



Kicks for Kokoda

Response to KTF's Internal Project Evaluation: December 2023

10 January 2024

Introduction

KTF leveraged its internal capabilities to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the Kicks for Kokoda project, seeking to review and evaluate the substantial data collected over the first three years of the project and to appraise its impact and effectiveness in enhancing adolescents' knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights, improving decision-making, fostering self-efficacy, and instigating shifts in gender norms and disability inclusiveness. The evaluation encompassed a thorough review of data gathered through baseline and post-intervention surveys conducted across three interventions spanning three years (2021-2023). Additionally, consultations with coaches played a pivotal role in identifying success or areas for improvement as well as elucidating findings from the data analysis. The supplementary analysis also delved into data provided by the Kicks for Kokoda project team, offering insights into the project's inception, design, and operational dynamics, including valuable information from interventions and tournaments, key project activities.

Data analysis took place throughout October and November of 2023, with the report drafted and finalised in December. In response to the evaluation's findings, this document outlines KTF's strategic initiatives to address recommendations and enhance pivotal aspects of the program's design and implementation.

Recommendations and KTF actions

Recommendation: To enhance attendance rates, it is recommended that the project explores alternative session times, potentially conducting them in the mornings before school. Introducing a participatory approach by allowing each village to collectively decide on the most convenient day and time for sessions could ensure the effectiveness of this approach. Additionally, the implementation of incentives, such as providing snacks, may serve as a motivational factor, addressing potential challenges associated with hunger and subsequently reducing the likelihood of participants leaving prematurely.

KTF acknowledges that there are unique challenges to operating in remote and rural settings, distinct from the urban environments where similar projects initiated by Grassroot Soccer have been implemented. Recognizing the impact of these challenges on attendance rates, KTF sees the merit in introducing more flexibility into the scheduling of SKILLZ sessions. Encouraging discussions among coaching pairs to determine the most convenient session times for students,

coaches, and communities will be a priority. The KTF project team plans to visit the region in advance of the next intervention, fostering dialogue to ensure that sessions align with the collective preferences of the communities involved.

KTF also plans to implement the recommendation of providing snacks during sessions, thereby reducing the likelihood of participants leaving prematurely for this reason. Furthermore, KTF will incorporate discussions on attendance rates, emphasizing a 90% target set by Grassroot Soccer, during this year's SKILLZ Training of Coaches. By underscoring this benchmark, KTF aims to enhance ownership of attendance rates within communities and make coaches more accountable for achieving this standard.

Looking ahead, KTF is placing a higher priority on graduation and attendance rates when determining the allocation of teams. Stricter adherence to these targets will be implemented, and KTF will consider discontinuing interventions in communities with consistently poor attendance. This approach is designed to incentivize communities to actively engage with the SKILLZ program and tournaments, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability in sustaining the project.

Recommendation: To enhance sustainability, KTF is advised to capitalise on its established relationships with schools by advocating for the integration of the SKILLZ curriculum into the regular academic schedule. Collaborating with schools to institutionalise the curriculum would contribute to the longevity of its impact. Furthermore, introducing an annual recognition program within schools could serve as a powerful motivator for maintaining positive attitudes and behaviour changes. For instance, instituting awards for outstanding citizenship among project alumni and recognising current participants with the highest academic achievements could reinforce the value of the SKILLZ program and foster a culture of continual positive development within the educational setting.

While KTF recognizes the potential benefits of incorporating the SKILLZ Curriculum into school schedules, we acknowledge the challenges associated with this. KTF does not hold sole authority to enact this change, but we are committed to advocating for it. Leveraging our positive relationships with schools and supportive teachers, we will explore avenues to collaborate with the Provincial Department of Education to champion the integration of the SKILLZ curriculum into the regular academic schedule.

In response to the recommendation regarding an annual recognition program, KTF agrees that acknowledging project alumni's achievements would be a valuable initiative. We will actively seek recommendations from teachers, coaches, and juvenile officers within communities to devise a meaningful recognition system. This could potentially be integrated into tournaments, reinforcing the value of the SKILLZ program.

