



THROUGH OUR FOOTBALL, THE WORLD TURNS ORANGE



FOOTBALL BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

SEASON
2024/'25

FOOTBALL BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

TOGETHER

Our football landscape is known as the largest social network in the Netherlands, with more than 2,800 clubs, 1.2 million members, and 10 million fans.

Football brings together people from all kinds of backgrounds, social classes, and personalities on the pitch, along the touchline, and in the clubhouse. There are few places in society where so many different kinds of people connect as they do around a football field.

Through football, a space is created where a truck driver and a surgeon stand side by side and play together on the same team.

Where young people interact with children outside their familiar bubble and learn to treat one another with respect.

In football, you don't have to agree with each other or experience the world in the same way. Once the ball starts rolling everyone knows what time it is.

Football brings people together.



We use our network to create positive social impact. The pillars:

HEALTHY FOUNDATION

Together, we get moving, for a physically and mentally strong start.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Participation is for everyone. Together we work hard for clubs where everyone feels at home, regardless of their background or preferences.

GREEN CLUBS

Football clubs are meeting places for the community. Together we make clubs greener and future-proof.



FOOTBALL FOR THE GOALS

The KNVB is a member of Football for the Goals, an initiative of the United Nations. Participants raise awareness of the SDGs and demonstrate that football can take action on social issues.





Sometimes you only realize how special something is when you take a step back from it. This year, it stood out to me once again: at a time when people sometimes seem to be drifting further apart, there is still one place where differences disappear, where the Netherlands truly comes together. That place is football. Everywhere you see the same sense of connection and the same joy. I notice it along the touchline, at the clubs I visit, and at the club where I play myself. Football is more than a sport. It is an anchor in a rapidly changing society.

Our football is bigger and more versatile than many people realize. We have more than ten million football fans. Behind every club stands a proud community, and behind every child who starts playing football stands someone who believes in the power of our sport. I see this reflected at the European Championship in Switzerland with our women's team and in Eredivisie matches, which are more popular than ever.

At a time when politics sometimes focusses on differences between people, football demonstrates the opposite. On the pitch, everyone is equal. That is why I am proud that, as the KNVB, we are working toward a more cohesive Netherlands. Because football connects the Netherlands. Through programs for mental health, smoke-free sports environments, sustainable clubs, equal opportunities for girls and women, and initiatives such as Niemand Buitenspel, which has already helped 11,000 children remain members of their club, we are making a difference. We also commit ourselves to people with disabilities, so that they too can play football without limits. The reversal of the VAT increase on sport underscores that politics also recognizes the social value of sport.



"FOOTBALL IS MORE THAN A SPORT. IT IS AN ANCHOR IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING SOCIETY."

This societal strength is also recognized far beyond our borders. The way football brings people together does not stop at the Dutch touchlines; it resonates internationally as well. This became clear once again during the UEFA Congress in Belgrade, where I was elected to the Executive Committee. It is a great honor, and above all a responsibility, to represent not only the sporting side of Dutch football, but also its social dimension.

Shaping developments in this field requires leadership at both national and international levels, and we are committed to demonstrating that the Netherlands aims to play a guiding role. The power to connect, to create opportunities, and to strengthen communities is something we bring with us onto the international stage, because football is more than a sport; it is a bridge between people from different backgrounds.

We do not carry this responsibility only internationally, but above all here in the Netherlands. We do this for young people and veterans, for amateur football and professional football, for futsal, for inclusive football, for women and for men. Without grassroots sport, there is no elite sport. Everything is interconnected.

As the KNVB, we work together every day to strengthen football in its entirety to ensure that our sport in the Netherlands remains a source of enjoyment, connection, and hope. Because ultimately, that is the greatest social value we as the football community can offer.

01 FOREWORD



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SOCIAL PARTNERS



MARIANNE VAN LEEUVEN

“WHETHER IT IS ABOUT A HEALTHIER NETHERLANDS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, OR INCREASING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, FOOTBALL SHOWS THAT REAL CHANGE BEGINS WHEN PEOPLE MEET EACH OTHER.”



What moved me again this season is how deeply football is rooted in our society. With 10 million football fans, more than 2.1 million people in front of the television every weekend, and one in three Dutch people visiting a stadium, football is the largest social network in the Netherlands. Wherever I go, at an Eredivisie match, at a club in the Eerste Divisie, or during a community activity, I feel the same energy everywhere: football brings people together. And our clubs do not do this only on the pitch. With 330 social programs and an investment of €9.9 million, professional football has once again been a driving force for health, mental resilience, and social connection. That makes me incredibly proud.

It was also the season in which we saw even more clearly how players, coaches, and volunteers make a real difference. From Walking Football to young people finding their own path through Community Champions, from programs focused on mental health to personal encounters during the KNVB iftar, everywhere you can feel the strength of football.

At the Captains Dinner in the Rijksmuseum, we saw how the players of the Eurojackpot Women's Eredivisie have grown into role models for new generations. Spark the Game is not just a slogan; it is exactly what these players do, they help girls feel that their dreams are within reach.

The KNVB has both the responsibility and the ambition to make the connecting power of football visible. We do this by supporting clubs, developing new ideas, and working with partners who believe in what football means for society. Whether it is about a healthier Netherlands, equal opportunities, or strengthening mutual understanding, football shows that real change begins when people meet each other.

From surgeon to truck driver, from Oranje player to young supporter: it is precisely these encounters that make our football so special and so important. I feel and see this every day. That is why I give the 2024/2025 season, both on and off the pitch, a perfect nine.

MARIANNE VAN LEEUVEN
VICEPRESIDENT PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL KNVB



02 FACTS & FIGURES



FIGURES THAT SHOW WHAT FOOTBALL MEANS

The value of football is hard to capture in numbers. It lies in moments, encounters, and stories that can't always be counted, but that certainly mean a great deal. However, the data in this chapter show what we, together with our partners and thanks to the analyses of KNVB Expertise and the Data Intelligence team, can make visible. The impact report for the 2024/25 season of the Eredivisie and Keuken Kampioen Divisie, prepared in collaboration with Utrecht University, makes clear how significant the societal power of professional football is. From a healthier Netherlands to greater social connection, from growing football enjoyment to new opportunities for young people: the figures make this impact tangible and help us focus even more on building a healthy foundation, equal opportunities, and a sustainable Netherlands. Because investing in football is investing in a stronger and more connected society.

10
MILLION
FOOTBALL FANS



IMPACT FIGURES



220.000

PARTICIPANTS SCHOOL FOOTBALL



225.000

EURO RAISED BY THE DUTCH TEAM FOR HET VERGETEN KIND

WORLD COACHES COURSES IN

18 COUNTRIES AND 6 CONTINENTS

1400

PARTICIPANTS KNVB SCHOOL FOOTBALL SPECIAL EDUCATION

700

VOLUNTEERS FOLLOWED THE CPR COURSES

UNITY EURO CUP QUALIFICATIONS BRING PLAYERS FROM

33

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES TOGETHER

4189

GREEN CLUBS

12.902.671

KG CO2 SAVINGS THROUGH THE GREEN CLUB

650

FINANCIAL CONTACTS AT CLUBS

11.000

CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES WITH LIMITED RESOURCES WERE HELPED TO PLAY FOOTBALL

800

PARTICIPATED IN DISCRIMINATIE = KANSLOOS

PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL

1 / 3

PEOPLE IN THE NETHERLANDS VISIT FOOTBALL STADIUMS

2.1

MILLION TV-VIEWERS PER MONTH

3.7

MILLION PEOPLE STRENGTHEN THEIR SOCIAL NETWORK THROUGH FOOTBALL

49%

WOULD LIKE TO SEE LOCAL AND NATIONAL AUTHORITIES WORKING MORE INTENSIVELY WITH PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL AND THEIR FOUNDATIONS TO IMPROVE SOCIAL COHESION

330

SOCIAL PROGRAMMES WITH **186.406** UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS

9.9

MILLION INVESTED IN SOCIAL INITIATIVES

110.000

PARTICIPANTS IN THE ORANJE MARCH

FOOTBALL CONTRIBUTES TO ENJOYMENT, HAPPINESS AND MENTAL WELL-BEING FOR

4.1

MILLION PEOPLE

AMATEUR FOOTBALL

1.2

MILLION KNVB MEMBERS

400.000

VOLUNTEERS

778.104 MATCHES

EQUALS **5.450.180** GOALS

2.800

AMATEUR CLUBS

68.000

TEAMS



HIGHLIGHTS

SEASON 2024/'25

THROUGH OUR FOOTBALL, THE WORLD TURNS ORANGE



AUGUST

FIRST WORLDCOACHES COURSE IN THE NETHERLANDS

OCTOBER

FIRST-EVER POWERCHAIR FOOTBALL COMPETITION



DECEMBER

500 CLUBS COMMIT TO 'DISCRIMINATIE = KANSLOOS'

FEBRUARY

THE NETHERLANDS WINS THE BID TO HOST THE UNITY EURO CUP, THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP FOR REFUGEES.



