The operating and embedment of European football academies in West Africa

Using the example of Red Bull Ghana

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INTERESTED IN...

- the **aims** of Red Bull
- the **structure** within the academy
- RB’s way of **acting and operating**
- the realistic **chances for the players**
- **the legacy**
STRUCTURE

I.  Background
II.  Aims of Red Bull Ghana
III.  Results
IV.  Conclusions
V.  Potentials and Status Quo
BACKGROUND

- Red Bull Salzburg: founded in 2005
- New York Red Bulls: 2006
- RasenBallsport Leipzig: 2009

- **Overall objective:** getting active in the football business; increasing the global advertising value of the brand
FROM
SOGAKOPE
TO THE
ACADEMY
„New York is about marketing; Leipzig and Salzburg is a combination of marketing and sport; here [in Ghana] it’s only about sport. In Ghana you can’t sell a Red Bull can (...). That has nothing to do with marketing. It has to do with the fact that Africa is cheap and that you can find a lot of talent here. It’s about developing players for Leipzig, Salzburg and New York or about selling players.“ (Interview 27.08.2010)*

→ finding players for other Red Bull teams; but also: bypassing the FIFA-U18-rule.
RESULTS

INPUTS

• State of the art infrastructure: construction EUR 5,5 Mio. (plus EUR 100.00/ month)
• Personnel/ expertise from Europe: 47 employees/ 6 Europeans

OUTPUTS

• 4 teams (U13, U15, U17, 1st team)
• > 100 players (around 60 at a time); 1000ds tested
• 4 players to Salzburg (2010 & 2014)
RESULTS

„COMMODITY“ CHAIN

... in Ghana
juvenile teams → Red Bull Ghana U13 → U15 → U17 → 1st

... in Austria
Red Bull Salzburg U18 → FC Liefering → Red Bull Salzburg
RESULTS

VARIOUS ACTORS – MANY CHALLENGES

(National/ local) football business
• Ghanian FA, Ghanian Clubs Association, Ghanian Player’s Union
• Scouts and competing football clubs

Local authorities and communities
• Modern leaders: mayor and other local and national authorities
• Traditional leaders: paramount chief and divisional chiefs
• Local institutions

& Red Bull as a transnational (commercial) company
RESULTS
CONCLUSIONS

BENEFITING ACTORS

• Individuals and families, players (potentially), workers and technical personnel

LEVELS OF CONFLICT

• Uncertainties and lack of transparency in land acquisition
• Geographical and institutional isolation
• Ignorance of local actors; no collective identification

→ manifested through: petition and demonstrations
CONCLUSIONS

EFFECTS ON THE PLAYERS

• No local players
• High fluctuation among the players
• No security concerning education
• No tertiary education
• High level of technical and tactical training
• Strong focus on discipline and re-socialization
→ Strengthening dreams of Europe and illusion of facility
POTENTIALS AND STATUS QUO

• **For the local communities:** interaction, involvement and discourse at eye level; precondition: respecting local realities

• **For the players:** egal combination of sport and school; contractual security

• **For the workers and employees:** job security, exchange of expertise (training courses)
POTENTIALS AND STATUS QUO

• 2013: Red Bull Ghana closed its doors
  → “Due to the remote area with no larger city nearby and because of mistakes of the local management.“ (Gerard Houllier, 2013)

• 2014: West African Football Academy (WAFA) was established
  → “In close technical and textual cooperation with Red Bull.“ (Red Bull, 2013)
THANK YOU!

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download paper:
www.vidc.org/publikationen/projektpool/poolstudien/
ADDENDUM

* translated into English; original in German: