



HeartShapedHands

# Academy

KEI KAMARA  
HEARTSHAPEDHANDS  
FOUNDATION

# About Us



*“The youth of Sierra Leone have the natural talent and desire for learning and HSH Academy can be the missing piece that helps the next generation of Sierra Leoneans achieve greatness.*

*Let us cultivate the leaders, ambassadors and world-class athletes that will lead the country forward and put Salone on the international stage.”*



## What is HeartShapedHands Academy

Kei Kamara HeartShapedHands Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2012 by professional footballer and Sierra Leone native, Kei Kamara.

Originally, the US-based charity sought to provide scholarships to help motivated youth attend school in Sierra Leone. Throughout Kei's initial work with the foundation, he began to see a bigger opportunity to help. Now HeartShapedHands Foundation aims to create an academy with world-class facilities to provide quality education and character development through athletics to the youth of Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone, educational and athletic opportunities for youth are limited and it is impossible to pursue both. Youth can be either a student or an ambitious athlete. HeartShapedHands Academy (HSHA) seeks to establish a non-government associated program to give the youth of Sierra Leone the opportunity to become true student athletes.

This unique setting provides youth the ability to learn life-long skills on the field as well as in the classroom, to improve both themselves and their community.





Sierra Leone -----> The Gambia -----> USA

## Kei's Story

Born in Kenema, Sierra Leone on September 1, 1984, Kei Kamara spent his childhood days like most African youngsters - playing football. By 1990, Kei's mother had left for the United States and Sierra Leone, the country he so loved, fell into a violent civil war. Fearing for their lives, Kei and his remaining family fled their home, eventually seeking refuge in the neighboring country of The Gambia. They patiently awaited their ticket out and ten years later, in 2000, Kamara came to America through a refugee program and was finally reunited with his mother in Los Angeles.

Kei's life was at a turning point. As a student at Luezinger High School, Kamara was introduced to organized soccer. With the help of his dedicated teachers, coaches, and mentors, Kamara found the support that enabled him to be recruited to California State University Dominguez Hills. In 2006, after achieving numerous soccer honors at the collegiate level, his dream of playing professional soccer became a reality. He was drafted 9th overall in the Major League Soccer SuperDraft. Now, fifteen years later he has played in Major League Soccer, the English Championship & Premier League and has represented the Sierra Leone National Team.

Kei recognized early that he couldn't have done this alone — and neither can the underprivileged, at-risk youth of Sierra Leone today. HeartShapedHands Academy can be their ticket out and provide the turning point in their lives.

The vision of HeartShapedHands Academy is not about Kei himself. It is about all the kids like him, who will stand on his shoulders, arms outstretched to reach their full potential. He is the success story and inspiration HeartShapedHands strives to give other kids with talent and dreams of their future.

By partnering together with Kei and the HeartShapedHands Foundation, you help make the HSH Academy a reality. This will give at-risk youth a real chance at achieving their dreams and breaking the bonds of generational poverty.

These kids are counting on us to help them. Like Kei, they cannot do it alone but require both athletic and academic opportunity. Ultimately, this is how we can make a difference in our world: by giving a 'hand up' to one child at a time. Won't you join us? Please read on as we share our noble and ambitious vision...



# Core Values

Education is the most powerful tool a person can possess but how can you educate children in a developing country? When play is involved, kids listen. HSHA will give children the ability to learn in the classroom and on the field, emphasizing the following core values of our program:



## Respect

Respect yourself, others and the game always



## Collectiveness

Working together we can all go further



## Sacrifice

Making the right choices to achieve your dreams



## Determination

Though hard work anything is possible



## Swagger

Enjoy what you do and make it your own



## Belief

Belief in yourself doesn't mean believing you're the best, it is knowing you have what it takes to be the best

# The Academy



**HSH Academy will facilitate the creation of true student athletes, allowing them to earn an education while developing their athletic skills. This is their ticket out of the bonds of generational poverty and onto a better life.**

## The Community Need for an Academy

Every visit home we see the need. We see kids with big dreams and endless talent sitting on the sidelines with no direction or education to make those dreams a reality. We see kids packed into over-crowded schools trying their hardest to learn in the most difficult conditions from a dated curriculum.

