



HOPE TOUR 2008

IRAQ - BAGHDAD

JANUARY 2009 – PHASE 1 – REPORT



U.S. Department of State
Public Affairs Section
U.S. Embassy Baghdad

FUNDERS



Sager Family Foundation
Boston, USA



Provincial Reconstruction Team
Baghdad

SUPPORTERS



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
United Kingdom



Ministry of Youth
and Sport, Iraq



England
Football Association



Kick for Nick
Wilton, USA



DHL



Truce International

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Live Consulting
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THE PRIME MINISTER

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

Football has the unique ability to bring people together, to inspire them and bring them hope. In Iraq it can play a major role in promoting community development amongst the country's young population. I wish FC Unity's Hope Tour every success in helping to provide a positive future to the young people of Iraq.

Gordon Brown

July 2008

Letters of Support

The British Prime Minister
The Rt Hon
Gordon Brown MP



Embassy of the United States of America

The Ambassador

Baghdad, Iraq

October 13, 2008

Mr. Yamam Nabeel
FC Unity
Baghdad
Republic of Iraq

Dear Mr. Nabeel,

The Hope Tour 2008 that launched earlier this year in Najaf was a great success as an initial effort at reconciliation and community building in this formerly war-torn region of Iraq.

It is laudable to note the strong support that FC Unity has garnered so far within Iraq as well as internationally for this excellent, broad-ranging initiative. I would like to add the endorsement of the U.S. Embassy and express our commitment to assist you as you work toward the achievement of your strategic goals nationwide. The work that FC Unity conducts throughout Iraq is indeed in harmony with and strengthens the reconciliation and reconstruction efforts of the U.S. Mission.

By engaging Iraqi youth through sports, the Hope Tour is inculcating positive values within the next generation - teamwork, good sportsmanship, self-confidence, and mutual respect. These values will be essential for young Iraqis to overcome the history of violence and conflict. Moreover, your work at the grassroots level is vital to establishing an empowered citizenry and the strong, peaceful nation that we envision.

We extend to you our best wishes for the Hope Tour's continued success.

Sincerely,

Ryan C. Crocker

Ryan C. Crocker

Ambassador
Ryan C. Crocker
U.S. Ambassador to Iraq

EVENTS

MONDAY 15th December

- Girls Football Festival and kit distribution, College of Physical Education for Women, Al Kasra District
- Mixed Football Festival and kit distribution, Al Salam School, Askan Distict

TUESDAY 16th December

- Multi-community Football Festival and kit distribution, Abbas Rahim Academy, Tunis District

WEDNESDAY 17th December

- Multi-community Football Festival, Sha'ab National Stadium
- Kit distribution to Iraq's under 14's national team, Sha'ab National Stadium training field
- Kit distribution to community teams, Sha'ab National Stadium Academy
- Exhibition training session and kit distribution, Ammou Baba Academy, Sha'ab National Stadium complex

FRIDAY 19th December

- U.S. Army game with kit distribution, Al-Salam Field, International Zone
- Kit Distribution to Under 12's teams, Al Karkh Stadium
- Kit Distribution to girls and boys, Mohamed Risan Football School, Sadr City
- Kit distribution to the fans at Sha'ab Stadium during the game between Zawra and Talaba



INTRODUCTION

Dr. Nabeel Yasin

Chairman of FC Unity

Bringing happiness to war-affected people is difficult. The 'Hope Tour' aims to promote happiness by bringing back a sense of normal life through sport, peace education and moral responsibility.

In Najaf last summer, in searing temperatures of 47 degrees, hundreds of Iraqi boys gathered together to put their trust in new freedom and the return of community feeling in one place for one purpose and for one hope.



Giving hope is one thing - keeping it alive is another. It takes time to make hope a reality after so much pain. The 'Hope Tour' is intended to be a catalyst to accelerate the process of re-education and bring to fruition the dreams of generations of young Iraqis with the help of the modern world as part of the modern world.

The 'Hope Tour' is for the lost generations and the hope lost during the years of oppression. It is also for the present generation offering immediate rehabilitation and life-skills in the post-conflict situation.

Finally, it is for the future generations in providing hope for a new world free from violence and ideological illusions bringing Iraq into the international family of nations.

After years of isolation, in the December 2008, the main stadium in Baghdad was the field of friendship for a football game for peace. New stories were told and new dreams were born. Violence was defeated and peace was the victor.

Yamam Nabeel

Chief Executive of FC Unity

December 17th 2008: Standing on the playing field of Iraq's Sha'ab National Stadium surrounded by young people from all the different communities of the capital, I was once again filled with hope. A few months ago these young men would have put their lives at risk by simply taking part in this game with youngsters from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. On this day - they stood with me as one nation - united on the famous field that all young Iraqis dream of playing on.



