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# ANNUAL REPORT

GRASSROOT SOCCER ZIMBABWE



**GRASSROOTSOCCER**  
ZIMBABWE

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# MISSION

Grassroot Soccer Zimbabwe (GRS) is an adolescent health organisation that leverages the power of soccer to educate, inspire, and mobilise young people to overcome their greatest health challenges, live healthier, more productive lives, and be agents for change in their communities.



# EDUCATE

GRS uses soccer-based activities and lively discussions to educate participants on HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-related issues that affect them and their communities.

# INSPIRE

GRS trains young community mentors and leaders, including local professional soccer players, to be health educators and GRS Coaches. Coaches connect personally with participants and become trusted mentors.

# MOBILISE

GRS provides referrals to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and social support for participants who access these services. GRS provides health events, community mobilisation, and other opportunities for young people to access comprehensive health and social services. We provide young people with the life skills they need to break down harmful social norms that negatively impact their health.

# OUR DELIVERY METHOD



## OUR APPROACH:

### 3C'S



#### CURRICULUM

SKILLZ soccer-based health curriculum



#### COACHES

Caring adults and mentors



#### CULTURE

Vital conversation, safe spaces, inspiration, and fun

## OUR IMPACT:

### 3A'S



#### ASSETS

Increased health knowledge and life skills, and the self-confidence to use it



#### ACCESS

Increase uptake of high quality health and social services



#### ADHERENCE

Adherence to medical treatment, therapy and/or healthy behaviors

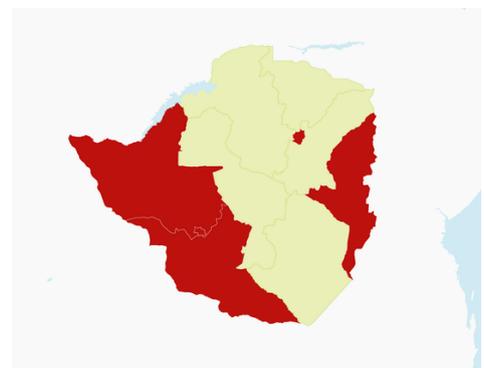


# ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

*GRS Zimbabwe is a registered Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) with the Government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare under (registration number PVO 22/11).*

## GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

While the core of GRS's direct implementation focuses on five provinces (Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Bulawayo, Harare, and Manicaland), GRS has programming experience nationwide through technical assistance support to other local organisations.



## GRS ZIMBABWE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Grassroot Soccer Zimbabwe is proud to have an all-Zimbabwean Board of Directors.*

- Elizabeth Langa
- Sikhanyisile Magagula
- Linda Magwaro
- Cecilia Mudzana
- Themba Ndlovu
- Sihle Ndlovu



"Disclosure was never my thing because I always feared rejection. But after doing the SKILLZ Plus program and the support given to me by my Coach, I got the courage to discuss my status with my partner, who has been very supportive and a great pillar for me."

**Beauty Lunga, Mpilo Young Mothers' Support group**

# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

2020 was a challenging but exciting year for Grassroot Soccer (GRS) Zimbabwe. The year started on a high note in January with the anticipated focus on creating enabling environments and the ever-exciting USAID DREAMS project in Bulawayo and Manicaland. All this was brought to a sudden halt with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in hard lockdowns that paused in-person programming and community gatherings (including SKILLZ Health Events) and resulted in school closures for most of the year.

In spite of the negative impacts of the pandemic, 2020 was a year where the GRS Zimbabwe team exhibited their resilience and ability to adapt in difficult circumstances. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to exacerbate persistent gaps in adolescent health, it also consistently highlights the critical need for GRS's dynamic, adaptable, and youth-powered approach. In response to these challenges, GRS innovated as an organization and came up with programs and products that responded to the restrictions and effects of the pandemic in the near and long term.

For instance, in order to ensure young people had continued access to critical health services throughout the pandemic, we partnered with the Zimbabwe National Family Planning

Council (ZNFPC) to train GRS Coaches to serve as Youth Reproductive Health Assistants (YRHAs). Stationed within their communities, these YRHAs delivered comprehensive, youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information to adolescents.

The GRS team realized the potential for YRHAs to address service gaps exacerbated by COVID-19 and scaled the program to connect more than 6,700 participants to family planning services in 2020. Now, this model will be a critical part of GRS's strategy beyond the pandemic.

