



# **DARFUR UNITED SOCCER ACADEMY**

**Kicks & Hope Curriculum**





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**The Darfur United Soccer Academy (DUSA)** is a MOVEMENT for HOPE. The Academy is the first comprehensive sports program for Darfuri girls and boys in the refugee camps along the Chad-Sudan border. The Academy is co-created with the refugee community and is implemented by trained men and women refugee coaches. The Academy builds leaders; promotes health and education; empowers women and girls; and provides a safe place for refugee children to play, move, and heal, while developing their soccer skills.

## OBJECTIVES

**Promote Leadership.** Four coaches (two men and two women) and a team of adult volunteers are trained and hired to lead the Academy. Their leadership roles include coaching the children in soccer, health, and peace-building skills, supervising the youth players six days a week, managing the Academy facilities and equipment, maintaining community partnerships, and connecting with i-ACT and communities around the world. The coaches serve as role models for the boys and girls, who are the future leaders of their communities.

**Promote Health.** The Academy serves as a source of awareness and health promotion for the children and youth. In order to create an environment that is free from physical and emotional threat, the coaches are trained in basic health and hygiene, positive behavior management, injury prevention, and player safety and support.

**Promote Education.** The Academy partners with the primary schools in each camp in order to support school attendance. This is particularly important since school attendance rates in refugee camps tend to be low and fluctuate throughout the year. Partnerships with schools seek to ensure that the school and the Academy have an inclusive strategy that serves the unique needs of the children.

**Promote Equality.** The Academy is challenging gender norms by promoting the equal inclusion and participation of women and girls. Women and girls typically aren't offered the opportunity to play soccer in the Darfuri culture. The Academy requires that two women serve as coaches and leaders in order to empower women, as well as to provide employment opportunities. Twice a week, boys and girls participate separately in the Academy, allowing the girls to play solely with other girls. This strategy has been shown to increase the girls' level of comfort and reduce the potential for dropout.

**Promote Connections.** The Academy serves as a way to connect the refugee participants with children and youth soccer players and clubs across the U.S. and globally. This is a vital connection for a group of people who feel isolated and forgotten. Furthermore, it is a unique learning experience for individuals and clubs, offering them the opportunity to add a global service element to their programs.

**Promote Development.** The Academy strives to develop players for the representative men's and future women's Darfur United teams. The philosophy and style of play of the Academy is the same as the Darfur United team. Players have a team to look up to and are now able to dream of being part of something beyond the camps.



# DUSA PHILOSOPHY



## PEACE

The DUSA atmosphere, language, and player management are grounded in non-violence. This creates a safe environment for trauma recovery, social-emotional development, and a more caring and empathetic community.



## HELPING

Offering support to others is essential in life and in soccer. Helping is inherent in a community that values equality. Personal growth comes from overcoming challenging situations by working with others towards a common goal.



## SHARING

Teams and communities become exponentially stronger when individuals share their strengths and resources. Caring for and giving to others, on and off the field, creates unity and promotes a nurturing environment where everyone can thrive.



# STRENGTH-BASED COACHING

**FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE ACADEMY, STRENGTH-BASED COACHING IS DEFINED AS:**

- Focusing on the unique strengths of each player
- Players knowing that Coaches care for them and will be there unconditionally for them
- Being mindful of the language used and emphasizing positive feedback and support
- Promoting the value in differences among players and the differences in their skill levels, while creating an environment that fosters working as a team
- Leading by example whereby Coaches are outwardly positive, inclusive, and cheerful with all players
- Fun participation by the children, regardless of skill level



# LEADERSHIP

## SELECTION

Refugee men and women serve as the Academy Coaches and leaders. In partnership with refugee camp leadership, a pool of refugee men and women candidates are recruited and trained. Candidates learn the Kicks & Hope curriculum and how to manage the Academy. On the final day of training, two men and two women are selected and employed. The remaining candidates are offered incentives to be volunteers until a spot opens up for a Coaching position, at which time they will be re-evaluated.

Certificates of Completion and soccer gear are given to each candidate that completes the entire training.

## COACH PROFILE

Meet one of the first Darfur United female coaches:



## COACH LEILA

**AGE: 19**

**CAMP: DJABAL**

Leila was chosen as a DUSA Coach because of her leadership skills and outward positivity with her peers.

**QUOTE:**

"Now I feel a new responsibility. I feel like a leader, and I feel confident talking in front of large groups of people in the community."

## COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

DUSA is co-created and implemented by trained refugee men and women soccer coaches.

**Learn.** Understand the DU Kicks & Hope soccer curriculum; i.e. Academy philosophies, skills, drills, techniques, training regiments, and health strategies.

**Lead.** Be an encouraging leader to all DU Soccer Academy children. Work effectively and respectfully with all the children, parents, other coaches, and community leaders

**Encourage.** Provide positive and constructive discipline when necessary; however, under no circumstances are harsh punishments tolerated.

**Live.** Lead by example and live what you teach! Continue to represent DU Soccer Academy when you are off the field and out in the community. Your team work, passion, and inspiration are all vital to the success of the DU Soccer Academy.

