KILLING SOCCER IN AFRICA
An ‘Arizona project’ in Africa

‘Killing soccer in Africa’ is the first Arizona project ever conducted on the African continent. In the Global Investigative Journalism Network, the label ‘Arizona project’ is extended to a team investigation into a story that has led to the harassment, injury, or death, of the individual reporter who first pursued the story alone. It is derived from an investigation that took place in the US state of Arizona, that got reporter Don Bolles killed in 1976. The assassination, by criminals intent on stopping Bolles from pursuing the investigation, led to a call by FAIR’s US sister organization, Investigative Reporters and Editors, to its members, to all descend on Arizona and finish the story. Thirty-eight reporters, working for over twenty media houses, responded to the call, followed the story, and published. The impact of the original story, that Bolles’ killers had wanted to silence, increased massively. Since then, the title of ‘Arizona project’ is given to efforts by a team of journalists coming to finish a story that a lone journalist has been stopped from pursuing by force.

The point that ‘you can stop a journalist, but you can not kill the story’ has, in 2010, been made in Africa by FAIR. When a journalist in Cameroon was severely beaten after he started probing the financial affairs of (Cameroonian) Confederation of African Soccer President Issa Hayatou, FAIR decided to carry out a Transnational Investigation to, not only investigate Cameroon soccer, but African soccer administration, the reign of Hayatou, as a whole. In total eight African countries, including all the relevant African soccer countries, were covered.

This report resulted. Its conclusions are based on hard facts and can not be dismissed: African soccer will not achieve until its administrators are reigned in and held accountable for their high-living, wasteful and destructive management style. Maybe most importantly, this investigation shows that African soccer administrators are not the only culprits. The international soccer body FIFA is shown to protect and even promote bad African soccer managers.

The report has so far been published by media in all the eight African countries where individual journalists participated in FAIR’s Arizona team. It has been reviewed by radio and online media internationally and FAIR hopes that the release of the entire dossier will incur even more international publicity.

This would after all be in line with the Arizona motto: You can stop a journalist, but you can’t kill the story.

FAIR investigative team

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Africa’s dismal performance at the 2010 World Cup, with the exception of Ghana, should be no surprise. A FAIR investigation into soccer management in eight African countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, found that while players have sacrificed their personal fortunes to develop not just soccer but their own communities, and have in some cases bailed out their national teams, the administrators tasked with developing the game focus on personal gain.

In Cameroon, traditionally Africa’s foremost soccer country, and the home of Confederation of African Football (CAF) president Issa Hayatou, soccer stadiums are empty. “How do you want people to attend matches when their favourite players are not on the field?” asks Prince Ndoki Mukete, former assistant secretary general of the Cameroonian football association, Fecafoot. The reasons for the absence of both supporters and the most famous players from the Cameroonian stadiums is simple, adds Mukete. “It’s transfers. Our soccer officials quickly sign deals for player transfers as soon as a player shows promise. Transfers bring in money.”

The effect of the focus on transfers is that every good player knows that his value is to the outside world and not to the national soccer team. Samuel Eto’o, one of the best known players from Cameroon, and currently the most decorated African player, is only 29, but he has been in international soccer since he was 16, playing for top clubs like Real Madrid, Mallorca, Barcelona and Internazionale. Other top players in Cameroon have similar histories. They often don’t perform well on the rare occasions that they are playing nationally, since getting hurt or exhausted will diminish their international value. Mukete regrets the situation, which he says, has gotten out of hand recently. “We need to retain some value here. Soccer cannot develop when the stadiums are empty.”

Soccer development does not seem high on the agenda of the present Fecafoot, which is a virtual top ten of real estate owners, sports goods manufacturers’ agents, lawyers (who organize player transfers), transport and hotel contractors, and public relations agents. At any Fecafoot meeting in Cameroon, businessmen reportedly fight to get access to the rich spoils that have turned at least nine of the federations’ officials extremely wealthy.

Beefing up payment for Fecafoot services is a common scourge, with a prime example, cited in pending court papers against four Fecafoot officials in Cameroon, being a bill for an air-conditioned Prado for the Malawi team at the occasion of the African Cup of Nations in January 2010, when the actual vehicle offered to the Malawians was a dilapidated Toyota.

The court documents, which were obtained by FAIR, show that Fecafoot vice president David Mayebi received regular payments from sports manufacturer Puma into his personal bank account, without reflecting the amounts in Fecafoot records. Co-bidder for the same sponsorship Adidas, that did not offer a bribe, lost out. Other Fecafoot documents seen by FAIR are player transfer contracts in which birth dates of players are altered to make them more easily marketable. Club origins of players are altered sometimes as well, so that the purported owners of the clubs can cash in on transfer fees. Some players sold off in this way have not made it in international soccer and live in poor conditions in countries such as Indonesia, China and Mexico.

A recent state audit, likely prompted by revelations made by Government delegate to Fecafoot, Jean-Lambert Nang, has recommended the prosecution of the four Fecafoot officials charged in the court papers. However, observers do not expect these prosecutions to take off. Said one such observer: “They can’t do that, because everybody is in on it.”

Within all this, Cameroon’s players seem to be forgotten. When news reports said they had complained about ‘poor payment’ in the run up to the World Cup, soccer officials stated in response that the players were not ‘patriotic’ enough. Cameroon was knocked out in the first round after losing all its three games against the Netherlands, Denmark and Japan.
executive summary

Being 'unpatriotic' was also one of the epithets directed at a member of the FAIR team in Cameroon, when he attempted to investigate the sources of CAF president Issa Hayatou's wealth. The reporter was threatened, beaten and has been in hiding since the incident earlier this year.

Partying in Ivory Coast
Ivory Coast—a country of extremely poor coffee and cocoa farmers—spends millions of US dollars on its soccer managers, with very little national performance in return. The coffee and cocoa industry is one of the soccer federation FIF's (Federation Ivoirienne de Football)'s principal sponsors, jostling for prime position with mobile telephone operator Orange Cote d'Ivoire. Other major sponsors are the National Petroleum Operations Company (PETROCI) and the Petroleum Stocks management Company (GESTOCI). Estimates of the amounts that are contributed by these major sponsors are not made public, but sources say they could be as high as US$40 million per year.

Sadly, Ivory Coast has received very little national soccer performance in return. Though equipped with such great international starts as Didier Drogba, the team lacks cohesion and is mostly, like Cameroon, concerned about individual players’ performances outside their country. At the World Cup, Ivory Coast was knocked out in the first round.

Soccer officials and local government allies in this country meanwhile make money out of fraudulent ticket sales and building contracts that seldom materialize into the actual buildings as intended. Abidjan stadium dates from 1945 and only has 35,000 seats. This is so small that, when extra tickets for non-existent seats were fraudulently sold at the World Cup qualifying match against Malawi in 2009, a stampede killed 20 people and injured another 135.

The Ivorian Football Federation has reported this particular incident as “an unfortunate experience” and refers to ‘funds allocated to the presidents of the clubs of Anyama, Korhogo and to the mayor of Bouaflé’ for the refurbishment of their stadiums, which was apparently never carried out. A number of low-level officials were fined for the fraudulent ticket sales leading up to the Abidjan stampede, but local award-winning journalist André Silver Konan, who investigated the matter, has gone on record to say that only small fry got punished and that ‘big fish’ were left alone.

Partying seemingly comes before soccer. On the eve of the quarter final match in the African Cup of Nations last January, soccer chairman Jacques Anouma’s daughter threw a birthday party for her national team boyfriend. The Elephants were beaten the next day. Anouma found nothing wrong with the situation, saying: “It was just a cake”.

Érvé Siaba, president of the Ivory Coast Association of Football Club Presidents has gone on record to say that ‘FIF money is wasted’ because the FIF is “full of people who know nothing about football and who make decisions according to their own whims, to the detriment of the laws that govern our football”. Numerous telephone calls, emails and questionnaires addressed to those in charge of the FIF only resulted in promises for interviews. One of the contributors to this investigation went to a few such promised meetings only to be stood up. He concluded that “they do not want to be disturbed”.

Nevertheless Anouma has withheld calls for his resignation. “They can call me to resign as much as they want”, he has commented, meaning that it was all water off a duck’s back to him. Strengthening his power is the fact that he is also the financial director of the presidency in Ivory Coast.

Administrators fly around, players stay stuck
In Kenya, in May this year, soccer officials went on an all-expenses paid trip to the United States, leaving the national soccer team—the Harambee Stars—without means to go play a match in neighbouring Uganda. The Kenyan government had to fork out US$10,000 in taxpayers money to get the team to the African Nations Cup. “This morning we have been forced to spend KSh750,000 to take the boys to Kampala,” Gordon Oluoch, the Commissioner of Sports, told FAIR. “The federation guys are in the US.”

Similarly, in Nigeria, Sports Minister Ibrahim Issa Bio had to use taxpayer’s money during the World Cup to bail out the Super Eagles, Nigeria’s national team, after the Nigeria Football Federation had booked them into a cheap hotel in South Africa, costing only US$100 a night when FIFA was paying the federation US$400 for each player per night. Nigeria was knocked out in the first round.

When former England coach Glen Hoddle was asked to coach the national team and offered a contract worth US$1 million, he was told by NFF officials that it would be announced as US$1.5 million, with the profit to be divided amicably between the individuals involved. He rejected this and went public, scuttling the deal.

The Nigerian Football Federation is certainly not batting for money. Other than the 2010 World Cup FIFA grant of US$9 million, the NFF receives an annual sponsorship from TV company Globalcom to the tune of about US$7 million. Where the money is spent is a mystery. The Nigerian
football clubs that are supposed to benefit say they only get 10 percent of it. Nobody seems to know where the rest goes. Additional television rights for the league are worth US $5 million but the clubs all say that they haven’t seen any of this money either.

The South African Premier Soccer League is the seventh best funded league in the world. It is supported by ABSA, one of the leading banks, SAB Miller, internationally the fourth largest brewer, the satellite Supersport channel and a number of other banks and corporates, whose donations together amount to about US $300 million over a five year period from 2007.

In the run up to the World Cup in South Africa, R64 billion (almost US $1 billion) was spent. Stadiums which were originally expected to cost the taxpayer R2.3 billion (US $325 million) cost nearly eight times that. The tender for Soccer City in Soweto was briefly in the news because of a BEE-fronting scandal (the ‘black empowerment’ element consisted only of a security guard); Nelspruit municipal officer Jimmy Mohlala was murdered in connection with the tender for Mbombela Stadium in Mpumalanga in 2009; and local media reported that in some communities schools were destroyed and people moved in order to make way for the stadiums. Observers have expressed fears that some of the stadiums may not be of much use in the future.

A recent report on the benefits and pitfalls of big soccer spending by the Institute for Security Studies questioned, however, whether this was really such a bad thing: “If mega-events make governments expedite the spending of public funds efficiently and advance much-needed infrastructural projects and other important social services, surely they act as catalysts for economic and social development?” The report appeared even to excuse corruption to some extent: “If the end can justify the means perhaps it is acceptable to side-step democratic governance and accountability. It may even be tolerable to overlook conflict of interest situations and isolated instances of corruption to ensure the public have access to enhanced infrastructure and the country to an enhanced international image.”

Three international airports in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban were upgraded in preparation for the World Cup. Road networks and transport were improved with the introduction of new train services. Five new stadiums were built and another five were refurbished.

Nevertheless, despite the massive sponsorships and investments, South Africa was knocked out in the first round of the World Cup becoming the first host nation to do so.

According to a South African-based investigation by the Sowetan newspaper, the Local Organising Committee, of which Khoza is chairman, recently voted to allocate 10% ofMbomboela Stadium in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga- is already being described as a white elephant
World Cup profits (expected to amount to US $130 million) to its own members and 5% (US $65 million) to SAFA officials. The biggest winner was definitely the International Football Association (FIFA). It made US $3.2 billion from the event.

Donations for young players going haywire
Maybe the worst aspect of the mismanagement in African soccer is the misuse of funds meant for the development of new soccer talent. It is the dream of many a young African child to learn how to play soccer really well: you can see them all over the continent, playing in dusty streets with plastic balls made from discarded maize meal packages, plastics and paper, shouting ‘Maradona! Maradona!’ But specific donations meant for community soccer development often don’t reach these target groups.

In Ivory Coast, an annual donation by the national oil refinery company SIR for the development of local clubs, worth US $2 million, was suspended by SIR in 2007 when it found out that none of the clubs had received any of the money. The head of Ivory Coast’s Football Federation FIF, Jacques Anouma argued that ‘that money was not supposed to go to the clubs anyway’, without explaining where it, then, went.

In Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe’s nephew, Leo Mugabe, was sacked from the Zimbabwean Football Association (ZIFA) after misappropriating US $61 000 for youth soccer development, but that did not clear the rot. A consignment of soccer kits meant for young players in communities was last seen in the garage of ZIFA chief executive officer Henrietta Rushwaya in Harare in late 2007 and could not be recuperated because the garage was reported ‘burnt down’ shortly after FIFA tried to locate the kits.

Moneys for local soccer development went haywire also in Nigeria and Kenya.

FIFA acts against soccer corruption investigations, every time
FIFA had stepped in every time when African countries try to address corruption in their soccer associations to stop those efforts. In 2004 it suspended Kenya for ‘interference’ after its government fired the Kenyan Football Federation for misuse of funds. KFF executives left office with a debt of US $320 000, which they could not explain, even though the federation had a surplus of US $200 000 when they came into office.

FIFA has, since 2004, also suspended Chad, Ethiopia and Madagascar for ‘government interference’.

In 2008, FIFA threatened to suspend the national Zambian team when that country’s government announced it would investigate the transfer of Emmanuel Mayuka to an Israeli club. The transfer had been facilitated by Football Association of Zambia head Kalusha Bwalya. There was no investigation after the threat.

FIFA has managed to make even Robert Mugabe, president of Zimbabwe, look good – be it only momentarily. He did not stand in the way in 2003, when his nephew, Leo Mugabe, was sacked from the Zimbabwean Football Federation ZIFA for misappropriating US $61 000. In 2006 Mugabe issued instructions to investigate corrupt ZIFA soccer bosses but FIFA threatened the country with expulsion. The investigation came to a quick halt.

The corrupt bosses have since bounced back. Current ZIFA boss Cuthbert Dube simply paid his way into office. Three ZIFA councillors told FAIR that they were paid US $2000 (more than the average Zimbabwe citizen’s annual income) each by Dube to ensure that they voted for him.

Sending in the heavyweights
Nigeria is the latest victim of a FIFA suspension threat. President Goodluck Jonathan announced suspension of Nigerian participation in all FIFA and CAF organized competitions for two years after the national Super Eagles’ poor showing at the just ended World Cup. Jonathan also announced an audit on the N 900 million (US $6 million) that had been allocated to the team. “We went to the World Cup and found all sorts of problems and we felt we should sit back and look inward,” Nigeria Rivers State governor Rotimi Amaechi who headed a Presidential Task Force on South Africa 2010 FIFA World Cup, explained the decision.

But it was not to be. FIFA gave Nigeria three days to withdraw its decision or face a ban from the soccer governing body. According to FIFA communications director, Nicolas Maingot, the FIFA ban would not only cover the national team but club matches in African competitions, referees as well as the cash that flows from FIFA to national associations. Apparently this included the US $8 million that was due to Nigeria for participating in the first round of the World Cup.

Ironically, the man who was sent by FIFA to present the full picture and weight of the FIFA threat to President Jonathan was Amos Adamu, the sacked Director-General of National Sports Commission (NSC), whose cronies run the Nigeria Football Federation. Adamu is generally seen as the force behind the opaque multi-million Globalcom and TV rights deals (mentioned above), from which the Nigerian football clubs received only crumbs. Adamu is an executive
committee member of both FIFA and the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

Ghana’s secret
Ghana’s success – up to the quarter finals – in the World Cup may seem surprising in the light of the above, but the Ghanaian Football Association, one of the oldest on the continent, is reportedly more mature in its outlook and also better organized than its counterparts in other countries. Ghana spends its money on a much-praised youth development programme which has seen its junior teams winning international tournaments at World Cup level.

Ghana’s success has, however, been marred by allegations – dating back to 1997 – of match fixing in cahoots with Asian gamblers. Soccer author Declan Hill, in his book: The Fix: Soccer and Organized Crime, says the gambling rings’ contact person was Abukari Damba, who had been a national player and coach of the Ghana Under 17- team, and that he had access to players at any level. One of Ghana’s star players, Stephen Apiah, who played in the just ended World Cup, has admitted to receiving payment, and distributing the money to other players, at the Olympics in Greece in 2004. Hill asserts that he was personally told the score of the Brazil-Ghana game in 2006 two days before the match was played.

Nevertheless, engaging in a bit of fixing seems to have done Ghana’s general soccer development no harm, as its results and its youth development programme show. It is perhaps a ‘higher’ level of corruption, comparable to soccer corruption in the rest of the world, where the corruption, though bad, does not seriously impact on a country’s development, either in sports or in general.

Corruption does more damage in Africa
That corruption in developing countries is more damaging than in developed countries has been argued by Richard Hall, former editor of the prestigious London-based Africa Analysis. “What makes corruption different – and much less affordable – in Africa is that its countries only have infant economies,” Hall who lived and worked in Zambia for years before returning to England, said. “Like human infants, they are more vulnerable to infection, more likely to sicken and die. In America, Japan or Britain the exponents of big-time corruption are (if caught) gently side-lined. In Africa, economies lack the depth, strength and stability to shrug off corruption.”

As a way forward, African soccer fundi Joe Kadenge, who has been involved in Kenyan football since the late 1950s as a player, team manager and coach, says countries should simply defy FIFA. “We should take control of the federations until clean people are elected to take over. FIFA can suspend us if they so wish,” Kadenge argues.

‘The Fix’s’ author Declan Hill says one solution could be for FIFA to pay players directly. One of the possible major reasons for African players’ bad performance has been disgruntlement among the players that they were not being paid promised bonuses. “The fact is that some of the athletes competing at the world’s biggest sporting event still do not know how much money they will be paid or even if they will be paid at all,” said Hill.

Lastly, the sports media in Africa also seem to have some cleaning up to do. One of the FAIR investigative team members was present when fellow journalists witnessed an event of soccer bribery. Instead of running to their newsrooms to report the crime, the journalists stayed and demanded some payments for themselves, too.
Cameroon took part in the World Cup for the sixth time this year making it the only African country to have attained such a feat. It participated in the first tournament in 1982, missed the 1986 games but has qualified for every tournament since then, except the 2006 games. Cameroon is also one of the only three African countries to reach the quarter finals of the World Cup. It did so in 1990. (The other countries are Senegal which has only qualified for the World Cup once, in 2002, but reached the quarter finals in that tournament. Ghana, which has qualified for the World Cup twice, reached the quarter finals in the just ended World Cup.) Cameroon was the second highest ranked African country just before the tournament. The highest ranked African country was Egypt. But despite this glossy picture, football is dying in Cameroon.

Explaining this paradox, club manager Bate Arung said: “Those who think Cameroon football is doing well, simply because we always qualify for the World Cup, are wrong. Individual Cameroonian football players, especially those playing for foreign clubs, are doing well. They are the ones propping up the national team but football at home is dying.”

This view was shared by Prince Ndoki Mukete, a one-time Assistant Secretary General of the Cameroon Football Federation – popularly known by its French acronym Fecafoot – and a current member of the body’s Executive Committee. He said the main problems holding down the development of soccer in the country were “…the lack of goodwill at all levels, corruption and embezzlement by soccer managers at national and local levels, government’s indifference towards the provision of soccer infrastructure and the wholesale sale of bright players to foreign clubs”.

“Soccer cannot develop when the stadia are empty. People cannot attend football matches when their favourite
Killing soccer in Africa – Cameroon

players are not on the field. The tendency in this country is that immediately when a young player starts shining, he is hurriedly put onto the next plane and shipped abroad to be sold to a foreign club. How then can people want to come to the field? Who will they be coming to watch when the players who would attract them to stadiums have been sold to foreign countries?” Prince Mukete asked.

Samuel Eto’o, one of the best known players from Cameroon and currently the most decorated African player, for example, is only 29, but he has been in international soccer since he was 16, playing for top clubs like Real Madrid, Mallorca, Barcelona and Internazionale.

Cameroon is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Last year it was ranked 146 out of the 180 countries surveyed.

Former Fecafoot general manager, Jean-Lambert Nang, said in his book ‘Desperate Football House’: “Cameroon football is a victim of treachery, fraud, financial trafficking, corruption of the actors and personnel, impunity on the part of its main stakeholders, falsification of official documents and the ages of footballers as well as the indifference of officialdom”. Nang, a celebrated sports journalist, seconded to Fecafoot from the Cameroon government, was sacked as General Manager because he was viewed by Fecafoot as “a spy who came here only to dig out what we do here”.

Nang cites several cases where personal interests were placed before the general interest of soccer and its main actors – the players:

- In 2007, one of the private mobile telephone operators in the country (MTN) signed a convention with Fecafoot for the renovation of a number of stadiums in the country for a total sum of 400 million FCFA (about US $800 000). The telephone company was to provide 300 million FCFA (US $600 000) and FECFAFOOT 100 million (US $200 000). While MTN disbursed part of its own share of the money for work to start on the stadiums, Fecafoot would not come up with its own money. At one time the company threatened to stop financing the project unless Fecafoot would pay its share. But instead of football management paying up in order to ensure that the renovation work continued, it gave 73 million FCFA (about US $146 000) to the then Minister of Youth and Sports Thierry Augustin Edzoa so that he could “breathe better” – as he said after receiving the money.
- At one time, staff at the Fecafoot headquarters almost brought football activities to a standstill because they were owed 44 months’ salary. FIFA sent money to Fecafoot to pay the arrears. However, officials only paid 16 months’ arrears and pocketed the money for the remaining 28 months.
- Parliament appropriated a total of 12 035 585 000 FCFA (about US $24.1 million) for the renovation of existing infrastructure and the preparation of players for international competitions within three years. There is nothing to show for this money. In fact, the two soccer stadiums in Yaoundé and Douala that were constructed in 1971 are in an advanced state of disrepair.
- During the 1998 World Cup, the then Minister of Communication, Prof. Augustin Kontchou Kuoumegni, who was in charge of allowances intended for players, simply pocketed the money and announced that he had ‘forgotten’ the bag containing the money in the aircraft.
- Another minister, Prof. Bipoum Woum, collected eight million FCFA (US $16 000) for an air ticket saying that the ticket bought for him had gone missing. He eventually boarded the plane using the ticket which was supposedly missing.

All the members of the executive committee of Fecafoot are businessmen, except the President, Iya Mohammed, who is General Manager of a state corporation (SODECOTON), Vice President John Ndeh, who is General Manager of the Northwest Development Authority -popularly known by its French acronym MIDENO- and the Secretary General Tombi à Roko, a civil servant. All others are real estate owners, sports goods manufacturers’ agents, lawyers (who organize player transfers), transport and hotel contractors, and public relations agents. At Fecafoot meetings in Cameroon, other businessmen reportedly fight to also get access to the rich spoils that have turned at least nine of the federations’ officials extremely wealthy.

The secondment of Jean-Lambert Nang to Fecafoot and his subsequent revelations have since materialized into a state audit of the federation. And these state audits in turn have led to formal charges for corruption, lodged in court, against four Fecafoot officials.

A dilapidated Toyota

In these court papers, plenty details can be found of Fecafoot overpaying its own people for services, with a prime example being a bill for an air-conditioned Prado
for the Malawi team at the occasion of the African Cup of Nations in January 2010, when the actual vehicle offered to the Malawians was a dilapidated Toyota.

The court documents also show that Fecafoot vice president David Mayebi received regular payments from sports manufacturer Puma into his personal bank account. Co-bidder for the same sponsorship Adidas, that did not offer a bribe, lost out. Other Fecafoot documents seen by FAIR are player transfer contracts in which birth dates of players are altered to make them more easily marketable. Club origins of players are altered sometimes as well, so that the purported owners of the clubs can cash in on transfer fees. Some players sold off in this way have not made it in international soccer and live in poor conditions in countries such as Indonesia, China and Mexico.

Observers do not expect the prosecutions to take off. Said one such observer: “They can’t do that, because everybody is in on it.”

