



## COMPASSION AND SPORT. COMPASSION IN ACTION.

When we speak of the values of sport, words like excellence, respect and teamwork usually come to mind. Seldom does the word [Compassion](#) come up in the context of sport.

When Pope Francis inspired us to “[challenge ourselves in the game of life, as we do in the game of sport](#)”, Sport at the Service of Humanity committed to “[changing the narrative in sport](#)” - to focus not only on winning in sport, but more importantly, winning in life.

It was this belief that living a good life through sport was more important than the outcome of the game that inspired Sport for Humanity’s Declaration of its Six Principles: Compassion, Love, Respect, Enlightenment, Balance and Joy.

In this issue, we explore [Compassion and Sport, Compassion in Action](#).

## COMPASSIONATE CITY

Since 2016, the City of Leeds in the UK, has been recognising and celebrating the positive work that individuals, community groups and organisations do every day to make their local communities a great place to live, work and play through the Leeds Compassionate City Awards.

One of the awards given out annually is the Compassionate City Sports Project Award recognising the power of sport, especially at the grassroots level, to bring communities together. A nominee for this year’s [Compassionate City Sports Project Award](#) is [The Bambisanani Partnership](#).



## THE BAMBISANANI PARTNERSHIP: LIVING LIKE THEY ARE PLAYING

Bambisanani is a Zulu concept that means 'working hand in hand' or 'working together'.

The Bambisanani Partnership is a UK based charity that operates in one of the most challenging areas of South Africa using the power of sport to change lives.

Compassion is at the heart of everything they do – linked to Ubuntu: 'a person is a person through other people' or 'I am, because you are'.

*"Our take on compassion is very much about empathy, love and humanity. We see compassion as a two-way reciprocal process. Our projects in South Africa are driven by local needs and we engage the local community at every stage. Our work is about capacity building and empowerment in these communities. To see our young people engaging in the joy of sport together is surely compassion personified – we need each other to participate in sport, as we need each other to participate in life. Without true compassion our partnership simply could not work. We can only be human together."*

- David Geldart, Founder, The Bambisanani Partnership

The Bambisanani Partnership resulted from teacher David Geldart's visit to South Africa in 2006 to develop an initiative linking UK and South African schools through physical education and sport. While there, David visited Mnyakanya High school situated in rural KwaZulu-Natal, with a view to developing a school partnership with his own school, St. Mary's High School in Leeds.

What David found during his visit was a school that served one of the most deprived communities in South Africa with alarming levels of poverty, HIV/Aids, unemployment and adult illiteracy. But he also found children who had a real love of sport and who were prepared to walk two hours to school each day, and back, because they wanted an education. He also met teachers that were prepared to go the extra mile for their learners every day in the most difficult and challenging of circumstances. David described Mnyakanya as 'an oasis of hope in a desert of deprivation and despair'.



David recalls his meeting with the school's leaders, the local Zulu Chief and elders:

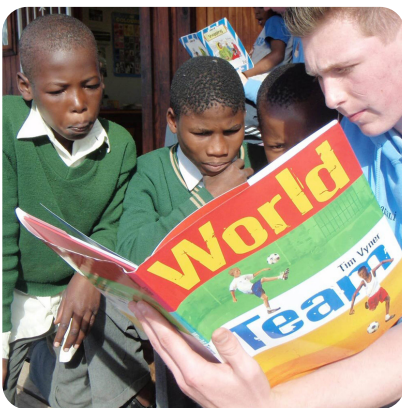
*"We talked about possible collaborations between our two schools using the power of sport as a catalyst to promote education, health, global citizenship and leadership. It was evident that both schools, albeit from very different parts of the world, had much to learn from such a partnership and significantly much to learn from each other. Thus, the Bambisanani Partnership was born."*



A wide range of innovative developments followed that embedded the partnership in the lives of both schools.

One example is the Bambisanani Leadership Programme which has trained young sports leaders in both countries then brought them together in South Africa to jointly plan, deliver and evaluate community Sports Festivals, Reading Festivals and Numeracy Festivals for over 100 primary school children every year. Significantly, gaining the Bambisanani Leadership Award is seen a starting point not an end point. Young Leaders from this programme have gone to use their leadership skills in the most remarkable ways.

Fifteen years on, and now a multi-award-winning charity, the pioneering partnership has gained international acclaim for its work. Despite many challenges, this project has not only been sustained but has grown and expanded to involve many other schools and universities.



*"We have worked together...people of different colours, countries, religions and cultures...we have proved it can be done"*  
- South African student

*"My world has just got bigger; I realise that it is my duty to be a global citizen"* - UK student

*"I have learned to help other people and I have learned that respect is everything. Through sport we have worked hand in hand- we have different colour skin and it does not matter. I am a leader now and I want to help my community"* – South African student



*“South Africa has a history of people from abroad attempting to ‘serve’ the local community. Many of these missions’ flounder because they are designed to engender a feeling of goodwill more for the giver than the recipient. Bambisanani – working hand in hand – works because there is neither giver nor receiver. Two groups from different ends of the planet, each borrowing from the culture of the other forge relationships through the medium of sport, changing perspectives of both from the experience.”*

*- Logan Govender, South African businessman and entrepreneur*

To learn more about the Bambisanani Partnership and their work, visit <https://www.bambisananipartnership.org>



## THE COMPASSION PRINCIPLE

Sport at the Service of Humanity believes that compassion has a vital role to play in sport. When we embrace this principle in the way that we live and play, our actions can have a positive, lasting impact on those around us.

The Bambisanani Partnership has demonstrated the natural relationship between sport and compassion through the incredible work they are doing and the many lives that have been enriched by their programs.

If the past year and a half has taught us anything, it is that the world can use more compassion.

**Join the conversation. Share your story.**



**SPORT** at the SERVICE  
OF **HUMANITY**