

# THE CAF AFRICAN SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

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A study of Schoolboys and girls  
safeguarding knowledge and  
experiences



# Introduction

The African Schools Football Championship was officially launched in 2022 by the CAF President Dr Patrice Motsepe with the purpose to exploit the opportunities within the values of football to holistically develop African boys and girls.

In this brochure, CAF is pleased to present the second edition of research work conducted at the Zonal Union phase of the CAF African Schools Football Championship 2024/2025.

This study was undertaken to assess schoolboys and girls' knowledge and experiences regarding key safeguarding aspects, including player agents' regulations, contract policies, and social media exposure.

## Demographic data of the research population



The objective of this study is to gather valuable data that can inform the development of interventions aimed at enhancing the safeguarding of African schoolboys and girls.



# Knowledge of player agent regulations among young African football players

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70% of schoolboys and girls did not know where to report legal issues involving agents, and **62%** lacked confidence in reading player contracts. However about **49%** of schoolboys and girls may have been approached by player agents at some point.

2

**62%**

of participants mistakenly believed that current employees of FIFA, Confederations, or Member Associations are permitted to act as player agents.

3

**57%**

believed that player agents or teams can take and keep players' legal documents

4

**96%**

participants who were aware that player agents should be licensed and registered with FIFA.

CAF research from the 2023/2024 season further revealed that nearly 80% of young footballers in Africa aspire to become professionals, highlighting the urgent need to intensify efforts to close the knowledge gap and safeguard young players from exploitation.





## Key Recommendation for Member Associations

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CAF continues to deliver safeguarding workshops at every African Schools event. However, Member Associations must play a leading role in ensuring that schools, affiliated clubs, and academies frequently offer comprehensive training, educational resources, and clear guidelines on understanding contracts, player interactions with agents, their expected behaviours and reporting mechanisms when they require assistance with an agent.



## Media and communications training for Schoolboys and girls

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Only 37% of participants reported not using social media regularly. While most have taken part in pre- and post-match media or press engagements at various competitions, just 26% said they had received training on how to engage on social media, and only 38% had received any form of media and communications training. These findings highlight a significant gap in both social media and media communication education for young footballers, leaving them vulnerable to online risks, reputational damage, and misrepresentation.

### Key Recommendation for Member Associations

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The Member Associations must encourage continuous media and communications training for players to ensure they are able to handle themselves well in interviews with journalists, as well as communicate well with their followers and other football stakeholders on social media. The training may be as simple as an infographic on the 'Do's and Don'ts of Social Media communications' or as in depth as seminars with public relations/communications experts.



## African Schoolboys and girls may be at risk of Cyberbullying

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Nearly 30% of players reported witnessing cyberbullying to some degree. Engagement in social media use is related to cyberbullying victimization in particular and as most of the players use social media, it is important that the risks of cyberbullying be communicated to them and mitigated. Cyberbullying has mental health and well-being consequences, it is thus important that schoolboys and girls are given ample opportunities to deter them from developing favourable attitudes towards cyberbullying (e.g., extended time on social media, problematic use of social media, and communicating with strangers online), while promoting conscientious use and engagement with social media.

## Key Recommendation for Member Associations

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Safeguarding training workshops should include training on cyberbullying and equip players with skills that improve self-esteem, foster belonging, and deter them from favourable attitudes towards cyberbullying.





## Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study show that to further safeguard adolescent African football players, it is important that they are aware of player agent and player contract regulations as lack of knowledge of these may put them at elevated risk of exploitation by unscrupulous player agents as well as trafficking. Additionally, it is important that players receive training in the use of various types of media as well as awareness on cyberbullying.

For more information on this study, kindly  
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