

The Ministry of Science and Education of Azerbaijan Republic

The Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan Republic

Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Education and Sport

Faculty: Sports Medicine and Management

Department: Sports management and Communication

On the right of manuscript

Anar Rzazade

“State Program on the development of football in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2005-2015:
objectives, goals, and outcomes of the program”

Submitted to receive a master`s degree

DISSERTATION

Code and the name of specialty – 060407 Physical Education and Sport

Specialization – Sport Management

Supervisor: Tim Pawlowski

Baku – 2022

ABSTRACT

In 2005, Azerbaijan adopted a ten-year state program for the development of football in the country. The study was aimed to investigate the results of the work done, to what extent the set goals were achieved, which prevented the implementation of all the tasks and goals set, as well as identifying the shortcomings of the program. Interviews were conducted both with local specialists involved in the implementation of the program, and with a foreign football expert who has worked in Azerbaijani football for many years. The findings of this study can be used in the future in the implementation of other similar programs for the development of sports in general, as well as directly in the implementation of the second state program for the development of football in the country.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	4
CHAPTER I. SPORT DEVELOPMENT.....	6
1.1. Definitions.....	6
1.2. Empirical studies.....	7
CHAPTER II. THE 2005-2015 STATE PROGRAM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTBALL IN AZERBAIJAN.....	10
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY.....	15
3.1. Expert interviews.....	15
3.2. Data analysis.....	15
RESULTS.....	17
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	27
REFERENCES.....	30
APPENDIX I. (MOE).....	32
APPENDIX II. (AFFA).....	36
APPENDIX III. (FOREIGN EXPERT).....	40

INTRODUCTION

In 1991 after collapsing of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan became independent. In 1992, the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) was founded. Two years later, the association joined the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), prompting assistance in developing financial, technical, and logistical improvements to Azerbaijani football (UEFA,2021). Since 1994, the Azerbaijan National football team is participating in the UEFA European as well as the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. Moreover, clubs (that qualified) could participate in different European club competitions organized by UEFA. For many years the teams showed very weak performances in those competitions and there were no prerequisites for improving the results. Given this development, the President of the country, Ilham Aliyev, signed a decree on the implementation of a ten-year state program for the development of football in the country from 2005-to 2015 (Aliyev, 2005). Overall, the main objectives of the program were:

- To expand the infrastructure of football, and strengthen its material and technical base;
- To improve the system of preparing football specialists;
- To develop a network of youth football schools and create specialized football boarding schools for children with special football talents;
- To strengthen football education;
- To establish and develop relationships with foreign football organizations and institutions to implement advanced technologies in the field of football;
- To ensure access to football fields and facilities for all segments of the population.

The thesis intends to critically evaluate the main directions of development of football that were outlined in the program. At the moment of launching the program in October 2005, the Azerbaijan national football team was ranked at 114th position in the FIFA world ranking.

The position of Azerbaijan in the ranking in October 2021 was 119 (FIFA, 2021). As such, the overall development program seemed to not have been successful at all. However, the thesis will take a more fine-grained look into the different sub-objectives. The main goals of the research are to investigate (i) whether and which tasks and objectives specified in the program were fulfilled to which extent, (ii) which objectives were not achieved and for what reason(s), (iii) what prevented their implementation and, most importantly, (iv) to find out why there has not been any improvement in the performance of the A national team nor the youth national teams.

CHAPTER I

SPORT DEVELOPMENT

1.1. Definitions

The common sense understanding of sports development is relatively straightforward and perhaps best summed up by 'getting more people to play more sport. (Michael P. Sam, 2016). In other words, *Sport* development is about facilitating opportunities for people to get involved in sports and physical activity. More specifically, sport development refers to the policies, processes, and practices of facilitating opportunities for involvement in sport, from mass participation to elite performance (Hylton & Bramham, 2008; Green B.C., 2005).

In its most comprehensive meaning, sport development refers to participating in sport itself and promoting the opportunities and benefits of such participation. The potential outcomes of sport development may include betterments of the sport itself, plus individuals who are involved in the sport for various benefits and experiences, and in a wider sense nations and communities (Tinaz C., & Knott, B. 2021)

Sport development (SD) covers both the development of sports (SD), as well as using sports as a vehicle for development (mainly in less developed countries). In this thesis focus will be on the former dimension, i.e., the development of sports in a country. Traditionally, the management and delivery of the development of sports in a country is the responsibility of the corresponding sports organization, federations, and / or associations as well as the responsible ministries (Sherry, Schulenkorf, & Phillips, 2016).

The rise of sport development is closely linked to contemporary government investment. By 'government', we should think not only of central or federal institutions but also of state (or provincial), regional, local and municipal level agencies (Sam, 2016). According to Andreff (2006), "the government is the main sponsor and patron of sporting activities in many developing countries. But regardless of governments' policy declarations,

sport is neither a top priority in the state budget, nor a pillar of the country's education system, in any developing country". That is why "despite the rising government interest and investment in this area internationally, sport participation rates have either increased slightly, declined or become stagnant" (Nicholson, Hoye, & Houlihan, 2010).

1.2. Empirical studies

According to Green's (2005) Pyramid Model of sport development, there are three levels of sport development:

1. mass participation which seeks to develop opportunities for everyone to participate in sport (recruitment);
2. a competitive sport which deals with people's chances to achieve their potential in sport, from taking part for fun and health to competition (retention);
3. high-performance sport in which athletes are identified and developed for their performance potential (advancement).

Thus, according to this model of sport development, the three levels of sports development are participation, performance, and excellence, with the three critical strategic foci being recruitment, retention, and transition (Hylton & Braham, 2008).

Astle (2014) reworked these definitions by providing the following six subcategories of sport development:

- Development **IN** sport: the extent to which authorities adapt the sport to make them more attractive to audiences
 - Development **OF** sport: breaking down barriers to participation
 - Development **FOR** sport: the production of elite talent
 - Development **THROUGH** sport: community initiatives in nations
 - Sport **FOR** development: promoting sport in developing nations
 - Sport **AND** development: the connection between sport and humanitarian issues.

According to Astle, Leberman, and Watson (2018), "development IN sport" considers how sport has evolved and adapted its content and appearance for the benefit of itself and its stakeholders. Development IN sport focuses on the emergence, codification, diffusion, and adaptation to change in different sports.