JUNE

NATIONAL FOOTBALL WEEKEND: FC DE BILT WINS CANTEEN OF THE YEAR

2025

2024

SEPTEMBER

LAUNCH OF MODULAR, DEMOUNTABLE AND SUSTAINABLE WOODEN CLUBHOUSE UNITS

NOVEMBER

REFUGEE REFEREE WINS MVP AWARD 2024



JANUARY

15 YEARS OF WORLDCOACHES

MARCH

CAPTAINS DINNER OF THE AZERION WOMEN'S EREDIVISIE AT THE RIJKSMUSEUM



MAY

DUTCH MEN'S NATIONAL TEAM RAISES 225,000 EUROS FOR CHARITY 'HET VERGETEN KIND'

JULY

START OF 'THE INVISIBLE INJURY': KICKING OFF THE CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL WELL-BEING



03 WHAT WE DO FOR OUR FOOTBALL



“AMATEUR FOOTBALL IS MORE THAN A SPORT:
IT STANDS FOR ENJOYMENT, HEALTH,
CONNECTION, AND DEVELOPMENT.
IT IS A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN LEARN,
ADULTS UNWIND, AND COMMUNITIES GROW.”



What a season it has been! A year in which our amateur football once again showed why it is the largest sport in the Netherlands, with nearly one million playing members who take to the field with joy every week. Across the country, we saw full pitches, enthusiastic teams, and all those volunteers whose tireless dedication makes it all possible.

This season, we played no fewer than 778,104 matches, resulting in 5,450,180 goals. Each team has its own story, and every goal delivers a unique moment of celebration. It is exactly these stories that make amateur football so special. Together we make football what it is: a celebration we get to experience again every single week.

You don't just feel the magic of our amateur football on the pitch, but also in the clubhouse. It is the place in the Netherlands where people come together. Matches are discussed afterwards, friendships are formed, and successes are celebrated there. This year, FC De Bilt took the honors: its clubhouse was voted the most beautiful in the country by more than 44,000 voters, and anyone who steps inside immediately understands why. The warm interior, the oak bar, the familiar bartender and volunteer John, who makes the best sandwiches, it all comes together to create a place where you instantly feel at home. Football clubhouses show how important clubs are as meeting places for young and old alike. Football brings people together.

In addition, I am proud of everything the clubs have achieved this season. From School Football for special education to Niemand Buitenspel for families who can use extra support, and from football that is safe for the heart to clubs contributing to the Green Club initiative. All of this came together during the National Football Weekend, with more than 700 activities across the country.

Amateur football is more than sport: it stands for enjoyment, health, connection, and development. It is a place where children learn, adults unwind, and communities grow. Thanks to the dedication of the many thousands of volunteers, we are able to continue celebrating this. I am deeply grateful to them for that. I look forward with great enthusiasm to what we will achieve together again next season.

JAN DIRK VAN DER ZEE
VICEPRESIDENT AMATEUR FOOTBALL, KNVB

JAN DIRK VAN DER ZEE





AN ODE TO AMATEUR FOOTBALL

A few lines, a ball and family cheering from the sidelines. This is the game. The game as it was once intended. The word amateur comes from the Latin verb 'amare', meaning to love. And that is what we all are in the weekend: lovers of the game. On Monday you go back to the office, school or the construction site. On Saturday and Sunday, no one knows or cares about that. There are no stars here. And that is exactly the point. Because at the club, we are all equal.

This is how we celebrate football week in and week out. And during the National Football Weekend, even more so. The theme this year was Football Connects. More than 500 clubs across the country showed how beautiful and important amateur football is in the Netherlands. Tireless volunteers organised nearly 700 activities, from reunions to playing football non-stop for 24 hours. And in the end, everything comes together in the clubhouse. The beating heart of our club. One day a week, it is the centre of the world. For us, at least. The pictures of the trophies, all reminders of stories that started here. Or ended here. Or were made up here. Or all of that at once.

That is why, together with the Dutch Lottery, we went looking for the Football Clubhouse of the Netherlands. The pride in the clubhouse was palpable during the election. More than 44,000 people voted for the clubhouses of more than 1,800 football clubs. In the end, three clubs remained. Former internationals Frank and Ronald de Boer had the honour of choosing a winner from this top three. In the television programme De Oranjezomer, the clubhouse of FC De Bilt was ultimately named the Football Clubhouse of the Netherlands. Ronald de Boer explained why: "Behind the bar, the same familiar bartender has been standing there for years, and volunteer John makes the tastiest sandwiches every Saturday. It is clearly more than a place to have a drink after the match; it is the beating heart of the club and an important meeting place for young and old. What was once a cold, empty space has been transformed by volunteers into a cosy pub where you always want to stay a little longer."



3.1 HEALTHY FOUNDATION



3.1.1 MENTAL HEALTH

MAKING THE “INVISIBLE INJURY” DISCUSSABLE

THE INVISIBLE INJURY

In an average football team, two young people are fighting a tough match every single day. Not on the pitch, but in their minds. Saying what you feel is not always easy. It can be very lonely. Yet a bit of support can make a world of difference. That is why the KNVB and Zilveren Kruis are working together to break the taboo surrounding mental health. So that this invisible injury becomes visible, and every player feels encouraged to speak up about their struggles.

Jan Dirk van der Zee: “More and more young people are experiencing mental pressure, and we see this in football too. In professional football, more players are speaking out about stress and pressure, but in amateur football it is often still a taboo. By talking about it, we break the taboo. The pressure on young people is increasing due to school, work and social media, but amateur football can actually be part of the solution.”

The Play Mental Foundation, Erasmus MC and MIND Us strengthen the initiative with their knowledge and experience.



FUTSAL HIGHLIGHTS MENTAL HEALTH

Gianni Zuiverloon and Edson Braafheid both struggled with this invisible injury during their football careers. Their mission now is to help the next generation feel comfortable speaking up. They founded the Play Mental Foundation, believing everyone deserves the chance and support to overcome mental obstacles and become the best version of themselves.

Each year, during the Final Four of the KNVB Futsal Cup a social theme is focused on. This year, it was mental health. We collaborated with the Play Mental Foundation. The women of finalist FC Marlène took part in a mental health workshop. Public figures such as Soufiane Touzani, Broederliefde, Ryan Babel and Jeremain Lens drew extra attention to the event in Topsportcentrum Rotterdam. At the end, Gianni Zuiverloon was presented with a 10,000 euro cheque for his foundation.

3.1.2 NATIONAL TEAMS IN ACTION

ORANJE SUPPORTS HET VERGETEN KIND

The Dutch men's national team is strongly committed to children who are ill or facing difficulties in life. During the past season, several worn and signed shirts from six EURO matches and eight Nations League fixtures were auctioned for Stichting Het Vergeten Kind. With the net proceeds of nearly 225,000 euros, the foundation can offer hundreds of children holidays, day trips and other events that provide the love and attention they miss at home.

There is also room for personal encounters through organisations such as Make-A-Wish and FC Robinstijn. Children enjoy the day of their lives with a surprise visit to Oranje training. For a moment, they feel like international players: a ride in the Oranje bus, a tour of the team hotel and, as the highlight, access to the closed training session. Virgil van Dijk ensures, like a true captain, that all players sign their shirts afterwards.



STICHTING DENZEL DUMFRIES VISITS ORANJE

"Everyone has their own path, their own talents and qualities. Triggering those, that is the challenge." With that philosophy, Denzel Dumfries founded Dumfries Unlimited Care and Education (DUCE) together with his mother, sisters and brother. The goal is to strengthen the resilience of Rotterdam youth and help them find their own path. Sport plays a major role: "Through sport, youngsters encounter each other, discipline and rules. You must work together. All of that comes back in daily life, which is why it is an essential part of the programme."

Although Dumfries's football schedule limits his availability, he occasionally gets to do something special. This season, several youngsters were surprised with a visit to Oranje training. A powerful example of how football at the highest level remains connected to society.

ORANJE YOUTH BRINGS JOY TO CHILDREN AT THE PRINSES MAXIMA CENTER

The national youth teams had an exceptionally strong season in 2024/2025 and captured the public spotlight. Four out of five teams qualified for their European Championships. Under 17 women and Under 19 men even made history by winning the European title. The Under 17 women also earned a ticket to the World Cup in Morocco. Jong Oranje reached the top four.

These Oranje talents already serve as role models at a young age, also beyond the pitch. Five players from Jong Oranje and coach Michael Reiziger visited children at the Prinses Maxima Center in Utrecht. Reiziger: "Through football activities, we tried to bring a smile to their faces and take away the worries of the children and their parents for a moment. It worked. Their energy and enthusiasm made a deep impression on us."



ORANJE FOR PINK

The Dutch women's national team continues its involvement with Pink Ribbon. Around the home match against Indonesia, the players again raised awareness for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Oranje entered the pitch wearing a Pink Ribbon on their chest. The message about recognizing symptoms yourself was shared both online and in the stadium under the slogan "Oranje for Pink".

The initiative was launched two years ago by Kim Blewanus, physiotherapist with Oranje, and her sister Eva, physiotherapist at Ajax. Both were affected by the disease, just like one in seven women in the Netherlands. Daniëlle van de Donk: "It affects our team too. Not only our physiotherapist Kim, but also former international Vanity Lewerissa has faced this illness. Checking your breasts is important to detect breast cancer early and increase your chances of recovery. We feel it is important to use our platform to share this message with our female fans."

After the match, Oranje made several worn shirts available for auction in support of Pink Ribbon.



3.1.3 THE HEALTHY SPORTS ENVIRONMENT

HEART-SAFE FOOTBALL

A player suffering a cardiac arrest unfortunately happens too often. According to the Hartstichting, three to four people per week die during or shortly after exercising, not counting spectators. Quick resuscitation and the use of an AED save lives. That is why we work with the Hartstichting and the Dutch Resuscitation Council to make as many clubs heart-safe as possible.

It takes more than installing an AED. While 89 percent of clubs now have one, only 55 percent are always accessible. That number needs to rise.

