

THE POWER OF SPORTS

This summer, CARE partnered with Nike and Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) to create the Kenyan American Soccer Exchange (KASE), which brought a team of Kenyan girls to select U.S. cities to meet and play soccer against local girls' clubs. It was all part of a global initiative to drive positive social change and unleash the potential of youth through sports. Nike's *Let Me Play* program is directed at youth who are excluded from sports due to poverty, war, natural disaster, discrimination or cultural bias. It is led by youth who believe in the power of sport and who have a passion to drive change. Empowering meaningful participation of children, especially girls, is fundamental in CARE's work.



CARE AND NIKE BRING GIRLS TOGETHER TO HELP "KICK OUT" POVERTY

ANNE OKONGO:

Anne has been playing soccer for six years and uses sports as a way to escape the hardships of daily life. At 18, Anne is an orphan and lives with her four sisters and two brothers outside of Nairobi. Her dream is to become a famous Kenyan lawyer and advocate for women's rights.



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THE KENYAN AMERICAN SOCCER EXCHANGE RECENTLY VISITED THE UNITED STATES TO SHOWCASE THEIR TALENT AND BRIDGE CULTURAL GAPS THROUGH SPORTS.

The Kenyan soccer team is made up of academic and athletic rising stars. Many of the players have battled social norms and opposition to girls playing sports. They have done so with dignity, even during the times that they have had little emotional support from their parents, and they have achieved remarkable goals. Their preparation emphasizes women's empowerment as a tool for success in obtaining gender equity.

"These girls have 'won' against the backdrop of the recent ethnic and social conflict in Kenya," says Maria Bobenrieth, global director of Nike's *Let Me Play* program. "Nike believes in the power of sports as a tool to bridge cultural divides, resolve conflict and empower girls and women. The KASE team is a shining example of how sport brings young people together to form a strong and united team in the face of such difficulties."

"This partnership highlights CARE's 'I Am Powerful' principle of encouraging women to become catalysts for social change and agents of their own development," says Wayne Lifshitz, director of CARE's Sports for Social Change Initiative. "The KASE program is an example of sport used as a vehicle for leadership and self-development by empowering young women to achieve their goals on and off the field."

TO WATCH A VIDEO OF THE KENYAN SOCCER TEAM'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES AND LEARN MORE ABOUT CARE'S SPORT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE INITIATIVE, PLEASE VISIT



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EVERLYN AJING:

Everlyn is 20 years old and has been playing soccer for more than half of her life. She hopes to study journalism in college and become a journalist or a Kenyan politician. Everlyn believes that more women in politics would create more stability and less violence in Kenya.



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