



Changing Lives One Young Woman At a Time

My name is Mahlatshe Mamabolo. I am 21 years old and I am a Skillz coach at Grassroots Soccer. I am a second-year student studying social work at UNISA. I am a very vigilant and ambitious person. I am a person that believes that for every problem there's always a solution.

I am working for Grassroots Soccer on a project called DREAMS. I mentor, motivate and empower girls and young women, teaching them about HIV and how they can protect themselves from HIV infection through activities like condom promotion and provision. I believe that I have an impact that is life changing because it's not just about me delivering services or distributing condoms, but about long-term relationships. It's about empowering girls and young women and making them feel that there is something they can achieve in their lives. When I look at my community, girls and young women are disempowered and this results in high youth unemployment, drop-outs, HIV infection and teen pregnancies. My work is not just about delivering services and activities but about changing lives.

I was introduced to Grassroots Soccer during the practical portion of my studies. I did a few sessions with the coaches. One day I heard them speaking about the DREAMS project, and I got interested. I felt my passion come alive. I believe that life is all about purpose. I measure success by what I can give to the next person. Working for Grassroots Soccer gives me the opportunity to give back.

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My relationship with the girls is amazing. Even when we don't have a session they are free to talk about anything and share their problems with me. I am proud of the fact that I can be a role model. I love kids but they can frustrate you at times. They can make you feel like giving up, but my passion makes me persevere.



Mahlatshe Mamabolo

Working with the girls reminds me of myself when I was a teenager. A lot of things that I went through back then help me open up to them. When I see some girls being teased by their classmates, their self-esteem being down, I remember what I went through. Now I know how to support girls when they have the same challenges.

Working as Skillz coach has made me realise that anything is possible. I see my career manifesting in front of my eyes. I would say it has a good impact and has taught me to be mindful about my community. Working on the DREAMS project helps with my studies. I see myself practicing as a social worker in the near future. Being here at Grassroots Soccer has made me dream of starting my own organisation working with girls and young women. I think the vision I have will be successful.

257 Brooklyn Road, Block D, Equity Park, Brooklyn, Pretoria, Gauteng, 0011, South Africa
 TEL: +27 12 366 9300 FAX: +27 12 366 9301
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