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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"The over-arching goal for evaluation in international development is to foster a transparent, inquisitive and self-critical organisational culture...so we can learn to do better." (DFID, 2005)

Whilst much progress has been made globally in the efforts to prevent HIV, significant challenges remain, especially with regard to reaching adolescents. Coupled with a reduction in funding for HIV work and an increasingly competitive aid environment, providing value for money has never been more critical. Measuring outcomes through robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is now a pre-requisite for most funders (meeting *external* needs), and is vital to ensuring organisations can achieve their objectives (meeting *internal* needs).

This M&E strategy is aligned to Grassroot Soccer's mission and vision. It details the relationship between M&E, programme design, management, grant reporting, research and curriculum development at Grassroot Soccer (GRS). M&E plays a clear role in organisational development with a transparent, participatory and empowering approach to devolving M&E functions across GRS, while ensuring the organisation's signature hallmark of quality is consistent throughout.

This document compliments both Grassroot Soccer's Organisational Strategy and Research Strategy. It is useful internally to ensure a uniform, outcomes-focussed M&E approach, whilst delivering diverse and complex projects. The strategy is valuable externally as evidence of the rigour of M&E at GRS and allows the organisation to showcase its evidence-based approach to others in the field.

BACKGROUND

Grassroot Soccer is an adolescent health organisation that leverages the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilise at-risk youth in developing countries to overcome their greatest health challenges, live healthier, more productive lives, and become agents for change in their communities. GRS has reached over 1,700,000 youth since inception in 2002, both directly or through partners in almost 50 countries. The organisation provides HIV Counselling and Testing to over 20,000 youth per year and employs over 200 community workers who reach around 100,000 youth annually through its youth-focussed interventions. Grassroot Soccer records individual level attendance and knowledge change (through pre-post) among youth and their demographic details, and links youth to a range of interventions over multiple years so that GRS staff can ascertain (any) long-term impact.

GRS invests significant resources into strengthening its results-based M&E system to better measure outputs, outcomes and impact. The organisation uses evidence from the field and its findings, to ensure the team intervenes in an effective, timely and relevant manner. While its M&E system is well-developed, a uniform strategy for business units and partners has not been articulated. This is understandable given the reach of GRS, complexity and diversity of projects, and the healthy tension between the needs of funders, GRS and the communities in which it works.

There is always room for improvement. Grassroot Soccer seeks to strengthen its emphasis on learning and qualitative research, and strives to constantly innovate programmes, ensuring the team includes, listens to and learns from young people throughout. The organisation plans to more deeply analyse routine monitoring data to produce information, knowledge and wisdom, whilst being more selective about what the M&E team monitors and evaluates. While the majority of Grassroot Soccer's work has explored changes in the lives of individuals it serves, the organisation acknowledges that it needs to produce more detailed information exploring changes at the community level (*meso*) and the society level (*macro*). Grassroot Soccer has adapted its organisational strategy to better reflect:

- *A fundamental shift from outputs (graduating young people from its programmes) toward outcomes (measuring the ultimate impact of its work on young people)*
- *A focus on having deeper impact on each individual participant*
- *An awareness that HIV is the organisation's historical core work, but gender, sexual and reproductive health, youth empowerment, and sport for development are vital*
- *A recognition that GRS Coaches are important beneficiaries of its work, as well*

In line with international standards, Grassroot Soccer has shifted from traditional output-based reporting to results-based M&E, to better measure change and understand if, and how, change occurred. The team conducts impact and process evaluations, using both types of indicators to measure change as outlined by Goparaju (2004).

Process Indicators	Change Indicators
Tracking progress in the planning and delivery of project activities – monitoring outputs	Measuring progress towards identified results of project activities – evaluating outcomes
Numerical	Often expressed as a percentage
Collected at regular intervals	Collected at specific time, beginning (formative) or end (summative) of an intervention
e.g. Coach training provided; number of relevant participants attending	e.g. Changes in knowledge, attitudes and communication, increased self-esteem; changed behaviour of participants, etc.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Grassroot Soccer has worked hard to institutionalise an M&E framework within the organisation, utilising these distinct yet complimentary approaches to results-based management.

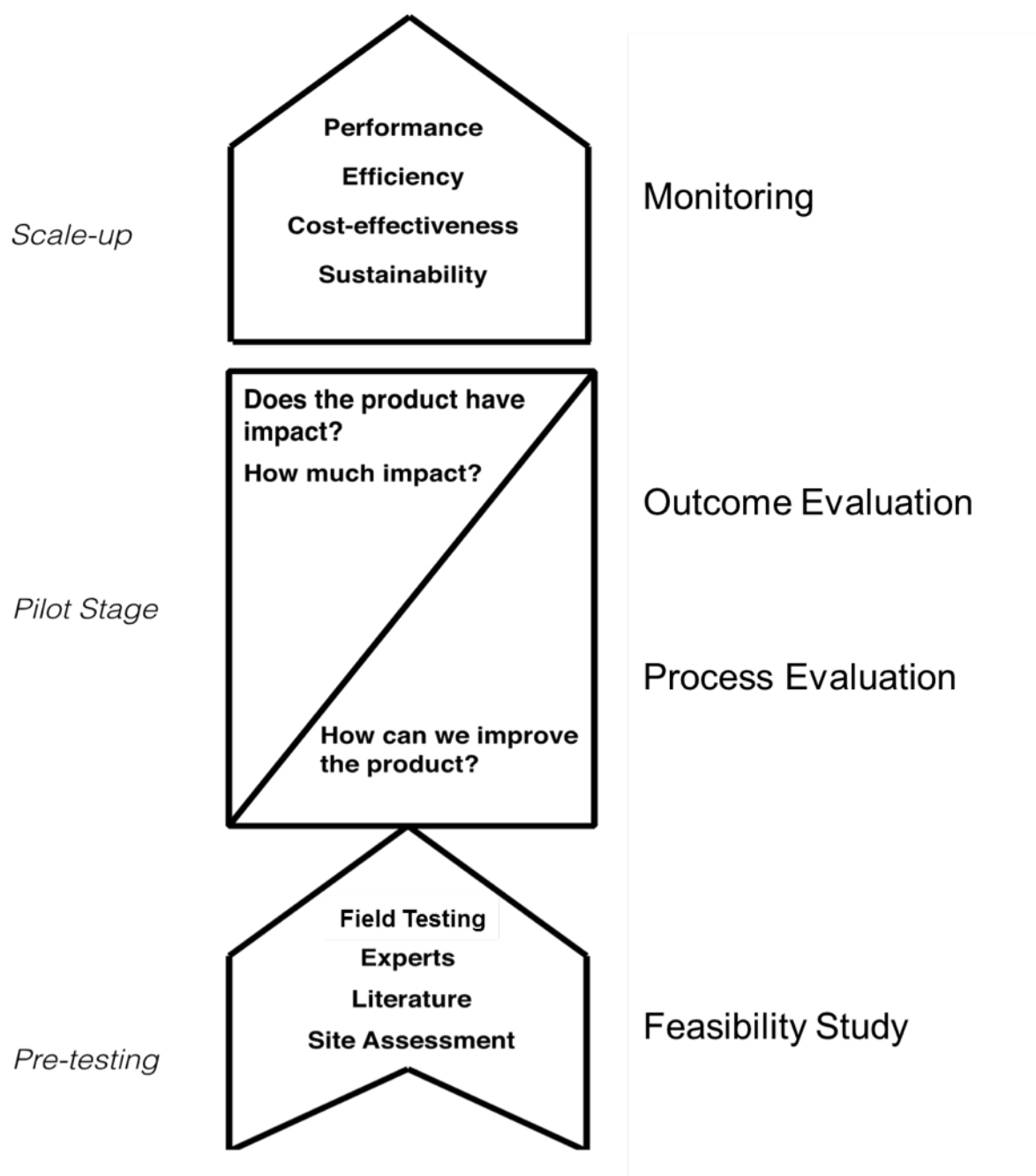
Monitoring	Evaluation
Concerned with efficient use of resources	Concerned with effectiveness of programming
Clarifies programme objectives	Analyses why objectives were or were not achieved
Links activities and resources to objectives	Explores contributions of activities to results
Translates objectives into performance indicators and compares results with targets	Examines implementation process
Routinely collects data on indicators, e.g. individual attendance, knowledge change	Explores unintended results
Reports progress to managers and alerts them to problems and/or opportunities	Provides lessons, highlights accomplishments or potential, offers recommendations for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is GRS doing things right? • Is this expenditure necessary? • Is the organisation getting maximum output from inputs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is GRS doing the right thing? • What were the actual results of the outputs? • How did the organisation achieve (or not achieve) these results?