Within all this, Cameroon’s players seem to be forgotten. When news reports said they had complained about ‘poor payment’ in the run up to the World Cup, soccer officials stated in response that the players were not ‘patriotic’ enough.

Cameroon was knocked out in the first round of this year’s World Cup. It lost all three games against the Netherlands, Denmark and Japan.

**Beaten and in hiding**

Being ‘unpatriotic’ was also one of the epithets directed at a member of the FAIR team in Cameroon, when he attempted to investigate the sources of CAF president Issa Hayatou’s wealth. The reporter was threatened, beaten and has been in hiding since the incident earlier this year. “I wouldn’t want to live through that kind of experience ever again,” the reporter said.

He has every reason to be afraid. Hayatou comes from the ruling dynasty in Garoua, capital of the Northern Region of Cameroon. His brother Sardou Hayatou was Minister of Finance, Prime Minister and is currently country head of the Bank of Central African States (BEAC). His other brother Alim Hayatou is Secretary of State for Public Health in the current government. There has been a Hayatou in every Cameroonian government for the past 50 years.

A number of journalists have been killed or have disappeared after trying to investigate the powerful in Cameroon. Ngota Ngota Germain Cyril, publisher of the Cameroon Express newspaper who was arrested along with two of his colleagues Robert Mintya – publisher of Le Devoir and Serge Sabouang – publisher of La Nation, died in custody. The three were investigating a story involving the purchase of a luxury yacht for 17 billion FCFA (US $34 million) and the payment of commission to three government functionaries amounting to 1 342 000 000 FCFA (US $2.7 million).

Despite all this, the government is worried about the decline in football since Cameroon’s brilliant performance in 1990. Sports Minister Michel Zoa on May 25, 2010 convened 320 persons including former sports ministers, all former captains of the national team, FIFA and CAF experts, all former FECAFOOT presidents, players of the 1990 World Cup squad, traditional rulers, MPs, economic operators and civil society to look into the administration and management of the game.

It appears that no one took the meeting seriously. At the just ended World Cup football officials from Cameroon, including Fecafoot president Iya Mohammed, overpaid themselves by 235 million FCFA (US $470 000). They were ordered by Prime Minister Philemon Yang to repay the money.
A money circus that bleeds the country dry

Not even FIFA itself trusts the Football Association in Ivory Coast

Eric Mwamba

On Sunday 29 March 2009, twenty people died and 135 were injured in a stampede for tickets at the Felix Houphouët-Boigny Stadium in Abidjan after a World Cup qualifying match between Côte d’Ivoire and Malawi. It later transpired that officials of the Ivorian Football Federation (FIF) had sold 2,000 more tickets than the stadium—an old structure built in 1936—could accommodate. More people without tickets could also have entered into the stadium as security guards reportedly let people in exchange for small bribes.

Anzouan Kacou, the official in charge of organising competitions in the FIF, admitted later that 36,616 tickets had been issued when the stadium had a capacity of 34,600. He was made to shoulder the blame and was fined FCFA 500,000 (about US $1000) for “involuntary homicide and involuntary injury” and “complicity to commit fraud and the use of forgeries”.

Faustin Aka, the printer of the match tickets, was fined FCFA 50,000 (US$ 100) for “fraud”. Three agents of the company in charge of security, Yao Celestin, Serge Zabalou and Camara Shindou, were asked to pay a suspended fine of US$ 1000, for “fraud and use of forgeries”.

In a sport where officials the world over seem to be above the law, it would seem that Ivorian authorities had here, at least, taken gallant action. However, one of the most respected journalists in the country, André Silver Konan, described the verdict as “cowardly, corrupt and shameful,” pointing out that “prosecutors had gone for the small fry and left the big fish (at the top of the FIF, ed.) alone”.

Sillé N’Thabétéien Oumar, a sociologist and researcher and a member of the Council for the Development of Research in Social Services in Africa, CODESRIA, subtly criticized the FIF for allowing the dilapidation of this stadium and football infrastructure in general. “Aside from the debates around the presumption of fraud linked to the management of the ticketing office and the capacities of the stadiums... It is also a call to improve security on the sites which shelter this kind of manifestation”.

Big fish and missing funds

The Abidjan stadium was constructed in 1936. The capacity of less than 35,000 seats is woefully inadequate for a city of more than 5 million inhabitants. In its 2007 report about the tragic stampede, the Ivorian Football Federation refers to “an unfortunate experience” and “funds allocated to the presidents of the clubs of Anyama, Korhogo and to the mayor of Bouaflé” for the refurbishment of the stadiums. Perhaps needless to say, no one acknowledged receiving such funds.

The “big fish” in the FIF that should be monitoring the development of Ivorian soccer and the use of soccer funds, are the top layer of the 48 people that the FIF employs full-time, chief among them FIF director Jacques Anouma. But observers have pointed out mismanagement at all levels of the FIF. Local soccer clubs for example, haven’t seen any of the FCFA 800 million (US $1.6 million) per year that was habitually donated to them by the Ivorian Petrol Refinery company Société Ivoirienne de Raffinage, SIR, through Anouma’s FIF.

Since nobody knew of these donations, nobody complained, until 2007, when the SIR itself found out that national clubs had not seen any of it. A letter written by the SIR, announcing the suspension of the yearly donation until further notice fell into the hands of one of the clubs’ presidents, after which it was made public. In response to the ensuing criticism, FIF director Anouma argued that “that money was not supposed to the clubs anyway”, without explaining where it, then, went.

That the money had been pocketed by officials was confirmed by various sources in local football clubs during the course of this investigation. Sources also said that sports donations from the corporate sector are sometimes paid directly to the sports minister “to avoid the money falling into the hands of Anouma”. There are many examples, of state and corporate funds alike, disappearing. The fact that Anouma is also the Chief Financial Officer in the presidency of Ivory Coast contributes considerably to this state of affairs.
Self-sufficiency à la FIF
The FIF boss has often publicly denied that the FIF gobbles up much needed national funds, intended for sports development as well as for other expenditure. In 2008, Anouma announced that the federation “now had a surplus” of FCFA 1.1 billion (US $2.2 million); that FIF was now “functioning like a real company” and that it would be “self-sufficient within 10 years”. The FIF however does not function like a real company when it comes to publishing its income and expenditure. FIF does not publish any reports, keeps all internal papers secret, and only announces “surpluses” and “deficits” verbally at press conferences.

When, at the same press lunch in 2008, journalists dared to query whether it was really true that FIF was on its way to financial independence, Anouma shouted: “Stop accusing us of using taxpayers’ money. FIFA gives us money!” But this was contradicted by FIF’s own internal report for 2007, a copy of which FAIR was able to procure. “The FIF has a portfolio of partners that are categorised according to their contributions”, this report says. The coffee-cocoa industry is at the head of the list, with all its five state structures donating individually. Jostling for prime position with the coffee and cocoa sector is Orange Côte d’Ivoire, the mobile telephone giant.

The report qualifies the cocoa industry and Orange Côte d’Ivoire as “leading partners” according to the size of their contributions but does not mention the exact sums. Nevertheless, a source close to the three cocoa industry’s former managers who were jailed for corruption in 2007, has mentioned donations of “more than FCFA 2 billion (US $4 million) paid to the FIF and to football training centres between 2006 and 2007.” Names of training centres that have benefited from such donations are not mentioned in the 2007 FIF report.

Interestingly, the same report notes that “we have made transparency a management requirement in order to reassure our partners”. But when questioned on this, an internal source at the same organisation said it was “simple rhetoric” and explained that, at the most, the phrase could apply to the management of licenses and competitions, but not in any way to financial transparency.

Other sources said that the government annually allocates FCFA 3 billion (US $6 million) to FIF for the benefit of the national team and for the first, second and third division teams.

The Ivory Coast’s Chamber of Trade and Industry also fundraises for the FIF. Other major sponsors are the National Petroleum Operations Company (PETROCI) and the Petroleum Stocks management Company (GESTOCI). Estimates of the amounts that are contributed by these major sponsors are not made public, but sources say they could be as high as FCFA 2 billion (US $4 million). The refinery company SIR alone used to contribute FCFA700 million (US $1.4 million) annually on its own.

The FIF also gets a basic grant from the International Football Association (FIFA), which allocated each participating country US $1 million for preparations for this year’s World Cup. In addition, all the above companies, the government and the presidency of the Republic were again obliged to dig deep into their pockets, merely for “honourable participation”.

