Coaching for Hope launches Inclusion League

On Thursday, May 14th, Coaching for Hope and partners, ACEFOOT, FEMASH and the Bamako League launched the Inclusion Championship competition with a gala match of disabled and non-disabled players. The ceremony was attended by local Coaching for Hope partners including the Malian Minister of Youth and Sport, who was surprised and delighted by the professionalism, innovation, and quality of the event, and said in an opening remark: “Others should take example from Coaching for Hope.”

With generous support from adidas, CFH has had the opportunity to initiate a league style championship with three local partners in Mali. Each partner will facilitate a championship league that addresses the needs of specific communities of people who don’t normally have access to football competition, specifically young men, people with disabilities, and young women. The championship will not only give opportunities for quality competition, it is intended to open discussion and harness support for further initiatives to support football development for these groups.

The three partners of the league are:

ACEFOOT is a regrouping center for football schools and clubs in Mali. ACEFOOT works hard to make quality football accessible to youngsters through training, education, and support of grassroots football schools in Mali. Throughout the years, many football coaches from ACEFOOT have been trained and become top level CFH coaches. In an environment where elite football is the primary focus of the federation, ACEFOOT continues to put the accent of quality grassroots football, and has built a championship for young community boys teams who are not competing at top levels.

FEMASH, the National Federation on Sport for Persons with Disabilities, started working with CFH in 2008 with a pilot training course including people with disabilities. Since then energy and enthusiasm has grown within the community of people with disabilities, and FEMASH is launching an innovative and unique pan-disability league. Participants in the league
will come together from various backgrounds, and special rules are being developed to ensure that persons with visual impairments, persons with auditory impairments, persons with motor impairments, and persons with learning difficulties will have the chance to play together.

The Bamako League, most recent addition to the CFH family, has worked hard over the years to support womens football in Bamako. With 16 league teams, and only one national championship, Women footballers in the capital have little opportunity to compete. The addition of a womens championship will give young women the chance to play more often and build support among the community for more womens teams.

Already, public interest in Mali has soared. CFH Mali coordinator Mme Bantandian SIDIBE participated in a national radio program with the president of ACEFOOT, and as a result, the National television station has offered free coverage of specific disability sporting events, an individual has donated 25 footballs to ACEFOOT, and expressions of interest are streaming into CFH offices. Mme Sidibe has also been invited to speak on a local radio station, about the role of women leading sports organizations.

Coaching for Hope will soon be posting profiles of participating teams and match results on the website, so keep an eye open!

www.coachingforhope.org