

Vision: To create stronger, safer & friendlier communities throughout Ireland; making opportunities a right, not a privilege.

Mission: To facilitate positive social change by using the power of football to build community cohesion, promote health, and encourage lifelong participation and learning.

I grew up, like many of us did, playing on the street. We were just having fun and had never heard of professional football. I never dreamt of where it would take me, or realised what a difference the sport was making to our community. Today it's a different story, with different rules, and now more than ever people at risk need our support.

John Giles

In Ireland today there is a recognised and ever widening social gap which is putting increased pressure on already strained resources. For this reason The John Giles Foundation, the only one of its kind in Ireland, has been set up to help tackle some of the most significant social challenges facing our communities.

Our objective is to use the power of football to improve quality of life, build community spirit and create lasting opportunities for all involved. We are doing this by supporting sustainable community projects that would not otherwise be realised.

The focus of the Foundation is the individual and their environment, and using football to create better quality of life, higher self-esteem and greater opportunities.

In 2005 the ESRI Children and Sport in Ireland report acknowledged soccer as the primary sport in the broad national study as having untapped potential and that “as far as the social benefits of sport are concerned, soccer is the most important.” Furthermore recent studies by the ESRI NESF and Joint Oireachtas Committees, among others, have shown how involvement in sport can help to address issues such as health and racial discrimination, as well as individual and community development.

In conducting research to identify where the Foundation can have most impact we have identified that a significant amount of progress has already been made in recent years. One example of this is An Garda Síochána who have identified the value of football as a social tool via late-night-leagues held on Friday nights in disadvantaged areas. They have noticed a 50% reduction of antisocial related callouts in Tallaght and Ballymun and much improved outreach to difficult to reach youths between the ages of 13-21

Despite good progress current resources are only scratching the surface of the challenges we face, and we need to do more to help communities. Over the coming years we will begin to see how, now more than ever, the economic climate and pressure on our social system makes this project vital. In particular there is a severe shortage of personnel and programmes that provide people with an opportunity to participate.

Through our programmes the Foundation is making a real contribution to reducing these negative factors and socioeconomic inequalities in a way that no other sport can. With its unique approach it is able to have a significant and measureable impact on a number of the social issues currently facing Ireland's youth.