There are increased protests in the country against the money circus that is the FIF. Reports that international football stars are accommodated at the luxurious Golf Hotel in Abidjan together with officials and ministers with the bill paid by the state, even for the prostitutes that are allegedly brought in, have caused widespread anger among local soccer clubs.

Team building comes last
Ivory Coast’s national team, nicknamed the Elephants, boasts no less than ten world class players. Kolo Touré, who plays for Manchester City, is the best paid player in Ivory Coast and ranked 19th best paid player in the world last year. Didier Drogba, playing for Chelsea, is a close second. Other internationally famous Ivorian soccer players are Zokora Didier, Toure Yaya, Emmanuel Eboue, Keita Kader, Kalou Salomon, Bakari Kone, Kalou Bonaventure and Boubaka Sanongo.

But Ivorian soccer expenditure has done little to maintain or build the team. In the words of Le Nouveau Réveil newspaper of 16 February 2010: “For five years now, this has been a team that the whole world considered on paper to be the best but its performance has only plummeted, and Mr Jacques Anouma, led by false results that are obtained without any conviction, sweeps all criticism away with the back of his hand.”

The “conglomeration of stars” – in the words of former player Abdoulaye Traore – has indeed been dismal on the field. In the 2006 World Cup, the team was knocked out in the first round. It was also knocked out in the first round again this year. Playing in the ‘group of death’, which included Brazil, Portugal and People’s Republic of Korea, it won one game, lost one and drew another.

Experts say that the Elephants are not doing well because they are not a cohesive team. They are accused of...
playing as individuals, with each player’s interests taking precedence over national and team interests. Reportedly, the Elephants have virtually cracked in half, with part of the team forming a faction around Kolo Touré and the other around Drogba. FIF president Anouma, however, still seemed pleased with the team’s performance at the World Cup. “If we compare with the World Cup of 2006, we achieved satisfactory results in South Africa”, he said in an interview.

Ervé Siaba, president of the Ivory Coast Association of Football Club Presidents has gone on record to say that ‘FIF money is wasted’ because the FIF is “full of people who know nothing about football and who make decisions according to their own whims, to the detriment of the laws that govern our football”. Even FIFA seems to distrust the management capacity of the FIF. Just before the World Cup, Kaba Koné, manager of the national soccer team, announced that FIFA would market the 15 365 tickets meant for Ivory Coast in South Africa itself, in order to “minimise the risk of fraud”.

After the national team lost the African Cup of Nations in Cabinda, club presidents called for a general soccer assembly and even threatened to boycott competitions if their complaints were not heard. FIF director Anouma has remained defiant: “They can call for my resignation as much as they like”, he said.

His daughter, Stephanie, who is player Bamba Souleymane’s girlfriend, was reported to have contributed to the team’s loss to Algeria as she had thrown a party for Souleymane a night before the quarter finals. Said Anouma: “It was just a humble birthday cake.”

Numerous telephone calls, emails and questionnaires addressed to those in charge of the FIF only resulted in promises for interviews. One of the contributors to this investigation went to a few such promised meetings, only to be stood up several times. He concluded that “they do not want to be disturbed”.

This waste of money prompted Diomandé (surname withheld on request), a member of the Ivory Coasts’ Association of Child Planters, to ask why the farming parastatals were putting money into soccer when children of planters remain devastatingly poor. “It is revolting that such staggering sums should be given to football when the government cannot even build schools in cocoa-growing areas,” he said.

Jacques Anouma: the man behind FIF
Football in Nigeria has two faces. One is that of players taken out of the slums by the game. In gratitude, after making fame and fortune, they are developing the community. The other is that of soccer officials who enrich themselves at the expense of local players and to the detriment of the game.

Nwankwo Kanu, who currently plays for England’s Portsmouth Football Club, has paid for heart surgery for hundreds of Nigerian kids with heart problems. Kanu also employs hundreds at his hotel, Hardley Suite, in Lagos, his bottled water manufacturing company, transport, real estate and other businesses.

Austin Okocha, who played international soccer for 16 years for German, English, French and Turkish clubs before retiring, helps orphanages. Several children’s homes have benefited from his yearly donations in cash and kind. Now back in Nigeria, Okocha controls enterprises that range from entertainment, real estate and other businesses employing scores of Nigerians.

John Obi Mikel was born and bred in the slums of Jos, a city in the Northern part of Nigeria. Today, football has not only turned Mikel into a millionaire, but many of his childhood friends and members of his community in Jos are now self-employed thanks to Mikel’s generosity. Many have also been given scholarships.

Virtually all former Nigerian players in Europe and those currently playing employ thousands of Nigerians and embark on developmental programmes in their communities.

But the same cannot be said of the officials. Though Nigeria has a population of about 150 million that is passionate about football, several good stadiums and talented players, football suffers. International Football Association (FIFA) and Confederation of African Football (CAF) executive board member, Amos Adamu, who ran Nigerian football in recent years, has ruled over a situation in which Nigerian football clubs were able to access only about 10% of the US $7 million yearly donated to them by their sponsor, Globalcom. The rest has stayed with the officials on the board of the Nigeria Premier League. Television rights for the Nigerian league are worth about US $5 million, but since this deal was signed a couple of years ago, none of the clubs in the premier league have seen any of this money either.

Many clubs have complained about this situation, saying that they can not possibly pay their players and staff like this, but the status quo remains.

Just before the current World Cup Nigeria Minister of Sports, Ibrahim Isa Bio had to bail out the national team, the Super Eagles. The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) had hired the US $100 a night Hampshire Hotel in the South African coastal town of Ballito for the team, whilst the federation was getting US $400 per person per night from FIFA for this purpose. With two players expected to stay in a room, the officials stood to make about US $700 on each room. The Minister quickly organized a better hotel for the team.

Before the hotel affair, the NFF was also involved in a scandal over an agreement with Glenn Hoddle, the former England coach. Hoddle had signed an agreement to coach the national team. The deal was worth US $1 million but an official had told him it would be announced as US $1.5 million. Hoddle rejected this and went public.

Lastly: recently about US $250 000 in cash was said to have gone missing from the coffers of the NFF, with nobody, reportedly, having any clues to the money bags’ whereabouts.

When Nigeria was knocked out in the first round in 2010, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan was so disappointed that he suspended the national team from all international competitions for two years and ordered an audit. He was supported by Rivers State governor Rotimi Amaechi, who headed the presidential task force on the 2010 World Cup, as well as by former Nigeria soccer star John Fashanu. “We went to the World Cup and found all sorts of problems and we felt we should sit back and look inward,” Amaechi said, explaining the Nigerian government’s decision.

But this was not to be. FIFA gave Nigeria three days to withdraw its decision or face a ban from the soccer governing body. FIFA communications director, Nicolas Maingot,
said the FIFA ban would not only cover the national team but club matches in African competitions, referees as well as the cash that flows from FIFA to national associations. This included the US $8 million that was due to Nigeria for participating in the first round of the World Cup. 

Ironically, the man who was sent by FIFA to present the full picture and weight of the FIFA threat to President Jonathan was Amos Adamu, whose cronies still run the Nigeria Football Federation.
Killing soccer in Africa – Ghana

Ghana’s secret: star players and cheats

"There is massive corruption in football and all hands must be on deck to eradicate that cankerworm"

Olukayode Thomas

Ghana’s greatest football players plough back their fortunes into the communities where they grew up. In doing so, they encourage other youths to take soccer seriously. The people of Senya Bereku, a fishing community in the Central Region of Ghana, for example, had high expectations about the 2010 World Cup -not because they expected the Black Stars to win, but because of the promise by Michael Essien to build a hospital and a school for them afterwards.

“Michael is our son,” said Emmanuel Frimpong, a taxi driver who says he grew up with Essien. “He grew up and started playing football here before he moved away. We all support him and Chelsea here and we are waiting for him to come and fulfill his promise.” Were it not for football, Essien would probably have ended up a Senya Bereku fisherman, artisan or perhaps a teacher at the local school.

