



KAKUMA CHESS CLUB

KAKUMA AND KALOBYEI END OF YEAR REPORT

Project Summary for Kakuma and Kalobeyei Chess for Protection

The Kakuma and Kalobeyei Chess for Protection project harnesses the game of chess to transform the lives of refugees and host communities, promoting peace, protection, and equality. In the Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, chess has become more than just a game. It is a tool for empowerment, education, and creating opportunities on both local and international stages.

Transforming Lives Through Chess

The project uses chess as a strategic and impactful way to address critical challenges faced by refugees and host communities as follows:

1. **Fostering Peace and Diversity:** Chess brings people together across cultural and national divides, providing a shared platform through tournaments and trainings thus creating interaction and collaboration for over eleven Nationalities across Kakuma and Kalobeyei Settlement Camp. The game teaches patience, respect, and problem-solving qualities that are critical for conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence in diverse communities in Kakuma and Kalobeyei Settlement camp. The sport has helped in curbing rampant trivial differences by bringing people together through the platforms mentioned above.
2. **Protecting and Engaging Youth:** By establishing chess clubs and organizing tournaments, the project provides a structured and positive outlet for young people. This helps protect them from engaging in risky behaviours like substance abuse, early pregnancies, and unhealthy relationships while equipping them with critical thinking and decision-making skills which support their careers growth by being focus through utilization of the mentioned attributes.
3. **Promoting Gender Equality:** Recognizing the need to support girls and young women, the project has created dedicated programs that provide a safe space for them to participate and grow. Through online and onsite mentorship sessions with professional players, arbiters, and journalists, girls gain skills, confidence, and exposure, breaking traditional gender barriers and fostering equality within the grassroots of Kakuma and Kalobeyei Chess for protection project.

4. **Creating Local and International Exposure:** Chess has opened up new avenues for refugees to showcase their talents both locally and beyond. Players from the camp have participated in tournaments within Kenya, impressing the National Chess Community and demonstrating the significance of this initiative. Despite challenges, including a failed attempt to participate in the recent Chess Olympiad due to travel documentation issues, there remains hope and determination to see Refugee Team representation at the 2026 Olympiad in Kazakhstan.

Implementation and Activities

- I. The project has established chess clubs within Kakuma and Kalobeyei Schools, providing weekly training sessions facilitated by 21 trained facilitators across Kakuma and Kalobeyei. The facilitators help establish chess clubs, collect club members data and monitor their skill learning progress through puzzles and mini tournaments.
- II. Tournament organization has been a key assessment tool that provides the platform for all Chess Club members to showcase their abilities. During the year 2024, Kakuma Chess Club held/participated in the following tournaments:
 1. Qualification for Kenya National Youths and Cadets Championship held at Kakuma Youth Centre 2 (March 30,2024)

The pictures below were taken during the KNYCC qualification





2. Participation of qualified boys and girls in the Kenya National Youths and Cadets Championship held at Mangu High School, Central Kenya (April 5-9,2024)

The images below were taken during and after participation in the KNYCC Tournament





3. Qualification for Chess Olympiad held at Youth Centre 2 (April 2,2024)

The pictures below were taken during award of the qualified boys and girls for the Olympiad







4. FIDE 100 years Tournament (July 20,2024)

The images below were taken during the FIDE 100 tournament





Impact and Vision

Chess has become a lifeline for many in Kakuma and Kalobeyei, offering not just a game but a path to personal growth, resilience, and opportunity. The program has already transformed lives by fostering unity, protecting youth, and promoting gender equality for over 11 Nationalities and the host community.

Looking ahead, the initiative aims to amplify these efforts, preparing players for greater achievements and international recognition. The hope for participation in the Kazakhstan Chess Olympiad in 2026 underscores the potential of chess to inspire ambition and provide a platform for refugees to shine on the world stage.

This project is a testament to the profound change that simple yet meaningful activities can bring, proving that with the right support, every move on the chessboard can lead to a brighter future.

