

Play Global Grant Report

In June of 2022, AASBCR® approved a grant for Play Global. Play Global is a US 501(c)3 non-profit organization that teaches baseball to coaches and youth in developing countries and areas of conflict. Play Global uses baseball to help kids see past their differences, respect others, and play as a team. Participants learn and work together, cooperating and developing respect and teamwork through baseball. Play Global has active, ongoing programs in South Africa, Israel, Bhutan, and Ukraine. Recent projects have also taken place in Uganda, Kyrgyzstan, India, Nigeria, and Gambia.

The following provides insight into Play Global's use of the AASBCR® grant:

Play Global Report - South Africa 2022

Program description

Play Global returned to South Africa in October 2022 in our fourth year participating in the Billy Mangengele Baseball Revival Programme. This effort is named after coach Sithembiso Billy Magengelele, who coached and mentored youth in the Mdantsane area of the Eastern Cape province. Baseball provides a positive outlet for low-income youth in this area who lack access to organized sports or afterschool activities.

"As I walked around town, people would stop me to say hello and share how they hoped that having baseball programs would help with crime issues, giving the kids a positive outlet and goals they'd be excited to work toward. It made sense that being part of a team could keep kids out of trouble." - Kevin Healy, past Play Global coach

Play Global has led this initiative together with Mdantsane Eagles baseball club since 2017. When travel and sports were suspended during the pandemic, we facilitated a hybrid online/in-person coach education program and leveraged a donation from Wilson Sporting Goods to distribute youth baseball equipment to participating coaches and clubs. In Fall 2022, Play Global sent three expert coaches to support local youth baseball teams, train P.E. teachers to teach baseball in schools, and introduce baseball to youth in two Eastern Cape locations over a six-week span.

Participation

In East London/Buffalo City:

- 350 youth players
- 11 schools and clubs
- 20 teachers and 6 baseball coaches trained

In Port Elizabeth/Mandela Bay:

- 100 youth players
- 9 clubs and schools
- 11 coaches trained

In both regions, our coaches took over PE classes and taught teamwork and respect through baseball to hundreds of additional schoolchildren. In those lessons, coaches introduced students to baseball equipment, base running, throwing and hitting off a tee.

Challenges

The coaches faced an unusual amount of heavy rainfall, affecting field access, ability to hold outdoor practices, and school schedules.

They adapted and secured indoor facilities, but given availability and COVID precautions, this limited participation numbers on those days.

We made a late adaptation to the program, shifting the final 10 days of our last coach from Mandela Bay to Buffalo City, as the host/director was facing personal problems. This allowed more depth with the coaches and some players in Buffalo City, while limiting our expected reach across the Mandela Bay region.

Successes & Follow-up

The Billy Magengele Revival Programme generated positive regional press, with articles in The Herald, The Daily Dispatch, and Go Express:

<https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/daily-dispatch/20220928/281968906561544>

<https://www.goexpress.co.za/2022/09/29/baseball-development-receives-international-boost/>

Additionally, the coaches did several interviews for local radio, and several updates were posted and tagged to [Play Global's Facebook page](#). Attendance at baseball sessions grew during our time in the region, and interest from schools increased.

Reflection from Play Global coaches:

“It was a great trip and I think there are many avenues for growth and improvement, having just seen a small glimpse of the South Africa baseball landscape in Mdantsane.”

“We can get them playing and having fun. This will allow for organic growth and an increase in youth development.”

“I'm confident that with a concerted effort, we can grow the sport of baseball in South Africa and provide opportunities for more people to participate.”

We are continuing to build relationships with leaders in the region and build the coaching community across the Eastern Cape. Our coaches maintain formal and informal contact with teachers and coaches to support their lessons year-round. We plan to send a trainer in 2023 specifically for coach education.

Play Global is grateful for the AASBCR® grant which helped support this initiative!

The next two pages provide photos of the Play Global participants in action:



