**Press Release**

**For immediate release**

**Barclays and Grassroot Soccer Celebrate Launch of Skillz for Youth**

*June 8th, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe* – Barclays Bank and Grassroot Soccer launched a usd$300 000, 3-year partnership program in Bulawayo at Mawaba Primary School in Lobengula West on the 8th of June, 2011.

The launch, officiated by The Vice President of Zimbabwe, Honourable John Landa Nkomo, was also attended by Provincial Governor, Cde Cain Mathema, The Managing Director of Barclays Zimbabwe, Mr. George Guvamatanga and other Government dignitaries as well as representatives of Barclays and Grassroot Soccer.

The program entitled “Skillz for Youth” is part of the Barclays Spaces for Sports initiative and aims at harnessing the power of soccer to stop the spread of HIV in Zimbabwe. The partnership also builds self-esteem and self-efficacy of Zimbabwean youth by empowering local role models and increasing community ownership and awareness. With an anticipated direct reach of 16 000 children and an indirectly reach of 100 000, Skillz for Youth is anticipated to positively impact the Bulawayo community.

Vice President Nkomo stated that the Government of Zimbabwe is committed to investing in the future of the youth, particularly through the avenues of education and health. The Honourable Vice President thanked Barclays Bank and Grassroot Soccer for their investment in the youth and commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Managing Director of Barclays Bank Zimbabwe, Mr. George Guvamatanga stated that Barclays is committed to giving back to the communities in which the bank does business in. Said Guvamatanga, “Today marks another exciting chapter in the eventful history of Barclays Bank Zimbabwe. As a Corporate Citizen, Barclays Bank is very eager to be involved in projects that benefit the Community. The Skillz for Youth Project is another way in which we are giving back to the community.”

The Executive Director of Grassroot Soccer Zimbabwe and former Warriors coach, Methembe Ndlovu noted that GRS Zimbabwe trains soccer stars, soccer coaches and peer educators to deliver an interactive HIV prevention curriculum to youth –providing them with the knowledge, skills and support to remain HIV free.

Ndlovu noted that Barclays, having had a presence in Zimbabwe since 1912, has demonstrated its commitment to the community of Zimbabwe for nearly a century. “Their continued efforts through the Barclays Spaces for Sports program will offer an opportunity to bring in more players into football for health and development, hence reaching out to more children who are faced with a plethora of challenges, including vulnerability to HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe.” said Ndlovu.

Skillz for Youth will impact 100 young adult community role models, 16,000 youth program participants, and up to 100,000 community members. The program will begin in Bulawayo initially, with plans to spread to Gweru in 2013. The Grassroot Soccer Skillz curriculum was designed by leading experts in sport, health care, and youth development. Community role models, including professional soccer players and community leaders, will be trained as Barclays Spaces for Sports coaches to implement the lessons.

The curriculum focuses on building the basic life skills of boys and girls through a series of interactive soccer-based activities and discussions. The program is implemented outside the classroom, creating a safe and fun space for vital conversation and active learning. The program will create a lasting and life changing effect in the lives of the youth participants. An exciting and unique addition to the curriculum for Skillz for Youth will be a financial literacy component designed with guidance from Barclays.

**Background Information**

**Barclays Spaces for Sports**

The Barclays Spaces for Sports programme was launched in 2004 and uses the positive power of sport to revitalise disadvantaged communities as well as to tackle key social issues. The programme is part of Barclays’ Global Community Investment strategy and has made significant investments both in the UK and internationally. In the UK, Barclays has invested over £30m in developing 200 physical sports sites across some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country which has been delivered through a very successful partnership with the Football Foundation. These sites are used by nearly 60,000 people every week. In 2008 we began to invest in sport-for-development programmes around the world, and thus far projects have been launched in China, South Africa, Spain, the UK, Zambia and now in Zimbabwe. In addition to these, we plan to launch further projects in India, Hong Kong and the UK later this year. All our programmes are tailored to address the social needs of a specific community; each initiative will use a specifically designed curriculum based on physical activity to help educate the beneficiaries thus enabling them to develop both their social and life skills as well helping them to lead healthier lives. Our vision is to help empower communities through the positive power of sport and to leave a lasting legacy by using a sustainable model which encourages role models to share their knowledge and expertise thereby allowing the positive messages & learnings to spread across communities as a whole.

For more information please refer to our website: <http://group.barclays.com/Citizenship/Community-Investment/Community-programmes/Barclays-Spaces-for-Sports>

**Grassroot Soccer**

Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is a non-profit organization launched in 2002 in Zimbabwe that uses the power of soccer to educate, inspire and empower young people to live healthy and productive lives. GRS has programs in 15 countries around the world with flagship sites in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. GRS believes that despite such difficult circumstances there exists immense potential for youth to engage in a transformational process that will improve their health and well-being and that of their communities. GRS strives to find innovative ways to help youth engage in this process.

**About Barclays:**

Barclays is a major global financial services provider engaged in retail and commercial banking, credit cards, investment banking, wealth management and investment management services, with an extensive international presence in Europe, the USA, Africa and Asia.

With over 300 years of history and expertise in banking, Barclays operates in over 50 countries and employs over 155,000 people.

Barclays moves, lends, invests and protects money for over 48 million customers and clients worldwide.

For further information about Barclays, please visit our website www.barclays.com.,

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