

GRASSROOTSOCCER 



Annual Report **2022**



Playing for *Life*

Grassroot Soccer uses the power of soccer to equip young people with the life-saving health information, services, and mentorship they need to thrive.



Letter from CEO & Founder Tommy Clark

Dear Friends,

2022 was a milestone year for Grassroot Soccer (GRS): our 20th anniversary. Twenty years is a humbling feat for any organization, and I'm especially proud of GRS's impact on the young people we serve, and on the broader field of adolescent health.

Endorsed by global health leaders and world health organizations, and adopted by national governments, the GRS model is saving lives while fundamentally changing how the world engages, teaches, and empowers young people around their health.

At the heart of all of our work continues to be a core element: **fun**. Too often, the importance of fun is overlooked when it comes to working with youth, especially around difficult topics. Fun is what keeps young people engaged, it makes them want to show up, and it makes key information stick. Since day one, GRS has understood that fun is not just a nice-to-have in our programs — **it is a necessity**.

20 Years of Impact

When I founded GRS during the height of the AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa, it was with the conviction that soccer could be harnessed to engage young people to stop the spread of HIV and build healthier communities. Since then, GRS has evolved from a disease focus to an integrated adolescent health focus, using soccer to empower young people to overcome their most pressing and interconnected health challenges

in areas such as sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and mental health.

As we celebrated our 20th anniversary throughout 2022, I found myself reflecting on how our organization has evolved from a bold idea into real impact:

- ▶ GRS has gone from reaching 1,500 youth with our first program in Zimbabwe to equipping **more than 18 million young people across 60+ countries** with life-saving health information, services, and mentorship.
- ▶ GRS's initial cohort of 14 trained Coaches is now a **global network more than 13,000 Coaches strong**.
- ▶ Today, GRS participants are 3x more likely to test for HIV and get on treatment, resulting in **20x fewer new HIV infections**; while girl participants are 2x more likely to use modern contraception, resulting in **2.3x fewer unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and maternal deaths**.

We've achieved this level of impact not by chance, but through developing a **signature approach to adolescent behavior change**, continuously improving through a **dedication to research and evaluation**, and building a vast **network of local partners around the globe** that brings our programs to far more youth than we could ever reach on our own.



Looking Ahead

In 2022, GRS continued building on our strengths; innovating in how we engage young people, such as through bringing our curricula to youth using digital platforms; strengthening our relationships with existing partners while forming new ones to scale our efforts; and continuing to rigorously question, measure, and evaluate what we are doing to ensure we are effective in driving proven impact.

Our work isn't done. Given the enormous and growing demand, we are only scratching the surface of what's needed to ensure a healthy future for the next generation and the planet. I'm excited about our next chapter and, together with our global GRS community, achieving our most ambitious impact yet.

Thank You

I invite you to read more about GRS's work and impact in 2022 in this Annual Report.

All that GRS achieved in 2022, and over the entirety of our 20 years, is thanks to our global community of partners and supporters. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to working with us to equip young people with the health information and life skills they need to reach their fullest potential.

With appreciation,

Thomas S. Clark, MD
CEO & Founder

Our Mission

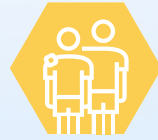
Grassroot Soccer is an adolescent health organization that leverages the power of soccer to equip young people with the life-saving information, services, and mentorship they need to live healthier lives.

3C's OUR MODEL



Curriculum

Our Curricula are activity-based and provide accurate and actionable health information.



Coaches

Our Coaches care about and connect with adolescents so that they are inspired to take action.



Culture

Our Culture creates a fun and safe environment that is optimal for engaging young people around the most important, difficult, and often taboo health topics.

3A's OUR IMPACT



Assets

We build Assets (health knowledge and the confidence to use it).



Access

We improve Access to high-quality health services.



Adherence

We increase Adherence to crucial treatments and healthy behaviors.



The Challenge

By 2050, sub-Saharan Africa is projected to have more adolescents than any other region, and those adolescents face nearly 10x the risk of death as their peers in high-income countries (WHO).

- ▶ **HIV/AIDS** continues to be a leading cause of death among all adolescents in Africa (Avert).
- ▶ **Pregnancy and childbirth** are the leading cause of death among teen girls in Africa (Avert).
- ▶ Thirty percent of adolescent girls report being victims of **sexual violence**, and the actual number is estimated much higher (Avert).
- ▶ Sub-Saharan Africa has a higher prevalence of **mental health conditions** yet fewer resources for mental health care than other parts of the world, meaning that more than 90% of young people in need of mental health services in the region will never receive them (University of Cape Town).