Antony Yeboah, after excelling in the English League and German Bundesliga, where he made fame and fortune, is now an employer in Ghana, owning hotels in Accra and Kumasi. And former Bayern Munich star, Samuel Osei Kuffuor, is a power player in the Ghanaian real estate industry today, owning sprawling estates in the same two cities. The eye catching ‘VAT House’, in the heart of Accra, is his. The former player employs many Ghanaians, and scores of youths have benefited from his scholarship scheme.

Life is less rosy for players who haven’t made it to the international scene. Kwadwo Poku of Asante Kotoko, one of the league’s best players, earns US $450 a month. Another top player, Eric Bekoe, earns only US $170. Some clubs pay players a maximum of US $70 a month, with some players reportedly earning as low as US $30.

It is the gap between international and local players that may have led to widespread corruption in the domestic league. Abedi ‘Pele’ Ayew, who was African Footballer of the Year for two consecutive seasons in 1991 and 1992...
when he played for French club Olympique Marseille, was accused of match-fixing after the final round of matches for qualification for the country’s top league in 2007. The clubs involved were allegedly his own Nania Football Club and three other clubs: Okwahu United, Great Mariners FC and Tudu Mighty Jets. Ayew was found guilty and fined US $20,000. He was also banned from football for one season. The ban was later lifted and the fine reduced to US $5,000.

Even international player Stephen Apiah, who played in the just ended World Cup, was found guilty and fined for match fixing in 2004. Apiah admitted to receiving payment, and distributing the money to other players, at the Olympics in Greece in 2004. Something similar again happened in 2006, when the national Black Stars reportedly threw away their game against Brazil in the then World Cup. Soccer corruption investigator Declan Hill says in his book *The Fix – Soccer and Organised Crime* that he, Hill, was personally told, accurately, the score of the Brazil Ghana game, two days before the match was played.

Ghana’s match-fixing allegations date back to 1997, when investigators found that the team was in cahoots with Asian gamblers for this purpose. Declan Hill maintains that the gambling rings’ contact person was Abukari Damba, who had been a national player and coach of the Ghana Under 17-team. According to Hill, Damba had access to players at any level.

Football officials have been accused of involvement in the match-fixing, as well as of fiddling with the division levels. The head of the local Purejoy Stars FC, Isaac Tetteh, publicly blamed the relegation of his club to a lower division on corrupt practices by opposing club officials: “I challenge you (the media, ed.) to dig deep and expose corruption affecting Ghana’s football. There is massive corruption in football and all hands must be on deck to eradicate that cankerworm. My humble plea is to the President, Minister of Youth and Sports, GFA President and the National Sports Council to come together to fight corruption in Ghanaian football, else we will fail as a nation,” Tetteh said.

His allegations were supported by Welbeck Abra-Appiah, the chairman of the Premier League Board. Abra-Appiah said that virtually all clubs were engaged in ‘corrupt acts’.

Nevertheless, unlike other African countries in their investigation, Ghana seems to have a successful soccer development programme. The Ghanaian Football Association, one of the oldest on the continent, spends its money on youth development, which has seen its junior teams winning international tournaments at World Cup level.

And, though it was the lowest ranked African country at the 2010 World Cup – apart from South Africa which qualified by virtue of being the host – Ghana qualified for the quarter finals in only its second qualification for the tournament. Its team was the right mix, experts say: it had international players as well as as many as six young local players, all hungry for success. The average age for team members was 24 years.

These results seem to indicate that engaging in a bit of fixing seems to have done Ghana’s general soccer development no harm, at least not so far. The question could be asked whether match-fixing is perhaps a ‘higher’ level of corruption than simply having soccer officials living the good life from soccer money, like the situations uncovered in FAIR’s other country investigations. But while match fixing might not be affecting the country at the moment, it can kill soccer in the long run, as it has done in Asia.
The 2010 World Cup united South Africans for six years, but it brought with it a conspiracy of silence. Mainstream media, radio and TV did not report much about South African soccer mismanagement or corruption—even when there was a lot to report—out of fear that the tournament could be moved elsewhere. There was a real threat that this could happen in view of doubts, nationally and internationally, that South Africa was safe enough or even able to host the event. All this being now water under the bridge, it is perhaps time to reflect on the big question: was it all worth it?

Michael Cross, who had hoped that his documentary on world soccer, ‘Fahrenheit 2010’, might anticipate the answers to these questions, is disappointed because he could not find a TV station to air it before the games. The documentary was completed last year, almost a year before the World Cup, but it has only been shown at selected, small, cinemas.

“Neither SABC nor e-TV are willing to rile government and FIFA,” Cross said just before the World Cup referring to the South African Broadcasting Corporation and the independent e-TV channel. “My documentary asks hard questions on poverty, corruption, crime and what is to become of the massive infrastructure built after the tournament. It has been aired abroad. But no broadcaster here wants to look at it.”

The SABC, the nation’s public broadcaster, was the official sponsor of the 2010 World Cup. This effectively barred it from doing any independent reporting on soccer business and spending. The other main TV channel, e-TV, did not have this excuse but seemed to be sharing the same spirit of positivity. It ran a weekly ‘feel good’ soccer programme that, among other things, showcased some of South Africa’s tourist attractions.

Michael Cross slammed the fact that there was no healthy debate in the broadcast media about the World
Killing soccer in Africa – South Africa

Cup. “Good stuff is presented but there is little to show the other side of the story, to show whether this spectacle which has cost us billions will make us or break us financially,” he said.

A whopping R64 billion (almost US $1 billion) was spent on the World Cup: money that, critics said, the country could have used for more urgent needs. Stadiums which were expected to cost the taxpayer R2.3 billion (US $325 million) cost nearly eight times that. According to the Sunday Times, one of the companies that won the tender for the largest soccer stadium, Soccer City, benefited from a ‘black empowerment’ component that turned out to be fake. The ‘black empowerment’ element consisted only of security guard Gladwin Khangale, who lives in a poor Johannesburg township, whilst officially owning 26 percent of the company, Global Event Management.

Only small, progressive media, like African Eye News Service, persisted in investigating the murder of a whistleblower in connection with tenders for Mbombela Stadium in Mpumalanga. They also reported that schools were destroyed and people moved from where they were living in order to make way for the stadiums.

A recent report on the benefits and pitfalls on soccer spending by the Institute of Security Studies, questioned whether big soccer spending was really such a bad thing: “If mega-events make governments expedite the spending of public funds efficiently and advance much-needed infrastructural projects and other important social services, surely they act as catalysts for economic and social development?” The report appeared even to excuse corruption to some extent, if the spending on the whole would be to the overall benefit of the country. “If the end can justify the means, perhaps it is acceptable to side-step democratic governance and accountability. It may even be tolerable to overlook conflict of interest situations and isolated instances of corruption to ensure the public have access to enhanced infrastructure and the country to an enhanced international image.”

Three international airports in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban were upgraded in preparation for the World Cup. Road networks and transport were improved with the introduction of new train services. Five new stadiums were built and another five were refurbished.

But the ISS added, during such mega events “the costs of corruption are high. Apart from eroding public trust and a country’s global reputation, it can result in more expensive financing and capital and maintenance costs, the misappropriation of funds, or inappropriate financing, unviable and defective or environmentally or socially destructive projects”.

The Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane
South African soccer is massively sponsored. The South African Premier Soccer League is the seventh best funded league in the world. It is supported by ABSA, one of the leading banks, SAB Miller, internationally the fourth largest brewer, the satellite Supersport channel and a number of other banks and corporates, whose donations together amount to about US $300 million over a five year period from 2007.

With Egypt, South Africa is the only African country where local leagues are competitive enough to keep local players from rushing abroad, and players are well paid. The local leagues even attract a flood of players from other African countries. But despite all this, South African soccer standards are still not at par with world standards. After the country's long international isolation during the apartheid years, South African players still lack international exposure. South African soccer management appears to continue to neglect this factor. South African was knocked out in the first round of the World Cup, becoming the first host nation to do so.

The Local Organising Committee was one of the biggest winners from the tournament. Reports, which they brushed off, said members of the committee and other football administrators could share between R 1 billion (US $ 130 million) and R500 million (US $ 65 million) from the proceeds of the cup. The overall winner was definitely the International Football Association (FIFA), which made US $ 3,2 billion from the event.
On May 21 this year, the Kenyan government was forced to spend US $10,000 to transport its national team, the Harambee Stars, to the Africa Nations Championships qualifier in Kampala, Uganda, after the national soccer federation had failed to do so. Gordon Oluch, the Commissioner of Sports, said federation officials were, instead, on an all-expenses paid trip to the United States. “This morning we have been forced to spend Sh750,000 (US $10,000) to take the boys to Kampala,” he said. “The federation guys are in the US.”

