

# Interagency Gender Working Group Male Engagement Task Force

## Rethinking Men's and Boys' Healthcare Access and Use

March 17, 2022



# IGWG Male Engagement Task Force

**Myra Betron**  
(she/her)

USAID MOMENTUM  
Country and Global  
Leadership, Jhpiego



**Julie Pulerwitz**  
(she/her)

Breakthrough  
RESEARCH,  
Population Council



**Courtney McLarnon-Silk**  
(she/her)

Passages Project, Institute  
for Reproductive Health at  
Georgetown University



**Dominick Shattuck**  
(he/him)

Breakthrough ACTION,  
Johns Hopkins Center for  
Communication Programs



**Ann Gottert**  
(she/her)

Population Council



**Danette Wilkins**  
(she/her and they/them)

Breakthrough ACTION,  
Johns Hopkins Center for  
Communication Programs



# IGWG Male Engagement Task Force

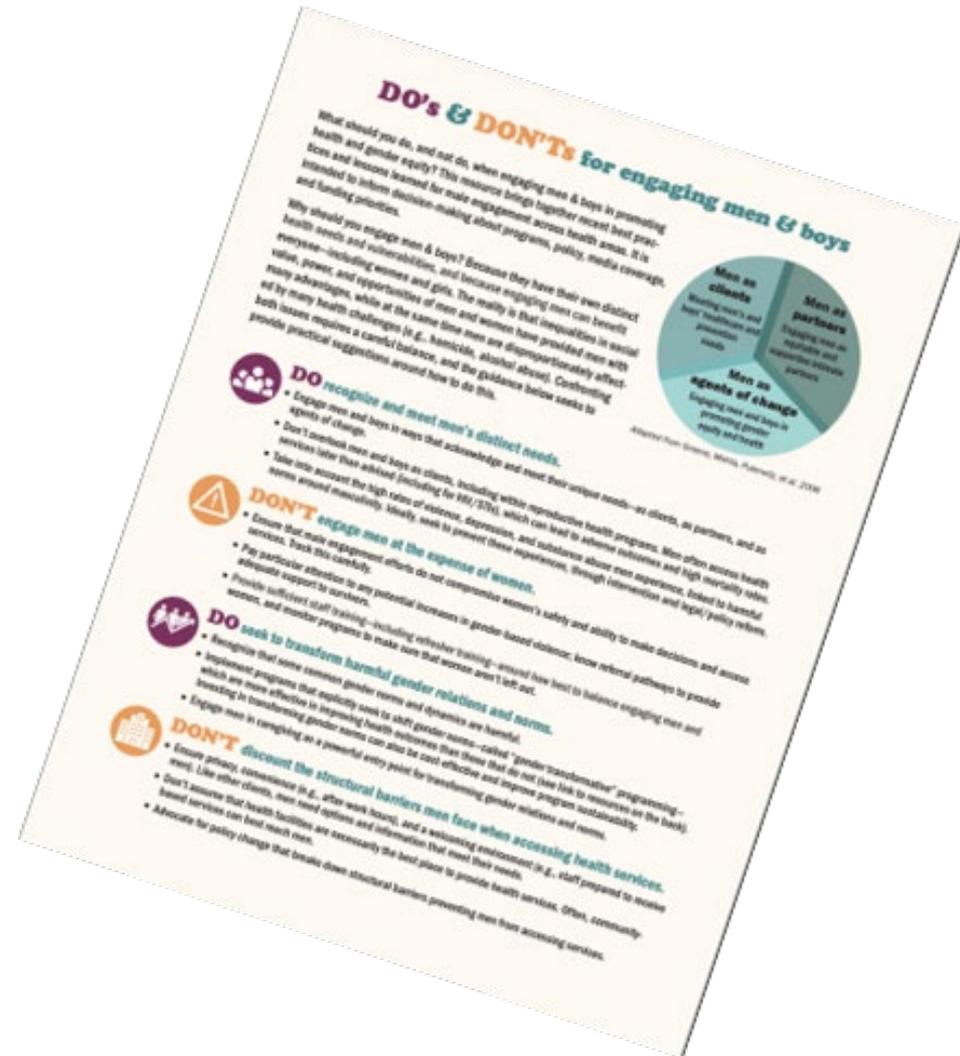
The Male Engagement Task Force (METF) is an information, advocacy, and knowledge exchange network that:

- Examines how to engage men and boys in health promotion and gender equality
- Explores the who/what/where/when/why/how of better reaching and including men and boys while addressing gender dynamics that act as barriers to health
- Focuses on the health areas of family planning and sexual and reproductive health (FP and SRH); maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH); HIV/AIDS, and prevention and treatment of infectious diseases (e.g., malaria, tuberculosis)
- Considers best, promising, and emerging practices in research and programming in order to improve outcomes across these health areas

# Resource Highlight

## The DO's and DON'Ts for Engaging Men and Boys

- Two-pager on important considerations for engaging men and boys in health promotion and gender equity
- Cited as key resource to guide decision-making about programs, policy, media coverage, research, and funding priorities (Example: MenStar Coalition)
- Now available in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese



# Focus and Objectives

## Rethinking Men's and Boys' Healthcare Access and Use

### Objectives

- Share global research and programming on rethinking men's and boys' help-seeking and healthcare access and use.
- Identify best, promising, and emerging practices to facilitate and support men's and boys' help-seeking and healthcare access and use, with particular attention to approaches that engage with gender and power dynamics to further health promotion and gender equality.

# Presentations and discussions will explore...

- What are **overlooked barriers** to men's and boys' help-seeking and healthcare use and access? How can we overcome these barriers?
- What are **missed opportunities** to encourage and support men's and boys' help-seeking and healthcare use and access? How can we identify and leverage these opportunities?
- What are **effective program approaches** and strategies at different levels (e.g., facility, mobile, community)?
- What **gender and power dynamics** were identified and addressed in the particular context? And how?

