

**SKILLZ Core for
World Education Uganda Bantwana Program
*Grassroot Soccer's Narrative Report***



January 15, 2022 – December 31, 2022

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I. Background

Project Background

The Bantwana Initiative of World Education Inc (WEI/Bantwana), in partnership with Grassroot Soccer (GRS), implemented the Western Uganda Bantwana Project (WUBP) in Western Uganda to reduce sexual and other forms of violence against pre-adolescent and adolescent girls and boys (ages 9-14) by integrating social norms change approaches to prevention and response to sexual violence in schools and communities. WEI/Bantwana utilised the Social Ecological Model, which engages participants at an individual, relationship, community and institutional level to deliver a range of district-specific activities through an “integrated approach”. The project further engaged teachers, children, caregivers and communities to prevent and respond to violence against children in schools and communities in 20 schools across three districts – Kabarole, Kyenjojo and Bunyangabu.

Grassroot Soccer Background

GRS is an adolescent health organisation that uses the power of football to equip young people with the life-saving information, services, and mentorship they need to live healthier lives. GRS's "3 Cs" model trains young adult mentors (Coaches) as community change agents to deliver evidence-based curricula (“SKILLZ”) in a fun and safe environment. GRS's model harnesses the power of sport to build youth SRHR and life skills ASSETS, improve their demand for and ACCESS to youth-friendly services, and promote ADHERENCE to healthy behaviours and prosocial norms.

II. Overview of GRS scope

GRS’s scope was to provide technical assistance to enable WUBP to deliver SKILLZ Core to 3,480 students aged 9-14 across three districts in Western Uganda. GRS’s technical assistance focused on design and delivery. As part of the design, per the request from WUBP, GRS adapted its existing SKILLZ Core program to meet the WUBP objective of addressing violence against children. GRS adapted the curriculum to incorporate content around child sexual abuse and violence against children and adapted monitoring & evaluation tools to ensure they tracked project-specific indicators and outcomes. As part of delivery, GRS trained 31 Coaches to facilitate the SKILLZ Core intervention, scaled up select staff to provide program support and oversee data, and provided ongoing program support as well as periodic M&E analysis and insights.

III. Results

Key results stemming from GRS' technical assistance are highlighted below:

- Curriculum Adaptation
 - GRS reviewed four manuals and feedback from WUBP and integrated the following topics into the SKILLZ Core curriculum:
 - Content on equal opportunities and sexual harassment was incorporated into *Practice 3: Understanding Gender* and *Practice 7: Know Your Status*
 - Content on identifying individuals and structures for support was incorporated into *Practice 7: Know your Status*
 - The Pictures of Violence incorporated into Practice 5: My body is mine
 - Content on preventing teen pregnancies and early marriages was incorporated into Practice 7 and Practice 8: Make your Move
 - Content on preventing, responding and reporting trauma, as well as response and effects of trauma were incorporated into the Training of Coaches' content
- Training
 - GRS trained 31 Coaches and 13 Field Officers in a 5-day Training of Coaches
 - Coach pre/post results demonstrated an overall 12% positive change in knowledge on technical areas within the curriculum
 - Per the training evaluation, 88% of the coaches thought the objectives of the training were very clear and felt that the trainers were also prepared and informed.
 - 94% of participants stated that the quality of trainers was excellent; 86% felt the quality of the curriculum was good to excellent and felt the quality of the training was excellent.
- Implementation:
 - Cohort #1:
 - Graduation rate of 94%, which is higher than the average GRS program graduation rate of 90%.
 - Participants demonstrated a 9% positive change in attitudes across all measured outcomes
 - Participants demonstrated a 63% change in communications outcomes
 - Participants demonstrated a 17% positive change in knowledge around CSA, VAC, and HIV.
 - Cohort #1:
 - Participants showed a 6% change in Attitude, and a 72% change in Communications, meaning that the participants could openly discuss HIV and Violence related issues with either a parent or a peer and a 26% change in knowledge around CSA, VAC, and HIV. Again, the results showed that the SKILLZ Core intervention significantly impacted the knowledge of gender norms and contributed to improved communication and attitudes towards gender norms.

