

A Community Football Academy in the Bolivian Andes

-- Outline and Proposal to seek CSR funding and support --

Bolivia at the heart of South America is a country where different cultures and ethnic groups criss-cross its varied geography, but they are all united by a single language and a passion for football.

Barely 100 kilometres west from the of the city of La Paz, Bolivia's political capital, lies the Yungas tropical region, and the picturesque town of Coroico, inhabited by some 3,000 people.

The Bolivian Yungas is known for its all year round temperate climate, the production of exquisite tropical fruits, highland gourmet coffee, and the legendary Andean coca leaf popular for medical and ritual use. The Yungas region is also renowned for its excellent soccer players, many of whom went on to play for top football clubs, and the national team.

In Coroico, Professor Ramiro Blacut has decided to open a Football Academy for the children of Yungas.

Ramiro Blacut is a successful international football player and coach who trained in Germany, Spain and Mexico.

In 1961 he toured Europe with the Bolivian Always Ready team before joining Bayern München to play alongside the legendary Franz Beckembauer, Sepp Maier and Gerd Müller. He also signed up for Ferrocarril Oeste in the Argentine, and several times captained the Bolivian national team.

Ramiro went on to manage the national team and was named the Best Football Coach in Ecuador's Professional League in 2001 and 2002. Today, Ramiro has new dreams and has set himself a bold challenge.

"I chose Coroico because there are so few opportunities for young people and children. The area may have limited economic growth yet it offers good conditions for the Academy to work positively using an integral work plan."

Ramiro Blacut is concerned about poverty and the lack of opportunities for children and youths in the Bolivian outback. He reckons football offers an alternative way for developing better citizens through integral development and football in the community initiatives.

"As a football player and as a coach I want to give back to the community what life has given me, that is to say, help people who live in poverty and lack opportunities."

The whole town of Coroico supports the Football Academy; however the economic limitations are enormous. The Academy has 140 registered children, but because they are so poor, they are all on scholarships.

"It is important to prevent children from coming into contact with alcohol and drugs so that they can grow in a healthy environment to become useful to themselves, the town and Bolivia as a whole."

Given these limitations Ramiro Blacut is looking for support to fund the scholarships, the Academy's own infrastructure and training programmes, to assist the expansion of football in Coroico and the Yungas tropical region where children can play football all year round.

Ramiro reckons the Academy will be able to yield results in about five years time: that is to say deliver new citizens with opportunities in life.

In the meantime Ramiro Blacut is pressing ahead with his team despite limited funding and resources.

The Academy has kicked-off, but like the road to Yungas, the route ahead is long and winding. We hope you can join this adventure supporting Ramiro Blacut. The children of Yungas will thank you for this opportunity.

Proposal

Ramiro Blacut would like to invite companies, NGOs and individuals to support the Academy to create opportunities for young footballers in Bolivia's outback. Your support will enable them to play football in a safe and healthy environment boost and boost their self esteem so that can in time become leaders and contribute to the development of Coroico and communities in the Yungas region..

Your support will enable the young footballers of Coroico will acquire key skills given the learning environment influenced by the right people and institutions.

Positive growth can be achieved in young people if they are surrounded by caring adult mentors and coaches like Ramiro Blacut, by community leaders, by their extended families, by school and religious leaders.

This key aspect lays the groundwork for children to develop internal interpersonal, decision-making and problem-solving skills. In Bolivia children paying football stay off alcohol and drugs and progress to becoming star players or community leaders¹.

¹ **Bolivia fights drugs with football**

BBC World Service, 26 February 2006

For many children in Bolivia - the poorest country in South America - the Tahuichi football academy in the eastern lowland city of Santa Cruz provides a future and a second chance.

With inadequate food and education, many of the country's young people often take to the streets to try and earn money for their families, ending up involved in drugs, crime and prostitution. Gustavo - one of Bolivia's top young players, currently on trial at Argentinean side Rosario Central - is one of the graduates of the academy.

He told BBC World Service's World Football programme that he was saved from looking after cars on the Santa Cruz streets when the founder of the academy invited him to train for free.