# Agenda and Speakers

|                        |   |   |
|------------------------|---|---|
| <b>9:00–9:10 EDT</b>   | <b>Welcome and Opening</b>  | Courtney McLarnon<br>Passages Project, Institute for<br>Reproductive Health at Georgetown<br>University |
| <b>9:10–9:25 EDT</b>   | <b>Opening Remarks</b>  | Marcos Nascimento<br>Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz)  |
| <b>9:25–10:00 EDT</b>  | <b>Panel #1: Major development and newest thinking around men’s and boys’ healthcare access and use</b>                               | Julie Pulerwitz<br>Population Council   |
| <b>10:00–10:45 EDT</b> | <b>Panel #2: Emerging innovations and practices for meeting men’s and boys’ needs and priorities around healthcare access and use</b> | Dominick Shattuck<br>Breakthrough ACTION, Johns Hopkins<br>Center for Communication Programs            |
| <b>10:45–10:50 EDT</b> | <b>Closing Remarks</b>  | Dominick Shattuck   |
| <b>10:50–10:55 EDT</b> | <b>Announcements</b>  | Courtney McLarnon   |
| <b>10:55–11:00 EDT</b> | <b>Wrap-up</b>  | Courtney McLarnon   |

# Opening Remarks



# Gender, Masculinities, and Health: the Brazilian Experience

Marcos Nascimento, Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz)



## Men's Health: A Framework

- Gender perspective: social and gender norms
- Power dynamics, particularly in sexual and reproductive (SRH) field
- Intersectional approach (e.g., gender, class, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability)

## Background

- Social Movements (1990–2010)
  - National and international agenda
  - Education and communication strategies for male engagement in sexual and reproductive health
- Research (2000–2010)
  - Men's health (from a gender perspective)
- Public Policy (2003–2010)
  - Paternity legislation
  - Men's and women's health
  - LGBT health and Black population health

## Brazil's National Healthcare Policy for Men (2009)

- Medical associations
- Social movements
- Scholars

*One of the few countries with a specific health policy target for men and boys*

# **Brazil's National Healthcare Policy for Men - Main Areas of Intervention**

- Sexual and reproductive health
- Fatherhood and care
- Violence prevention
- Chronic diseases

# Brazil's National Healthcare Policy for Men - Strategies

- Brazilian health system (SUS)
- Public health campaigns
- Community health workers and health professionals
- Outreach efforts

## Fatherhood and Care

- The male prenatal care strategy includes:
  - Male partner involvement in prenatal care
  - Men's health
  - Legislation (parental leave; companion law)
  - Childcare

## Challenges

- Men as “strangers” in health facilities and clinics
- “Gender ideology”; conservatism and backlash
- “Be a man” and the familial perspective
- Structural vulnerability: racism, homophobia, sexism, transphobia

## COVID-19 Pandemic

- More than 650,000 people have died in Brazil
- Around 56% were men
- Men and COVID-19
  - Gender and social norms
  - High level of unemployment
  - Precarious work
  - Health-seeking behaviors
  - Mask misuse or refusal
  - Vaccination refusal

# COVID-19 Pandemic

- Gender perspective analysis
- Responses to:
  - Gender-based violence
  - Family violence
  - Femicide
  - Sexual and reproductive health issues
  - Social vulnerabilities
  - Intersectional approach

**Thank you! Gracias! Merci! Obrigado!**

**Marcos Nascimento**  
**marcos.nascimento@iff.fiocruz.br**

# Panel #1

Major developments and newest thinking around men's and boys' healthcare access and use (including gender transformation)

## Speakers:

- Kathryn Dovel, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and Partners in Hope-Malawi (PIH)
- Stella Abah, WI-HER
- Neeta Bhandari, U.S. Department of State, Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator/President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)



# Identifying Efficient Linkage Strategies for Men (IDEaL)

Kathryn Dovel, PhD, MPH

University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)

Partners in Hope-Malawi (PIH)

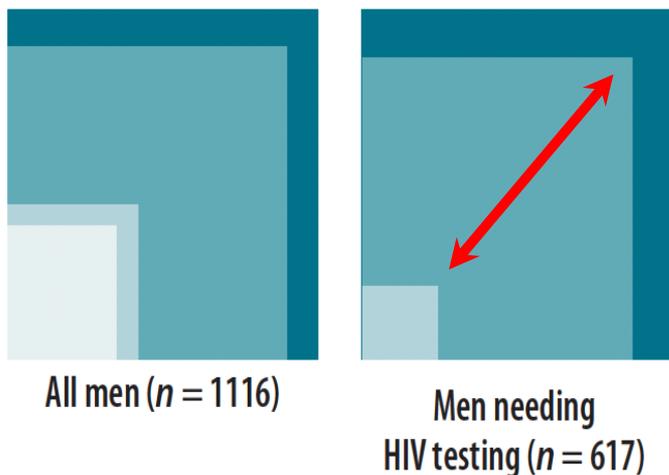


# Outpatient Department (OPD) is an Important Entry Point for Men

## Majority of men attend OPD <sup>1</sup>

Community-representative survey with men in Malawi (n=1,116)

Percentage of men visiting a health facility in the past 12 months, offered HIV testing and accepted HIV testing <sup>4</sup>



- Study population
- Made a facility visit
- Offered HIV test during a facility visit
- Tested for HIV during a facility visit

Among men in need of testing:

- 7% offered testing services

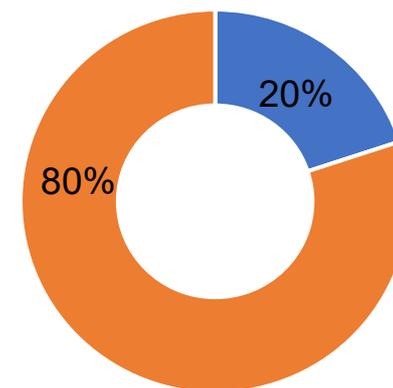
Reason for not testing:

- 37%: Provider did not offer
- 23%: Perceived low risk

## Men living with HIV attend OPD <sup>2</sup>

Survey with HIV+ men disengaged from care (n=434)

Facility attendance since disengagement (median time since disengagement: 3.4m)