The rot in Kenyan soccer, deep-rooted and pervasive, can be traced to the early 1980s when the economy went into recession and corporate bodies, such as Rivatex, Thika Textile Mills, Kenya Airways and Posta, retrenched a number of key national and club players among their staff. Their premier league teams were hit badly.

However, the methodical rip-off started in earnest in September 2000 when a new team headed by Coca Cola corporate official Maina Kariuki, and politicians Peter Kenneth and Sam Nyamweya took over the management of the Kenyan Football Federation (KFF). In just three years, the team had cleared the Sh15 million (US $200,000) cash surplus in KFF coffers and lost Sh70 million (US $933,000) sponsorships from Kenya Breweries Ltd, BAT, and Glaxo Smithkline.

By the time the group left office in 2006, the federation couldn’t meet its Sh400,000 (US $530,000) tax obligation, forcing the Kenya Revenue Authority to freeze its accounts. The group left a deficit of Sh24 million (US $320,000). Sports Minister Najib Balala then fired the entire KFF executive, but this drew the ire of the International Football Association (FIFA). It suspended Kenya from all international and continental soccer tournaments for 6 months.

After the lifting of the ban in March 2007, Bob Munro, the chairman of Mathare United, - one of Kenya’s top football clubs – restructured the Kenya Premier League, attracting a KSh90 million (US $1.2 million) sponsorship from Multi-Choice, that included live coverage of matches by the SuperSport channel. However, when it appeared that the KFF was still merely interested in reaping from appearance fees in international matches and hardly in developing soccer, Munro pulled his five key players from Harambee Stars, Kenya’s national team, making it almost impossible for the then coach, Antoine Hey, to assemble a meaningful team for the World Cup qualifiers.

This in turn caused a rebellion in the Kenyan Football Federation and an acrimonious leadership fall-out, forcing the creation of two parallel leagues, followed. The new Football Kenya Limited, led by officials ousted from KFF, started jostling for the national federation label with the KFF. The FIFA arbitration council then ruled in favour of FKL and FKL is now FIFA's only Kenyan partner.

FKL is chaired by ex KFF official Mohamed Hatimy, a property owner with political ambitions, who has personally contributed US $250,000 towards the FKL’s youth development programmes. But parts of the Kenyan government still appear to favour the KFF, which is now led by Sam Nyamweya, a political activist with the Party of National Unity (PNU), one of the coalition government partners.

Many of those who take up key positions in soccer administration use this as a stepping stone to politics. Dan Omino, Peter Kennedy, Alfred Sambu, Kennedy Matiba all held key positions in the KFF before moving into politics as ministers, deputy ministers or political party officials.

Kenyan soccer is now torn in the middle, with the FKL allied to the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) while the KFF is close to the PNU.

“They want to be known. They want to market themselves,” Joe Kadenge, a legendary sportsman who defined Kenya’s soccer from 1957 through to 1975 as a national team player, Dan Omino, Peter Kennedy, Alfred Sambu, Kennedy Matiba all held key positions in the KFF before moving into politics as ministers, deputy ministers or political party officials. Kenyan soccer is now torn in the middle, with the FKL allied to the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) while the KFF is close to the PNU.

“The Premier League has little time for any of the two federation’s officials. “Year in year out, these (federation officials) are the same faces. They have dominated football for more than ten years. They always bribe their way...
Killing soccer in Africa – Kenya

“Nobody dares touch these looters because of FIFA’s policy of non-interference”

back after defeats in elections,” says a Premier League coach. Corporate sponsors bypass the federations and donate directly to the Premier League, whose architect is Bob Munro, and his Mathare United, Kenya’s first well-run soccer club. Mathare has about 17 of its players in foreign leagues including Inter-Milan’s MacDonald Mariga and Auxerre’s Dennis Oliech.

Both federations get the money its officials scramble for in appearance fees from matches. FKL technical director Patrick Naggi declined to say how much his association reaps by taking part in international friendlies. “Someone can tell you that, not me. Ask them.”

Former national coach, Francis Kimanzi, got his fingers burnt when he tried to get in the way of the ‘appearance fee’ revenue stream. Kimanzi once declined to release his charges to play friendlies in Spain and Egypt, much to the disgust of KFF officials led by Mohamed Hatimy (the same Hatimy who later crossed floors to the FKL), Titus Kasuve (the senior vice chairperson) and Erastus Okul (the second vice chairperson). The federation had banked on the expected “appearance fees” and did not seem responsive to the argument that the welfare of the clubs that produced players for the national team, was at stake.

The trip to Spain would have been a windfall for the federation. Instead the federation was fined for turning down an offer that we had earlier consented to,” says Okul. Kimanzi was fired.

Kenya counts more than 2 million soccer players. Its national team was formed in 1926. Football administrators claim that the country has what it takes, but it has never qualified for the African Cup of Nations or the World Cup. “We already had what is required to get there (the World Cup, ed.),” says Patrick Naggi. “We had the players and ability to get there this time round. Our league is one of the most competitive in Africa. But we didn’t do it because of politics, mismanagement and poor planning.”

With a fan base of 10 million in 2000, only a handful of Kenyans now go to the stadium to watch matches. They rather congregate in bars to watch foreign leagues such as the English Premier, La Liga or Serie A. “This is very bad for football in this country,” says Kadenge, agitated that his fellow country people talk about Arsenal and not Harambee Stars.

Kadenge is of the view that the present football administration must be disbanded. “We should defy FIFA and take control of the federation until clean people are elected to take over. FIFA can suspend us if they so wish.” Joe Kadenge argues. Patrick Naggi says the answer is in youth development. “It’s all about development of youth soccer from the grassroots,” he said. But right now Kenya doesn’t have a youth soccer league.
Zimbabwe: Betting allegations, football kits and audit problems

The reporters were unhappy, not because of the corruption, but because they wanted some money, too

Dumisani Ndlela

Dust curls up from the football pitch into the sky as a bare-footed boy advances towards a defender, stops the plastic ball made from a maize meal package filled with plastics and paper, before passing it on to a team mate to the left. The boy runs to the right flank where he gets back a cross, tackles another defender before striking the ball into the goal, triggering wild cheers: “Maradona! Maradona! Maradona!”

He is not the legendary Diego Maradona who became an idol in Argentina after leading his country to victory at the 1986 FIFA World Cup; this is a 13-year-old boy from a high density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital who has become a hero among colleagues for his sharp dribbling skills. But the boys’ potential is going to waste. Despite millions of dollars splurged into developing the game by the International Football Association (FIFA) and national governments, Zimbabwe does not experience much soccer development at all.

The Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) has been dogged by perennial squabbles and pillaging over the past decade, with all chief executive officers (CEOs) having been embroiled in bitter fights with their boards either for incompetence or gross financial irregularities. The CEOs have, however, been usually the softer targets every time national football lurches into a crisis.
Officials bouncing back
Edgar Rodgers, the ZIFA CEO at the start of the millennium, was booted out in 2003 after a chaotic trip to Mali that could have cost Zimbabwe their place at the Nations Cup finals. He accused the ZIFA board of using him as a scapegoat and threatened to sue, but he never did. He was replaced by Jonathan Mashingaidze but Mashingaidze, in turn, was embarrassingly suspended over allegations that he had sold World Cup tickets issued to ZIFA at inflated prices.

Mashingaidze however bounced back, reportedly because he was not the only one in Zimbabwean top soccer management who had engaged in this type of activity. After being officially exonerated, he was appointed as ZIFA’s football development manager. A top football source told FAIR that ZIFA board chairman Wellington Nyatanga had been instrumental in the exoneration. “Mashingaidze should have demanded his job back. But he was grateful that he came back at all, because there were a lot of underhand deals during his tenure,” the football administrator said.