Every child in Sierra Leone longs for a better life — one they see on television or hear about from their family abroad. They dream of becoming the next doctor, lawyer, entrepreneur, or soccer star. At HeartShapedHands, we believe they can be just that.

From our hearts, we give back with our hands an opportunity for these children to reach a better future. Together, we can make their dreams achievable.



## Poverty

**Approximately 60% of Sierra Leone's population live below the national poverty line.**

- More than 60% live on less than \$1.25/day.
- Sierra Leone is one of the world's poorest nations, ranking 180 out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index.



## Literacy

**More than 50% of Sierra Leone's population over 15 years old is illiterate.**

- The adult literacy rate is 43.2% (Male 51.6%, Female 34.8%)
- From 2015 census, 37.8% of population 6-15yrs went to school and 49.3% of population 15 & older never went to school



## Employment

**70% of youth are unemployed or underemployed.**

- The youth population (15-35yrs) makes up 1/3 of the population
- One of the leading reasons for these high rates is the persistence of illiteracy and the lack of formal education to provide skills to compete for the limited jobs available.



## Gender Equality

**9.5% of adult women reach secondary or higher level education compared to 20% of male counterparts**

- Sierra Leone has a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.662, ranking it 137/146 countries in 2011
- Significant gender-based inequality exists in all aspects — reproductive health, emotional empowerment, economic activity and governmental representation.

## Potential & Opportunities in Support of HSHA

### Education

**Behind the leadership of current Sierra Leone President H.E. Julius Madaa Bio, the government is committed to attaining universal primary education by 2020 through expanded opportunities of free education for all.**

Sierra Leoneans want to learn, but the facilities still lag behind:

- From 2012-2015, the number of schools increased by 813 schools
- Despite the new schools, most still struggle with overcrowding
- Many original schools haven't been updated since they were built decades ago

Enrollment & Retention:

- In 2015, the primary school enrollment rate was 125%, indicating a significant number of over and underage kids
- Cost is still a major deterrent to enrollment and retention
- Although free, many schools still charge levies for various activities
- School fees prevented 56% of out-of-school kids from attending

### Football

**As many as 15,000 young African footballers are trafficked out and within the continent each year.**

- Children as young as 10 years old give up an education and spend their family's savings in pursuit of establishing a soccer career abroad
- Crooked "agents" target extremely poor and uneducated families
- Thousands of kids across the country play soccer with whatever means possible, often playing barefoot on rocky, uneven dirt fields with a ball made of plastic bags
- There are several unorganized youth "football academies" that lack any educational component or support
- Over 70% of players in the Sierra Leone Premier Football League did not finish secondary school.



#### **\*COVID-19\***

As the international community struggles with the current pandemic, HSHA will remain flexible to the world around us in regards to education, technology, and outside threats from national and global crises.



# Vision

**To improve the lives of underprivileged youth in Sierra Leone by utilizing athletics to provide education, develop character and help break the chains of generational poverty.**



## Local Community

A healthy working partnership with the local community is essential. It starts with employing community members and is grown by mutual support in sustainability, health & wellness and facility access.



## Educators & Craftsmen

A rigorous education is at the core of our mission and our educators will lead student athletes to excel in the classroom and beyond through hands-on experience and vocational skills.



## Outreach Programs

Student athletes will be active and contributing members to the surrounding communities by participating in local revitalization initiatives and community service projects.



## Athletics

Sports will supplement education as weekday training will expand the daily lessons beyond the classroom, helping student athletes develop their physical and team-building skills.



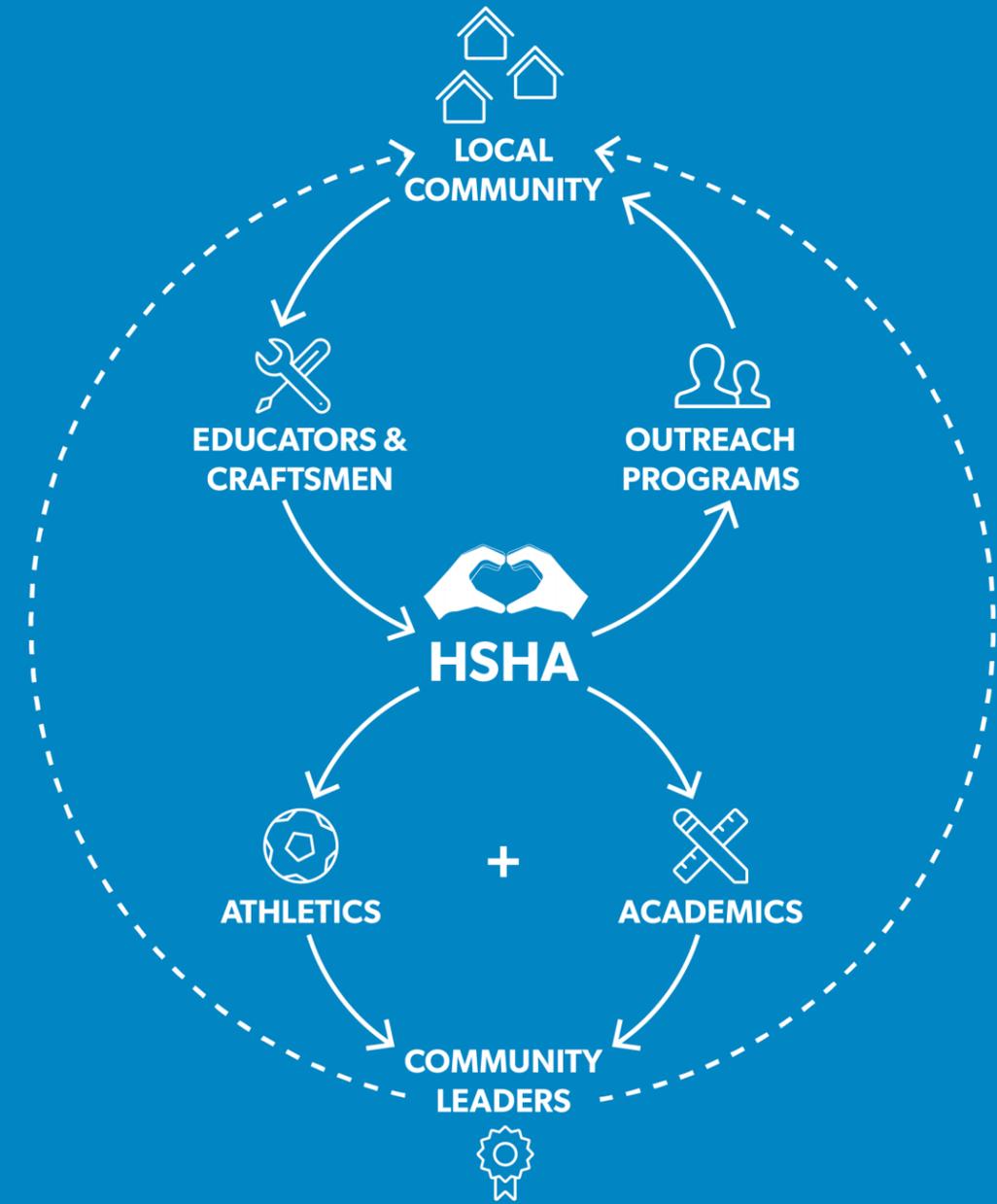
## Academics

A robust and quality education from top educators in a world-class setting, will help at-risk students transcend barriers and lead student athletes to higher education and development beyond the walls of HSHA.