## **Bhekimpilo Moyo**

Managing Director

Grassroot Soccer (GRS) Zimbabwe





# PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW

In 2020, as COVID-19 spread in Zimbabwe, the pandemic resulted in a national lockdown, with schools abruptly closed and community projects halted to curb the spread of the virus. Throughout the year, some measures slowly eased, allowing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to work in communities, but schools remained closed or disrupted for the majority of the year.

In this context, Grassroot Soccer (GRS) Zimbabwe focused on adapting its methodology and impact model to provide COVID-19 information and sustained sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) support for young people and their communities. Throughout the year, GRS quickly responded to the needs of adolescents through listening, innovation, and collaboration. None of this could have been achieved without the team of GRS Coaches, along with GRS staff, partners, and funders, who collectively jumped into action to make a difference

## ASSETS

### **SKILLZ Magazines for Remote Implementation**

With changing restrictions around in-person gatherings, GRS scaled its SKILLZ Magazines to make its health curricula more accessible than ever. GRS developed five interactive, age- and gender-segmented “SKILLZ Magazines” – versions of our in-person SKILLZ curricula – to ensure continued engagement with adolescents in their communities and households despite barriers to in-person programming. SKILLZ Magazines are a fun, interactive, and remote resource that use soccer metaphors to communicate comprehensive health information on topics like SRHR, HIV and testing, mental health, and COVID-19. Like GRS’s in-person SKILLZ curricula, SKILLZ Magazines are designed to build young people’s health and life skills assets, improve their demand for and access to youth-friendly services, and promote adherence to treatment and healthy behaviors.

Through this approach, GRS managed to reach 18,185 participants, which was 64% of our total 28,760 participants reached in 2020. Routine monitoring and evaluation data showed a remarkable reported improvement of 35% in knowledge changes through SKILLZ Magazines, similar to GRS’s standard in-person approach.

### **SKILLZ COVID-19 RESPONSE Curriculum**

In April 2020, GRS developed a play-based SKILLZ COVID-19 RESPONSE curriculum to help build resilience among the youth, families, and communities with whom we work. Based on WHO guidelines, the curriculum includes activities on topics like hand washing, mask wearing, debunking myths about COVID-19, and mindfulness, with ongoing updates to include the latest guidance (i.e. vaccine information). To ensure this urgent resource is widely accessible, the curriculum is open source and free to download. Now in its third iteration, the curriculum is a brief, evidence- and play-based COVID-19 prevention and response tool that enables community-based youth mentors (Coaches) and caregivers to easily facilitate fun, simple, and effective sessions with young people (ages 9+).

28,881

YOUTH REACHED  
IN 2020

# PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW CONT.

## ACCESS

### **GRS Coaches as Essential Health Workers**

COVID-19 made it even more difficult for adolescents to access family planning and other health services, and stretched capacity at many clinics to respond to the virus and meet the other needs of the general population. When this happened, GRS Coaches trained as Youth Reproductive Health Assistants (YRHAs) were a vital lifeline between young people and clinics. Originally deployed as part of GRS's flagship Total Health project, Youth Reproductive Health Assistants were classified as essential health workers during lockdowns so that they could move freely to reach young people.

GRS partnered with the Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC) to build a community-based distribution model and train YRHAs aged 18-30, who could reach out to youth to provide SRHR information; counseling on contraceptive options, short-term contraception, and other health products; and referrals for long-acting reversible contraception and other clinic-based services. YRHAs were trained on each contraceptive method (both long and short term), counselling, condom promotion, and core family planning knowledge and skills. YRHAs were mobilized across Bulawayo and continue to serve as a critical resource, providing youth-friendly access to family planning services for adolescents during the pandemic. GRS and ZNFPC would like to increase coverage and train and deploy additional YRHAs.

### **Demand Creation for Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) for Adolescents and Young Men Aged Between 15-29 Years**

In collaboration with Population Services International (PSI) under the USAID Going the Last Mile for the HIV Control Project, GRS delivered its "Make the Cut" curriculum to adolescent boys and young men aged 15-29 years in Bulawayo and Harare to create demand for voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) and condom use and facilitate linkage to clinical services. The 60-90-minute curriculum was composed of the soccer-based activity, "Cut and Cover," which was led by a GRS-trained adult community role model (Coach). A total of 2,732 adolescent boys and young men accessed VMMC and HIV testing services through the project.

## ADHERENCE

### **Promoting Long-Term Adherence to Healthy Behaviours**

GRS supported adolescents through its SKILLZ Teen Clubs, a peer-led approach to promote repeat service uptake and adherence to protective behaviors. Participants were able to go through sessions on HIV prevention and treatment, family planning, STI screening, and HPV vaccination information using participatory methodologies. The SKILLZ Teen Clubs were further used as a tool to encourage adolescents to adhere to long-term healthy protective behaviors and promote repeat uptake of SRHR services among adolescent girls and young women.



# PROGRAMMING OVERVIEW CONT.

## Youth Living with HIV

GRS partnered with the Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care to implement our SKILLZ Plus program for youth living with HIV at local health clinics. Through the SKILLZ Plus program, GRS engaged adolescents living with HIV to participate in discussions about acceptance, disclosure, healthy relationships, positive prevention, mental health, and antiretroviral therapy (ART) adherence. SKILLZ Plus participants met through monthly sport-based, long-term adherence support clubs in groups of 20-25.

## CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

### Parent-to-Child Communication Training

GRS engaged parents and caregivers of adolescents through its Parent-to-Child Communication Training programs. These trainings utilized participatory learning and action methods to facilitate rich and meaningful discussions on adolescent SRHR, including success stories and challenges. The trainings empowered parents and caregivers to support young people with knowledge and life skills on SRHR topics including HIV/AIDS, STIs, the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy, adhering to ART, and positive behaviors. Parents and caregivers were also trained on creating an enabling environment for youth to access comprehensive HIV services without fear of stigma and discrimination, and on solution-focused approaches to offering counsel to young people that require support.

### Community Dialogues

With support from ZNFPC, GRS Coaches served as youth representatives and held dialogues with community members including church leaders, local leaders, parliamentarians, and other elders in the community to address adolescent SRHR and youth-friendly services. The dialogues raised awareness on sexual and reproductive health and enabled participants to take an active role in their communities and social networks in advocating for SRHR and youth issues — such as youth-friendly service provision and support. Small group discussions, reflections, and storytelling were utilized to drive key messages and information, and a youth participation framework ensured that young people were meaningfully engaged and listened to when it came to decision-making about community strategies concerning sexuality and reproductive health.



6,701

PARTICIPANTS WHO  
ACCESSED SRHR SERVICES

20,694

PARTICIPANTS REACHED  
THROUGH SKILLZ MAGAZINES  
AND YRHAS



“Taking my medication was difficult because I had not accepted my status. My Coach was able to visit me at home and I opened up to her, telling her the fears of taking my medication in the presence of my peers and the shame in being HIV positive. She shared her story on how she discovered her positive status and her journey to accept it. I was touched by her experiences and I asked her to continue visiting me. She later visited with a nurse who advised my parents to change my medication times to 7:00 in the morning before going out with friends or going to school. I am slowly accepting my status and taking my medication and living a healthy life. I would also love to join the Coaches and encourage others like me to take their medication and have an undetected viral load.”

**- Queen Zulu, Tshabalala Clinic**

# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

## VUZU RESEARCH

In partnership with AIDS Healthcare Foundation and young people, GRS conducted a study to explore and describe the underlying factors that lead adolescents to participate in the “Vuzu party” phenomenon (secretive gatherings involving risky behaviours such as drugs and alcohol consumption and sex often without condoms).

A total of 122 young people between ages 15-24 were recruited into the study. Other participants included 19 key stakeholders from NGOs, government departments, and the City of Bulawayo, as well as influential people in the community. The research highlighted that many young people were motivated to attend Vuzu parties by peer influence, seeking outlets to relieve stress, and wanting to socialize with their peers. Furthermore, these parties offered them the opportunity to engage in sexual activity, and some young people used the parties to earn money either by selling drugs or sex work.

Young people recommend that parents, older residents, police, and church leaders should lead a campaign to address Vuzu parties, with religious leaders providing spiritual guidance to young people as well. Using the police to suppress such parties could potentially save a lot of young people from the disastrous effects of Vuzu parties. Other young people requested risk reduction approaches to Vuzu parties, making them safer places with condoms readily available, which would make these parties ‘cooler’ spaces to ‘chill.’ Young people further suggested that such parties change venues from secretive to public places, and from nights to afternoons.

Moreover, identifying potential champions who are empowered in SRHR and can relate to other young people, like a GRS Coach, would go a long way in guiding other young people. Engaging young people in livelihood skills will keep them off Vuzu parties, while parents that enjoy a good relationship with their children will be better safeguarded against such parties.

