

# **Partners for Positive VMMC Coverage: How Advocacy Partnerships Can Influence VMMC News Coverage**

Emily Bass, Program Director, AVAC

Joint WHO/PEPFAR Meeting on VMMC – September 25-28,  
2012

# About AVAC

- Founded in 1995 AVAC is an international non-profit organization that uses
- education, policy analysis, advocacy and community mobilization to accelerate
- the ethical development and global delivery of biomedical HIV prevention
- options as part of a comprehensive response to the pandemic.

# Think globally ... & locally

- AVAC works through partnerships in countries where research or implementation of new biomedical strategies is planned or ongoing
- Guided by the principle that local partners and stakeholders have the expertise in developing strategic plans and setting priorities
- An international focus on key issues
- A “go-to” source of information

# AVAC' s work on VMMC

- Anticipating results
- Engaging key issues – the Women' s HIV Prevention Tracking Project (WHiPT)
- HIV Prevention Research Advocacy Fellowship
- Coalition-building to gather evidence and effect change
- **Africans Telling the Truth about VMMC**
- **VMMC Communications Working Group**



# Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision

[www.truthaboutvmmc.org](http://www.truthaboutvmmc.org)

[www.facebook.com/africansformalecircummcision](https://www.facebook.com/africansformalecircummcision)

## **Who We Are**

We're a unified African voice speaking the truth of voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) as an HIV prevention intervention for us. We stand for accelerated roll out of VMMC for HIV prevention in Africa.

# **Building an African VMMC Movement**

# About Africans Telling the Truth

- Formed in early 2012 to consolidate African ownership and support of VMMC for HIV prevention
- A response to the dismissal of VMMC as an effective intervention by (mostly Western) denialists
- Stands for accelerated roll out of VMMC for HIV prevention in Africa
- Formed to help create a platform to facilitate ongoing conversations among different stakeholders across the continent

# About...

- Started via social media platform Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/africansformalecircumcision](http://www.facebook.com/africansformalecircumcision)

The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the page 'Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision'. The page is viewed as 'Angelo Kaggwa'. The top navigation bar includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and the user's name 'Angelo Kaggwa' with links for 'Voice' and 'Home'. Below the navigation bar, a status bar indicates the user is posting as 'Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision' and provides a link to 'Change to Angelo Kaggwa'. The main content area features a profile picture of a man in a white shirt, the page name 'Africans telling the truth a...', and an 'About' dropdown menu. A 'Liked' button is visible. A list of members follows, including names and locations such as 'S. Mukwaya - Entebbe, Uganda', 'Monja Minsi - Kampala, Uganda', 'Suleiman Kafeero - Kampala, Uganda', 'Dalia Nabunya - Kampala, Uganda', 'Harriet Atuyambe - Kampala, Uganda', 'Rose Zawedde - Kampala, Uganda', 'Zaituni Nabateregga - Kampala, Uganda', 'Richard Senkuuma - Kampala, Uganda', 'Rogers Mutaawe - Kampala, Uganda', 'Joseph Ochwo - Kampala, Uganda', 'Jacquelyne Alesi - Kampala, Uganda', 'Gift Maridadi - Kampala, Uganda', 'His Royal Highness Chief Mumena XI - Solwezi, Zambia', 'Mannasseh Phiri - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Clever Chilende - Lusaka, Zambia', 'FM - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Paul Banda - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Mwanei Simasiku - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Winifreda Phiri - Lusaka, Zambia', 'William Kilembe - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Roy Alkayo - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Elizabeth Chiyende - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Eliack Shikamo - Solwezi, Zambia', 'Mwelwa Chibuye - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Fred Mwansa - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Gershom Kabasu - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Wallen Sinkala - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Harry C. Tembo - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Dennis Chibuye - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Danny Lungu - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Victor Kangwa - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Mary Tembo - Lusaka, Zambia', 'Chamunorwa Mashoko - Harare, Zimbabwe', and 'Mika Chigoria - Harare, Zimbabwe'. On the right side, there is an advertisement section titled 'See Your Ad Here' with the text 'Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision' and a small image of a man in a white shirt. Below the image, it says 'We're a unified African voice speaking the truth of voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) as an...' and 'Like · Angelo Kaggwa likes this.' There is also a button labeled 'Advertise Your Page'.

facebook Search for people, places and things Angelo Kaggwa Voice Home

You are posting, commenting, and liking as Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision — Change to Angelo Kaggwa

Africans telling the truth a... About

✓ Liked

See Your Ad Here

Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision

We're a unified African voice speaking the truth of voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) as an...