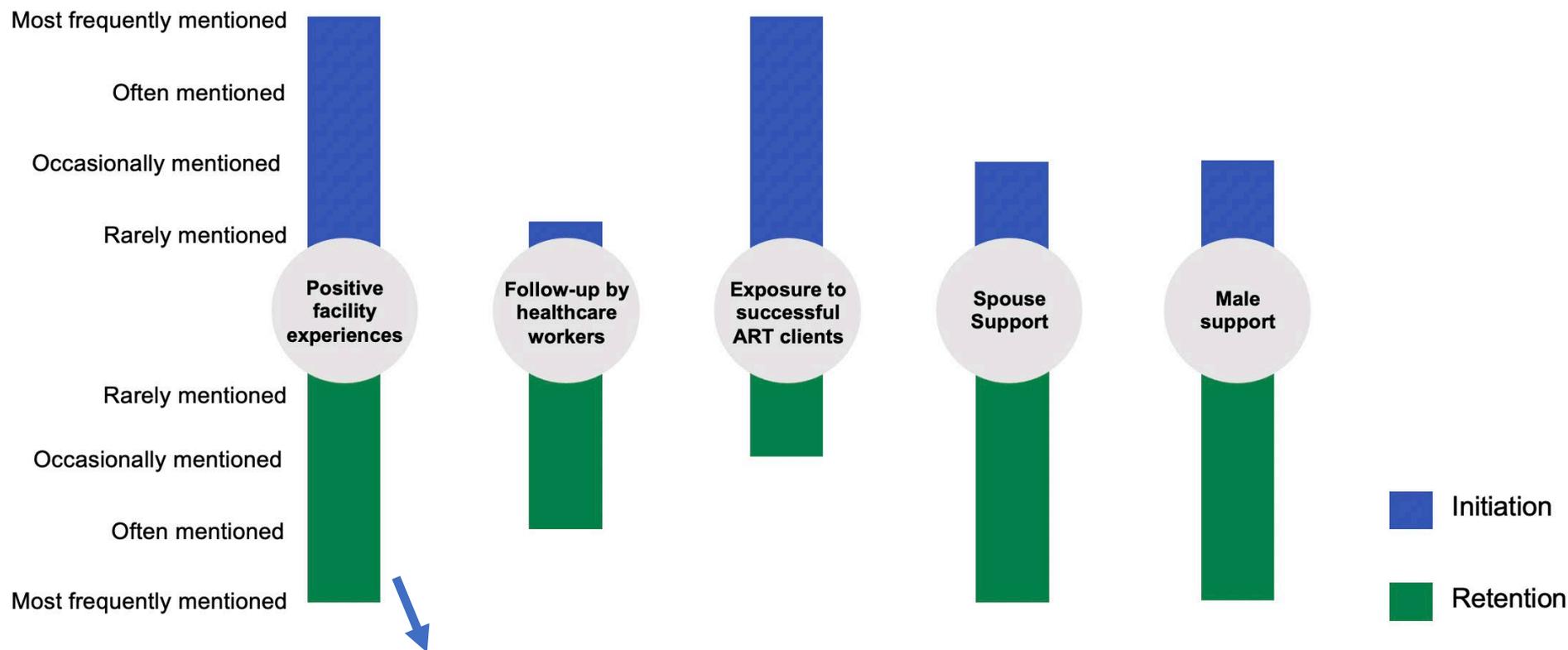
- Facility attendance
- No Facility attendance

Among men attending a facility:

- 38% had >1 visit
- None told about HIV services

# Facilitators to Men's Engagement in Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)

In-depth interviews with men struggling with initiation or retention (n=40)<sup>2,3</sup>



**Core building blocks of positive facility experiences (process evaluation of two trials):**

- Time efficient services (reduced wait time/wait time utilized for other things)
- Engaging patient-provider interactions (feel respected and heard)
- Motivating and detailed information (don't demand but explain why)

# Identifying efficient linkage strategies for men (IDEaL)

## Sources

1. Dovel K, Balakasi K, Gupta S, Mphande M, Robson I, Khan S, Amberbir A, Stilson C, van Oosterhout JJ, Doi N, Nichols BE. Frequency of visits to health facilities and HIV services offered to men, Malawi. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*. 2021 Sep 1;99(9):618.
2. Unpublished, preliminary data
3. Chamberlin S, Mphande M, Phiri K, Kalande P, Dovel K. How HIV Clients Find Their Way Back to the ART Clinic: A Qualitative Study of Disengagement and Re-engagement with HIV Care in Malawi. *AIDS and Behavior*. 2022 Mar;26(3):674-85.

# USAID's Nigeria Integrated Health Program: Male Engagement in Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Childhood, Adolescent, and Nutrition Services in Kebbi State, Nigeria

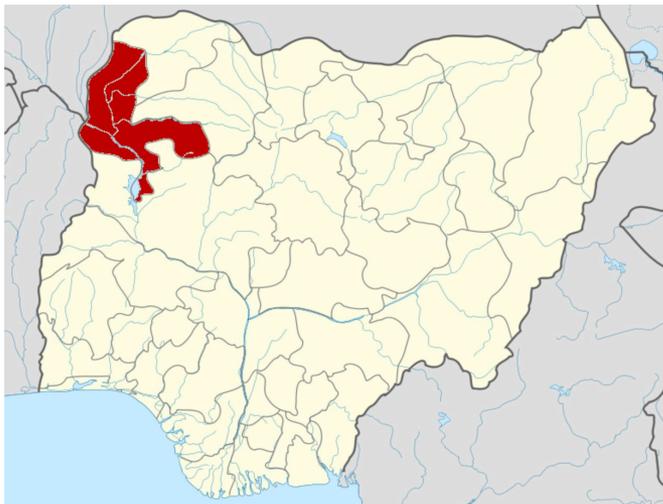
**Stella Abah, Gender, Social Inclusion and Community  
Engagement, Advisor for IHP in Kebbi State, [stella.abah@ihp-nigeria.com](mailto:stella.abah@ihp-nigeria.com)**



# USAID's Nigeria Integrated Health Program: Male Engagement in RMNCAH+N Services in Kebbi State

## Background

Gender equality and social inclusion implementation began in January 2021 for antenatal care (ANC) and April 2021 for family planning (FP) in Kebbi

