



Play Proud

Providing safe spaces for LGBTQ+ communities



THE GOAL

To create safe sporting spaces for LGBTQ+ communities across the world.



THE STRATEGY

To implement an LGBTQ+ inclusivity training program that works with all stakeholders in soccer to create inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and communities.



launch

2019

funding

€209K

overall

€135K

2021

the team in 2021

6

players / managers / businesses
pledging 1%

10

community organisations



Impact Sponsors

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Globally, LGBTQ+ communities face discrimination both on and off the pitch. LGBTQ+ discrimination comes in many forms—ranging from homophobic chants in the stands to laws that criminalise LGBTQ+ identities.

Play Proud is a grassroots-driven program that works with all stakeholders in soccer to make communities and stadiums a safer space for the LGBTQ+ community. Play Proud transforms soccer clubs and organisations around the world by equipping coaches and staff with the skills and knowledge to ensure that LGBTQ+ inclusion is championed, on and off the pitch.

Play Proud recognises that everyone has the ability to provide allyship and support to LGBTQ+ people. The programme seeks to equip coaches, staff, and club representatives with the skills and knowledge to be mentors to LGBTQ+ youth, allies in their workplaces, and champions of inclusion in their communities.

Since the pilot project, Play Proud has expanded globally, training 50 coaches from 13 countries around the world. In 2020/2021, Play Proud trained 23 coaches from 7 countries across Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. In 2022, Common Goal is bringing together grassroots soccer organisations, fan groups and professional soccer clubs from the MLS, NWSL, USL, Liga MX, and CPL to UNITE the North American continent and promote LGBTQ+ inclusion ahead of the FIFA Men’s Football World Cup in 2026.

OBJECTIVES



Design curricula and policies that can be used to make programmes, organisations, and communities more LGBTQ+ inclusive.



Build organisations' capacity to incorporate the methodology into their programmes, training the first generation of coaches.



Roll out the Play Proud Playbook to guide organisations in promoting open and safe football programmes for all.

TEAM LEADS



Coaches and Mentors trained through the project to offer LGBTQ+ inclusive programming in their organisations and communities.



Inside Inclusion works with businesses to explore and address issues relating to all forms of diversity and discrimination.



Impact International, a leadership development expert that designs customised experiential learning experiences for organisations.



Inclusion Playbook, a civil rights advocacy group with the goal of empowering social change agents to transform their communities.



Stonewall UK is the largest LGBTQ+ rights organization in Europe.

LOCATIONS



AFRICA

- **South Africa:** Grassroot Sport South Africa, Altus Sport
- **Zimbabwe:** Grassroot Soccer Zimbabwe

ASIA

- **India:** Slum Soccer, YFC Rurka Kalan
- **Indonesia:** Rumah Cemara

EUROPE

- **Italy:** Balon Mundial
- **England:** Sport4Life, Street League
- **Scotland:** Denis Law Legacy Trust

N. AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

- **Canada:** Canada SCORES Vancouver
- **Dominican Republic:** Fútbol Más
- **Haiti:** GOALS Haiti, Fútbol Más
- **Mexico:** Fútbol Más
- **St. Lucia:** Sacred Sports Foundation
- **United States:** America SCORES Chicago, Project Goal, City In The Community, Pure Game, Soccer In The Streets, Soccer Without Borders, South Bronx United, Starfinder Foundation, Street Soccer USA, The Sanneh Foundation

CHALLENGE

There are a lack of inclusive and safe spaces for young people to participate in football, which leads to...



Reduced Participation

Reduced participation in sports of young people from LGBTQ+ community.



Feelings of Alienation

LGBTQ+ young people are often alienated and rejected from sports with 4 out of 5 LGBTQ+ youth not out to their coaches.



Increased Vulnerability

LGBTQ+ youth that lack mentors have a greater chance of exposure to drugs and alcohol at a young age, lower academic performance, and suicide.

SOLUTION

To make all football spaces safe, inclusive and welcoming to all, regardless of one's gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

Leadership Development

Implement LGBTQ+ inclusivity training to staff.

LGBTQ+ Knowledge Acquisition

Deliver a methodology to give participants the tools and knowledge to create safe spaces for in their organisations and programmes.

Train the Trainer Theory

Increase advocacy of LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport.

