A grassroot educational program that unites children, youth and communities and promotes their health, physical and social development through recreational sport.
PLAY SOCCER strives to promote the health, social and economic well-being of disadvantaged children and youth and their communities through a nonprofit sport for development program that is open to all. The program is educational and recreational.

The sport of soccer provides the foundation for the program, and acts as a catalyst for development. Physical, health and social skills are integrated with soccer skills into a year round curriculum with fun activities that invite girls and boys to participate, encourage early childhood education and provide low cost sustainable resources within the community.

Over time, the core program is enhanced with relevant activities that build impact and sustainability, strengthen local capacities, and help to achieve broad health and socio-economic development objectives.

Community service and volunteerism from youth provide important resources for the program. Children, youth and communities are internationally linked through the PLAY SOCCER Network and activities such as the Global Peace Games for Children and Youth. They develop a social network beyond the local playing field that broadens understanding, respect for others and gender equality.

PLAY SOCCER mobilizes local, national and international community resources to support the program and is also developing local social enterprise and micro-finance projects to help it become self sustaining. The program is implemented internationally by nonprofit country organizations that affiliate as the PLAY SOCCER Network and operate without religious or political affiliation.

Program Principles

The PLAY SOCCER program works in disadvantaged communities and focuses on an investment in children and youth because:

- Early access to learning basic skills of physical and social development provides maximum life time benefits

- Early childhood is the optimal period to encourage learning, personal growth and openness to attitudinal change, cultural diversity and gender equality

- Community benefits and interest are multiplied through the involvement of youth and family members as role models and volunteer instructors and through the skills and knowledge gained from the program

The program is open to girls and boys ages 4-15. It uses activity based education and operates year round in the community through weekly sessions. The program has a well defined curriculum that integrates three core educational components and also reinforces basic literacy and math skills. The three core components are:

- **Physical and health education**—learning how the body works, how to take better care of it through nutrition, sanitation, clean water, personal hygiene, immunizations, and to prevent and live with diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and substance abuse

- **Social values and skills**—such as leadership, fair play, gender equality, peaceful solutions, teamwork, respect for others, and international and cultural awareness

- **Soccer/Football**—the rules, skills and techniques of the world’s most popular game

Each child is actively involved, regardless of skill. A healthy snack and clean water are provided during the sessions which take place in a fun participatory teaching and learning environment on the playing field after school and weekends. By practicing and sharing what they learn with friends and family, the children and community instructors transfer learning into their daily lives, homes and communities.
PLAY SOCCER produces the curriculum and training materials for the program and for the organization of the country offices. These materials provide a basic framework for program delivery, for implementation of the integrated content and the training workshops for the community instructors.

**Youth Training and Instruction**
Local community members, primarily youth, are trained to teach the girls and boys in the program’s weekly year-round sessions. Youth gain skills, knowledge and local economic and educational opportunities by becoming volunteer instructors for the program. Play Soccer trains primarily young adults from the community as instructors through a formal training program. The training is a means of developing their skills, leadership and credentials to strengthen the quality of the PLAY SOCCER program and to also help to equip them for gainful employment and productive lives in their community.

**Volunteerism and Community Service**
Volunteerism provides important resources for PLAY SOCCER at all levels and is integral to its program principles and development objectives. It provides the essential spirit and social relationships that are essential development ingredients so that the communities themselves mobilize and drive the development process as well as the human resources that help to keep the program low cost and affordable.

**Organization, Partnerships and Collaborations**
The goal is to work with other civil society organizations, NGOs, schools, government ministries and development agencies to expand the benefits and impact of the program, and to maximize the efficient and effective use of resources without duplication. Through collaborations and partnerships, PLAY SOCCER looks for ways to encourage broad, long term socio-economic development around the core sport for development program from the micro community level to the macro national level.

Each country organization starts with a “jump start” financed by PLAY SOCCER to create a low cost community-based program that is then helped to become self-sustaining. Moreover, PLAY SOCCER provides the organization, training and resources to open the program and mobilize local partnerships, community infrastructure and resources. Each country organization is legally established as a national nonprofit entity.

The core PLAY SOCCER program is replicated within each national country environment in order to provide a universal quality, consistency and accountability for program content and organization. However, the international program is designed to be flexible and responsive to legal, cultural, health and other environmental conditions in each country.

The country organizations are internationally affiliated as the PLAY SOCCER Network. Organizations must demonstrate standards of financial and program quality and accountability. Donors receive financial program and audit reports on a regular basis. In addition, country organizations must meet certain requirements to maintain their Network affiliation in good standing which permits them to use the PLAY SOCCER name and logo, implement its program, take part in training workshops and use its curriculum materials.

The PLAY SOCCER Network is managed by The PLAY SOCCER International Umbrella. The International Umbrella is recognized by the United Nations with consultative status on the UN Roster of Nongovernmental Organizations and is an implementing partner in Football for Hope, FIFA’s corporate social responsibility initiative to “make the world a better place.” The International Umbrella is a nonprofit corporation, founded in the USA in 1999 in the State of New Jersey. It has tax-exempt status under the US International Revenue Service Code as a 501 C 3 charitable organization.

**Contributions and Financial Support**
PLAY SOCCER seeks contributions and contributions-in-kind to the program at the local, country and international level from corporations, foundations, organizations and individuals. Donors recognize the value of an investment in children and youth that promotes physical health, fundamental social values and community. Beyond this, PLAY SOCCER is also developing social enterprise activities to produce healthy products and services that add value, generate income, reduce poverty, transfer skills and create self-financing mechanisms.