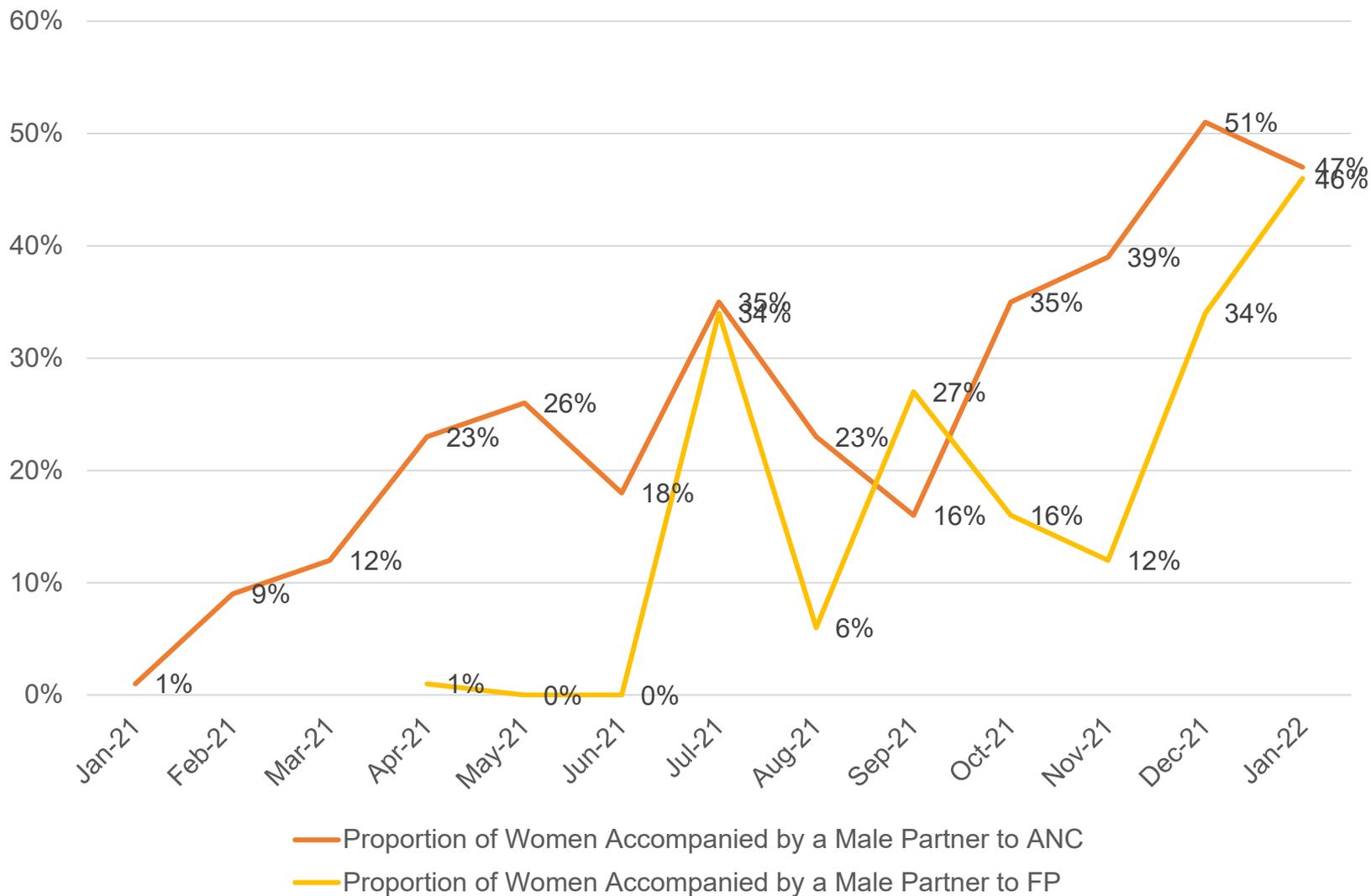


## Learning Lab Initiative

- Engaging men as allies and champions of health
- Tackling harmful traditional norms
- Promote male-friendly space in the healthcare facility
- Address couples' decision-making and women's autonomy
- Use strong, high-quality indicators

(Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health plus nutrition = RMNCAH+N)

# Proportion of ANC and FP Appointments Attended by Male Partners at Maiyama Primary Healthcare Centers in Kebbi State



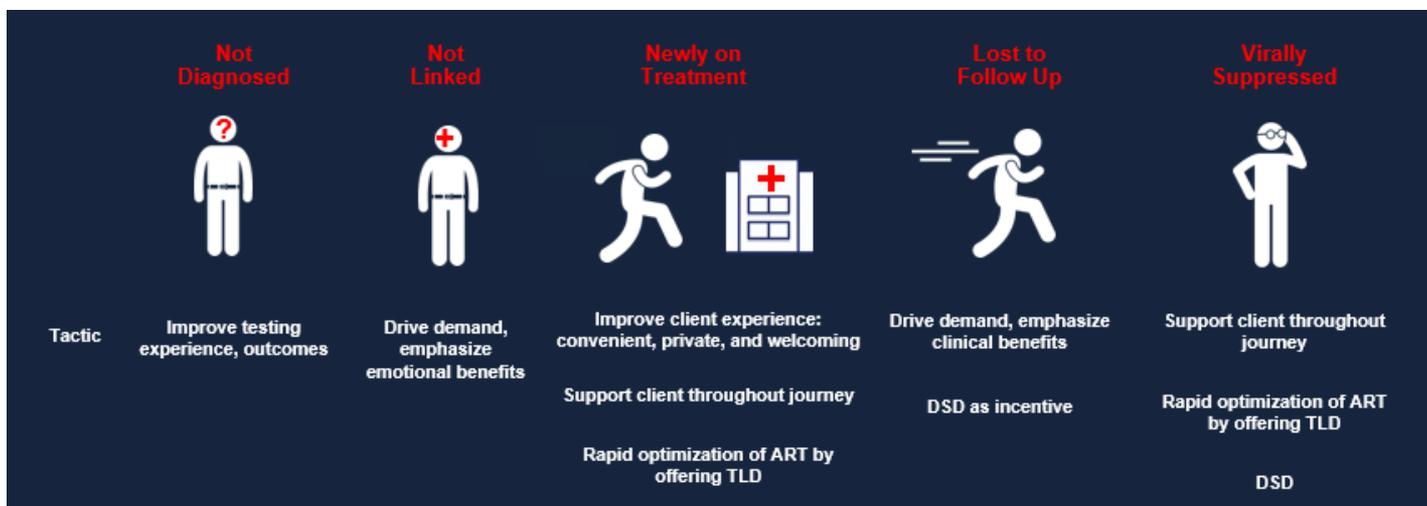
# MenStar Coalition: A People-Centered Approach to Accelerate HIV Treatment Services for Men



Well-coordinated partnership, bringing together **public sector HIV service delivery capacities** with private sector **consumer-oriented marketing** acumen, MenStar is an innovative way of doing business to reach men where they are, with the services they need.