These research efforts responded to an identified need in Zimbabwe, with many government officials, civil service organizations, and NGOs calling for a raise of awareness regarding Vuzu parties and how they can lead to negative health outcomes for adolescents.

## TOTAL HEALTH EVALUATION

GRS has been working on a longitudinal study of the 'Total Health' approach in Zambia and Zimbabwe since 2018. In this study, supported by the Vitol Foundation, GRS has followed the same cohort of adolescents as they go through three consecutive SKILLZ interventions: SKILLZ Core, SKILLZ Girl/Boy, and SKILLZ Teen CLub. This mixed methods evaluation aims to evaluate the cumulative effects of multiple SKILLZ interventions, a first for GRS, and will conclude in late 2021. Data collection includes quantitative surveys and in-depth interviews with SKILLZ participants and focus group discussions with teachers and adults in the communities. The evaluation will include data collection on GRS Zimbabwe's adapted programming during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as data on service provision by the YRHAs.



# TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

- ASRH Forum
- Family Planning Forum
- Referral Working Group
- International Youth Network
- Provincial Development Committee
- Young People, HIV and AIDS / Young People's Network
- NAC Monitoring and Evaluation Task Force
- MOE: Life Skills, Sexuality and HIV and AIDS Education TWG
- Rural District Council Social Services Committee
- Rural District Development Committee
- DREAMS Referral Working Group
- Provincial AIDS Action Committee
- District AIDS Action Committee
- NAC Mitigation Task Force
- NAC Prevention Task Force
- Provincial and National Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health Forum

# PRESENTATIONS

## **Better, cheaper, more effective: Using a Rapid Cycle Improvement Model to Improve Implementation and Outcomes on Sport-Based VMMC Demand Creation in Zimbabwe**

Presented at the Fourth International Workshop on HIV & Adolescence



## A GRS ZIMBABWE SUCCESS STORY: MEET THUBELIHLE

When the weight of the pandemic strained Zimbabwe's health systems, adolescents' access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services and information became even more limited. To address these heightened barriers, a number of GRS-Zimbabwe Coaches received training to serve as Youth Reproductive Health Assistants (YRHAs). Stationed within their communities, YRHAs deliver comprehensive, youth-friendly SRHR information to adolescents; offer counseling on contraceptive options; provide short-term contraception and other health products; and facilitate referrals to long-acting reversible contraception (LARCs) and other clinic-based services.

One such YRHA who has continued to engage adolescents during the pandemic is Thubelihle, a 27-year-old GRS Coach from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. When Thubelihle was a teenager, a lack of SRHR information and access to family-planning resources contributed to an unplanned pregnancy, which caused her to drop out of school. "This was the story of my life," said Thubelihle, who then focused on sharing her story with young people in her community, "hoping they would not make the mistake that I had."

After joining GRS Zimbabwe as a Coach, Thubelihle had the chance to train as a YRHA and jumped at the opportunity to bring crucial SRHR information to a wider network of young people, parents, and community leaders.

"Lack of information has always driven us young people to make the ill-informed decision, and I am glad that I am only a stone's throw away from many young people," Thubelihle said. "[As a YRHA], I can easily provide them with information and facilitate access to [contraceptives]...I am now a game-changer in my community [and] the youths are now able to access family planning methods without being judged."

Through training GRS Coaches as YRHAs, GRS Zimbabwe is helping strengthen communities' capacity to provide services to young people and create safe spaces for openly discussing social norms and taboos around gender, sexuality, and SRHR. In particular, the success of training Coaches as frontline health workers demonstrates how bringing SRHR out of health facilities, away from overburdened community health workers, and into communities in youth-friendly ways can have a meaningful impact on young people.

**"[I'm] creating a supportive environment for young people to reach their full potential," said Norleen, another YRHA. "Bringing positive change in people's lives is one of the best things that ever happened to me."**

# A LOOK AHEAD: 2021 OUTLOOK

Building on the hard work and achievements throughout 2020, GRS Zimbabwe will seek to consolidate the momentum of the success of the SKILLZ Magazine and YRHA models in 2021.

To date, GRS has developed five brands of Magazines:

- SKILLZ Core (for ages 10-14)
- SKILLZ Girl (for ages 15-19)
- SKILLZ Boy (for ages 15-19)
- Two editions of SKILLZ Plus for HIV-positive youth (one for ages 10-14, one for 15-24)

In 2021, GRS looks forward to finalising the Magazine for SKILLZ Teen Club, which will seek to establish continuous positive adherence clubs after the initial GRS SKILLZ Programs. GRS will partner with key stakeholders, including the government through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and funders, to scale up adoption and distribution of SKILLZ Magazines to many adolescents in Zimbabwe, both in and out of schools.