IV. Summary of Deliverables

CSA-Inclusive Material

Work with WUBP staff to customize SKILLZ curricula to include child sexual abuse content

WUBP reviewed SKILLZ Core and proposed potential places where GRS could integrate content from other WUBP manuals. The framework for changes can be found [here](#). GRS reviewed WUBP feedback and identified feasible places to incorporate content without overcrowding the curriculum, ensuring methodology was consistent, and flow was cohesive. A summary of the changes can be found [here](#).

The final curriculum included eight sport-based practices that focused on building life skills, including HIV, and discussing CSA and VAC. GRS also branded the curriculum for the project. A copy of the curriculum framework can be found [here](#) and the curriculum can be found [here](#).

Training

Customize training based on program and participant needs:

To ensure WUBP was able to identify, recruit and select appropriate Coaches for training and implementation, GRS adapted its coach recruitment guide for the project. The guide included various strategies to recruit, interview, and select Coaches. A copy of the recruitment guide can be found [here](#).

Deliver ½ day staff orientation to sensitize selected WUBP staff on the program:

GRS held an orientation to familiarize the WUBP team with the SKILLZ program, integrate the SKILLZ program into the broader WUBP project, and provide an enrollment guide on recruiting participants into the SKILLZ Core curriculum. The orientation covered an overview of SKILLZ, an overview of the SKILLZ Core Curriculum, the roles and responsibilities of the coaches, Coaches' Support visits and GRS's technical supportive role throughout the project cycle.



Deliver 5-day Training of Coaches for 31 WUBP Coaches

GRS delivered a 5-day Training of Coaches for 31 new WUBP Coaches and 13 Field Officers. The training was conducted in July 2022. Coaches and the Field Officers were from three districts - Kabarole, Kyenjojo and Bunyangabu. The training focused on building the capacity of Coaches and project staff around facilitation methodology,

curriculum content, health information, program delivery and M&E tools. GRS Trainers provided the new Coaches and WUBP staff with the skills and knowledge needed to roll out the program. The training was participatory, engaging and focused on building the Coaches' capabilities to facilitate the SKILLZ Core curriculum. The training also capacitated Coaches on how to work effectively with young people, ensured Coaches quality knowledge and understanding of health information within the SKILLZ curriculum, and how to transfer accurate information around HIV/AIDS, SRHR, VAC, CSA, and life skills issues to young people. Life skills training included self-awareness, body language, communication, 3 SKILLZ to say "NO", how to keep oneself and others safe, and access services.

A pre/post challenge was administered to the training participants. The evaluation showed a 12% overall improvement in knowledge levels of the SKILLZ Core content.

However, participants demonstrated a negative change on the statement, "*A boyfriend may have a good reason to hit his girlfriend*". This indicated a need for continued support for coaches, specifically around attitudes toward cultural and gender norms, including violence against women and girls.

A copy of the full Training of Coaches report can be found [here](#).

M&E

Adapted Monitoring and Evaluation Tools and Onboarded WUBP staff

GRS adapted a set of M&E tools (attendance register, pre/post-test, coach support visit, scorecard, and standard operating procedure) to align to project indicators. The PRE-POST Statements were aligned to the curriculum content of CSA. In addition, the attendance registers were aligned with the 8 practices of the curriculum. The scorecard incorporated the District names, the number of practices of the curriculum and the coaches' details. These tools provided a systematic method for collecting data, tracking participant and coach attendance, understanding coach performance, and understanding and analyzing participant knowledge, attitude, and communications changes. The tools were aligned to GRS and WUBP indicators. The aligned tools can be found [here](#).

Train select WUBP staff to conduct routine M&E, Coach Support Visits (CSVs) and manage data flow.

Prior to the Training of Coaches, GRS conducted an M&E orientation with WUBP staff to provide an in-depth understanding of the M&E systems and roles & responsibilities of WUBP and GRS teams. It encompassed the utilization of the tools, roles, and responsibilities for data capture and sharing between organizations and routine data monitoring and analysis that would inform programmatic decisions and further curriculum adaptations where there was a need. The orientation provided an opportunity to discuss strategies for sustaining M&E activities and reporting mechanisms while ensuring data accuracy and timeliness. As a result of this orientation, WUBP staff had a better understanding of the M&E processes that led to effective and efficient data collection processes during the implementation of the project.