Monitoring tracks progress routinely and is primarily concerned with *efficiency*. This involves getting maximum value from resources. It is expressed as a ratio of outputs (e.g. people reached) to the inputs (resources such as staff and finance) used to produce them. This input/output relationship should ensure attention is focused on the key products or services.

Effectiveness relates to the achievement of outcomes and is primarily measured with evaluation. Evaluations do not occur routinely and are done at a specific point in time. It is possible for a programme to be cost-efficient (delivering required activities within budget) but have low cost-effectiveness by failing to achieve the desired outcomes.

International development has stressed a move towards outcomes, but outputs are still important. This is relevant to GRS as the organisation seeks to expand its work using an *economy of scale*, which involves achieving quantity and quality with lowest possible cost. For this to occur, robust M&E needs to provide evidence on cost-effective and cost-efficient approaches.

Grassroot Soccer has devised an M&E system to measure direct work in our three affiliates (South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia) and its partnership work which provides technical assistance to implementing partners in almost 50 countries. In taking any model to scale, GRS must therefore balance the need to deliver directly or partner, and to conduct evaluations or monitor routinely. The organisation acknowledges that scale often has an inverse relationship to attribution and measurement. The diagramme below shows how GRS produces proof of concept for its work through pilot studies and robust evaluations, before deciding whether to scale and monitor the work routinely. This guides Grassroot Soccer's work from the pilot phase to scale with M&E playing a vital role throughout.



Grassroot Soccer's model for piloting, monitoring and evaluating new interventions before scale up

M&E IN THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Grassroot Soccer defines research as 'the systematic investigation into programme delivery and impact,' and acknowledges the overlap between M&E and research. Integration between M&E, research and curriculum development is vital to safeguard the relevancy of its results framework.

GRS views M&E as integral to research and development, though the team acknowledges this visual is limited and does not include the multiple feedback loops involved in the organisation's M&E processes. GRS knows that successful M&E depends on a clear results framework. For M&E to be effective it is dependent upon, and must be guided by, a results framework clearly specifying the theories of change for each intervention. These theories must be guided by the organisation's strategic objectives, an integral part in being able to generate relevant indicators for measuring outcomes.

USING EVIDENCE FROM THE FIELD

Grassroot Soccer's programmes respond to needs dictated by *evidence* and to research gaps, strengthening the body of evidence in emerging fields and making a case to influence policies and plans. The organisation uses existing evidence and generate data to ensure its work is informed.

Case Study: GOAL trial

GRS conducted the first ever Randomised Control Trial in the sport for development field at 46 schools in South Africa over three years, collecting baseline, midline and endline data. Baseline results indicate 36% of male trial participants ages 15-16 reported having ever perpetrated physical intimate partner violence (IPV) and 30% of female participants reported having ever experienced IPV (n=4,485 participants). GRS then used the findings to adapt its curricula to include more gender-transformative content and engage with schools, the state and policy makers to mainstream youth-friendly approaches to adolescent health.

GRS identifies outcomes along a continuum of change, aware that it is not the only player in the field and lasting, sustainable impact will be achieved with partners. The organisation recognises that:

- *GRS does not achieve longer-term outcomes or impact alone - it contributes*
- *GRS is committed to outcomes and are willing to adapt its theory of change*
- *GRS recognises outputs are only relevant if they coherently link to outcomes*