Recommendation: To enhance the effectiveness of the program, it is recommended that KTF strategically align one of the Coach Support Visits to correspond with challenging sessions that cover sensitive topics like the reproductive system. These sessions, often uncomfortable for newer coaches to navigate, could benefit from additional support. By synchronising the support visit with these specific sessions, KTF can provide targeted assistance, ensuring coaches receive the necessary guidance to handle complex subjects effectively. Additionally, it is recommended to ensure two Coach Support Visits are conducted during each round of the 9-week intervention.

KTF recognises the importance of strategically aligning Coach Support Visits with challenging sessions, particularly those covering sensitive topics such as the reproductive system. While we will make every effort to dispatch the project manager, who possesses extensive experience in navigating these sessions, there may be instances where scheduling conflicts or travel logistics present challenges. In such cases, we will be prepared to send an alternative, the Coach Trainer, as a possible replacement to provide targeted assistance during these crucial intervention weeks. This approach ensures that newer coaches receive the necessary guidance to effectively handle complex subjects, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the program.

KTF also agrees that it would be ideal to ensure there are two Coach Support Visits per intervention. We plan to implement the first visit during week three to assess new coaches, ensuring they meet the required criteria. The second visit will be scheduled for practice seven, allowing us to monitor attendance rates and offer additional support as needed. KTF will also communicate with the Coach Trainer to highlight the challenges faced by new coaches during the more challenging sessions and will have these valuable insights incorporated further into the upcoming Training of Coaches.

Additionally, KTF will also introduce changes to the Training of Coaches schedule. An additional day will be allocated after the 5-day training for coaches to engage with the Coach Trainer, seek clarification, and practice what they have learned. Furthermore, a 2-day refresher training for previous years' coaches will be implemented, focusing on honing their skills in challenging sessions and addressing any additional support requirements identified by the Coach Trainer. This comprehensive approach aims to better equip coaches to navigate sensitive topics and contribute to the overall success of the SKILLZ program.

Recommendation: To enhance the monitoring of Youth-Friendly Health Corners (YFHCs), KTF should explore improved methods for assessing their utilisation and effectiveness in promoting access to health services among adolescents. Implementing sign-in sheets or similar tracking mechanisms could offer valuable insights into the frequency and patterns of adolescent engagement with these designated spaces. By systematically collecting data on usage, KTF can gain a clearer understanding of the impact of youth-friendly health corners and identify any areas for improvement.

Recognising the crucial need to enhance the monitoring of Youth-Friendly Health Corners, KTF places significant importance on implementing this recommendation. Currently lacking data on the utilisation of YFHCs, KTF has initiated consultations with healthcare workers to determine the most effective methods for implementing data collection. To kickstart the process, KTF plans to introduce regular data collection at Kokoda Memorial Hospital and Kokoda College Aid Post.

This strategic approach aims to systematically gather information on the frequency and patterns of adolescent engagement with these designated spaces, providing valuable insights into the utilisation and effectiveness of YFHCs.

In addition to these measures, KTF recognises the importance of raising awareness among adolescents about the availability and purpose of YFHCs. This will be incorporated into the Coach Training and Refresher sessions, emphasising the significance of these health corners as accessible resources. Coaches will be encouraged to reinforce this message during each practice's 'cool down' session, ensuring that participants are well-informed about the existence and opening hours of YFHCs. Additionally, coaches will highlight that these health corners are inclusive and available to everyone, not just participants of the Kicks for Kokoda project.

Recommendation: To amplify the impact of the project, KTF should persist in extending its reach to more remote locations, where the teachings have shown to be particularly impactful. The data suggests that these more isolated areas, characterised by limited educational opportunities and healthcare access, benefit significantly from the SKILLZ curriculum. By prioritising outreach to these underserved communities, KTF can continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of adolescents and contribute to positive behavioural and attitudinal changes.

Recognising the profound impact of the project in remote and rural communities, particularly where limited educational opportunities and healthcare access exists, KTF is committed to reaching these underserved areas. The data demonstrates the significance of the SKILLZ curriculum in providing factual information from reliable sources to adolescents in these isolated regions, where access to primary schools may be scarce. KTF plans to explore opportunities to further engage with neighbouring villages of current project sites, ensuring that the positive impact of the curriculum reaches a wider population.