The development OF sports has been defined as a traditional approach representing the creation and development of sport initiatives aimed at building sport capacity (Green, 2005). This framework is focused on ensuring that community sport remains up to date by providing flexible opportunities and ways of experience that attract and retain participants in sport to ensure the future growth and sustainability of sport (Astle, Leberman, and Watson, 2018).

According to Astle, Leberman, and Watson (2018), development FOR sport has similar aspects to development OF sport, except essentially its primary focus, which is developing elite sport. Here, the particular concern is on developing children and youth into high-caliber performers.

Development THROUGH sport approaches sport as a driving force in conducting various development programs, covering issues such as the resolution of intergroup conflict, the physical and psychological benefits of sport, the promotion of cultural understanding, the development of physical and social infrastructures, the empowerment of girls, women, or disadvantaged groups, and social inclusion (Ha, Lee, and Ok, 2015).

Levermore (2008) grouped sport FOR development initiatives into six clusters, namely conflict resolution and intercultural understanding; building physical, social, sport, and community infrastructure; raising awareness, particularly through education; empowerment; direct impact on physical and psychological health as well as general welfare; and finally, economic development/poverty alleviation. Astle, Leberman, and Watson (2018) distinguish development THROUGH sport from sport FOR development mainly through the geographical setting, as development THROUGH sport deals with

community sport in developed nations and sport FOR development deals with community sport in developing nations.

Sport AND development are related to the capacity of sport to contribute to personal and social development. It is claimed that sport has inherent physical, social, and moral qualities, and the experience of participating in sport provides individuals with opportunities to inspire confidence, learn to accept gains and losses, and develop qualities such as work ethics and team spirit (Astle, Leberman and Watson, 2018).

CHAPTER II

THE 2005-2015 STATE PROGRAM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTBALL IN AZERBAIJAN

Taking into account the high achievements in many sports as a result of state care in the Republic of Azerbaijan, to increase the state's care for football, develop its material and technical base, to increase the interest of the population in a healthy lifestyle on 10th of October 2005 the president of Republic of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev signed a decree which included the following items:

1. To approve "The State program on development of football in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2005-2015"

2. To entrust the coordination of activities provided for in the state program to the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA)

3. This Order comes into force from the date of publication

As noted above the main objectives of the program were:

- 1) To expand the infrastructure of football, strengthen its material and technical base;
- 2) To improve the system of preparing football specialists;
- 3) To develop a network of youth football schools and create specialized football boarding schools for children with special football talents;
- 4) To strengthen football education;
- 5) To establish and develop relationships with foreign football organizations and institutions to implement advanced technologies in the field of football;
- 6) To ensure access to football fields and facilities for all segments of the population.

As can be seen, these 6 paragraphs take into account all the necessary points for the development of football. First of all, the goal is to build new football fields and training bases, to bring the existing ones in line with modern standards, and then by using these facilities to

develop youth and kids football schools and train specialists who are aware of the intricacies of modern football. At the same time, the promotion of the most popular sport has not been forgotten. During the implementation of the program, special emphasis was placed on increasing the interest of all segments of the population in football, as well as the establishment of international relations to take advantage of advanced technology.

In addition to the main goals, the main directions for the development of football in the country were also determined. From 2005-to 2015, it was planned to develop football in the following main areas:

- 1) creation of football infrastructure in educational institutions, and settlements;
- 2) development of football training programs for educational institutions;
- 3) development of methodological aids and recommendations on football;
- 4) opening football sections in general education, secondary schools, and universities;
- 5) organization of football tournaments among schoolchildren and students;
- 6) holding football competitions between yard teams;
- 7) creation of women's football training groups in existing and newly created children's and youth sports schools and boarding schools;
- 8) creation of specialized boarding schools for gifted children in all regions of the country;
- 9) ensuring the participation of national teams in international competitions, including the Olympic Games, European and world championships, and club teams in European tournaments;
- 10) Creation of a treatment and rehabilitation center equipped with modern equipment under the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan;
- 11) improving the system of training football specialists;
- 12) promotion of football
- 13) expansion of international cooperation in the field of football development

An action plan was prepared to implement the football development program. The following organizations and state structures were appointed responsible for the implementation of these plans: AFFA, MoYS, MoE, and local executive authorities. Here is the list of some main activities which had to be implemented within the development program:

Activity	Executors	Period of execution	Source of financing
Preparation of a youth football development program	AFFA, MoYS	2005-2006	AFFA, MoYS
Creation of football training groups in existing children's and youth sports schools (boys and girls) and boarding schools	AFFA, MoYS, MoE, local executive authorities	2005-2007	MoE, MoYS
Conducting competitions between the combined teams of district and city secondary schools	AFFA, MoYS, MoE	2005-2015	MoE, MoYS
Creation of a youth futsal league	AFFA, MoYS	2005-2006	AFFA, MoYS
Reconstruction of stadiums and training facilities in the regions per the requirements of FIFA and UEFA	AFFA, MoYS, local executive authorities	2005-2008	AFFA, MoYS, local executive

Continuation

Creation of football fields for training young football players in the regions of the country under the AFFA program	AFFA, MoYS, local executive authorities	2005-2015	AFFA, MoYS, local executive authorities
Creation of football fields in higher and secondary specialized educational institutions	MoE, MoYS	2005-2015	MoE, MoYS
Organization of advanced training of football specialists	AFFA, MoYS	2005-2006	AFFA, MoYS,
Improving the system of education for football coaches and increasing the level of professionalism	AFFA, MoYS	2005-2015	AFFA, MoYS
Establishment of the Higher School of Football for coaches under the AFFA	AFFA, MoYS	2005-2007	AFFA, MoYS
Conducting scientific and practical conferences on football issues	AFFA, MoYS	Regularly	AFFA, MoYS

The measures envisaged by the program were to achieve the following results:

- 1) application of the principles of a healthy lifestyle in society
- 2) as a result of the popularization of football, increase in the number of citizens involved in physical culture and sports, including football

3) increase in the number of children, adolescents, and youth involved in football in general education schools, higher and secondary specialized educational institutions, and youth sports schools of the country;

4) creation of specialized regional boarding schools for gifted children in the field of football, covering all regions of the country;

5) involvement of teenagers and young people in football as a result of the development of the material and technical base of football;

6) create additional jobs in all cities and regions of the country;

7) preparing professional football players of international level, who will adequately represent the country in the international arena

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Expert interviews

For the interviews, one specialist/expert was selected from each organization and structure that were involved in the process of implementing the football development program in the country. In addition to this, an interview was also held with a German football expert who worked in the Azerbaijan Football Federation from 2011 to 2015.

