



ABDU LUMALA

**From Refugee-Asylum seeker to Global
Football Icon & Humanitarian**

“
THROUGH DEDICATION TO BOTH HIS CRAFT & HUMANITARIAN CAUSES, LUMALA HAS PROVEN THAT FOOTBALL IS MORE THAN JUST A SPORT—IT'S A PLATFORM FOR CHANGE.
”

INTRODUCTION



Abdu Lumala (Shirt number 22) is a Ugandan-born footballer and humanitarian, now playing as a forward for Gokulam Kerala in India's I-League and the Uganda national team. His journey from a refugee-asylum seeker in Sweden to an internationally recognized football talent is nothing short of extraordinary.

Abdu has represented Uganda at the **Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)**, competing against top African teams, and is now one of Africa's finest athletes,

earning accolades for his dedication on and off the pitch.

Lumala Abdu's journey stems from his personal background, challenges, career growth and community contributions to impact the world and inspire millions. Through the Lumala-Abdu Youth Impact (LAYI), Lumala demonstrates his passion for making a positive impact on global issues of importance. He carries and shares a big smile with many.

From playing for the Uganda Cranes to signing with top European and Asian teams, Abdu's story resonates deeply with displaced and orphaned children worldwide. Having overcome unimaginable hardships, including a no-parent and relatives life plus cultural displacement, Abdu's experiences make him a compelling advocate for causes supporting refugee children, mentorship and global health awareness.

Since 2020, European and American teams expressed interest in reacquiring Lumala's full transfer rights and loaning him out again. However, an Indian team presented a lucrative offer, securing his transfer. Notably, the team had already reached its quota for non-EU and Asian players, making Lumala's acquisition a strategic move.

He knows firsthand the difficulties of growing up in poverty and the importance of having someone believe in you. Abdu regularly visits schools, donates sports equipment, and provides mentorship to young souls who, like him, dream of a brighter future and works tirelessly to inspire early pursuit of goals, no matter the odds. Yay!

STYLE OF PLAY

Nicknamed the
Electricman

He is very fast

A dynamic and clinical forward, Lumala Abdu is famed for his exceptional goal-making magic and versatility. Capable of playing as a traditional center-forward or mobile, roaming striker, Abdu's pace, agility, and technical skill allow him to exploit spaces and create scoring opportunities.

Tactically, Abdu has evolved into a flexible and intelligent attacker, adapting seamlessly to various formations and roles. His strength and aerial prowess make him a formidable target-man, while his vision and passing range enable him to link play and create chances for teammates.

As a winger playing on the right flank, Abdu possesses a predatory instinct, often finding himself in the right position at the right time. His movement and positioning create chaos for defenders, and his clinical finishing makes him a reliable goal-scorer.

Abdu's playing style draws comparisons to prolific European and American strikers, combining physicality, technical skill, and intelligent movement. His development into a complete forward has made him a valuable asset for his team and country, capable of influencing games and deciding outcomes.

Abdu's key attributes include:



Devastating speed & acceleration, outpacing defenders with ease



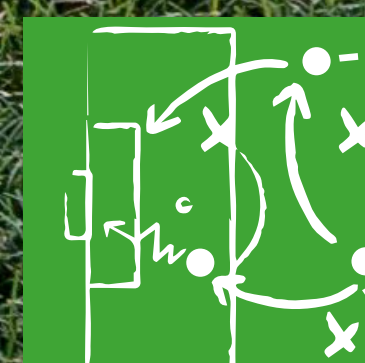
Exceptional ball control & dribbling skills, navigating tight spaces with precision



Clinical and powerful finishing, both inside and outside the penalty area



Aerial dominance, with impressive heading accuracy & jumping ability



Intelligent movement & positioning, consistently finding space in the box

BACKGROUND:

OVERCOMING TRAUMA TO FIND PURPOSE



Abdu Lumala's early life was at the small village of Kataba and then Bakuli in Uganda. He was born on July 21, 1997, into a life of uncertainty. Abdu's life story begins with tragedy and displacement. Separated from his mother Irene Mbabazi at 4 months due to circumstances beyond his understanding with no whereabouts of his father. Lumala's childhood was marked by hardship. Raised by his grandmother who also died in 2016 and with no known father, his last hope was shattered. He was later adopted into a family. Abdu never knew the comfort of parental care.

He was adopted into a family that gave him care, but the emotional scars of abandonment and displacement were etched deep within. As a young boy, Abdu faced the world with an unspoken emptiness, not knowing where he truly belonged. His adoptive home, though loving, couldn't fill the void of origin and identity.

But in his darkest moments, Lumala found a passionate escape—football. He kicked, ran, and pushed himself for survival. It was through sport that he discovered his identity and worth. His commitment and drive soon caught the attention of local coaches, and his talent started to shine. As he grew, so did his talent. With every victory, he healed a part of his broken spirit.

Abdu never forgot his origins. He understood what it meant to feel lost and powerless, and he chose to channel his fame toward a greater cause. Today, as a global football champion, he uses his platform to advocate for displaced children, refugees, and orphaned youth. His story of overcoming trauma, cultural displacement, and emotional scars has the potential to inspire millions.

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FANS' BEST FOREIGN PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2019

EDUCATION HISTORY

His academics began at **Namirembe Infant Primary School** until 2009. Little did he know, his life was about to take a dramatic turn.

As a talented young footballer, Lumala's prowess on the pitch earned him a spot in the UAM campaign, sponsored by MTN. In 2019, his exceptional performance caught the attention of Christina Barrineau, who gifted him a mobile phone in South Africa.

This recognition propelled Lumala to greater heights. He clinched the **Fans' Best Foreign Player**

of the Year award 2019 in Uganda and led his team to a remarkable second-runner-up finish against Zamalek.

The summer of 2019 marked a defining moment in Lumala's career. Representing Uganda in the **Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)**, he faced off against powerhouse teams like **Senegal, Zimbabwe and in Egypt.**

Lumala's educational journey continued at **Old Kampala Primary School**, where he completed his Primary Seven studies in 2010. He then joined **St. Mary's SS Kitende** for two years before taking a break for greener pastures in Sweden.

CAREER: BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ICON



Nicholas Bamulanzeki



EARLY BEGINNINGS IN UGANDA

Lumala Abdu began his football journey as a young player in Uganda. His exceptional talent caught local attention early, earning him a place in youth training programs and leading to his selection for MTN's United Against Malaria campaign, where he played in prominent youth leagues and won the Fans' Best Player of the Year award in Uganda.

At just 10 years old, his debut to the international market took shape when he received a Henrik Larsson jersey as a gift from his aunt, sparking a dream that would eventually take him far beyond the boundaries of his village. That dream, however, was paired with hardship. Recognizing the potential for a better life while in Sweden at 16 with no resources and limited opportunities in Sweden, Abdu worked menial jobs, including washing cars, just to survive.



INTERNATIONAL BREAKTHROUGH IN SWEDEN

His breakthrough came when he met a group of European visitors who saw his passion and determination. They helped him board a plane to Sweden, marking the beginning of an incredible journey. Alone in a foreign country, Abdu contacted Swedish authorities and filed for refugee asylum and was placed in a small town called Bromölla, where he first played football in Sweden's lower leagues.

Abdu's relentless spirit quickly turned heads. At age 16, he faced initial struggles, including working menial jobs to support himself. He started in Sweden's lower leagues, gradually advancing to play with Mjällby AIF in the second division.

His performances attracted significant attention, allowing him to secure a contract with **Kalmar FF in Sweden's top league, the Allsvenskan**. Here, he began building his reputation as one of Uganda's most promising football exports.



EU development and humanitarian aid comm

PROFESSIONAL RISE & AFCON REPRESENTATION

In 2019, Abdu reached a career milestone by **representing Uganda at the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)** in Egypt, where he played against top teams, including Senegal and Egypt.

His performances in **AFCON** led him to sign his life changing contract with **Pyramids FC in Egypt**, where he reunited with his now coach Sébastien Desabre (former Uganda national team coach). His upward trajectory saw him sign with Pyramids FC in Egypt in 2019, further solidifying his position as one of Uganda's brightest football exports. where he reunited with his former Uganda national team coach, Sébastien Desabre.

GLOBAL EXPANSION TO INDIA'S I-LEAGUE

In 2024, Lumala continued his international journey by signing with **Gokulam Kerala in India's I-League** even though he had many offers from Europe and Saudi Arabia.

This move allowed him to explore the Asian football scene and showcase his adaptability across diverse playing styles and leagues.

His recruitment was strategic, as Gokulam Kerala's roster was full of international players, underscoring his value and impact on the team's dynamics.





HUMANITARIAN IMPACT: LUMALA-ABDU YOUTH IMPACT (LAYI)

Rooted in his own experiences of overcoming hardships, he has made it his mission to uplift underprivileged youth and contribute to social development through multiple impactful projects.

Parallel to his sports career, Abdu had for the longest time been doing school fees charity to his friends and upcoming footballers and funding initiatives on an individual level until in 2024 he **founded the Lumala Abdu Youth Impact (LAYI)**. Here he is leading a non-profit movement focused on youth empowerment, health advocacy, and refugee support. Under LAYI, he implements

programs supporting young athletes, encouraging them to use sports as a vehicle for growth, education, and health awareness.

Under his guidance, the organization provides scholarships for talented young athletes, funds health and hygiene workshops in local schools, and organizes sports tournaments to encourage youth engagement in constructive activities. LAYI's ongoing projects include distributing malaria nets to prevent disease spread, promoting mental health awareness, and providing young people with critical life skills for their personal and professional growth.

LUMALA
ABDU Youth
Impact



UNITED AGAINST MALARIA HEALTH ADVOCACY

At 13, Abdu was selected as the few global health ambassadors for the United Against Malaria campaign, becoming an advocate for malaria prevention and control across and beyond Africa.

Through this role, he has traveled to global summits in Addis Ababa, Brussels, and New York, raising awareness and mobilizing action. His participation in this campaign has made a lasting impact, helping reduce malaria prevalence in African regions.

Lumala's passion for advocating against the devastating impact of malaria led him to South Africa during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, where he participated in high-profile advertisements in Johannesburg, raising awareness about the disease., meeting influential figures like Presidents Thabo Mbeki and JB Keboza, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

United Against Malaria Milestones

2010:

CRITICAL YEAR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MALARIA, WITH THE AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS AND FIFA WORLD CUP

2014:

TARGET YEAR TO END MALARIA DEATHS, ALIGNED WITH MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

2015:

GOAL TO ACHIEVE NATIONWIDE COVERAGE WITH NETS AND TREATMENTS IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES.



BUILDING A SOCIAL HOME & SPORTS ACADEMY

In Uganda, Lumala is set to launch a social home and sports academy for vulnerable children. This initiative will provide accommodation, healthcare, and mentorship, as well as training for young athletes. The academy will also focus on academics, ensuring a holistic approach to youth development.

Abdu's vision is to empower children from disadvantaged backgrounds, providing them with the resources and guidance to achieve their dreams.

SPORTS FOR REFUGEE YOUTH

Lumala has extended his outreach efforts to refugee camps, recognizing the unique challenges faced by displaced youth.

Through LAYI, he frequently visits refugee settlements to run sports clinics, donate gear, and mentor young athletes who have been impacted by conflict and displacement.

He aims to inspire these young people, offering them hope and a sense of belonging by connecting through sports. His work has reached hundreds of youth, fostering resilience and optimism amidst difficult circumstances.



EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Believing that knowledge is as vital as physical strength, Lumala sponsors educational scholarships for promising young athletes who lack the means to pursue formal education.

His mentorship extends beyond the field, as he frequently holds motivational talks in schools and youth centers, sharing his personal journey and encouraging young people to overcome challenges.

His hands-on involvement has inspired countless young individuals, reinforcing the values of hard work, perseverance, and giving back to one's community.