## Community Leaders

By using a holistic approach, student athletes will learn the value of emotional intelligence necessary to be the leaders of tomorrow and good global citizens.



# The Program

## Who Can Participate

Boys & girls ages 10 years and up who possess the drive to achieve something greater

## Selection Criteria

Student athletes will be selected based on a variety of factors including academic aptitude, athletic talent and positive character traits. HSHA will admit students of any ethnicity, religion, or tribal background.

## Program Structure

A year-round program with a total of up to 120 student athletes. Creating a diverse multi-age and multi-level academy.



## Education

Student athletes will attend class five days a week and focus on a mix of international and core Sierra Leone educational curriculum in preparation for secondary school and/or university.



## Trainers

Professionally licensed coaches will develop athletic skills and include special guest training from accomplished Sierra Leonean and international players and coaches.



## Health/Wellness

Emphasis will be placed on proper hygiene, nutrition, dispelling misinformation, and addressing sexual and mental health.



## Gender Equality

Both males and females will receive the same academic and athletic opportunities, emphasizing the breakdown of gender stereotypes and teaching students mutual respect.



## Character Development

Through sports, students will learn the values of respect, leadership, accountability, time management, social awareness, teamwork, and responsibility.



## Support

Student athletes will be mentored and supported throughout their time at HSHA and beyond. Seeing our graduates as educated, active members of their communities is our biggest success.

# Economic Opportunities

The reach of HSHA and its student athletes goes far beyond the classroom and training facilities. By creating a holistic approach to developing each student athlete, HSHA will provide the knowledge, experience and character growth they can use to affect their own change in their communities.

It is our goal to see these HSHA graduates not only continue to higher education but also return to Sierra Leone to “give back” as active and leading citizens. Producing the next generation of Sierra Leoneans, creating new stability, growth, and prosperity.



## Job Creation

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Over the three phases of building HSHA we expect to create up to fifty construction jobs and teach skilled and semi-skilled trades that will last a lifetime and carry forward into the greater community.

The ongoing operation of the facility will require teachers, coaches, administration and other skilled jobs. We expect a full-time staff of over up to 40 persons. The facility will practice gender and pay equality.

## Revenue Opportunities

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The 50-acre facility will include various rental spaces, paid access to medical and gym facilities and vast agricultural opportunities.

## Lasting Impact

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The academy aims to train a new generation. Distilling skills and values into present youth will continue to benefit and contribute to society tomorrow. A foundation of upcoming community leaders will be created.



# The Facility

Our goal is to build a facility and program that will create true student athletes, allowing them to earn an education while developing their athletic skills.

Kei Kamara HearstShapedHands Foundation has teamed up with Michael Green Architecture (MGA) and Design Build Research, based in Vancouver, British Columbia, to bring our idea to life. They have generously donated time and energy to design a world-class facility, unlike any other academy program in Africa.



## Sport

- Football fields (natural grass & turf)
- Basketball Court
- Gym
- Walking/Bicycle Path



## Education

- Classrooms
- Faculty/Staff Offices
- Resource Library
- Computer Lab
- Specialty Classrooms (STEM vocational training)



## Living

- Student Dormitories
- Communal Student Space
- Staff Quarters
- Director's Residence
- Laundry Facilities



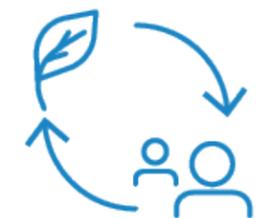
## Community

- Community Gardens
- Lounge
- Kitchen & Dining Hall
- Meeting Rooms



## Health & Wellness

- Training/Medical Room
- Restrooms & Showers
- Sanitary Program



## Sustainability

- Water Collection/Conservation System
- Solar Energy
- Natural Resources

# Timeline

PRESENT

LEGACY

## Phase 1

**Main Building**  
3 Classrooms  
Meeting Room  
Kitchen & Dining Hall  
Lounge

**Living**  
20 Double/Triple Occupancy Rooms  
Student Communal Space  
10 Staff Quarters  
Director's Residence  
Restrooms & Showers  
Laundry Facilities

