. In the following section, we will present inclusive recruitment strategies as well as a selection of life skills and social topics relevant to anti-racist education for youth through football. We will provide a football3 session plan template as well as various activity plans.

## *Target group*

Because of the nature of this project, special care should be taken to ensure that players represent the diversity of the community. Specifically, players should be aged 12-18 and from both migrant, non-migrant and disadvantaged groups. Teams should include girls and boys alike. Inclusive recruitment strategies should also focus on ensuring there is representation from different religious denominations, socio-economic backgrounds and gender balance.

### PLAYER PROFILE

- › Youth aged 12-18
- › Represent the diversity of the community
- › Migrant and non-migrant and marginalised youth
- › Different religious denominations
- › Different socio-economic backgrounds
- › Gender balance.

**TIP: INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES** When recruiting players it's important to be inclusive in the search to ensure there is diverse representation football3 is a flexible tool that can be used to address social topics and life skills.

## *Evaluation of football3 sessions*

To monitor player progress and evaluate the impact of the sessions and program, ensure that player feedback is collected at the end of each session. For one-time sessions, the basic session template can be found in the manual. For long-term football3 programs, it's recommended to design the program and establish the evaluation strategy using the logic model. Additional information on the logic model is available in the football3 trainer manual and the football3 handbook.

## Concluding remarks

DIALECT project's results have evidenced that *Football3 is a unique way of playing football that is changing lives across the world. It is based on the principle that the basic values of fair play, gender equality, teamwork and respect are just as important as football skills. Named after its "three halves" - a pre-match discussion, football game, and post-match discussion - football3 incorporates key life lessons into every match. In mixed-gender and ethnic/nationality teams, players collectively decide on the rules before the game. Following the match, they reflect on their behavior and the behavior of their opponents, with points awarded for goals as well as for fair play. As football3 is played without referees, players must learn how to resolve conflicts themselves through dialogue and compromise. Football3 has a unique basic concept "inspired by street football. Across the globe, players meet, form teams, agree on rules and play football. Football3 harnesses the educational potential of street football by ensuring that dialogue and fair play are integral to the game. It can be played by anyone, anywhere and it can be used to address any social topic. There are no referees. Instead, mediators facilitate discussions between the two teams and monitor the match".<sup>1</sup> In the context of the DIALECT projects, we have envisioned to adapt the football3 methodology to address the most burning social challenges of the targeted communities: xenophobia, racism and social exclusion".*

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1. Football3 handbook. How to use football for social change, published by Streetfootballworld gGmbH Berlin – Germany.

## *References*

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