

# Ruben Jongkind



**Football can change the world,  
but we need to change football  
first**

*Football is by far the most popular sport in the world. It is a game for all ages, cultures and backgrounds. Especially young children embrace football, because it is an accessible sport and it provides the possibility to move, to express oneself and learn to work together. However the adults involved in the game, coaches and parents focus on the most visible part of football: winning. Relatively younger or late mature players are discriminated against and children are pressured to meet the unrealistic high expectations of adults. Seven out of 10 children who play football drop out before the age of 13.*

*By breaking away from the traditional structure, payment system and culture of youth football based on the needs of the adults towards a child centered approach to youth football, all children get the chance to enjoy the most beautiful sport of the world. The key is in the hands of the adults because to forego present personal satisfaction for the future success of the children is the true goal of coaching.*



Movement and sports have always been Ruben's passion. He worked with world class 800 meters athlete Bram Som, and several other Dutch champions in athletics, triathlon and pentathlon before taking on the responsibility of coaching at the famous academy of Dutch Football Club Ajax Amsterdam.

Ruben was introduced to the Montessori philosophy through Ajax youth player Jamie Lawrence, Lynne Lawrence's son, the CEO of Association Montessori Internationale. As Head of Talent Development of Ajax, he teamed up with Johan Cruyff and implemented Montessori principles into the academy, contributing to the development of world class players.

Between 2015 and 2018, Ruben was director of Cruyff Football, spreading Cruyff's football legacy throughout the world. In 2018, he founded Montessori Sports with the aim to use the power of sports to improve education for all children. Montessori Sports programs run across five continents. Ruben initiated the Montessori Sports Fund to support indigenous communities to create and sustain learning environments for children, using the power of sports. Ruben is strategic advisor to the Dutch professional football club FC Volendam. He holds a Master's degree in environmental science and business administration and obtained the AMI Montessori 3-6 diploma.