

THE ALDRIDGE FOUNDATION EXPANDS ITS SUPPORT FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT GAINED THROUGH SPORT TO YOUNG AFRICANS IN KENYA

The Aldridge Foundation announces that it is to provide funding and share learning to enable Cricket and Character Development Programmes to reach thousands of disadvantaged young Africans in Nairobi and help them transform their lives through sport and education.

The Aldridge Foundation, an established UK registered charity celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, focuses on programmes that help young people from disadvantaged communities to develop key life and employability skills to underpin their engagement in academic learning and help them to create better lives for themselves. The experience and discipline of studying and playing sport is one of the methods the Foundation deploys to help young people develop these skills. The Foundation currently supports over 7,000 young people primarily across a family of Academies and colleges based in the UK, in London and in North West and South East England.

In 2016, the Foundation founded a cricket centre and cricket academy programme at its Brighton Academy based in the South East of England encouraging the development of state school cricket. This programme offers integrated courses bringing together academic study with cricket learning and coaching. Armed with both academic qualifications and key life and enterprise skills nurtured through their cricket study, students progress to studying specialist sports and other degrees at top UK universities, play club, county and national cricket, or choose to directly secure various roles in the wider sports industry.

With the successful development and outcomes of the programme in the UK, the Foundation's founder Sir Rod Aldridge now wishes to support other similar projects and share learning to help change the lives of young people in disadvantaged communities beyond the UK and has chosen to initially focus on Kenya. His interest in Africa results through numerous family holidays to different parts of the continent and more latterly to visit family members who live and work in Nairobi.

The Aldridge Foundation has chosen to collaborate with The East Africa Character Development Trust (EACDT) which was founded in 2013 and teaches key character traits essential for personal development to progress and to succeed in life. This resonates strongly with the Aldridge Foundation's work in the UK. EACDT exists to bring hope and opportunity to disadvantaged young people, developing through its teaching and playing cricket, attitudes and life skills which better equip young people for school, employment, family and community life, and social integration. EACDT currently engages with 6,000 pupils through working in seventeen schools in and around Nairobi, Kenya, many located in the poorest slums and facing a constant, uphill struggle through chronic overcrowding, a lack of resources and many other every-day challenges.

The EACDT/Sir Rod Aldridge Cricket and Character Development Programmes will utilise EACDT's expertise in delivering character education through sport and establish 6 community cricket hubs encouraging boys and girls to play with the help of dedicated coaches. Practice nets will be built and practice cages constructed for centre wickets and all the necessary sporting equipment will be provided. Ultimately, the plan is for this to lead to the formation of a Cricket League for under 19 boys and girls creating a development pathway for young cricketers of promise.

From the 6 community hubs, the programme is expected to reach 800 (500 girls and 300 boys) young people in their first year of operation and to reach at least 3,000 (1800 girls and 1200 boys) over the next 3 years. The 800 in the first year will include the 400 players that can be reached immediately and another 400 who are expected to enrol in the programme in the next six months. The programme target ratio of girls to boys is 60% girls and 40% boys.



Sir Rod Aldridge, Founder and Chair of The Aldridge Foundation, commented:

“We are delighted to have identified an organisation in EACDT that shares our beliefs and purpose and have this opportunity to collaborate and carefully extend our support and impact on young lives from disadvantaged communities.

“Cricket as a multi-faceted game, is ideal as a vehicle for building character. It has a unique dynamic in which players are team-members and also individuals with particular responsibilities; it is a game for everyone - for girls, boys and those with disabilities. Cricket is complex, offering wide-ranging roles and opportunities to contribute – on and off the field, as players and officials; it demands high levels of strategic thinking, patience, self-control but also physical courage and risk-taking. It’s best traditional values - play hard, play fair – are highly relevant to all aspects of life. Cricket requires fitness, intelligence, skill and, above all, character.

These are the skills, values and attitudes that the Aldridge Foundation stand by – all of which combine to form our characters - that matter most if young people can become good, purposeful citizens and effective performers in the community and workplace.”

David Waters MBE, EACDT Programme Director, said:

“This ground-breaking collaboration between the Aldridge Foundation and East Africa Character Development Trust will allow, for the first time in Kenya, the development of community-based cricket clubs for young men and women in socially challenged areas of Nairobi and beyond.

Using sport, and in our case cricket, our programme will enhance and promote character development and life skills in young people and in doing so will give them a greater chance of leading productive lives in their homes, at school/university, in their communities and ultimately in the work place.

We are hugely grateful for the support given by the Sir Rod Aldridge and the Aldridge Foundation and hope that this project becomes an inspirational model to be replicated throughout Kenya and East Africa.”

Robert Aldridge, representing his father Sir Rod, and the Aldridge Foundation at the official launch event in Kabiro, Nairobi on 11 December 2021, said:

“I am delighted to be in Kenya to celebrate this unique collaboration which will have a transformative effect on the lives of so many young women and men in this country and wider region. Sport is an excellent catalyst for skills development and is an activity that supports physical and mental wellbeing and builds stronger ties across communities. We look forward to this programme building on its initial impact and expanding its reach over the coming years.”

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About the Aldridge Foundation

The Aldridge Foundation is a charity, founded by Sir Rod Aldridge OBE in 2006. The Foundation is built on a desire to equip young people with essential, transferable employability and life skills, developing an enterprising mindset that gives them the ability to create better life chances for themselves and become catalysts for positive change in their communities.

Find out more about the Foundation and our relationship with the Aldridge Education family of schools and colleges at www.aldridgefoundation.com

About the Aldridge Cricket Academy

The Aldridge Cricket Academy, founded in 2013 and one of a handful of state schools rated in the Cricketer Magazine's Top 100 schools, enables students from Brighton Aldridge Community Academy to develop their cricket skills alongside studying for their academic qualifications. Through the programme players develop a wide range of skills that are required at the highest level in cricket. They also experience various areas involved in the whole sport of cricket; such as, sport science, sports management and coaching, to adequately prepare them for whichever career path they choose to take. More information can be found at www.baca-uk.org.uk/Cricket/

East Africa Character Development Trust: <https://eacdt.org/>