During the delivery of SKILLZ Magazines, GRS noted remarkable interest in the Magazine by parents and guardians, including interest in how the Magazine opened up conversation between parents and their children on SRHR issues. GRS will build on this to further strengthen our approach of creating an enabling environment for adolescents by conducting more parent-to-child communication trainings, community dialogues, and trainings of community cadres as SRHR champions who advocate for adolescents in their communities to have easy and comfortable access to SRHR services.

GRS will also focus on training and mobilizing more Coaches as YRHAs and at the same time work on collecting evidence on the effectiveness of this model through an external evaluation.





# OUR SUPPORTERS



# AUDITED FINANCIALS

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b><u>USD</u></b>	<b><u>USD</u></b>
<b>PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET</b>	<b>33,151</b>	<b>24,589</b>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Accounts Receivable	46,828	13,952
Other assets	3,534	3,700
Cash and equivalents	<u>23,937</u>	<u>28,086</u>
Total current assets	74,299	45,738
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>107,450</b>	<b>70,327</b>

## EQUITY AND LIABILITIES

### EQUITY

Capital reserve	6,348	6,348
Retained earnings	<u>4,620</u>	<u>(28,835)</u>
<b>Total accumulated fund</b>	<b>10,968</b>	<b>(22,487)</b>

### LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	8,040	9,146
Accrued salaries and leave pay	10,540	11,523
Due to related party	31,842	70,052
Deferred revenue	<u>46,060</u>	<u>2,093</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>96,482</b>	<b>92,814</b>

<b>TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>107,450</b>	<b>70,327</b>
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## STATEMENT OF INCOME

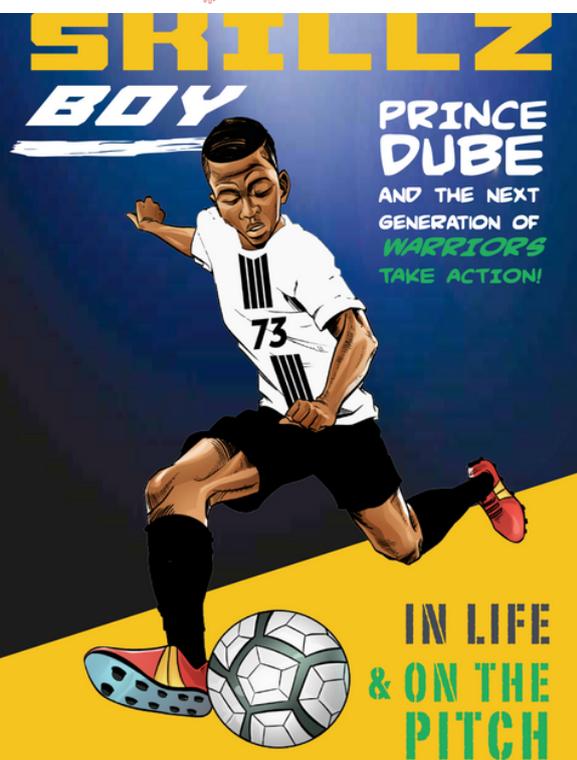
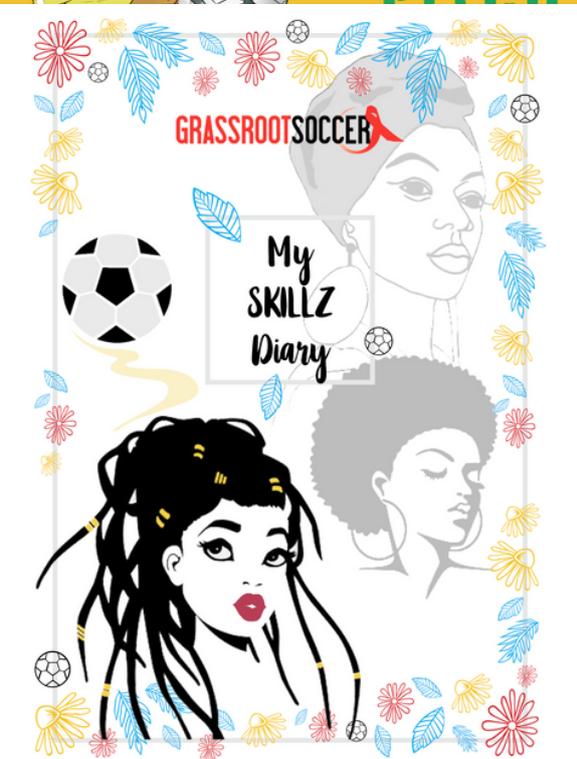
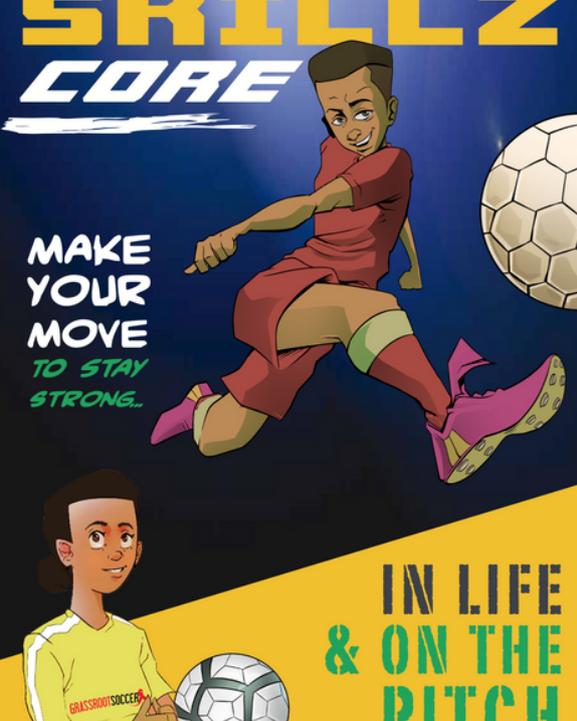
Grant income	477,358	509,557
Contribution income	154,298	130,376
Other income	287	3,704
Operating expenses	<u>(598,499)</u>	<u>(639,230)</u>