These challenges are not only acute, but interconnected. For example, poor mental health and sexual and reproductive health are inherently linked. Mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression can result from concurrent or past sexual and reproductive health challenges, including HIV/AIDS, and vice versa. **People with mental health challenges are 4-10x more at risk of acquiring HIV and depression is 2-3x more common in people living with HIV (AIDS).**

That's why Grassroot Soccer takes an **integrated approach** to adolescent health, equipping young people with the knowledge, life skills, and access to services they need to navigate their most pressing and interrelated health challenges.

“Having a SKILLZ Coach made me feel like I mattered.”

Mthokozisi
Former Participant and Coach
ZIMBABWE



Impact & Reach

“Through the lessons Grassroot Soccer gave me, I learned that I cannot reach my goals without protecting myself...I am what I am today because of those programs.”

- Nkosikhona, Visual Artist and Former Participant, Zimbabwe

In 2022, Grassroot Soccer reached more than

4.2 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE

with health and life skills programs and services through our unique in-person SKILLZ interventions, digital platforms, and SKILLZ Magazines.



Program Highlights

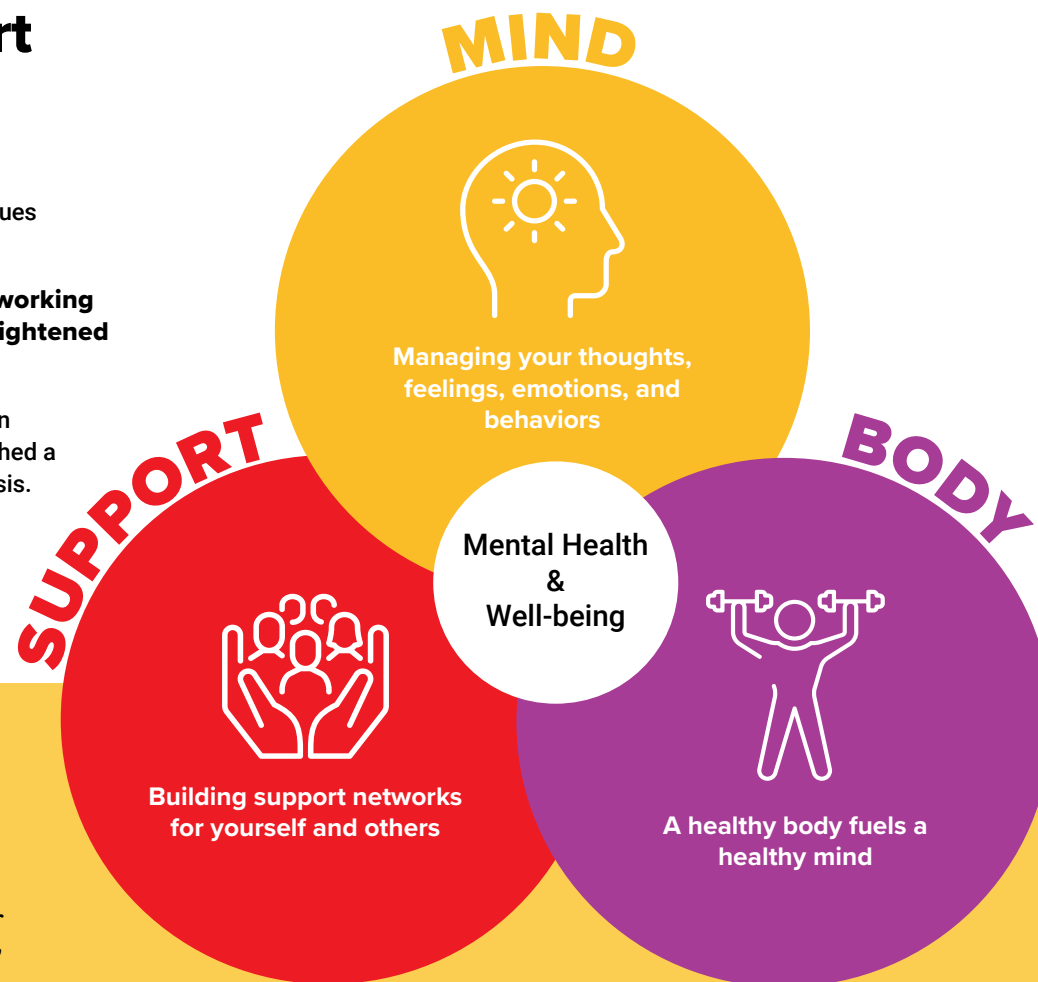
Equipping Adolescents with the Support and Skills for *Improved Mental Health*

Mental health is integral to adolescents' overall health outcomes and affects other acute health issues including sexual and reproductive health (SRH), gender-based violence, and HIV.

As part of its integrated approach to adolescent health, Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is working to improve the mental health and well-being of young people in communities at heightened risk of poor mental health and with limited access to information and services.

In 2022, in partnership with leading institutions including USAID, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), Comic Relief, LVCT Health, and Ministries of Health in Mozambique and Kenya, GRS launched a comprehensive mental health initiative to tackle the growing global adolescent mental health crisis.

GRS's model, based on input from world-leading mental health professionals and over 20 years of experience working with adolescents, improves young people's mental health and well-being through a **resilient mind, healthy body, and strong support network**.



“My Grassroot Soccer Coaches have offered me love and care from day one. Their influence is being a better version of myself in everything I do.”

Kamogelo

Participant

SOUTH AFRICA

In 2022, Grassroot Soccer

- ▶ Initiated mental health partnerships in **5 countries** (Kenya, Mozambique, Scotland, South Africa, and Zambia)
- ▶ Launched and tested **MindSKILLZ**, GRS's signature adolescent mental health promotion program, as well as integrated basic mental health promotion content into its foundational adolescent health programs (SKILLZ)
- ▶ Secured strategic partnerships with the **Ministries of Health** in Mozambique and Kenya to co-develop and scale MindSKILLZ through schools, communities, and health systems

MIND SKILLZ



“When I first started attending Grassroot Soccer sessions, I loved the safe and open environment. There, no one would point fingers at me over my status or how I have HIV at this age. I felt like I became a different person after losing myself when I found out about my HIV status; **I felt like I was reborn because of Grassroot Soccer.**”

Mercy
Participant
ZAMBIA



Impact on Adolescents’ Mental Health

Grassroot Soccer is employing its 3 C’s model to equip adolescents with three critical factors for improved mental health: a resilient mind, healthy body, and strong support network.

96%

reduction in clinically significant depression symptoms

GRS achieved a 96% reduction in clinically significant depression symptoms amongst youth living with HIV who completed GRS’s Coach-led group therapy in Zambia.

93%

of participants viewed GRS’s MindSKILLZ Magazine as a good educational tool

93% of participants viewed GRS’s MindSKILLZ Magazine as a good educational tool to learn about mental health in Zambia.

24%

more likely to identify local sources of mental health support

After completing GRS’s new mental health-enhanced sexual and reproductive health program in South Africa, female program participants were 24% more likely to identify local sources of support for challenges with mental health and alcohol.

“ [My Coach] and the group gave me a lot of confidence about living with HIV. I have friends and a Coach who are just like me and have shown me that I can live with the virus. I weighed the challenges I face, and with the help of my group, **I came up with solutions to better cope with my condition** and an adherence plan. Learning soccer made it fun and relatable.

- Participant Living with HIV, Zambia



Partnering for Impact

Throughout

2022

GRS COLLABORATED WITH
PARTNERS IN

21 COUNTRIES

Over its two decades, Grassroot Soccer (GRS) has built a unique and strong network of partners around the globe that includes community-based organizations, national and local governments, international NGOs, and football clubs and stars. As a technical assistance provider, GRS trains partners to effectively deliver its programs, giving the signature SKILLZ methodology dramatically broader reach. Since local partners know their communities best, this approach to partnership allows GRS to learn from and incorporate local institutions, knowledge, and talent into its programs, ensuring that impact is deep and sustainable.



Locations

This map shows the countries where GRS collaborated with partners for impact in 2022.



2022 World AIDS Day Gala

**\$1.9
MILLION**
raised for Grassroot
Soccer programs



Tobin Heath

“Football is one of the best vehicles for change in the world, especially for adolescent girls.”

