

# Coastal Kings & Queens



## Soccer for Life by Fredrick 'Bokey' Achola

Since we renovated the Bomu ground, soccer has been the language of the area. Children come as early as 6:00 AM every weekend to play. By 11:00 AM two strong matches get concluded. At 2 PM the third match kicks off and by 6 in the evening the Magongo community will have enjoyed a total of four matches.

Since the income of Freelance, much of what we used to use (cash) in the senior team has gone to the little boys of under seventeen and under thirteen team. These two teams under Coach Alex have ballooned in numbers. Both the teams now total about ninety that at times he gets a problem in picking who to play and who to sit on the bench. We have therefore been forced to move their training venue to the larger Airport grounds.



To well develop the team, we rented Alex a house costing us 1,500 Kenya shillings a Month. Every evening he assembles his boys at the airport grounds for training and on the weekends he is at the ground in Bomu

at 6 AM. The boys play very good soccer and the community has come to admire the good work of Alex.

What however disappoints most is the education of the children. Most if not all are in public primary schools of Bomu, KwaHOLA and Mwijabu primary school. A school like Bomu has about 2,000 children and less than 30 teachers. The ration of children to teacher is therefore about 66 children to 1 teacher. Take a class of 60 children and one teacher and a lesson of 40 minutes. If a teacher was to spend a minute with each child, he/she would only reach out to 40 children. 20 others therefore have to miss the services of the teacher. This shows that most of Alex children don't get quality education. For those who go to private schools, they are cut off from soccer.

## Robinho with Rocket Long from SoccerAM

Take a child like "Robinho". He likes soccer so much that he used to spend most of his hours on the ground. To improve his grades in school, we got him a sponsor and was taken to a private school.



His English and his academic grades have very much improved. He has however been cut out of soccer. He goes to school as early as 6AM and school ends at 6:30 PM. Robinho can only play on Sunday afternoon. He misses soccer.

Kenya has become a country where education is everything. Parents will go to extreme ends to make sure that their children get quality education. Schools called "Academies" and which are privately run have mushroomed everywhere. Here knowledge is pumped or drummed into children brains. In these schools children go as early as 6 AM and come from school as late as 7pm. Parents pay for these schools. Children in these schools never get time to play or socialize as they go to school even on the weekends. At the end of the year, the children sit for the same national exams. Those one's from private schools come out with high marks while those from the public schools come out with lower marks. Those from private schools therefore get a place at public secondary schools which are well equipped and well trained teachers while most if not all from the public schools end up finishing all together after primary school.

While the others go to school, the only hope left for the rest is soccer. Soccer makes them feel respected and wanted. Soccer gives them hope. Soccer makes them have a sense of belonging. Most believe that soccer will get them a job. Some dream of one day playing in the Premier league in England one time. But something has to be done to the Kenyan Education System so that children can both go to school and play.