Like · Angelo Kaggwa likes this.

Advertise Your Page

S. Mukwaya - Entebbe, Uganda  
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# Highlights

- 500+ African scientists, nurses, doctors, counselors, advocates, journalists, artistes, political and traditional leaders etc from at least 20 countries
  - Some high profile members include:
    - Dr. Specioza Wandira, Former Vice President, Uganda
    - His Royal Highness Chief Jonathan Mumena XI, Zambia
    - Hon. Blessing Chebundo, MP, Zimbabwe
    - Hon. Dr. Oburu Oginga, MP & Dep. Min. of Finance, Kenya



# Highlights...

- Ever-expanding membership base with vocal, engaged social media presence
- Rapid response to negative media coverage – eg letter to the editor in Botswana
- Key resources including “Debunking” tool kit for taking on Boyle & Hill-type myths and misconceptions (available on website)
- In person consultations and media trainings in four countries

# Highlights...

**facebook**                                        

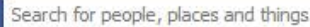
# Highlights...

**facebook**                                        

**facebook**               



## facebook



Voice Home ▾

## Africans telling the truth a...

Timeline ▾

August ▼

## Admin Panel

[+ Create A Page](#)

Now

August

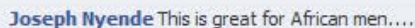
Launched

### Promote Your Page

Like · Comment · Share

2

👍 Wini Iklai Rachel, Sigirenda Simon and 2 others like this.



August 7 at 2:47am · Like

**Wini Ildai Rachel** Having read this, I realised Angello is not

# Highlights...

**facebook**    10 Search for people, places and things 

You are posting, commenting, and liking as Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision — [Change to Angelo Kaggwa](#)

 **Africans telling the truth a...** **Timeline** **Launched** **Admin Panel**

 **Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision** shared a link.  
July 17

Here is an update from the Clearinghouse on Male Circumcision about VMMC at the upcoming International AIDS Conference in Washington D.C. Details below:  
<https://app.e2ma.net/app/view/CampaignPublic/id:1407563.11082642832/rid:0a630e78d60c88cfed480bd2ace5a941>

**email : Webview**  
app.e2ma.net

Male circumcision for HIV prevention will be highlighted in more than 70 presentations and abstracts at the XIXth International AIDS Conference in Washington, DC, from 23 to 27 July.

Like · Comment · Share  1  1

118 people saw this post

 **Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision** shared a link.  
July 3

Here is some<http://www.the-star.co.ke/national/national/83013-africans-launch-male-circumcision-campaign> coverage of our initiative in a Kenyan newspaper today -

 **Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision** shared a link.  
July 10

Our initiative continues to receive coverage. See recent report by Kenyan journalist, Henry Neondo in an online publication "key Correspondents, a network of more than 250 journalists in 50 countries. See report below -  
<http://www.keycorrespondents.org/2012/07/06/facebook-used-to-promote-medical-male-circumcision/>



**Facebook used to promote medical male circumcision | Key Correspondents**  
[www.keycorrespondents.org](http://www.keycorrespondents.org)

In bid to fight a group of 'pseudo-scientists' who deny that circumcision has

Like · Comment · Share

 2 people like this.

 **Andrew Murunga** Though i missed the event,i have learnt alot from the report via fb link  
July 10 at 3:10pm via mobile · Like

 **Wini Iklai Rachel** Actually I saw a communication from KC Connect,,it was good  
July 12 at 8:25am · Like

 Write a comment

**+ Create A Page**

Now  
August  
**Launched**

**See Your Ad Here**

**Africans telling the truth about voluntary medical male circumcision**



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 Like · Angelo Kaggwa likes this.