A. Enabling coaches and staff to create more inclusive and safer sports environments for LGBTQ+ youth

Using appropriate terminology

shows respect and acknowledges the team as a unit and as individual members.

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



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

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

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

B. Training Play Proud coaches and staff to become community leaders

1. Coaches & staff identify and commit to addressing the problem.

2. Coaches & staff learn more inclusive language and behaviour.

3. Coaches & staff's programmes become more safe and inclusive.

4. Coaches & staff become LGBTQ+ champions in their communities.

- Coaches and staff discuss behavioural change and create action plan.
- Discrimination is noticed and addressed.
- Participants feel safer and included.

- More supportive coaches and staff welcome LGBTQ+ youth to sports.
- More LGBTQ+ youth take part in sport.
- LGBTQ+ youth feel safe.

- Trained coaches and staff create a safe and inclusive space for participants.
- Sport becomes more inclusive, safe and welcoming to all young people.

C. Implementation Model



IMPACT

As a result of implementation, the impact and outcomes of Play Proud are felt in the short, mid and long terms:

Staff become inclusion advocates

Coaches & staff use the skills and knowledge they learnt to make their programmes more inclusive.

Organisations become more inclusive

Participants use their newly gained skills to make organisations more intentional about inclusivity through programmatic and policy changes.

Sports become safe and inclusive for all

Youth from all backgrounds benefit from inclusive sport for development programmes.

OUTPUTS SINCE THE LAUNCH



13
countries reached



25
implementing organisations



50
coaches trained



200+
hours of training delivered

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN 2021

1ST QUARTER >> JAN - MAR 2021

Play Proud Online Implementation

ACTIVITIES

- ▷ Online lectures for coaches.
- ▷ Self-paced assignments.
- ▷ Community mapping exercises for the learning acquisition phase of Play Proud.
- ▷ The Play Proud Toolkit used in tandem with online teachings.

OUTPUTS

- ▷ **Design and implementation of an 'action learning project' by each of the 10 implementing organisation.**



2ND QUARTER >> APR - JUN 2021

Trained Organisations Implement Projects

ACTIVITIES

- ▷ LGBTQ+ training for coaches.
- ▷ Community mapping exercises in conservative areas.
- ▷ LGBTQ+ webinars to young people and staff.
- ▷ Inclusion policy implementation.

OUTPUTS

- ▷ **All 10 organisations trained in 2020/2021 implemented LGBTQ+ inclusion projects geared towards addressing specific challenges in their local communities.**
- ▷ **All coaches completed 100+ hours of LGBTQ+ inclusion training.**

3RD QUARTER >> JUL - SEP 2021

Play Proud concept for 2022 is developed

ACTIVITIES

- ▷ Subject Matter Expert consortium identified.
- ▷ Concept for new Play Proud programme finalised.

OUTPUTS

- ▷ **Stonewall UK, Inside Inclusion, and Impact International brought on as Subject Matter Experts.**

- ▷ **Programme delivered to 8 community organizations, 8 fan groups, 8 professional clubs.**
- ▷ **Angel City FC and Tigres to host residencies in 2022.**
- ▷ **Theory of change developed to account for clubs, fan groups, and community organisations.**



4TH QUARTER >> OCT - DEC 2021

Play Proud United cohort is finalized

ACTIVITIES

- ▷ Clubs, fan groups, and community organisations selected.
- ▷ Play Proud materials reviewed and developed for new cohort.
- ▷ Theory of change reviewed and developed for new cohort.

OUTPUTS

- ▷ **Play Proud United 2022 cohort is finalized.**
- ▷ **Theory of Change is developed.**

IMPACT IN 2021

10

organisations across 7 countries integrated LGBTQ+ inclusion as part of their curricula.

10 inclusion projects created by the implementing organisations, to reflect the inclusion needs of their communities.

75% of the participants taking part in the 'action learning projects' phase felt satisfied with their projects.

22

coaches trained to create an open, safe, and inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ youth.

85% of coaches agreed that Play Proud gave them the skills to implement inclusion training.

70% of coaches indicated they learnt new training methods to combat homophobia, biphobia, transphobia.



“Play Proud is a programme that directly supports and empowers us to learn and make things happen for LGBTQ+ communities.”

CRAIG

Sport 4 Life UK