

# Executive Summary

Evaluation of the *Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls Through Football Programme*

## About the programme

The *Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls Through Football* programme was a pilot funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and the British Council in two locations (Kisumu and Mount Elgon) in Western Kenya. Known locally as 'Kenya Timz,' the programme aimed to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG) through challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours using a sport-for-development model.

The programme combined football and education sessions to engage children and young people aged 10–20 years old, aiming to build positive relationships between participants, and challenge gender

inequitable attitudes and behaviours that foster violence. Coaches were recruited from the communities and trained to deliver a curriculum focusing on knowledge, attitudes, life skills and behaviours, aiming to promote teamwork, fair play, self-confidence and respect for self and others.

The programme also worked with adult community members and duty bearers (teachers, police, county government officials, health workers and community leaders) in an attempt to shift wider social norms and improve broader policy and practice for VAWG prevention and response. Community members were involved through quarterly festivals to stimulate dialogue around issues relating to gender and violence, and targeted through a multi-media campaign during the second half of the programme. Duty bearers were engaged via the participation of programme staff in county and sub-county gender technical working groups, as well as through targeted capacity building activities focused on raising awareness, challenging attitudes and improving coordination.

## About the evaluation

Itad was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the programme. Given the need for more rigorous and credible evidence on the effectiveness of sport for social change, the evaluation has aimed to investigate whether the programme has made a difference, and for whom; to explore how and why it has made a difference; and to draw out lessons on whether the approach can be expected to work elsewhere.

The evaluation used a theory-based approach, employing contribution analysis to explore how far the programme contributed to change. The baseline was undertaken in 2015-16 before programme activities commenced in each site, and the endline was completed in late 2017 after programme activities had ceased. The evaluation collected data through a small survey (150 households) in each site, combined with an "outcome harvesting" exercise with the coaches, and qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with young people, adult community members, service providers, community leaders, government officials and programme staff. In total, 356 individuals were consulted through focus groups and interviews at endline. The evaluation also drew on the extensive monitoring data collected by the programme alongside its activities.



*Kenya Timz participants during a football session at Kapsokwony High School, Mount Elgon*

## Has the programme made a difference, for whom, and why?

**The programme has made a difference to the thousands of young people who participated – increasing their knowledge and awareness on VAWG and helping build self-esteem and life skills.** Kenya Timz was highly successful in reaching young people through its school-based delivery model, reaching almost 4,500 young people and maintaining high retention and attendance rates. Where the programme did not match its aspirations was in the inclusion of hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations. However, the second half of the programme mitigated this to a certain extent through a more tailored delivery model, which succeeded in reaching a cohort of older and out-of-school young people. Importantly, the evaluation has found that the programme went beyond raising awareness, succeeding in shifting attitudes among its youth participants around gender and the acceptability of violence. In line with the assumptions in the programme theory of change, youth attitudes and behaviours were influenced through a well-designed curriculum, delivered effectively by coaches who also acted as role models; girls' confidence was built through participation in sport; and boys and young men were influenced to reject violence.

**Football proved a powerful entry point to communities,** helping start conversations around VAWG, maintain engagement of boys and men, capacitate coaches as role models and build young people's knowledge, confidence and skills. However, the programme rightly identified that football alone is no 'magic bullet' – tackling an issue as deeply rooted as VAWG necessitated a multi-pronged strategy, engaging different parts of the community, including duty bearers, in different ways.

**The programme succeeded in developing coaches into strong community champions who are likely to continue speaking out against violence into the future.** The coaches have acted as role models and champions for the programme, and they gave many personal examples of how participation had changed their own attitudes and behaviours. They also played a key role in gaining and maintaining programme access to the community, as well as facilitating entry into local institutions such as schools, churches and the police. However, recruiting and working with coaches was not without its challenges, given that they were members of the community and thus in some cases held the same inequitable attitudes that the programme was seeking to address. This has required careful and ongoing support and management.

**The programme has worked strategically with duty bearers, recognising the need to engage with existing structures and provide targeted rather than generic capacity support.** Programme staff successfully identified opportunities to convene, broker relationships and identify synergies with partners, helping to influence specific areas of policy and practice. There were some high-profile examples of programme contribution at county government level – most notably in catalysing the decision to build a gender-based violence recovery centre in Mount Elgon. The programme succeeded in influencing policy and practice where it focused on engaging with and strengthening existing forums, and provided strategic support that synergised with the work of other organisations.

**The programme succeeded in engaging a large number of community members, starting conversations about VAWG, and facilitating rich dialogue around the issues facing women and girls in the community.** Around 12,000 community members were reached through advocacy and outreach events, which succeeded in encouraging open and rich conversations about sensitive issues relating to gender and violence. The evaluation highlighted several anecdotal examples where the programme has contributed to some change in both attitudes and behaviours among participating adults, particularly through community conversation events, but also in some cases through young people sharing what they had learned with their parents.

**However, the evaluation found limited evidence that the programme has substantially contributed to girls being able to claim their rights or to reducing violence at a community level.** Inequitable attitudes are still widespread, particularly in relation to stigma and shame felt by survivors. The evaluation also highlighted the role that poverty and limited economic opportunities play in putting girls and women at risk and preventing them from escaping violent situations; issues which were beyond the scope of this programme to address. Across most types of violence targeted by the programme, there is no consistent evidence of change beyond anecdotal examples and perceptions. There is also limited evidence that the programme has helped girls claim their rights on a large scale (for example, rights to attend school, choose when to marry or have children, or participate in community and political decision making). This is

unsurprising given the short duration of the programme, the relatively low-intensity nature of community activities, and the deep-rooted nature of the gender norms the programme was seeking to address.

