Football for Life Academy – Fostering Sporting and Educational Excellence Through Play-Based Social, Emotional and Cultural Learning:

1st Year DepEd Region VIII Accomplishment Report
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Football for Life Academy (FFLA) is an experiential, play-based, life-long learning pathway designed to compliment public-schools. It uses football as a tool to develop soft-skills, resilience and belief, empowering children to reach their full potential, in education and in life.

Football For Life Academy (FFLA) was first established in 2014, in response to super-typhoon Haiyan, using football as a tool to restore normalcy to children living in a short-term emergency. Its impact was immediate, reaching over 10,000 children in its first year and quickly gaining an international reputation for its innovative approach and educational focus. After working with UNICEF Philippines for two years, FFLA gained the support of UEFA Foundation who recognized it as one of only 16 global projects to support. Since then, FFLA has continued to grow into a global leader in using sport as a tool for education, gaining support from partners such as FIFA Foundation, Qatar Supreme Committee for World Cup Legacy, as well as winning regional and global awards for its methodology and social impact.

The unique innovation of FFLA is that it uses football (or any team participation sport) as a tool for improving both sporting performance in addition to educational outcomes. Through the delivery of regular sports sessions, the programme supports development of social, emotional and cultural learning for young people. In the process of training youth in sports, FFLA inculcates soft skills vital to achieving educational success such as hard work, persistence, vision, teamwork, communication and emotional intelligence.

FFLA is designed to complement existing education systems, using community mentors and young leaders to encourage school pupils to reach their full potential. In doing so, it actively supports teachers and allows them to spend more time on teaching while the young leaders help to monitor the social and emotional welfare of pupils.
In May 2017 FundLife International in collaboration with Department Education (DepEd) piloted FFLA as a school based programme in Palo National High School, Tanauan School of Craftsmanship and Home Industries and San Joaquin National High School.

Within weeks of the pilot starting, more schools wanted to join the pilot and it was decided to include San Jose National High School, Sagkahan National High School and Tacloban City Stand Alone Senior High School in the pilot programme.

The objective of the FFLA Pilot in Region 8 was to support teachers and students from pre-selected public schools and improving educational and sporting outcomes for students enrolled in the FFLA programme. Schools were selected based on need as well as suitable students and environment for FFLA to take place in the pilot programme.

We believe there is so much sporting and personal potential across our schools that is not always realized – we look forward to embarking on this exciting journey with FundLife.

- Dr. Ramil Uytico,
DepEd Director, Region VIII
THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

After coordination with schools, teachers and communication was established with all stakeholders. A series of orientation was conducted in the targeted schools to gather students who were interested to take part in the project.

Table 1. The above diagram shows the process of how the FFLA pilot was implemented using the signed MOU as reference also considering internal and external accountability.

A student of Tacloban City Stand Alone Senior High School expressing his interest in participating the session.
THE FIRST YEAR BY NUMBERS

A total of 255 sessions based on international football standard was delivered from June 2017 to April 2018 in these pilot sites. This involved 13 classroom sessions and 242 regular football sessions.

REGULAR FOOTBALL SESSIONS
These sessions are conducted in a field enough to accommodate 30-40 players. The topics tackled are focused on the skills in playing football integrated with key behaviors that the players need to develop. They are asked to do warm-ups, execute different drills and are given the opportunity to play a friendly game with their co-players.

CHAMPION SESSIONS
These sessions are ideally conducted indoor or inside the classroom. The topics on these sessions feature professional football players of Barcelona and Arsenal Football Club. They are also called as “Champions” because they possess the core values of FFLA i.e. vision, respect, commitment, courage, creativity and skills.
FFLA reached a total of 316 students between the ages of 12 to 20. This covers 37% of the total number of children from all covered school and community sites of FundLife.

Children were able to participate 49 tournaments and 28 of which were Mini Champions League. There were also 5 tournaments that was held outside Tacloban that was participated by selected good performing players and one of this is the Thirsty Cup in Cebu City.

Activities like this gives them opportunities to look into how they could improve their skills in Football and gain experiences on how to deal with real sports competition in areas with different sports dynamics.

![Image of students and coaches]
Through **PLAY**, we support teachers and parents that inspire children to **DREAM**, encourage them to **BELIEVE**, and empower them to **ACHIEVE**.
BEST PRACTICES:

- **FundLife and DepEd through the focal persons (teachers) of the FFLA project established a good communication** which helped in making sure that the response towards issues or concerns were timely.