**Teach.** Use all opportunities to teach the DU Soccer Academy ways. Children are always learning. As Coaches you are encouraged to ask the i-ACT Team and DU Coach Ambassadors questions. The more knowledge that is shared, the more the children will learn and grow as players and individuals.

**Enjoy.** Smile, laugh, and live with enjoyment. This is essential to the DU Soccer Academy experience.



# ACADEMY DESIGN

**Schedule:** DUSA takes place six days a week. Boys and girls ages 6-to-13 attend the Academy in the afternoon, after their morning of primary school. Coaches provide each player with a DUSA membership card upon registering and assign each player two days to attend the Academy each week. Youth 14+ are given the opportunity to utilize the Academy field, equipment, and guidance from coaches in the morning.

**Expected Reach:** Each DUSA is designed to reach 2,000 children per refugee camp, or 24,000 across 12 camps in eastern Chad.

**Duration of Academy Session:** The total recommended time frame for each DUSA session is approximately 1 to 1.5 hours in order to meet the health experts' recommendation of 60 minutes of daily physical activity for children and to allow sufficient time to engage the children in an appropriate and safe learning environment on the field.



# DUSA CURRICULUM

Kicks & Hope curriculum plants a seed for peace and hope for children and the refugee community at large. The curriculum consists of three core elements: Soccer, Health, and Peacebuilding. The curriculum emphasizes the development of soccer skills while integrating health and peacebuilding content in order to support the social-emotional development of children. Through soccer, the curriculum includes appropriate physical and loco-motor skill development, as well as health and peacebuilding skills.



## SOCCER

Developed in partnership with U.S.-based women and men soccer coaches and professionals, there are 3 parts to the curriculum that are implemented over time.

**DUSA Curriculum #1** teaches the four primary classifications of soccer through basic drills. The drills provided are the true fundamentals of soccer, to be taught with patience and encouragement.

The four primary classifications for the DUSA Soccer Curriculum #1 are:

1. Passing
2. Dribbling
3. Receiving
4. Scrimmaging

**DUSA Curriculum #2** builds upon the four primary classifications and introduces more competition and 'real time' play structure. For example, in a passing drill players are set up in a diamond shape to reflect field positions.

**DUSA Curriculum #3** builds upon curriculum #1 and #2 with an added focus on learning new moves, tactics, and tricks, maximizing the number of touches each player gets on the ball during an Academy session (800 to 1000 ball touches by each player), and improving 1v1 defending.



## HEALTH

Developed in partnership with medical professionals, the health curriculum consists of teaching and reinforcing proper safety, health, and hygiene practice.

**Safety:** Coaches are responsible for verifying that the Academy field and space are safe in order to prevent any harm or injury.

**Hand washing:** Coaches emphasize and model the importance of hand washing after latrine usage, as well as before eating. To help with this, Coaches count to 20 with each child as he/she washes his/her hands (which also improves counting skills).



**Coughing:** Coaches teach and demonstrate to children how to cough into their arms in order to prevent the spread of germs. Coaches also discuss and define germs.

**Drinking Clean Water:** Coaches teach the children what clean drinking water is, the importance of drinking clean water, and the importance of hydrating.

**DUSA First Aid:** Coaches are trained in basic first aid and injury prevention for children ages 6-to-13. Every DUSA has a medical kit on site and Coaches coordinate with medical clinics in each refugee camp.

**Stretching FIFA 11+:** DUSA integrates FIFA's 11+, a complete warm-up program that covers stretching, hydration, and common football-related injury prevention.

All DUSA Coaches are trained in i-ACT's Little Ripples Health & Hygiene Curriculum.



## PEACEBUILDING

Developed in partnership with early childhood development experts, the peacebuilding curriculum consists of components that promote leadership, respect, teamwork, empathy, and non-violence. These peacebuilding components are integrated into all DUSA-related activities. It is a part of DUSA's DNA.

All DUSA Coaches are trained in i-ACT's Little Ripples Positive Behavior Management Curriculum. The curriculum provides a foundation for learning, peacebuilding, and trauma recovery for children.

## PLAYER PROFILE

Meet DU Soccer Academy player:



## MOHAMED HAROUN

**AGE: 10**

**CAMP: DJABAL**

Mohamed's favorite parts of the Academy are the coaches and getting to scrimmage and score goals with his friends.

**QUOTE:**

"When I feel alone, I go to the Academy and make friends and see my friends."

# A DAY AT DUSA

## COACHES' TIME

- Coaches arrive at the field at least 30 minutes before the children
- Meet to discuss the plan for the day
- Organize the equipment
- Prepare the water-drinking and hand-washing station
- Check that the field is safe for children to play barefoot

## WELCOME

- Coaches welcome and shake the hand of each child that attends the Academy session
- Coaches take attendance at beginning of each session
- In order to empower players, Coaches select two boys and two girls at the beginning of each session to serve as "Captains." Captains assist in leading the Academy session and are given special responsibilities such as gathering equipment and picking games to play. Coaches make sure that eventually all children are included as Captains.

