

Press Release

Michael Essien, Diambars, the Senegalise academy set up by the former Arsenal player Patrick Veira, and Didier Drogba and the Cote D'Ivoire national team, were among the big winners at the prestigious SCORE4africa Awards on 30th November.

The SCORE4africa Awards celebrate the power of football to transform lives, honouring those who are using football for development purposes in Africa. The lucky winners received their awards in front of a star studded audience of fellow footballers, politicians and business people, including Salomon Kalou, Diomansy Kamara and Kagisho Dikgacoi, George Elokobi, Sports Minister, Gerry Sutcliffe, MP and the South African High Commissioner, HE Dr Zola Skweyiya.

Chelsea mid-fielder Essien walked away with the People's Choice Award for best African Ambassador in the Premier League, beating off a strong challenge from Didier Drogba and Nwankwo Kanu. While Didier Drogba and colleagues Salomon Kalou, Kolo Toure and Emmanuel Eboué, from the Cote D'Ivoire national team were recognised for their contributions to peace and reconciliation during the civil war in their home country, which split the country between the north and the south.

Salomon Kalou, speaking on behalf of the Cote D'Ivoire National team said: 'Our country went through a difficult time during the troubles. Our football team stayed together. Football helped in the peace process. As we go to the World Cup we hope the county can unite behind the team and we can help further with reconciliation.'

It was a disappointing night for Man City striker Craig Bellamy, who was nominated in two categories but was pipped to the post by Patrick Veira's Diambars, who won for best education project using football and for the best football Foundation.

Grassroots organisations using football for development were also recognised. Alive and Kicking, who have created a leather ball making business employing over 20 people, won the Enterprise Award for second year. While Kick4Life, an HIV project won the Health Award.

Cameroun football legend Roger Milla was given the Lifetime Achievement Award. In his acceptance speech he called on African players to do more off the pitch.

'It's been a very exciting competition, reflecting the high profile individuals and grassroots organisations making a difference through football,' said Onyekachi Wambu, one of the event's organisers.

Co-event organiser, Ayo Alli added: 'The strength of the winners reflects the growing importance to development in Africa and is a challenge to the entire football world to do more.'

Finally, HE Dr Zola Skweyiya welcomed the SCORE4africa initiative and promised the gathered audience that South Africa and Africa were ready to host the 2010 World Cup next year.

Judges for the awards included Marcel Desailly, Nancy Dell'Olio, Lord Newby, Nada Hook from the FA, Brian Oliver, Sports Editor of The Observer, Farayi Mungazi from BBC World Service Africa, and Gibril Faal, Chair of charity, AFFORD.

A list of the full winners is attached below.

For further information please go to score4africa.org.

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Notes for Editors:

SCORE4africa Award Winners 2009

Award 1: Health - Kick4life

Award 2: Peace - The Cote D'Ivoire National Team

Award 3: Green - EMIMA

Award 4: Mentoring - Stephen Keshi, Mali Manager

Award 5: Diversity - Special Olympics Africa

Award 6: Enterprise - Alive & Kicking

Award 7: Education - Diambars

Award 8: Foundation - Diambars

Award 9: Partnership - Grassroots Soccer /FIFA Football for Hope/Football for a HIV free Generation

Award 10: Youth - Moving the Goalposts

Award 11: Peoples Choice - Michael Essien

Award 12: Lifetime Achievement Award - Roger Milla

SCORE4Africa is a social enterprise wholly owned by AFFORD - a UK Registered Charity, number -1104682 (www.afford-uk.org)

What we do

- We hold an annual awards ceremony...
- We support the foundation of social enterprises in Africa...
- We celebrate the partnerships that create sustainable development...
- 30% of surplus funds raised go to developing LIVING FOOTBALL Community Hubs
- 70% of surplus funds raised go to AFFORD's SEEDA (Supporting Entrepreneurs and Enterprise Development in Africa) project.

The full awards categories are:

- 1) The Peace Award** - for the best efforts in peace building and reconciliation
- 2) The Health Award** - for the best or most innovative health or rehabilitation project
- 3) The Youth Award** - for quality & innovation in youth development and advancement
- 4) The People's Choice Award** - as voted for by the general public
- 5) The Green Award** - for the best & most innovative environmentally sustainable project
- 6) The Education Award** - for the highest impact or most pioneering educational project
- 7) The Foundation Award** - for the best & most innovative football foundation
- 8) The Diversity Award** - for the greatest contribution to the promotion of diversity
- 9) The Mentoring Award** - for unswerving commitment to cultivating & nurturing African talent
- 10) The Partnership Award** - for the international individual or organisation contributing to African development through football
- 11) The Lifetime Achievement Award** - for recognition of an individual's legacy of outstanding contribution to African development & football
- 12) The Enterprise Award** - for the most exciting business investment or project in Africa

About The African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)

Since AFFORD's formation in 1994, it has gained recognition as a pioneering African development think tank & charity. AFFORD's groundbreaking research, advocacy and policy development activities have helped highlight diaspora issues; and led to international recognition of the role of diasporas in development. AFFORD has had direct input in the policy development of diverse bodies such as UN, World Bank, DFID, International Organisation of Migration, UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Union, and European Union. Most recently, AFFORD has piloted effective ways of harnessing African diaspora resources to create and sustain jobs in Africa. AFFORD's recent successes include:

- Mobilising over 200 diaspora professionals in 2006/2009 to invest over £300,000 supporting over 600 small businesses in Sierra Leone and Ghana (in partnership with VSO).
- Creating 5 business centres in Sierra Leone in 2007/9. These have to date trained 25 business coaches who provide practical business support to 100s of local businesses and entrepreneurs (in partnership with Comic Relief & University of Sierra Leone).
- Working with banks, micro-finance institutions and trade associations in African countries to help small entrepreneurs become more structured and efficient.