PRESS RELEASE

WORLD CUP ROUNDUP:

UNICEF assesses its work, takes a close look at lessons learned during the World Cup

Pretoria, South Africa 21 July, 2010... Ten days after Spain's historic World Cup win and the departure of thousands of happy fans, UNICEF and its partners are taking a closer look and assessing the impact of their Child Friendly Spaces, sport for development community festivals, school holiday activities and Red Card public awareness campaign, all of which aimed at strengthening child protection and leaving a lasting legacy for children’s development after the World Cup in South Africa.

Despite concerns in public fora and the media, South Africa successfully hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ from 11 June to 11 July 2010. During this period, South African Government, civil society, the public and UNICEF took great care to keep vulnerable children safe and protected, implementing a Plan of Action that had been put in place several years prior to the event.

Fewer incidents affecting children than anticipated

UNICEF, in collaboration with civil society and private sector partners, supported the Government to develop and implement measures to prevent and reduce the possible abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children during this period and to strengthen the child protection system as an enduring legacy of the global event. Key actions to protect vulnerable children were for the first time concentrated at the official FIFA Fan Fests visited by some 3.3 million revelers.

“Amidst all these festivities there were far fewer incidents affecting children than had been anticipated,” said UNICEF Deputy Representative Malathi Pillai. “For those of us concerned with the safety of children and reducing their chances of being exposed to abuse, neglect or exploitation, this is truly a good thing.”

According to UNICEF, there were 809,803 visitors to the four sites where UNICEF had established Child Friendly Spaces. During the four weeks of the tournament 161 children were reunited with their families, 3,778 received services and 28,907 children were tagged to make their reunification simpler should they have separated from their parents. UNICEF-trained personnel also conducted awareness raising activities amongst children and parents on how they could protect themselves while enjoying the games. In total, 39,094 one-on-one awareness raising sessions were conducted.

“These results have much to do with our successful voluntary tagging of children and parents with twin wristbands in collaboration with Emergency Management Services (EMS). Close to 29,000 children were tagged and the wristbands accelerated reunifications of separated children from their parents or caregivers. The wristbands gave peace of mind to parents and youngsters alike”, Ms. Pillai said.
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With fewer children than anticipated attending the Fan Fests and needing services, UNICEF teams launched a series of structured activities including games, puzzles, drawing and other fun activities inside the spaces that helped children learn how to identify danger signals and protect themselves. A hot meal was also served to the children as young as 3 years up to 16 years who queued up in front of the space to be part of the daily happenings.

“The children saw the CFS as their space and came to play around the area well before the Fan Fest opened each day. If a child was hurt or needed help in any way they would come to the CFS for assistance,” said Carol Bews site manager at the Soweto space where many unaccompanied children from neighbouring communities visited every day.

Attendance at Community Football Festivals Exceeded Expectations

With schools closed for the duration of the World Cup, UNICEF supported planned programmes, for children including sports events, tournaments, photo workshops as well as provincial workshops for leaders in the Girls’ and Boys’ Education Movement from eight provinces. Additionally sports activities were conducted in 25 participating school communities in all nine provinces.

For families and children people living in rural and hard-to-reach areas away from the free public Fan Fests, UNICEF, together with sport for development partners, SCORE and Sportstec, organized 11 community sports festivals over four weekends of the World Cup to help families and children enjoy the fun of football in their own communities.

“The sport festivals exceeded all expected attendance figures and reached more than 11,000 children at each hosting. The World Cup provided a great opportunity for UNICEF through its valuable community based implementing partners to impact the lives of children during the school holidays through daily programmes and sports festivals,” Ms. Pillai said. “Our hope, as we move forward, is for the best results that can be obtained through sustainable engagement by children in these programmes long after the world cup is over.”

Red Card Campaign a Winner in South Africa’s Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The massive Red Card campaign spouting anti-child abuse messaging through branded collateral material such as leaflets, posters and banners in print and electronic format was a winner with the general public, including children. Partner activations and replications helped the red cards reached over 1 million people through placements at hospitality and tourism industry sites, hotel lobbies, service stations, border posts and in schools and communities during community festivals and other activities.
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UNICEF produced and distributed approximately 724,000 items conveying information and messages in 13 different formats, during this campaign. This included: 2,000 posters, 643,500 brochures/cards, 112 branded outdoor banners and other promotional materials.

UNICEF is also working closely with MXit, the most popular social network amongst South African youth, to expand the partnership which began with the red card campaign, to include and raise awareness about other critical child protection priorities.

Supportive Public Service Announcements, focusing on the right to participation and play, and protection, recorded by Argentine football star and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Lionel Messi and South African singer and Celebrity Advocate Tshedl Mhlo reached millions of television viewers and radio listeners on the African continent.

Additionally, UNICEF hosted 16 high level and media delegations including government, major donors and goodwill ambassadors and the media on behalf of our National Committees to our child friendly spaces and sport for development sites.

Consultations with Government and civil society partners are now underway to evaluate the implementation of child protection and sport for development strategies employed during the world cup. Based upon lessons learned and the partnerships built, plans will be developed to strengthen the national child protection system and sport for development strategies aligned to the Child Friendly Schools programme. The experiences and findings from South Africa will help inform similar programmes by UNICEF country offices for major upcoming sporting events.

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