

**Gulu Girls Basketball Camp Report**  
**Gulu, Uganda**  
**June 28<sup>th</sup> - July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**By Gulu Go Volunteers:**

**Betsy Allen, Linda Eng, Atim Oti,**

**Ageno Oti, Tyler Peterson, & Brooke Reves**



## **Executive Summary**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Gulu Girls Basketball Camp took place in Gulu, Uganda between June 28<sup>th</sup> and July 5<sup>th</sup>. The 102 camp participants ranged from ages 13-18 from 10 different primary and secondary schools in the Gulu area. The camp was hosted at Kaunda Grounds in Gulu through a partnership between Friends for Peace in Africa, a US non-profit organization and Uganda International Sports Academy, a Ugandan non-profit organization.

Volunteers from the US, lead by head facilitator Atim Oti conducted an intensive two day basketball training camp for primary aged girls and a week long training camp for secondary aged girls. The team of volunteers was comprised of individuals with backgrounds in secondary education, high school coaching, collegiate athletics, professional athletics, law, community development, communication, program management, international youth facilitation and a universal passion and love for sports and empowerment. They solicited donations (kind and in-kind) from various businesses and individuals, and brought basketballs, shoes, uniforms, water bottles and other equipment for the camp.. This volunteer groups efforts were possible because of Friends for Peace in Africa's commitment to reaching out to the northern Uganda community.

The focus on girls for the camp was done intentionally due to a great lack of attention on the female child in Africa. Sports allow girls to learn transferable skills which can be applied to various aspects of their lives, such as in inter-personal communications and career development. The five main skills incorporated into the entire camp focused on discipline, communication, focus, determination, and hard work. All of these skills focused on the central theme of seeking one's greatest potential.

In order to continue and build upon this training, a coach's clinic for 21 physical education and sports teachers from participating schools was held on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 at Pece Stadium. This clinic introduced the methods of teaching basketball to girls at school and how sports can be used to compliment and reinforce education in the schools for greater retention of the girl child.

Overall, the camp was a tremendous success. There is a greater need for introduction of more sports in this region. It is our hope to continue this camp with the intention of establishing a girl's basketball club in Gulu, where there is currently no club for girls.

Thank you for your support.

Kindly,

Gulu Go Volunteers

## **Background**

The focus on girls for this camp was done intentionally due to a great lack of attention on the female child in Africa. Specifically in northern Uganda, many young girls have found themselves as heads of households, caring for infants, siblings, and elders, while still trying to secure a future for themselves.

Traditionally, girls in this region do not participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports mainly because of embedded gender roles. A girl within the targeted age group usually must stay at home to attend to house chores such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of younger siblings. During the civil war that struck northern Uganda, between 20 to 30 percent of child abductees were girls, including the millions of individuals who were killed or forced to live in internally displaced camps. With these circumstances at the forefront of this project, this camp serves as an outlet to rebuild this affected community.

Sports allow participants to learn transferable skills which can be applied to various aspects of their lives, such as in inter-personal communications and career development. The five main skills incorporated into the entire camp focused on discipline, communication, focus, determination, and hard work. All of these skills focused on the central theme of exploring one's greatest potential.

Strategic planning and fundraising for the camp began in December of 2007. Team members met once a month, then bi-monthly and weekly in May and June of 2008. The official facilitating team was formed in January, 2008 with one member on the ground coordinating camp program and logistics with UGISA staff while the rest of the team continued to fundraise, collect camp materials, and prepare logistics and program for the camp. Fundraising was conducted by means of direct mail campaigns, private house parties, and public events. Monetary and in-kind donations were solicited, with all goals being met. In-kind donations of basketballs, shoes, jerseys, and rim equipment were of great significance to the camps' success.

## **Participant demographics**

In an effort to minimize travel for the camp participants, the schools closest to Kaunda Grounds were chosen to participate. Additionally, UGISA volunteered to continue to promote girls sports. For close follow-up, only four girls from each school were chosen by their sports teachers to participate in the camp. Furthermore, the camp participants were divided into two groups: primary and

secondary. The following schools participated with the correlating number of participants from their school.

Alliance High School..... 15	Unifat Primary School..... 5
Gulu Public School.....5	Layibi Primary School..... 5
Gulu Senior Secondary School .....12	Pece Primary School..... 5
Gulu Central High School.....14	Labourline Primary School.... 6
Police P.7 School .....5	Primary P.7 School .....5

\* Approximately 25 participants not registered for the camp were signed up and participated in the secondary camp.

In conjunction with the basketball camps, a coach's clinic was held for physical education and sports teachers from the participating schools. This was done to help support and promote girls sports within the schools. The clinic was held at Pece Stadium and was a half day session focusing on: basketball fundamentals, rules and officiating, coaching techniques, conditioning/ drills, and using basketball to teach life skills.

### **Impact and Results**

In total, the girls' basketball camp reached 102 primary and secondary participants. The initial camp roster had 40 primary participants and 40 secondary participants. We exceeded this number in the secondary group which saw a steady increase in camp participants throughout the week.

Basketball fundamentals were the focus for the camp, which included: dribbling, shooting, passing, and positions, proved to be very effective. We divided the camp into three stations, with camp participants rotating stations every 15 minutes. This was done to ensure increased repetition and gave the facilitators the opportunity to work with the girls on a more individual basis. Dialogue between girls from different schools was achieved by splitting the girls up into three groups. This allowed them to rely on each other in learning the different drills and practice communication, hard work, and cooperation skills.

The visible involvement of UGISA staff and assistants created a comfortable and friendly environment where learning was embraced. The assistance of the coaches' assistants from UGISA was very beneficial, as they were able to help with language translation, demonstration and explaining drills, support for facilitators, and as promoters and role models for girls sports in Gulu.

The coach's clinic was a success predominantly because of the teachers' eagerness and understanding of the need for girls' sports. All participating schools sent at least one representative, with most schools sending two representatives. They were active participants and even commented on their experiences during the clinic. One participant noted, "it is commendable to empower us with skills for basketball...keep us in touch and update us, ...follow up our performance... and leave communication open for us to share the challenges with you".

## **Challenges**

The camps were held during the middle of a school term, where many secondary participants were in the middle of mid-term exams. Therefore, camp for the secondary camp participants was only an hour and a half instead of the full two hours each day. There were also several unforeseen school commitments which did not allow some participants to come to camp.

While approximately 50 pairs of shoes were used by camp participants without shoes, there were still quite a few individuals who did not get shoes and had to play barefoot. Additionally, most girls do not own shorts and so they played in skirts. Shoes are a must in order to play at full capacity. For comfort and for certain drills, shorts or trousers would've been more appropriate.

Kaunda grounds, located within Gulu town, is one of the only places with basketball courts. This being the case, many other schools were not able to participate for lack of transportation to get to Kaunda grounds.

## **Lessons-learned**

Having the camp on the break of term would maximize attendance and attention for the participants. Many girls were unable to participate because of scholastic commitments. Hosting the camp during the term break would also be able to yield better logistics and programs for the entire camp. In the future, camps will be able to host participants all day, rather than for half a day. Additionally, teachers and coaches can get more involved in the process and get practical experience.

Although a great deal of effort was put into soliciting in-kind donations of sports equipment, more should be solicited for the next year. We expect more participants as UGISA has seen a dramatic increase in girls coming out for basketball practice. In addition, a transportation plan/budget should be worked into the fundraising efforts to ensure that all the donations reach the camp in

Gulu. Participants will be able to continue developing their skills with this necessary durable equipment.

During the camp, many participants walked up and just joined the camp. Better publicity and recruiting on the ground, prior to the camp, will help lower the number of walk-ins. A special fundraising line item can also be added, so that costs of walk-ins are accounted for and hopefully sponsored.

During the camp, a one day classroom session on self-development was held at the local youth center. This was received well by the girls; therefore including more classroom sessions is a must for 2009. This will require fundraising for renting space and materials for the sessions.

Finding avenues to spreading the camp all over northern Uganda will continue to be explored. Transportation and lodging scholarships for girls in outlying districts should be solicited in the fundraising for the 2009 camp to be held in Gulu, Uganda. Ideally, participants who live the farthest will be hosted at a local school for the duration of the camp and their transportation paid to and from their villages. In the future, multiple camps could be hosted in different districts to increase access to rural areas.

## **Conclusion**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Gulu Go Basketball Camp for girls was a success. Participants learned a new sport, many for the first time, and life lessons. The vision of the camp has been about empowering girls to develop leadership skills and learn how to build community through sports. The participants in the camp, coaches, and volunteers were all students of the great lessons that community building can do. Community development is essential in this region because the trauma of the war has inflicted so many people. Many members from Gulu town camp out to watch the girls train, several groups including boys and elders inquired about camps for them as well. This camp not only benefits the girl child, but also the community in which she lives. The practical manner in which the camp teaches personal development is one that will transfer into the daily lives of the participants and hopefully aid them in actualizing their highest potential.

Planning for Gulu Go 2009 has already informally begun. Lessons learned from Gulu Go 2008 have been the starting point for the next year's planning process. Many of the 2008 volunteers have expressed interest and commitment to return to Gulu in 2009, and other supporters have pledged interest as well. Gulu Go 2009 remains the next short term goal for the volunteer team.