PARTNERING FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT
2018 ADOLESCENT HEALTH PARTNERSHIP FORUM IN BRIEF
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Grassroot Soccer (GRS) hosted its first Adolescent Health Partnership Forum from 10-12 April 2018 in Soweto, South Africa to harness the power of partnerships, influence the global adolescent health agenda, and achieve collective impact for today’s youth and tomorrow’s future. More than 75 participants from 14 countries and 63 organizations representing government, civil society, academia, private sector and development partners came together to share their knowledge and experiences, participate in GRS’s sport-based and youth-focused learning activities, and discuss how to improve collaboration and deliver better health outcomes for young people. Interactive sessions and lively debates over the three days emphasized the critical importance of integrating approaches and strengthening effective collaboration across issues and sectors.

Three key themes were identified that can support practitioners in their efforts to promote health and well-being for all adolescents and ultimately contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals:

**Theme 1:** Ensure an Adolescent-Centered Approach  
**Theme 2:** Focus on the Partnership as well as the Program  
**Theme 3:** Strengthen Teamwork and Integrate Approaches across Sectors

See highlights from the Forum on [https://youtu.be/akEIUiA6Tmo](https://youtu.be/akEIUiA6Tmo)

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“*It takes a healthy person to change the world*”  
- Zandile Mkhize, Youth Leader

Forum participants take part in an interactive soccer-based activity.
BACKGROUND: THE 3 A’S

Improving the health and well-being of the world’s largest generation of adolescents is fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Indeed, the global development community has made the case for urgent investment in the health and capabilities of the world’s 1.2 billion adolescents—yet in this time of uncertainty and competing global priorities, ensuring effective, efficient and coordinated support is ever more important.

As outlined in Agenda 2030, and the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent Health, concrete commitments and collective action across sectors are needed to harness the power of partnerships and achieve collective rather than isolated impact. Today’s adolescents are the leaders and decision makers of 2030. With support and encouragement from peers and adults, opportunities for growth, and services that respond to their unique health and development needs, adolescents can break long-standing cycles of poverty and inequality. Grassroot Soccer has committed to scaling dramatically over the next five years in order to achieve greater impact and help improve adolescent health outcomes in high-need geographies across the globe. Greater impact will mean reaching more young people, providing highest quality programs, and strengthening linkages across the full health continuum. For Grassroot Soccer, this means ensuring adolescents develop the Assets (knowledge and skills) they need; that they can Access youth friendly services; and that they have the necessary support to Adhere to medicines and adopt health-seeking behaviors over the long term. By leveraging its own unique value proposition, namely the connection and trust that is generated with adolescents through GRS’s 3 C’s Model (Coaches, Curriculum, Culture), and building complementary partnerships to achieve the 3 A’s, the organization seeks to contribute towards sustainable adolescent health and well-being.

GRASSROOT SOCCER’S IMPACT FRAMEWORK: THE 3 A’S

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<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>ACCESS</th>
<th>ADHERENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased health knowledge and confidence to use it</td>
<td>Increased uptake of high quality health services</td>
<td>Adherence to medical treatment, therapy, and healthy behaviors</td>
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Against this background, the 2018 Adolescent Health Partnership Forum hosted by Grassroot Soccer created a space for a broad range of partners and stakeholders, including adolescents themselves, to exchange knowledge and experience – focusing attention on the “how” as well as the “what” – with a goal of enhancing collective action for adolescents.

Dr. Tommy Clark, CEO and Founder of Grassroot Soccer, opened the event: “We are committed to working hand-in-hand with our partners to maximize impact and outcomes. As implementers, policymakers, researchers and funders, your vision, knowledge, passion and experience are invaluable—and sharing best practices amongst us is key to ensuring the health and well-being of young people globally.”

“Sharing best practices amongst us is key to ensuring the health and well-being of young people globally.” - Dr. Tommy Clark

The three-day Partnership Forum was structured around the 3 A’s (Assets, Access and Adherence) and included interactive sessions in various formats which enabled partners to discuss strategies and approaches that have and have not worked to address the unique needs of adolescents and ensure they are empowered, skilled, and able to access and adhere to youth-friendly services.

Throughout the event, however, it was repeatedly emphasized that adolescents cannot do it on their own. On day one, Remmy Shawa of UNESCO’s Regional Office outlined how adolescent health cuts across the Sustainable Development Goals and highlighted the critical importance of an enabling environment in terms of policies and people, noting that “adolescents don’t just need services, they need trained professionals who are non-judgmental”.

“Adolescents don’t just need services, they need trained professionals who are non-judgmental.” - Remmy Shawa

The lively and often frank discussions over the three days coalesced around three key themes that are outlined below and reaffirm the need for practitioners to actively engage adolescents themselves and work more effectively in partnerships across issues and sectors.

Adolescent learners participate in a Grassroot Soccer program in Soweto, South Africa.
Adolescent health and well-being need to be understood holistically, moving from a disease or issue-centered focus to a “kid-centered” approach. The distinct needs of adolescent boys compared to adolescent girls were emphasized and discussed in a socio-ecological context, taking into account that each adolescent is part of a family, school, and community. The levels of violence and poverty that individual adolescents face influence not only their ability to access HIV and SRH services, but also impact on their mental health and ability to perform in school. Hence the meeting participants called for recognition and linkages among all players working with adolescents across government ministries and sectors to ensure a youth-centered and youth-driven approach. To reach adolescents, and especially those most at risk, including gender non-conforming and adolescents living with a disability and/or HIV, it is critical to work with partners and build trusting and supportive relationships that enable a full understanding of the breadth of their lived experiences and perspectives. Dr. Saiqa Mullick of WITS Reproductive Health Institute concluded her presentation on adolescent development by stating “if we are going to make a difference in young people’s health there is no other way than partnering”.

This was underscored by the vibrant Youth Panel on day one where youth leaders described their daily realities and challenges which include financial woes, depression, and concerns about school and career. Even if help is out there, adolescents often lack the confidence to access it, and the panel noted that this is where programs like GRS play an important role. Everyone agreed that adolescents are the future, but as the Youth Panel boldly concluded, “it takes a healthy person to change the world.”
Focus on the Partnership as well as the Program

The importance of building effective partnerships was continually underscored as a fundamental necessity to achieve better outcomes for adolescents and contribute to achievement of the SDGs. The Forum’s day two interactive workshop session on partnering for collective impact also highlighted the challenges and delays that inevitably arise when developing and implementing partnerships, how there is often a misconception on the amount of effort involved to get partnerships to work effectively, and that they require regular and ongoing maintenance and attention. Fostering transparent communication as well as a common understanding of each partner’s unique value proposition were emphasized as critical success factors for partnering. Participants came up with certain key principles to follow in order to ensure not only a successful programme but also a rewarding and sustainable partnership.

The different modes and objectives of partnering were also considered, and participants were encouraged to reflect on how their partnerships fit on a collaboration continuum — moving from philanthropic and transactional to integrative and transformational partnerships, the latter being most time-consuming but also more innovative.

Participants explored tools and engaged in conversations on the types of partnerships along the collaboration continuum, identifying how the context and objectives of the partnership, over both the short and long term, influence how it should be approached, and the level of time and effort it may require at all levels of the organization. Within the context of adolescent health and the SDGs, participants acknowledged the need for collaboration based on comparative advantage and investment in transformational partnerships to achieve collective impact.

**Elements of the Collaboration Continuum**

*Philanthropic* | *Transactional* | *Integrative* | *Transformational*
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(*Austin and Seitanidi, 2012 & The Partnering Initiative*)
Strengthen Teamwork and Integrate Approaches Across Sectors

The importance of engaging with government ministries and fostering cross-sectoral dialogue and influence was highlighted during the lively multisectoral panel on the afternoon of day two. Representatives from Ministries of Education and Health in Zambia and Zimbabwe emphasized their interest and commitment to work with partners more closely to ensure the best outcomes possible for adolescents in their countries.

Day three’s focus on Adherence enabled participants to hear first-hand the needs, challenges and dreams of adolescents who are living with HIV. These powerful insights resonated with all participants and were underscored by the final high-level panel that brought together experienced leaders from the United Nations, private sector, academia, government, sport, and the international NGO world to discuss “hot topics” for adolescent health, and how partnerships can play a role in addressing them. By and large these leaders conveyed their concern that we will only achieve the ambitious global goals and targets related to 90-90-90, Family Planning 2020 and the SDGs if we work better together to engage adolescents themselves, their communities, and elected leaders, and ensure we address their full range of concerns. These concerns span from safety to education, nutrition, and mental health.
“Adolescents want what everyone else wants. We seem to forget that we have been adolescents. We forget they have the same right to health as everyone else...They want security, safety, trust, confidentiality, respect and more—in both health centres and schools” - Catherine Sozi

“Adolescents and young adults today don’t want to be managed, they want to be coached.” - Carl Manser

“This is a human being embedded in a community, in a family, in an environment, and if you don’t make any effort to understand what the issues are that this individual is coming into contact with, you’ll make very little impact on your individual health outcome.” - Dr. Heena Brahmbhatt
Urgent and complex challenges call for transformational solutions. At the 2018 Partnership Forum, participants acknowledged the need to integrate approaches and strengthen collaboration across issues and sectors, taking an “adolescent-centered” approach. The causes of and solutions for social challenges are interdependent and cannot be addressed unless organizations and stakeholders break out of silos.

This powerful takeaway, and the underlying call to engage adolescents more meaningfully and ensure programs and policies meet their current needs, led Grassroot Soccer to focus its recent International AIDS Conference Pre-Conference event on the theme of “demystifying adolescent-centered design”, to make such approaches more accessible and build a critical mass of partners working towards the same aim. The knowledge and experience shared during the Pre-Conference underscored several important points:

- Adolescence is a journey, and it is critical that partners and service providers understand the biological basis for risk-taking and create an environment that takes this into consideration.
- The global health community must put resources behind gender transformative approaches.
- Adolescents must be viewed as partners, not just beneficiaries.
- Innovative approaches, including investment in self testing, are needed to reach men and boys and facilitate their access to health care services.
- Adolescents require differentiated models of prevention, care, treatment and psychosocial support – one size does not fit all.

As Grassroot Soccer embarks on our new scale strategy to address the adolescent health gap, we are taking partnering seriously. Today’s adolescents are the policy and decision-makers of 2030. With competing priorities and limited resources, we recognize that we must learn to partner differently, to leverage each stakeholder’s unique value and achieve sustainable impact towards broader adolescent health and development. The future of our younger generation depends on our collective action today. Thank you for engaging with us to keep adolescents at the center of our work.
The Forum generated a host of recommendations about how to move from insights to action. These are summarized below and will serve to guide Grassroot Soccer's interactions with partners and adolescents themselves going forward.

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<tr>
<th>INSIGHT</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>REMARKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nothing about us without us</td>
<td>Include greater representation of adolescents (not just young adults, and across a range of life experiences) in future forums and across all levels of planning and implementation</td>
<td>“Who should determine what adolescent health services are offered and where those services are located?”</td>
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<td>SDGs are interdependent</td>
<td>Improve partner and intervention mapping to get to transformational partnerships across sectors.</td>
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<td>Leverage partnerships to access and influence funding.</td>
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<td>Engage with the private sector early and often.</td>
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<td>Identify champions &amp; institutionalize effective leadership</td>
<td>Involve key stakeholders from government, civil society, and private sector from the start.</td>
<td>“It should be us designing and Washington refining”</td>
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<td>3A’s &amp; 3C’s as a simple, effective framework for conveying adolescent health partnerships</td>
<td>Use the framework as a concrete way to convey the adolescent health journey to partners and stakeholders.</td>
<td>“We can build young people’s assets through the education system”</td>
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<td>Need for gender-transformative work with adolescent boys and young men</td>
<td>Understand and address conflict between rights and legal frameworks.</td>
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<td>Facilitate open and challenging dialogues on masculinities.</td>
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<td>Consider shorter vs. longer term health gains.</td>
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<td>Importance of citizen engagement</td>
<td>Elect the right people to office; work with partners to create a collective voice and message to influence policy makers.</td>
<td>“You’re fighting with the wrong people – approach decision-makers with a collective voice”</td>
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## From Insights to Action

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<tr>
<td><strong>Adolescent-centered NOT issue-centered programs; their challenges do not exist in a silo</strong></td>
<td>Understand the adolescent brain before you design for it – i.e. age-appropriateness, gender synchronized programs, etc.</td>
<td>“Adolescent development is a journey, not a final destination”</td>
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<td>Stop problematizing AGYW and villainizing ABYM — adolescence is an adventure not a problem</td>
<td>“I’m going to go back to MOE and train teachers differently for mental health issues; focus on the right people in the right place at the right time on the right issues!”</td>
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<td>Engage parents and care-givers; intentional father-son interventions (i.e. braais)</td>
<td>“Don’t reinvent the pie, bake a new one!”</td>
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<td>Design with the Human at the center</td>
<td>“Re: inclusion - do people want to be “included” in the first place?”</td>
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<td>Address gap in religious leadership</td>
<td>“You cannot do SRHR without mental health, substance/alcohol abuse and safety!”</td>
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<td>Maximize adolescents and youth as trendspotters AND trendsetters to stay relevant</td>
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<td>Train and support mentors to engage with and normalize adolescents with disabilities and identify exciting or concerning trends early — this is an identified gap</td>
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<td>Social prescribing — need for community influencers and caregivers to have training on observing social cues as warning signs</td>
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### Design the partnership for the purpose

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<tr>
<td>Identify a few partnerships that have transformative potential, and focus your effort on guiding them along the partnership continuum</td>
<td>“Not all partnerships need to be transformational!”</td>
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<td>Identify your unique value proposition</td>
<td>“The power of shared vocabulary in partnerships”</td>
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<td>Develop exit strategies from the start</td>
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### Data-driven decision making & advocacy in adolescent health partnerships

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<td>Collective partner advocacy, e.g. HIV testing at schools</td>
<td>“Partnering is not always easier than doing it alone”</td>
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<td>Interpret data with youth committees’ and advisory boards’ support.</td>
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Participants in the 2018 Adolescent Health Partnership Forum represented a wide range of expertise, backgrounds, and geographies. Participating organizations included:

Action Aid
Afrika Tikkun
Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo
Amanda Dlamini Girls’ Foundation
Aurum Institute
Baylor College of Medicine Children’s Foundation, Malawi
Biraelat
Bulawayo Project Centre
Centre for Communication Impact
Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia
Concern WorldWide Malawi
Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation
DG Murray Trust
Dominican Republic Education and Mentoring Project
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, Kenya
FHI 360
Ford Foundation
Foundation for Professional Development
Futbol Mas
Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance
Hivos
IBIS Reproductive Health
ICAP
Integrated School Health Policy & Adolescent and Youth Health Policy
Iringa Development of Youth, Disabled and Children Care
John Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health
Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs - Tchova Tchova Communications Programs
Justice Project South Africa
Laureus
Life Health Care
Mothers2Mothers
Partners in Health
PATH Zambia
Project Concern International, Botswana
Peace Corps South Africa
Peace Corps-Office of Global Health and HIV
Philakahle
South African National AIDS Council
Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service
SRHR Africa Trust
Sentebale
Show Me Your Number
Sonke Gender Justice
Soul City
Special Olympics
Special Olympics Nigeria
Special Olympics South Africa
Sports for Social Change Network Southern Africa
Stepping Stones
Swaziland Ministry of Health
UNAIDS - The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID - United States Agency for International Development
University of California Berkeley
Waterberg Welfare Society
Waves 4 Change
WITS Reproductive Health & HIV Institute
World Education
Young1ove
Zambia Ministry of General Education
Zambia Ministry of Health
Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care
Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council
Program Overview