- **FFLA coaches attends Coaching Education** which was facilitated by the Arsenal coaches once a week which helped them **improve their football skills according to international standards and child facilitation.**

- **Mechanisms were established** to ensure accountability towards the players, parents, schools and all its partners.
Established in 2014 and reached over 10,000 children in its 1st year.

- Informed participation – parents and teachers are informed about the sessions and tournaments that the organization conducts through communication and invitation letters.

- Parents permit and school permits are secured to ensure the safety and security of children during sessions, tournaments and travels.

- Children, parents, teachers and partners were consulted through focus group discussions, student survey, one-on-one interviews and home visits. They were able to participate and influence the organization in making decisions and plans to improve program implementations.

- Engaged a number of stakeholders, including education authorities, parents and teachers to create a holistic approach to childhood development through sport and play.
The impact of FFLA is best measured over a consistent period of time. SEC learning and its objective of creating behavioral change takes time. However, there was undeniable evidence that showed how effective FFLA was in reducing school drop-out rates across its target groups.

In Leyte, recorded senior high school dropout rates are as high as 21% in 2016 (14% boys, 7% girls) from similar peer groups. This empirical data shows without FFLA, the average rate of dropout without FFLA should have been 35.3 students for every 168. FFLA had 1 from the 168 that enrolled and who selected as being ‘at risk’ when they joined FFLA.

“Students need people who could really inspire them and help them. If you cannot inspire the child, they would not dream bigger but FFLA inspires them and shows them the possibilities, they do dream bigger.”

- Mr. Rufino Almaden,
  Teacher, Tanauan School of Craftsmanship and Home Studies

**Table 4. Graph showing comparison between FFLA and non-FFLA student against drop-out rate. (Source: https://technology.mb.com.ph/2016/12/16/big-data-analytics-school-dropout-rates-for-grades7-to-10/)**
BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDE IMPACT:

The evaluation that was conducted recently by the organization found out that;

**98%** of the children feels happy being part of Football for Life Academy program.

**91%** of the children from FFLA covered school and community sites improved in their academic performance. Their behavior at home and in school positively changed.

Furthermore, **69 of the 168 students enrolled** graduated the school year with ‘exemplarily academic performance’ or with ‘high distinction’.

The evidence was undeniable in the pilot - SEC Learning and the support FFLA mentors offered to students, parents and teachers crucial exponentially improving stay-in-school rates.

**90%** of the respondents also said that FFLA program has positive influence on children and if they continue engaging in the program it’ll help them become better person.

**92%** of the adults encourages their children to continue participating the program.

When I talked to the parents of my students enrolled in the FFLA Programme, the parents shockingly said, “You know what, although our child comes home late due to playing football, his grades improved!”

-Mr. Rufino Almaden,
Teacher, Tanauan School of Craftmanship and Home Studies

Most Outstanding players from FFLA covered schools and communities together with Mr. Almaden of TSCHI and Coach Robs during the FFLA Recognition and Graduation on April 27, 2018.
Alongside the 242 regular sessions FFLA delivered to students, we also held 49 separate events - an average of 1.4 per week - giving students short-term goals they could easily achieve.

**ANNEXES**

*PLAY & BELIEVE* - Students learn the importance of doing things well, consistently - Through showing their commitment, they are selected to join special events and festivals.

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**August 2017** - Players recognised for attending every session.

**September 2017** - Players recognised for attitude to others.

**October 2017** - Reminded about importance of academic performance.

**December 2017** - Rewarded not for skill, but for commitment to improve.
ACHIEVE

Students begin to see fruits of their commitment through special events to commemorate their hard-work, dedication, attitude and accomplishments in the FFLA programme.

Teachers, parents and coaches come together to celebrate their progress and graduation from the school year.

For FFLA, achieving small goals are the easy way to have big ones.

**September 2017 - Champions Award:** Recognised for excelling and competing FFLA Cup or similar event.

**February 2018:** Individual contribution recognised - Best Player Award

**March 2018:** Congratulations! You graduated from FFLA year 1 and you stayed in school.

Given this day, 5 August 2017.
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A Project Of:

FundLife International
A-303 Mendoza Complex,
141 Sto Nino St., Tacloban City
6500 Philippines

Tel: +63 (0) 53 523 1160
Email: hello@fundlife.org

www.fundlife.org
www.facebook.com/FootballForLifeAcademy