In addition to the initial orientation, at the request of WUBP, the GRS M&E team provided additional training on the scorecard to the WUBP M&E team. The goal of the training was to enable the WUBP team to utilize the scorecard to run reports and analyze the data after GRS' period of performance was finished

Run customized reports, analyze findings, and provide detailed feedback to WUBP on program implementation as understood through routine M&E tools outline

Cohort #1

GRS analyzed the routine data collected in attendance registers and pre-post questions shared by the WUBP team to assess program quality and impact. The full report can be found [here](#). Below is a summary of the data report:

- Between July and September, 31 Coaches recruited 411 participants across the three districts in Western Uganda.
- 388 (94%) of the 411 participants graduated, meaning they had attended at least 6 out of 8 sessions of the SKILLZ Core curriculum.
- Participants demonstrated a 9% improvement in attitudes and beliefs regarding gender norms.
- Participants demonstrated a 13% increase in a comprehensive knowledge of HIV, sexual and reproductive health and related services;
- There was a 17% increase in participants who felt they could make their own informed decisions regarding contraceptives, sexual relationships and reproductive healthcare.
- There was an 18% increase in participants who felt supported to overcome challenges they face and make the right adolescent health-related decisions;
- Participants demonstrated a 9% increase in self-efficacy to make good decisions around adolescent health.
- Participants demonstrated an 18% increase in comprehensive knowledge regarding potential areas of violence in their communities and safe routes.
- 12 Coaches were rated as “Needs Improvement” under “sharing accurate information”, and 4 coaches were rated as “Needs Improvement” under “Creates safe space”
- Interventions, where there was a negative change were facilitated by Coaches noted as “Needs Improvement”. This highlights the need for ongoing support and learning for Coaches to ensure they are engaging appropriately with the content

Cohort #2

The full report can be found [here](#).

- Cohort 2 was implemented from October to December 2022.
- 31 coaches implemented 34 interventions, reaching 997 participants, with 996 graduating (99.8% graduation rate).
- Of the 996 graduates, 387(39%) were male, while 609 (61%) were female.
- Participants demonstrated a 6% improvement in attitudes and beliefs regarding gender norms.
- Participants demonstrated a 24% increase in a comprehensive knowledge of HIV, sexual and reproductive health and related services;



- There was a 25% increase in participants who felt they could make their own informed decisions regarding contraceptives, sexual relationships and reproductive healthcare.
- There was a 25% increase in participants who felt supported to overcome challenges they face and make the right adolescent health-related decisions;
- Participants demonstrated an 11% increase in self-efficacy to make good decisions around adolescent health.
- Participants demonstrated a 24% increase in comprehensive knowledge regarding potential areas of violence in their communities and safe routes.
- According to the data received by GRS, Coaches who were rated as “needs improvement” in Cohort #1 did not receive a Coach Support Visit in Cohort #2
- For the pre/post statements “*I wouldn't play sport with someone who has HIV and Statement,*” and “*A boyfriend may have good reason to hit his girlfriend*” showed negative changes. Further probing is needed to understand the cause before taking action. Possible areas include the wording of the statement, Coach beliefs, and/or the need to layer additional activities.

Ongoing Program Support

Coach Support Training

In order to ensure coach support was prioritized, GRS organized a follow-up remote Coach Support Visit training for field officers in August. This enabled the WUBP to support the coaches across the three districts more effectively. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Host bi-weekly check-ins

GRS hosted bi-weekly virtual check-ins with the WUBP team to discuss challenges and share lessons learned. One main challenge was an Ebola outbreak which forced schools to close earlier than expected. However, the early assessments of the outbreak and regular check-ins conducted by GRS and the WUBP team allowed WUBP to continue to implement without large scale interruption. The notes from the calls can be found [here](#).

Program debrief with Field Officers

GRS hosted a virtual check-in with field officers to debrief on the cohort #1 data review report. Through this debrief, GRS was able to gain a better understanding of some of the issues Coaches and field officers face and some of the barriers to successful implementation. After the call, GRS proposed ideas for the field officers and/or GRS to support the Coaches, including learning sessions for the Coaches on gender norms. GRS' contract was not extended, so they could not deliver these sessions. However, GRS is hopeful that the WUBP team will still deliver ongoing learning.

In person program support

GRS was supposed to have an in person trip to conduct Coach Support Visits and deliver coach ongoing learning sessions. However, due to Ebola, that trip was not possible. GRS is still hopeful to visit the program in March/April 2023.

V. Key Learnings

Successes

- Coach Support Visits: The WUBP team conducted coach support visits to all 31 coaches implementing the SKILLZ Core curriculum. This enabled the team to identify challenges around coaches' low confidence levels in discussing SRH and GBV issues. As such, the WUBP team will facilitate a training that will capacitate coaches on facilitating sensitive topics and how they can identify and meaningfully support participants who disclose during the SKILLZ Practices.
- Participants sharing information with community: Regular check-ins with schools' teachers and parents in the community conducted by the WUBP team

showcased the project's positive influence on adolescents. During the project cycle, as reported by the Field Officers, the adolescents increased their awareness of CSA and VAW by sharing the program lessons with the broader community. As reported by the Field Officers, the project enabled the teachers and parents to engage in critical dialogue and discussions about violence prevention with



the adolescents and other community members. Parents and teachers viewed it as an avenue for communities to have critical conversations about violence prevention and increase the general level of awareness regarding CSA and VAW. This positive impact included fostering a safe learning environment in the school and the community

- Increase in reporting abuse: The WUBP team further reported that there had been an increase in the number of adolescents that report abuse due to the information from the curriculum and the support they have received from the Coaches. This increase in reporting these forms of violence is encouraging, as it suggests that the participants feel supported and confident enough to report their experiences. Further, these encouraging results suggest that the WUBP program is achieving its goal of helping young people become better informed about violence prevention and giving them a safe space to talk about it with someone they trust.

Challenges

- Implementation started late due to the longevity of the curriculum review processes. Nevertheless, GRS and the WUBP teams involved in the review recognized the necessity of the changes. They were determined to bring them to fruition with a curriculum that responds to the needs of the adolescents in Uganda. Regardless of this, the WUBP team did tremendously well in the implementation phase, starting with a pilot phase whose results showed

significant improvements in communications and knowledge. The implementation phase was efficiently carried out, and the team worked tirelessly to ensure that all deadlines were met.

- Coaches raised a number of challenges with facilitation and/or implementation during the data review meetings. These included:
 - Challenge #1: Low confidence levels to openly discuss and share sensitive information, especially the activity My Body is Mine.
 - Solution #1: A development session will be conducted with Coaches to train them on how they can facilitate the sessions and how they can refer sensitive issues and disclosures. In addition, the WUBP will continuously support the coaches as they engage the participants, offering feedback on where they could improve.
 - Challenge #2: When translating ad hoc from English to the local language. Rutooro, the key messages were conveyed differently and the content lost its intended meaning.
 - Solution #2: The WUBP will review the curriculum and suggest the terms that can be used in the local language to avoid losing the curriculum's meaning.
 - Challenge #3: Shorter time period is given at school, which made coaches rush sessions.
 - Solution #3: The WUBP team will continue engaging the schools and negotiating for more time to conduct the sessions where possible. In addition, the WUBP team will utilise the community approaches and engage the participants in the community.

VI. Recommendations

The following are recommendations that can support the WUBP team in enhancing the impact of the SKILLZ Core program:

- **Provide ongoing capacity building for Coaches.** This is critical to improving coaches' facilitation skills and confidence skills for the coaches to spark vital conversations in VAC and SRHR.
- **Create a supplemental resource with translated key terminology.** This will prevent any translation issues and diversion from core content.
- **WUBP to share the data review reports with the Coaches** so that they understand their progress, accomplishments and areas for improvement.
- **Document success stories and best practices.** Field officers shared a number of Human-Interest stories during the virtual check-ins. Therefore, there is a need for coaches and field staff to document significant change stories or best practices they can share across school districts and provinces to facilitate exchange learning.

VII. Conclusions

Overall, the adaptation and roll out of SKILLZ Core for the WUBP project was a success. GRS and WUBP worked together collaboratively and iteratively to ensure the curriculum, coach recruitment, M&E tools, and training addressed the overall project outcomes and was responsive to the needs of the participants. There were generally positive pre/post results, indicating knowledge and attitude change amongst participants. Coaches require ongoing support, and there is a need to probe as to the underlying reason for some of the changes within the pre/post. However, GRS is confident in the future of this program and with the dedication of the WUBP team to ensure its continued success. As WUBP continues to deliver the program in 2023, GRS is optimistic that they will continuously rely on program and data reviews to respond to the needs and reduce violence against children in the three districts while identifying ways of strengthening Coaches' capacities in implementing SKILLZ.