Project Plan: Kakuma and Kalobeyei Chess for Protection

Project Duration: Ongoing with key phases over 1-3 years

Project Locations: Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement, Kenya

Project Overview

The Kakuma and Kalobeyei Chess for Protection project is designed to engage refugee and host community youth in chess activities. By using chess as a tool for education and personal development, the project aims to promote peace, protection, and empowerment. It provides a constructive outlet for young people to develop critical thinking skills, build confidence, and be kept away from risky behaviours like drug abuse, early pregnancy, and violence.

The program also emphasizes gender equality by offering specific opportunities for girls to participate and develop leadership skills. Over time, the project will create pathways for international exposure, allowing talented players to represent their communities at national and international levels.

Key Goals:

1. Promote Peace and Protection:

Provide a platform for youth to engage in healthy activities and build relationships that foster peaceful coexistence through club trainings and tournaments across Kakuma and Kalobeyei.

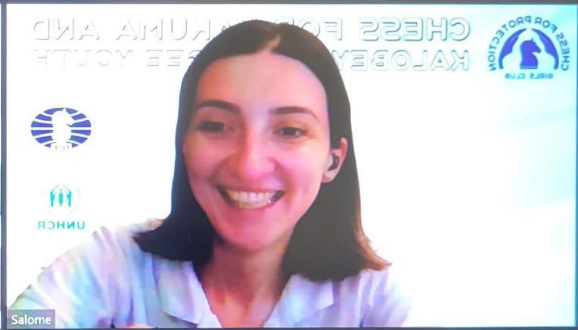
2. Empower Girls:

Establish gender-focused chess programs to ensure equal opportunities for girls and young women, offering mentorship and training from international chess experts. The Girl Club exist in the following Girl schools: Bhar-el-Naam Girls Primary School, Angelina Jolie Girls Primary School and Lifeworks Tumaini Girls Secondary School.

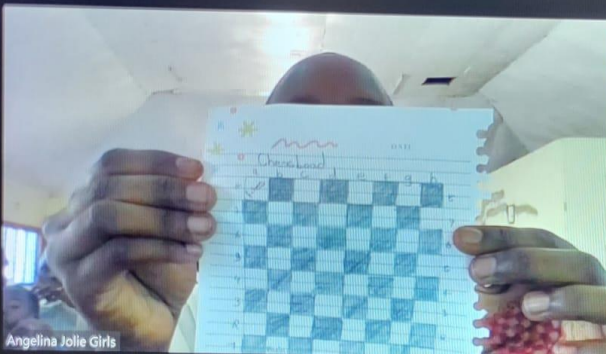
The images below show an ongoing Girl Club Session



Angelina Jolie Girls



Salome



Angelina Jolie Girls



Salome



3. Build Life Skills:

The game of chess involves nurturing of Life skills such as, problem-solving, strategic thinking, and teamwork to help youth make better decisions in life and develop their careers and lives.

4. Local and International Exposure:

Chess has offered opportunities for players to showcase their skills locally and nationally in the tournaments mentioned in the project summary. The goal of competing in

international tournaments like the Chess Olympiad in 2026 is key masterpiece for the Refugee Community.

Project Stakeholders

1. FIDE (International Chess Federation):

FIDE is the main donor that supports the project through funding, chess materials, and resources. Their involvement is critical for ensuring access to quality chess content and international recognition. FIDE pays incentives for Facilitators, supports tournaments finance and accommodation and travel costs for players locally.

2. UNHCR

UNHCR is a key partner, supporting the project within its umbrella to operate across the two camps. It plays a supervisory and evaluation role. It also supports in assisting players with travel documents for local and international participation. Integration of refugees into the community and aligning the project with broader refugee empowerment goals.

3. Chess Kenya Federation

Chess Kenya is the national chess body that oversees the program's activities and provides technical guidance, helping organize tournaments and connect participants with the larger chess community in Kenya. Chess Kenya also offers training of arbiters locally to empower the refugee arbiters gain the capacity to manage tournaments independently.