These young men represent a new chance for Iraq built upon a united effort. This is the new Iraq where divisions can be the things of the past and the feeling of playing together is greater than our individual differences. This is the new Iraq where we learn from our shared history and build the future together for ourselves.

FC Unity's 'Hope Tour', devised back in 2006, has come of age breaking down barriers that divided our society through the power of this simple game. Young Iraqis of all backgrounds were united in the feeling of new hope for a return to normal life. As the two captains shook hands their smiles were genuine and their camaraderie lasted beyond the duration of this symbolic game.

The year of 2008 was eventful for me and for Iraq. I will never forget the smiles and laughter of the young players in Najaf and Baghdad. The project indicators were not just written on paper but were coming to life before my eyes in the transformed attitudes of Iraqi youth. This was the real benefit; creating a new chance for Iraqi youth to feel united in hope that will provide the productive motivation for the future.

What more can we do?

The answer is evident from our work in the field. We need to give young Iraqi men and women the chance to shape their own future and provide them with the opportunities to rebuild the country from the ground up. We need to empower them and provide the mentoring and motivation to create strong positive communities with responsible and able citizens and to instil in them the values necessary for a more sustainable future. We need to give them the life-skills to achieve the goals inherent in their individual potential.

This is not the time for promises to fail or for token gestures. This is a time for action. To build on what we have achieved and to empower the present generation and give young people the confidence through good authority and self-discipline to become the leaders of tomorrow. This human resource will secure the future of the Iraqi nation as an international community partner and a viable secular, pluralist, liberal democracy, where all citizens enjoy equal rights and equal opportunities.

To make our dream a reality will not be easy but the first steps have been taken. United we can achieve our goals and create the biggest team in the world.

Are you on the team? I ask you to join us!

Mark Wildermuth

Public Diplomacy Officer - Baghdad PRT

Hope Tour 2008 arrived in Baghdad during the week of 14 December and organized numerous soccer events throughout the province benefiting youth and promoting the message of tolerance and sportsmanship. FC Unity's Yamam Nabeel is to be commended for his tireless work to bring together boys and girls from different neighborhoods and backgrounds in the spirit of friendship and unity. With the strong encouragement of Ambassador Crocker and the American Embassy, both the Baghdad Reconstruction Team and Multinational Division-Baghdad actively supported this program. The success of these events and the enthusiasm of the participants highlighted the commitment of Iraqis to work together to build a positive future. We at the PRT are proud to have been able to contribute to these efforts.



Lord Richard Newby

Chairman of Live Consulting – FC Unity Senior Strategy Adviser

Iraq is entering a new phase in its history.

Social and economic development are now the top priorities, with an urgent need to foster institutions and patterns of behaviour which will deliver stability and growing prosperity.

With an exceptionally young population, it is crucial to engage children and young people in activities which they enjoy, but which also foster key life skills such as teamwork, leadership, communications and citizenship.

This is where FC Unity's Hope Tour can play an extremely important role. By bringing young people – boys and girls – together to play football within a structured league system, FC Unity can help instil core positive values which will serve its participants well, both as individual and as citizens of Iraq.

Experience from around the world – from countries as diverse as Kenya, South Africa, Trinidad and the UK – has demonstrated that sport has the power to change young lives for the better.

FC Unity has already begun to change lives in one part of Iraq. The challenge now is to turn this into a national movement.



EVENTS OF THE HOPE TOUR BAGHDAD

The Baghdad event series of the Hope Tour Programme, which started in Najaf in July 2008 and included three cities, took place between 15th December and 19th December 2008. It had 11 separate events in various parts of the capital and has managed to engage over 2,000 young people, both women and men, with ages ranging from 7 to 25, representing a wide background of Iraqi society and has successfully promoted the values of unity and tolerance. Over 2,000 England football shirts, donated by the England Football Association and valued at over \$120,000 were given out as well as Iraqi football shirts and shorts, t-shirts, footballs as well as footballs donated by the Kick for Nick Foundation to promote the legacy of fallen U.S. soldier PFC Nick Madaras. All events were documented by the Iraqi media, in addition to FC Unity's own television crew and photographer.

Event 1 - Monday 15th December 2008, 11am-1pm College of Physical Education for Women, Al Kasra District, Baghdad (Age group 16-21) Number of participants: 50

The first event included distribution of Iraqi football team tracksuits and England football shirts and footballs to the students at the women-only exhibition game in front of the students and college faculty.

We also held a pre-event press conference to the students and the faculty with the Dean of the College Professor Dr. Nawal Ubaidee, talking about FC Unity's Hope Tour Iraq's aims and objectives. Dr. Nawal Ubaidee is also member of the National Olympic Committee of Iraq. We discussed future cooperation between the College and FC Unity with emphasis in providing coaching courses as well as leadership programmes to women coaches and students.

This event was attended by the media, both press and television and our own crew fully documented the events on video and photographs.



Event 2 - Monday 15th December, 2pm-3.30pm
Al Salam Football School, Askan District, Baghdad (Age group 7-14)
Number of participants: 150

Al Salam Football School and FC Unity organised a football festival to promote peace and unity, with children, both girls and boys from schools in the Askan district. The participants all received Iraqi football shirts and shorts and England football shirts and footballs. The students of the football school took part in a celebration of unity and presented a short play against extremism and terrorism, before taking part in a full training session and exhibition game.

In addition footballs donated by FC Unity partners, the Kick for Nick Foundation were given out in memory of fallen U.S. soldier, PFC Nick Madaras.

This game was attended by LTC Christopher Beckert of the US Military - 2nd Brigade 1st Infantry Division with soldiers from his company in addition to members of USAID and the Western Press.

Sharar Al Hadithi from Baghdad PRT was also a guest of honour as well as other guests from the local community and Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Our own crew of cameraman and photographer fully documented this event.



Event 3 - Tuesday 16th December 2008 3pm-4.30pm
Abbas Rahim Football Academy, Tunis District, Baghdad (Age group 10-25)
Number of participants: 250

This was a multi-community football festival held for FC Unity by former Iraqi international footballer Abbas Rahim on a field built by the local community on a former wasteland site.

Over 20 community teams, some made two-hour-long journeys, came from Tunis, Gra'at, Al Kadhimiya, Al Askan, Al Adhamiya and Sadr City districts.

There were over 250 players present, representing all communities of the Iraqi capital, who all received England football shirts and footballs.

Special Kick for Nick footballs were given out too and the story of PFC Nick Madaras told to the youngsters. The former Iraqi international footballer was interviewed by Qatari and Iraqi televisions holding a Kick for Nick football.

Iraqi and Qatari televisions were present and FC Unity's own crew documented the event on video and photographs.



Event 4 – Wednesday 17th December 2008 11am-12.30pm
Shaab National Stadium, Baghdad (Age Group 14-21)
Number of participants: 150

The most important event of the Hope Tour Baghdad took place on the famous Sha'ab National Stadium in Baghdad. The stadium many young Iraqis dream of playing on.

This was a multi community youth football tournament and kit distribution for teams representing districts that were on the opposite of the ethnic and religious divides of the capital not so long ago.

The highlight of the event was a game where players from Yarmuk and Saydia and Ma'amal Al Tabug.were mixed in two teams and played a peace game. This game was refereed by former Iraqi international player Abbas Rahim.

On this day teams and players represented Saidiya, Adhamia, Sho'ola, Sha'ab, Sadr city, Yarmuk, Ghazaliya and Ma'amal Al Tabug districts and included players representing most, if not all ethnic and religious affiliations of the country.

There was England football shirts and football distribution to over 150 youngsters, aged 14-21.



**Event 5 – Wednesday 17th December 2008 1pm-1.30pm, Sha’ab National Stadium Training Field, Baghdad (Age Group 13-15)
Number of participants: 30**

During this event, we honoured the Iraqi under 14’s team by giving them all England football shirts and footballs and talking to the players and coaches about the important roles young people, especially sportsmen and women can play in the rebuilding of the country. Iraqi and Qatari TV crews were present.



**Event 6 – Wednesday 17th December 2008 2pm-3pm
Sha’ab Stadium Academy, Baghdad (Age Group 8-16)
Number of participants: 200**

The 3rd event of the 3rd day saw all the teams of the Academy based at the Sha’ab Stadium complex receive football shirts and footballs ahead of their daily training session. Over 200 young people, with ages ranging from 8-16 took part, most youngsters come daily from the poorer parts of Baghdad. Yet again, the smiles were there long after we left.



**Event 7 – Wednesday 17th December 2008 3pm-4pm
Shaab National Stadium, Ammou Baba Football School, Baghdad
Number of participants: 300**

The highlight of the day was an exhibition training session with over 300 young people aged 8 to 16 at the football academy of Iraq's most famous former footballer and coach Ammou Baba. Ammou welcomed us personally and toured his academy and presented the football shirts with us to every single player. At the academy the highly-qualified coaches not only pass on their football skills to the youngsters but aim to teach life-skills to the future generations.

There are also music, IT and language classes.

Ammou Baba was very touched to have been honoured by FC Unity and we were equally honoured to have spent the afternoon with the legend himself. Discussion took place about long-term cooperation with the academy to create young leaders.

Our crew and Iraqi TV and Qatari TV documented all events of the day.



Event 8 – Friday 19th December 2008 10am -11am
Al Salam Football Field, International Zone, Baghdad
Number of participants: 30-35

FC Unity, together with LT Gary Agron, Deputy Leader of the Baghdad PRT and Mark Wildermuth from Public Affairs Section of the Baghdad PRT planned to host a football game between US and Iraqi troops on the final day of the Hope Tour Programme. This would have been similar to the military friendship game that took place, with much success, in the Najaf Programme of the Hope Tour in August 2008.

But due to logistical and security concerns the Iraqi troops could not make it.

However, on this cold Baghdad winter morning, in the spirit of FC Unity, over 30 US troops, who came all the way from Camp Victory and the PRT, were given England shirts and played a 40-minute game.

We thank the U.S. military and the troops for their much-valued support of the Hope Tour.



Event 9 – Friday 19th Decemer 2008 11am – 12pm
Mohammed Risan Football School, Sadr City, Baghdad (Age Group 7-18)
Number of participants: 200

FC Unity's programme assistants, Hamza Qureishi visited the Mohammed Risan Football School in the impoverished Sadr City district to distribute football shirts and footballs to over 200 very young Iraqis, both girls and boys between the ages of 7 and 18. Hamza also talked about the aims of FC Unity and the importance of bringing Iraqi together regardless their social, ethnic or religious backgrounds. The event was a great success. This event was filmed by FC Unity's own crew.



Event 10 – Friday 19th Decemer 11am - 12pm
Al Karkh Football Club, Mansour District, Baghdad (Age Group 10-13)
Number of participants: 30

At the Al Karkh football club, the director of Al Salam Football School, where FC Unity hosted an event on Monday 15th Decemer, Jamal Ulaibi organised a mini tournament for very young players and given out US little league uniforms donated by the Kick for Nick Foundation.



Event 11 – Friday 19th December 3pm - 4pm
Al Sha'ab National Stadium, Baghdad
Number of participants: Around 20,000 when FC Unity was announced

The curtain-closer of the Hope Tour Baghdad this year took place appropriately at the Sha'ab National Stadium, where the Baghdad derby was taking place between Al Zawraa and Al Talaba clubs.

In front of 20,000 fans FC Unity was announced, and together with the former Iraqi international football player Abbas Rahim distributed England football shirts to the fans in the stands. Over 100 football shirts were given out at this event. This event was featured on several news bulletins on Iraqi and Arab television channels, as the kit distribution took place during the game. FC Unity's crew documented this event.



In one week, we had seen 11 FC unity events, distributed 2,000 England football shirts, 200 Iraqi football shirts, 50 tracksuits, over 300 footballs and 40 US little league uniforms donated by the Kick for Nick foundation, in memory of fallen US soldier PFC Nick Maderas. We have told his story to hundreds of young Iraqis and the story and the memory of this brave soldier and his desire to help Iraqis lives on in the heart of our young people.

After the reception we got during the Hope Tour Baghdad programme, and after all the press coverage, we will be continuing the programme with more events in 2009.

During the week of events, we were supported by some of Iraq's best know former footballers, Ammou Baba, Sharar Haydar, Abbas Rahim and more and we managed to include and involve Iraqis from almost every district of Baghdad.

In total, over 2,000 smiling young people took parts in the festivities.

FC Unity - Hope Tour – Baghdad – The Team



Yamam Nabeel
Chief Executive
FC Unity



Tareq Yassen
Iraq Director
FC Unity



Yassar Tareq
Iraq Young Leader
FC Unity



Hamza Qureshi
Event Organiser
FC Unity



Aidi Qureshi
Event Organiser
FC Unity



Abbas Rahim
Director
Abbas Rahim
Football Academy



Jamal Ulaibi
Director
Al Salam
Football School

MEDIA

The Hope Tour was well covered by the Iraqi media with broad coverage by correspondents from the main television channels as well as newspapers and magazines. Interviews and reports were conducted and produced by Afaq TV and Baghdad TV as well as Qatari TV with reports distributed to all major Iraqi and Arab media outlets. Interviews and reports also appeared in Al Muwaten and Baladi newspapers. Extended interviews were conducted with Yamam Nabeel, Dr. Nabeel Yasin, Ammou Baba and Abbas Rahim.

In addition, FC Unity had enlisted the services of a young Iraqi cameraman/photographer to film a fly-on-the-wall style documentary and shoot a photo essay of events.

MEDIA TRAINING

As the media is keen to report positive stories on Iraq and such reports have a significant effect on winning the hearts and minds of people at a grass-roots level, FC Unity would like to introduce media skills training as part of its remit. This programme would assist Iraqi journalists eager to further their professional standing toward the development of a free and open press.

NEXT STEPS

After consultation with community leaders, football coaches, players, central government ministers and provincial officials the under-mentioned actions were proposed.

- To strengthen the capacity of the strong culture of community teams, with over 12,600 teams (Ministry of Youth and Sport figures) all over Iraq. This would mean outreaching projects to an estimated 250-400,000 young people in organised football activity.
- To set up a “premier” style community league that “sits” between the existing community leagues and the professional/semi-professional leagues, run by the FA. All coaches, referees and admin would be trained by FC Unity and partners and all teams would be supported by FC Unity. This league would be a feeder league and would have 12-16 teams in each province with over 300 players in each league, all between the ages of 15-18.
- To develop citizenship and mentor training programmes - as well as add educational “supplement” of at least 2 hours per week, where the youngsters would receive basic life-skills training, leadership training and citizenship advice to the league programmes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS of OUR FUNDERS and PARTNERS

United States Department of State – Public Affairs Office – Baghdad Embassy

The primary funder of the Phase 1 Programme of the Hope Tour is the U.S. Department of State. Financial and logistical support, vital to the delivery of the programme, has been provided by the Public Affairs Office of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.



Sager Family Foundation

The Sager Family Foundation are our development partners and funders. The primary aim of the partnership is to create young mentors who can support community development in Iraq.



Provincial Reconstruction Team – Baghdad

We received much-needed logistical support as well as Baghdad-specific programme funding from the PRT in Baghdad. We worked closely with the Head of Public Diplomacy Section, Mark Wildermuth and PRT Deputy Leader COL Gary Agron.



England Football Association

The England Football Association has donated 2,000 official England national football team jerseys for the Baghdad Phase 1 programme of the Hope Tour. Together with the 1,000 donated for the Najaf programme, the total retail value of this donation exceeds \$180,000.

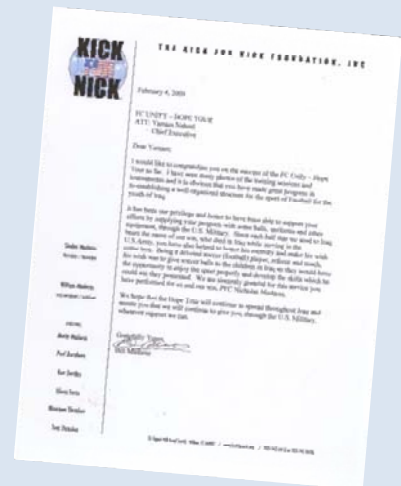


Kick for Nick Foundation

The Kick for Nick Foundation mission statement:

"While home on leave from Iraq in July 2006, Private Nicholas Madaras rounded up as many soccer balls as possible to bring back to the children near his post in Iraq. Being a passionate soccer player, he wanted to give the balls to the children as a gesture of good will. Unfortunately, Nick was killed by an IED on September 3, 2006 and was never able to distribute the balls himself. Instead we have taken up a crusade on his behalf to fulfill his dream..."

FC Unity is supporting Nick's legacy and continues to distribute footballs and equipments to young Iraqis and re-tell Nick's story, keeping his memory alive in Iraq. To date over 300 footballs, as well football jerseys and equipment have been distributed on behalf of the Kick for Nick Foundation. And with over 500 footballs available in storage in Iraq, we continue to bring joy to young Iraqis on behalf of Nick's family. The Foundation has so far managed to deliver, through the U.S. Military, over 15,000 footballs to young Iraqis.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office and DHL

The FCO and DHL have kindly helped us ship the 2,000 England football jerseys and 800 FC Unity t-shirts to Iraq.



Ministry of Youth and Sport – Iraq

Following a meeting with the Minister of Youth and Sport in Iraq, Jasim Muhammad Ja'far on 4th December, FC Unity received logistical support from the Ministry and further discussion are in process to discuss a more active cooperation.



FC Unity would like to thank the following people for their ongoing help and support:

- Ambassador Ryan Crocker
- Ambassador David Satterfield
- Ambassador Adam Erel
- Sayed Ammar Al Hakim
- Sayed Hassan Bahr Al Uloom
- Jasim Mohammed Jaffar
- Helen LeFave
- Jinnie Lee
- Mehmed Ali
- Mark Wildermuth
- COL Gary Agron
- Ammou Babab
- Sharar Al Hadithi
- Hashem Muhsen

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