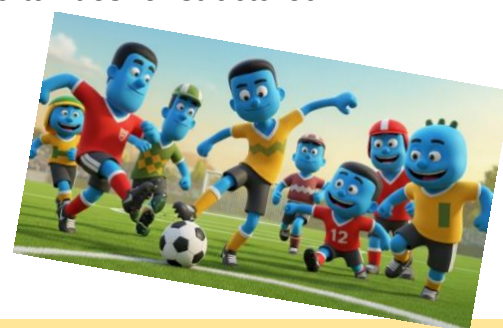


Empowering Boys Through Football

The Impact and Growth of the FC Football Club for Boys in Machakos

Sports are a powerful tool for shaping the lives of boys and young men, especially in communities where individuals are facing significant social and economic challenges. Having seen the benefits of sports in our communities, we came up with the Sports for Boys program, which is designed to provide a safe, structured, and engaging environment where boys can develop physically, mentally, and socially. Our program intends to help young men who face unique challenges in modern society, including declining engagement in physical activity, increasing mental health concerns, and a rise in anti-social behavior and school exclusions. These issues are often compounded by social inequalities, lack of positive role models, and reduced opportunities for structured physical activity. According to reports, boys from disadvantaged backgrounds are the most affected and are always at higher risk of inactivity, poor mental health, and underachievement in school (Whitley, 2021). Structured sports programs, when thoughtfully designed and delivered, can provide safe spaces, foster positive development, and unlock boys' academic and personal potential.



Strengthening the Evidence

Numerous studies have linked sport-based interventions to positive impacts on individuals. Among the key benefits of participation in sports are enhanced emotional regulation, self-efficacy, and a sense of belonging (Godor, 2025).

The key findings include:

- Community leaders report a significant reduction in drug abuse and criminal activity among participants.
- Teachers note improved school attendance and academic focus, with some schools observing a drop in dropout rates linked to boys' involvement in the club.
- Participants demonstrate enhanced confidence, discipline, and motivation, which translate into better educational engagement.
- Football matches and tournaments serve as platforms for campaigns like "Say No to Drugs", reinforcing positive choices.
- Scouts from regional and national teams have identified talented players, linking sports participation to potential professional opportunities.

Advocacy

Advocacy toolkits and campaigns have proven effective in mobilizing support and resources, ensuring that sports remain a priority for youth wellbeing and development. The FC Football Club for Boys actively integrates advocacy into its activities by:

- Using football tournaments and matches as venues to run drug prevention and education campaigns.
- Engaging families, schools, and community leaders to build a support network that champions youth development through sports.
- Empowering boys to become role models and advocates for healthy lifestyles and continued education.
- Raising awareness among local authorities about the program's positive social impact, helping to mobilize resources and support.



Guidelines, Curricula, and Tool Development

The program follows a holistic framework emphasizing:

- Life skills development through football, focusing on teamwork, discipline, and leadership.
- Providing necessary equipment and logistics—sportswear, shoes, footballs, snacks, and transport—to remove barriers to participation.
- Embedding education promotion and drug prevention messages within sports activities.
- Tailoring training and mentorship to meet the diverse needs of boys, including those balancing education and sports.
- Using feedback from participants and stakeholders to continuously refine program delivery.

Strengthening the Workforce

We understand that having a skilled workforce is very important for effective service delivery and the success of our initiatives. They ensure that programs are delivered safely, effectively, and with empathy. Success is supported by a dedicated team of coaches, mentors, and volunteers who:

- Provide regular coaching and mentorship, fostering discipline and personal growth.
- Serve as positive role models, guiding boys both on and off the pitch.
- Receive ongoing training to address the developmental needs of adolescent boys.
- Work closely with schools and families to create a supportive ecosystem.
- Identify and nurture talented players, linking them to professional pathways.

Service Delivery

Service delivery is grounded in a holistic, youth-centered approach. The program is designed to be inclusive, without barriers related to cost, transport, or equipment, and to foster a sense of belonging and achievement.

The FC Football Club for Boys delivers services through:

- Targeted recruitment of boys at critical life stages, particularly post-high school and tertiary education who are at risk of disengagement.
- Organizing regular training sessions, friendly matches, and community tournaments, including events at Kenyatta Stadium and local leagues.
- Providing full logistical support to ensure comfort and full participation.
- Running campaigns integrated into sports events to promote education and discourage drug use.
- Facilitating community involvement by engaging families, schools, and leaders.
- Monitoring participation and outcomes to adapt and improve the program continuously.

Results

The impact of the Sports for Boys program is clear and measurable, with results showing significant transformative changes. This program has been very beneficial, where students at risk of exclusion improved their school attendance, developed new friendships, and became more engaged in school and community life. Boys who previously struggled with behavior or academic motivation found purpose, self-confidence, and new aspirations through sports participation.

The program has achieved significant positive changes:

- A clear reduction in crime and drug use among participants.
- Improved school attendance and academic performance reported by teachers.
- Enhanced self-confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills among boys.
- Strengthened community bonds through football events that unite families and local leaders.
- Identification of talented players who have progressed to regional football academies and professional opportunities.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Lessons Learned

- Addressing physical, mental, and social needs together yields the strongest outcomes.
- Mentorship is essential as consistent, positive role models drive engagement and growth.
- Community involvement amplifies impact, and engaging families and local partners increases reach and sustainability.
- Celebrating achievements, big and small, boosts self-esteem and commitment.



Recommendations

- Expand the program's reach to include more boys across Machakos and neighboring regions.
- Strengthen partnerships with schools, local authorities, and sports organizations.
- Invest further in workforce development to maintain quality coaching and mentorship.
- Enhance monitoring and evaluation to track progress and inform improvements.
- Promote lifelong sports participation to sustain health and wellbeing beyond youth.



Michael, 19, was on a dangerous path due to peer pressure and risk of dropping out. Joining the club in 2023 marked a turning point. With access to sportswear, coaching, and mentorship, he developed discipline and teamwork skills that improved his academic focus. Michael actively participated in the "Say No to Drugs" campaign and now excels in school, serving as team captain and mentoring younger boys.



Talented 17-year-old Kioko caught the eye of scouts early in the program. Coaches provided specialized training and guidance, helping him secure a place in a regional football academy. Kioko is working toward his dream of playing in the Kenyan Premier League, crediting the club for the opportunity and ongoing mentorship that keeps him grounded and focused.

References

- Godor, B. P. (2025). Cultivating Resilience in Youth: Assessing the Psychological Benefits of Sport-Based Development Programs. *Journal of Sport for Development*.
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