Expanding projects into new areas requires careful consideration of the region and existing relationships as well as the accessibility of people within the community. Ensuring access to health and aid posts, promoting engagement with health workers for SKILLZ sessions and tournaments, and understanding the unique characteristics of each region are crucial considerations. KTF primarily works in remote and rural areas of Papua New Guinea and remains committed to supporting and reaching these communities.

As part of KTF's ongoing initiatives, the implementation of a new Village Health Attendant (VHA) project has commenced. This project aims to collaborate with more VHAs in even more remote and rural areas, opening the possibility for additional project sites in the future, provided the region is suitable. Additionally, KTF is mindful of the critical impact that bringing service providers to tournaments has on community access to healthcare services. This practice will be continued, given the observed positive ripple effects, such as the establishment of other community groups focused on Family and Sexual Violence. By persistently reaching more remote locations, KTF aims to continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of adolescents.

Recommendation: To enhance the impact of the project on the broader community, especially adults and parents, it is recommended that KTF explores additional ways to engage these groups actively during tournaments. Given the significant interest and their participation in the program, providing specific activities for adults could contribute to a more inclusive community experience. KTF may consider organising teams and games tailored for adults at tournaments or incorporating the gender equality activities from the SKILLZ Curriculum, targeted at this demographic. Introducing game cards for adults and parents, encouraging them to accumulate points by participating in various stations and information booths, with bonus points for activities like HIV testing, could serve as an effective strategy to foster their involvement. Additionally, KTF could explore synergies with its other projects, particularly those focusing on raising awareness about gender-based violence (GBV) and family and sexual violence (FSV). By strategically combining activities, KTF could create a more comprehensive and integrated approach for both projects.

KTF acknowledges the recommendation to enhance the project's impact on the broader community, especially adults and parents, during tournaments. Leveraging the success of initiatives like Project Zero, we've already taken steps in this direction with positive results. We'll continue exploring ways to integrate and enhance these efforts further, and as previously mentioned, we recognise the positive impact that bringing service providers to the tournaments has on communities.

Appreciating the community's support and enthusiasm for involvement, KTF plans to incorporate SKILLZ session activities, such as the Limbo game, into tournaments, and have these hosted by the PNG Olympic Committee athletes will create an even more enjoyable and informative atmosphere for both adults and the broader community.

To actively engage adults, KTF is considering the implementation of a scorecard or adult-team-based activities. With strong community turnouts at tournaments, we anticipate increased engagement, fostering a positive ripple effect where parents pass on knowledge and encourage participation in activities like HIV testing.

Recommendation: To enhance disability inclusion efforts, KTF should integrate the use of the Washington Group Set questions into the enrollment process for the SKILLZ program. This approach would facilitate the identification of individuals with non-physical disabilities, enabling coaches and teachers to offer tailored support. Furthermore, KTF should foster collaboration with a local Disabled Persons' Organisation to bolster the participation of individuals with disabilities in the program. The established strategies, such as featuring a para-Olympic athlete at tournaments and organising events on International Day of People with Disabilities, should be continued to raise awareness and promote inclusivity.

KTF strongly supports the recommendation to incorporate Washington Group Set questions into the SKILLZ program's enrollment process. We are committed to thoroughly training coaches to administer these questions during registration, allowing us to identify individuals with

non-physical disabilities and provide tailored support accordingly. KTF will deliver this training at the upcoming Training of Coaches.

To enhance disability inclusion efforts, KTF has welcomed a para-athlete from PNGOC into our GEDSI working group. This collaboration aims to gather valuable insights and promote inclusivity through the perspective of someone with lived experience. KTF will continue efforts to increase awareness of opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and explore further engagement with the Oro Disable Foundation.

Recognising the significance of established strategies, such as featuring a para-Olympic athlete at tournaments and organising events on the International Day of People with Disabilities, KTF is dedicated to their continuation. Even if schedules don't perfectly align, we will ensure that one round of tournaments specifically focuses on disability inclusion, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment.