GIVE EVERY TALENT A CHANCE

A call for action
Give every talent a chance
Global football
Not all talents get a chance

Football development lies at the heart of FIFA’s overarching mission to make football truly global. To have a significant impact on the development of the game, it is crucial to have a full understanding of the current global ecosystem:

- Is there a competitive balance globally?
- Is there a financial disparity between domestic leagues across the globe?
- Are opportunities for players balanced across the globe?
- Are countries reaching their full potential?
Give every talent a chance

Competitive imbalance
It is FIFA’s long-term ambition to see at least 50 national teams and 50 clubs from all continents competing at the highest level. Over the years, it has become clear that there is a competitive imbalance, with European football dominant across international competitions.

100% of the national teams that qualified for the semi-finals of the last four FIFA World Cups were from CONMEBOL or UEFA

81% of the national teams that qualified for the semi-finals of the last four FIFA Women’s World Cups were from Concacaf or UEFA

56 different countries participated in the last four FIFA World Cups

34 different countries participated in the last four FIFA Women’s World Cups

Only 32 different national teams reached the knockout stage

Only 20 different national teams reached the knockout stage

Financial disparity
Pre-COVID-19, elite clubs and associations around the world were enjoying a period of stable growth, albeit with a clear disparity between Europe and the rest of the world. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for both clubs and associations across the globe. A new financial era is dawning for modern football, and it is an era that must be met with caution to ensure the game is protected for the future.

469% In 2020, the gap between the combined transfer spend of clubs affiliated to the associations that are home to the “big 5” leagues on the one hand, and clubs from the other five associations that make up the top ten on the other, was a staggering USD 3.4bn (469%).

Top 10 MAs by transfer spend in 2020 (USDm)

"Big 5" Total

USD 3.3bn

Next 5 Total

713

4,052

In 2020, the total transfer spend of clubs residing in UEFA was over 4x more than the combined spend of clubs in the AFC, CAF, Concacaf, CONMEBOL and the OFC.
Inconsistent playing opportunities
The opportunities for young boys and girls to participate in organised competition varies across the globe. The absence of regular and consistent playing opportunities, both domestically and internationally, puts players in certain age groups and countries at a distinct disadvantage.

60%
Almost 60% of male players in the top 30 domestic leagues across the globe come from countries ranked 1-20.

3x
European youth national teams can play up to three times as many games as other teams globally across all age groups.

In some regions, many talented boys and girls miss the opportunity to play due to international competitions taking place only once every two years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>17yrs</th>
<th>16yrs</th>
<th>15yrs</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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</table>

The chance of playing in a FIFA U-17 World Cup is five times higher for a male player born in an even year than for a male player born in an odd year.

Only one third of all countries offer two or more female youth competitions at domestic level (Forward Programme criteria).
### Countries not reaching their full potential

To reach its full potential, each association must be aware of how it needs to support its talented boys and girls. A clear pathway from youth to senior football is key for future success. With so few countries able to manage this transition, what are the contributing factors?

Many countries are **unable to transfer youth performance** into senior success.

#### Men’s competitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIFA U-17 World Cup</th>
<th>FIFA World Cup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong> confederations</td>
<td><strong>2</strong> confederations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of semi-final appearances in the last four World Cups per confederation by men’s U-17 and senior national teams.

- CAF
- AFC
- OFC
- Concacaf
- UEFA
- CONMEBOL

#### Women’s competitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup</th>
<th>FIFA Women’s World Cup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong> confederations</td>
<td><strong>4</strong> confederations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of semi-final appearances in the last four World Cups per confederation by women’s U-17 and senior national teams.

- CAF
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- OFC
- Concacaf
- UEFA
- CONMEBOL

This data represents the fulfilled FIFA Forward technical development criteria (criteria 1-8, article X) in 2019.
Give every talent a chance

Youth development enables each MA to reach its full potential

It is clear that much more can and needs to be done to make football truly global at the highest level. At the heart of this is a dedicated approach to talent development. Long-term commitment in this area leads to structural results. The data clearly shows that talent development has a positive impact upon later success, both domestically and internationally. A concerted effort from all stakeholders (FIFA, confederations, associations, leagues and clubs) to influence the key factors of talent development could lead to a higher competitive balance. As shown in the forthcoming sections, the top MAs appear to be supporting talent development throughout the pathway to a greater extent. However, it is clear that there is still work to be done to truly give every talent a chance.

“Everything is connected in our sport. We are all connected. Giving every talent a chance requires everyone to play their part.”

FIFA President
Give every talent a chance

Development of talents

Identification of talents

Access to football
Offering continued chances to play, train and fall in love with the game at every stage is crucial to the growth and development of football.

Access routes into football in the top 20 MAs

- Club football: 35%
- School football: 65%
- Informal play: 75%
- Futsal: 50%
- Private leagues: 30%

Percentage of the top 20 MAs that incorporate grassroots in the overall strategy for player development

CALL TO ACTION
1. Implement comprehensive grassroots programmes countrywide
2. Encourage communities and regional associations to support the growth of volunteer engagement
3. Organise age-appropriate competition formats for optimal skill development

Age-appropriate competition formats are key to success

% of MAs that have age-appropriate game formats

Top 20: 100%
Top 21-50: 90%
Top 51-100: 80%
Scouting and identification
Motivated and talented male and female footballers should all get the chance to be scouted, identified and developed, regardless of where they are from, when they were born, or their social or economic background.

Only half of the top 100 associations have a TID system in place for boys and girls.

85% of the top 20 MAs have qualified scouts and talent ID staff.

**CALL TO ACTION**
1. Implement a structured system for identifying talented young boys and girls at every stage of the pathway across all regions
2. Ensure that talents are not overlooked because of their date of birth or their maturation
3. Provide accredited training courses for the education of scouts and talent ID staff

Data
Access to key technology is crucial to supporting the identification and development of players. From data collection hardware to data management systems that enable the data to be used effectively, knowing how to use the latest technology allows users to gain further insight into the game.

65% of the top 20 MAs have an IT system/database for talent identification

**CALL TO ACTION**
1. Increase access to technology to support the collection of data to objectively support the identification process
2. Implement a data management system to support decision-making
High-quality, home-grown players are the cornerstone of any successful senior national team and competitive domestic league. It all starts with having a large number of players at youth level. The best talents should train and play with and against the best players in the best environment. Professionalised environments where the most talented players are developed on a day-to-day basis (also when they are not part of the youth national teams) are crucial.

Academies in the top MAs have the lowest player-to-coach ratio across the U-12 to U-15 age bracket (11 players to 1 coach).

Academies in the leading associations have clearly defined football and coaching philosophies.

CALL TO ACTION
1. Invest in academies with strong leadership to make sure that talented players are developed properly
2. Develop and follow a holistic long-term player development plan rather than focus on short-term results
3. Design and implement regulations to support a fair ROI and create incentives for clubs to invest in youth development
Quality coaches

Key for the production of young talent are the people in charge of player development – none more so than the coaches.

100% of the top 20 MAs are members of a coaching convention.

of top 20 MAs deliver specific programmes for coach educators.

The quality of coaches matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>50%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>70%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top 20</td>
<td>Top 21-50</td>
<td>Top 51-100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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</table>

% of national team coaches holding a Pro Licence

3x Academies in leading MAs have more full-time coaches – nearly 3x as many as those ranked 51-100.

Training sessions

Contact time is crucial in the acquisition of any skill – and football is no different. Talented players must be repeatedly exposed to high-quality, age-appropriate development sessions, both on and off the pitch, to become well-rounded athletes.

198 The average number of team training sessions for a U-16 boy per season

171 The average number of team training sessions for a U-16 girl per season

U-12

From the U-12 age category, top academies deliver >1 individual-focused session per week.