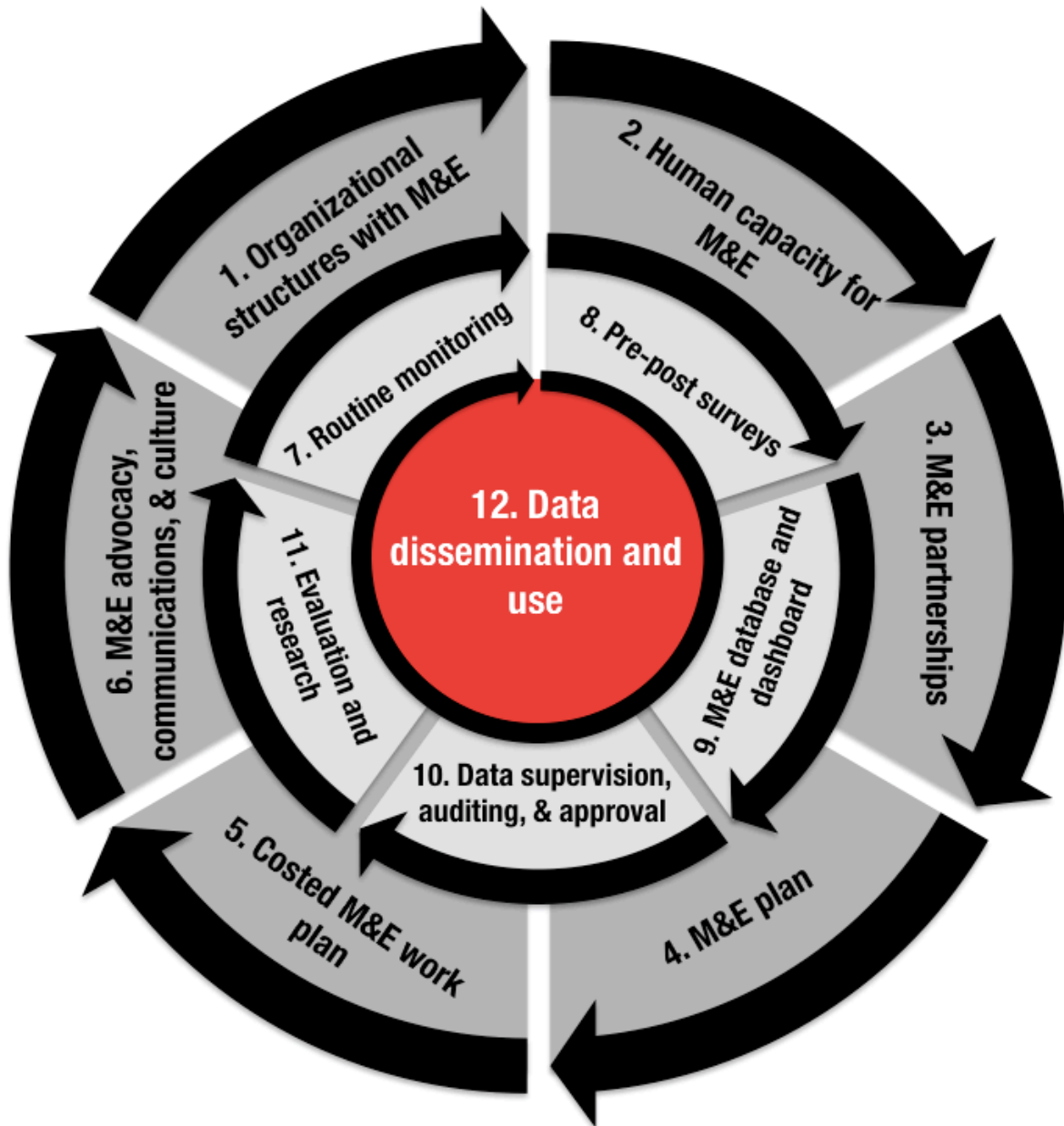
ESTABLISHING A RESULTS-BASED M&E SYSTEM

Designing an integrated and results-based M&E system is essential to supporting Grassroot Soccer's overall strategy and aspirations. M&E functions should support and inform policy, programme and project goals, be sensitive to the various levels of the organisation, and generate information and knowledge for continuous improvement. This system is by definition transparent to all stakeholders, opening up the possibility for increased internal and external support, ultimately leading to the organisation being able to better achieve, and measure, its desired outcomes.

The World Bank (2009) has developed a blueprint of an organisation wide results-based M&E system, adopted by UNAIDS (2008), spanning twelve components across three levels:

1. Constitutes the enabling environment for M&E within the organisation relating to people, partnerships, and planning of M&E, including existing capacity and readiness.
2. Details the approach to M&E of routine data collection, capturing and verification.
3. Refers to utilisation of data to inform decision-making (World Bank, 2009: 7-8).