<b>TOTAL SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>33,455</b>	<b>4,407</b>
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	<b>Capital Reserve</b>	<b>Retained Earnings</b>	<b>Total Equity</b>
	<b><u>USD</u></b>	<b><u>USD</u></b>	<b><u>USD</u></b>
<b>STATEMENTS OF CHANGES IN EQUITY</b>			
<b>Balance, at January 1, 2019</b>	<b>6,384</b>	<b>(33,242)</b>	<b>(26,894)</b>
Net income for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>4,407</u>	<u>4,407</u>
<b>Balance, at December 31, 2019</b>	<b>6,384</b>	<b>(28,835)</b>	<b>(22,487)</b>
Net income for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>33,455</u>	<u>33,455</u>
<b>BALANCE, AT DECEMBER 31, 2020</b>	<b>6,384</b>	<b>4,620</b>	<b>10,968</b>

# AUDITED FINANCIALS (CONT.)

	<b>2020</b> <b><u>USD</u></b>	<b>2019</b> <b><u>USD</u></b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>Net income for the year</b>	<b>33,455</b>	<b>4,407</b>
Adjustments to reconcile net income to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	8,361	7,365
(Increase) decrease in:		
Accounts receivable	(32,876)	(1,147)
Other assets	166	(438)
(Decrease) increase in:		
Accounts payable	(1,105)	688
Accrued salaries and leave pay	(983)	(870)
Due to related party	(38,210)	(10,133)
Deferred revenue	<u>43,967</u>	<u>(7,342)</u>
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b><u>12,775</u></b>	<b><u>12,796</u></b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Purchase of property and equipment	<u>(16,924)</u>	<u>(13,086)</u>
<b>Net cash used by investing activities</b>	<b><u>(16,924)</u></b>	<b><u>(13,086)</u></b>
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(4,149)	(290)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	<u>28,086</u>	28,376
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b><u>23,937</u></b>	<b><u>28,086</u></b>



“The [SKILLZ Magazine] is more of a diary for me. I am able to write about how I feel and how I need to deal with negative feelings. I keep the Magazine in my bag and use it as a reference when we discuss girly stuff.

With being empowered comes the confidence to access [sexual and reproductive health] services. Fortunately for me, I am able to access my services from a Coach who lives closer to my place, and I can discuss issues with her in confidence, as I know that she understands and can relate to what I go through.”

- Zanele Dube, Masotsha High School



# GRASSROOTSOCCER



## ZIMBABWE

## CONTACT US

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