April 10-12, 2018 - Nike Football Centre, Soweto, South Africa

Day 1 - ASSETS: Tuesday April 10

7:00 - 8:00am - Registration

8:00 - 8:30am - Opening and Welcome: Tommy Clark, Founder and CEO Grassroot Soccer

8:30 - 10:00am - Setting the Adolescent Health Scene within the SDGs
  • UNESCO

10:00 - 10:30am - Tea Break & Crossbar Competition

10:30 - 12:00pm - Adolescent Development and Evolution of GRS: 3C’s to 3A’s
  • WITS RHI

12:00 - 1:00pm – Lunch Break

1:00 - 2:40pm - Building the ASSETS of Adolescent Girls and Young Women: Key to Empowerment and ‘Future Planning’
  • Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation
  • Soul City
  • Centre for Communication Impact
  • South African National AIDS Council
  • Mothers2Mothers

2:40 - 3:00pm - Session Demonstrations: Gender Stadium & Soccer Equality

3:00 - 3:30pm - Tea Break & Gallery Walk

3:30 - 5:00pm - Building the ASSETS of Adolescent Boys & Young Men: Key to Engagement and Retention
  • Sonke Gender Justice
  • Aurum Institute
  • WITS Reproductive Health & HIV Institute

Day 2 - ACCESS: Wednesday, April 11

7:00 - 8:00am - Registration

8:00 - 8:30am - Review Day 1, Overview of Day 2, Session Demonstrations: Game Changer & My Community

8:30 - 10:00am - What do we know about partnering? Interactive Session

10:00 - 10:30am - Tea Break & Timed Obstacle Course

10:30 - 12:00pm - Partnering for Collective Impact: Interactive Session

12:00 - 1:00pm – Lunch Break

1:00 - 3:00pm - Innovations and Results from Service Integration Partnerships
  • Special Olympics
  • Waves for Change
  • Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council
3:00 - 3:30pm - Tea Break & Shoot-Out on a Skilled Goalie

3:30 - 5:00pm - Multi-sectoral Partnerships for Impact
  • University of California, Berkeley
  • Zambia Ministry of General Education
  • Zimbabwe Ministry of Health
  • Zambia Ministry of Health
  • Hivos

Day 3 - ADHERENCE: Thursday, April 12

9:00 - 10:00am - Registration

10:00 - 10:30am - Review of Day 2, Overview of Day 3: Methembe Ndlovu, Co-Founder, Grassroot Soccer

10:30 - 12:00pm - Engaging and Supporting ALWHIV
  • Baylor College of Medicine Children’s Foundation, Malawi
  • Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, Kenya
  • ICAP

12:00 - 1:00pm - Lunch Break

1:00 - 2:00pm - Summary Session: From Insights to Action

2:00 - 2:30pm - Tea Break & SKILLZ For Life Demonstration (Special Olympics)

2:30 - 3:30pm - Multisectoral High-level Panel: “Hot Topics in Adolescent Health and Partnering for the Future”
  • Former Banyana Banyana player
  • UNAIDS
  • Life Health Care
  • Ministry of Health, Swaziland
  • Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health
  • FHI 360

3:30 - 4:00pm - Closing Remarks: Tommy Clark, Founder & CEO, Grassroot Soccer
Grassroot Soccer is an adolescent health organization that leverages the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilize youth in developing countries to overcome their greatest health challenges, live healthier, more productive lives, and be agents for change in their communities.