Perhaps a weakness of the original system is arguably its static depiction of the process, when in reality the various components must be able to move in relation to their surroundings. The figure below illustrates the framework for a results-based M&E system as adapted by Grassroot Soccer ensuring that the M&E team customise international best practice to suit the organisation's unique needs while remaining rigorous.



The 12 components, and three levels, of the results-based M&E system

Grassroot Soccer uses the 12 Components to organise its M&E system in the below ways (World Bank, 2009):

- As an organising framework for thinking about staff, resources, support, and funding required for the M&E system
- As the basis for conducting assessments of the M&E system, including each component
- As a way to develop joint M&E reports or updates on the status of an M&E system, in which each of the components can be reported on
- As a way to establish a clear division of labor at country level and a framework, within which all partners can work together

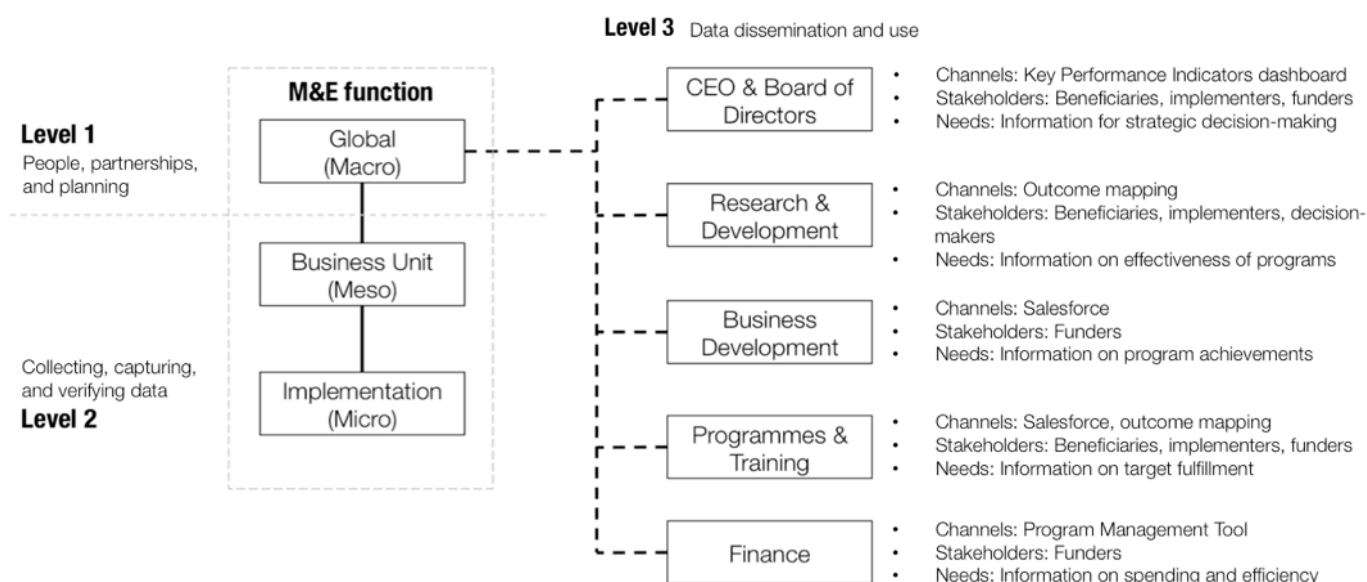
- As a means to develop indicators to measure levels of M&E system operationalisation, and the extent to which each component within the system is operational
- As the basis for job descriptions and building the capacity of staff in Grassroot Soccer's M&E unit, to ensure it has the capacity and competence to focus on all 12 components of the system
- As the basis for a checklist identifying the information requirements which need to be met

MONITORING & EVALUATION AS A CROSSCUTTING FUNCTION

Tying stakeholder groups to the levels of the functional M&E system ensures that each stakeholder is owned and interacts with the relevant part of the M&E function. The logical framework approach (LFA) takes into account four stakeholder groups of interest relevant for M&E (SIDA, 2004). Apart from these four groups, additional groups of stakeholders may be of interest such as policy-makers or other both internal and external stakeholders:

- Beneficiaries & Target Groups: Participants, communities
- Implementers: Site level staff, volunteers, partner organisations
- Decision-makers: Board of directors, senior management, advisory councils
- Funders & Partners: Donors, consortiums

The diagramme below shows how the M&E function interacts with other stakeholders at GRS:



Workflow between Grassroot Soccer's M&E team and other business units within the organisation

Level 1 – Global M&E

The Global M&E function is responsible for maintaining, resourcing and developing the overall M&E system and advocating for and communicating the work of M&E to all units.

Level 2 – Direct implementation and work through partners

The M&E functions on the ground work primarily to operationalise M&E dealing with routine collection, capturing and data verification by implementers and site staff at the micro level. Data is used at the programme management level to identify challenges, pinpoint opportunities for greater impact or expansion, and inform decision-making for programmes.

Level 3 – Global organisation

Finally, data and findings are disseminated to Grassroot Soccer stakeholders in appropriate formats and channels, according to the different needs of each stakeholder. The M&E function primarily interacts with GRS Senior Management, which in turn interacts with external stakeholders.

OUTCOME MAPPING

New Grant Proposal:
Insert Ideal Indicators from Outcome **Bank**
into Results or M&E Framework for Grant



New Grant Begins:
Insert Indicators from Accepted Proposal
or Grant Agreement into Outcome **Map**
for Relevant Business Unit



Grant Ends:
Identify this grant as "Inactive"
on the Outcome **Map**
for Relevant Business Unit



As with large development agencies (e.g. PEPFAR or DFID), Grassroot Soccer has attempted to improve, standardise and streamline its M&E system to better drive towards impact. As a result, the organisation conducted an Outcome Mapping exercise, which reflects the outcomes associated with all GRS grants and programmes. Previously, GRS reported on similar outcomes across units but often used varied indicators and data collection processes, making it difficult to measure outcomes. With an Outcome and Indicator Bank, GRS can aggregate, and compare, outcomes and indicators, across its work within a unified M&E strategy.

Business Development can build new grant frameworks with a set of standardised indicators and outcomes that are widely accepted in the field of public health and aligned to GRS's strategy.

Research & Development can standardise and align results frameworks, outcomes, indicators and data collection tools and procedures.

Programme Design/Management can identify indicators contained in the bank for programme (re)design, adjustment and implementation.

The Outcome Bank is stored centrally online and available to all Grassroot Soccer business units, and is updated routinely to reflect desired outcomes and best practice indicators related to the organisation's objectives.

GRS process to utilise its Outcome and Indicator Bank

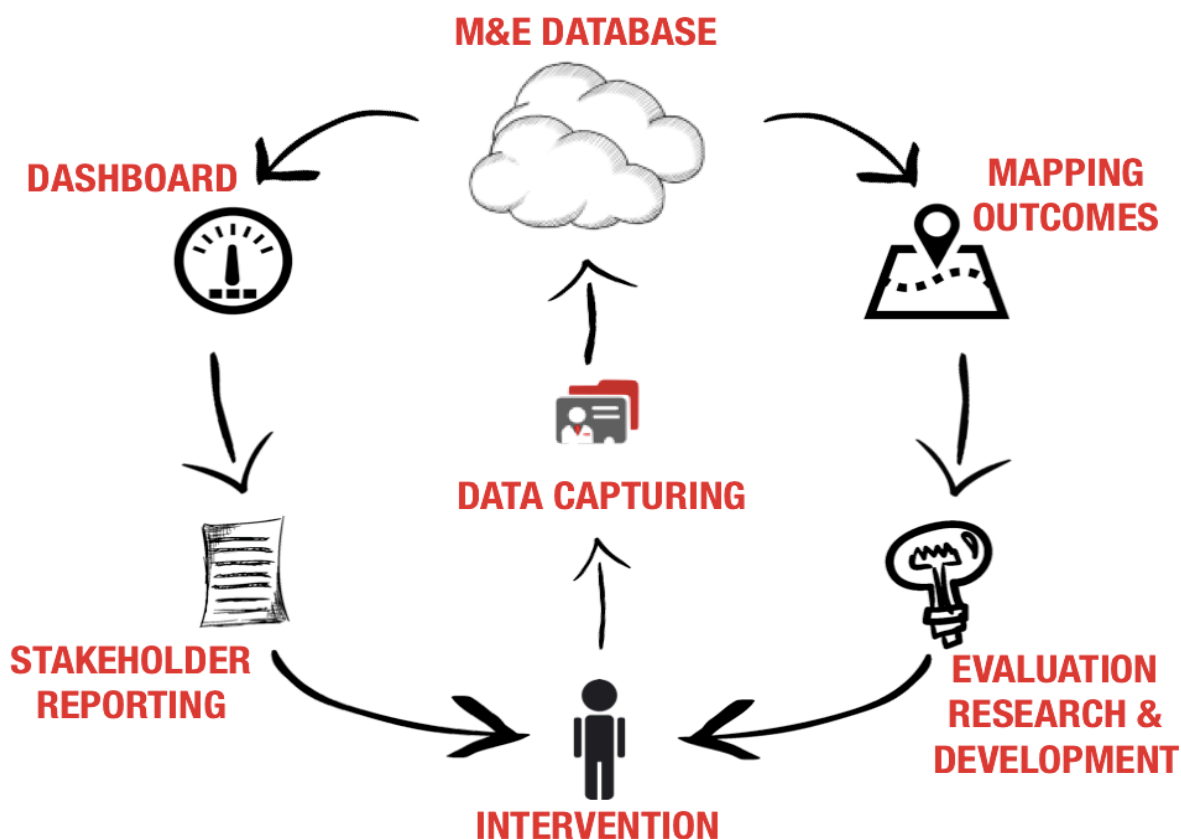
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

GRS reports on a wide range of indicators as reflected in the Outcome Mapping Process. The team has identified ideal indicators related to the outcomes each seeks to achieve and have streamlined this process to produce a smaller set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Grassroot Soccer created a number of goals for its revised KPI process, as seen below:

- The KPIs are a *snapshot* of the work that GRS does, and are not exhaustive.
- They cover a basic spectrum of routine M&E, but do not include specific research studies. *GRS continues to conduct unique evaluations with renowned research institutions.*
- They are *simplified* to show shared outputs and outcomes, aggregated from business units.
- The flow is logical and represents a theory of change, as illustrated in GRS's Impact Model.
- All KPIs are quantitative. GRS regularly conducts qualitative research and provide feedback.
- GRS tracks these KPIs by quarter and year and uses them to benchmark progress, enabling the organisation to set long-term strategic goals and ensure operations align to these goals.

OPERATIONALISING RESULTS-BASED MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Grassroot Soccer's M&E units have developed clear processes to operationalise the collecting, capturing, and verifying of data, which is used to generate knowledge to the organisation's various stakeholders. Its standard operating procedures (SOP) manual details the routine monitoring work and data entry, database management and development, auditing and approval of data shown below.



Data Flow Process at Grassroot Soccer

The process of collecting, capturing, and verifying data is essential, as it feeds the cycle with relevant information for stakeholders both internally and externally. This helps to foster continuous improvement of programmes and outcomes, as well as to enhance decision-making and communication to both internal and external stakeholders.

GRS takes a participatory approach to M&E by involving all levels of staff within the process. Implementers and coordinators at the community level are provided with M&E capacity building and training to ensure they are competent to complete, and be accountable for, their reporting. As GRS views M&E as a crosscutting function, many functions are decentralised, giving implementers and managers control of their data, with various check points built in. Certain functions remain centralised, such as tool development and technical maintenance of Grassroot Soccer’s Salesforce database, but these functions are responsive to the needs of programmes.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Grassroot Soccer uses various data collection methods to measure its intended outcomes. **Quantitative** methods include attendance registers and pre-/post-test, generally 15-statement surveys that measure knowledge, attitudes and communication. GRS’s unique surveys draw on a bank of scientifically valid research scales (e.g. Gender Equitable Men Scale, UNAIDS guidelines). In addition, Grassroot Soccer can provide data services by conducting research on mobile-based applications, a method used with high acceptability amongst adolescents in South Africa (ICTD, 2013). **Qualitative** methods include focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews, participant observation, the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique, as well as participatory audio and video. GRS conducts qualitative research at specific points to complement its routine quantitative monitoring.

All data collection tools are developed and standardised to ensure they capture identified indicators. As far as possible, all tools are customised for entry into the Salesforce portal. Furthermore, GRS routinely conducts Data Quality Assessments, both at ground level and on the Salesforce portal to ensure the integrity, reliability, validity and relevance of all its data.

THE SKILLZ SCOREBOARD



Grassroot Soccer's *SKILLZ Scoreboard* is a cloud-based monitoring and evaluation database that provides secure storage, robust analysis, real-time feedback, and efficient data entry for programmes, across almost 50 countries on six continents. The system is built on Salesforce, a versatile online data storage and analysis platform used by more than 25,000 non-profit organisations worldwide. In 2009, with support from the Salesforce.com Foundation, GRS developed this highly customised system to serve its unique M&E needs.

The *SKILLZ Scoreboard* touches every step of programming, facilitator training and reporting. This enables GRS to capture, centralise and access reliable, real-time information that enhances programme design, strategic planning and operations.

GRS dataflow process begins on the ground. Programme implementers use paper tools to record data on programme quality and progress. Staff then remotely access the *SKILLZ Scoreboard* to enter data directly into the system, using custom pages that mirror the paper tools. Once entered, data immediately becomes accessible to system users who have the information they need to make decisions.

WHY DOES GRASSROOT SOCCER USE THE SKILLZ SCOREBOARD?



Customisability – GRS uses Salesforce's versatility to create a unique monitoring system tailored to the organisation's needs. Staff use an interface that is intuitive, familiar and functional.



Global Access – As the *SKILLZ Scoreboard* is an online platform, GRS staff can enter and access data from anywhere, essential for an organisation with operations in almost 50 countries.



Current Data – The *SKILLZ Scoreboard* updates instantaneously. As soon as data has been entered and approved, it can be accessed throughout the GRS network. This allows staff to make decisions based on real-time information and to report up-to-date figures.



High Quality Data – By empowering programme implementers, Salesforce ensures those with the best knowledge of programming enter data. Built-in checks automatically prevent entry of incomplete data and a multi-level approvals process verifies data accuracy.



Functionality – GRS can analyse data at varying levels of detail from a programmes overview in a country or individual site to individual facilitators, participants and events.



Individualised Support – Each system user has a unique login that allows system administrators to track activity within the system and provide support to users.



Security – Salesforce is a secure system. Grassroot Soccer can trust that its data will not be tampered with or altered by external parties.

DASHBOARDS

Being able to present relevant and accurate information to various stakeholders in a timely fashion is essential for an effective decision-making process, as well as for efficient stakeholder management. The dashboard presents tailored information related to activities, outputs and outcomes across all Grassroot Soccer business units, based on all programmes throughout each year.



Screenshot of Grassroot Soccer's unique Salesforce.com dashboard

THE FINAL WHISTLE

M&E plays a pivotal role at Grassroot Soccer. Its robust system is vital to measuring and improving programmes and allows for more engaged relationships with funders. Further, it provides the organisation with the opportunity to become a thought leader and contributor to the growing base of evidence in the Sport for Development field, such that sport can be used to tackle adolescent health and prevent HIV amongst one of the hardest to reach populations in the world – youth.

Furthermore, GRS has closely linked its M&E to the curriculum design and development process, allowing the organisation to continually refine and innovate its curricula to ensure greater impact. There are clear synergies between M&E and research and development, as Grassroot Soccer continues to conduct, and prioritise, crosscutting and rigorous evaluations. M&E continues to play a crucial role in business development, grant management, programme design and delivery.

Grassroot Soccer's M&E system provides a transparent and accountable medium through which staff, and external stakeholders, can ascertain whether the organisation is meeting outcomes. GRS acknowledges its limitations, and is committed to producing, and measuring, outcomes more regularly at the *meso* and *macro* level. GRS also remain committed to institutionalising M&E within its organisational culture, and to use findings to influence broader Sport for Development and adolescent health sectors. Grassroot Soccer will always be a learning organisation, and while this strategy offers a blueprint, the organisation will continue to monitor, evaluate, innovate and improve its work.

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