**Promote Your Page**



# Highlights...

- Resources website: <http://truthaboutvmmc.org/>

## *Africans Telling the Truth About VMMC*

### Who We Are:

We're a unified African voice speaking the truth of voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) as an HIV prevention intervention for us. We stand for accelerated roll out of VMMC for HIV prevention in Africa.

### Why VMMC, Why Now?

Although VMMC alone cannot and will not end the AIDS epidemic, it can put a major dent in the epidemic. A recent UNAIDS report shows that new HIV infections in both women and men would be averted by 2025. In Zimbabwe, the impact would be even greater, up to 42% of new infections among men and women would be averted.

In terms of cost savings, it's projected that net savings from 2011 to 2015 due to averted treatment and care costs amount would be US\$16.5 billion. Scaling up VMMC today would therefore save lives and finances. And combining VMMC with other proven interventions such as abstinence, being faithful to partners of known sero-status, consistent and correct condom use, treatment of HIV infected persons, prevention of mother to child transmission and others will get us closer to a world free of HIV/AIDS.

### Contact:

Angelo Kagawa, [angelo@avac.org](mailto:angelo@avac.org)



This group stands for accelerated roll out of Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC) for HIV prevention in Africa. We reaffirm the fact that the evidence for VMMC is strong, consistent and undeniable. We believe that as scientists, advocates and others continue to work towards adding more options to the HIV prevention arsenal, we MUST make the best of the interventions we currently have, to begin to end the AIDS epidemic.

our intervention, our epidemic, our analysis. That's why we want to be part of conversations to help debate and find answers/solutions to these questions and concerns. Now!

Here are a number of resources to help spread the truth about VMMC:

- Renew commitment to male circumcision—Uganda's Minister of Health, along with a number of co-authors, wrote this piece appearing in Uganda's most read newspaper, *The New Vision*.
- *A Call to Action on Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision: Implementing a key component of combination HIV prevention*—A joint report from AVAC, National Empowerment Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya, Sonke Gender Justice Network and Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organizations
- *Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision Talking Points*
- *Separating Fact from Fiction: Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision—An evidence-based, proven HIV prevention strategy*
- Angelo Kagawa, AVAC staffer, speaking about his recent experience getting circumcised (read it in the *Ugandan New Vision* or hear Angelo read his story aloud)
- UNAIDS Country Update Report: *Progress in Scale-Up of Male Circumcision for HIV Prevention in Eastern and Southern Africa—Focus on service delivery*

# What lies ahead?

- Continue building & diversifying membership
- Launch members Listserv to ensure that all members are part of the conversations
- Build VMMC speakers' bureau
- Continue support members to gain skills to be proactive in developing and sending positive messages esp in the media
- Support key members in priority countries to proactively monitor VMMC scale up and coverage in media