Expert 1: Firuddin Gurbanov - Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan; Head of the Working Group in the preparation of the "State Program for the Development of Football in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2005-2015"; Member of the AFFA Executive Committee

Expert 2: Representation of Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA)

Expert 3: German football expert – Head of International Sport Projects at Eintracht Frankfurt Football Club; former head coach of U-19 and U-17 Azerbaijan national football teams; UEFA instructor

3.2. Data analysis

The research method was qualitative in nature. The primary and secondary data were used. To obtain the primary data the face-to-face and online interviews were conducted that lasted between 25 minutes and an hour and were conducted between April and May 2022. In total 2 hours of interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for a total of 12 pages. Veed.io software was used to assist with the process of axial and open coding. Interviews were conducted in Azerbaijani and English languages and the interviews conducted in Azerbaijani then were translated into English.

Report of Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan was used as secondary data. As there is not any secondary data related particularly to this topic and to Azerbaijani football in general this can be mentioned as a limitation of the study.

RESULTS

Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan

AFFA has identified three main priorities for the implementation of the State Football Development Program – grassroots, infrastructure, and education (AFFA, 2014).

According to the report of AFFA about 2005-2015 activities, the main stages of AFFA development were:

- under 17 and 15 leagues began to operate
- Opening of the AFFA Football Academy
- A registration department has been set up to organize the registration process for players and officials
- To accelerate the development of women's football, a Women's Football Department was created as part of the Technical Department (new leagues began to operate).
- AFFA Football Center (Dalga Arena) put into operation

Opening of the stadium in the city of Agsu, Bakcell Arena, Bayil Arena, and Bina stadiums in Baku (added to AFFA infrastructure)

- FIFA 2012 U-17 Women's World Cup was held in Azerbaijan
- Manchester United football school opens in Baku

Grassroots

With the adoption of the State Program for the Development of Football (2005-2015), significant progress has been made in the field of mass football programs. Since 2008, AFFA has organized numerous football festivals and tournaments to encourage young people to play football. Starting in 2011, these festivals were organized in 12 cities of Azerbaijan and were attended by more than 1,200 boys and girls. These events have led to an increase in interest in football among young people from year to year. To increase the interest of young

people in football in all regions of the country, such events are organized every year in different regions. (AFFA, 2014).

The following grassroots programs were implemented:

2009 - "Football is life" pilot project

2010 - Football lessons program - the project aims to improve the knowledge and skills of football teachers, improve pupils' football knowledge, identify talented players and support their professional development.

2011 - Elite training program – the aim of the project is the identification of talented young people in the age group of 10-14

2012 - 'Live Your Goals' - The project aims to create a strong foundation for the development of women's football, increase the number of female players and increase the popularity of women's football

2013 - Football with Bakcell - in this project, training was conducted for children aged 8-12 years. The goal of the project is to promote football and a healthy lifestyle among minors.

2013 - "3x3" girls tournament – the aim is a development of grassroots football, increase the popularity of football among women, identification of new female players.

2014 - opening of the Manchester United football school

Infrastructure

As a result of the State Program for the Development of Football for 2005-2015, substantial progress has been made in the football infrastructure in Baku and some regions of Azerbaijan. The existing football infrastructure in 2005 was limited by the Republican Stadium named after Tofiq Bahramov in Baku, built-in 1951, and the Ganja City Stadium, built-in 1967. In addition to these stadiums, there were several stadiums, each with a capacity of 6,000 spectators, which were in great need of an overhaul.

Over the past 10 years, significant progress has been made in this area: the construction of a new Baku Olympic Stadium, the construction of public stadiums, and the establishment of stadiums in schools and different regions of the country have further increased the population's opportunities to play football. AFFA expands football opportunities at all levels by creating the appropriate infrastructure for the use of the general public, as well as the creation of modern and high-quality stadiums and training grounds at a professional level (AFFA, 2014).

The main objectives of AFFA for 2005-2015 in terms of infrastructure include:

- Creation of a new national football stadium - Baku Olympic Stadium was established in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports
- Creating more pitches and training sites in the region that meet both UEFA and FIFA standards
- Creating a more modern football infrastructure, including the installation of artificial pitches to create conditions for football in all seasons
- Creating more football infrastructure in schools and universities

Table 1 shows the stadiums and training centers built over 10 years with the support of UEFA and FIFA and the direct funding of AFFA and other shareholders, including government agencies and clubs.

Table 1

(AFFA, 2014)

Year	Venue	Capacity
2005	Shamakhi Olympic complex stadium	2 000 (artificial)
2006	Lankaran city stadium	12 500
	Lankaran city stadium training pitch	

Continuation

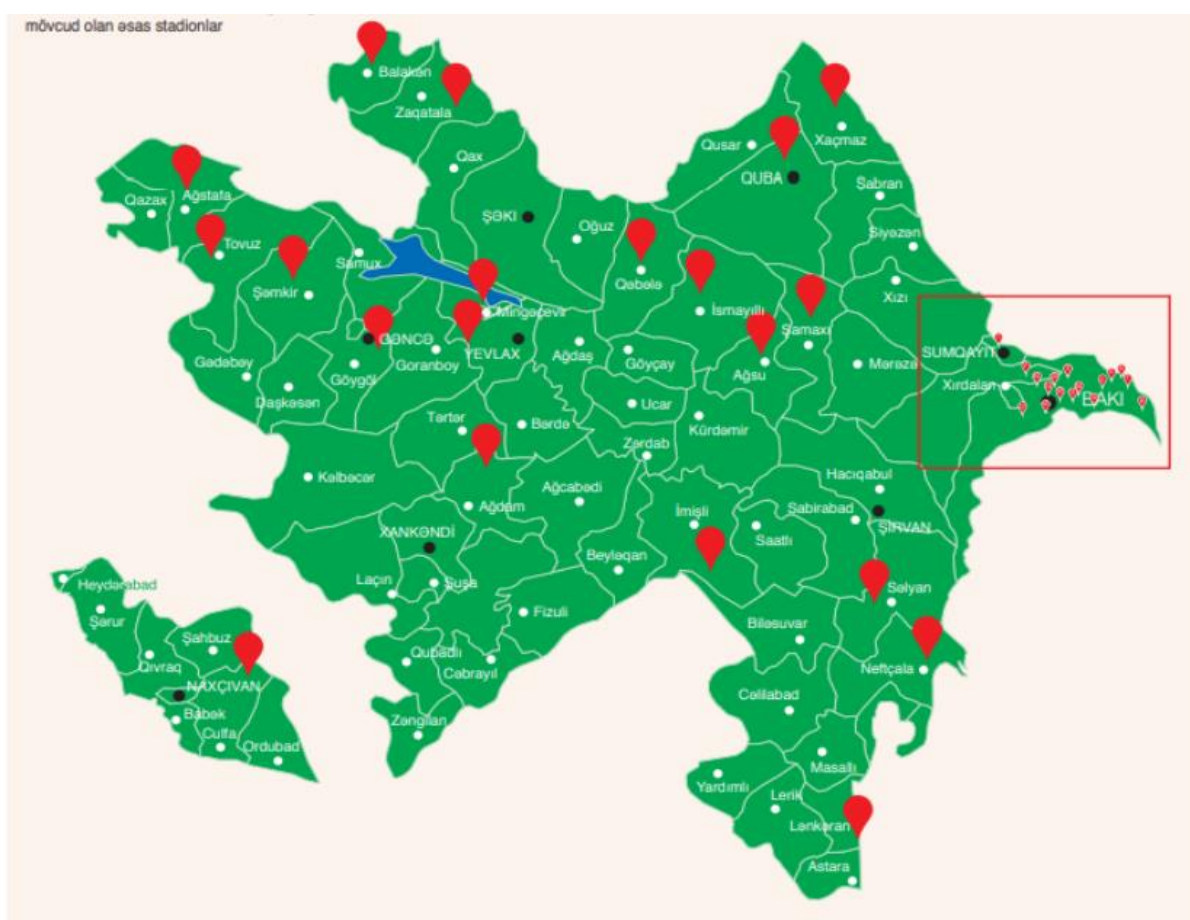
	Imishli city stadium	7 220
2007	Salyan Olympic complex stadium	1 032
2008	Zaqatala city stadium	3 200 (artificial)
	Zaqatala city stadium training pitch	artificial
	Quzanli Olympic complex stadium	2 000
2009	AFFA Football Academy	accommodation for 33 people, 1 dining room, conference room, medical room, massage room, gym, sauna, indoor swimming pool, recreation area
	Gabala Football Academy	32 rooms, living space, and a restaurant for 110 people
	Shagan Olympic complex stadium	1 032 (artificial)
	Shamkir Olympic complex stadium	2 000
2010	Balakan Olympic complex stadium	940 (artificial)
	Ismayilli Olympic complex stadium	960 (artificial)
	Gabala FC training site	6 training pitches (4 – natural, 2 – artificial)
2011	AFFA Football center and Dalga Arena	6 700
	Dalga Arena training site	2 artificial training pitches
	Baku FC stadium *	3 000
	Baku FC training site *	5 training pitches (4 natural, 1 artificial), an indoor training hall (75x45m), and Baku FK Academy

Continuation

	Baku FC Academy *	11 otaq, 44 nəfərlik yaşayış sahəsi, restoran, internet salonu və sair
2012	Agsu City stadium	3 000 (artificial)
	Bakcell Arena	11 000
	Bayil Arena	3 500 (artificial)
	Bina Stadium	600 (artificial)
	Zira Olympic complex	1 530 (artificial)
	Tofiq Bahramov Stadium (restoration)	32 000
2013	Kapital Bank Arena in Sumgayit	1 330 (artificial)
	Khachmaz Olympic complex stadium	1 020
	Zagatala city stadium	artificial
2014	Alinja Stadium	12 000 (artificial)
	Alinja FC training site	1 artificial training pitch and 1 indoor field
	Ravan FC training site and training academy	Artificial pitch (80x50m), office rooms, conference room, restaurant, seating area for 30 people, and four dressing rooms
2015	Training center for the National team	dining room, 2 gyms, 2 meeting rooms, 2 dressing rooms, 2 massage rooms, 3 office rooms, 32 living rooms
	Baku Olympic Stadium	68 000

* in 2021, the stadium, training center, and academy of the Baku football club were demolished and the construction of a residential complex began

Stadiums map



Looking at the table and map of the stadiums, one can say with confidence that a lot of work has been done in terms of infrastructure development. But at the same time, negative aspects should also be noted.

“The infrastructure compared to the situation before the introduction of the program is significantly different for the better - the construction of the “Dalga” training base, the construction of football fields. But the improvement of infrastructure, and management is not at the desired level. For example, a training base for national teams has been built on the seashore in the windiest part of Azerbaijan, and everyone knows how much the wind is related to football. The training pitches of the Baku Olympic Stadium (BOS), which were built later, are located on a large slope and this means that, except 2-3 months a year, the conditions for training camp are not so favorable. All this can be called a little unsatisfactory” (interview with AFFA representative).

Education

According to former technical director of AFFA Bernhard Lippert “for the development of world-class players, we need to train more capable, qualified coaches and these coaches must support them at every stage of player development. As we attract more players, we need more and better coaches, referees, and managers to support the game” (AFFA, 2014).

“The training of football specialists from the very beginning of the program was conducted under the guidance of the German specialist Nicolai Adam. There was a department of coaching education, which, per the concept and cooperation with UEFA and based on current trends and innovations, was supposed to train football coaches in different categories. This is encouraging because 90% of the local coaches currently employed by Premier League clubs and national teams are coaches who have been trained in these licensed courses. All this can be considered positive factors” (interview with AFFA representative).

During the 10 years state program the following coaching courses have been conducted - AFFA C, UEFA B, UEFA A, and UEFA Pro and 388 coaches have been licensed by AFFA during that period. Of these coaches: 12 have a UEFA PRO license, 61 have a UEFA A qualification, 142 have a UEFA B qualification and 173 have an AFFA C coaching license (AFFA, 2014).

During this period, a fairly large number of coaches have acquired various coaching licenses. Whether this quantity has grown into quality is difficult to judge. “I have done my job as an instructor on one side and national coach on the other side. At the beginning of my contract, I did four C courses per year, two B, and one A and every two years we started a new Pro license. I can say in terms of quantity, yes, I have delivered coaches. I have delivered coach education I even delivered or helped to build up to two instructors that still work for Azerbaijan – Aslan Kerimov and Osman Rahimov. In terms of quality, it's difficult again to evaluate because has Azerbaijan won any trophies, has Azerbaijan significantly

made a profit in terms of let's say, did the national team reach new heights after all this? No!" (interview with foreign expert).