- Chukua Selfie HIVST Campaign (Kenya)
- MINA: A Brand for Men (South Africa)
- MenConnect (South Africa)
- Dablap Meds (South Africa)
- Somos Iguais (Mozambique)

PEPFAR supports innovative approaches; enhances service delivery models; commodity procurement; and efficient testing strategies and facility-based innovations.



# Results: Success to Date



Since its launch in 2018, MenStar has reached an additional 2.4 million men with HIV treatment.

94% of those are virally suppressed.

Source: PEPFAR MER Data (TX\_NEW and TX\_PVLS), Baseline 2018 Q4 – FY21 Q3

# To Learn More...



## MenStar Coalition Website

<http://www.menstarcoalition.org>

## MenStar Strategy

<https://menstarcoalition.org/strategy/>

Contact:

Neeta Bhandari, Acting Deputy Director, Private Sector Engagement, U.S. Department of State/PEPFAR:  
[bhandarin@state.gov](mailto:bhandarin@state.gov)

### Acronyms

AGYW: adolescent girls and young women  
ART: anti-retroviral therapy  
ARV: anti-retrovirals  
DSD: decentralized service delivery  
HIVST: HIV self-testing  
PPP: public-private partnership  
TLD: Tenofovir, Lamivudine, and Dolutegravir

# Panel Discussion

**Moderator:**  
Julie Pulerwitz,  
Population Council



## Panel #2

Emerging innovations and practices for meeting men's and boys' needs and priorities around healthcare access and use

### Speakers:

- Ehi Adejo-Ogiri, Jhpiego
- Charlotte Pahe, Population Services Kenya
- Vitumbiko Namondwe and MacBain Mkandawire, Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)
- Dorcas Manortey, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Ghana

# The Big Idea: VALOR

With support from USAID through PEPFAR, the Reaching Impact, Saturation, and Epidemic Control (RISE) program used human-centered design “lite” approaches to develop and test empathy-powered social media messaging, along with virtual navigators to increase uptake of first-time HIV testing, treatment and care among undiagnosed/unlinked Nigerian men 20-34 years.



**If we...**

Create resonate creative concepts for social media

Empathetically connect to men’s deep concern and desires

Invite men to virtually connect with a person who is knowledgeable and relatable



**And we...**

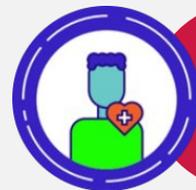
Establish a network of virtual navigators

Who field questions and screen early in their decision process

While addressing personal needs and concerns

Link men to community HTS and self-testing

In a way that is supportive, empathetic and confidential



**Then...**

At-risk untested and unlinked men aged 20-34 will get linked and (re)linked to care



VALOR: Virtually Accelerating Linkage Of Men to Reframed HIV Services



# The VALOR Insights & Secret Sauce: Resonant Promise + Reason to Believe

During prototyping men consistently preferred and requested tender depictions of support, joy and love, rather than isolating pictures showing men conquering challenges all alone through brute strength.

| VALOR Insights   | So Instead of....   | VALOR's approach...  |
|--|---|--|
| Men are lonely in their fear, feel ashamed   | Minimizing men's fear by saying "there's nothing to fear"     | Reassures men that feeling nervous is normal   |
| Isolation is worse than death  | Telling men to "Man Up" and face their fear                   | Promises men that a VALOR guide will be a trusted friend helping them connect with the courage inside them |
| What matters most: love, friendship, sex, belonging  | Pressuring men to protect their families (playing on guilt)   | Reassures men that their families will still love them and be safe   |
| Risk-based, general messaging may imply men are irresponsible and uncaring- men can't relate | Implying men are at risk because they have been irresponsible | Meets men where they are with empathy and understanding  |
| Courage is defined as social support. Being supported and loved is courage                   | Showing images where men are in charge                        | Depict loving and egalitarian relationships between men and women  |



No judgement, no shame, celebrate him at every step.

## Claim Courage

- **You're not alone**
- Testing is scary for everyone.
- You will find the courage because our virtual VIP Guides are here to help you.

Courage comes through doing hard things with support

## Keep What Matters

- **You're Loved: friends and family**
- You will still be loved because new treatment makes it so you cannot transmit the virus to anyone else.

Social isolation is death

## Enjoy Life

- **You Feel Good, Thrive**
- You can continue to have fun and thrive anxiety-free, because the new treatment is so easy; just one pill a day!

One pill a day? Sounds easy!

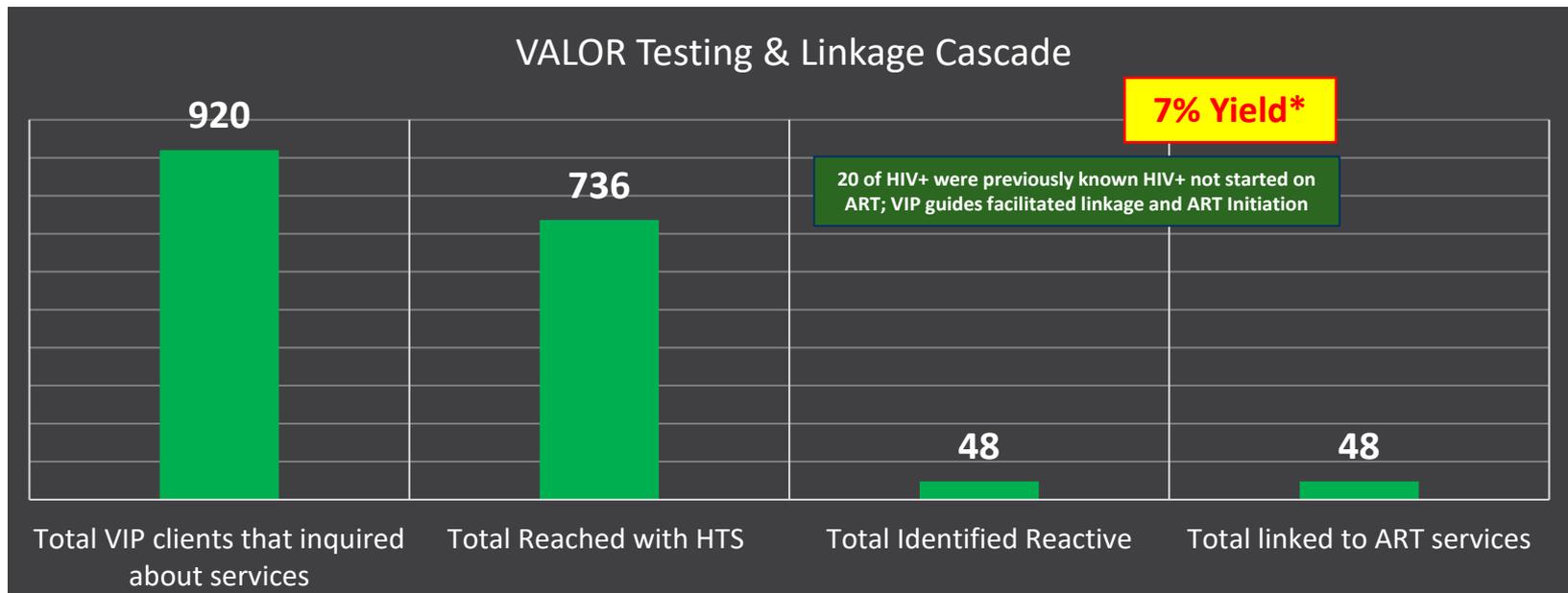
"If you massage a man's ego very well, you can get him to do anything."

-VALOR focus group participant



# VALOR Results: A Snapshot

After three months of small-scale implementation, VALOR reached thousands of men with anti-stigma messages, engaged 920 men via WhatsApp, connected at least 736 men to HIV testing services. 48 men were identified HIV+ and linked to ART care (given a yield of 7%). RISE-Nigeria followed up with VALOR clients and continued the use of VALOR messaging in RISE-supported states



Cumulative VALOR VIP Guides Data 3 Sept – 12 Dec 2020 – ( Pilot Stage)



# Acknowledgments

This presentation was made possible with support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, through the United States Agency for International Development funded RISE program, under the terms of the cooperative agreement 7200AA19CA00003. The contents are the responsibility of the RISE program and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



# Leveraging Innovation & Human-Centred Design for Sustainable HIV Self-Testing Market in Kenya



**Project Name:** HIV Self-Testing (HIVST) Challenge Fund Project

**Project Goal:** Support the Kenyan government to attain first 95 for HIVST with a focus on at-risk men 20-34 years old.



- Project Objectives**
1. Optimizing distribution and linkage models in the public and private sector that increase uptake of HIVST
  2. Create a sustainable supply of HIVST kits (available and accessible)
  3. Create an enabling environment for HIVST scale-up and sustainability



**Donor:** Children Investment Fund (CIFF) and Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) **Prime Partner:** PSI



**Project Duration:** 3 years (March 2019 – February 2022)

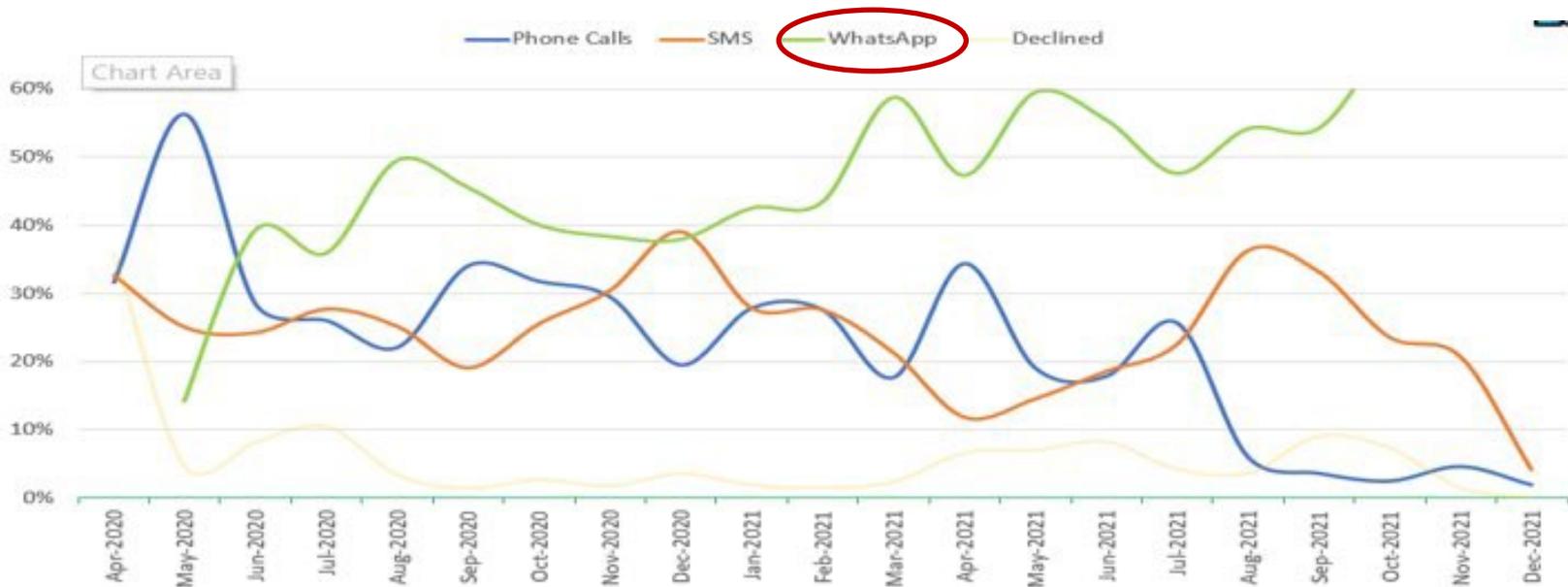


**Key Performance Indicators**

1. # of kits distributed by the project to users (125% target achieved)
2. # of pharmacies and retail outlets that stock HIVST kits (1, 100)
3. % of men 20-34 reached through the project who report testing positive for HIV using an HIVST and enrolled in ART -1465 tested positive and started on ART
4. % of HIVST users using linkage tools designed by the project -86%
5. % of HIVST users who report their test kit outcome-60%