The more people trained in AED use and CPR, the safer a club becomes. With our partners, we offer a tailored CPR and AED course. Seven hundred volunteers have completed the training. They can now save lives not only at the club but also at home, in the neighbourhood or at work.



Friends Bas van Loon and Nikki Baggerman were struck by cardiac arrest in two unrelated matches at the same club. Both lived active, healthy lives and were fully embedded in football. The shock was enormous. Thanks to fast action from people on the sidelines, both survived.

Their recovery showed how heavy the aftermath is: fear, uncertainty and a body that suddenly feels unfamiliar. But it also strengthened their friendship. By sharing their story, including in their book Voetbalhart, they highlight how essential trained volunteers and accessible AEDs are at sports venues.

700

TRAINED VOLUNTEERS

89%

OF THE CLUBS HAVE AN AED

55%

OF THEM IS ALWAYS ACCESSIBLE

SUN SCREEN = WINNING

Weekend. The sun is shining. A perfect day to play or watch football. But hidden danger lurks: excessive sun exposure is the biggest cause of skin cancer. In the rush of match day, people often forget.

Together with our partner La Roche-Posay, we launched Smeren = Winnen, highlighting the importance of sun protection. We encourage awareness of three principles: create more shade at clubs, wear protective clothing and make sunscreen part of the sports routine. This season we installed sunscreen dispensers at one hundred amateur clubs, including free sunscreen.

The campaign resonated: 71 percent of clubs say they have become more aware of the importance of sun protection.

100

AMATEUR CLUBS HAVE BEEN PROVIDED WITH SUNSCREEN DISPENSERS FOR THE ENTIRE SEASON, INCLUDING FREE SUNSCREEN.

71%

OF CLUBS SAY THEY HAVE BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SUN PROTECTION.

#11: INNOVATING FOR HEALTH AND FOOTBALL JOY

The Football Innovation Hub #11 is the place where innovators meet. It scouts, tests and scales innovations. The network includes more than fifty partners.

This season, #11 accelerated several innovations that contribute to participation, more activity and more joy in football. Examples include:

Footbar

A performance tracker for amateur players. It measures distance, sprint speed and ball touches. Tests show increased enjoyment, motivation and effort. More than 5,000 players now use it.

FC Urban

A platform for flexible football. Together we created a concept allowing amateur clubs to offer flexible football sessions. FC Urban is now available at eight clubs and will expand to more than twenty in 2025/2026.

Refsix

A smartwatch app for referees to handle administration digitally and monitor physical performance via GPS and heart rate. More than 12,000 matches have been officiated with the app.



SMOKE-FREE IS WELCOMING

All football clubs smoke-free by 2025. That is the goal we set together with NOC*NSF and the Rookvrije Generatie. Most Dutch citizens agree strongly: sports environments, particularly where many children are present, should be smoke-free. JOGG-Teamfit coaches guide clubs through the process and provide tailored advice. To help clubs take the final step, we participate in the campaign Smoke-free is Welcoming.



3.1.4 YOUNG AND OLD: EVERYONE PLAYS FOOTBALL

SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Everyone remembers it: school football. Last year, 221,400 children participated, from both mainstream and adapted forms of education.

The aim of School Football is to introduce boys and girls to football alongside their classmates. It also encourages children to embrace sport as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The Jeugdfonds Sport & Cultuur is a partner of School Football. If children want to continue playing at a club after the tournament, parents who cannot afford the fees can apply for support.

In addition to traditional School Football, the KNVB and Albert Heijn developed Code Blauw this year: an audio programme for primary schools, teaching pupils about nutrition, exercise and sportsmanship.

220.000

PARTICIPANTS IN KNVB SCHOOL FOOTBALL

1400

PARTICIPANTS IN SCHOOL FOOTBALL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION



WALKING FOOTBALL: MAKING YOUR ORANJE DEBUT AT 78

One of the best things about football is that you can play it your whole life. As a child you chase the ball in a big group; later in life, even if your body creaks and aches, you can play Walking Football with fellow seniors. Many older adults have found their way back to the pitch through Walking Football. It keeps them physically fit and, equally important, socially connected at an age when loneliness is unfortunately common.

Together with the KPN Mooiste Contactfonds and the Ouderenfonds, the KNVB is working to grow Walking Football across the country.

Walking Football has special rules: no running, no sliding tackles, and the ball must not rise above hip height. These rules keep the game enjoyable and prevent injuries. It has become a great success: more than five hundred clubs now offer it, supporting 6,500 players aged sixty and above. There is even a Dutch national Walking Football team.

To increase visibility, we decided together with the KPN Mooiste Contactfonds to participate for the first time in the World Cup in Spain. From dozens of interested players, coaches Hans van Breukelen and Peter Heerschop, together with captain Kees Kist, selected a mixed team of twelve experienced 70-plus Walking Footballers. Van Breukelen enjoyed every moment: "This is a great group," he joked, referencing the famous EURO 1988 squad. "Winning a World Cup is still missing from my list of achievements. That would be wonderful, but if other countries join with the same mindset as we do, it will be an amazing tournament regardless."

6500

WALKING FOOTBALLERS

500

CLUBS



3.1.5 INCLUSIVE FOOTBALL

NORMAL WHERE POSSIBLE, SPECIAL WHERE NEEDED

ZWALUWEN YOUTH ACTION

Under the patronage of Princess Beatrix, the 65th Zwaluwen Youth Action began. Until the autumn holidays, more than 500,000 young players competed in the Zwaluwen Cup tournament. For each participant, their club donates one euro. Many young players may not realise what they are playing for, but their matches help children for whom football is not so easy.

In total, the action raises around 500,000 euros for the Prinses Beatrix Spierfonds, Spieren voor Spieren and for children with disabilities needing extra support. The proceeds also fund projects within Inclusive Football and grants for clubs working on equal opportunities.



PARA FOOTBALL WEEKEND

Everyone deserves the chance to grow in football. That is why we organised the Oranje Para Football Weekend from 23 to 25 May at the KNVB Campus. Three days dedicated to equal opportunities, encounters and celebrating talent among athletes with disabilities. Players from international youth, women's and development teams inspired one another through matches in amputee, blind and CP football. Children were invited to train with the internationals and left dreaming of one day playing for Oranje.



COACHES ON TOUR: YOU WON'T GET THIS SMILE OFF MY FACE

During 'Coaches on Tour', footballers with disabilities spend an afternoon coached by trainers from professional football. It began 31 years ago at BVV Barendrecht and now spans six host clubs across the country. Players wear the kit of the club their visiting coach represents or the Oranje shirt. Professional referees oversee the matches. This year, coaches from the Azerion Women's Eredivisie participated for the first time.

The result? It hardly mattered. This encounter between disability football and professional football was above all about joy. Two worlds meeting, united by the same love for the game.



3.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES



Cees
NIEMAND
BUITENSPEL



Souad
ONS VOETBAL IS
VAN IEDEREEN
& CLASS OF '25



Mido
REFUGEE
REFEREE

3.2.1 OUR FOOTBALL BELONGS TO EVERYONE

'DISCRIMINATIE = KANSLOOS'

Differences in origin, skin colour, religion, beliefs and so on fade away once the ball starts rolling. However, we are not blind to the risk of problematic behaviour creeping in on the pitches. Discrimination harms people and everything football stands for. That is why we are fully committed to combating it. Since 2020, we have been working closely with the government in the programme Our Football Belongs to Everyone (OVIVI). Measures in the areas of prevention, detection, sanctions and cooperation reinforce one another.

"Discriminatie = Kansloos", we do not accept it here" is the standard we have set and that we promote through the campaign. Already eight hundred clubs express this standard visibly with signs, tiles and flags at their grounds. The campaign has also attracted attention outside football. The local authorities of Arnhem, Apeldoorn and Roermond, for example, have adopted 'Discriminatie = Kansloos' as well.

Now that the standard is clear, it is also easier to see when action is needed. There is still room for improvement. Research shows that only 42 percent of respondents say they intervene when they witness an incident involving discrimination. Yet bystanders can have a major influence on both the perpetrator and the victim, especially when they use the power of the majority. We have communicated this message to football fans through various channels: television, online platforms, digital and outdoor advertising near stadiums, and email.

Clubs in both professional and amateur football can also take part in a special OVIVI training. The aim is to increase knowledge among board members, staff and youth players, and to raise awareness of the impact they can have. More than four hundred clubs have taken part in recent years. Together with NOC*NSF, the training is now being offered across sports under the name "Our Club Belongs to Everyone". Last season, local sessions were organised in cities including Amsterdam, Uithoorn, Wassenaar, Zwolle, Eindhoven, Deventer and Vught. In addition, we are looking at how the training can be integrated into leadership programmes, as is already the case for stewards.

Besides prevention, sanctions remain crucial when rules are broken. And to be able to sanction, evidence is needed. That is why a pilot is underway with new technology to better identify perpetrators of discriminatory chants. The disciplinary approach has also been strengthened, with prosecutors specialising in the fight against discrimination.



RECRUITING WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Within professional football organisations, we are also tackling discrimination and racism. Prejudices can be a blind spot in the search for new employees. For all professional football organisations, we therefore organised a joint OVIVI session focused on recruitment and selection without bias, supported by the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights and KNVB Expertise.

Participants learned, for example, about the effect of stereotyping and critically assessed their own communication. They also worked on making job advertisements more inclusive.