Ministry of Education

Unlike the football federation, the Ministry of Education did not prepare and made available to the public any reports of works done during the program implementation processes. "Relevant reports on the implementation of the program were provided. It is recommended to contact AFFA to get information about the work done in the country" (interview with the representative of the ministry of education F. Gurbanov).

Following the adoption of the State Program for the Development of Football (2005-2015), a cooperation agreement was signed between AFFA and the Ministry of Education. Within the framework of this cooperation, a pilot project called "Football is life" was implemented in 2009. The project aimed to promote a healthy lifestyle among school children using football, as well as to identify talented players.

The main objectives of the football lessons program include:

- Improving the knowledge and skills of football teachers
- Improving students' football knowledge
- To teach football rules correctly among students
- Encourage "fair play" rules among students
- Identify talented players and support their professional development (AFFA, 2014)

According to F. Gurbanov for the football development program, the following significant actions have been taken by the ministry – "football lessons were taught in the 5th, 6th and 7th grades of Baku, Ganja, Sumgayit, Absheron, Lankaran, Sheki, Gusar, Ismayilli city and district secondary schools within the joint project "Football is life" together with AFFA. The Coca Cola School Cup project was implemented among 7th and 9th-grade pupils of secondary schools; since 2008, national football championships have been held among students of higher education institutions, and this championship, in which more than 30

higher education institutions participated, was given the status of “League” in 2010; in 2014 and 2015, the “Education Cup” football competition was held among higher education institutions; during 2005-2015, football fields were built in higher and secondary specialized educational institutions; in 2005-2006, professional development courses for coaches, managers and other football specialists were established at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Culture and Sports; at the initiative of the Ministry of Education, "B" and "C" category coaching courses were organized for football coaches of sports schools operating in Baku” (interview with F. Gurbanov).

It is difficult to say how effective all these actions were because the program did not set specific key performance indicators. But as a representative of the ministry of education mentioned in his interview – “the tasks set in the program have been successfully implemented and the approval and implementation of the program had a positive impact on the development of football in the country”.

In general, the specialists respond positively about the program and the works done, but at the same time, they also note negative aspects. “The first years of the program were marked by a large influx of foreign players to both clubs and national teams due to large financial investments. After the end of finances and the departure of legionnaires, it became obvious that for all this time local football players were not grown ready to take the places of these players. The academies remained empty, the academies did not improve, and huge amounts of money were spent by clubs only on bringing foreign players into the country. If these funds were directed to the creation of academies at each club, then even now one could see the fruits of this work. I think it would be better to spend large sums of money on raising local children than on legionnaires and foreign coaches.” (interview with the representative of AFFA).

“The problem I see is, how do you evaluate the success of a program? How do you evaluate the development of football players? Is it the pure number of players that make it

to professionals? But even then, you would still not know what have we missed? But there is a dilemma of we will never know what could have been done better. There are many different layers we have to talk about to come close or closer to an answer to that question. One is, have we inspired more kids to play football? That would be a question for me how to evaluate that. It comes with infrastructure have we built more infrastructure that makes it possible for inspired kids now to play football? Have we also delivered the materials - balls, nets, cones, markers, many pitches, and so on? I think for sure things were better than before when we didn't have any program in Azerbaijan. I think there was a positive impact but that I say with fully convinced it could have been done better." (interview with foreign expert).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The development and implementation of state programs or development strategies for each area can be divided into 3 parts: the development of proposals, the adoption of the program, and its implementation. When preparing proposals, a baseline study of the current situation should be carried out, resources should be assessed and realistic targets should be set. Based on this, the program should be adopted and started implementation.

As we can see, the chosen directions are great. It can be seen that the program is carefully prepared, highlights the problems of Azerbaijani football, and the right directions for getting out of them have been identified. Even if almost half of the above were implemented, Azerbaijani football would be much better than it is now.

However, the process of implementing each strategic goal or development program is as important as its preparation. Unfortunately, only a small part of what should be done within the framework of the 10-year State Program has been done.

At the same time, the goals which were settled must be "SMART" (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound). Thus, to calculate the extent to which the goal has been achieved, and to assess the level of implementation, the targets must be measurable, and the key performance indicators should be noted. For example, if one of the main goals was identified as infrastructure development, the initial baseline study should examine the level of infrastructure in Baku and the regions, and indicate the targets to be achieved and key outcome indicators. In my opinion, one of the main problems of the state program for the development of football is the lack of measurable goals and lack of performance indicators. This, in turn, makes it difficult to assess performance and clarify to what extent the program has achieved its goals.

There will inevitably be certain shortcomings in the implementation of any task. Undoubtedly, during the implementation of the "State Program for the Development of Football in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2005-2015" there were some shortcomings and

difficulties, and it was not possible to complete certain tasks at an ideal level. But it also should be taken into account that the development of football is a serious and complex process. Success here is not as easy as in individual sports.

In general, there should be mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of each program, and accountability should be strictly observed. If interim reports are prepared and submitted during the process, the expected risks, difficulties, and delays can be prevented to some extent.

Ensuring the participation of national teams in international competitions, including the European and World Championships, the Olympic Games, and club teams in European tournaments was also one of the main directions of the State Program for 2005-2015. However, our teams have not achieved any success over the years. We can take some comfort in some of the progress we have made at the club level in recent years. However, these successes are the result of the correct work of the club's managers and head coaches. That is, for example, the fact that Qarabag FC played in the group stage of the Champions League, the Europa League, and the League of Conferences is the result of the correct strategy of the club.

The 30 years of independence of Azerbaijani football can be divided into two parts. After a very serious struggle and decisive steps, great changes took place in AFFA in 2004, and care for football increased. As a result, a 10-year state program was adopted. New clubs were created, and stadiums were built. Society had a belief in football. During the games of the national championship, 15-20 thousand fans came to the stadiums. A lot of money was allocated for football. But adoption of the program is one thing, and its implementation in practice is a completely different concept. It is necessary to draw conclusions from the mistakes of the last 10-15 years, direct the allocated funds on the right path, attract qualified football specialists, improve development projects, and put them into practice. Otherwise, another 10 years will be wasted and hundreds of talents will be destroyed again.

Of course, it is gratifying that the state has taken such steps for the development of football, and in recent years this concern has continued to grow. But here the main condition is how to use the state program prepared. Recent events in the country, including the victory in the 44-day Patriotic War and the liberation of the occupied territories, can become key factors in the development of football. With this in mind, it is expected to develop a new program for the development of football in the country.

Taking into account the abovementioned, it is important to define the main strategic goals, properly assess the resources, conduct a baseline study, set SMART goals to be achieved, and set key performance indicators when developing a new state program for the development of football in the future. The program should pay special attention to implementation control mechanisms and accountability, proper assessment, and proper use of resources.

REFERENCES

1. Aliyev, I. (2005). On approval of the state program on the development of football in the Republic of Azerbaijan from 2005-to 2015. Retrieved October 25, 2021, from https://frameworks.e-qanun.az/10/c_f_10767.html
2. Andreff, W. (2006). Sport in developing countries. In Andreff, W. & Szymanski, S. (eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport* (pp. 308-315). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
3. Astle, A.M. (2014). *Sport development – Plan, program, and practice: A case study of the planned intervention by New Zealand Cricket into cricket in New Zealand*.
4. Astle, A.M., Leberman, S. and Watson, G. (2018). *Sport development in action: Plan, program, and practice*. London and New York: Routledge.
5. FIFA (2021). Men's ranking. Retrieved November 02, 2021, from <http://www.fifa.com/fifa-world-ranking/ranking-table/men/>
6. Green, B.C. (2005). Building sports programs to optimize athlete recruitment, retention, and transition: Toward a normative theory of sport development. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 233-253.
7. Ha, J., Lee, K. and Ok, G. (2015). From development of the sport to development through sport: A paradigm shifts for sport development in South Korea. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 32(10), pp. 1262–1278.
8. Hylton & Bramham, (2008); Green B.C., 2005 *Sport development: Policy, processes, and practice* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
9. Hylton, Braham, Jackson, & Nesti, (2001) *Sports Development: Policy, Process, and Practice*. London (UK): Taylor & Francis.)
10. Levermore, R. (2008). Sport: A new engine of development? *Progress in Development Studies*, 8(2), pp. 183–190.

11. Nicholson, Hoye, & Houlihan, (2010) Participation in sport: international policy perspectives: Routledge
12. Sam, M. P. (2016). Sport Development. In Hoye, R. & Parent, M. P. (eds.), Sage Handbook of Sport Management (pp. 227-240). London, UK: SAGE.
13. Sherry, E., Schulenkorf, N., Phillips, P. (2016). Managing sport development: An international approach. London, UK: Routledge.
14. Telseth, F., & Halldorsson, V. (2017). The success culture of Nordic football: The cases of the national men's teams of Norway in the 1990s and Iceland in the 2010s. Sport in Society, 22(4), 689-703.
15. Tinaz, C., & Knott, B. (2021). Sport and development in emerging nations. New York: Routledge
16. UEFA (2021). Developing football in Azerbaijan: Inside UEFA. Retrieved October 31, 2021, from <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/member-associations/aze>
17. 2005-2015 Activity report. AFFA. (2014). Retrieved April 02, 2022, from <https://www.affa.az/index.php/affa-haqqnda/hesabatlar/203>

APPENDIX I

(MOE)

Preamble:

According to the ten-year state program for the development of football in the country from 2005-to 2015 the main objectives were:

- To expand the infrastructure of football, strengthen its material and technical base;
- To improve the system of preparing football specialists;
- To develop a network of youth football schools and create specialized football boarding schools for children with special football talents;
- To strengthen football education;
- To establish and develop relationships with foreign football organizations and institutions to implement advanced technologies in the field of football;
- To ensure access to football fields and facilities for all segments of the population.

1) Which measures have been implemented to achieve these objectives? -

Following the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan No. 1038 dated October 10, 2005 "On approval of the State Program on development of football in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2005-2015" the following measures were taken to implement the tasks arising from this state program:

- In 2005-2006, football training groups were established in children and youth sports schools and boarding schools. Football sections were opened in children and youth sports schools No. 8, 10, 14, 15, and 19 in Baku, in the Republican Specialized Olympic Reserve Children-Youth Football School "Vatan", in the "Education" Children-Youth Football School of the Republican Sports Center, in the Ganja branch of "Education" Republican Sports Center and at the Baku children and youth sports school No. 9 girl sections were

opened. A football-oriented boarding gymnasium has been established based on Ganja city boarding school No. 1.

- To attract teenagers to a healthy lifestyle, to increase the sports skills of schoolchildren and the popularity of football, and to promote this sport in 2005-2007 among the national teams of district and city secondary schools the Ministry of Education Cup football tournament and different competitions were held

- Football lessons were taught in the 5th, 6th and 7th grades of Baku, Ganja, Sumgayit, Absheron, Lankaran, Sheki, Gusar, Ismayilli city, and district secondary schools within the joint project "Football is life" together with AFFA. The Coca Cola School Cup project was implemented among 7th and 9th-grade students of secondary schools

- To improve the professionalism of adolescents and young football players, 19 schoolchildren studying in secondary schools in Baku, Tovuz and Imishli were selected and sent to Istanbul (Turkey) to undergo training camps at the Fenerbahce club. Also, 4 football players from Sumgayit and Lankaran were selected and sent to the Vedau sports school in Germany to have training camps.

- In 2006, a system of measures related to the development and promotion of women's football in secondary schools, secondary and higher education institutions was developed, girls' football teams were formed, "School Cup" girls' tournament was held among girls of U-13, U-16 and U-19 age groups, among students of secondary schools of Baku, Ganja, Lankaran, Sheki, Gusar and Ismayilli regions

- Since 2008, national football championships have been held among students of higher education institutions, and this championship, in which more than 30 higher education institutions participated, was given the status of "League" in 2010

- In February-March 2015, a mini-football championship in Baku was held among 8th-grade pupils of secondary schools

- In 2014 and 2015, the “Education Cup” football competition was held among higher education institutions
- From 2005-to 2015, football fields were built in higher and secondary specialized educational institutions.
- In 2005-2006, professional development courses for coaches, managers, and other football specialists were established at the Azerbaijan State Academy of Physical Culture and Sports
- At the initiative of the Ministry of Education, "B" and "C" category coaching courses were organized for football coaches of sports schools operating in Baku

2) In which of these measures were you / your institution involved? - Active participation of employees of the Ministry and subordinate agencies was ensured in all organized events.

3) Where are these measures effective? - The growing interest of school footballers in this field, the development of women's football, and the popularity of futsal and mini-football among students of higher and secondary schools can be considered effective results of the measures taken.

4) What went wrong? What was good? Please provide your evaluation for each measure. - According to the state program, the above-mentioned events were organized at a high level to promote football and increase its popularity in this field. The tasks set in the program have been successfully implemented.

5) What is your overall evaluation of the program? - The approval and implementation of the program had a positive impact on the development of football in the country.

6) Are you aware of any reports regarding the measures of this program? Where can I find them? - Relevant reports on the implementation of the program were provided. It is recommended to contact AFFA to get information about the work done in the country.

7) What would be your suggestions to be added to the next program? - The program takes into account all the necessary points for the development of football.

APPENDIX II

(AFFA)

Preamble:

According to the ten-year state program for the development of football in the country from 2005-to 2015 the main objectives were:

- To expand the infrastructure of football, strengthen its material and technical base;
- To improve the system of preparing football specialists;
- To develop a network of youth football schools and create specialized football boarding schools for children with special football talents;
- To strengthen football education;
- To establish and develop relationships with foreign football organizations and institutions to implement advanced technologies in the field of football;
- To ensure access to football fields and facilities for all segments of the population.

1) Which measures have been implemented to achieve these objectives? - The infrastructure compared to the situation before the introduction of the program is significantly different for the better - the construction of the "Dalga" training base, and the commissioning of football fields. But the improvement of infrastructure, and management is not at the desired level. For example, a training base for national teams has been built on the seashore in the windiest part of Azerbaijan, and everyone knows how much the wind is related to football. The training pitches of the Baku Olympic Stadium (BOS), which were built later, are located on a large slope and this means that, except for 2-3 months a year, the conditions for training camp are not so favorable. All this can be called a little unsatisfactory.

As for education, the training of football specialists from the very beginning of the program was conducted under the guidance of the German specialist Nicolai Adam. There was a department of coaching education, which, following the concept and cooperation with UEFA

and based on current trends and innovations, was supposed to train football coaches in different categories - C, B, A, and later Pro. I would like to note with pleasure that all this falls during the time of the football development program. This is encouraging because 90% of the local coaches currently employed by Premier League clubs and national teams are coaches who have been trained in these licensed courses. All these can be considered really positive factors.

As for the boarding schools, earlier, during the Soviet era, there were football boarding schools in different regions of the country and Baku. These schools should be created under the Ministry of Education. Because to separate children and teenagers from education and just play football would not be such a successful project. For example, in boarding schools of the previous period, there were sections on football, wrestling, and other sports in which children were involved who were selected at regional and city tournaments and showed themselves well at internal tournaments. It could be a successful project, but the only thing that has recently been undertaken is that football talents from different regions are invited to various football clubs at the expense of the clubs maintained at the bases of these clubs. But, as far as I know, there is only one centralized academy, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, and this is the academy of the "Vatan" football club, where children study and also train in the football sections of the academy. Maybe there are other academies, but the most advanced football project known to me is "Vatan".

In Soviet times, every district had football fields where children could play street football. Street football is very important for the popularity of football. Later, after independence, the unstructured construction of new buildings inevitably created problems in the use of football pitches in front of these buildings. And all of this had a profound effect on football. As the buildings were built, the football fields in the yards began to slowly disappear. Thus, the flow of kids from the streets to football has slowed down. But later, I can't say the exact number, as a result of joint work of the federation and local executive bodies in the yards of separate

schools and buildings, mini-pitches were put into operation to attract people to mass football. But if we take into account that the capital has a population of about 3 million, it is necessary to admit that the number of pitches is not enough.

Last but not least we are behind in terms of technology. There is still incompetence and a shortage of computer technology specialists such as Polar and Catapult needed to measure the fitness of players. Yes, the training of local specialists abroad, and the invitation of foreign specialists to Azerbaijan is becoming more widespread, but in general, much more work is needed in this direction.

2) In which of these measures were you / your institution involved? - The Federation took part in all the above-mentioned events.

3) Where are these measures effective? - If we look at previous years in terms of infrastructure, there is progress, but it needs to be improved and brought into line with standards. As I mentioned earlier, great steps have been taken to train coaches, and this is not only my subjective opinion but also the opinion of the instructors sent by UEFA. Currently, the number of PRO-licensed and A-licensed coaches in the country is higher than in previous years. I do not know what will happen in the future with the issue of boarding schools, but at the moment it is not encouraging.

4) What went wrong? What was good? Please provide your evaluation for each measure. - The first years of the program were marked by a large influx of foreign players to both clubs and national teams due to large financial investments. After the end of finances and the departure of legionnaires, it became obvious that for all this time local football players were not grown ready to take the places of these players. The academies remained empty, the academies did not improve, and huge amounts of money were spent by clubs only on bringing foreign players into the country. If these funds were directed to the creation of academies at each club, then even now one could see the fruits of this work. An example is the Gabala Football Academy. At the expense of large funds, legionnaires and well-known

foreign coaches were invited to the team. After they left, the players brought up in the academy form the backbone of the first team. There are such examples, and I think it would be better to spend large sums of money on raising local children than on legionnaires and foreign coaches.

5) What is your overall evaluation of the program? - The program was an indicator of the state's care for sports. It is also was an opportunity for the development of football by the people in charge of the program. In general, I highly appreciate the program, but if there is a second such state program, more structured work should be done.

6) Are you aware of any reports regarding the measures of this program? Where can I find them? - All reports prepared by the federation are publicly available on the federation website. There you can also find an extensive report on the work done regarding the state program for the development of football.

7) What would be your suggestions to be added to the next program? - As I mentioned before in general, I highly appreciate the program, but if there is a second such state program, more structured work should be done. Directions of action, the mechanism of operation of the program and the implementation of projects arising from the program, and the mechanism of control over those projects, it is not enough to do, it is necessary to control what happens after, where are the gaps. I think it would be better if the control mechanism was more active.