Mashingaidze was replaced as CEO by Henrietta Rushwaya, who got the appointment at the instigation of ZIFA’s patron, the now late Zimbabwe Vice President Joseph Msika. Rushwaya has equally been embroiled in a number of controversial transactions. She was arraigned in 2007 over allegations of theft involving US$2 400. ZIFA boss Wellington Nyatanga came to her rescue, too, offering witness testimony that led to her exoneration.

In March this year, Rushwaya was suspended at a ZIFA board meeting after a controversial trip by the national team to Asia at the end of last year. The Sports Commission had demanded a report from the ZIFA board over how the Warriors flew out to Asia to play Thailand, a Malaysian club and Syria, without getting its clearance. Nyatanga again bailed out Rushwaya, labeling the suspension ‘irregular’ and stating that “we need to concentrate on image building than destruction”.

Rushwaya consequently survived, and openly lobbied for incumbent ZIFA President Cuthbert Dube, who landed the post after a landslide victory over Leslie Gwindi in an election on March 27, 2010.

Dube, the CEO of the Premier Service Medical Aid Society, the biggest medical aid company in Zimbabwe, had oiled his campaign with vast sums of money. Three councillors who voted at the ZIFA elections confirmed to FAIR that they were each paid US$2 000 by him for handing him the victory. One of the councillors told FAIR it was no big deal: “He was still the better candidate of the two anyway.” When asked to sign an affidavit confirming the payment, another one of the councillors demanded US $1 000 because “he was putting his relationship with Dube at risk”.

Under Dube’s leadership, national coach Sunday Chidzambwa, one of the most successful local coaches, resigned because ZIFA failed to pay him $67 000 in salary arrears.

Match-fixing allegations
After Chidzambwa’s exit, Henrietta Rushwaya was suspended over allegations of match-fixing. She is now being investigated on betting allegations relating to the national team’s tour of the Far East in December last year and alleged to have worked with Asian gamblers. Soccer officials say the matches cost the Warriors their international ranking. Zimbabwe lost 6-0 to Syria in Kulala Lumpur and 3-0 to Thailand on the tour.

During this investigation, it was also discovered that a FIFA donation of football kits worth US$50 000 was used by Rushwaya to campaign for political office. Rushwaya had registered to contest the ZANU-PF primary elections in Gutu, in Masvingo province, but pulled out at the last minute. When FIFA got wind that its kits had disappeared but was assured by ZIFA that they were still there, it suggested that the kits be disbursed by a FIFA representative. Rushwaya’s garage, at which the kits were being “kept”, caught fire shortly after that and everything including the kits was purportedly destroyed. FIFA had to replace the kits with new ones.

FIFA has also disbursed money to ZIFA under its goal programme but it appears this money has never been fully accounted for. One audited report this reporter had sight of stated that: “A substantial portion of income comprises grants and donations. Due to the nature of this income it is impracticable to implement accounting controls prior to entry of such income in the books of accounts. Whilst we have no reason to believe that there is any unrecorded income of this nature, we are unable to confirm this.”

Mugabe can’t interfere
The rot in Zimbabwe football caught the attention of President Robert Mugabe during the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Egypt in 2006. A fund, set up to raise money for Zimbabwe’s participation, was said to have been embezzled by ZIFA administrators and Mugabe then chided the administrators, saying: “ZIFA continues to be in shambles ... Even with the fund we had, the problem now is with how the money was spent. There should have been a
proper supervision given to the monies."

Mugabe announced that the Sports Commission would investigate ZIFA "to get things right", but, after threats that Zimbabwe would be banned from international competitions by FIFA, the investigation did not go ahead.

One soccer coach who has closely worked with ZIFA said: "Nobody dares touch these looters because of the FIFA policy of non-interference. There’s a lot going on here. The football community will never get to the bottom of the rot." “It’s a pity because it is the country that is suffering,” another football administrator, who declined to be named for fear of internal conflict with his colleagues, said.

The media appear to have become tainted by the soccer corruption as well. Reporters covering the ZIFA elections were aware that someone was dishing out money. They were overheard commenting that they were not happy: not because of the corruption, but because he had not paid them too.
Zambia plagued by dictatorial soccer administration

From promising star to totalitarian boss

Dumisani Ndlela

Kalasha Bwalya was the darling of Zambian soccer fans and the media when he was still a player for the national team, Chipolopolo. He was revered and almost untouchable. Then he changed roles. He became national coach, rose to vice-president of the Football Association of Zambia and is now president of the Zambian Football Association, FAZ. Bwalya, however, still behaves like a star and not like someone who should, as boss of the most popular sports sector in the country, be answerable to the nation. The International Football Association (FIFA) seems to be reinforcing that impression.

Last year, FIFA threatened to suspend Zambia after its National Sports Council suspended Bwalya from all sporting activities. This followed Bwalya's refusal to stand before a parliamentary committee to answer charges related to his involvement in the transfer of a minor to an Israeli club, Maccabi Tel-Aviv, in 2008.

An investigation by the Sports Council had implicated Bwalya and his deputy Emmanuel Munaile in the transfer of Emmanuel Mayuka to Maccabi, indicating that they had influenced the issuing of an international transfer certificate without the consent of his domestic club, Kabwe Warriors. Kabwe Warriors should also have received a percentage of the transfer fees. So controversial was the issue that a Zambian priest, Reverend Alfred Sayila, said sports authorities should “mete out stiff punishment to those corrupt soccer officials who may have had a hand in the illicit transfer of Mayuka”. He also said the amount realised from the “underhand, shoddy contract” should be made public.

FIFA, however, ordered that the investigation by the Sport Council should be stopped or Zambia would be banned from international football, saying in a letter to the FAZ signed by the FIFA general secretary Jerome Valcke: “This current controversy circles around issues falling under the direct competence of FIFA, (a) the defence of the fundamental principle of the autonomy of the FIFA member associations from external influence, (b) the disputes around international transfers of players.” The government had to rescind Bwalya’s suspension.

Call for unity

Bwalya is also a player agent. He has been involved in the international transfers of several players from Zambia: most recently in the transfer of Collins Mbesuma to English club Portsmouth from South Africa’s Kaizer Chiefs. Bwalya’s wife Emmy Cassalleti, a FIFA World Cup marketing executive, is the manager for Collins Mbesuma. She has also been involved in the sale of Zambian players and has been linked to the FAZ deal with Nike, for which Bwalya’s critics allege conflict of interest.

Just before the annual general meeting of FAZ affiliates in Zambia in March, Bwalya faced a petition over a number of issues from disgruntled members, among them the transfer of Mbesuma, his involvement in the Mayuka
transfer, and his suspension of an administrator, Simaata Simaata, who was reinstated after being cleared by an independent adjudication team.

Bwalya has also been mired in the controversial purchase by the FAZ of three vehicles from Japan without going to tender as required by the FAZ constitution, as well as a London debacle in which the FAZ fielded London-based Zambian students at a friendly match between Zambia and Ghana in the UK after failing to arrange visas for foreign-based players, according to findings by the Zambian Sports Ministry.

The FAZ annual general meeting came out with a call for unity from Bwalya. His foes, however, charged that he had manipulated the meeting and suppressed debate from dissenting voices. FIFA marketing and development officer Ashford Mamelodi backed Bwalya in the row, saying petitions targeting Bwalya and his deputy Munaile, by committee members Pivoty Simwanza and Keegan Chipango, were ‘ill-conceived’.

FAZ Division Two side Medical Stars chairman Alex Mambwe, who supported the petition, retorted: “FIFA may be satisfied with the misuse of resources through the London trip, the purchase of motor vehicles without tender procedure, the non ratification of the general secretary, but this is unacceptable in Zambia.”

**Reporter slapped**

Bwalya slapped Zambian sports reporter Augustine Mukoka in Cape Town in December last year shortly after the 2010 World Cup draw, because of a report Mukoka had written. Mukoka had quoted sources saying the FAZ president had banned national team players from granting interviews to the media. Bwalya wanted to know who the sources were and slapped Mukoka when the latter refused to reveal their names. “I must say I have nothing personal against Mr Bwalya. He was a great footballer. But he does not take kindly to criticism,” Mukoka said later.

Zambia has never qualified for the World Cup. It has appeared in the Nations Cup finals twice. Its biggest victory was against Italy at the 1988 Olympic Games. Chipolopolo beat Italy by 4-0.

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**Killing soccer in Africa – Zambia**

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