"Of my friends, many who used to play sports and go to school are now living on the streets, taking drugs, they are drunks, they don't study, and they have left home," he said.

"I have the same dream that everyone has here - that I could go and play abroad, represent the Bolivian team and also play in Europe."

Although seventy percent of Bolivia's population are of indigenous origin, it has taken the country 181 years since its declaration of Independence from Spain, to inaugurate its first Indian President and government. The Yungas community is a unique region, as it is a melting pot that reflects Bolivia's ethno-cultural mix of Indian, Black, white and mixed race people, and this combination is reflected in the membership of the football academy.

Ramiro Blacut wants to demonstrate social inclusion is possible and necessary by offering young people the opportunity to build their confidence and a future for themselves through team work.

Ramiro Blacut is particularly keen in nurturing and finding placement opportunities for emerging football talent and has five footballers in Coroico who have the potential to become international players. Several Bolivian football players have made it to the World stage including Marco Etcheverry who plays for DC United in the United States.²

Ramiro Blacut wants the Academy's talented players transferred to national, Latin America region or international teams, to manage their transfer monies and incomes well by contributing a proportion of these revenues to their communities and Academy so that they can both be sustainable.

Ramiro Blacut would also like you to become a role model on issues such as racism, but also on team and skills building in football education proposals

The Ramiro Blacut Football Academy is seeking funding for the following projects:

² **UNITED HONORS ETCHEVERRY**

Posted on Sat, Sep. 23, 2006

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Marco Etcheverry was inducted into D.C. United's "Tradition of Excellence" on Saturday night, becoming the second member behind John Harkes.

A seven-time MLS All-Star midfielder, Etcheverry was one of 16 players from D.C. United's 1996 team that celebrated the 10th anniversary of their first MLS Cup prior to a game against the New York Red Bulls.

"Marco was the most influential player in the history of MLS, and without his brilliance on the field and his ability to raise his game in our most important matches, there would be no D.C. United legacy," D.C. United president Kevin Payne said. "No player is more deserving of this honor than the man they called 'El Diablo.'"

Etcheverry earned Most Valuable Player honors in 1998 and MLS Cup MVP honors in 1996. He also garnered MVP honors at the 2002 All-Star Game and ranks fourth in MLS with 101 career assists. He was named to the MLS Best XI squad four consecutive seasons from 1996-1999. Etcheverry is among club leaders in nearly every D.C. United statistical category: fourth in goals scored (34), first in assists (101), and second in games played (191), minutes played (16,305), shots (319), shots on goal (156) and game-winning goals (11).

Etcheverry made 72 international appearances and scored 13 goals for the Bolivian national team. He played one World Cup match for his country in 1994.



The Ramiro Blacut Football Academy's proposed new pitch

Infrastructure:

Expand and enlarge the Academy's own football pitch, grounds and pavilion.

100 gabions 2 x 2 x 2 m.	1,700
Manpower + stone	1,200
Scraper and tractor to level the pitch @30 hours x 40.	1,200
Drainage 10 workers x 30days + stone	3,000
Sand for pitch	3,000
Earth black 250 truck loads x (4 m3) x 50 =	12,500
Creole grass for 4.500m =	5,000
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	US\$ (dollars) 27,600
Dressing rooms 50 m2 x 150 US\$ \$x 2	7,000
Olympic mesh wire fencing 900 m x 2	5,000
Pavilion 300 m2 x 150 US\$. (2 floors)	45,000
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	US\$ (dollars) 57,000
Infrastructure total	US\$ (dollars) 84,600

Education:

Three one year football scholarships @ US\$333 US\$ (dollars) 1,000

Children will receive an integral education.

Sports Materials:

Sports material	100 balls No. 5 100 balls No. 4 50 big vests, 5 colours 50 medium vests, 5 colours 100 plastic plates for signalling.	
	Approximate cost	US\$ (dollars) 3,000

Technical Training and Formation.

Apprenticeship training through different workshops to provide the players with basis skills: carpentry, bricklaying, electricians, glass workers, artisans, painters, engravers, garment makers and tailor, potters and ceramic makers, web designers and computing and Internet technicians..

These small workshops will enable apprentices to become self-employed owners of their businesses.