

DARAJA ACADEMY FOR EXCEPTIONAL KENYAN GIRLS

“Educate a girl, change the world”



Daraja Club Handbook and Meeting Agendas

Your guide to starting and running a successful Daraja club

CLUB NAME:

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Welcome to the Daraja Family!

Congratulations! You have taken the first step into what will be a truly memorable experience for your students, yourself, and the Daraja Academy community. From all of us, karibuni (welcome)!

Thank you for your interest in creating a Daraja Club, in partnership with the Daraja Academy ! This handbook is meant to provide your first-year club with the tools it will need to not only successfully complete one academic year of activities and discussions; it will also provide you with ideas for sustaining your club long-term, fundraising tips and techniques, and how to maintain contact with the Daraja community, both in the United States and in Kenya. By taking this first step, you are supporting the work accomplished at Daraja every day – both by the students and the teachers, administration, staff, and volunteers. We are excited to start this journey with you; once again, welcome to Daraja!

The History of Daraja Academy

Although established in 2009, the idea behind Daraja Academy was created long before the school first opened its doors. As a teenager, Jason Doherty visited East Africa and developed a passion for the region, specifically in education, that would bring him to Tanzania after graduating from Dominican University. With his wife Jenni and the support of their local community in Northern California, Jason and Jenni were able to follow this dream and visited East Africa together in 2006; during this trip, they located the campus of what would eventually become Daraja Academy (formerly the Baraka School and site of the documentary *The Boys of Baraka*).

Funded almost exclusively through private donations, Daraja Academy provides four-year scholarships to each of its girls and has grown to include all secondary levels; recently, the school graduated its founding class of 26 girls, who are now in a transition program created by the school to ease the switch from secondary school to college or the workforce. Additional initiatives at Daraja include the WISH program (Women of Integrity, Strength, and Hope), a weekly workshop focused on women's empowerment; an on-site organic farms which supplies the kitchen with fresh fruit and vegetables; and many different extracurricular activities on campus, including athletic teams and student organizations.

Daraja Clubs: Overview and Expectations

The decision to start a Daraja Club at your school comes with both benefits for your students, as well as expectations and responsibilities of all club members. In order to be considered a fully functional partner of Daraja Academy, each Daraja Club must:

- Determine and maintain a Club Advisor position; typically a teacher or other administrator at the school who will be responsible for conducting meetings and planning future activities, discussions, and fundraising
- Ensure that all active members have signed a copy of the Club Constitution (pg. 5), and understand the personal responsibilities that come with a Daraja Club membership
- Commit to conducting meetings on a biweekly basis, at minimum. Individual clubs can elect to hold meetings more frequently or as needed

These three simple steps are all it takes to fulfill your role as a functioning Daraja Club! In addition to learning more about Daraja Academy and secondary education systems in Kenya, your club will have the added benefits of:

- Getting to know the girls through student biographies, which will teach your club about their experiences both before Daraja and as students
- Participating in virtual Q & A sessions with the girls, allowing your club to further connect with students as well as using and developing computer skills (for both your students and the girls at Daraja)
- Learning not just about Daraja Academy, but the geography, religions, and cultures of many different ethnic groups and areas of Kenya – inspiring students with a variety of interests and leading to possible career paths

However, before your group can begin learning about Daraja Academy and the cultures of Kenya, please ensure that all interested members have a thorough understanding of the club bylaws and have a signed copy of the Daraja Club Constitution on file.

DARAJA CLUBS BYLAWS

To maintain a uniform and unified approach to all Daraja Clubs, the following bylaws are requirements that all individual organizations must follow:

1. Each club must maintain the following:
 - a. An advisory position, managed by a teacher or other administrator
 - b. A roster of at least four active members, three of which must be staffing the following positions:
Club President, Vice President, and Secretary
 - c. An organized record book of Club Meeting Minutes (may be maintained in a hard copy or electronically)
 - d. An additional record book of Club Finances, which may be maintained by either the Club Advisor or Secretary
 - e. A copy of the Daraja Clubs Handbook, to be used for meeting agendas, maintaining contact information, etc.
2. In addition to the above requirements, each functioning club must perform the following:
 - a. Club meetings must be held, at minimum, on a biweekly basis; however, additional meetings are always welcome and encouraged
 - i. Biweekly meetings should follow the standardized Year One format found in this handbook, although additional meetings may choose their own discussion topics
 - b. Club recruitment should be accomplished at the beginning of each school year (Aug/Sep); this can be accomplished via flyers, informational meetings, a booth at your school's open house, etc.
 - c. Fundraising events should be scheduled throughout the school year; see the Fundraising section in this handbook for more information regarding frequency and possible ways to raise money
3. Additionally, the students in Daraja Clubs will be expected to abide by the four pillars of Daraja Academy, the same ideals that all members of the Daraja community adhere to:
 - a. Pillar One: Be accountable for the role that you play at Daraja, neither neglecting nor abusing it.
 - b. Pillar Two: Maintain open communication. Speak honestly and listen respectfully.
 - c. Pillar Three: Embrace differences. Treat all with dignity and respect.
 - d. Pillar Four: Each day, leave it better than you found it.
4. Finally, all members of Daraja Club should strive to balance club duties and activities with their scholastic work; to everyone in the Daraja community, schoolwork comes first! In light of this, if a member fails a subject or if they are unable to maintain a 2.0 GPA, they will receive a mandatory counseling session with the club advisor regarding their position in Daraja Academy.

In addition to adhering to these laws, all members should print and sign a copy of the Daraja Club Constitution below; these copies should be maintained by the club advisor until the student graduates or is no longer a member of the organization.



DARAJA CLUB CONSTITUTION

As a member of Daraja Club, I agree to the following responsibilities and expectations:

As a member of Daraja Club, I agree to the following responsibilities and expectations:

1. I understand and will abide by the Club Bylaws, as outlined in the Daraja Club Handbook.
2. I will attend every scheduled meeting of our organization; if I am unable to attend I will inform the Club Advisor as soon as possible.
3. I will also attend any ancillary meetings or events (fundraisers, social events, etc.) as scheduled by the Club advisor, giving advanced notice if I am unable to attend.
4. I will keep an open mind during all discussions and activities, even if some of the ideas or cultures we discuss are different from my own.
5. Additionally, I will be an active participant in all meetings and discussions; I will have the courage to speak up or answer questions and will take initiative in projects, meetings, or other club activities.
6. Most importantly, I will always abide by the four pillars of Daraja Academy:

Pillar One: Be accountable for the role that you play at Daraja, neither neglecting nor abusing it.

Pillar Two: Maintain open communication. Speak honestly and listen respectfully.

Pillar Three: Embrace differences. Treat all with dignity and respect.

Pillar Four: Each day, leave it better than you found it.

Club Member Name: _____

Club Member Signature: _____

Club Advisor Name: _____

Club Advisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Daraja Club Meeting Agendas

This section will provide you with all the tools you need to successfully lead your new organization through the entire academic year, providing information on Daraja Academy and Kenya as a whole, discussion topics, and a variety of activities to get your students thinking and talking about many different facets of the life of a Daraja Girl.

How to Hold a Successful Club Meeting

Each bi-weekly Daraja Club meeting is formatted to provide you with an hour of discussion topics, statistics, and activities; however, some topics may run your meetings longer or shorter, depending on the topic of the week. Additionally, each meeting will be prefaced by a student or teacher biography which will help your students connect with someone in the Daraja Family! Set the tone of each meeting with statistics from both Daraja and Kenya as a whole, then follow up with an activity to keep your club members engaged in the topic of the day. Finally, each meeting ends with several discussion topics that are sure to engage students to think about cultures, practices, and experiences that are very different from their own.

Daraja Club Meeting Tip:

To save time and paper, use a projector to display each meetings' student or teacher biographies for the entire group to see, rather than printing out several copies or crowding around a computer screen.

As you become more comfortable with your club members and the weekly topics, feel free to not only add or remove certain discussion topics and activities but also include your students and assign them leadership roles in the meetings. For example, allow your Club President to lead discussions or to teach the class about a certain aspect of Daraja, or ask another member to present the student biography to the group.

How to Use this Manual During Meetings

Typically, each Daraja Club advisor should have one printed copy of this manual to reference during meetings, as well as an electronic version to e-mail to club members and their families. Prior to every meeting, review the meeting agenda and add or remove information as you need to encompass as much or as little of the topic as you wish. Finally, it is advised that the Club Secretary keeps track of all augmented meeting agendas and to submit them to Club Headquarters each year so that Daraja Club organizers can review what works and what doesn't in order to make changes to the meeting formats and agendas.

Meeting 1 - Girls of Daraja

1. Introduction

What is Daraja Academy?

Daraja Academy is a secondary school for girls in Kenya that was founded in 2009 by Jenni and Jason Doherty. Daraja provides its students with full scholarships and provides shelter, food, healthcare, and counseling services to students so that they can focus on their academic and personal potential without the everyday barriers they would otherwise face from poverty. Daraja's programs and rigorous curriculum are designed to challenge students to reach their potential and empower them to be leaders in their communities.

Daraja Statistics

- 177 girls have graduated from Daraja's 4-year program
- 82% of alumni have been admitted to colleges and universities
- Daraja graduates earn 33% more than the average Kenyan

The Need for Girls' Education in Kenya

Girls are often denied the right to education in Africa, with poverty, exclusion, and early marriages and childbirth as some of the contributing factors. Statistics show that in sub-Saharan Africa, 4 million girls will never attend school compared to 2 million boys. As of 2019, 60.5% of secondary-school-age girls in Africa were out of school. Educating girls can profoundly change their lives: an education opens up job opportunities for them, increases their chances of financial independence and escaping the cycle of poverty, helps them support themselves and their families better, and reduces their chances of early marriage and childbirth, thus allowing them to complete their education. Educating girls also has a global impact: when a country educates 1% more girls, its average gross domestic product (GDP) rises by 0.3%.

As the Daraja girls say on campus: "When you educate a girl, you educate the whole world."

2. Club Activities

Project your computer screen and show club members these three videos:

- [Powerful Beyond Measure \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CBSGplMqk8\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CBSGplMqk8)
- [Girls of Daraja \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YOxeAP_dIo\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YOxeAP_dIo)
- [School of my Dreams \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4u-7a0qrBK8\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4u-7a0qrBK8)

Meeting 2 - Ethnicity

1. Initial Facts: Ethnicity in Kenya and at Daraja

KENYA FACT: Kenya has 42 different ethnic groups spread across the country, the five largest being the Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Kamba, and Kanlenjin. After the presidential elections in 2007, there was an outbreak of ethnic violence that resulted in the death of over 1,300 people and the displacement of tens of thousands.

DARAJA FACT: Daraja is proud of its diversity; we have students representing 30 of the 42 different ethnic groups. With Kenya's history of ethnic violence, we feel that it is important to boost camaraderie between the girls and help them to understand that we are all one, regardless of where we come from.

2. Club Activities

Activity One: Assign each student or group of students a specific ethnic group to look up. Give them a short period of time for research, and then have each student or group of students briefly present to the club what they have found.

Activity Two: Ask students to name prominent ethnicities that may be found in America, both now and in the past. Then divide students into groups to come up with answers to the following: What are some of the stereotypes that these groups encountered, and how did they try to counteract these ideas? What are some important milestones (both positive and negative) in the history of these ethnicities and their American past? Feel free to add more questions as necessary!

3. Discussion Topics/Prompts

1. What does ethnicity mean? What does race mean? How are they different and/or related?
2. What do you think of when you hear the word "tribe"? In what ways do you think that word can have negative or derogatory connotations?
3. What are some of the similarities between some of the ethnic groups you learned about? What are some of their differences? Do you think one outweighs the other?
4. What do you think it means to "other" people? Some have said that race and ethnicity are "social constructs;" what do you think this means?
5. What does nationalism mean? How do you think ethnic differences can help or hinder a push for nationalism?
6. How can racial or ethnic stereotyping lead to tension, or even violence and hate? What can you do in your community to help combat stereotyping?

Meeting 3 - Religion

1. Initial Facts: Religion in Kenya and at Daraja

KENYA FACT: The most popular religion in Kenya is Christianity, making up 70% of the total population (33% Protestant and 28% Catholic) followed by 6% Muslims and 25% indigenous religions.

DARAJA FACT: Because girls at Daraja come from all corners of Kenya and from very diverse backgrounds, they also represent the most commonly found religions in Kenya.

Every Sunday from 9 am to 11 am, the girls are allotted “spiritual time” where they can praise however they choose. Although there are no formal religious services being held, the girls are more than happy to praise alone and with each other. On a typical Sunday morning, a visitor to Daraja may find the Catholic girls giving praise in one classroom, right next to the Protestants in another classroom, right next to the Muslims in the mosque. The students are very open to other religions and there is no prejudice or hatred towards each other from that (or any other) basis. Each service is student-led, which gives many girls a chance to combine their love for their religion with their blossoming leadership skills.

2. Club Activities

Activity One: Have students in groups go around and take a tally of everyone’s religion. Tell them to turn these numbers into a percentage and compare it to that of Kenya. Is the diversity similar or different? How so? What may be some contributing factors to this, and how do they think this may affect their cultural understanding and awareness?

Activity Two: In groups, have students research the religious and spiritual beliefs of various ethnic groups found in Kenya, particularly some of the indigenous religions. Allow the students to share what they’ve found. How do these numbers compare to Kenya as a whole, and how do they relate to the United States?

3. Discussion Topics/Prompts

1. How does the religious composition in Kenya differ from that in your state/hometown?
2. Do you think a person’s religion is influenced by their culture? How so?
3. How would you feel if going to a religious or spiritual service was entirely up to you? Do you think you would still go?
4. How would you feel if your religious service was led by you and/or your peers?

Meeting 4 - Education

1. Initial Facts: Education in Kenya and at Daraja

KENYA FACT: Only 50% of Kenyan boys between the ages of 16 and 20 are in school; for girls, the number drops to a startling 35%.

DARAJA FACT: All of the girls at Daraja would not be going to school if they hadn't been able to obtain help in their educational costs. Therefore, no girl here takes her education for granted.

Daraja students may have had various reasons for why they would not have been able to attend secondary (high) school: some are orphans, some could not afford to pay for school fees, some lived too far from the nearest school, and much more. However, the one thing they all have in common is the drive to continue with their education and make a difference in their communities.

Immediately after gaining independence in 1963, Kenya employed what was known as the 7-4-2-3 system, where children would take seven years of primary, four years of lower secondary, two years of upper secondary, and three years of tertiary education. This system was modeled after the British education system, but was changed in 1985 to the 8-4-4 system, much like that in the United States. This change also included more of a focus on mathematics, English, and vocational subjects.

For most, secondary school starts around the age of fourteen and lasts for four years. However, many adolescents may start school later than that due to lack of school fees or a delayed admission in primary school. At the end of their fourth year each student is required to partake in national testing called the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exam. Scoring is based on a scale from one to twelve points, twelve being a perfect score (A+) and one being a failing score (E). A student's outcome on the KCSE is a full determinant of acceptance into a university; rarely if ever is a school average grade or grade point average used to gauge a student's knowledge or potential. Therefore, this one test can determine a child's future.

2. Club Activities

Activity One: Before teaching members about a typical day for a student at Daraja Academy, have them individually write out their daily school schedule and allow them to read or present it to the class; this can be as creative as making posters listing the activities in their day or as simple as writing a timeline on a piece of paper. After they've finished, share the following excerpt with them describing a typical day at Daraja:

A Day in the Life: Daraja Academy:

A typical day at Daraja has the girls waking up at 6:30 am to get ready for study hall, which lasts from 6:30 to 7:30. After breakfast at 7:30, the girls have class from 8:00 until their tea break at 10:30, followed by more class until lunch at 1:00 pm. After lunch... more class! The last class ends at 4:00 PM, but the girls are working hard until it's time for dinner at 6:00 pm; this timeframe can include club meetings/sports practice, WISH class (Women of Integrity, Strength, and Hope, a women's empowerment class held once a week), life skills workshops, or study time. At 6:00, everyone breaks for dinner but are soon back to work: students have study hall until 9:00 PM. This formula creates tired girls, but it also enforces discipline and a drive like no other. Daraja girls are tough and their motivation to better themselves and their communities pushes them to keep on going!

3. Discussion Topics/Prompts

1. Is education important for youth? Why or why not?
2. Do you think everybody should be entitled to a free education? Who should be responsible for the costs?
3. How would you feel if you weren't able to go to school? Consider why not: maybe your family can't afford it, the school is too far and there's no transportation, etc.
4. Why do you think a lack of education is thought to be such a bad thing in the United States? From what you've learned about education in Kenya, would you guess their view of education is similar?

Meeting 5 - Children and Society

1. Initial Facts: Children's Roles in Kenya and at Daraja

KENYA FACT: Kenya has a population of 28 million, 15 million of whom are children.

Therefore, of the 12.6 million Kenyans living in absolute poverty, over half of those are children.

A large percentage of children in Kenya don't finish primary school. While primary school is technically free, there are other expenses that go along with sending a child to schools such as the cost of uniforms, school supplies, and sometimes transportation to and from the nearest school. For some families, the children may be needed at home to take care of any crops or animals, or even younger siblings.

DARAJA FACT: Students are not the only children on the Daraja Academy campus! Several staff members live on-site with their families, which means their young children reside at Daraja and interact with the students, teachers, and volunteers. Though these children aren't students at Daraja, they are definitely part of our family and even take part in sports events, movie nights, and our talent shows!

2. Club Activities

Activity One: Have students write a list of their responsibilities, both at home and at school. Allow them to compare this to the typical responsibilities of the average Kenyan child: fetching water, helping in the kitchen, looking after younger siblings, attending school and doing homework (if they are able to go to school), hand washing clothes, and in some instances looking after or herding livestock all day.

3. Discussion Topics/Prompts

1. How does the typical life of a Kenyan child differ from that of where you come from? In what ways does it seem similar and/or different from what you've experienced?
2. Interpret the phrase "Children are our future." Think about all of the different meanings this might have.
3. What is one thing that you like about the way a typical Kenyan child lives? One thing you don't like?
4. How do you think you would be different if you were raised in Kenya? Are there some opportunities you might miss out on?

Meeting 6 - Higher Education

1. Initial Facts: Higher Education Opportunities in Kenya and at Daraja

KENYA FACT: On average, the gross enrollment rate in colleges across Kenya is 8%. In the United States, the average is 77%.

DARAJA FACT: Thus far, all Daraja graduates have received jobs, internships, or acceptance into a college or university to continue their education.

With such low enrollment rates for higher education across Kenya, the Daraja staff is dedicated to empowering their students to raise the standard for girls' education. We believe that education is a powerful tool that, when put into the right hands, can make huge changes in the world. The girls at Daraja have many different goals: some want to be doctors, lawyers, accountants, journalists, politicians, and much more. They all understand the importance of higher education and are each striving for acceptance to the university of their dreams.

2. Club Activities

Activity One: Using notecards, write out several possible life courses that graduates of Daraja may take. Use the following as a guideline, or create your own:

- You have been accepted into college/university, using loans to pay for it (1-2 cards)
- You have been placed into an internship, and work in a restaurant part-time (1-2 cards)
- You found a job at a local bank (1 card)
- You found a job working in a greenhouse/farm/plantation (2-3 cards)
- You returned home without a job/degree (3-5 cards)

Have students draw a card at random, and give them several minutes to think about how they would attempt to live the life on the card they selected; then, ask each person to share their card and describe how they would live for the next five years in their specific situation.

3. Discussion Topics/Prompts

1. What do you think is the likelihood that you will attend college? Is it something you are looking forward to, or do you see it as just another thing expected of you?
2. Why do you think there is a higher university enrollment rate in the United States than Kenya?
3. Do Americans see a college degree as being expected or necessary to succeed? Why or why not? Do you think this differs from other countries?
4. Imagine you live in Kenya. Would you pursue a college education? Why or why not? What factors influenced your decision?

Race for Daraja

Race for Daraja is an annual fundraiser held in May. It began as a part of the annual Bay to Breakers race in San Francisco, but has since changed to Race for Daraja, a virtual event to allow for people all over the world to join.

Participants complete a 10k race of their choice (running, walking, biking, swimming, etc.) and fundraise for Daraja. The Daraja girls also race a 10k around the school campus and surrounding village, and each participant is partnered with a Daraja girl in Kenya and will race "together" with her. Participants will be able to connect with their partner and earn prizes for reaching fundraising milestones.

Race for Daraja is one of Daraja's biggest fundraisers of the year, so get your club members excited about participating! Stay updated about news and details regarding the event through Daraja's website and social media, and as the event nears, let your club members know about what Race for Daraja is, registration information, and event updates. Share fundraising tips with them, and if logistically feasible, have the club race together.

Fundraising Tips

Brainstorm ways club members can fundraise and share tips on how to reach out to potential donors. These methods will come in handy both for Race for Daraja and when your club hosts fundraisers and events. Here are some suggestions:

- Possible outreach avenues include email, social media, and text.
- When reaching out:
 - Introduce what you're doing and why you're doing it.
 - What is Daraja Academy? Why is Daraja's mission important?
 - Include the link to Daraja's website: daraja.org
 - Why is girls' education important? Why are you passionate about it?
 - Include facts and statistics about the need for girls' education (see [page number] or visit daraja.org/why-girls for information).
 - Include your personal fundraising goal and/or the club goal.
 - Remember to include the link to your personal fundraising page.

Additional Resources and Links

- [Daraja's website \(daraja.org\)](http://daraja.org)
- [Newsletter sign up sheet](#)