481 On average, a male player training from U-6 to U-21 will take part in 481 more sessions than a female player.

CALL TO ACTION

1. Run a comprehensive education pathway as part of the confederation’s coaching convention to develop top-quality native coaches and specialist practitioners
2. Invest in full-time coaching positions
3. Implement a coaching competency framework linked to the playing philosophy
4. Create a culture of knowledge development (collective findings, initiate research, bringing experts together) and sharing across all target groups (online and offline)
5. Provide educational opportunities for academy and national team staff and coaches

CALL TO ACTION

1. Optimise the contact time with players
2. Ensure that training is age- and maturation-appropriate, both physically and mentally
3. Plan, review and track training over the long term to maximise player availability
4. Integrate the use of technology to support and monitor the development of individuals
Development of talents

Playing opportunities for talents

**Domestic playing opportunities**

Competitions offer players opportunities to implement what they have learnt in training. Competitions and games must start with a focus on having fun and playing football, and then progress to a situation in which the best can play with and against the best at each stage of the pathway. It is crucial to challenge talents in preparation for professional football. As with training, repetition is key, although balance is required.

On average, a **14-year-old boy** at an academy in a top 20 MA will play **44 matches** per season, including friendlies.

Top 50 MAs offer **22% more playing opportunities** to young talents aged between U-12 and U-15 in their domestic competitions.

**CALL TO ACTION**

1. Create a games programme that maximises the opportunity to play across all age groups and minimises the gaps that incur drop-out
2. Use the support of technical expertise to ensure competitions are competitive and age-appropriate, and offer different experiences
3. Integrate the use of technology to support and monitor the development of players and coaches
Development of talents

Give every talent a chance

1. Integrate the use of technology to support and monitor the development of players and coaches at international level
2. Support the development of specialist practitioners as part of the overall education strategy
3. Integrate such knowledge into the coaching curriculum
4. Emphasise the concept of individual player development within a team setting in coach education

CALL TO ACTION

1. Organise more frequent competitions across all national teams
2. Develop suitable programmes for youth national teams
3. Facilitate international playing opportunities for academies

International playing opportunities

At international level, the same principle should be applied: the best versus the best across all age groups. Regular exposure presents players with invaluable experience and a greater understanding of what is required at the highest level. At the same time, this gives technical staff a clear understanding of the level required and what needs to be adjusted to meet these demands. Furthermore, it must be noted that international playing opportunities are not only relevant to associations, but also offer key development experiences for academies as part of a progressive games programme.

Performance analysis

The use of video footage to support performance analysis of both the team and the individual is common across the game. Such analysis can be used in a multitude of ways, including performance analysis, match preparation and delivering best practice.

69% of academies around the world do not use video analysis for player development.

100% of the top 20 MAs use footage for match preparation across all national teams.

85% Percentage of the top 20 MAs that use video footage for individual player development

UEFA associations played an average of 12 games at both U-16/U-17 and U-19/U-20 level during the last youth World Cup cycle, considerably more than any other confederation in which the number of games was as low as 4.

12 games

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40% of MAs do not have an active U-16/U-17 or U-19/U-20 women’s national team.

93% of MAs have an active U-16/U-17 men’s national team.

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Development of talents

The transition of talent

Guidance regulations

The transition from youth to senior football is a delicate phase for talented players as they have to assert themselves quickly in a bid to find their place. Good guidance for talented players and their environment is key. The pressure of results-driven senior football, the need for an appropriate number of competitive experiences in this phase, individual long-term development and broader education are all in the balance. Players need a mentor, an individual who cares about their personal and sporting development in this phase.

The clubs, the domestic league and the member association are all key stakeholders in enabling the transition of talented young players. Implementing domestic regulations and incentives to field home-grown players encourages clubs to drive the development of young players.

“Many talented youngsters waste their time on the benches of top teams instead of gathering experience on the pitch.”

Arsène Wenger

Only 43% of the top 100 MAs have a specific strategy for the transition of male players from youth to senior football.

In the 18-21 age bracket, domestic players receive 30% less playing time than foreign players in the top 10 domestic leagues.