**One important exception is in relation to sexual violence in Mount Elgon, where there is more consistent evidence that cases may have reduced, although these findings should be interpreted with caution given the challenges associated with accurate measurement of violence, especially over a short duration.** Focus groups and interviews suggested that programme may have contributed to change through influencing the attitudes of boys and men – both directly through the programme and indirectly through raising awareness of the legal consequences of rape, which may have acted as a deterrent – as well as raising girls’ and women’s awareness of situations that may put them at risk.

### Can this approach be expected to work elsewhere?

The findings from the evaluation highlight a number of considerations for future programmes, in order to maximise the success of a sport-for-development approach in tackling VAWG. The following factors are likely to prove important to success:

- **Identifying a sport that has broad popularity in the targeted communities:** This might be football or another sport, but ideally should have existing infrastructure in the form of teams and pitches that can be leveraged and used to recruit coaches and attract participants.
- **Careful recruitment and support of community coaches:** The Kenya Timz delivery model was a successful one, but required ongoing support and management to ensure the values and behaviours of the coaches were in line with those of the programme.
- **Integrating football closely with thematic content:** This was a key adaptation during the course of the programme, responding to reflections about how best to engage young people with the educational curriculum.
- **Upfront investment in community sensitisation:** Communication with the community at the start of the programme is required to counter negative perceptions and unrealistic expectations that may come with a sport for development programme.
- **Choosing implementation partners carefully:** The programme faced challenges in its choice of delivery partner, which did not have a permanent presence on the ground in either site. Choosing partners with existing infrastructure has a better chance of promoting longer term sustainability.
- **Integrating sustainability considerations from the start:** The sustainability hopes for the Kenya Timz programme rest in large part on the coaches and other local champions, who will hopefully continue to support the programme’s agenda. However, it is likely to prove difficult for individuals to carry on conducting activities without structural support or resources. A phased exit plan might have maximised the chances of a longer-term legacy.
- **Employing a flexible and adaptive approach:** It is difficult to predict exactly how change in gender norms and behaviours will happen in advance and what will work and what will not. A flexible approach, allowing programmes to try out different models and respond to windows of opportunity, is likely to be more appropriate than setting rigid up-front fixed targets for programming and monitoring and evaluation.
- **Matching ambition with resourcing and sustained engagement:** Shifting social norms at a community level requires sustained engagement over time. Programmes wishing to shift deeply rooted practices such as VAWG should ideally commit to long-term engagement, to maximise opportunities for sustained change and minimise the risk that short-term gains are simply reversed when activities cease.

## Recommendations for future sport for development programmes

- 1** **Future programmes should consider using football as a mechanism for engaging communities on issues related to VAWG;** however, sport should be seen as one activity within a broader package of interventions. Making the most of this potential requires building on what attracts people to football – for example, opportunities for competitions – while giving adequate prominence to the thematic objectives.
- 2** **Tailored approaches, ideally built in from the start of the programme, are required to engage the hard-to-reach groups who are most at risk of VAWG** – considering factors including site locations, timing and supportive services such as childcare. Working through schools provides an effective entry point to reach large numbers of younger children, but one size does not fit all, and bespoke strategies (which may be more resource intensive) will be required to reach different groups.
- 3** **In relatively small-scale programmes, value can be added through strategic and targeted engagement with duty bearers through existing forums,** to help ensure increasing demand for services is matched with adequate supply and prioritisation. It is important to be realistic about what is possible to achieve through capacity building activities, especially small-scale training courses. Programmes should also carefully investigate existing services for VAWG prevention and response and the potential to strengthen these in a sustainable way over the lifetime of the programme, to avoid the risk of harm to survivors if service availability does not match increased levels of reporting.
- 4** **Future programmes should consider working with community coaches; however, this must be accompanied by adequate training and ongoing support.** It is important to recognise that coaches are members of the target communities, and thus may themselves hold some of the inequitable attitudes that programmes are attempting to address. These challenges should be identified and mitigated through activities such as group dialogue, codes of conduct, refresher training, and self-diagnosis and reflection processes.
- 5** **Where programmes seek to address VAWG, engaging adults from the very beginning is a vital complement to activities with young people, both to ensure buy-in and to begin addressing community-wide attitudes and social expectations.** Engaging parents and community members in implementation meetings can help with this, as can the use of coaches and influential community members as champions for the programme. However, programmes should recognise that change at this level will not happen overnight. The intensity of engagement needs to be carefully considered in relation to programme objectives.
- 6** **Future programmes seeking to address deep-rooted attitudes and behaviour, such as those around VAWG, should plan for more sustained and intensive engagement.** This requires longer-term funding, to ensure adequate resourcing of the multi-pronged strategy needed to reach different groups within the community.
- 7** **Sustainability should be prioritised in design decisions for programmes working to tackle VAWG, including considerations of programme length, suitable partners and appropriate phase-out and exit strategies.** A phased exit plan should be built in from the start of the programme, focused on ensuring that the programme legacy has structural support rather than relying solely on individuals as advocates of change.