



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Starfinder Foundation Selected to Partner with International Soccer Star Juan Mata to Advance Gender Equality

*Starfinder selected from among global youth soccer organizations to receive funding and partner with Common Goal, an international movement driven by professional soccer players, managers, and supporters to tackle high-impact social issue including gender equality.*

**Philadelphia, PA – June, 2018** – Starfinder Foundation is one of 27 organizations globally – and one of only three US-based organizations – selected to join the first collaboration cycle of Common Goal, a worldwide initiative dedicated to supporting local organizations that have successfully used soccer as a tool to tackle tough social issues. Common Goal is currently at the inception stage, with initial funding from 40 professional soccer players and managers, and expects to expand exponentially.

In this first cycle, Manchester United star Juan Mata and Alberto Prada Vega of Wiener Neustadt designated 4,500€ (over \$5,000) to Starfinder through Common Goal to support its work – and their priority – to advance gender equality.

Starfinder will use their support to help cover the cost of female coaches in its soccer and education programs for low-income and underserved girls. In particular, Starfinder will prioritize hiring and training female graduates of its high school program in order to support their continued development as young leaders and to provide inspiring, relatable role models to girls coming from similar backgrounds.

“Girls and young women face tremendous barriers to playing soccer, especially those living in marginalized communities. They have less access to quality programs, fewer role models, and less social support,” explained Starfinder’s Executive Director, Heidi Warren. “Being selected to partner with Common Goal, and particularly with Juan and Alberto, is a tremendous honor for Starfinder and our students. Their support will help more girls become strong athletes and confident leaders.”

In addition to Juan Mata and Alberto Prada Vega of Wiener Neustadt, participants in Common Goal include US women’s national team players Megan Rapinoe (Seattle Reign FC), Alex Morgan (Orlando Pride), and Heather O’Reilly (Arsenal FC), as well as local favorite David Accam of the Philadelphia Union.

### **Publicly-Announced Common Goal Members:**

Alberto Prada Vega (Wiener Neustadt), Aleksander Čeferin(UEFA), Alex Jason Brosque (Sydney FC), Alex Morgan (Orlando Pride), Alexander Esswein (Hertha BSC), Alfie Mawson(Swansea City), Ana Cate (Stjarnan), Atli Gregersen(Víkingur), Bokang ‘Lefty’ Mothoana (Kick4Life), Borja Lassode la Vega Gayán (CA Osasuna), Bruno Saltor (Brighton & Hove Albion F.C.), Charlie Daniels (AFC Bournemouth), Daniel Didavi (VfL Wolfsburg), David Accam (Philadelphia Union), Duncan Watmore (Sunderland FC), Giorgio Chiellini (Juventus Turin), Giuliano Modica (1. FC Kaiserslautern), Heather O’Reilly (Arsenal FC), rene Paredes (Paris Saint-Germain), Jean Sseninde (Crystal Palace), Juan Mata (Manchester United), Julian Nagelsmann (1899 Hoffenheim), Kasper Schmeichel(Leicester City), Mats Hummels (FC Bayern Munich), Megan Rapinoe (Seattle Reign FC), Olga García (FC Barcelona),Pauline Bremer (Manchester City), Runar Alex Runarsson (FC Nordsjaelland), Sebastian Plog (BV Cloppenburg), Serge Gnabry (1899 Hoffenheim),

Shinji Kagawa (Borussia Dortmund), Sofie Junge Pedersen (Levante UD). Tessel Middag (Manchester City), Vero Boquete (Beijing BG)

### **Organizations Supported by Common Goal**

Starfinder Foundation, OSCAR Foundation, Sacred Sports Foundation, FundaciónTiempo de Juego, KICKFAIR, Africaid WhizzKids United, Soccer Without Borders, Balon Mundial, Tackle Africa, Football for All in Vietnam, FundLife International, Indochina Starfish Foundation, Albion in the Community, YEDI, AmericaSCORES, Sport4Life, Street League, Football United, HODI, training4ChangeS, Jambo Bukoba, IDYDC, Asociación Civil Andar, RheinFlanke, Yuwa, WASH United, KICK4Life

### **ABOUT STARFINDER**

Starfinder Foundation is a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania based youth development organization utilizing soccer to engage low-income youth to engage and foster their bodies, brains, and budding leadership skills to develop strong and healthy individuals. Starfinder's mission is to enhance the personal growth of underserved youth through soccer and learning experiences that engage, inspire, and motivate.

Since its founding in 2002, Starfinder's programs have equipped over 9,000 youth from underserved communities with the tools they need to achieve success both on and off the field. Soccer is the hook; success in school, in the community, and in the pursuit of higher education is the goal.

Starfinder has been a proud member of the streetfootballworld network since 2009.

[www.starfinderfoundation.com](http://www.starfinderfoundation.com)<<http://www.starfinderfoundation.com>>

### **ABOUT COMMON GOAL**

Common Goal is a global movement in which the soccer community pledges a minimum of 1% of its earnings to soccer-for-good organizations that use the game to advance the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Common Goal's long-term vision is to unlock 1% of the entire soccer industry's revenues—conservatively estimated at \$30 billion per year—to support soccer for good organizations using the game to strengthen their communities. This would translate to a 400% increase in funding for soccer for good organizations each year, allowing them to engage and educate an additional 10 million disadvantaged people.

Common Goal is the creation of streetfootballworld, the international leader in soccer for good. Since 2003, the organization has assembled a global network of more 120 local charities that use soccer as a tool to tackle social issues ranging from gender equality in India to peacebuilding in Colombia to refugee integration in Germany. streetfootballworld supports Common Goal's members by aligning their donations with soccer charities that generate the greatest impact around the world.

[www.common-goal.org](http://www.common-goal.org)<<http://www.common-goal.org>> |  
[www.streetfootballworld.org](http://www.streetfootballworld.org)<<http://www.streetfootballworld.org>>