

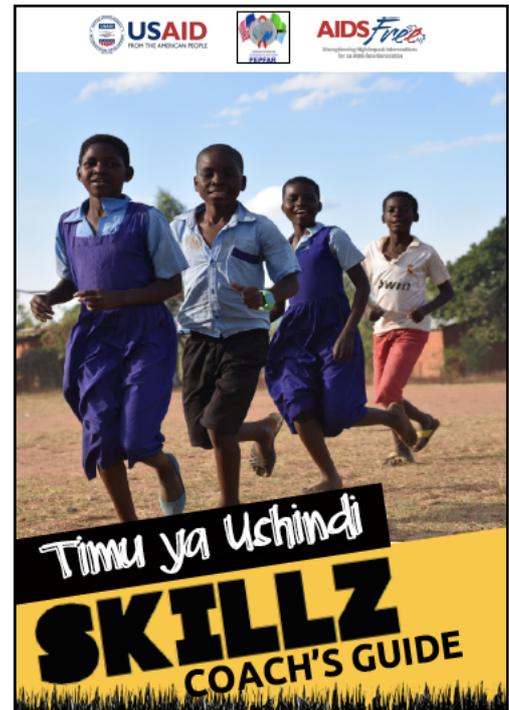
Winning Team Pairing HPV/Cervical Cancer Services and VMMC Demand Creation

Background: Cervical cancer is caused by the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus (HPV), which is the most common viral infection of the reproductive tract.¹ Cervical cancer is the leading cause of female cancer, the number one cause of cancer related deaths amongst women in Sub-Saharan Africa, and is considered an AIDS-defining illness. HPV prevalence in women is higher in Sub-Saharan Africa than in more developed areas of the world. The subsequent burden of cervical cancer is highest in Guinea, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, with incidence rates of nearly 50/100,000 or more.

Cervical cancer is a preventable disease.² In addition to the HPV vaccine and routine screening for cervical cancer, circumcision has been proven to reduce the incidence of HSV-2 infection and the prevalence of HPV infection among female partners.³ It is well established that risky sexual behaviors, including early sexual debut and having unsafe sex with multiple partners, increase women's risk of STIs, contributing substantially to the ongoing HIV epidemic.⁴ It is expected that due to lack of access to appropriate prevention services and the concomitant HIV/AIDS epidemic, cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates in the region will rise over the next 20 years.

Response: Grassroot Soccer recently developed a single-session, flexible, soccer-based intervention for adolescent girls and young women 10-24 years old to increase demand for and uptake of the HPV vaccine and cervical cancer screening services and improve knowledge on key HIV risk reduction themes. The intervention is paired with a single-session VMMC demand-creation intervention for adolescent boys and young men 10-35 years old, called *Make the Cut* (MTC). MTC has been found to increase uptake of VMMC 9x for adult men and 2.5x for adolescent boys through two randomized controlled trials and feasibility studies in eight VMMC priority countries and is recognized by PEPFAR, UNAIDS, Gates Foundation, and the USAID OPTIONS Consortium as a game changer in HIV prevention. Grassroot Soccer field-tested the HPV/cervical cancer practice in Zimbabwe and rolled out the mixed-sex HPV/VMMC pilot with Jhpiego in Tanzania in August 2018 for very young adolescents 10-14 as part of AIDSFree Tanzania. *Timu ya Ushindi* (as it is called in Tanzania) is in pilot phase in Njombe and Dodoma regions. Grassroot Soccer and Jhpiego are evaluating the program to assess its impact on knowledge, attitudes, and uptake of services, as well as scalability.

Intervention: During school classes or soccer tournaments, groups of young people are divided into same-sex groups where they participate in engaging, soccer-based activities and meaningful discussions for 90 minutes. Boys gain comprehensive knowledge on VMMC and discuss ways to address and overcome barriers to uptake. Circumcised male coaches share their real-life stories about circumcision and answer questions about the procedure. Meanwhile, girls gain comprehensive knowledge on HPV, cervical cancer and key risk factors for contracting or transmitting HIV. Female coaches share real-life stories on how they have utilized local services and how they have modified their behavior to take control of cervical cancer in their lives. Boys and girls are then brought back together to share what they have learned. At the completion of the activities, boys and girls who are interested in accessing services are referred directly to local youth friendly clinical service providers.



¹ <https://afro.who.int/news/cervical-cancer-common-amongst-african-women>

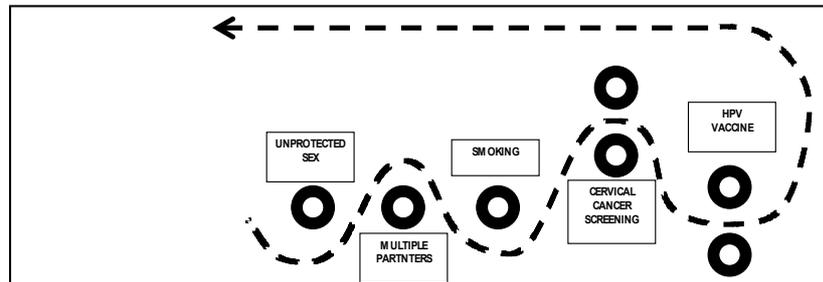
² <https://afro.who.int/news/cervical-cancer-common-amongst-african-women>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2676895/>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4144870/>

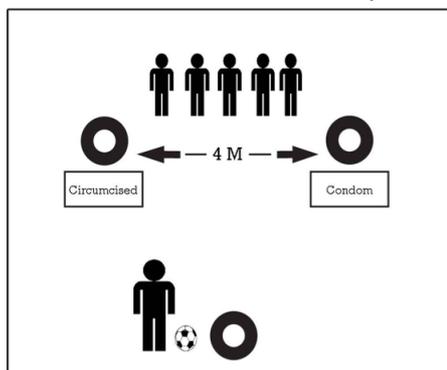


Risk Field Set Up



Risk Field for girls is a race between two teams. In the first round, the players need to dribble through cones. The cones represent risks to cervical cancer, such as smoking, multiple partners, and unprotected sex. If the player hits a cone, there is a consequence. In the second round, the girls dribble through goals, which represent healthy behaviors such as HPV vaccination and cervical cancer screening. If a player misses a goal, there is a consequence. In the third round, the players need to dribble around the risks and dribble in between the health goals.

Cut and Cover Set Up



Circumcised, Protected Sex



Cut and Cover for boys is a penalty shootout where the goalkeeper represents an uncircumcised male who does not use condoms to protect himself from HIV infection. Often, he fails to stop the ball. However, once players discover that VMMC reduces the goalkeeper's HIV risk, the width of the goalposts reduce to represent the protection that VMMC offers. Further reduction happens when additional defenders help block the goal. These defenders represent the additional protection from using condoms consistently and correctly.

Coach's Story: Following the soccer-based activity, the Coaches shares their respective personal experiences with circumcision, cervical cancer, answer questions, and connect participants to service providers. At the end of the practice, the two groups reconvene, share out what they have learned, and are connected through referrals to HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, HIV testing, and VMMC services.