# Innovation Highlight

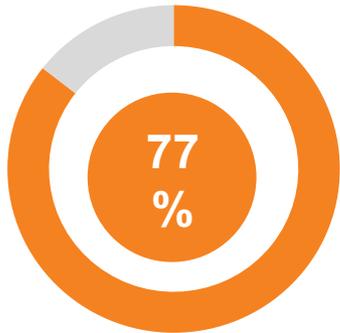
1. Innovate around service delivery models in the public and private sector that increase uptake of HIVST
  - a) Community-based distribution: 7 community-based organizations, workplace distribution, and vending machines
  - b) Targeted distribution utilized PEPFAR/DATIM results to determine locations with testing gaps among men
  - c) Pharmacy distribution: physical “brick and mortar” pharmacies, online pharmacies
2. Innovate models for linkage to services among at-risk men ages 20-34
  - Support client privacy and efficiently gather opt-in data-import for any follow-on programming
  - Utilize self-reporting on site through phone calls, texts and WhatsApp messages



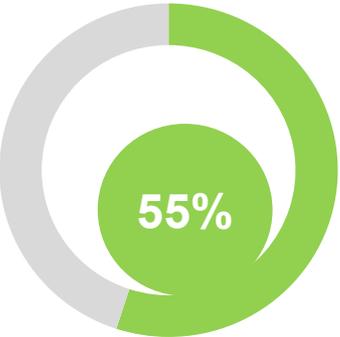
# Results/Impact of Work

305,263

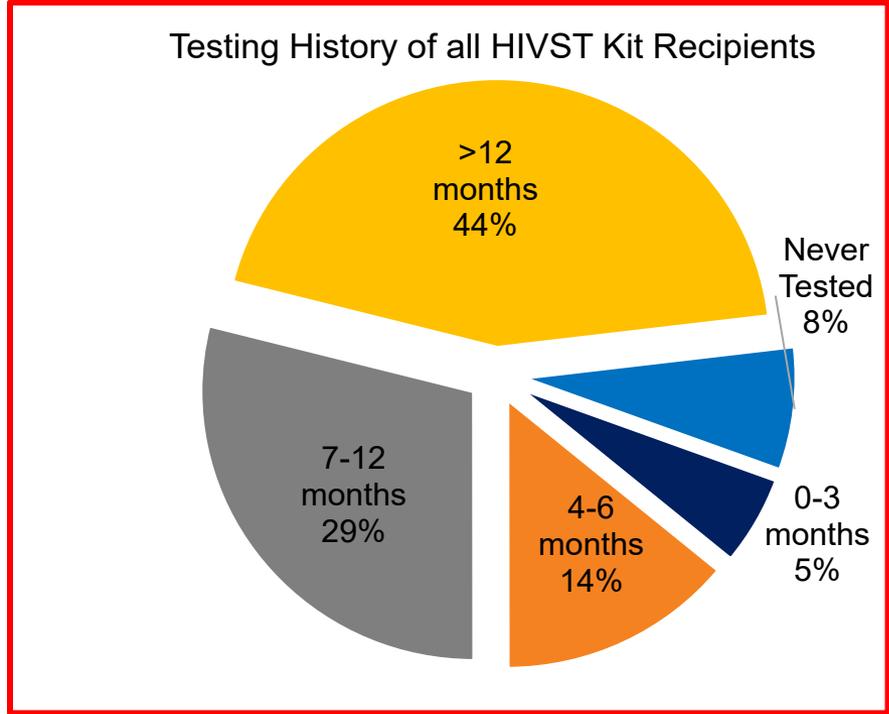
HIVST Kits distributed to users between July 2019 and December 2021



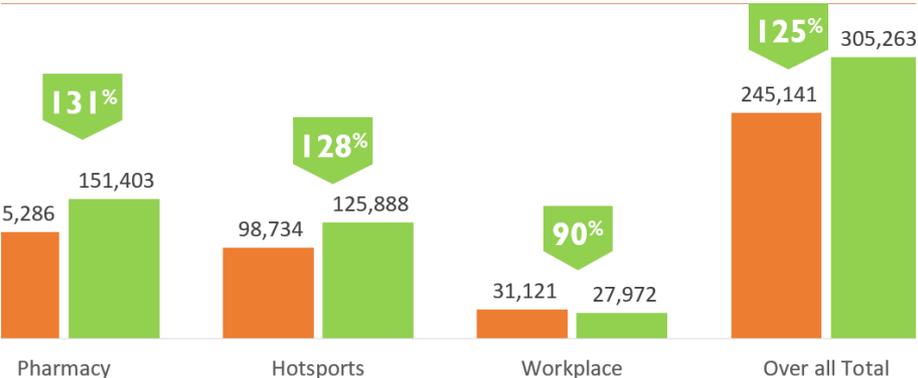
Percentage of HIVST kits distributed to men  
n=198,550



Men who reported that they were testing for the first time or had not tested in a period exceeding 12 months



Kits Distribution Targets Vs Performance



- **Project target:** 70% HIVST kits distributed to men
- Prioritize men eligible for HIV testing as per service guidelines in Kenya
- Engaged sales through community-based pharmacies
- Started with 500 pharmacies and grew to 1,100+ pharmacies
- Accounted for one-third of kits distributed by project

# Kumphala



Creating Safe Spaces to Engage Boys in Positive Masculinity for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Promotion



## Overview:

Boys' safe spaces and male engagement initiatives serve to promote positive, nurturing and collaborative images of men and boys.

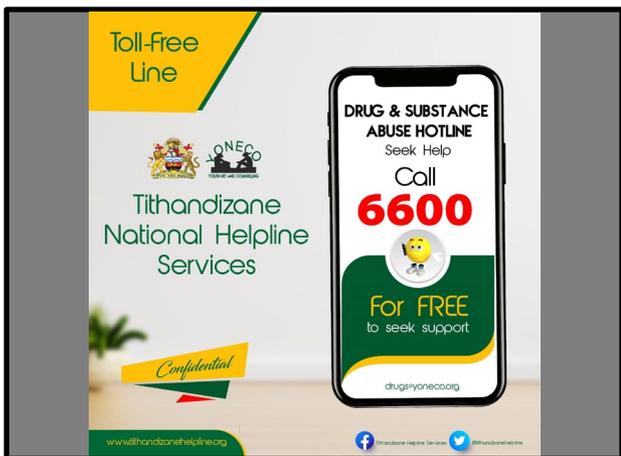
## Context and Program Scope:

- Kumphala are pre-existing cultural settings for socialization
- Modified space
  - ✓ Deep-rooted patriarchal culture, norms around male dominance and harmful conceptions of masculinity
  - ✓ Safe spaces for mentorship and role modelling of positive masculinities

# Kumphala: Innovation Highlight



- 120 boys mentors and male champions trained
- 896 boys and men participate in safe spaces and male action group sessions
- Kumphala curriculum on positive masculinities used
- Creative engagement using sports (e.g., football drills)



- Safe and confidential access to 24/7 helpline with referral services

- Psychosocial support
- Counseling
- Referral
- Linkage to services (HTS, STI, etc.)

| Age Group    | Access to mental health services | Anger and frustration | Drug and Alcohol Assistance | Health and Sexuality | Suicidal thoughts and suicide | Total      |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 10 - 14      | 0                                | 0                     | 9                           | 12                   | 0                             | 21         |
| 15 - 19      | 1                                | 0                     | 101                         | 118                  | 1                             | 221        |
| 20 - 24      | 2                                | 0                     | 76                          | 100                  | 1                             | 179        |
| 25 - 29      | 2                                | 1                     | 38                          | 30                   | 0                             | 71         |
| 30 - 34      | 0                                | 0                     | 22                          | 12                   | 0                             | 34         |
| 35 - 39      | 2                                | 1                     | 14                          | 9                    | 0                             | 26         |
| 40 - 44      | 0                                | 0                     | 10                          | 9                    | 1                             | 20         |
| 45 - 49      | 0                                | 0                     | 12                          | 5                    | 1                             | 18         |
| 50+          | 1                                | 0                     | 10                          | 5                    | 0                             | 16         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>8</b>                         | <b>2</b>              | <b>292</b>                  | <b>300</b>           | <b>4</b>                      | <b>606</b> |



- Bulk SMS systems available to users for free
- Let's Chill: mobile site for provision of digital access to SRHR information and services
  - Interlinked with social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp
  - Initiate live chat sessions moderated by professional counsellors and health personnel
  - Quiz and campaigns for young people with prize awards, including 'Let's Chill' branded IEC materials (e.g., t-shirts, caps, arm bands)



# Kumphala: Impact of Work

**ACCESS** to male -  
friendly, timely and  
convenient services

Assurance of  
**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Experience sharing  
in Male circles for  
**EMOTIONAL**  
support and  
connection

The Executive Director  
Youth Net and Counselling  
C/o Youth Leadership Development Centre  
P. O Box 471  
Zomba, Malawi.  
Email: [executive@yoneco.org.mw](mailto:executive@yoneco.org.mw)  
Website: [www.yoneco.org](http://www.yoneco.org)

# WAWA ABA Innovation: Bridging unmet FP/SRH gap among adolescents

Dorcas Manortey

Programme & Innovations Assistant, UNFPA Ghana

[manortey@unfpa.org](mailto:manortey@unfpa.org) / [dorcasm021@gmail.com](mailto:dorcasm021@gmail.com)

# Project Overview



- High unmet need for FP information and services among adolescent boys and girls ages 15–19 years (61%), much higher than national average (30%) (MHS, 2017)
- COVID-19 exacerbated existing barriers such as proximity to health facilities, attitudes of service providers, and fear of ridicule
- Call for innovation by UNFPA headquarters in 2019
- Prototyped and co-created with over 600 adolescents (including boys)
- Tested of actual platform with users (including boys) in five regions of Ghana

# The Wawa Aba Way



**WAWA ABA Innovation is a web-based platform, not an app**

It leverages digital technology and maps to aid adolescents (including boys) in finding and accessing FP/SRH services via nearest health facilities, clinics, and pharmacies.

- ❑ Maps users to 16,000 health/FP/SRH facilities, including adolescent-friendly services, across Ghana
- ❑ AI avatars aid translation from English into four Ghanaian local languages: Ga, Twi, Ewe, and Dagbani
- ❑ Collects anonymous responses from users with comments and feedback
- ❑ SRH information (YMK App) and GBV support (toll-free number 0800111222)

# Project Impact



## Impact on Men's and Boys' Access to SRH Services

- Wawa Aba dashboard analysis reported the following:
  - Over 120,000 young people have anonymously accessed the platform and used it for their FP/SRH needs
  - Out of registered users, **41%** were men/boys
- Web anonymity created the safest space for men and boys to access quality SRH information and services
- 40% of men and boys involved throughout prototype and design phase

## Key Learnings

- Partnership with key actors- government, CSOs, youth-led & youth-focused organisations, community leaders, etc.
- Human-centered design facilitated user acceptance and engagement
- Teamwork even in the face of COVID-19 pandemic

# Conclusion



- Technology remains a powerful tool that can be harnessed to address different barriers to FP/SRH access among men and boys



# Panel Discussion

**Moderator:**

Dominick Shattuck

Breakthrough ACTION, Johns Hopkins  
Center for Communication Programs



# Closing Remarks

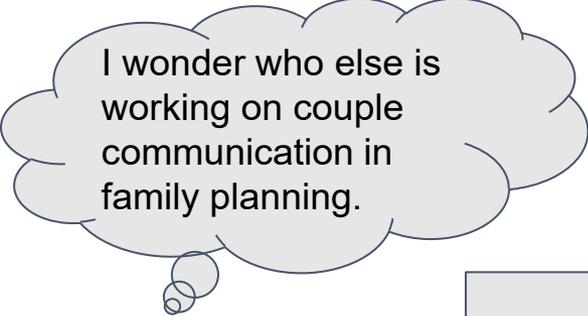


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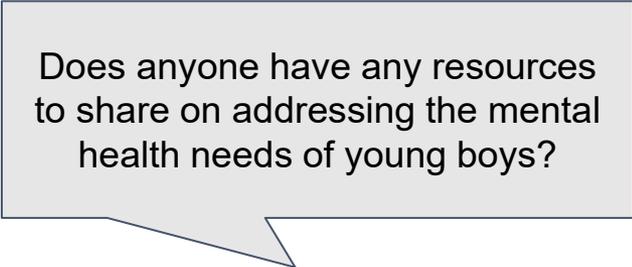


# Announcements and Wrap-up

- New resources
- Upcoming events
- METF online community



I wonder who else is working on couple communication in family planning.



Does anyone have any resources to share on addressing the mental health needs of young boys?



I'm writing to share an upcoming event about engaging men in HIV screening.

# Thank you!



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