THE HAGUE STANDARD

We also support an initiative in The Hague known as the Hague Standard (De Haagse Norm). Together with "Werken aan Sportstad Den Haag" and the municipality of The Hague, we want to make football in the city safer, more accessible and more enjoyable. Eleven local clubs are helping us by testing which agreements and interventions really work and how clubs can strengthen one another. In this way, a bottom-up movement is emerging, driven by club officials, sports professionals and representatives from the The Hague football community. The pillars of the Hague Standard are understanding, connection, development and safety. These values give players, coaches, referees, board members and supporters a framework to build a sporting culture in which everyone feels welcome.

800

PARTICIPATING CLUBS
DISCRIMINATIE = KANSLOOS

400

PARTICIPANTS IN THE OVIVI
TRAINING PROGRAMME

MIJNALS COMMITTEE

At the start of Our Football Belongs to Everyone in 2020, we wanted to create a think tank to bring together knowledge on combating discrimination. A group of experts who could provide both requested and unsolicited advice. This think tank, chaired by Humberto Tan, was named Commissie Mijnals, after Humphrey Mijnals, the first Dutch international of Surinamese origin. The members of this independent committee meet twice a year with the KNVB board to discuss the approach to racism and discrimination. For five years now, they have helped ensure that everyone continues to feel welcome on Dutch football pitches.

3.2.2 EQUAL FOOTBALL FOR MEN AND WOMEN

COACHING GIRLS

The number of girls aged 13 to 18 playing football in the Netherlands is still growing. At the same time, drop-out rates in this age group are consistently higher for girls than for boys. Contributing factors include social norms, stereotypes and coaching that is not tailored to girls. That is why we have joined forces with Nike to further improve the training of coaches of girls' and mixed teams.

We do this through the Coaching Girls module, a learning module specifically designed for coaches of junior girls' and mixed teams. From puberty onwards, the differences between boys and girls gradually become bigger. This requires specific knowledge and skills from coaches. The module offers guidance and consists of eleven themes relevant to girls in football. Topics include giving feedback, dealing with conflict, setting goals and how coaches can best address menstruation. Clubs also receive practical tips on how to arrange facilities for girls, such as changing rooms, club kit and other provisions.

Ambassador Esmee Brugts fully supports Coaching Girls and stresses its importance: "In my youth I was supported by coaches who not only paid attention to what I did on the pitch, but also to what was going on outside football. Good coaching goes beyond what happens on the field; it is about creating an environment in which young girls feel safe and confident. That is why this new Coaching Girls module is so important. It gives coaches the tools to really make an impact and to help more girls, just like I once did, keep enjoying football and pursue their dreams."



EUROJACKPOT WOMEN'S EREDIVISIE: SPARK THE GAME

Equal opportunities for everyone should be the most natural thing in the world. But there is still work to be done. Our goal: by 2040, today's generation of girls will be equal players in all roles, both on and off the pitch.

To put equal opportunities firmly on the agenda, we again organised the Captains Dinner at the Rijksmuseum during the week of International Women's Day, together with ING.

In the Gallery of Honour, all club captains from the league came together with a wide group of captains from outside football. This second edition emphasised the importance of social support: support from the media, the corporate sector, men's football and female role models. During the match weekend, all captains walked onto the pitch with a special pennant bearing the message "Spark the Game", calling on others to contribute to positive change.

ATHLETE EDUCATION: PREPARING TO BE A ROLE MODEL

Players who break through in the Eurojackpot Women's Eredivisie become role models. Suddenly they are giving autographs, posing for selfies and speaking to ESPN microphones. What does that mean, and how do you handle it? Several players were invited to Nike headquarters for the Athlete Education programme. Expert Rocky Hehakaija gave them tools on how to support others and use their voice to make an impact.



FIRST GIRLS' HUBS OPENED IN AMSTERDAM

Together with the municipality of Amsterdam, we have shown that football is more than a pastime. At ASV De Dijk, OSV, Atlético Club Amsterdam and Zuidoost United, four girls' hubs have opened. For the first time, long-term investment is being made in every aspect of development: from local recruitment to training female coaches. The opening at ASV De Dijk, including the major "Girls Above the IJ Tournament", immediately revealed the potential of this approach: a full club and hundreds of girls playing football. The four clubs together form the foundation of a new network that aims to structurally offer girls more space, visibility and opportunities to grow in football.

RESEARCH INTO KNEE LIGAMENT INJURIES

Girls and women suffer anterior cruciate ligament injuries more often than boys and men in the same sport. Why this is the case has long been overlooked in medical research. Fortunately, progress is now being made, supported by our Football Medical Centre. The University Medical Centre Groningen (UMCG) is investigating a possible connection between stress factors in daily life and the occurrence of ACL injuries among girls and women.

DAPHNE TACKLES INEQUALITY BETWEEN TEAMS THROUGH COACHING GIRLS

Daphne is from Veenendaal, mother of six and coordinator for the upper youth categories. But she has also become a football innovator. "Honestly?" she says. "I had nothing with football, except when the Dutch national team played. I loved that feeling of everyone coming together. But other than that? No, not really."

That changed when her youngest son wanted to play football and she was confronted with the shortage of volunteers at the club. "If I think something can be done differently, I do it myself," Daphne explains. Within a few months, she became coordinator for the upper age groups at GVVV, for both boys' and girls' teams from Under 13 to Under 23.

And it was with the girls that she discovered something that had been simmering for years: inequality that almost no one intends, but that is felt nonetheless. That is why she introduced the Coaching Girls module.

"It should really be mandatory"

Daphne is clear: "If you coach a girls' team, it should almost be mandatory to follow that module. Because girls sometimes need a different approach." That involves listening, coaching differently and also very practical matters. At GVVV, the girls still play in white shorts. Daphne: "We are currently halfway through a process to change the kit. I see it as a success story, and so do the girls. I hope they will be playing in blue shorts by the end of the season."

Checking in is not a hassle

What excites her most? "The mental part. Just checking in: how are you doing? Coaches sometimes think that is a hassle. But it is not. People want to be seen and heard."

For Daphne, Coaching Girls is not just a course but a source of inspiration. Through her volunteer work at the club, she even decided to start in a new direction: "In January I will begin a full-time social work programme. Through football I realised how much talent young people have, especially when you guide them properly. That is what I want to dedicate my work to."



3.2.3 NIEMAND BUITENSPEL THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN BACK ON THE PITCH

One in eleven children grows up in poverty. For them, playing football at a club is not as obvious as it is for their peers. Membership fees, football boots or sports clothing may simply be too expensive, leaving these children unintentionally sidelined.

We do not let that happen. Everyone deserves the chance to play football and form friendships on the pitch.

Through Niemand Buitenspel, ING and the KNVB, together with the Jeugdfonds Sport & Cultuur, help parents ensure their children can play football, even when there is temporarily no financial room. Various local schemes can provide support, but they are not always known to parents and clubs. Niemand Buitenspel highlights these schemes in an accessible way and aims to reach as many people as possible.

And it is working. Eleven thousand children were helped through local schemes in the third season of the programme, double the number of the previous year. They were able to remain part of their club or join one for the first time. Financial barriers no longer have to stop a child from continuing or starting football.

More than eight hundred amateur clubs have joined Niemand Buitenspel. At many of these clubs, parents can receive support from one of the 650 trained financial contact persons. They are specially trained to guide people confidentially through the available schemes and are always ready to answer questions.

11.000

CHILDREN SUPPORTED TO PLAY FOOTBALL,
DOUBLE COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS SEASON

THE PROGRAMME IS ACTIVE AT MORE THAN

800

AMATEUR CLUBS IN THE NETHERLANDS

MORE THAN

650

TRAINED FINANCIAL CONTACT PERSONS
GUIDE PARENTS PERSONALLY

FINANCIAL CONTACT PERSON CEES SHOWS WHAT CLUBS CAN MEAN FOR FAMILIES IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES



On a busy Sunday afternoon in the clubhouse of FC De Bilt, Cees from Waddinxveen takes a seat. A father of three football-playing boys, once a player himself until injuries forced him to stop, and in recent years a driving force in almost every possible volunteer role within the club. Coach, referee, assistant referee, youth committee member, and now, as a board member, Financial Contact Person in the Niemand Buitenspel (No One Offside) program.

Cees knows what it feels like to be part of a football club: a community, a place where everyone, rich or poor, comes together. That is precisely why the Niemand Buitenspel initiative appeals to him so strongly: "With members whom we know are struggling, we look together at what's possible using the benefits check. Additional subsidies, for example. It's simply difficult to navigate that system on your own."

Not looking away, but taking action

At his club, CVV Be Fair, it is made clear right from registration that support is available.

"We immediately ask whether there is a need for a conversation with the Financial Contact Person. It's simply included on the intake form."

Cees tells the story of a divorced mother who thought she was entitled to almost no support. "By talking things through together, it turned out she could actually receive much more help than she expected."

But signals go beyond forms alone. Sometimes you can see for yourself that support is needed.

"Children playing in shoes with holes in them. Or a player we suddenly don't see for a while anymore. Then you shouldn't look away you should take action. That's not just my responsibility; it's the responsibility of everyone at the club."

A ride to training, a discreet conversation, a short line of communication with the coach, small gestures that can make a world of difference.



3.2.4 MVP AWARD



REFUGEE REFEREE WINS THE 2024 MVP AWARD

The initiative Refugee Referee has won the 2024 MVP Award. This annual prize, named after former KNVB president Michael van Praag, is awarded to an individual or collective that has contributed to inclusion, accessibility and diversity within football. Refugee Referee demonstrates the power of football. By becoming referees, status holders become part of the football community, which also supports their personal development and integration into society. Refugee Referee helps bridge the gap between status holders and the local community. After all, football is never played or experienced alone.

The jury also nominated two other inspiring initiatives for the MVP Award. Former footballers Wout Brama and Maud Roetgering have written two children's books about a football team, addressing discrimination and inclusivity in an accessible way. Jules and Mahmoud play football together at S.V. Enkhuizen. Their different backgrounds do not matter. Jules is Jewish; Mahmoud is Palestinian. When the war in Gaza began, they decided to extend their conversations into the classroom to help build a bridge toward greater mutual understanding.

3.2.5 CLASS OF '25

The Class of 2025 is a national program developed by the KNVB together with sixteen volunteer board members to highlight the diversity of board members and to recruit new ones.

The group consisted of young, diverse, and ambitious volunteer board members from amateur football, selected from more than fifty nominations submitted by our club advisors. The board members followed a three-day leadership program at the KNVB Campus, focused on personal development, governance, and mutual knowledge exchange. Their own stories of pride, growth, and meaningful volunteer work formed the basis of a nationwide communication campaign.

Through a quiz, clubs were able to connect with motivated candidates, allowing the approach to have a direct impact on the recruitment of new volunteers. The Class of 2025 ultimately reached more than 1.5 million people. The campaign showed that being a board member is not something of the past, but a role in which development, diversity, and social engagement come together.

3.2.6 CANAL PARADE 2024

Wout Brama was our guest during the 2024 Canal Parade. We joined the NOC*NSF sports boat to speak out together with other sports federations for equal opportunities in sport. The former player of FC Twente, FC Utrecht and the Dutch national team wrote the youth book *Wout & Maud: Het geheim van de trainer* together with former FC Twente player Maud Roetgering. In it, the main characters experience football adventures but also witness issues such as homophobia.

According to Brama, especially in men's football, there is still a long way to go regarding acceptance of LGBTQ+ players. "I once asked my teammates how they would feel if someone in our team came out. I was shocked by the reactions. Several players said they would not feel comfortable with that, and I found that a painful realisation." Brama had hoped we would have progressed further by now. That is precisely why we take part in the Canal Parade: to show clearly that everyone is welcome in football. And that in the dressing room, you should be free to be who you are.



3.3 INTERNATIONAL IMPACT





GIJS DE JONG

"DUTCH FOOTBALL OPENS DOORS THAT WOULD OTHERWISE REMAIN CLOSED."

There are moments when you pause and think: how special that I get to do this. For me, those moments often happen far from home. In Nairobi, Jordan or Indonesia, where children show the same spark of joy the moment a ball starts rolling. But I see it just as clearly here in the Netherlands. On Saturday mornings at my local club, I see Article 1 of the Constitution in action: children from all backgrounds playing, learning and laughing together. That is the power of football. It brings people closer together, especially in a world that is changing quickly and can feel unsettled at times.

This season we celebrated fifteen years of WorldCoaches, now accounting for more than twenty thousand trained coaches and hundreds of thousands of children reached. A remarkable achievement, but also a moment of sadness. We said goodbye to Johan Neeskens, the warm heart of the programme. Across the world, he inspired coaches and children alike with his simplicity, humour and immense dedication. His legacy lives on in all those coaches who are now strengthening their own communities.

Internationally, the KNVB also shows what football can mean. From sports diplomacy to clinics and participation in the Unity EURO Cup with players from thirty-three different countries, Dutch football opens doors that would otherwise remain closed. Especially now, as geopolitical relationships shift rapidly, it is valuable that football creates connection. That is why we believe in cooperation. We do not develop football alone; we do so together with federations, embassies, partners and thousands of coaches and volunteers worldwide. Wherever the ball rolls, there is room for encounters, understanding and dialogue. We will continue to strengthen that power together in the years ahead.

GIJS DE JONG
GENERAL SECRETARY, KNVB

3.3.1 KNVB WORLD COACHES

“EVERY CHILD DESERVES A GOOD COACH – A WORLD COACH.”

This season, KNVB WorldCoaches celebrated its fifteenth anniversary. Since 2009, more than 20,000 coaches have been trained to guide children and youth on three core themes: personal development, health and social cohesion. As trainers and role models, they help young people develop skills such as communication, teamwork and critical thinking, enabling them to better cope with the challenges in their own environments.



A SUSTAINABLE AND SOLID FOUNDATION

WorldCoaches invests deliberately in long-term development. The training model is designed sustainably: the most motivated and talented participants progress to become co-instructors and eventually train new WorldCoaches in their own countries. In December 2024, thirty coaches from five countries in the Middle East and North Africa followed the International Coaching Course in Cairo. After an intensive ten-day programme, they graduated and can now work independently as WorldCoaches.

Thanks to this long-term approach, many sessions in countries such as Kenya, Indonesia and Lebanon are now fully delivered by local WorldCoach instructors, without KNVB trainers. This creates a solid foundation for lasting change.

FOOTBALL AS A TOOL FOR HEALING AND HOPE

We intentionally choose to be present even where sport is not a given. WorldCoaches offer training in refugee camps to support psychosocial well-being, structure and hope for young people. In Lebanon, for example, WorldCoaches organised activities for children who had fled violence in the south of the country, using football as a source of relief and perspective. By serving as coaches and role models, trained participants take on meaningful positions within their communities and create better prospects for themselves and others.

IN MEMORIAM JOHAN NEESKENS (73), STANDARD-BEARER OF KNVB WORLD COACHES

Sunday, 6 October. A sunny autumn morning. Until the news reaches us from Algeria that Johan Neeskens has passed away. Johan was in Algeria for a project with his beloved KNVB WorldCoaches. The football world was shocked. Memories of the great Ajax team of the 1970s and the Dutch national team that coloured the world orange in 1974 resurfaced. His tenacity on the pitch made him immensely popular.

After his playing career, he became a club coach, youth national team coach and assistant coach under Frank Rijkaard. But at the KNVB, Johan Neeskens became, especially later in life, the standard-bearer of WorldCoaches. He travelled the world to places where even having a football is not a given. He trained countless coaches, equipping them with tools for a better life that they now pass on in their own communities. Anyone who saw him at work knew the role suited him perfectly. He enjoyed it with his whole heart. Being on the pitch with fellow football lovers, working together to achieve something meaningful — that was Johan Neeskens in essence.

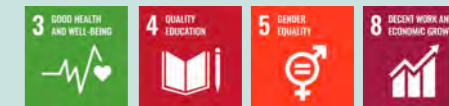
“JOHAN WAS MORE THAN ALL OF THIS TO US: NOT JUST THE FRIEND WHO TOLD STORIES OF HIS PLAYING DAYS. NOT JUST THE STAR ON THE FIELD. NOT JUST THE TEAM LEADER WHO WAS ALWAYS THE KEY TO THE GAME. NOT JUST THE INSTRUCTOR WHO CORRECTED AND TRAINED YOU, GUIDED YOU AND TAUGHT YOU, ALWAYS TRYING TO MAKE YOU THE BEST COACH YOU COULD BE. HE WAS ALL OF THAT AND EVEN MORE. HIS LEGACY AND WHAT HE TAUGHT US WILL ALWAYS REMAIN PART OF EVERYTHING WE DO.”

**WORLD COACHES PARTICIPANT,
COLOMBIA**



3.3.1. KNVB WORLD COACHES

“EVERY CHILD DESERVES A GOOD COACH – A WORLD COACH”



WE DELIVERED **74** COURSES IN **18** COUNTRIES, TRAINING **1,022** COACHES. TOGETHER, THEY REACHED **16,871** CHILDREN ON A STRUCTURED BASIS.

U20 WORLD CUP X WORLD COACHES OUTSIDE THE PLAYERS' BUBBLE

Whenever possible, national teams step outside their professional bubble to give local children an unforgettable day. During the U20 Women's World Cup in Colombia, WorldCoaches and the team organised a clinic in one of the poorer neighbourhoods. Players experienced the contrast between life as professionals in the Netherlands and daily reality in the communities around them. It added a new dimension to the tournament. Children were thrilled to play with the players, while boys welcomed them with music on plastic drums. Players, in turn, offered the children a glimpse into their world by inviting them to the semifinal to cheer for the team from the stands.

FUTSAL WORLD CUP X WORLD COACHES AN EYE-OPENER FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES WE HAD

While preparing for the Futsal World Cup in Uzbekistan, the Dutch men's futsal team travelled to Morocco for friendly matches. Between games, the team of Miguel Andrés delivered a WorldCoaches clinic in Rabat for twenty children, supported by the local WorldCoaches and attended by the Dutch ambassador.

