

**AMBASSADORS
FOOTBALL**

ANNUAL REPORT 2022





AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Ambassadors Football has been bringing youth and adults together to play football, pray and hear the Word of God all over the world for more than 30 years. We now have increasing opportunities to envision and equip the Church to make disciples through football.

In 2022, I was visiting Diego at a partnering church in Fort Lauderdale that had to completely stop meeting during the pandemic. Yet, as we walked out to the soccer field, he shared how he led a group of 50+ people every Sunday afternoon during the pandemic. They would pray together, share from the Word and play football.

My mind flashed back to a photo that my missionary father would show when visiting churches. It showed a flat slab of concrete with a few rows of wooden benches, as a hurricane had destroyed the building. My father would then explain that though the church (building) was gone, the Church was still gathering there worshipping God every Sunday. This was the first time I came across the concept of Church without walls.

What do walls do? Walls keep people in and they keep people out. Walls separate us from others. They can separate us from a world that needs Jesus and from other believers who need fellowship and encouragement. Church is less about physical location or a particular day and more about being the spiritually united body of Christ in a world that needs Jesus. In many ways starting and being a church without walls is easier than one with walls.

As we look back on 2022, we are humbled and grateful for your support and what God has been doing in and through us together. The Holy Spirit is moving, and we want to be where God calls us to join Him. Your support makes this possible, and your prayers make us effective as churches all over the world ask us to help them to be churches without walls. We need and appreciate you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Ortlip', written in a cursive style.

JONATHAN ORTLIP

AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL PRESIDENT

AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL GLOBAL REACH

Our vision is to see transformation through football ministry in every country and culture.

We strive to be a servant-hearted mission, working as one global team through football, developing innovative strategies to mobilize the church so that disciples are made in every nation.

We have 154 full-time and part-time staff working in over 30 countries around the world. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors...



AFRICA

Congo • Kenya • Liberia • Mozambique
• Nigeria • Rwanda • South Africa •
Zambia



THE AMERICAS

Bolivia • Brazil • Chile • Colombia •
El Salvador • Haiti • Mexico • Peru •
United States



EUROPE

Albania • Croatia • Cyprus • Czech Republic •
Great Britain • N.Ireland/Ireland • Netherlands •
Serbia • Slovakia • Spain



ASIA-PACIFIC

Australia • Nepal • Five Other Asian
Countries

Ambassadors Football also works with partners in some countries that cannot be listed in this report. We see open doors to share God's word in those nations and opportunities to increase our witness. If you wish to know more about this part of our work please contact us.

IN 2022...

6 BIBLE EPISODES SHARED

from within our 9-part Toward the Goal Bible curriculum which walks children through the entire story of the Bible via a series of animation videos & booklets.

331 CHURCHES EMPOWERED

through trainings and partnerships to engage with 9065 players in their communities through the simple sport of football.

3910 PLAYERS DISCIPLED

in our clubs & academies on a weekly basis, including 837 girls, 201 women, 2342 boys and 530 men

89 CAMPS RUN

across the world, sharing the Gospel with 6823 kids and involving more than 623 coaches & volunteers

524 COACHES TRAINED

as disciple-makers within 24 training courses, who have then gone on to coach 5281 players on a weekly basis.



SPIRITUAL IMPACT

We are aware of 1160 faith decisions, 391 baptisms, and 2713 people who started attending church or Bible studies.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

Many of our players and coaches have returned to school after having previously dropped out of education.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

We are blessed to assist the families of our players and coaches in finding sustainable employment.

SOCIAL IMPACT

The impact of God's forgiveness and reconciliation has been witnessed in many lives, relationships, churches & schools.



AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL AFRICA

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA - "I loved school, I wanted to be something one day in life but growing up I didn't have a father. Somehow I found myself deep in drugs and standing in the corners robbing people". These are the words of Ayanda, when he thinks about his upbringing in Cape Town.

Similar to thousands of other South Africans, Ayanda grew up in a very rough environment, marked by poverty, a lack of opportunities, feeling invisible and unloved, and living a life without meaning. As he himself states, what affected his life the most was the absence of a father, as he had to learn to protect himself and provide for himself from a very young age. He had to do what he had to do to survive.

All of this led him deep into a lifestyle of drugs, gangs, carrying knives, and being ready to fight or rob whenever the opportunity arose. He wanted to feel that he belonged; he wanted a safe place; and this group provided that for him. Eventually, this road led him to jail.

When he got out of jail, he went back to his old neighborhood, with his old friends, to his old misdeeds. His old life was waiting for him - nothing had changed and it seemed nothing would change. With no future, no hope, no true love, he was only expected to continue the same cycle, over and over again. But one day something changed.

