

**Stay in the Game:**  
A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Sports and Life Skills Program for  
Vulnerable Youth in Liberia

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July 2019

\*Send correspondence to: [s.herskowitz@igir.org](mailto:s.herskowitz@igir.org). We are grateful to Mercy Corps for its willingness to evaluate the program discussed in this paper. Without an openness to scrutiny and facilitation of sharing administrative data, this research would not have been possible. We thank Stephanie De Mel for her research assistance and T. Wordpree Marwoko, Joseph Kamara, Dickermose Doko, Abel Widwan, and other field research staff of Innovations for Poverty Action for their hard work and dedication in carrying out data collection. We are grateful to Innovations for Poverty Action for assistance running the study. We thank the study participants for generously giving their time. We thank Chris Blattman, John Jamison, and Margaret Sheridan for sharing questionnaires. Guanghua Chi provided valuable contributions to the qualitative data analysis. This research was funded by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation [grant number OW4/1094], the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency [award number 90954-S-001], the International Growth Centre [grant number I-VCH-VSLE-VXXXX-SU300], and Mercy Corps.

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Over the past two decades, sports programs have proliferated as a mode of engaging youth in development projects. Thousands of organizations, millions of participants, and hundreds of millions of dollars are invested in sports-based development programs each year. The underlying belief that sports promote socioemotional skills, improve psychological well-being, and foster traits that boost labor force productivity has provided motivation to expand funding and offerings of sport for development (SFD) programs. We partnered with an international NGO to randomly assign 1200 young adults to a sports and life skills development program. While we do not see evidence of improved psychosocial outcomes or resilience, we do find evidence that the program caused a 0.12 standard deviation increase

in labor force participation. Secondary analysis suggests that the effects are strongest among those likely to be most disadvantaged in the labor market.

July 01, 2019