

Reports on visits to

**Cape Town, South Africa,
with Auf Ballhohe** (supported
by DFB, Sepp Herberger
Stiftung and Adidas)... **and**
Arminia Bielefeld

and

**Atlanta, Georgia, USA,
with the ESFA.**

DA Woollaston

SAFIB Chairman
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South Africa

I was very pleased to be able to take up the offer from Matthias to join him and representatives from the DFB and Arminia Bielefeld on their trip to Cape Town, South Africa April 1 -12 2009. It was a wonderful opportunity to view the work of the 'Auf Ballhohe' project he had spoken about at the previous two SAFIB meetings.

We arrived in Cape Town three days before the main party, who were in Johannesburg(!), but met with other members of the group involved in the project. Silke Wohlfahrt was more than happy that I had my wife with me and that she would have some female company. Having a very reliable local taxi driver to hand was also a godsend and ensured that we had no logistical problems.

We met the main group on their arrival at Cape Town on Saturday and transferred with them to Stellenbosch, our base for the next four days. The main group were accommodated in Stellenbosch High School where all meals were taken and a barbeque was held on the first evening which provided a superb occasion for socialising.

The first visit to Esangweni Secondary School in Khayelitsha was made by coaches and referees but not the players. The facilities were less than basic and it was a



tearful experience for some of the visiting adults. There was soon a large turnout of young people ranging in age from about 5 to 16, some wearing footwear, many not, some of whom had walked for up to six miles to attend the coaching session! Groups were soon sorted and work began; referees, teacher coaches and player coaches were all in action.

After a couple of hours in very warm conditions the session drew to an end

and everyone gathered inside for refreshments and presentations of kit and equipment. These were received with grateful thanks by the young people and adults from the local community.

Boys, girls and adults all had a wonderful day.

All of the children were provided with a packed lunch consisting of a chicken bun, soft drink and a piece of fruit. It was very humbling to see many of them just eat a small part of their lunch and prepare the rest to take home to share with other members of the family. It was also interesting to note that those youngsters with shoes often played in just one as they had lent the other to one of their



(shoeless) friends. There is something for many children in Western society to learn from these less fortunate boys and girls.

We arrived on day two almost an hour early but even so there were still children already there and waiting for us. Our reception was enthusiastic. It was pleasing that the youth players from Arminia Bielefeld were also able to join us on this occasion and their presence meant that we were able to have more and smaller groups to work with.

Despite any worries the players may have had they were soon working hard

ensuring that learning and enjoyment was happening in equal quantities

There were close to 200 children at the session today with many of them attending for the first time. Word soon gets round in this community! Groups were supervised by the youth players under the close eye of Peter Krobbach and his team of coaches. It was pleasing to note the progress of the local children and also the self confidence being gained by the visiting players. The temperature was even hotter today but the sessions were still in full swing after a couple of hours.



Once again the session was followed with refreshments and presentations and the grateful thanks for the generosity shown by 'Auf Ballhohe' can be clearly seen on the face of one of the local team organisers. Overall, the two visits



to Esangweni School had proved to be a great success and it was certainly an eye opening experience for all of the visitors, young and old alike.

The group moved on to take a tour of the township and revisit the sites of last year's visit to observe the progress made. Here was a chance to get close to people living in the township and speak to them about their lifestyles. I was pleased to listen to Vicky, one of the community leaders, who said, "We are not unhappy and we are proud. We make the most of what we have."



I just wish they could have a little more! It is interesting to note that to build a small house of brick (instead of corrugated iron and wooden boards) would only cost in the region of £1500. To rebuild this kindergarden so that it had a quality kitchen, classrooms, a day-dormitory and toilet facilities would be possible with a little over £5000. This is a positive education link with which SAFIB could take a lead.

Auf Ballhohe presented the nursery with food, clothing and hygiene products.

Our visit on day three was to Mfuleni which was a follow up visit to those made last year. Again there were plenty of children wanting to join in the coaching activities and with all of our party there the youngsters were soon split into small groups to take part in numerous skills practices. I even found myself involved in a goalkeeping session – thoroughly enjoyable but shattered afterwards. Too much

activity for this tired, old, worn out body!

It was amazing how well the local youngsters responded to the attention given them and it was also pleasing to hear the positive comments of the older locals who were watching the sessions.

The visit to the Cape Town Children's SOS Village proved to be a memorable occasion. This is a magnificent project which Auf Ballhohe is associated with and it reminds me very much of the pioneering work undertaken in England almost 150 years ago by Dr Barnardo. This is destined for equal success.



After hearing the horrors which some of the children who live there had experienced in their little lives, I recoil at how low some of our fellow adults can stoop.

It is wonderful to witness though how easily the young lad in the picture can interact with his visitor – obviously he doesn't realise he's a referee! (only joking)

Our next stop was at the sports centre for the opening ceremony of the Metropolitan Cup, the main focus of the

Arminia Bielefeld lads and the sign on the wall of the centre, pictured right, served as a stark reminder of what the project was about. Using sport as a focus for youth rather than having teenagers recruited by gangs and led into a life of crime and misery is a laudable aim.

On the Thursday morning I took the opportunity to visit Lovender girl's school with Folker Liebe to take a coaching session with one of the schools teams which just happened to be regional champions at their age group (U16). Folker was the teacher coach accompanying the project and ran an excellent session with the team. The standard, as with most girls' teams I have watched, varied greatly but the enthusiasm to learn was more than positive. There were some tired but grateful young ladies leaving this session and the teaching staff were greatly appreciative of the coaching session.