While Ayanda and his friends were in a corner of their neighborhood planning their next robbery, in the distance they saw an unknown person walking towards them. You see, if you weren't from this neighborhood, you didn't go there unless you were lost or looking for trouble and this man who was getting closer and closer didn't seem to be lost, so most likely he came looking for trouble.

Ayanda and his friends grabbed their knives and became alert, they did not know what to expect, but as this man got closer, they could see that he was carrying a bag with soccer balls and was dressed in sportswear. Apparently, he was lost and therefore he was an easy target to be robbed. However, before they could do anything to him, this man greeted them very kindly and asked if they wanted to play soccer with him.





“Poverty was there, the fatherlessness was there, the hopelessness was there and the low self-esteem was there too. The more this guy shared, the more I could relate. No one came to my life and spoke like this.” recalled Ayanda about that day. He also shared about the shock that he and his friend had when they saw this guy taking his Bible out of his bag and talking about it to them.

“This guy was brave, he came to us knowing the kind of people we were and he didn’t care, and he did it because God sent him”.

As the days went by, the man kept sharing the Word of God to them. He taught them how to read it and how to listen to God’s will through it. The more Ayanda learned about the Gospel and the Bible, the more his mind was being transformed. He found himself not interested in continuing the bad things of his life but wanted to know more about God and living for him. Ayanda says, “I started seeing him as a father figure who cares for me, and I learned to trust him. Some months later, I committed my life to Christ.”

It only took a ball and a coach willing to show how much he cares to impact the life of Ayanda and his friends. He was looking for a family, security and a father figure, and God gave him all his soul was longing for.

Now, seven years later, he is an Ambassadors’ staff member and coaching as a father figure in the same community. The community’s mothers, who once ran from him and guarded their children when they walked past, now send their children to him and the other coaches for training. When someone asked him some weeks ago, “Ayanda where would you be if that coach did not walk across the field?” He responded quickly by saying, “dead.” But now he is alive, he is found and he has a future. We dream of father and mother-figure coaches in every field of Africa.

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AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL THE AMERICAS

OHIO, USA - On the northeast side of Akron, Ohio, sits a small century house with faded blue paint & chipped wooden siding. Inside lives a Congolese woman named “Tania” and her 18-year old son “Matthew” along with 4 other children ages 7-15.

The family first moved to the United States in 2016 after spending the previous 20 years living in a refugee camp in Tanzania. When the first civil war of Congo broke out in 1996, thousands of people died and the civil and political unrest made life a constant struggle and threat to the well-being of everyone, especially young women. With the impending Great War of Africa looming in the near future, many young women fled the country, Tania being one of those who were displaced.

After having settled at a refugee camp in Tanzania, Tania built a life and began a family, with her first 5 children being born in the refugee camp. After 20 years of living in this temporary state, Tania seized the opportunity to move herself & family to the US in 2016. But life has not been easy for her since. The struggles of the last 20 years have taken a toll on her body and she needed to have heart valve surgery upon arriving in the US. This surgery saved her life but left her in a position where she was physically unable to work and provide for her young family of 6 children. She survived off government assistance and was able to find small temporary jobs on assembly lines or in factories but the debt of refugee expenses along with her medical bills, rent, and daily life expenses meant that opportunities for her children were very limited.

In 2018, Tania’s oldest son Matthew began attending a new after-school program with Ambassadors Football in a nearby school gym. The program grew organically as a few kids showed up and brought along their friends, one of them being Matthew. As the group grew and developed, they were able to form a team and began competing in local leagues and tournaments, eventually joining the premier club run by Ambassadors in Macedonia, OH.

The pay-to-play youth soccer system in the US often limits opportunities for lower income players, even for a highly-skilled player like Matthew. But his involvement with





Ambassadors allowed him to play at this level under a scholarship and be coached by godly men who can challenge and encourage him on a weekly basis. After he graduates high school in 2023, Matthew's goal is to continue playing at a higher level and God continues opening doors. Just this past year, a partner Christian organization (One7) asked if Matthew could play in a national tournament with them and he was able to fly out for the tournament with all expenses being paid by them.

Our goal is to have an impact on each of these players in a way that goes far beyond achievements on the soccer field. Getting to drive Matthew and the other refugee players to each event has allowed us the opportunity to learn more about their lives and families.

Over the years, we have been able to help Tania find a job to provide for her family and have been able to raise money to cover expenses when she has not been able to work. We have been able to bring children to church and counsel them when they experience difficult times.

We are grateful that God brought each of these players and families into our ministry, and their faith in God through hard times is an example to us. We continue to pray for Tania, Matthew and their family and trust that God will continue to provide for them in the future.

“Our goal is to have an impact on each of these players in a way that goes far beyond any achievements on the soccer field.”



AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL ASIA

Football is the number one sport on the continent of Asia and training football coaches to disciple young children is our core strategy within the region.