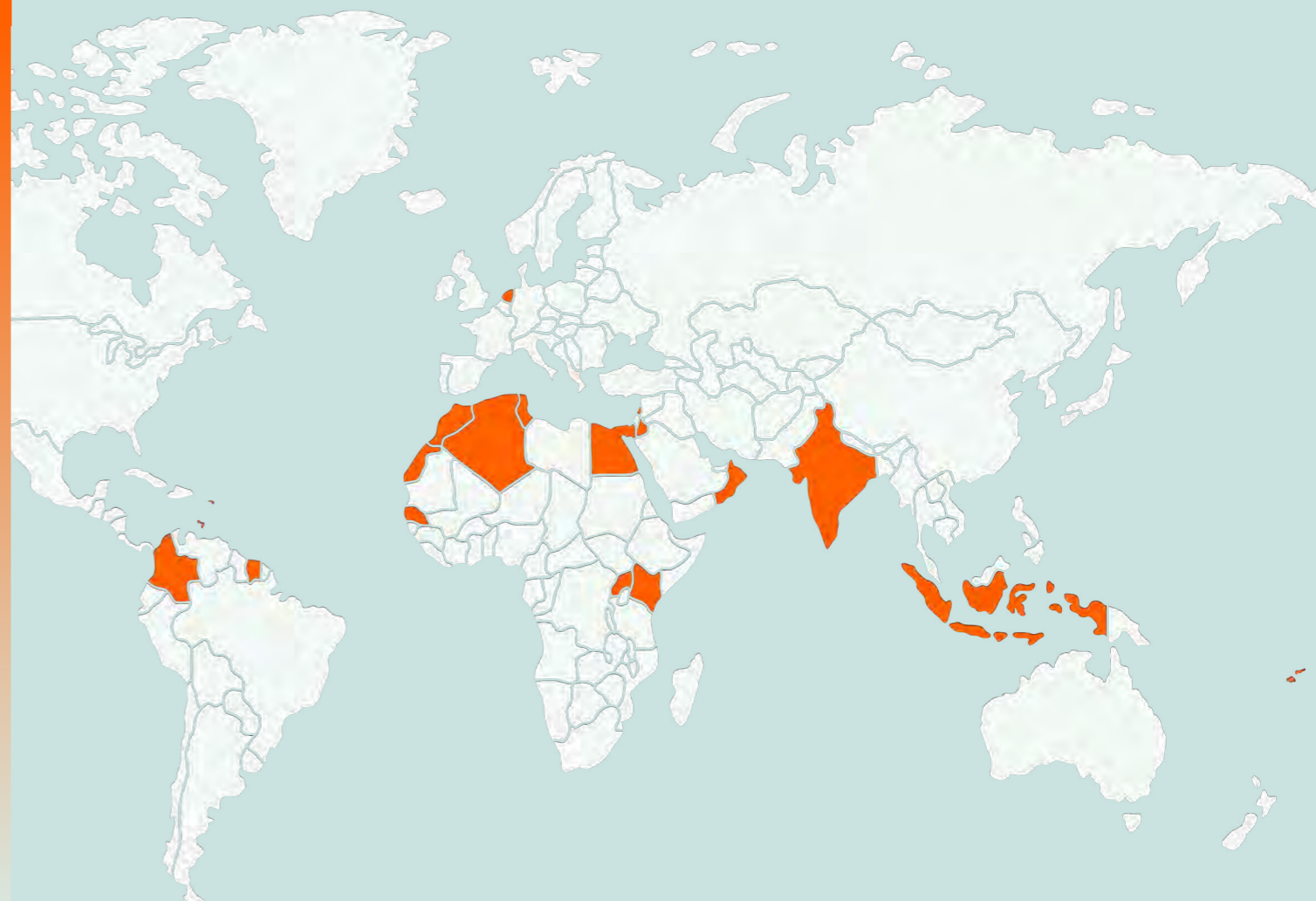
WorldCoaches has been active in Morocco for several years; since 2022, more than 180 coaches have been trained. For the players, the clinic was also a moment of reflection:

“WE HAD THESE OPPORTUNITIES GROWING UP IN THE NETHERLANDS. THIS WAS A REAL EYE-OPENER FOR OUR TEAM. WE SEE OUR LIVES AS NORMAL AND OFTEN COMPLAIN, BUT WE HAVE IT VERY GOOD ACTUALLY.”

WORLD COACHES IN TER APEL

For the first time, we are applying this expertise in the Netherlands. Together with the UEFA Foundation, we are training asylum seekers in Ter Apel and Wageningen to become WorldCoaches. They learn to organise sports activities for children, both in the reception centres and in the towns where they will eventually live. This not only promotes sports participation but also strengthens social cohesion, for example when participants become active in local amateur clubs. The WorldCoach training makes that step significantly easier.

With WorldCoaches, we continue building a world in which football is a powerful driver of positive change: locally rooted, globally supported.



74

COURSES

- AFRICA **41**
- ASIA **22**
- EUROPE **3**
- NORTH-AMERICA **2**
- SOUTH-AMERICA **5**
- OCEANIA **1**

1.022

COACHES TRAINED

OF WHICH
33%

WOMEN

COACHES REACHED
16.871

CHILDREN ON A STRUCTURED BASIS

3.3.2 UNITY EURO CUP

Clubs OJC Rosmalen, WVV Wageningen and AVV Zeeburgia opened their doors for a special tournament: the qualifying rounds for the Unity EURO Cup 2025. In total, 475 players from 33 countries competed for a place on the team that will represent the Netherlands in this unique European Championship, where status holders and Dutch citizens form one team.



WINNING BID

Thanks to a winning bid by the KNVB, UNHCR and Stichting Life Goals, the Netherlands was awarded the right to host the tournament, despite strong competition from Spain and Italy. A unique feature of the bid is that matches will be officiated by referees from the Refugee Referee programme, winners of the 2024 MVP Award.

"EVERYONE WANTS TO BELONG, TO BE PART OF SOCIETY AND TO MATTER. BUT THAT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY. THE MOMENT PLAYERS PUT ON THE ORANJE SHIRT, THEY FEEL PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER. IT IS WONDERFUL THAT WE CAN OFFER STATUS HOLDERS THAT ORANJE FEELING AND BRING THEM TOGETHER WITH THEIR FELLOW DUTCH CITIZENS IN ONE TEAM."

GIJS DE JONG
GENERAL SECRETARY

SELECTION

After the intensive qualifiers, sixty players were chosen for selection training under the guidance of KNVB WorldCoaches. Head coach and former professional René van Rijswijk formed the final squad: a diverse team of men and women from the Netherlands, Syria, Sierra Leone, Turkey and Yemen.

When asked whether everyone could ride a bike, the team laughed: "Of course, we live in the Netherlands, don't we?"

Like a true national team, they are preparing for the tournament at the KNVB Campus in Zeist. The kits are ready and the first training kilometres have already been cycled through the Zeist forests.



475

PARTICIPANTS AT THE SELECTION TOURNAMENTS

PLAYERS FROM

33

DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

18

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AND 1 EU UNITY EURO CUP TEAM



3.4 GREEN CLUBS



3.4.1 THE GREEN CLUB

FULL CLUB FUNDS, LOW EMISSIONS

The Green Club helps amateur clubs reduce their ecological footprint and lower their costs. This is good news for the planet and for club treasurers, because with rising costs for energy, waste and water, sustainability is no longer optional; it is a necessity. By supporting clubs with sustainable solutions, we are building a strong and future-proof foundation for Dutch amateur football.

DE GROENE CLUB IN CIJFERS

4189

PARTICIPATING SPORTCLUBS

12.902.671

KG CO2 SAVINGS

NOT AN OPTION, BUT A NECESSITY

Sustainability is no longer a choice but a requirement. Rising energy, waste and water costs are putting pressure on amateur clubs. The Green Club was founded in 2018. Together with our partners Mitsubishi Electric, Klimaatroute and ING, we work to make clubs financially future-proof, enabling them to contribute to a better climate while keeping football affordable for their members. We also encourage teams and supporters to carpool and choose the bicycle more often.

36%

OF SPORTS BOARD MEMBERS SEE ENERGY COSTS AS A MAJOR CONCERN

WHAT WE DO

01.

RESEARCH: We conduct research to identify challenges and create forecasts of expected costs.

02.

GUIDANCE: We inform clubs through webinars, themed meetings and toolkits. We provide tailored advice and organise collective purchasing programmes.

03.

INSPIRATION: We run pilot projects and share success stories from comparable amateur clubs.

GLOBAL TEMPERATURE RISE OF 1.1°C

In 2023, the IPCC reported that due to greenhouse gas emissions, the planet has already warmed by an average of 1.1°C. The consequences are visible and urgent: melting ice caps, rising sea levels and increasingly extreme weather. The need for action in the Netherlands is also growing, with direct effects on the sports sector. Extreme heat and heavy rainfall bring health risks for athletes and can damage fields, buildings and club infrastructure.

RIISING COSTS ARE A MAJOR CONCERN

In addition to impacts on the sport itself, the football community is already feeling the effects of rising costs for energy, waste and water. Research by the Mulier Institute shows that 36 percent of sports board members consider energy costs a major concern, a sharp increase from 19 percent in 2022. According to projections by The Green Club, without action these costs could increase by 60 percent by 2030. Quick action is needed to keep football accessible and affordable for everyone.

THE GREEN CLUB WEEKS

For the third year in a row, the KNVB and Mitsubishi Electric organised the Green Club Weeks, highlighting sustainability in sports associations. A major highlight was the Green Club Evening XL, held in collaboration with ING at the Sparta Stadium. The evening focused on sustainable developments in sport.

Sessions by Mitsubishi Electric, ING, Klimaatroute and Rijkswaterstaat covered key topics such as the ban on single-use plastics, opportunities in modular timber construction and practical tips for reducing gas consumption and accessing subsidies. Clubs that have already taken successful sustainable steps shared inspiring stories. Participants left with the confidence that sustainability is not only necessary but achievable and full of opportunity.

To give clubs an extra boost, we organised a competition in which three clubs could win the installation of a Mitsubishi Electric air conditioning unit. In doing so, we support sustainability not only through knowledge but also through concrete measures that reduce CO₂ emissions and contribute to a financially healthy future.



“MANY CLUBS ARE ACTIVELY WORKING ON SUSTAINABILITY. THE GREEN CLUB HELPS THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. TOGETHER WE ENSURE THAT FOOTBALL REMAINS ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE IN THE FUTURE.”