The image below shows Kenyan Chess President awarding trophies during Olympic Qualifiers in Kakuma



4. Educational Partners

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) this is the Educational Unit in charge of all Secondary Schools in Kakuma Refugee Camp, **Finnish Church Aid (FCA)** this Educational Unit is in charge of all Primary and Secondary Schools in Kalobeyei Settlement Camp, **Lutheran World Federation (LWF)** this is the educational unit in charge of all 21. All the mentioned

Educational Units offer venues, resources, and logistical support for the program's activities. Lutheran World Federation supports the project with its Youth Centres across Kakuma and Kalobeyei which are put in use by Chess Players on Weekly basis.

5. Parents and the Local Community

Parents play a key role in encouraging youth participation and creating a supportive environment. The broader community helps ensure the sustainability of the project. In the year 2024, Kakuma Chess Club partnered with KLABU a like minded Community Based Organization in Kalobeyei to incorporate Chess into their activities.

6. School Administrators

Local schools provide space for chess training, helping integrate the project into daily school life.

7. Kakuma Chess Club Staff

The dedicated staff run chess training sessions, organize events, and act as mentors to the youth participants. The team is lead by a project Leader, followed by two coordinators and assistants in Kalobeyei. Making a total of five administrators and sixteen facilitators.

Key Activities and Milestones

Phase 1:

Kakuma 1 Camp Schools August/2021 - completed

- Set Up Chess Clubs: Establish chess clubs in Kakuma 1 camp.
- Training and Resource Allocation: Distribution chess boards.
- Community Outreach: Launch an awareness campaign to explain the benefits of chess, recruit participants, and involve parents and local leaders.
- Recruitment of Staff: Hire local chess coaches and mentors to manage the training and ensure high-quality tutoring.

Phase 2:

Kakuma 2 Camp Schools May 2022 – completed

- Set Up Chess Clubs: Establish chess clubs in Kakuma 2 camp.
- Training and Resource Allocation: Distribution chess boards.
- Community Outreach: Launch an awareness campaign to explain the benefits of chess, recruit participants, and involve parents and local leaders.
- Recruitment of Staff: Hire local chess coaches and mentors to manage the training and ensure high-quality tutoring.

Phase 3:

Kalobeyei Settlement Camp Schools 2023/2024 – completed

Set Up Chess Clubs: Establish chess clubs in Kakuma 3 camp.

-Training and Resource Allocation: Distribution chess boards.

- Community Outreach: Launch an awareness campaign to explain the benefits of chess, recruit participants, and involve parents and local leaders.

- Recruitment of Staff: Hire local chess coaches and mentors to manage the training and ensure high-quality tutoring.

Phase 4: Refugee and Host Community Phase 2025

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. **Regular Reporting:** Monthly progress reports from staff detailing participant numbers, training outcomes, and any key achievements.
2. **Feedback from Participants:** Regular surveys and feedback from participants, parents, and community leaders to assess the program's impact.
3. **Annual Review:** A comprehensive review at the end of the year, with specific focus on whether the project has met its goals around peacebuilding, gender equality, and youth empowerment.

Risk Management

- **Documentation and Travel Challenges:** Work with UNHCR and local authorities to address any challenges related to travel documentation for international events.

- **Funding Constraints:** Actively seek new donors and partnerships to ensure the project has the financial resources to continue growing.

- **Community Buy-In:** Engage local leaders and community influencers early on to ensure broad support, especially for the girls' chess program.

Conclusion

The **Kakuma and Kalobeyei Chess for Protection project** offers a transformative opportunity for youth in the refugee and host communities to learn valuable life skills, build confidence, and engage in peaceful activities. Through chess, participants not only enhance their cognitive abilities but also gain opportunities for personal growth and international recognition. With strong community involvement, the support of key partners, and a clear

plan for sustainability, this project has the potential to make a lasting impact in Kakuma and Kalobeyi, offering youth a brighter and more empowered future.