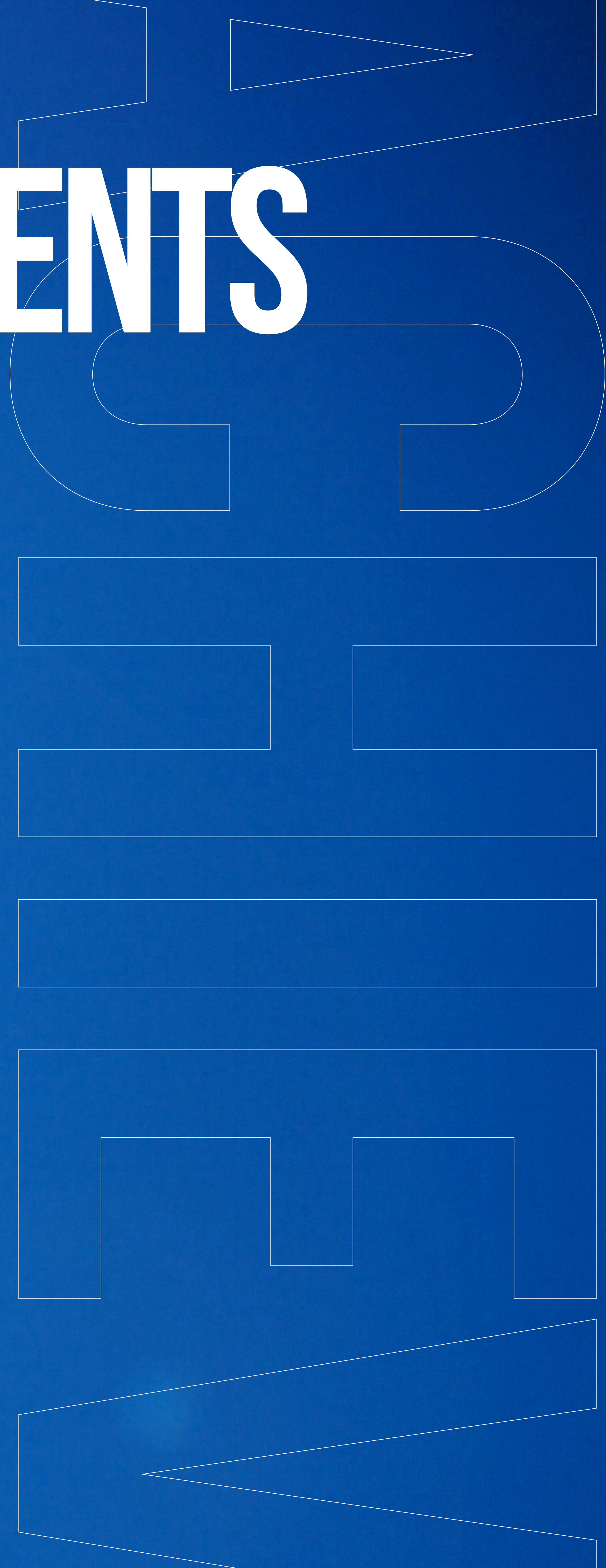
MENTORSHIP & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Beyond organized campaigns, Abdu regularly engages with communities by donating sports equipment to schools, visiting youth centers, and mentoring aspiring footballers.

His commitment to giving back to Uganda and supporting underprivileged youth remains a cornerstone of his legacy, making him a revered figure both on and off the field.



ACHIEVEMENTS



SOCCER EXCELLENCE & WORLDWIDE RECOGNITION

(Trophies/Tournaments/Rub-Shoulders)

His talent earned him a place in the Uganda national team, where he **represented his country in the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)** and competed against powerhouse teams. Also sometimes crossed paths with big shots.

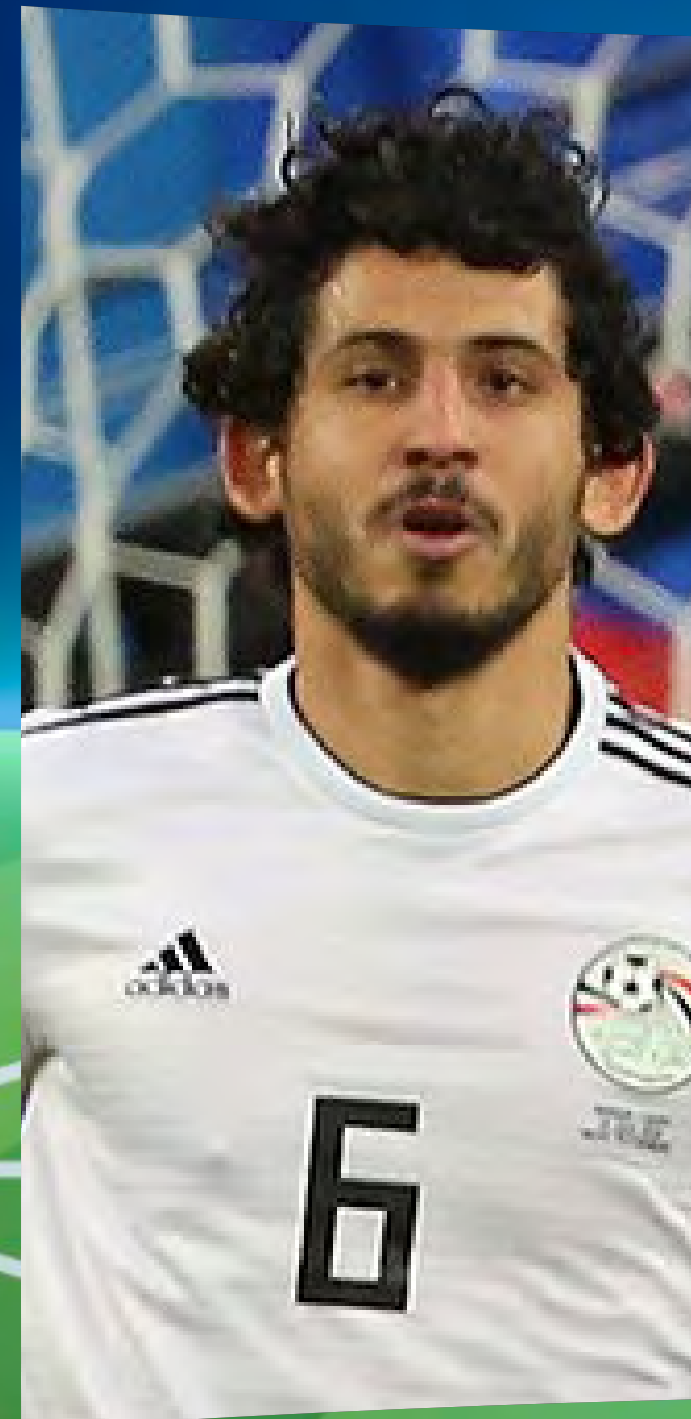
On the international stage, Lumala has tested his mettle against renowned players and sometimes crossed paths with many including;



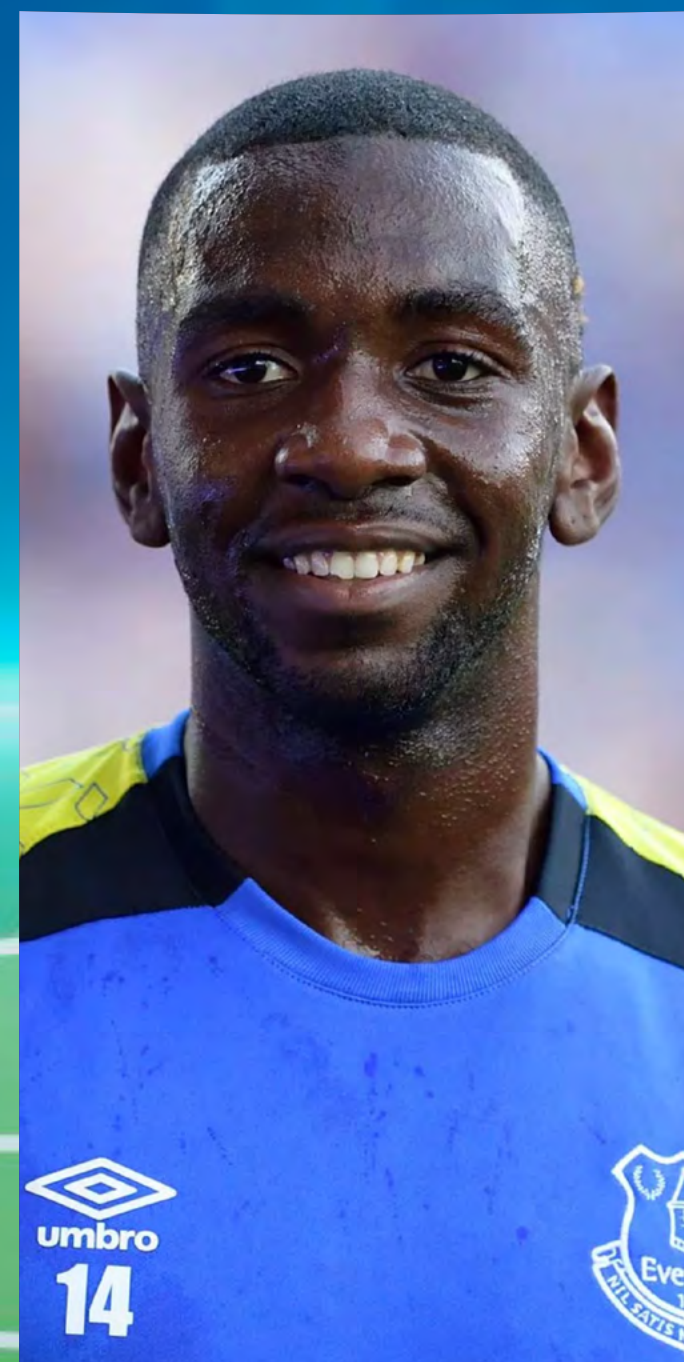
SADIO MANÉ



SERGE KESSIÉ



AHMED HEGAZI



YANNICK BOLASIE



KALIDOU KOULIBALY



CHOPO-MOTING
(Paris Saint-Germain)



ARTHUR MASUAKU

GLOBAL STAGE ADVOCACY LEVERAGING SPORTS

Lumala’s story of overcoming poverty, cultural displacement, and loss has positioned him as a global leader who is looked at as a role model who channels his talent and influence for the right reasons

He is thus a target at international summits, symposiums and conferences where he lends his voice to topics around peace, humanitarian work, global health and economic policy.

As a public figure, he has met and collaborated with influential leaders like **Archbishop Desmond Tutu** and participated in high-profile campaigns aimed at mobilizing African leaders on health issues.

Senior career*			
Years	Team	Apps	(Gls)
2015	Mjällby AIF	24	(3)
2016–2019	Kalmar FF	10	(0)
2017	→ Varbergs BoIS	10	(1)
2017	→ Helsingborgs IF (loan)	10	(1)
2018	→ IFK Värnamo (loan)	22	(0)
2019	→ Syrianska FC (loan)	9	(1)
2019–2022	Pyramids	4	(0)
2022–2024	Vipers SC		
2024	Slaven Belupo	4	(0)
2024–	Gokulam Kerala		
International career			
2019–	Uganda	6	(0)

Appearances and goals by club, season and competition												
Club	Season	League			Cups		Continental		Other		Total	
		Division	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals	Apps	Goals
Gualövs GoIF	2014	Division 7 Blekinge	10	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	20
Mjällby AIF	2015	Superettan	24	3	3	1	–	–	2	0	29	4
Kalmar FF	2016	Allsvenskan	10	0	5	2	–	–	–	–	15	2
Varbergs BoIS (loan)	2017	Superettan	10	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	1
Helsingborgs IF (loan)	2017	Superettan	10	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	10	1
IFK Värnamo (loan)	2017	Superettan	22	0	2	0	–	–	2	0	26	0
Syrianska FC (loan)	2019	Superettan	9	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	9	1
Career total			95	26	10	3	0	0	4	0	109	29

44



BY ENGAGING INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES THROUGH MEDIA, LUMALA HAS CEMENTED HIS ROLE AS A CHAMPION FOR AFRICAN YOUTH AND HEALTH ADVOCACY, EXTENDING HIS IMPACT BEYOND THE FOOTBALL FIELD.





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