## MINDFUL SOCCER

Coaches bring players out to the field and have them sit, and go through the following DUSA Mindful Soccer breathing exercise:

Coach says:

- When playing soccer, you want to be "in the moment." As you step on the field, you want to leave all your other worries and problems on the sideline, so that you can focus on the ball and on your game. This will help you make the best decisions for your team, and it will make the game the most enjoyable for you!
- A good technique to focus yourself and be in the moment is to sit for a few minutes and follow your breaths. I want you close your eyes and breathe normally. Focus all of your attention on your breath as it goes in and out of your body, starting through your nose, to your chest, until it raises your tummy, and then slowly back up and out. If you start thinking about anything, don't worry. Just let it go, and go back to focusing on your breath. We will do this for 3 minutes. OK, start breathing.

## WARM UP

### **Players on one line, arms distance apart, facing the coach**

- Coach claps hands once: players begin jogging in place
- Coach claps twice: players run at 25% speed to the other cones, turn and jog back
- Same as above: 50% speed
- Same as above: 100% speed

### **Coach claps hands once: players begin jogging in place**

- Coach claps twice: players skip (bringing knee up) at 25% speed to the other cones, turn and jog back
- Same as above: 50% speed
- Same as above: 100% speed



## WARM UP (Cont'd)

**Coach claps hands once: players begin jogging in place**

- Coach claps twice: players butt kick run at 25% speed to the other cones, turn and jog back
- Same as above: 50% speed
- Same as above: 100% speed

**Coach claps hands once: players sit on ground, legs crossed**

- Coach claps twice: players run at 100% speed to the other cones, turn and jog back
- Coach claps hands once: players sit on ground, legs crossed but with back to Coach
- Coach claps twice: players run at 100% speed to the other cones, turn and jog back
- Coach claps hands once: players lay on ground, on stomachs, hands on back of heads
- Coach claps twice: players run at 100% speed to the other cones, turn and jog back

[Coaches continue to warm-up activities]

## CIRCLE ACTIVITIES

Separate into small circles of 6 to 12 players

- Pass, trap the ball - Player says own name  
*progression:* add up to 3 balls
- Pass, trap the ball - Say the name of another player in the circle, pass to that player  
*progression:* add up to 3 balls
- Dribble to other player, high five, say favorite food  
*progression:* add up to 3 balls  
*mix it up:* players can say their favorite color, sports player, animal, etc.
- Keep-away, 1 player in the middle  
*progression:* go up to 3 players in the middle, encourage movement and communication  
*Variations:* Players can say their favorite color, age, favorite school subject, etc.

[Depending on timing, Coaches continue with skills and/or game activities]

## DUSA 4v4

Set up small fields, goals are 2 cones approximately 5 feet apart

- Divide up group into teams of 5 (4 players + 1 substitute)
- Before games begin, players shake hands and introduce themselves to teammates
- Team decides who sits out first as a sub and makes sure that they sub him/her in, so that all play approximately the same amount of time
- No hands allowed. No goalies
- Encourage teamwork and positive interactions
- At end of the game, shake hands with players on the other team, "Good game!"
- Games are a duration of 10 minutes, switching opponents as needed, until 10 minutes before end of practice time

## BE SURE TO GIVE WATER BREAKS

## DUSA TALK

- Coaches gather all players in a huddle to highlight positive behavior, teamwork, soccer skills from players that day.
- Coaches ask players to share stories about soccer, school, and/or daily life in the camps. This is to allow time for children to share in a safe space with their peers.
- Coaches reflect on the DUSA pillars of Peace, Helping, Sharing. Here they may ask a few players to describe an example of peace, helping, or sharing from their daily lives or share an example that they saw during DUSA.

## CLOSING

- Players and Coaches all come together in a small circle, put hands together and cheer: Darfur, United (loud)
- Darfur, United! (louder!)
- DARFUR, UNITED! (LOUDEST)
- Each week, Coaches select 3 different players to assist in cleaning up and storing all the DUSA equipment.





# INSIGHTS FROM DARFUR UNITED COACH AMBASSADORS



## MARK HODSON

DIRECTOR OF EVO SOCCER PROGRAMS

"I was extended a surprising invitation to join -- what was unbeknownst to me at the time -- the best team in the world [Darfur United]. And it would open my eyes to another world and the realization that we can all make a difference, more so than we can ever truly understand!"



## RACHAEL RAPINOE

RAPINOE SOCCER CAMPS

"The four DU Soccer Coaches and myself took 30+ children through the first ever DU Soccer Academy! It was an exciting moment, one which I will never forget. These two weeks have been full of hard work, laughter, tears and immensely rewarding. I have truly made friends here in Chad, ones who I hope to know for many, many years. It's not often you get to meet souls like some of our friends here, and I am truly a better person for knowing them."



Darfur United Soccer Academy was given Beyond Sport's 2014 Sport for Social Inclusion award.



i-ACT was the recipient of the 2012 Peace and Sport NGO of the Year Award for the creation of Darfur United.