

Narrative Report by Atim Oti to Athletes for Africa in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding with Gulu GO

Summary of the Project

The 4th Annual Gulu Girls Basketball and Leadership Camp took place at Kaunda Grounds, in Gulu, Uganda, from August 15th – August 20th, 2011. 200 camp participants from surrounding primary and secondary schools within Gulu town were registered for this camp. This the largest turn out since the camp's inception. The camp was hosted by Gulu Athlete Sport Limited, GASL, a local organization promoting sports in Uganda and through the partnership of Gulu GO volunteers and Athletes for Africa, an international non-profit organization.

As the lead facilitator, I organized volunteers from the United States to come to Gulu and conducted 2 intensive three day basketball training and leadership camps for both primary and secondary aged girls. The team of volunteers this year comprised two 2nd year returning coaches, a Division I collegiate basketball coach, and two new volunteers, one of whom has developed our leadership curriculum for the past 3 years. These individuals come from similar athletic backgrounds, some having played at the collegiate level. Professionally, this group spans experience in large corporations, progressive community based organizations, health fields, legal field, and the academics. This year we solicited more donations (kind and in-kind) than ever before from various businesses and individuals, and brought basketballs, shoes and for the first time ever, enough shorts for each camp participant!

The last three camps set a precedent of girls' sports in Northern Uganda and the game of basketball in this region. As northern Uganda begins to heal itself from the civil war that has torched its community, the girl child's participation in positive and motivational activities is critical. This year, the leadership segment of camp focused on harmonizing the mind, body, and spirit through action.

Building on the camp's motto of, "Striving for one's greatest potential", 2011 camp participants came ready to participate and learn the game of basketball. Renewed energy, familiar faces, and lots of natural talent were seen at this year's camp. An evident progression has been made in terms of the development of these girls ability to play basketball. There were almost a third of last year's participants present at this year's camp. The last day of camp competitions of 5 on 5 showed that the girls are starting to pick up the fundamental of basketball.

A special thank you to all those in Kampala who facilitated our journey to Gulu, those in Gulu town who assisted our camp, and to the many blessings, prayers, and thoughts which made this camp a reality. Thank you for your support.

Kindly,

Gulu Go Volunteers

Activities carried out during the period of agreement (directly related to the project description and activities foreseen in this agreement)

On August 20th, we conducted a preliminary camp meeting with GASL coaches' assistants who were recruited from previous camps to assist in the camps in addition participated in a ropes course to build the leaderships skills of the coaches' assistants. The primary aged camp began on August 21st and ended on August 23rd, 2011. The secondary camp started on August 24th and ended on August 26th, 2011. During each daily camp session, held between 9am to 12pm, we focused our instruction on the fundamentals of dribbling, passing, shooting, and defense through repetitive drills, active demonstrations, and creative challenges.

The camp participants engaged in the leadership curriculum for this year's camp with the assistance of the GASL coaches assistants, lead by the US Coach, Ageno Oti. At the end of each day, a different aspect of mind, body, and spirit was introduced and discussed with the camp participants.

At the end of each camp day, the volunteer coaches and the assistant coaches gathered for lunch to discuss and reflect on the day's camp activities in order to refine the next day.

During the afternoons, the coaches and the coaches' assistants were able to conduct other volunteer activities, mainly at St. Jude Orphanage, where clothing donations were taken for the orphans and assisted the house mothers in food preparation. An additional, basketball clinic was held at Restore Academy in the Lacor area as an attempt to reach more participants who were not able to come to Kaunda Grounds.

Difficulties encountered and measures taken to overcome problems

The fourth annual Camp GuluGo was an overall success; however, there were some challenges:

- The international economy and lack of rain had a drastic effect on this year's camp for several reasons. Namely, many girls were not able to attend because they had to go work in the village during their holiday because families were not able to afford foods in the market. I think our turnout would have been even bigger had the lack of food and the need to grow more crops not been such a barrier for so many camp participants.
- Camp participation was irregular this year, with more participants coming on the last two days of camp. While we accepted this high number of participants, the level of instruction suffered on these days as there were so many participants.
- Storage of camp equipment from year to year has always been a challenge due to the lack of a safe storage facility in Gulu. We are still working on this issue.
- Some camp days were hotter than others, and so training in an open space can be exhausting for camp participants and coaches. In an effort to remedy this challenge, more water breaks were given and camp activities were carefully planned to be completed in the morning before the extreme afternoon heat.

- Several schools which have previously participated did not participate this year. Since recruitment is coordinated through the local school's administrations, it is important to build working relationships with these institutions in order to convey the importance of positive activity for girls. This is a constant challenge that we will continue to work on.
- A sewage line broke and made the camp grounds very unpleasant. Unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done, but camp participants were very uncomfortable due to this issue.

Changes introduced in implementation

In an effort to strengthen the local leadership and presence of girls' basketball in Gulu, a concerted effort to increase participation of the locally based coaches assistants to participate in daily camp instruction. This effort was done to address the lack of consistency that girls' basketball currently has in Gulu. Teaching and empowering the coaches' assistants to teach the fundamental skills they have learned will help other girls in the community learn or begin to learn the game of basketball. This change in instruction style was very effective and the coaches' assistants responded well. We also introduced a camp survey and had camp participants who had participated from previous years take the survey. The feedback we received was both hopeful and informative and will be used to implement further changes in both our curriculum and presentation of the camp for next year.

Achievements/results

For the 2011 Gulu Girls Basketball and Leadership Camp, a total of approximately 200 primary and secondary participated. The strong recruitment process conducted this year by GASL was critical in the success of the camp.

Drawing from our challenges in previous camps, more emphasis was given to empowering the coaches' assistants in Gulu in an effort to build their basketball skills. Since the US volunteers only come once a year, we envision this approach to focusing on the coaches assistants will help leave persons in Gulu to teach camp participants during the school year. For the second time in 4 years of the camp's history the camp participants have been able to put all the fundamentals together and compete against each other. That is a sign that the willingness and ability of girls in northern Uganda to play basketball is growing participants ability to learn and play the game of basketball is improving with each camp.

Our local young leaders, the coaches' assistant, are being given the opportunity to develop their abilities to lead in positive ways. Many of these youth are in difficult situations and do not have many opportunities to engage in activities that relate to things other than their own basic substance and survival. This camp continues to give them opportunities to not only participate in a skill-building activity to do, but to hone on skills of responsibility and ownership over their actions towards others in their community.

The girl child in Africa, and locally in northern Uganda is vital in the development of this continent. In a region that has seen war, death, and hopelessness, the rebuilding process of northern Uganda will take time. A sport, girls' basketball, has given some of the youth in this area, the vision of a new day, laughter, and a smile to strengthen a community. The 2011 Gulu

Girls Basketball and Leadership Camp was a tremendous success. We will continue to build on the want and desire of these girls to play basketball and learn the tools to being a positive community member in northern Uganda.

Photos, videos, stories of the camp and the participants, leaders and volunteers

A few excerpts from secondary camp surveys that were given to returning camp participants from previous camps:

Would you come back to camp next year? Why?

yes I will come because I am very interested in it where I help me to chat with some of the visitors and friends from other countries and schools.

What are some leadership lessons that you learned at camp?

I learned lifestyle about body fitness
I learned how to balance

How can you apply these things in your everyday life?

I can apply through practicing of seriousness every time and again.

What was your most favorite part of camp?

My most favorite part of camp is being with the good leaders that we have - in our camp, ^{like a} today encouraged me a lot.

What are some other parts you really liked about camp?

I really liked the way our leaders behaved in the camp and our coaches also.

What are some leadership lessons that you learned at camp?

Healthy life style

How can you apply these things in your everyday life?

By eating balance diet