



Crossworld Football Club: Impact report

November 2013

INTRODUCTION

Crossworld is a registered charity that uses football as a means of empowering young people seeking sanctuary (those from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds), and equipping them with the skills, confidence and experience to build productive and fulfilling adult lives for themselves. Many of the young people with whom we work have been separated from their families and have arrived recently in the UK.

Crossworld runs two main projects:

- the **Football Club** is an eleven-a-side football team that trains weekly and competes in weekly league and cup matches organised by an amateur men's football league, affiliated with the Football Association;
- the **Friday Project** is a weekly drop-in project that offers young people the opportunity to play football in a structured environment, and to meet new people and make new friends.

All of our activities are planned and run by qualified Football Association Level 2 coaches. All of our volunteer coaches have enhanced CRB checks.

In September 2013, at the start of the new football season, Crossworld undertook a short exercise to evaluate the impact of the Football Club and to identify ways in which the project's activities could be improved. This report summarises the key findings from that exercise against each of Crossworld's six key outcome-measures. A summary of the way in which Crossworld plans to evaluate the impact of the Football Club can be found at Annex A.

The findings set out in this report are based on self-assessment questionnaires, given out to Football Club participants during September and October 2013. In total, 19 questionnaires were completed. In some places, findings are supplemented by coach assessments of players.

Our intention is to publish an updated summary report at the end of each season of the Football Club.



OUTCOME 1: IMPROVE PARTICIPATION

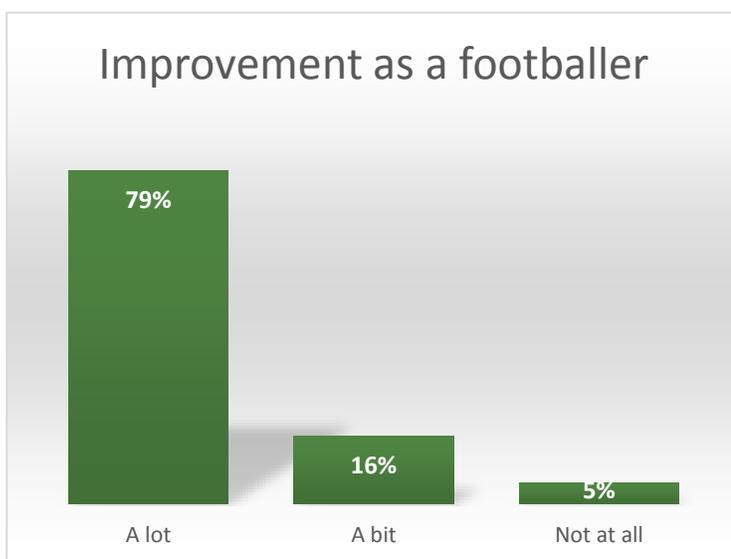
Our key measure of participation is the rate of attendance of individual participants at training and matches, measured as the percentage of training sessions and matches a participant has attended. The data collected during the first two months of the 2013/14 football season, up to and including our training session on 31 October, shows that:

- average attendance rates at training sessions among our regular participants is 53%;
- on average, 14 participants attend a weekly training session;
- 31 young people have participated in weekly training sessions;
- 22 young people have participated in weekly matches; and
- our “throughput” measure (the count of every instance a young person accesses one of our activities) is 162 for training sessions and 130 for matches.

OUTCOME 2: IMPROVE FOOTBALLING ABILITY

We have found that the most effective way of measuring improvement in footballing ability is by asking the player themselves. In the questionnaire we distributed, we asked our participants whether they thought that they had improved as a footballer since they had joined Crossworld. We also asked them to rate how good they thought they were when they joined Crossworld and how good they thought they were at present.

- 95% of participants said they had improved as a footballer since joining Crossworld: 79% of participants said that they had improved a lot, 16% said a bit, and 5% (one participant) said not at all (although he attributed this to a temporary loss of fitness).
- On a ten-point scale, on average, participants felt that they had improved by 1.5 points as a footballer since they had joined Crossworld. The average rating on joining Crossworld was 6.4, while the average rating at present was 7.9.





When asked what the most important thing they had learned about the game of football during their time with Crossworld, participants noted the specific technical skills that they had developed, as well as the importance of communication, leadership and teamwork.

What is the most important thing you have learned about football during your time at Crossworld?

'Putting the team first.'

'Teamwork and communication.'

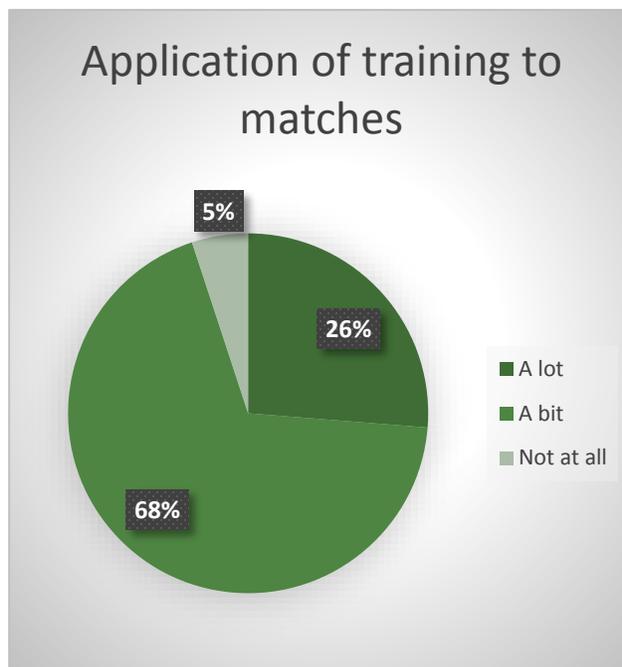
'Teamwork, leadership, responsibility.'

'Organisation is one of the most important things in football.'

'Improving my skills, working as a team, improving my listening skills.'

We also use coach assessment to measure the impact of our activities. In the main, we use this to provide feedback to the players themselves on their performance at key points during the season. As part of our own self-assessment as coaches, we assess whether the players are applying what they learn in training in matches, how versatile they are, and how match-fit they are. We use this information to plan subsequent training activities.

Coaches feel that most Crossworld players (94%) apply some of what they learn in training to match situations. In the cases of only 26% of participants, however, are coaches confident that they apply *a lot* of what they learn in training. In 68% of cases, coaches feel participants apply *a bit* of what they learn in training to matches.



- On average, using a ten-point scale, coaches rate the current tactical awareness of Crossworld players as 5.7.
- As an indicator of their versatility, the average number of positions a Crossworld player has played in competitive eleven-a-side matches during their time at Crossworld is 4.
- In terms of fitness, most Crossworld players are rated by their coaches as match-fit: 68% are match fit currently, compared to 26% mostly fit, while 5% are struggling with their fitness.



One of our key priorities for the Football Club is improving players' tactical understanding of the game, and their ability to apply this, and what they practice in training, to their weekly matches.

OUTCOME 3: INCREASE SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM

At Crossworld, we believe passionately in the power of sport to improve self-confidence and self-esteem. We consider that the most effective way of measuring our impact in this area is through a combination of player self-assessment and coach assessment.

In terms of player self-assessment:

- 95% of participants say that they feel more confident in themselves as a result of participating in Crossworld activities;
- 63% say that they feel a lot more confident;
- 32% say that they feel a bit more confident; and
- one participant was not sure.

Participants identified the way they had been treated within Crossworld, feeling more confident in their footballing ability, feeling better in themselves, learning to communicate (a number do not speak English when they arrive), and taking on leadership, as the key factors in improving their self-confidence.

Can you explain why you have become more confident in yourself?

'I can communicate with players confidently.'

'Because it has helped me with my English.'

'Because of the help I have had in my time here and the way I have been treated.'

'Being given a leadership role.'

'By taking responsibilities, and doing things with confidence.'

'I just love the club.'

In terms of coach assessment, we have developed a four-point scale to measure the self-confidence of our participants.

Level 1: the young person is generally shy and quiet

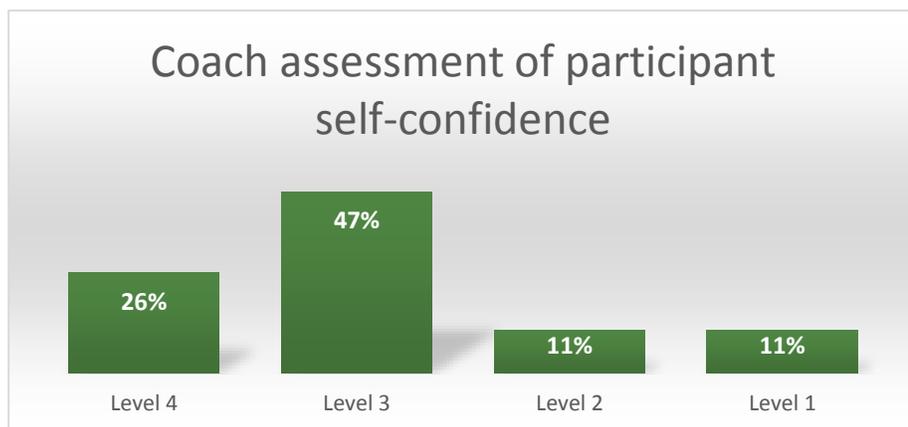
Level 2: the young person is making friends within the group