Lower professional leagues offer far greater opportunities for players to make their debut than the “big five” countries.

CALL TO ACTION

1. Develop individual playing pathways to support players transitioning from the youth teams to the senior team at both domestic and international levels
2. Clubs must better use young talent from their academies in a bid to maximise the ROI in these financially difficult times imposed by COVID-19
3. Appoint persons of trust who can help talents and their environment to make well-considered choices in this phase
4. Implement domestic league regulations for home-grown players
5. Support a games programme or loan system that supports the transition from youth to senior football
Development of talents

Talent development | Spotlight

Women’s football

To develop our game, we need to provide better access to all phases of player development, and more opportunities to play. Gaps in the player pathway push players to participate in older competitions, where they may not yet be physically or mentally ready to compete. This not only affects the players but also the coaches, as they are not exposed to the different phases of player development and do not gain the experience required to coach at higher levels.

28% fewer

In the top 20 MAs, U-12 to U-15 girls have 28% fewer training opportunities per week than boys.

only 41%

Only 41% of the top 20 women’s MAs have a U-23 national team.

only 32%

Only 32% of women’s national team coaches in the top 20 are female.

39%

Only 39% of MAs in the top 100 have a strategy to support the transition of female players from youth to senior football.

CALL TO ACTION

1. Create better league structures that allow players to play and train more consistently, thus increasing contact time through more playing and training opportunities
2. Through competitions, develop a complete player pathway to provide access and opportunities to play in appropriate-age and maturation phases
3. Create a coaching pathway and access to develop experience in the different phases of player development through improved competition structures
4. Facilitate female coaches’ access to education and coaching opportunities
Player welfare and holistic education

In a highly competitive environment in which only very few reach the top, academies, associations, leagues, confederations and FIFA need to take responsibility for the mental and physical health of each player. Creating an open and transparent environment with clear support networks enables players and staff to raise concerns and seek help and advice.

Having a safe environment for players, parents and coaches is crucial. As such, safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines must be in place for everyone to follow.

Furthermore, alongside more formal education programmes, players need to have the opportunity to take part in other workshops as part of a holistic education programme to prepare them for life inside and outside of football, as well as helping their performance on the pitch.

Leading associations are more likely to offer a player-care programme, with the most popular being:

1. Anti-doping
2. Nutrition
3. Media
4. Match-fixing prevention

CALL TO ACTION

1. Create a safe environment for players, parents and coaches with a structured safeguarding framework
2. Raise awareness of the stresses of professional football and their impact upon mental health, and create a support network for players, coaches and parents to seek support and advice
3. Support the holistic development of players through the delivery of formal and informal education and training to give them the best opportunity outside of the game
The case for talent development

Creating benefits for all

A clear pathway allows greater access, a better understanding of the expectations at each step, and a heightened sense of motivation for players to succeed.

GLOBAL FOOTBALL
When more talents can access the game, the competition will become more exciting. The fan base of both men’s and women’s football will grow across all regions - making football truly global.

DOMESTIC LEAGUES AND THE NA
More quality home-grown talents in the domestic league increases the connection with the local community. The same players often become the cornerstone for the future national team success and widespread national pride.

THE TALENTS

A focus on talent development grows the interest in the industry and entices more coaches and technical staff to enter the game as a career. This in turn drives the quality and the diversity of specialists supporting the game.

COACHES AND TECHNICAL STAFF

CLUBS AND THEIR ACADEMIES

The development of home-grown talents prepares them for potential access to the first team and/or professional football, which in turn has a strong sporting and economic potential (fan and commercial interest, transfer revenue).
The analysis process

- **Countries analysed**: 205
- **Academies analysed by Double Pass**: 864
- **Data templates completed**: 2,734
- **Data points captured**: >500

- **FIFA High-Performance experts & managers deployed**: 30
- **Surveys completed**: 2,140
- **Interviews conducted**: 1,143

- **Global Report**: 205 Country Reports
- **Academy Reports**: 326