

European Football for



Development Network

EFDN



FOOTBALL FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

In conversation with Kristof Fiebing,
Ecological Sustainability Officer at
Werder Bremen



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1.1. FOOTBALL FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE IN ACTION AT SV WERDER BREMEN

Tell us a bit about the project that SV Werder Bremen is undertaking as part of the Football for Climate Justice project.

The team at SV Werder Bremen has been developing an idea to hold an annual environmental match day. An exact date for the inaugural match day has not yet been set, but it is expected to be held early in 2025 during the men's professional team season. The first sustainability match day will focus on the theme of mobility and will form part of a broader week of climate action being hosted by the club.

Where did the idea for this collaborative project come from?

SV Werder Bremen has held similar match days in the past focused on topics like racism and social inclusion. Kristof described this environmental match day as an 'obvious choice'. Following initial discussions, a working group was set up within the club to plan and prepare for the event, and approval was sought from the Board at an early stage.

How does this project take a people and community centered approach?

According to Kristof, 'the main target is our fans and our local community so the key to success is to involve them'. To ensure that all age groups have an opportunity to participate, Werder Bremen is planning bespoke activities for people of all ages: children, teenagers, adults, and older community

members. Kristof feels that community and fan engagement is trickier at the preparation and planning phase of a project but he's hopeful that by grounding the match day in a broader week of action, the club will be able to engage with both fans in a meaningful way.

One activity that Werder Bremen will put in place for the match day is a bicycle repair service. Kristof described this activity as a good, albeit small, example of how a club can support fans and community members to feel the benefits of climate action.

"If that works out and we can support the community with it, we would like to have it at every match day, week in, week out."

Are there spaces or networks you can go to talk to other clubs about climate justice and topics like Community Wealth Building?

Kristof spoke about how there are some forums in Germany but that they are largely focused specifically on reducing emissions within the club and less focussed on the potential of community-led collective action. Giving examples of spaces for discussion and knowledge sharing, Kristof talked about positive exchanges between Werder Bremen and a handful of other clubs in the German league but noted that "there should be more for sure". Alongside developing spaces for networking with professional football clubs, Kristof also spoke about the potential for collaboration with grassroots clubs already doing exciting work on climate justice and sustainability.

Werder Bremen Season Opening: Kids Engaging in Climate Protection with Alfred Wegener Institute



What's the plan for the next six months?

The immediate next step is choosing the date for the match day and week of action. Then, the working group will come together to narrow down the line-up of activities at the match. Kristof spoke about wanting to involve more partners in the coming months, including an NGO with strong links to the community that could advise Werder Bremen on how action week activities could be tailored to respond to local priorities. The local university has also been identified as a strong collaborating partner for this work.

What have been the key learnings so far?

While it may be a bit too early to outline learnings from this project, Kristof is eager to share their learnings after the match day with other clubs and sports organisations.

Generally, discussing some learnings from the wider Football for Climate Justice project, Kristof spoke about the importance of involving professional players from the club to reach as many fans as possible.

Do you have advice for clubs starting out that are looking at climate justice and trying to understand how to build a climate justice approach into their current sustainability projects?

“I would say to start early in the process. It's really important to involve all of the stakeholders and to get the board to agree early on. It needs to be top-down but also bottom-up.”

Season Opening Event with Alfred Wegener Institute: Climate Protection Activities for Kids





FOOTBALL FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

How can football clubs support climate action that is good for the fans, their communities, and the planet?



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