THOMAS DEGEN
PROGRAMME MANAGER
GREEN CLUB



MODULAR TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

Outdated facilities often prevent clubs from taking sustainable steps. That is why, together with ING, we encourage clubs to replace ageing buildings. Modular timber construction can be a fast and sustainable solution.

ING offers financing to clubs wishing to rebuild sustainably using modular timber designs developed with Arons en Gelauff architects and Sustainer. With this method, clubs can assemble a building like building blocks, enabling the construction of a new sustainable clubhouse often within a single summer break.

HSV HEILOO GOES COMPLETELY GAS-FREE

HSV Heiloo demonstrates what is possible when ambition, expertise and support come together. In just a few years, the club transformed into a completely gas-free facility, with LED lighting, 160 solar panels, a battery system and a heat pump. Thanks to a strong sustainability team, club funds and available subsidies, they achieved major steps despite challenges such as reinforcing the roof and configuring new systems.

The result: significantly lower energy costs, a future-proof clubhouse and a stronger relationship with the municipality. HSV Heiloo is an inspiring example for other clubs: those who plan ahead, involve the right people and use The Green Club's expertise can achieve great impact.



3.4.2 KNVB GO

More than 1.2 million footballers play over 800,000 amateur matches per year. To reach the pitch, we collectively travel more than 300 million kilometres annually, producing around 41,000 tons of CO₂. KNVB GO, in partnership with Volkswagen and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, works to reduce both the total travel distance and emissions per kilometre. We optimise the amateur league schedule so that teams play as locally as possible without compromising competition integrity. By analysing travel distances and match locations each season, we continue improving and closely monitor effectiveness. We also encourage teams and fans to carpool and cycle more often.

128

VERIFIED TRIPS

24.154

KM

4.662

KG CO₂ SAVINGS

EURO 2024: SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TO ORANJE

Euro 2024 was a major celebration. As the tournament progressed, Germany became increasingly orange. Around the semifinal in Dortmund, an estimated 100,000 Dutch supporters were present. The tournament provided a strong opportunity to promote sustainable travel around matches.

In all host cities where the Dutch team played: Hamburg, Leipzig, Berlin, Munich and Dortmund, initiatives supported carpooling in addition to UEFA's public transport incentives. Through the Volle Bak! campaign and the Slinger widget, it became easier for fans to share rides. A total of 128 rides were shared, significantly reducing CO₂ emissions. The campaign also increased awareness about sustainable travel among fans.

ALL THE WAY!

Through Volle Bak! (All the way!), we encourage supporters to travel together to matches of the Dutch national team. Using Slinger, a ride-sharing widget, fans travelling to matches can connect and share rides, even if they do not yet know one another. In amateur football, players can use the carpool function in the Voetbal.nl app to organise shared rides with ease. Sustainable travel becomes more accessible for everyone who loves football.



04 WHAT WE DO FOR OUR ORGANISATION



WE WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO A BETTER WORLD, AND THAT STARTS WITH LOOKING CRITICALLY AT OUR OWN ORGANISATION. FOOTBALL BRINGS US TOGETHER. WE STAND FOR AN OPEN KNVB IN WHICH EVERYONE FEELS WELCOME AND HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW. WE CREATE SPACE TO LEARN, TO EXPLORE AND TO PERFORM AT OUR BEST TOGETHER.



4.1 HEALTHY FOUNDATION

KNVB CAMPUS: FIT FOR THE JOB

We believe it is important that our employees feel mentally and physically fit for the job. Our wide range of lifestyle activities helps support that goal. Healthy living begins with healthy choices, which is why fresh fruit is available throughout the day at all three of our office locations.

We offer many ways to help colleagues get moving, especially through the facilities at our campus in Zeist, including the VMC gym and two padel courts. Each week, employees can join boxing, spinning and core stability classes, and the annual Lifestyle Cup has become a cherished KNVB tradition. This season, we also organised an internal padel and football tournament.

For anyone who prefers walking, dedicated routes through the woods offer a moment of fresh air during lunch. All employees may exercise during working hours twice a week. Colleagues in Zwolle and Eindhoven receive monthly compensation for their gym membership.

FOOTBALL MEDICAL CENTRE

The Football Medical Centre (VMC) of the KNVB is the central hub where everyone, amateur players, professionals, referees, young or old, men or women can receive expert sports medical examinations, treatments and rehabilitation. Since 2010, the VMC has held the FIFA Medical Centre of Excellence designation, recognising its staff expertise and state-of-the-art facilities.

The VMC's sports physicians and physiotherapists also provide medical support for all national teams. Recreational athletes benefit from this too.

“The research and findings we gain from elite football are applied broadly, including for recreational players and other sports,” says national team doctor Edwin Goedhart. “Everything we learn about preventing and treating injuries is shared widely. This is part of the philosophy of the KNVB Campus. In this way, the VMC fulfils a national role for athletes at all levels, as well as a regional role as a regular medical centre.”

The Sports-Related Concussion Clinic (SGH-Poli) is a good example of how the KNVB looks beyond elite football. Together with Amsterdam UMC, the VMC provides tailored treatment and guidance for individuals experiencing long-term symptoms after a concussion.



4.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

TRAINING DAY: INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE, MEDIA AND REPRESENTATION

Through our channels and platforms, we reach millions of people. This gives us enormous influence over the stories we tell, how we address people and which images we choose. Language and visuals can create inclusion and recognition, but they can also unintentionally exclude. Awareness is essential.

In May, our commercial and communications teams joined a training day focused on inclusive language, media and representation. WOMEN Inc. and OMNI CORE delivered the sessions, offering insights and practical tools to communicate more consciously and inclusively.

We are making progress. Sports journalist Suse van Kleef and trainer Rebecca Slee (WOMEN Inc.) see significant improvement in how the KNVB presents itself across websites, campaigns and social channels. The Dutch national teams are consistently positioned equally.

But we must remain alert. That was one of the key reflections from the training with 50 employees: stay aware of blind spots. Continue to discuss language and imagery with one another. How are we doing? Where can we improve? The session inspired us to develop an organisation-wide language and imagery guide.

COLLEGE TOUR WITH NIGEL DE JONG

In April 2025, Nigel de Jong returned to Amsterdam Nieuw-West, the neighborhood where he grew up. 'Grote Spelers', an initiative of the municipality aimed at students and young professionals from the area, hosted a College Tour at the Caland Lyceum, the same school Nigel once attended. This time, he sat on the other side of the classroom, answering questions about his football career, personal challenges and his current role as Director of Elite Football at the KNVB. After the session, attendees also spoke with KNVB colleagues, offering a valuable opportunity to present ourselves as an employer.



KNVB YOUTH COUNCIL

We give young people a voice in football through the KNVB Youth Council. This council consists of eleven enthusiastic young people who provide both solicited and unsolicited advice on a wide range of topics. Their involvement ensures that KNVB policy aligns more closely with what youth players find important in their football environment.

In the past season, meetings with the Youth Council provided valuable input on topics such as sportsmanship and respect, competition formats, and the campaign The Invisible Injury, which draws attention to mental well-being in football. Several Youth Council members also helped create a manifesto in which, together with other youth organizations, they called for more space for football and shorter waiting lists. They presented this manifesto in The Hague.

After three years, we said farewell to the current Youth Council. They are passing the baton to eleven new young people who, from the 2025/26 season onward, will share their vision for the future of amateur football. We thank all Youth Council members for their tireless commitment to amateur football.

INTERVIEW YOUTH COUNCIL KARLIJN & XEM

How did you end up on the Youth Council?

Karlijn (K): "I played football for seven years and signed up via email. I was actually too late, but I was still invited to come by."

Xem (X): "I've been playing football for eight years. My mother sent an application email, and that's how I got involved."

What were your most special experiences?

X: "With the Youth Council, we went to matches like the Netherlands–France game and even visited the Australian embassy."

K: "We even played footvolley in the embassy's backyard."

KNVB IFTAR 2025

This year, we organised an iftar for the fourth time. Ahead of the match Netherlands–Spain (m), approximately 70 people came together at the Topsportcentrum Rotterdam to break their fast together.

According to Marianne van Leeuwen, Vice President Professional Football at the KNVB, the iftar shows the power of football and how the sport brings people together. "Especially in times like these," she emphasised, "evenings like this show how, together and through football, we can make a difference."

Former footballer Romano Denedoom and Iris de Jongh both work for the Excelsior Foundation. They explained how their activities contribute to social development and equal opportunities. Through the foundation, they encourage people to be physically active, with all the positive health effects that entails, and engage in discussions on societal themes.

Former international and member of the Supervisory Board of the KNVB, Clarence Seedorf, addressed those present ahead of the match of Oranje with a powerful message: "Let us first and foremost see one another as human beings and remain curious about each other."

It was a combination of great fun and something really special that you don't experience often. You truly feel that you're contributing. It was also special that someone like former FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura came by and made time for us.

What did you learn

K: "So many valuable experiences. You get a glimpse of what it's like to work within an organization and truly make an impact."

X: "I enjoyed thinking about how football can be improved. And I learned how to start conversations with people you don't know."

What are you most proud of?

K: "Of the group. We started out as eleven strangers who didn't really know what we were doing. Now, three years later, everyone has their own voice and we truly feel like a team."

FNAAN WOLDEGIORGIS

"BECAUSE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IDENTIFY WITH FOOTBALL IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE AS A FEDERATION, AND CERTAINLY AS AN EMPLOYER, HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO REFLECT AND STRENGTHEN THE ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTING POWER OF SPORT."



Why are you motivated to contribute to a more inclusive KNVB?

"I see that the KNVB occupies a unique position in Dutch society. We are rooted in football, but football itself is deeply rooted in communities across the country. It connects people regardless of background, identity or beliefs. Precisely because so many people feel connected to the game, we have a responsibility to ensure that our organisation represents those values too. That begins with self-reflection: how accessible are we really? Are we in an ivory tower, or is working at the KNVB truly achievable for everyone? We must continue creating a work environment where people feel recognised, safe and heard. Only then do we show that our values extend beyond the pitch."

What has been an important step in strengthening diversity and inclusion at the KNVB?

A major milestone was establishing the People and Culture department: a unified team in which HR, Learning & Development and Diversity & Inclusion work from one shared strategy. This ensures that inclusion is not a stand-alone initiative but a structural part of our culture and long-term vision.

Which organisations do you collaborate with and why?

"We work with several partners who support us in building a positive and future-proof work culture. WOMEN Inc helps us reflect on language, representation and workplace equality.

In 2023, we also signed the Talent to the Top charter, committing ourselves to increasing the number of women in leadership positions. They monitor our progress, helping us work toward our 2030 goals:

- 30 percent women in leadership and key positions
- 15 percent of staff with a bi-cultural background"

FNAAN WOLDEGIORGIS
HEAD OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY



4.1.3 SUSTAINABILITY

GREEN CAMPUS

Together with PwC, we carried out a double materiality assessment, giving us a clear picture of where our social impact is strongest and where we still need to make meaningful progress, especially in the area of sustainability.

For the first time, we mapped our full CO₂ footprint: 1,514 tons of CO₂. Each department then set concrete measures to reduce emissions by at least 10 percent in 2025.

The Board also adopted our new Code of Conduct, which will serve as the foundation for all future agreements and partnerships.

At an operational level, we implemented several improvements. With active energy monitoring, we now manage the consumption of our headquarters more effectively. We also installed solar panels behind the Football Medical Centre, allowing us to generate part of our electricity sustainably.

Together, these steps form the foundation of an organisation that takes its social responsibility seriously and embeds sustainability structurally into both policy and daily practice.



INTERVIEW TIM HOFMAN HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY

My motivation to contribute to a more sustainable organization stems from my belief that as a society we should live in harmony with nature. This means staying within the limits of our planet, both in our private lives and in our professional actions. Health is the most important thing we have, and we must protect it. Climate change, biodiversity loss, poor air quality and plastic pollution all pose real threats to our health. That is why I feel the urgency to strive for a sustainable organization.

The way I now view sustainability and social responsibility has been shaped in part by my experience advising sports clubs on making their facilities more sustainable. There, I saw that sustainability is not only necessary, but also truly delivers results. Remarkably, this was even before the energy crisis; in 2018, the KNVB already recognized that energy costs would play an increasingly significant role. That forward thinking characterizes the organization for me: looking to the future and already working today on solutions for the problems of tomorrow.

I consider the recently established Code of Conduct an important starting point for deepening the conversation on sustainability, governance,

and social issues. By defining what we value, we invite employees and partners to explore together how we can make our collaboration and everyday choices more sustainable. That conversation is already underway with various partners, but I expect the biggest cultural shift will take place internally. Ultimately, we ourselves are the consumers, the decision-makers, and the shapers of how sustainable our organization truly becomes. This requires conscious decision-making at all levels.

Last season, we took steps in that direction by adjusting our flight policy. We now opt for train travel more quickly, and where flying is unavoidable, we ensure compensation for emissions. These are concrete measures with a direct impact.

For the coming seasons, our ambition is high both at an organizational and a personal level. As an organization, we want to continue working toward our stated goals: meeting 'Fit for 55' by 2030 and operating fully climate neutral by 2040.



TIM HOFMAN
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY



KNVB EXPERTISE

KNVB Expertise is the knowledge centre of Dutch professional football. Our mission is simple and powerful: we believe in the strength of football and therefore contribute to the development of professional football organisations (BVOs) in the Netherlands.

We focus primarily on club executives, directors and staff, aiming to inspire, inform and educate them so the professional game can continue to evolve and professionalise.



Each year, we organise a knowledge conference where employees from all clubs come together. This year's edition highlighted UEFA's sustainability strategy and how clubs can translate that into their own operations. Organisations such as Powerchair Football, PLYRS, Hydraloop, Circulr, 3x3 Unites and ECA shared inspiring stories about social impact and sustainability.

We also visited Manchester United, where the club offered an impressive look behind the scenes into how the Manchester United Foundation creates social impact and contributes to sustainability.

The importance, organisation and execution of social initiatives are also embedded in the Management Programme for Professional Football and in masterclasses for supervisors. This ensures that social impact remains a structural component within all BVOs. In addition, collaboration with the Coöperatie Eerste Divisie and Eredivisie CV has intensified, resulting in joint sustainability strategy sessions for the clubs.



4.1.4 ADVOCATING FOR THE SOCIAL VALUE OF SPORT



VAT INCREASE ON SPORT OFF THE TABLE

The proposed VAT increase on sport would have had far-reaching consequences for our society. Sports matches were at risk of becoming more expensive, and participation in sports at clubs, climbing gyms, ice rinks, and swimming pools would have become less accessible.

Sectors beyond sport would also have been affected. That is why a broad alliance of organizations from culture, sport, events, media, books, and accommodation took action against the proposed VAT increase. At two locations that would have been impacted by the increase Museum Escher in The Hague and the House of the Book a “receipt for society” was displayed shortly before the royal carriage procession on Prinsjesdag. On this 20-meter-long banner, everyone could see the financial consequences the VAT increase would have had.

With success. Through a combination of actions, numerous discussions, and strong support from our grassroots, the VAT increase was ultimately prevented. David Pranger, Head of Corporate Affairs & Social Impact at the KNVB, said: “A fantastic victory for everyone who loves football. For a year and a half, we fought side by side with the cultural, book, media, and events sectors to keep sport affordable and we succeeded. Thanks to broad political support, football remained accessible: no higher ticket prices, no additional burdens for clubs, and room to continue growing amateur football. This decision underscores how important sport is for the Netherlands.”

ELECTION OF THE DUTCH FOOTBALL ALDERMAN OF THE YEAR

This season, we launched the first-ever election of the Dutch Football Alderman of the Year – a moment to recognise the many local administrators who have gone above and beyond for football in their municipalities over the past four years.

A jury consisting of Ahmed Aboutaleb, Simone Richardson, Fonda Sahla and Frank Paauw reviewed no fewer than 178 submissions and selected eleven nominees. Next season, ahead of the 2026 municipal elections, the jury will announce the inaugural winner.

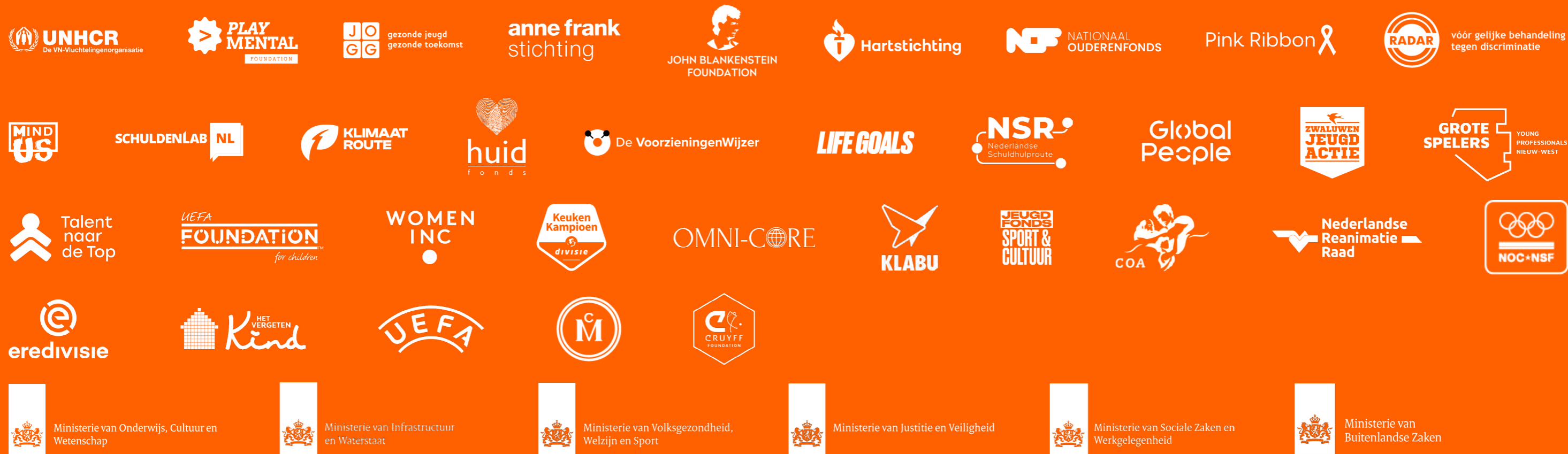
Jury chair Frank Paauw: “Football connects neighbourhoods, clubs and generations. Local administrators play a crucial role in that. With this election, we highlight the importance of their work and recognise those who truly make a difference.”



SOCIAL PARTNERS

THE KNVB WORKS WITH A WIDE NETWORK OF SOCIAL PARTNERS WHO SHARE OUR AMBITION TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF FOOTBALL IN SOCIETY.

SOCIAL PARTNERS



PARTNERS OF FOOTBALL



DOMEINPARTNERS



