GUIDE TO Premier Skills

Premier Skills is a partnership between the Premier League (PL) and the British Council (BC), which uses football to engage with and develop the skills of young people around the world.

The programme aims to break new ground internationally by using football as a tool to deliver a wide range of outcomes in capacity building, social inclusion, skills development, education, health and participation. Through the programme, coaches are trained and supported in developing their own community-focused football projects, with some participants graduating gaining the skills needed to train other grassroots coaches.

The programme has three strands:

- **Face-to-face training for coaches and referees**, using highly skilled coaches and referee trainers from the Premier League and its clubs, delivered in 25 countries around the world.
- A popular **English Language Teaching (ELT)** component, with football-related resources available for free to teachers and learners of English, via a dedicated website: [http://premierskills.britishcouncil.org/](http://premierskills.britishcouncil.org/)
- **Kicks-inspired projects** exist in Brazil (called *Esporte Seguro*), India (*Kolkata Goalz*) and Indonesia (*Gocekz*). These are modelled on the successful Kicks programmes run to great success in the UK. The programme focuses on “at risk” young people, and work closely with the police focusing on how community football projects can increase young peoples’ engagement with civil society and decrease anti-social and criminal behaviour.

### PREMIER SKILLS - THE NUMBERS FOR 2010-13

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<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Key decision makers actively engaged in the programme (Government, Football, NGO)</td>
<td>116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young people reached by the coaches and referees trained through Premier Skills</td>
<td>279,330</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coaches and referees trained</td>
<td>1,438</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kicks-inspired coaches trained</td>
<td>249</td>
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<td>Coach Educators trained</td>
<td>108</td>
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<td>‘Hardest-to-reach’ young people engaged through Kicks-inspired programmes</td>
<td>2,782</td>
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<td>Of coaches agree that Premier Sills has increased young people’s involvement in their local community</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<td>Of coaches feel more connected to their local community as a result of Premier Skills</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td>Of coaches say they were satisfied with Premier Skills</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<td>25% of coach and referee participants thus far have been women</td>
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**UK coaches**

Those UK coaches involved in the training of Premier Skills coaches felt more aware of the powerful impact of football on people’s lives as a result of participating in the programme. They felt that they had an **increased awareness and understanding of best practice in use of football for education and social inclusion**, and felt very positively about the impact their involvement in the Premier Skills programme had had on their own skills and outlook as coaches and coach-educators.

**Dealing with local issues**

Every Premier Skills programme is **uniquely adapted to the conditions of the country where it operates**. It works carefully with local partners to address the most pressing issues of the communities and to encourage a volunteering culture among the participants:

**Premier League Head Coach:**

“It’s a different way of looking at people – I am more keen to draw people in and get them engaged in how the coaching works rather than delivering structured training that follows a rigid set pattern and expects people to sit, listen and learn – I think I have become softer and more inclusive.”

**Decision-maker in the Brazilian government:**

“We don’t have much of a volunteering culture in Brazil, but Premier Skills had shown the participants that it can be fun and valuable to do so. Using football as tool to reach disadvantaged people is perfect ... I am almost angry that we have had to import a football project like this from the UK; we are Brazil – we should already have this!”
The programmes often focus on those who are least part of the community. For example, in Senegal and Mexico people with disabilities, who would not normally think that playing football was something they could do, have been encouraged to take part.

The programme focuses especially on including girls in the programme, often engaging them in sport for the first time. In many countries sport is seen as something girls shouldn’t do and Premier Skills has worked hard to combat this taboo. Through parent conversations and discussions, Premier Skills coaches have engaged girls in the programme and been able to mix social groups, giving them confidence and educated them about women’s rights.

The English language teaching (ELT) material has been used to much success in Premier Skills, improving both the participants’ and the coaches’ English language skills. For example, in Tunisia the ELT material used in Premier Skills has made its way into the national curriculum as part of a wider British Council sponsored English programme.

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Health and wellbeing is an important part of Premier Skills. In many countries Premier Skills is focusing on tackling substance abuse, and is helping children to stop smoking and taking drugs.

In Uganda, Premier Skills has teamed up with Tackle Africa, an NGO using football to teach young people about HIV/AIDS. Together the programmes have been able to expand their reach and create a training manual to sensitise the community about the disease.

The kicks-inspired programmes are focused on engaging those hardest-to-reach groups more in society: in Jakarta in Indonesia Gocoz focuses on street children; in Brazil Esporte Seguro is set up in favelas in Rio de Janeiro, and in India Kolkata Goalz is running in the most deprived areas of Kolkata.

CASE STUDY: Kolkata Goalz

The Kicks-inspired Kolkata Goalz project was launched in June 2011. In total 1,200 children and 24 police precincts are involved. The young people involved in the Kolkata Goalz project come from underprivileged and highly deprived backgrounds in the city of Kolkata. Nine local clubs are engaged in the delivery. Goalz is so embedded in some of the clubs that the fans have come out as volunteers to help maintain discipline, take attendance, distribute meals they provide to the participants and act as mentors.

Partnership is key to the success of this project and this has been managed very successfully in India.

- The Kolkata Municipal Corporation is responsible for provision and maintenance of all the venues;
- The Kolkata Police handles the logistics, transportation, and permits;
- The club managers provide financial support, coaches, stadiums for tournaments and strategic input;
- The coaches, club co-coordinators and volunteers from the fan base handle the day-to-day training of the young people.

The young leaders programme and ELT training run by the British Council in connection with Premier Skills have given the young people more confidence, exposed them to a new world, and opened their minds to possibilities and opportunities that can change their life: 54 young people have participated in the young leaders programme along with 38 coaches, and 200 young people have undergone a 32-hour (16 week) English course.

Young female participant in India:

“I was only thinking, what will they think of us girls from a red light area and they are so rich, will they want to come near us? But when we started competing everyone was the same and in some cases we were better than them!”

British Council staff in Senegal:

“The creativity behind the whole programme is something we really appreciate, in the sense that it’s using something that we see as basic entertainment and using it for the purposes of education. This is tremendous and a big learning point for us.”

Young male participant in Kolkata Goalz:

“I used to be a very angry person. I couldn’t control my tongue, I didn’t care for anyone. Since starting Kolkata Goalz I have changed. I can see myself as a different person now. Football has given me discipline and I have so much respect for my coach and my team mates. They are my brothers and I have more patience dealing with everyone. I feel I can achieve something in life now.”