Level 3: the young person is at ease within the group as a whole

Level 4: the young person is able to take responsibility and lead within the group

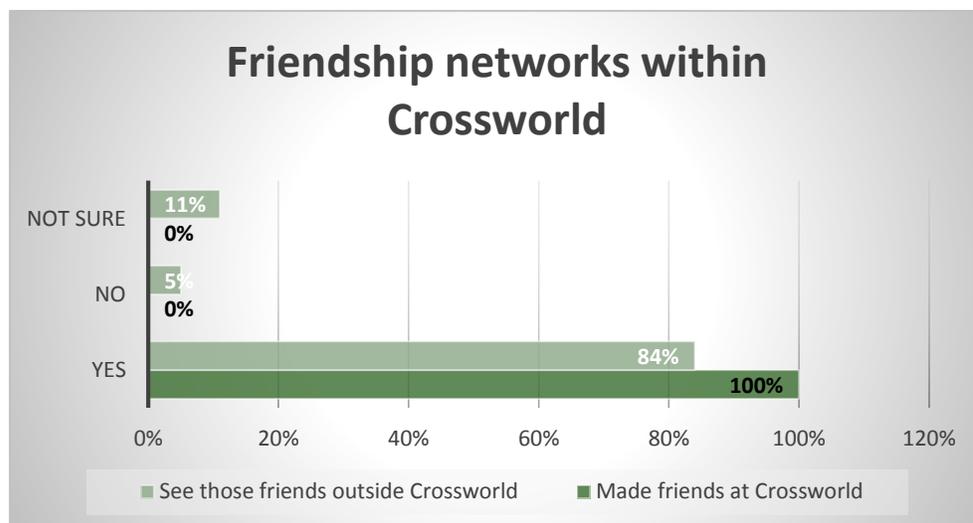


Another key priority for the 2013/14 season is to increase the self-confidence and leadership skills of our participants. To do this, we are piloting a new “leadership awards” approach, which we explain in more detail under outcome 5, below.



OUTCOME 4: DEVELOP FRIENDSHIP NETWORKS AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Given the backgrounds of the young people with whom we work, one of our key outcome-measures is whether or not the young people make friends within the group of participants. A further measure, which we use as a proxy of developing



social skills and forming deep friendships, is whether or not the young people then see the friends they have made within the Football Club beyond activities organised by Crossworld. We found that all participants felt they had made friends within the Football Club, and the majority spent time with and saw those friends outside Crossworld activities.



OUTCOME 5: IMPROVE SOFT SKILLS, SPECIFICALLY PUNCTUALITY, RELIABILITY AND LEADERSHIP

We seek to instill the values of punctuality and reliability in our young people, and use these as key the factors in our decisions over who is selected to play for Crossworld in competitive league and cup matches. Since we started the Football Club in 2009, we have had a rule that only players who attend training or who let the coaches know if they cannot attend will be considered for selection: any player who simply does not attend or is late for training and does not get in touch in advance is not considered.

From the start of the 2013/14 season, we have initiated a new way of recording punctuality and reliability, which we plan to use to provide feedback to players. At each training session or match, we record whether a player was on time or late. In addition, for each training session, we record whether a player let us know if they could not attend or not. By the end of the season, we will be able to record each individual player's attendance record in terms of punctuality and reliability, and report an overall picture and trend within the project.



In terms of leadership, from the start of the 2013/14 season we have had a much more deliberate focus on improving leadership among our participants. We have developed a new approach, which we call our “leadership awards” scheme, in order to recognise, record, and encourage demonstrations of leadership from our participants. By recording leadership awards, we are able to monitor the impact of our work to encourage leadership.

Leadership awards are issued for:

- organisation and communication on the pitch – either good encouragement for the team, or good, specific communication to individual players or about tactics;
- stepping forward to take responsibility for an aspect of a Crossworld activity – for example, volunteering to lead a drill in training; and
- an outstanding example of putting the team first and above yourself.