Tobin Heath
2x World Cup Winner



Fiona Ferguson & Susan Sarandon

“Any time you have something that transcends language barriers and everybody can talk about it and enjoy it, it becomes a tool for you to help address more important issues.”

Seth Meyers
Award-Winning Writer and Late Night Host



Seth Meyers



Ethan Zohn



Christen Press

“What Grassroot Soccer has been doing for the last 20 years is absolutely unbelievable – the lives they’re changing, the community they’re building, the impact they’re making.”

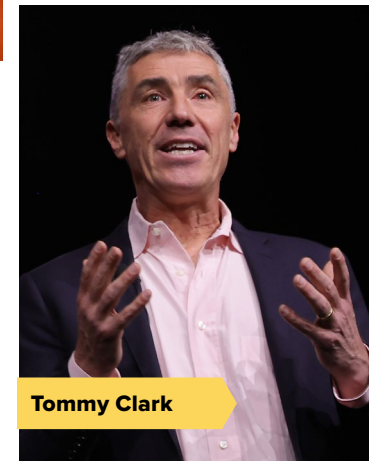
Julie Uhrman
Angel City FC Founder and President; Winner of 2022 GRS Game Changer Award



Julie Uhrman

“The work that Grassroot Soccer does with a single youth is incredible – to think that they’re doing that with 18 million young people, it’s unbelievable.”

Christen Press
2x World Cup Winner and GRS Global Board Member and Ambassador



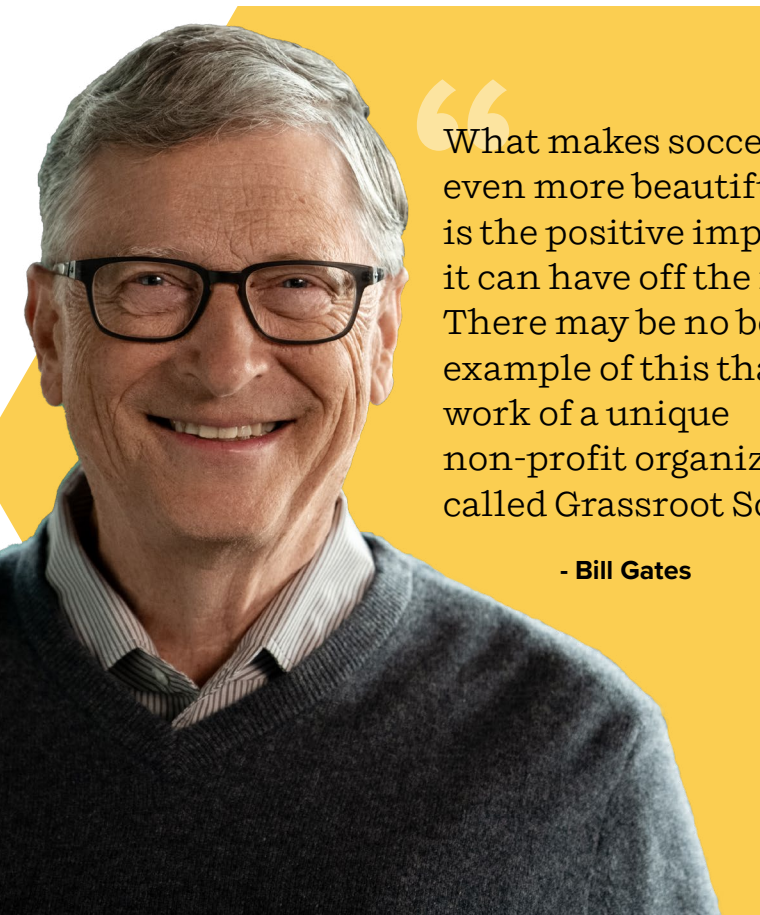
Tommy Clark



Cimafunk

Bill Gates Honors Grassroot Soccer

Amidst the excitement of the 2022 Men's World Cup, Bill Gates recognized GRS as a "Game Changer."



“What makes soccer even more beautiful is the positive impact it can have off the field. There may be no better example of this than the work of a unique non-profit organization called Grassroot Soccer.”

