

AN ODE TO THE MASHINANI LEAGUE

SUMMARY

The Mashinani League in Korogocho is far more than just a local football competition. It brings together 210 young men in organised matches, attracts over 200 fans every Monday and Tuesday, and thereby creates a space where community, discipline and hope become visible in everyday life. In the run-up to the 2026 Mashinani Cup, which runs from 25 May to 23 June, the league is stepping forward with a clear mission: football should not just be played, but used as a tool for social change. With Julius Tamree at the helm and the German organisation SlumChangers – an official partner for the first time – it is clear how effectively local initiative and international support can work together when it comes to youth development and change in Korogocho.

In Korogocho, change often begins not with a speech, but with a game.

The Mashinani League is a so-called 'Community-Based Organisation', or CBO. It is deeply rooted in the local community. And it does not view sport as merely a decorative leisure activity. Here, it means much more: it becomes social infrastructure. The Mashinani League involves 210 young men in structured competitions. Every Monday and Tuesday, it brings together more than 200 local fans, thereby creating a reliable alternative to idleness, crime and drug abuse. What may appear from the outside to be a local football initiative is, at its core, a form of public welfare.

Korogocho in the rhythm of the game

In many parts of the world, football is entertainment. In Korogocho, it is often more than that: a calendar, a meeting point, a place where young people are not reduced to their lack of resources. Here, they appear as players, teammates and visible members of their community. This is precisely where the strength of the Mashinani League lies. **It organises not only matches, but time, attention and a sense of belonging.**

When young people are involved in a regular competition, more than just their weekly routine changes. Sport creates routines, discipline and an audience. People come back, recognise one another, discuss the course of the game, cheer, argue and make up. In this way, community emerges not as an abstract development goal, but as something that is practised in a practical way week after week. That sounds like sporting activities here too. Here, however, in the slum, it means so much more.

Julius Tamree and the idea behind the league

At the forefront of this movement is Julius Tamree, president of the Mashinani League. His role is not merely administrative. He embodies the continuity of a project that can only have an impact if it is run locally, taken seriously and sustained over the long term.

In local sports structures in particular, a great deal depends on credible leadership. This applies just as much in Germany to the countless sports clubs here. A league like the one in the slum does not function on enthusiasm alone, but on reliability: match days must be organised, teams coordinated, partners involved, and the social idea behind the competition constantly renewed. The fact that the Mashinani League is now perceived as a serious grassroots initiative is also down to this kind of commitment.

The Mashinani Cup 2026

This year's Mashinani Cup 2026 brings this vision to the fore in a four-week competition.

According to the published tournament bracket, the Cup runs from 25 May to 23 June 2026. The fixtures show a clearly structured tournament field featuring teams such as Wakulima RZA, Sansiro Maldives, Bufu FC Indomitable, Kungfu Boys Hong Kong, Udinese CF Kavirondo and Kisumu Team Ganji; two 'best loser' spots also lead into the next round.

The structure of the diagram conveys a simple yet important message: this is not improvised, but organised. Those taking part operate within a clear framework of rules, pathways and a clearly marked final. This is central to a community project, because structure in itself builds trust.

The tournament's slogan — **"Where Football Ignites Transformation"** — sums up the idea perfectly. Football is not romanticised here, but understood in functional terms: as an opportunity to engage young people productively, bring the neighbourhood together and channel energy into something constructive – rather than into crime, drugs or other dangers.

Anthem, Identity and Public Space

The anthem fits so well with the Mashinani League because every strong community eventually develops its own distinctive sound. An anthem is more than just music. It is an expression of recognition, pride and collective presence. Where people come together regularly, a shared rhythm emerges almost automatically — in chants, shouts, slogans or in the atmosphere itself.

In the case of Korogocho, the idea of the anthem points to something fundamental: the right of a community not only to be seen, but also to be heard. The Mashinani League organises precisely this public space. It makes it clear that young people are not merely recipients of aid, but bearers of their own dynamism, their own language and their own vision of the future.

SlumChangers official partner for the first time

Particularly important for us as an organisation this year is our first-ever official partnership with the Mashinani League. Through this, the SlumChangers from Germany are supporting the Mashinani Cup 2026 not only in spirit but also with public visibility – as a partner in a four-week competition that organises change and social development in Korogocho in very concrete terms.

This partnership is more than just a logo at the bottom of a tournament graphic. It signals that the Mashinani League's ideas — **youth development, structure, community and change from the bottom up** — are resonating beyond the neighbourhood. This is crucial for local initiatives, because support is most effective when it strengthens existing structures rather than *over-shaping* them. As an organisation, we do not dictate anything. The ideas and their implementation arise and take place locally.

‘As an organisation, we do not dictate anything. The ideas and their implementation arise and take place locally. We help when we are asked to – and when we can.’

Thomas Schwarz
Chairman

The fact that we, as SlumChangers, are officially supporting this cup for the first time gives the project additional reach and credibility. It shows young people, spectators and potential sponsors that what has been built up in Korogocho is being noticed. **In many community projects, visibility is not a side effect, but part of the impact.**

Lean Budget – Strong Impact

Ahead of the 2026 Mashinani Cup, processes were deliberately optimised to enable a lean, impact-oriented budget. It focuses on the essential tournament infrastructure and the motivation of the players. This is precisely where one of the project's strengths lies: it does not try to appear bigger than it is, but rather to become more precise in what it achieves.

This clarity is rare enough in the field of local sports work in a deprived neighbourhood to be noteworthy. **Resources are limited, but the benefits are visible.**

When match days take place reliably, players remain involved and an audience turns up regularly, a form of credibility emerges that no advertising copy can replace.

Why this is more than just a “story”

The story of the Mashinani League is important because it translates an often abstract concept like social change into something concrete. A pitch becomes a public space. **A competition becomes a social event. An anthem becomes a symbol of collective identity.** And a local tournament shows what development can look like when it grows from the bottom up.

For us as an organisation, this is not merely a “cool story”. It is a powerful, sustainable reality. It brings together youth, sport, neighbourhood, leadership and partnership, without descending into sentimentality. The Mashinani Cup 2026 is not just about football in Korogocho. It tells the story of how a community organises itself — with Julius Tamree at the helm of the league, with SlumChangers as the official partner, and with a tournament that will help set the pace of a neighbourhood from 25 May to 23 June 2026.

Questions and Answers

What is the Mashinani League?

The Mashinani League is a community-based football initiative in Korogocho that engages young people through organised competitions, thereby creating an alternative to idleness, crime and drug abuse.

What is the Mashinani Cup 2026?

The Mashinani Cup 2026 is a four-week competition running from 25 May to 23 June 2026, in which teams from Korogocho and the surrounding area compete against each other in a clearly structured tournament format.

What role does Julius Tamree play?

Julius Tamree is the president of the Mashinani League and thus a key figure behind the organisation, coordination and long-term development of the initiative.

Why is SlumChangers important for this year's Cup?

Our organisation, SlumChangers, is officially supporting the Mashinani Cup 2026 as a partner for the first time. This will raise the profile of the Mashinani League's work and give the idea of change through sport greater reach and credibility.