Since introducing the scheme at the start of the season, by 31 October:



- Crossworld coaches had awarded 11 leadership awards;
- seven players had gained at least one leadership award – one third of our regular 21 participants; and
- one player led the way with three leadership awards, while two others had received two leadership awards each.

We will continue to promote the leadership awards throughout the season. We will also continue to model the forms of communication, organisation, and leadership skills we want to see from players in training and in matches. We will also use the leadership awards scheme as one of the ways we select match-day captains. At present, we rotate the captaincy to give more of our participants an experience of being a leader. We set out four key responsibilities for our match-day captain:

1. delivering the immediate pre-match team talk;
2. being the leading voice on the pitch responsible for organising the team;
3. taking any decisions that need to be taken on the pitch (e.g. free-kick takers); and
4. opening the post-match de-brief, providing feedback to the group on what the team has done well, and what we need to work on to improve further.

We also want our participants to take greater responsibility for leading drills in our weekly training sessions. We have begun to ask for volunteers each week to lead a drill on a topic of their choice, and will link the awarding of leadership awards to those who step forward.

OUTCOME 6: ACCESS TO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

In the past, Crossworld has considered the role that our coaches should play in terms of supporting our participants in their lives outside football. Following a trial programme of educational summer activities we delivered in 2010, we decided that we would offer mentoring and other forms of support to our participants on request, rather than educational group activities. We felt that this would allow us to tailor the support we offer to our participants according to who needed what help at any given time.

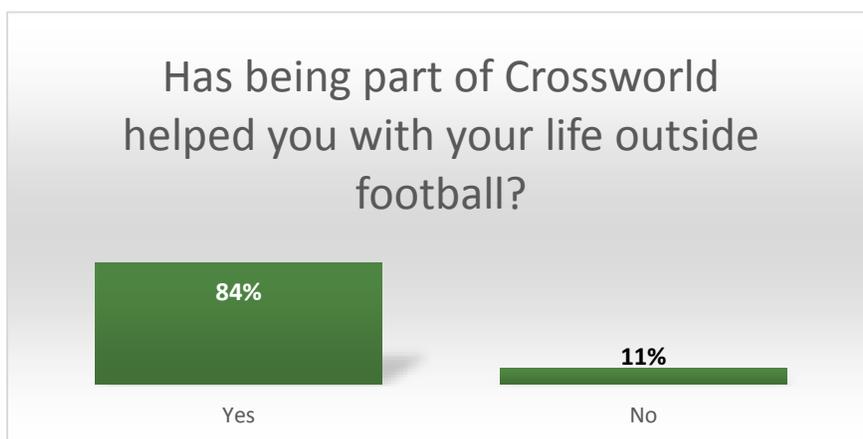
As coaches, we are conscious of our role as responsible adults and potential role-models for our participants. As adults and professionals, we are also conscious that we have access to resources, opportunities, and networks – in short, social capital – that we can use to help our participants develop and build productive and fulfilling lives. We consider, therefore, that we are in a position to provide support and advice to our participants as they seek to negotiate the complexities of growing up in this country, from accessing public services to searching for a job.



Of our current cohort, 14 young people have received additional support from Crossworld coaches beyond the football activities in which they participate. The most common forms of support we have provided are:

- support with an immigration case (e.g. writing reference letters, or liaising with key workers);
- help with writing a CV or preparing for a job interview;
- help in accessing work experience; and
- opportunities to gain experience and qualifications as a football coach.

In addition, we also measure our impact by exploring whether our participants feel that being part of Crossworld has helped them in aspects of their lives beyond the game of football. In the recent questionnaire, the vast majority of our participants felt that Crossworld had helped them in this way. They identified



the following as some of the things that they had learned through being part of Crossworld and that they had applied in other aspects of their lives:

- respect for others;
- the importance of teamwork;
- communication skills;
- self-confidence;
- leadership;
- socialising and making friends; and
- learning English.

'If I work hard, I can be good at what I want ... I learn how to make changes in my life.'