- Bill Gates

On his blog, Gates Notes, Bill [wrote](#) about why GRS's approach of using soccer to connect young people with life-saving health information and services inspires him. Gates also released a [video](#) highlighting the work of GRS Zambia Coach Kunda Mwitwa, who represents the more than 13,000 young adults around the world whom GRS has trained as mentor Coaches.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation also supported the creation of GRS's **World Cup SKILLZ Magazine**: a fun, interactive, and youth-friendly resource with information and learning exercises about mental health, gender equality, and COVID-19. Bill himself and three soccer legends – Didier Drogba, Nadia Nadim, and Michael Essien – feature in the Magazine!



GRS Coach Kunda Mwitwa was interviewed by David Beckham at a Gates Foundation health innovation event at the 2022 Men's World Cup.



Watch the Gates video highlighting GRS.

Research Highlights

From managing rigorous evaluations to conducting rapid impact assessments of program data, Grassroot Soccer (GRS) is committed to contributing to the global understanding of what works in adolescent health. GRS integrates these insights, along with the latest science and research in the field, into its programs so that they have the greatest impact possible.

In 2022, GRS research and evaluation projects spanned a number of critical and interconnected topics in adolescent health, such as:

- ▶ **Mental health**
- ▶ **Sexual and reproductive health**
- ▶ **Family planning**
- ▶ **Gender-based violence**
- ▶ **HIV prevention, care, and treatment**

12 research and evaluation projects going on in **5** countries in 2022



2022 RESEARCH PARTNERS:



Our Supporters

Grassroot Soccer (GRS) would like to thank our institutional donors and partners for their support in 2022. Their sustained commitment to the GRS mission enables us to continue connecting adolescents around the world with life-saving health information, services, and mentorship.



Cameron Schrier Foundation



Our Donors

Grassroot Soccer is very grateful to the following individuals and institutions for their unrestricted support.

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Mariano Zimmerler



Thank You

GRS also gratefully acknowledges the thousands of donors who gave in other amounts. These gifts made a substantial contribution to our work.



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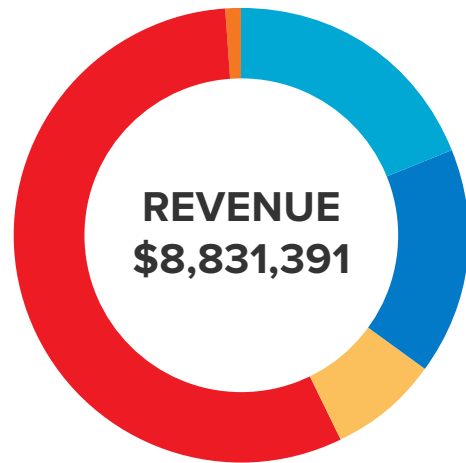
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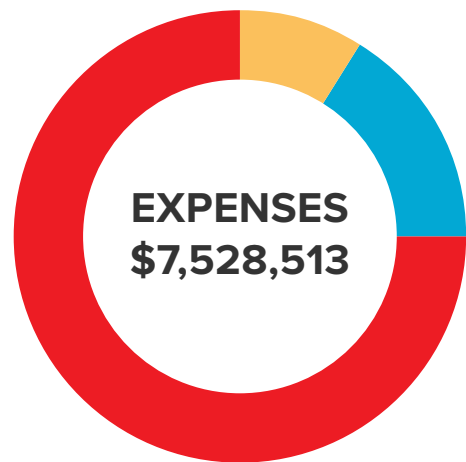
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Dover-Sherborn High School
Emerson College
Hanover High School (NH)
Holtan-Arms School
Kimball Union Academy
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New Jersey City University
Sarah Lawrence College
SUNY Cortland
University of Pennsylvania
Vassar College

Our Financials

Grassroot Soccer has a deep commitment to our donors and we encourage you to take a look at our record of accountability. You can find more information about this commitment on our website, www.grassrootsoccer.org/financials.



- 61%** **Individuals**
\$5,444,013
- 15%** **U.S. Government**
\$1,316,942
- 15%** **Private Foundations**
\$1,312,515
- 8%** **Corporate/Corporate Foundations**
\$735,765
- 1%** **Other Income**
\$22,156



- 71%** **Program Services**
\$5,523,694
- 17%** **Fundraising**
\$1,314,993
- 12%** **Management & General**
\$915,083



2022 Board of Directors

An aerial photograph of a densely populated township, likely in South Africa, showing a mix of brick and corrugated metal buildings. In the foreground, a large green soccer field is visible with several groups of people gathered on it. The background shows a vast expanse of similar housing under a cloudy sky.

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