APPENDIX III

FOREIGN EXPERT

1) Whether the state program had any positive impact on the development of football in Azerbaijan? If there were any in what it was shown? - As you know, I was part of that state development program. My contract started on the first of January 2011 and I worked in Azerbaijan until the 31st of March 2015. I basically joined the program even a little before in 2010, as an independent instructor sent by DFB, German Football Association, in 2010, the program was already in progress, or process. And it is always a little bit difficult to charge something I was part of myself. That's the one problem I see. The other problem I see is, how do you evaluate the success of a program? How do you evaluate the development of football players? Is it the pure number of players that make it to professionals? But even then, you would still not know what have we missed? Because you just don't know. But there is a dilemma of we will never know what could have been done better. In general, it's very difficult to evaluate objectively. It was 10. It was five it was three, I don't know. The answer to this question is not that simple. There are many different layers we have to talk about to come close or closer to an answer to that question. One is, have we inspired more kids to play football? That would be a question for me on how to evaluate that. It comes with infrastructure have we built more infrastructure that actually makes it possible for inspired kids now to play football. Have we also delivered the materials - balls, nets, cones, markers, many pitches, and so on? Have we, and that was my field, delivered coaches? Coaches that work accordingly to the developments face the kids are in their best interest. I have done my job as an instructor on one side and a national coach on the other side. At the beginning of my contract, I did four C courses per year, two B, and one A and every two years we started a new pro license. I can say in terms of quantity. Yes, I have delivered coaches. I have delivered coach education I even delivered or helped to build up to two instructors that still work for Azerbaijan Aslan and Osman. In terms of quality, it's

difficult again to evaluate because has Azerbaijan won any trophies, has Azerbaijan significantly made a profit in terms of let's say, did the national team reach new heights after all this? No. Right? So, but again, the question is how we evaluate it? Is that actually the expectation we should have in general? Is the question, right? What is it? That should be the expectation, but maybe the timeline is here, what really counts? Can we expect results and hard facts after 10 years? Maybe yes, maybe no, I don't know. So actually, I cannot answer that question. I think for sure things were better than before when we didn't have any program in Azerbaijan. I think there was definitely a positive impact but that I say with fully convinced it could have been done better.

2) In general what went wrong, what was good in Azerbaijani football? - I think the whole idea of the program was good. Let's remember how it was. Berti Foghts came with his team. Under 21 - Bernhard Lippert was also a technical director and I started as an under 15 under 16 coach and took the team finally generation ninety-seven actually to under 19 levels and on top of that Sisi Right in the World Cup in 2012, for the under 17 girls. I liked it, Of course, it sounds not objective. But of course, as a part of the program, I liked the fact that for that period, Azerbaijan fully committed to the German system. In I think it was done very consequent because those were the key positions, head coach of the national team, under 21, head of coach education, girls, before that event, the World Cup, and of course, technical director position, I think that was done well. Or that idea is done well, was everything done best during that time by the acting people, I don't know. I was one of them. So I'm not in the position to charge that. But the idea is good, I think. What went wrong and what was not in my hands. With all respect, I had the best time in Azerbaijan, I respect the country and I fully respect the people. But there is a "culture of baksheesh", there is a culture of a deep engraved in the people. That makes it difficult, or it is difficult, sooner or later, you will be confronted with that "baksheesh culture". Hey, Nicolai that coach needs to make it through the license and you as a coach say, no, he's the last one, in my opinion, who will

pass let's see, then you see he will not pass and you do a compromise and at the end, this guy gets his license because you don't want to start a war with the wrong people. And then half a year later you read he's in a top position somewhere and actually should be the last one having that position. That is definitely something that has to end. So, that one is definitely something that went not in the best way in my opinion this "baksheesh culture".

And the second problem maybe I see is consistency. A key factor is not a guarantee but a key factor for success. The success you can measure success you can for sure see, it is consistency. Consistency and consistency come with patience. You cannot make a plan, put all these people in a position and then after a year you change it again. In another year you change it again, consistency is the key. I realized that more and more the second thing is you need good management. And management I miss in Azerbaijan, the Premier League is a bubble in Azerbaijan, here in Germany, if you don't have a functioning, management, and on top of its corporate governance, management is not corporate governance. You have visions, not only where you want to be but also how you want to get there. And in all this has to be sustainable. And that's missing. And that's a problem.

3) If there is a second development program what would be your suggestions to be added to the program? What should be given special attention? - If there would be a second development program, my advice would be to continue with technical experts for sure. But also go to an or involve the management side of it. And so I would include that in the if there is a next program which I would love to help with. You need experts to explain "hey, this is how that whole football thing works". The football culture, of course, is the other thing that you need more people like me the technical people to spark that little fire in the people next to wrestling. Yeah, wrestling is the national sport in Azerbaijan, but why not have football also as a top sport in that country. But again, sustainable football development without management and cooperative governance is not possible.

If you do another program be smart and wise, If I was a man who made decisions in Azerbaijan find people who really are qualified to help the country, who have that extra soft skills to deal with this country, it can never be perfect still there will always find the people who can be the close to perfect, who can give maximum performance, give and not take only. Experts have their price but sometimes you give money I do not say to the wrong people but make it realistic do not give a million give half a million, find the people that will give their best for the realistic price. That really my advice. Make sure that the people who work for you are worth the money that you pay them.

We are in around the year 2000. Germany's national team was not doing well. Then we had a reform, but from a technical point, we started the talent development program, and that changed everything for the better finally in 2014, we won the World Cup again, after 1990. But again, what happened to the A-team? The result of our national team was a disaster. What will happen now in 2022, in Qatar, we will see. We had such a program, technically. And we saw the success in 2014, but in 2018 already heard, where's all the success gone? Football is always up and down. But, there has to be a corporate governance vision, and idea, of which way you want to go. And that needs time. Affection, passion, patience, a clear head, even when some things sometimes go down, ok guys we have to change something, but the general idea is still there. Sometimes you go, you have a great idea you are in your time you realize shit, the road is closed, I can go this way, then change a little but still, you know, I want to go to Cologne, but maybe not on that road, there is another one. And this is this flexibility. You need not only in so in football, you need it in your life.

I think Azerbaijan definitely should have a second development program with the technical part. But also with that management, cooperate governance vision part. This morning, I go to work in my car and I hear on the news that the oil price is \$130 per barrel even higher than when I started in 2011. Your country right now benefits from that world crisis. Doing

another program would be my advice. Be patient find the right people and include that management part.