



Engaging Adolescent Boys and Young Men Through Innovative Sport-based Platforms and Methods



2019 State of the Art in Engaging Men in Health and Development: Technical Marketplace

Lessons Learned from key projects with ABYM

Champions League for High-Risk Young Men: GRS engaged unemployed, formerly incarcerated young men (mean age 23 years) in South Africa using male mentors, curriculum-based group learning, and soccer to improve behaviors toward drug and alcohol abuse, sexual behavior, relationships, and violence.

- *Key findings: participants were less likely to test positive for drugs and alcohol, but the program had little to no effect on gender attitudes and justification of violence against female partners.*

SKILLZ Guyz SRHR Intervention for Adolescent Boys: Through lessons from previous work, GRS developed a dedicated program for in-school and out-of-school boys ages 12-19 in Lagos, Nigeria to address harmful gender norms, violence, substance abuse, and increase uptake of health services.

- *Key findings: participants showed significant increases in HIV knowledge, pregnancy and contraception knowledge. Largest changes were found in gender equitable attitudes.*

Delivery through Local Football Associations: GRS recruited younger participants (mean age 14 years) through the existing platform of local soccer leagues in South Africa, and trained existing soccer coaches to facilitate an SRH and life skills intervention.

- *Key findings: participants showed significant improvement in communication about HIV, gender-equitable decision-making in relationships, and knowledge of HIV risk behaviors. With over 3M members in South Africa, local football associations represent an underutilized and potential transformative platform to sustainably reach ABYM at scale.*

Make The Cut VMMC Demand Creation: Developed in 2012 and scaled to eight VMMC priority countries, Make the Cut is a short soccer-based interpersonal intervention facilitated by circumcised “Coaches” aiming to generate demand for VMMC and condoms among males 10-35. GRS conducted RCTs in 2012 and 2014, which indicated increased uptake of VMMC within three months (9x for men 18-35 and 2.5x for boys 13-18).

- *Key findings: Zimbabwe process evaluation indicated the strong impact “Coach’s Story” about circumcision had on influencing decision to circumcise, particularly for older males.*

Design Principles for working with ABYM

- 1 Use Soccer as a Hook and Platform**


Soccer is the world's most universal interest. Roughly 3.5 billion people identify themselves as soccer fans.
- 2 Train Male Mentors that Show Alternative Ways of Being**


Trusted and relatable messengers, mentors and role models are key to motivating ABYM – and the qualities of effective male mentors can be LEARNED
- 3 Create Positive Experiences with Health System in Non-Clinical Settings**


ABYM benefit from opportunities to reflect and ACT – we bridge connections to the health system and help both providers and ABYM connect
- 4 Design for Non-Traditional Champions**


We design materials and programs that work for diverse and often unconventional educators (e.g. soccer coaches) to bring about large scale change
- 5 Transform gender norms**


We use a gender-transformative approach, with intentional designs for engaging both men and women, boys and girls in single and mixed sex programming

Future Directions & Continuing Challenges

Future Plans

- SKILLZ Guyz – Looking to **scale up boys-only program** throughout the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Currently delivering program in Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Nigeria, and 7 countries through partnership with the US Peace Corps.
- Local Football Associations – Looking to build on and research Local Football Associations concept in Soweto, South Africa – plans to explore feasibility of **POC HIV & STI testing, HIVST, and PrEP** through local football structures.
- Make The Cut - Exploring **layering additional high impact services and health messages** into proven VMMC demand creation intervention.
- Champions League – Interested in opportunities to re-package Champions League format for **long-term ART adherence support groups** for young men.

Continuing Challenges

- Balancing donor demands for biomedical outcomes with the reality that many ABYM health-seeking behaviors are linked to underlying norms regarding masculinity that take much longer to change and programmatic timeframes are limited
- Determining how much to invest in gender norms programming for young men 20-35