**Football Field #1 - Main**  
Medical/Training Room  
Community Garden  
Security Fence & Guard Kiosk

## Phase 2

**Main Building**  
2-3 Additional Classrooms  
Resource Library  
Computer Lab  
Admin/Teacher/Trainer Offices

**Living**  
20 Double/Triple Occupancy Rooms  
Restrooms & Showers

**Football Field #2 - Practice**  
Gym

## Phase 3

**Main Building**  
Specialty Classrooms (STEM, craft, vocational)  
Remanding Rooms/Spaces

**Football Field #3 - Practice**  
Walking/Bicycle Path

# Our Plan



**Exceptional teaching  
facilities and faculty.**

**Exceptional sports  
facilities and trainers.**

# Conceptual Plan



## Sport



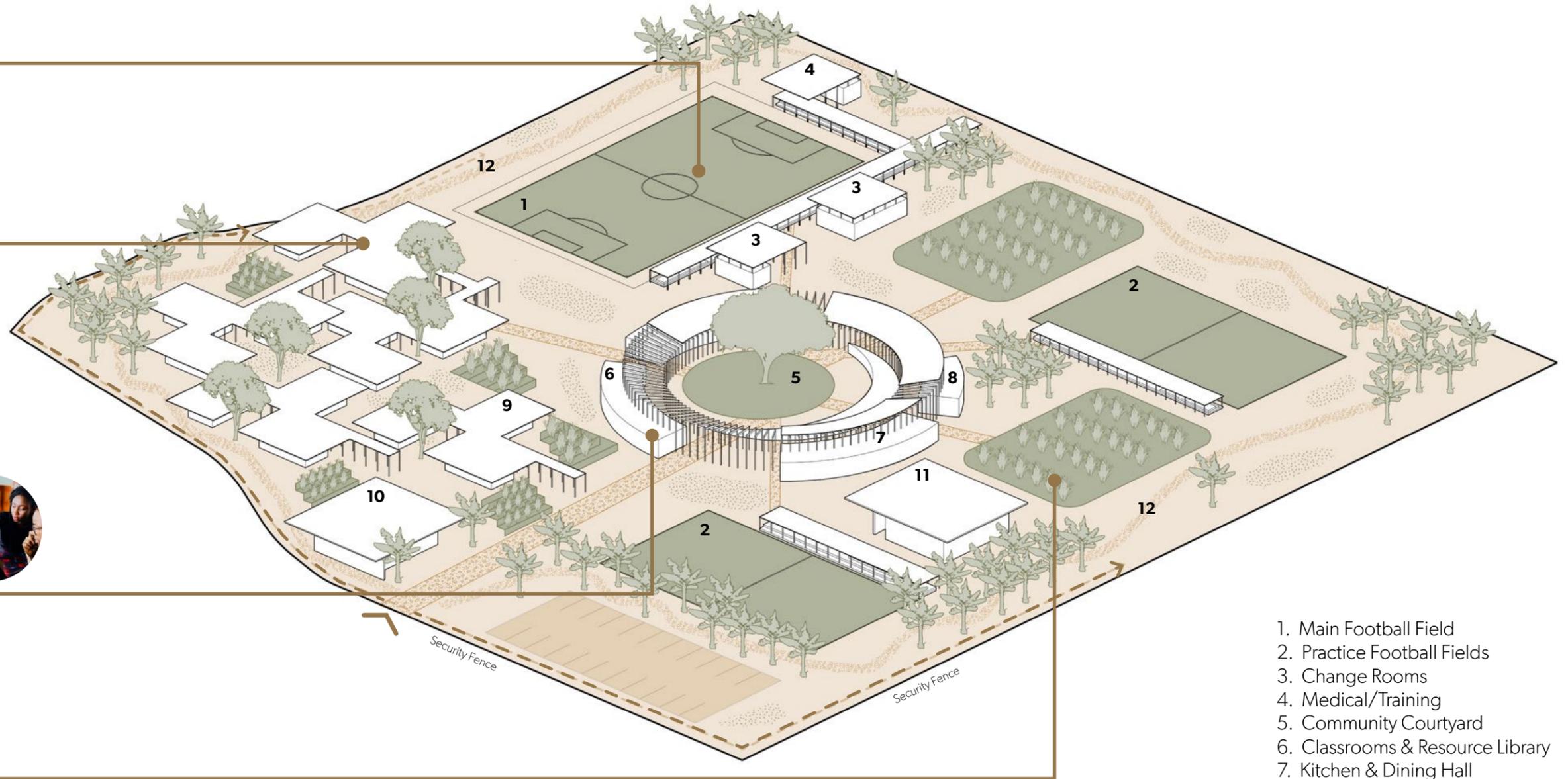
## Living



## Education & Community



## Agriculture



1. Main Football Field
2. Practice Football Fields
3. Change Rooms
4. Medical/Training
5. Community Courtyard
6. Classrooms & Resource Library
7. Kitchen & Dining Hall
8. Computer Lab
9. Student Dorms & Staff Quarters
10. Welcome Center
11. Farm Building
12. Walking/Bicycle Path

# Community



# Learn



Active



Grow



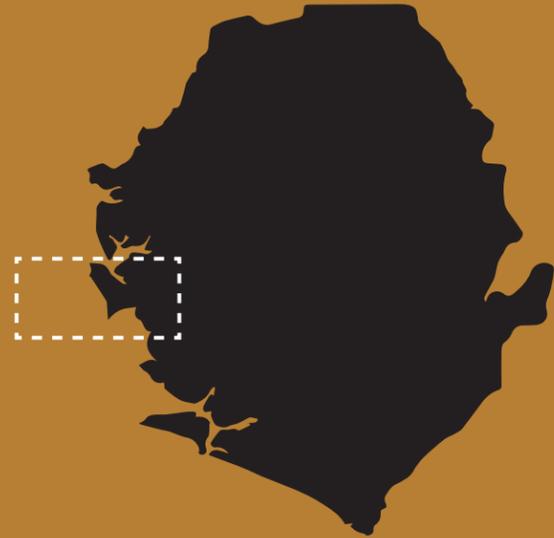
Live



# Gather



# Possible Sites



**1 | BIG WATER** - 1hr DRIVE TO FREETOWN COTTON TREE

SITE FEATURES:

- Close proximity to the beach to attract key visitors and staff
- Access to fresh water for agriculture



**2 | KERRY TOWN** - 1hr DRIVE TO FREETOWN COTTON TREE

SITE FEATURES:

- Close proximity to a new teaching hospital and Ipam University
- Abundance of palm trees and natural landscape



**3 | NEWTON** - 1hr DRIVE TO FREETOWN COTTON TREE

SITE FEATURES:

- Close proximity to adjoining solar field
- Flat open space with fertile ground for agriculture

# Up Next



## Partners & Funding

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HeartShapedHands Foundation is currently raising donations for the Academy campus capital projects through various marketing campaigns.



## A Project Site

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HSH staff have identified three potential sites for the 50-acre facility. Discussions are currently ongoing with the government of Sierra Leone to procure the land.



## Lasting Relationships

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All contributions to HeartShapedHands Foundation will ultimately affect the future opportunities of the youth in Sierra Leone. A current donation will have a lasting impact forming a lifelong relationship between donor and the academy. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) entity.



# Contact Us

## INFO

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