

Footballers support Comic Relief campaign

African and English footballers have lent their support to a series of public education films produced on behalf of Comic Relief, the UK-based charity, being broadcast across Africa. The series of 10 short films featuring teams or individual players focus on malaria, HIV/AIDS and education.



Each uses humour to communicate a serious message and aims to encourage people to take action to protect and help themselves and their families.

Stars play ball

Stars including Aaron Mokoena of Portsmouth and South Africa, Emmanuel Eboué of Arsenal and the Ivory Coast, Salif Diao, Abdoulaye Faye and Amdy Faye, all of Stoke City and Senegal, Sebastien Bassong of Cameroon and Spurs, Mamady Sidibe of Stoke City and Mali, and Kolo Toure of Manchester City and the Ivory Coast got involved in the campaign. They were joined by Rio Ferdinand of Manchester United and England and Peter Crouch of Spurs and England.

All the players got into the spirit of the films by putting in enthusiastic performances through goal celebrations urging viewers to use a mosquito net, know their HIV status and wear a condom and send their children to school. It is hoped that these goal celebrations will also be embraced by the teams during English Premier League matches.

Broadcast on free-to-view channels

The films will be broadcast during the live showing of premiership games on “free-to-view” television stations in over 30 countries throughout sub-Saharan Africa and will reach a weekly audience of 300 million viewers. The broadcast time has been fully supported by the English Premier League and donated by Optima Sports Marketing which distributes live premiership games throughout Africa and the campaign will run until the end of the current season in May. The films have been created by Mother, the London-based advertising agency.

Commenting on the campaign, Kevin Cahill, Comic Relief’s chief executive said: “We are delighted that so many footballing heroes have lent their support to this important campaign. Their participation will raise awareness of three really important issues to the people of Africa. By spreading serious messages in a lighthearted way, we hope that people will be

encouraged to take action and help both themselves and their families.”

Commenting on the campaign, Aaron Mokoena of Portsmouth and South Africa said: “I was born in Africa and I know how important football is across the continent so it's fantastic that so many premiership footballers have got involved in making these short films. These messages will be seen by millions of people and hopefully they will help to change lives.”

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