Accommodation back in Cape Town was at the Southern Sun Eastern Boulevard Hotel which was of a very good standard and occupied by a number of teams taking part in the tournament. The U19 tournament itself is played at a good level but the ages of some of the players could be reasonably questioned. The tournament has a good format with games being played over 2x30 minutes halves with the leagues being played over the first four days then knock out stages for the last 16. The level of refereeing was good with the visiting German officials showing their quality. I thought that Jonas Weickenmeier shows great promise.

In conclusion, I would like to begin by expressing my thanks to Matthias Eiles for the invitation to 'come and see' first hand. I was mightily impressed and can see great scope for development. The level of interest in football in South Africa is massive and a major aim following next year's World Cup has to be harnessing the enthusiasm and athleticism of the youth of the nation towards our great game. The work undertaken in the townships is paramount and the lead taken by Auf Ballhohe gives a tremendous example for others to follow. The excellent concept of 'Coach the Teacher' led by Folker Liebe and the 'Laws of the Game' sessions directed by Gunter Thielking are also examples of good practice. Both of these gentlemen are teachers in Germany and bring sound educational principles to their disciplines.



Overall, this is an excellent project which deserves the backing of a major sponsor. I congratulate Matthias on his energy and determination to make this project work

and also acknowledge the vision of the Deutscher Fussball-Bund for the outstanding support it has given to the project and the personnel driving it forward.

On a final note...



They're getting there.

Atlanta

The thought of being invited to the world's richest country to help in a project with disadvantaged children and supported by the United Nations filled me with intrigue. Coming close on the heels of my visit to South Africa with Auf Ballhohe I was more than interested to observe the pupils in another country who were described as 'disadvantaged'.

The ESFA were invited to Atlanta, Georgia, USA, by Peter Miller of the Magenta Corporation to contribute to a project they were beginning with elementary schools in the Atlanta area. Visits to two schools ensued with great success. The staff and young players of the ESFA U18 team took small coaching sessions with pupils of primary school age which lasted for approximately 60 minutes. The project slogan, 'Shoot Goals Not Guns', gives a very succinct clue as to what the project is all about.



At the first school visited the playing field looked not too dissimilar to that encountered at Esangweni in Khayelitsha but without the glass and building materials scattered around. Of course, there was slightly more grass and the area outside of the school fence was trees not township! I was amazed at the poor state of the facilities to be found in Oakcliff Elementary School especially compared to the facilities available in the high schools.

The children worked enthusiastically but we were severely restricted by the number of footballs available. Being able to take a supply of balls along to the U.S. and leave them behind (as Auf Ballhohe did in Cape Town) would have enhanced the impact of the visit and would also have allowed more children access to the football activities.

I did notice that the children here were better attired than those in South Africa and I was rather confused as to their level of disadvantage.

Most of the children were Hispanic or Afro-Caribbean in origin and had been bussed into the school.

At the second school we visited, Slater Elementary, there was a marked contrast. There were only Afro-Caribbean faces to be seen, teachers and pupils! We were informed that 80% of the pupils were from families who lived below the poverty line – in the USA, incredible (not what you see on tv!). For many the only hot meal they received all day was the one provided in school.



The school field here was covered in grass, if somewhat on a slope, but every few yards there was a soft mound which indicated the abode of fire ants. These are, in the words of our coach driver, 'horrible little buggers when agitated and give

painful bites'. Not the sort of place for a school playing field!

Again the pupils were very responsive and staff eager and supportive though I am unsure as to their knowledge of this game called 'soccer'. The children love it as all that is needed is a few coats and a ball and you have a game – unlike the armour needed for the other games popular in the USA.

The young players were brilliant in their attitude and coaching and firm bonds were very soon established. A small spark of enthusiasm for the game was lit and a realisation occurred to all of how collaborative action can raise aspirations for all.

Neither players nor pupils would forget this experience in a hurry. Links have been made and Andy Williams, the England assistant manager and head of a primary school in Liverpool, is setting up a partnership between his school and Oakcliff. The other part of the Magenta project involves a mobile classroom laden with laptops at which the students work when not playing football. The work in here is mainly personal development and is encouraging the pupils to make their own decisions and avoid drugs and guns.

A few weeks after returning home I was contacted by one of the Magenta staff, Stephanie, who knew my work in England involved the teaching of PSHE. She needed help constructing a Programme of Study for secondary pupils on the topic of bullying and was working in collaboration with the education section of the Atlanta Police Department. With the help of resources provided free by Prospects Publishing the task was easily accomplished and I look forward to hearing of its impact in the next few months.



Education + Collaboration = Success
all round!

Overview

Both projects were worthy and creditable in their outcomes. SAFIB should be proud of the work undertaken by Matthias and the Deutscher Fussball-Bund and the new initiative followed by the ESFA. I would hope that both projects would continue next year and for many years to come. The idea of combining football with personal development is full of opportunity for all members of SAFIB. Imagine how much positive development work for our own players would take place if each association adopted a project similar to either of the two described above.



I think the idea of sending a SAFIB team to play in the Metropolitan Tournament is interesting but probably impractical. The management of the Arminia Bielefeld team in South Africa were more focussed on the football than the educational opportunities, quite naturally, but the players were totally enthralled once they became involved. The ESFA group in Atlanta, being completely composed of teachers, was very responsive to the educational aspects of their visit. Two games were played but the main focus of their review of the trip was the building of educational links.

Auf Ballhohe is well established and is an excellent model to follow. The ESFA project is embryonic at the moment but shows potential. The possibilities for SAFIB members to develop their own project are almost endless. Would any association like to adopt Boston for the focus of its attention? I know a man who would help...

The seed of the idea of education and personal development through football as sown by Matthias via his Auf Ballhohe project has begun to germinate. Can the members of SAFIB nurture its development? I sincerely hope so. It will make a big difference.

