

# The operating and embedment of European football academies in West Africa

## Using the example of Red Bull Ghana

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# INTERESTED IN...

- the **aims** of Red Bull
- the **structure** within the academy
- RB's way of **acting and operating**
- the realistic **chances for the players**
- **the legacy**

# STRUCTURE

- I. Background
- II. Aims of Red Bull Ghana
- III. Results
- IV. Conclusions
- V. Potentials and Status Quo

# BACKGROUND

- Red Bull Salzburg: founded in 2005
- New York Red Bulls: 2006
- **Red Bull Ghana: 2007**
- **Red Bull Brasil: 2007**
- RasenBallsport Leipzig: 2009
  
- **Overall objective:** getting active in the football business; increasing the global advertising value of the brand



# ACCRA, GHANA



# VOLTA RIVER

[agoonline.com](http://agoonline.com)



# SOGA KOPE

[panoramio.com](http://panoramio.com)



# FROM SOGAKOPE TO THE ACADEMY





FIEVIE



FIEVIE

KPODZI





RED  
BULL  
GHANA  
/  
KPODZI



# RED BULL GHANA

# AIMS

*„New York is about **marketing**; Leipzig and Salzburg is a combination of marketing and sport; **here [in Ghana] it's only about sport**. In Ghana you can't sell a Red Bull can (...). That has nothing to do with marketing. It has to do with the fact that **Africa is cheap and that you can find a lot of talent here. It's about developing players for Leipzig, Salzburg and New York or about selling players.**“ (Interview 27.08.2010)\**

→ finding players for other Red Bull teams; but also: bypassing the FIFA-U18-rule.



# RESULTS

## INPUTS

- State of the art infrastructure: construction EUR 5,5 Mio. (plus EUR 100.00/ month)
- Personnel/ expertise from Europe: 47 employees/ 6 Europeans

## OUTPUTS

- 4 teams (U13, U15, U17, 1<sup>st</sup> team)
- > 100 players (around 60 at a time); 1000ds tested
- 4 players to Salzburg (2010 & 2014)



# RESULTS

## „COMMODITY“ CHAIN

### ... in Ghana

juvenile teams → Red Bull Ghana U13 → U15 → U17 → 1<sup>st</sup>

### ... in Austria

Red Bull Salzburg U18 → FC Liefering → Red Bull Salzburg

# RESULTS

## VARIOUS ACTORS – MANY CHALLENGES

### **(National/ local) football business**

- Ghanaian FA, Ghanaian Clubs Association, Ghanaian Player's Union
- Scouts and competing football clubs

### **Local authorities and communities**

- Modern leaders: mayor and other local and national authorities
- Traditional leaders: paramount chief and divisional chiefs
- Local institutions

### **& Red Bull as a transnational (commercial) company**

# RESULTS



# CONCLUSIONS

## BENEFITING ACTORS

- Individuals and families, players (potentially), workers and technical personnel

## LEVELS OF CONFLICT

- Uncertainties and lack of transparency in land acquisition
- Geographical and institutional isolation
- Ignorance of local actors; no collective identification  
→ **manifested through:** petition and demonstrations

# CONCLUSIONS

## EFFECTS ON THE PLAYERS

- No local players
  - High fluctuation among the players
  - No security concerning education
  - No tertiary education
  - High level of technical and tactical training
  - Strong focus on discipline and re-socialization
- Strengthening dreams of Europe and illusion of facility

# POTENTIALS AND STATUS QUO

- **For the local communities:** interaction, involvement and discourse at eye level; precondition: respecting local realities
- **For the players:** egal combination of sport and school; contractual security
- **For the workers and employees:** job security, exchange of expertise (training courses)

# POTENTIALS AND STATUS QUO

- **2013: Red Bull Ghana closed its doors**  
→ „Due to the remote area with no larger city nearby and because of mistakes of the local management.“  
*(Gerard Houllier, 2013)*
- **2014: West African Football Academy (WAFA) was established**  
→ „In close technical and textual cooperation with Red Bull.“ *(Red Bull, 2013)*

# THANK YOU!

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**download paper:**

Kainz, Martin, 2015: Red Bull Ghana, Global Value Chains  
and the Grabbing of Land and Resource. Vienna: VIDC.  
[www.vidc.org/publikationen/projektpool/poolstudien/](http://www.vidc.org/publikationen/projektpool/poolstudien/)



# ADDENDUM

*\* translated into English; original in German:*

*„New York ist Marketing, Leipzig und Salzburg sind kombiniert mit Marketing und Sport, hier ist nur Sport. In Ghana verkaufst Du kein Red Bull (...). Das hat nicht mit Marketing zu tun. Das hat damit zu tun: Afrika ist billig und es gibt viel Talent. Es geht darum, um Spieler für Leipzig, Salzburg oder New York zu entwickeln oder Spieler zu verkaufen.“*