To multiply the ministry, three levels of training are run with the coaches. The training focuses on the development of coaches to coach the sport well and impact the players as father figures and disciple-makers.

During the summer, coaches from six Asian countries in the region came together in one location for one of these training courses. Binod is one of these coaches that is having an impact...

Binod joined Ambassadors as a volunteer when he was 20 years old and later joined the team as a full time coach. For him, Ambassadors is a source of inspiration to grow and improve his life.

Through our ministry he has had the opportunity to do the Asian Football Confederation C & B license courses, attend an overseas sports ministry institute, and do the Disciple Making Movement training in a few other countries.

He has developed not only as a person but also he has been able to impact the lives of other young people whom he coaches and disciples. Right now he is the assistant coach for the professional Three Star Club in Nepal and he has coached and trained university students as well as discipling other coaches to make disciples.



**For him,
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Because of his involvement, it has opened doors for ministry at his church where he leads the football activities and coaches a team within the church, even winning the Inter-Church football tournament.

Keep Binod in your prayers as he continues impacting many people around him through football.

In Nepal our training ministry has now been extended to 28 locations. On a weekly basis, 950 youth are being disciplined through football in six of the seven provinces across the country.

Works like these are happening in five countries across Asia as our coaches are being trained & developed to create disciples of Jesus.

“ He has developed not only as a person but also he has been able to impact the lives of other young people whom he coaches and disciples. ”



AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL EUROPE

CZECH REPUBLIC - Around the world, many people find themselves in situations where they have to give up everything they know and treasure: family, friends, food and culture, and move to new places where they must learn a new language and start from nothing to achieve a better future. This is the case of is Haitham Faris Jassim, or as everyone calls him, Haity.

Fifteen years ago, when Haity was younger, he had to leave his native country of Iraq and relocate to the Czech Republic, and there, with the help of his father, he had the opportunity to study IT. Although he was very happy with this opportunity, it was also very hard for him to leave everything behind, especially his family.

Everyone around Haity knows how positive, hard working, and devoted he is, and how much he loves his son who requires very demanding care as he suffers from a serious genetic disease. For him, family is one of the most important things in the world.

Haity used to play football for a local team where he met Ondřej Mazaný, the former director of Ambassadors Football in the Czech Republic. They played together and became friends, and after some time, Ondřej invited him to train and play for Ambassadors.

Ambassadors quickly became a second family for Haity. He found the support and community he had missed so much. He could be free and be who he is, he did not need to put on any masks or please people to be part of the group. He could show his weaknesses, vulnerability, struggles or doubts and people would still love him.

“**He found the support and community he had missed so much. He could be free and be who he is...**”





Haity enjoyed his new Ambassadors family so much that even when he worked in Austria he took the time to be in Prague during weekends to spend time with the team.

During COVID, Haity and his family went through a really difficult time, both medically and mentally. One day, when the restrictions had eased, he showed up to training but something looked different about him. He wasn't as positive as before and you could see tiredness in his eyes.

After the training was over he talked to one of our staff and explained the situation. He didn't ask for any material or financial help; instead he asked if we could pray for him since prayers and mental support were very important to him. We made sure that he knew he has people in his life that he can rely on and it was so impactful for him that even his ex-wife noticed all the care and hand-made a scarf for us as a thank you.

Haity remains a Muslim, however he has opened himself to the Gospel as he listens to it during our trainings. In fact, he has already been to church and said it was a really good experience for him and he would like to be back as he finds peace there. We are excited for the work that God is doing in his life and the ministry in Czech Republic.



AMBASSADORS FOOTBALL GLOBAL FINANCE

Thank you to all of those who contributed to the work of Ambassadors Football in 2022. In 2022, we continued to recover from the pandemic and its effects on our finances. Our ministry activities are trending up towards pre-pandemic levels but have not fully recovered. Our contributions have managed to stay relatively static due to thousands of loyal donors but rising costs and inflation have certainly had an effect.

Please pray for 2023 as we continue to tackle financial adversity in our mission to reach the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ through football.

MINISTRY ACTIVITIES includes funds sent to our partners around the world that were raised in the US, our US-based programs, international tours, ministry training, travel, and missionary staffing costs. ADMINISTRATION includes admin staffing, operational and other administration costs.

TOTAL REVENUES: \$3,037,844

\$1,670,137

CONTRIBUTIONS

\$1,367,707

MINISTRY ACTIVITIES



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$3,145,189

\$2,836,104

MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

\$309,085

ADMINISTRATION



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AMBASSADORS
F O O T B A L L

FOOTBALL • FAITH • FUTURE

PRAY

To receive our prayer updates or quarterly reports, contact:
info@ambassadorsfootball.org

GIVE

To make a donation to a ministry or staff member, visit:
ambassadorsfootball.org/donations

LEARN

To find out more about our ministry around the world, visit:
ambassadorsfootball.org