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OUR MISSION
Grassroot Soccer Zambia (GRS) is an adolescent health organisation that leverages the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilise young people to overcome their greatest health challenges, live healthier, more productive lives, and be agents for change in their communities.

EDUCATE
GRS uses soccer-based activities and lively discussions to educate participants on HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-related issues that affect them and their communities.

INSPIRE
GRS trains young community mentors and leaders, including local professional soccer players, to be health educators and GRS Coaches. Coaches connect personally with participants and become trusted mentors.

MOBILISE
GRS provides referrals to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and social support for participants who access these services. GRS provides health events, community mobilisation, and other opportunities for young people to access comprehensive health and social services. We provide young people with the life skills they need to break down harmful social norms that negatively impact their health.

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE
GRS Zambia operates in seven provinces and currently implements activities in Lusaka, Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Muchinga, Southern, and Western Provinces.
OUR DELIVERY METHOD

OUR IMPACT

3 A’s

ASSETS
Increased health knowledge and the confidence to use it

ACCESS
Increased uptake of high-quality health services

ADHERENCE
Adherence to medical treatment, therapy, and healthy behaviors

OUR MODEL

3 C’s

CURRICULUM
SKILLZ soccer-based health curriculum

COACHES
Caring adults and mentors

CULTURE
Vital conversation, safe spaces, inspiration, and fun
DIR ECTOR'S N O T E

IT IS AN HONOUR and privilege to welcome you to the Grassroot Soccer Zambia 2018 Annual report.

The year 2018 was a remarkable one for Grassroot Soccer Zambia as it ushered in the implementation of our 5-year strategic plan, which focuses on expanding our reach, impact, and engagement with young people across Zambia. The 5-year Strategic Plan is aimed at positioning Grassroot Soccer Zambia to leverage its organizational strengths and precious resources by employing strategies that will maximize the impact of our work and provide the highest return on investment for our donors and partners.

During 2018, Grassroot Soccer Zambia managed to reach a total of 16,033 Zambian youth by providing them with evidence-based health education on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care, and support, gender norms, and violence. Our participants were also linked to free HIV testing services and 100% of those that tested HIV positive were enrolled into treatment.

As part of our broader service linkage strategy, Grassroot Soccer Zambia developed strong partnerships and referral networks this year with complementary organisations that help young people navigate the maze of biomedical health and social services they desire, including health screenings, psychosocial support, HIV treatment, and family planning.

As part of our development into a truly national scale organization and to reach more underserved young people and communities, we also strategically expanded our footprint in Zambia by launching programs in Eastern, Muchinga, and Western Provinces – bringing our work to seven of Zambia’s ten provinces. Additionally, in order to reach greater numbers of vulnerable adolescents living outside of urban areas, GRS initiated a partnership in 2018 with other local community organisations and community-based Ministry of Health structures to expand our SKILLZ Plus ART adherence support programme at the community level and decrease travel distance to health facilities. Through this decentralization strategy, GRS currently delivers SKILLZ Plus in two rural districts where SKILLZ Plus interventions and Club meetings are held at community centres (such as schools) and other health posts.

Finally, in collaboration with the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ) and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, I’m delighted to announce that in 2018 we officially launched a 5-year Randomized Controlled Trial of SKILLZ in Lusaka for adolescent girls and young women (AGYM) funded through a prestigious R01 research grant from the U.S. National Institutes of Health. Through this project, GRS and CIDRZ have developed a comprehensive SKILLZ-based package for AGYW that provides SRHR services across the adolescent health continuum through SKILLZ curriculum and programming (SKILLZ Girl/Teen Clubs) and adolescent-friendly spaces to support repeat of self-injectable contraception, HIV self-testing, condoms, pre-exposure prophylaxis, STI screening, and ART.

Given these many exciting developments, we greatly look forward to 2019 as we aim to reach more Zambian youth with holistic, integrated support that addresses their greatest health challenges, and more deeply influence the Zambian adolescent health landscape at all levels.

Boyd Mkandawire
Managing Director
Grassroot Soccer Zambia
PROGRAMS

At Grassroot Soccer Zambia, we create simple and powerful connections between soccer and life. Grassroot Soccer Zambia uses unique soccer-themed SKILLZ Health curricula that include interactive activities to reach both in-school and out-of-school youth, in government and community schools, health facilities, and local soccer academies.

SKILLZ CORE

GRS’s 10-12-session mixed-sex SKILLZ Core programme for very young adolescents (VYA), aged 10-14, is designed within a rights-based, gender-transformative framework that considers the profound changes brought about by puberty. Delivered by a mixed-sex pair of GRS Coaches, it offers girls and boys positive role models, increases self-concept, physical health, and school performance. It creates a safe space to discuss power dynamics and challenge harmful gender norms, and introduces core sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) topics, including the basics of HIV transmission, prevention, and risk, and violence prevention. Given VYA’s unique cognitive and physiological development characteristics, GRS’s SKILLZ Core emphasises interactive games, physical movement, and learning-by-doing.

SKILLZ GIRL

SKILLZ Girl is an 11-session, evidence-based curriculum for adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) ages 15-19. The programme combines HIV prevention, soccer, SRHR, life skills, HIV counselling and testing, and access to community services. GRS uses female Coaches (aged 18-29) to create a safe atmosphere and space for learning. It improves girls’ knowledge of key SRHR issues including gender-based violence (GBV), HIV, puberty-menstruation, and family planning/reproductive health, and also the social and structural drivers of violence against women and girls. Through SKILLZ Girl, GRS also works with Community Health Workers and clinical staff to improve their ability to deliver youth-friendly services to AGYW.
SKILLZ PLUS

GRS developed SKILLZ Plus, a 12-session programme for adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV), in Lusaka in 2012. Implemented in partnership with local health clinics and facilitated by GRS Coaches openly living with HIV, ALHIV are introduced to topics including HIV prevention and transmission, ART adherence, acceptance, disclosure, and healthy relationships. SKILLZ Plus participants graduate to monthly, long-term adherence support clubs.

SKILLZ PLUS CLUB

GRS developed SKILLZ Plus Clubs as long-term support groups for adolescents living with HIV graduating from SKILLZ Plus. Implemented at partner health facilities, SKILLZ Plus Clubs create long term safe spaces for participants to tackle challenges affecting them, including discrimination, stigma and medical adherence. Clubs enable adolescents living with HIV to support one another and reinforce key messages/themes from the SKILLZ Plus intervention. Clubs are led by pediatric health facility staff and supported by routine quality assurance/support visits from GRS SKILLZ Plus Coaches.
GRS uses soccer as a platform to mobilise communities around SRHR and to provide key services (HTS, VMMC, TB and STI screening, HPV vaccination, FP/RH, etc.) in non-clinical settings, such as high-volume soccer tournaments that double as community health events. These unique service delivery points for health providers sensitise community members to SRHR and facilitate access to services in non-traditional, community-based settings, reaching individuals that may not typically seek care at health facilities. GRS works with the Ministry of Health, CIDRZ, and JSI/USAID DISCOVER Health as its main clinical service partners for SKILLZ Community Health Events, and collaborates with additional private sector partners such as Latkins and Chreso Ministries in select communities.
To expand its impact on adolescent well-being, Grassroot Soccer Zambia reached 16,033 Zambian youth across all the SKILLZ Health interventions and community events in 2018. This included:

1,799 adolescents living with HIV reached by SKILLZ Plus adherence programme (graduation rate of 86.8%). Over 90% of these participants were directly referred from the Zambian Ministry of Health.

6,100 GRS participants (3,506) and community members (2,594) linked to HTS.

9,759 adolescent girls supported with gender-transformative SKILLZ programming – over 61% of Grassroot Soccer Zambia’s total participants.
NIH STUDY
Grassroot Soccer, in partnership with the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ), embarked on a five year study with funding from the U.S. National Institutes of Health. The overall purpose of the study is to assess the impact of the enhanced SKILLZ package, including different components of the programme aimed at both HIV-infected and uninfected adolescent school girls over two years on the outcomes of (1) HIV testing and subsequent retention in care, and (2) contraceptive uptake and continuation for pregnancy prevention. The study will also assess the impact of school-based SKILLZ Clubs on these same two outcomes. The study will take place across several highly densely populated areas of Lusaka where CIDRZ supports government Ministry of Health clinics with ARV services, electronic data management, and youth-friendly trained clinical personnel and where GRS has been implementing its basic SKILLZ curriculum and events in secondary schools.

LAUNCHING SKILLZ BOY
Aligned to the increasing global recognition of the importance of reaching high-risk adolescent boys and young men to break the cycle of HIV and GBV between them and their female partners, Grassroot Soccer Zambia diversified its programming by rolling out the single-sex SKILLZ Boy curriculum. The 11-session intervention for in- and out-of-school adolescent boys, aged 13-19, uses soccer metaphors and activities as a unique entry point to address SRHR topics including power, gender, consent, violence, substance use, and HIV prevention and treatment. Grassroot Soccer Zambia conducted a Curriculum Development Workshop incorporating seven male coaches to review the SKILLZ Boy curriculum from South Africa, contextualize it for Zambia, and ensure that young people are fully involved in the design and implementation of our programmes.
**SKILLZ PLUS DECENTRALIZATION STRATEGY AND RURAL EXPANSION**

In order to reach greater numbers of adolescents living with HIV in rural areas, GRS initiated a partnership in 2018 with other local community organisations and community-based Ministry of Health structures to expand SKILLZ Plus at the community level and decrease travel distance to health facilities. GRS launched SKILLZ Plus in two rural districts in Eastern Province where SKILLZ Plus interventions and Club meetings are held at community centres (such as schools) and other “health posts.” Utilizing these community ward structures has enabled GRS to integrate SKILLZ Plus Clubs into rural community centres in and out of clinics and align SKILLZ Plus sessions within ward community health workers’ own regularly scheduled ART collection patterns.

**TOTAL HEALTH**

GRS recognize that to deliver on its ambitious growth plans, the best strategy is to scale through partnerships. Thus GRS is committed to building on its extensive experience implementing GRS programmes through NGO and CBO partners and expanding the definition, scope, and type of its strategic partnerships to support programme implementation and resources, advocacy/policy influence, and research. GRS launched its Total Health project in Zambia in 2018. Total Health is a four year project, leveraging the collective impact of multiple donors and partners, to improve adolescent SRHR and increase uptake of high-impact SRHR services. Through our Total Health strategy, GRS aims to actively contribute towards holistic and sustainable health outcomes for adolescents in Zambia across the 3A's.
At Grassroot Soccer Zambia, we are committed to working hand-in-hand with our partners to maximise impact and outcomes. The vision, knowledge, passion, and experience of our peers and supporters are invaluable. Working together, we can ensure that young people have the mentors, information, and health services they need to thrive. Throughout 2018, we participated in the following events and thought leadership initiatives:

**Technical Working Groups:**
- Adolescent Health Technical Working Group
- Eastern and Southern African Commitment Alliance
- Family Planning Technical Working Group
- M & E Technical Working Group
- streetfootballworld Network

**External Presentations/Conferences:**
- PACT Pre-Conference Meeting, International AIDS Society Conference (Amsterdam)
- GRS Pre-Conference Meeting, International AIDS Society Conference (Amsterdam)
- International Conference on Family Planning (Rwanda)
“LEARNING ABOUT HIV IS SOMETHING I APPRECIATE FROM THE GRASSROOT SOCCER INTERVENTIONS, ALL I KNEW IS THE INFORMATION THAT WAS ALWAYS SAID IN OLD POEMS (AIDS IS A KILLER DISEASE), AND NOT THE DEEP INFORMATION ABOUT THE HIV VIRUS, HOW IT IS TRANSMITTED AND HOW CONTRACTING IT CAN BE PREVENTED.”

LINDA HALIZUZI, SKILLZ Core Participant

“TAKING PART IN THE GRASSROOT SOCCER INTERVENTION HAS BEEN SO BENEFICIAL. BEING AROUND FELLOW ADOLESCENTS LIVING WITH HIV AND INTERACTING ON ISSUES AFFECTING US; ADHERENCE AND COPING HELPED ME UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT MY STATUS.”

JAMES NGA’NDU, SKILLZ Plus Former Participant, Current Peer Educator
The work we do at Grassroot Soccer Zambia is powered and uplifted by generous financial support from the following organisations and foundations. Thank you to our 2018 donors!
LIVING THE 3A’s: KAWAMA’S STORY

The reflections below are from Kawama, a Grassroot Soccer Zambia participant who graduated in 2018:

“I have learnt a lot from Grassroot Soccer. I learnt how to overcome my fears, how to disclose my status, and how to be there for people and how to support them.

Grassroot Soccer is more like a home for me – it’s helped me build a future. I would really love it if people would attend Grassroot Soccer programming on a regular basis.

Grassroot Soccer has helped me in understanding adherence in specific ways such as what time to take medications, when to go to the hospital, how to tell people that can support you (and not tell people that can bring you down) – we learned how to disclose your status to people that can actually build your future, not destroy it.

One of the activities I really liked centered around healthy relationships; I learnt how to build a strong and confident relationship. I learnt how to build a relationship based on trust and placing value on differing points of view.

These activities can help you build a future. I got a certificate that I can use to better my resume. I would advise youths that shun such activities to just come through to Grassroot Soccer, because they are actually really helpful. It is not all about you knowing it all, it’s about you learning more. This life is all about knowledge and sharing it with others.”