Crossworld participant, aged 18



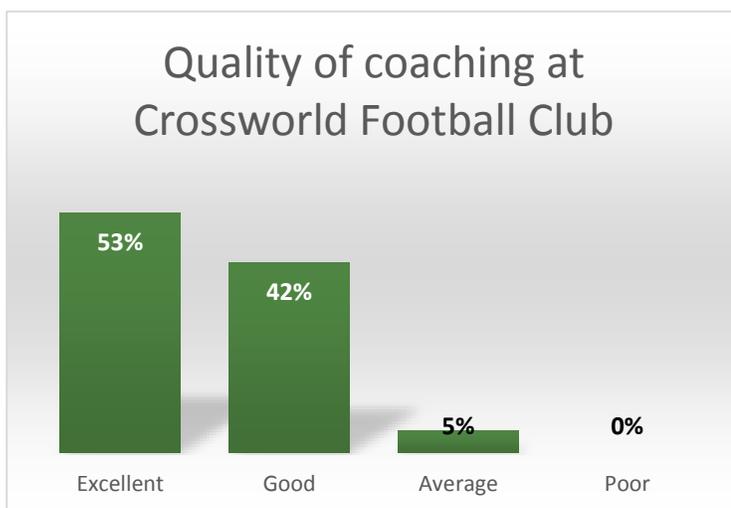
EVALUATION OF CROSSWORLD COACHING AND OTHER SUGGESTIONS

The final two questions in the questionnaire given to participants asked them to evaluate the quality of the coaching at Crossworld's Football Club, and to make any suggestions for improving the project further.

Ninety-five per cent of participants rated the quality of coaching at Crossworld as excellent or good.

Suggestions for improving the project included:

- more five-a-side tournaments;
- more work on fitness;
- specific drills on finishing;
- team-building activities; and
- socialising after matches – watching football matches or having dinner as a team.



We plan to work with our participants, and our fundraising team, to find ways to incorporate these suggestions into our activities.

PRIORITIES FOR THE 2013/14 SEASON

In addition to sustaining and further developing a successful football team and delivering enjoyable football activities for our participants, our key priorities for the 2013/14 season, based on feedback from our participants, are:

- building leadership capacity within the team and within each young person;
- encouraging each young person to lead drills in training; and
- developing players' tactical understanding of the game, and improving their ability to apply tactical plans and specific techniques practiced in training to matches.



ANNEX A

Football Club monitoring routines

Crossworld has six key outcomes-measures.

1. Improve participation
2. Improve footballing ability
3. Improve confidence and self-esteem
4. Develop friendship networks and social skills
5. Improve soft skills: specifically punctuality, reliability and leadership
6. Access to additional support

Each project – the Football Club and the Friday Project – has a set of routines to monitor, evaluate, analyse and record the impact of their activities. This information is then used to:

- improve Crossworld's activities;
- provide high-quality feedback to participants and volunteers on their performance;
- demonstrate evidence of need and impact in funding applications; and
- report to the board of trustees.

Following detailed work undertaken during the summer of 2012, Crossworld Football Club has launched a new way of recording information from its core activities and using this to monitor impact against the six key outcome-measures. This approach was put in place at the start of the 2013/14 season, which runs from August 2013 to June 2014.

Key monitoring routines

- **August / September 2013:** at the start of the season, we will issue participants with a simple feedback questionnaire. This will ask participants questions about the impact they think participating in Crossworld activities has had on them, specifically against outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 6. This will provide us with a baseline, as well as feedback and suggestions for improving the project.
- **Each week:** we will complete a weekly register for (a) training and (b) matches. This involves recording (i) who attended the session, (ii) whether they are on time / late / let us know / did not attend, and (iii) a 1-10 rating based on their performance. This information contributes to outcomes 1 (participation and throughput rates), 2 and 5.



- **Each week:** as and when appropriate, we also record any 'leadership awards' in the weekly register. These are awarded when a participant demonstrates excellent leadership, organisational skills, communication skills, taking responsibility for a situation, or putting the team above themselves. A small token (usually edible) is given out publicly to the recipient of each award, with feedback provided as to the reason for the award. The number of awards received are added up over the course of the season. This contributes directly to outcome 5, and supports outcomes 2 and 3.
- **Twice a year (in December and March):** we will carry out two, short mid-season reviews with our players. This will involve taking information from the weekly register (including average performance rating, attendance, leadership awards) and adding to these a coach-assessment for some of our sub-indicators (application of training drills, tactical awareness, versatility, fitness). Our findings are then given as feedback to each regular participant, telling them what we think they are doing well, and how they could improve even more. The overall figures will also be used to inform how we plan our activities, and reported to the charity's trustees.
- **End-of-year:** we will distribute a version of the questionnaire, focusing on further change over the course of the past year and on the impact of any new activities introduced (e.g. leadership awards). The findings of the questionnaire, weekly register, and coach assessments will then be used to complete a formal review of activities. The analysis will be used to inform planning and captured as our key impact indicators for the year.