Play Proud is a Common Goal project for LGBTQ+ inclusion that engages football-based community organisations around the world.

VISION
That grassroots football organisations, programmes, and communities around the world are inclusive for LGBTQ+ communities.

STRATEGY
Create methodology and train coaches and other sports professionals to address discrimination and create inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth.
Globally, LGBTQ+ people face discrimination both on and off the field of play. LGBTQ+ discrimination comes in many forms – ranging from laws that criminalise LGBTQ+ identities to familial and social rejection.

In a worldwide survey conducted by the Human Rights Campaign, 42% of all LGBTQ+ adolescent respondents felt that their community didn’t accept them.

Due to a lack of mentorship and inclusivity in society and sport, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, etc.) youth are growing up with a higher chance of experiencing assault, societal stigma, victimisation, and rejection. With-in the Football for Good sector, coaches have stated that they struggle to make their programmes more welcoming and inclusive for the LGBTQ+ community. Every day, these coaches offer vulnerable children and adolescents a safe place on the football pitch.

However, organisations reported that their coaches would benefit immensely from a targeted programme that addresses topics surrounding the nuances and complexities of gender and sexuality.

Play Proud is a coach-centred, human rights-based approach that looks to make sports programmes more inclusive for the LGBTQ+ community.

The programme recognises that coaches can provide LGBTQ+ youth with crucial mentorship during adolescence and therefore works primarily with coaches as its target group. Play Proud seeks to equip coaches with the skills and knowledge to become mentors that will create safe and inclusive spaces for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Play Proud pilot was implemented across the North America and Caribbean region in 2019, training 24 coaches from 6 countries. In 2020, Play Proud began expanding globally training an additional 23 coaches from 7 countries across Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Due to Covid-19, the project pivoted online while successfully staying committed to the original project outcomes. Play Proud participants were engaged through a model of asynchronous and synchronous learning; asynchronous learning took place through the learning management system, Thinkific, while synchronous learning was delivered through live “huddles” on Zoom.

Due to a lack of mentorship and inclusivity in society and sport, LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, etc.) youth are growing up with a higher chance of experiencing assault, societal stigma, victimisation, and rejection. With-in the Football for Good sector, coaches have stated that they struggle to make their programmes more welcoming and inclusive for the LGBTQ+ community. Every day, these coaches offer vulnerable children and adolescents a safe place on the football pitch.

However, organisations reported that their coaches would benefit immensely from a targeted programme that address the topics surrounding the nuances and complexities of gender and sexuality.

Play Proud is a coach-centred, human rights-based approach that looks to make sports programmes more inclusive for the LGBTQ+ community.

The programme recognises that coaches can provide LGBTQ+ youth with crucial mentorship during adolescence and therefore works primarily with coaches as its target group. Play Proud seeks to equip coaches with the skills and knowledge to become mentors that will create safe and inclusive spaces for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

The Play Proud pilot was implemented across the North America and Caribbean region in 2019, training 24 coaches from 6 countries. In 2020, Play Proud began expanding globally training an additional 23 coaches from 7 countries across Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Due to Covid-19, the project pivoted online while successfully staying committed to the original project outcomes. Play Proud participants were engaged through a model of asynchronous and synchronous learning; asynchronous learning took place through the learning management system, Thinkific, while synchronous learning was delivered through live “huddles” on Zoom.

Due to Covid-19, the project pivoted online while successfully staying committed to the original project outcomes. Play Proud participants were engaged through a model of asynchronous and synchronous learning; asynchronous learning took place through the learning management system, Thinkific, while synchronous learning was delivered through live “huddles” on Zoom.

“Even small things like using inclusive words can contribute to a more inviting and inclusive environment.”
**Coaches and participating staff in Play Proud become more competent as LGBTQ+ inclusion sport leaders.**

**Increased capacity of organisations to be more LGBTQ+ inclusive.**

**Increased access to safe and inclusive sports environments for LGBTQ+ identifying youth.**

---

**SHORT TERM**

The combined knowledge of experts in youth-focused sports programmes, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and professional sports, creates resources that organisations using sports to engage young people can use to shape inclusive programmes.

---

**MID TERM**

A global network of grassroots sports and LGBTQ+ organisations that apply the Play Proud methodology reach more coaches and young people every year.

---

**LONG TERM**

Young people from all backgrounds have equal access to sports programmes and are equipped with the skills to score, celebrate and succeed.

---

**CHALLENGE**

Lack of inclusive and safe spaces for young people to participate in football.

---

**SOLUTION**

Deliver Play Proud methodology which gives participants the tools and knowledge to create safe spaces in their programmes and organisations.

---

**1. ENABLING COACHES TO CREATE MORE INCLUSIVE AND SAFER SPORTS ENVIRONMENTS FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH**

1. Using appropriate terminology and avoiding gendered terms shows respect and acknowledges the team as a unit and as individual members.

2. Amplifying allyship is a sign of support and respect towards the LGBTQ+ community and reinforces that anyone is welcome.

3. Being consistent in words and actions: challenging homophobic behaviour and using inclusive language, on and off the pitch.

4. Being proactive about communicating commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion in a structured way.

5. Being informed and staying up-to-date on LGBTQ+ inclusion topics that impact your players, coaches, and community.

---

**2. TRAINING PLAY PROUD COACHES TO BECOME COMMUNITY LEADERS**

1. Coaches identify there is a problem and commit to addressing it in their programmes.

2. Coaches learn more inclusive language and behaviour.

3. Coaches’ programmes become more safe and inclusive.

4. Coaches become LGBTQ+ champions in their communities.

---

**3. IMPLEMENTATION MODEL**

- **PHASE 1 >> Content Development**
- **PHASE 2 >> Leadership Training**
- **PHASE 3 >> LGBTQ+ Inclusion Training**
- **PHASE 4 >> Action Leadership Projects**
- **PHASE 5 >> Production of a LGBTQ+ deliverable**

---

**IMPACT**

The combined knowledge of experts in youth-focused sports programmes, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and professional sports, creates resources that organisations using sports to engage young people can use to shape inclusive programmes.

---

Young people from all backgrounds have equal access to sports programmes and are equipped with the skills to score, celebrate and succeed.
Play Proud kicked off in January 2019 with the participation of 12 Football for Good organisations in North America. In 2020/2021 the project expanded to 7 countries. Due to restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic, both in-person residencies were cancelled and the programme moved online.

The following graphic provides an overview of the different phases of the project implementation over the course of 2020. The budget for the 2020 implementation was $66,486. The Outlook 2021 provides an overview of the activities planned.

**Outlook 2021**

1. In 2021 and beyond, Play Proud will expand globally to help create open and safe football programmes for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

2. In 2021 and beyond, Play Proud will continue to advance its methodology and training tools through further collaboration with external partners.
FOOTBALL IS A TEAM GAME, AND SO IS SOCIAL CHANGE.

COMMON GOAL