

**ICC EUROPE MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Lord’s Cricket Ground, London, 21 March 2013

**Israel win Flicx match pitch through Cricket4Peace story**

***Heartwarming story generates huge interest***

The International Cricket Council- Europe in partnership with Flicx UK today announced the Israel Cricket Association (ICA) as the winner of ‘***How cricket has made a difference to your life?’*** competition, for Shehadeh Salamin’s story of how Cricket4Peace changed his community and the lives of many in the troubled Palestinian region.

Shehadeh Salamin’s heartwarming story which really demonstrates the power of sport, generated huge interest and received over 2,500 page views,  please see his story as follows:

*“My name Shehadeh Salamin 16, from al – Samoa. All my life, I dreamt of being a famous Palestinian* *footballer…until our village was introduced to cricket. The game rapidly became our flagship sport, with most kids preferring cricket over soccer!*

*I soon found that the more I played, the better I became. But to progress to the next level, we needed more cricketers. Someone proposed holding joint activities with Israeli kids. I must admit, I had concerns. However, when we reached Beersheba, the Israeli coach, George, greeted us with kindness. His warm words broke the barrier of fear in me. I thought to myself “I like to play cricket, just like Israeli children. So it would be fun to play together.”*

*We played in mixed teams with the Israelis and I enjoyed it! We had amazing collaboration. The head coach said to me in Arabic: “Bravo, you are a great player”. I felt very proud and our next practice couldn’t come too soon. Cricket has given me a new lease of life. Now I am a more confident person with a real desire to continue improving my game. And my dreams have changed too.*

*Today I dream of a cricket club in Palestine and of becoming the first Palestinian cricketer to play in an international league. I’m sure that with those Israeli and Palestinian children who participated with me, we can also realize the dream of peace together.*

*When holding a cricket bat, I feel I hold the whole world.”*

The Israel Cricket Association through the Cross Border cricket project is using cricket to facilitate interaction and communication to break down barriers between ethnic groups. Stage 1 of the project involves bringing together Jewish and Bedouin children in the Negev area, with Stage 2 to include Palestinian youth from the West Bank, a project currently being coordinated with the Peres Center for Peace - Cricket4Peace.

Cricket Ireland were run into a very close second place with Dundalk CC, Eddie Bosano-Andrews story and they will receive a Flicx Crazy Catch Wildchild and Freestyle. Crazy Catch is the Ultimate Rebound Net and comes as a new handheld model for the new season. The other finalists included Estonia, Spirit of Cricket by Sharath Geetha; Germany, Cricket Club Bonn by Raymond Cooray; Israel, Cricket4Peace by Sharon Gudker and Spain, Lanzarote Cricket Association by Peter Starmer.

Speaking about the interest in the competition Flicx UK’s Managing DirectorRichard Beghin commented. “The Flicx team were amazed by the quality of stories which were put forward and the enthusiasm with which all the finalists promoted their entries within their cricketing networks. It really shows the vital role that sport plays in changing people’s lives for the better, which is the very reason why the Flicx Pitch was developed in post apartheid South Africa to help break down racial barriers”.

Please see all stories here: <http://flicxpitch.wordpress.com/>