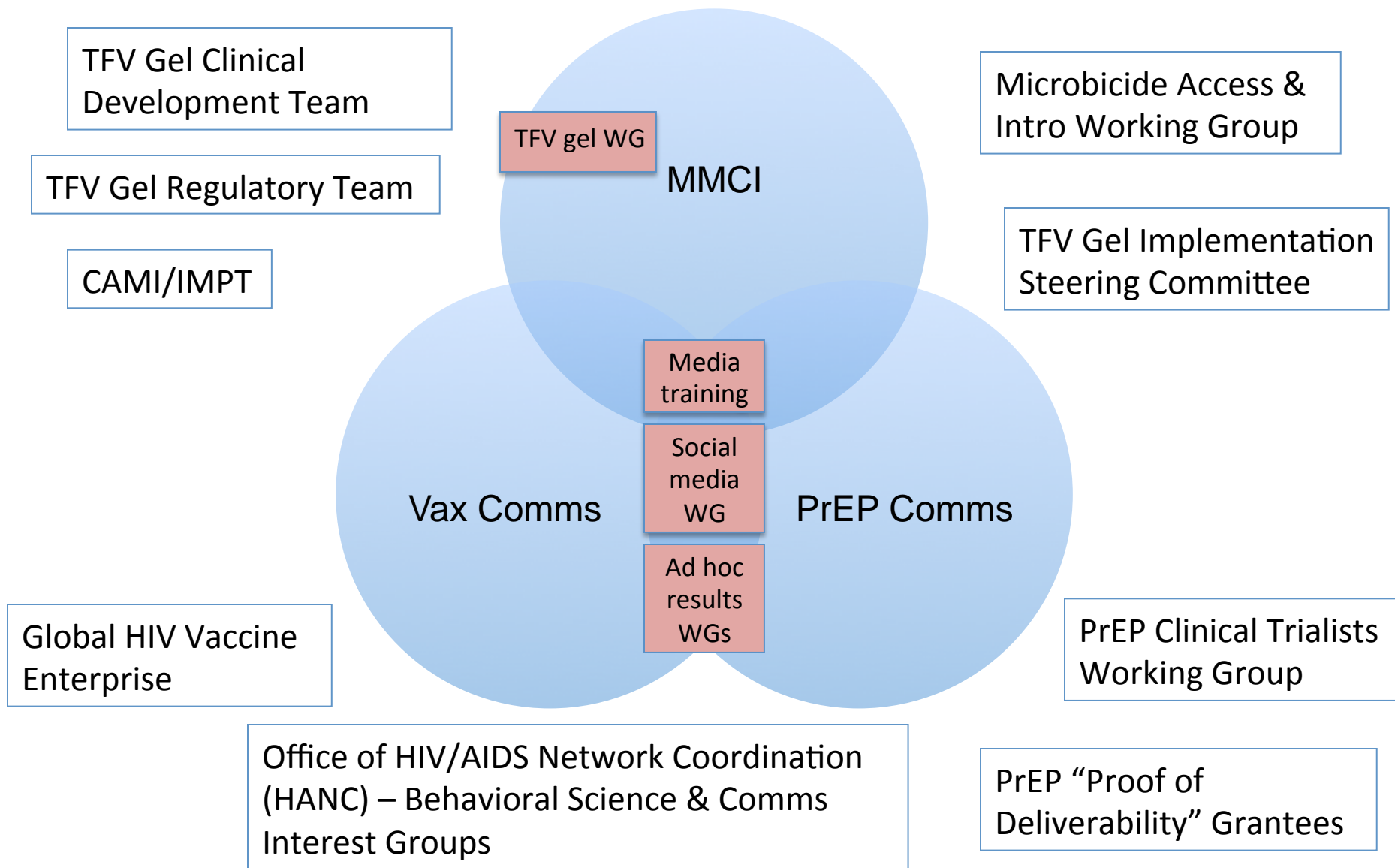
# VMMC Communications Working Group

- First call this quarter – draft terms of reference being finalized
- Proposed objectives include:
  - Build and sustain a network of communications representatives among different VMMC implementers, donors, research networks and sites, national VMMC task forces, and advocacy groups.
  - Develop channels of communication among CWG members with the goal of developing consistent messages and achieving shared communications goals when possible.
  - Maintain a consistent flow of information within this network and between this group and other prevention communications networks: the Microbicides Media and Communications Initiative, and the PrEP and Vaccine Communications Working Groups.



- Strengthen the ability of communications experts, implementers and national VMMC task forces to anticipate and respond to the communications challenges around VMMC and other HIV prevention needs.
- Support country-specific communications plans for different scenarios related to VMMC implementation, including demand creation and introduction of new devices.
- Support plans for grassroots and mass media marketing campaigns to generate VMMC uptake, including the targeting of women and older men, as well as more donor support and political will.
- Support informed and accurate media reporting on VMMC research and implementation in targeted countries and globally.
- Revitalize the communications aspect of the VMMC Clearinghouse website.

# Comms Working Groups



# Comms WG priorities

- Conduit of information through the 3 groups 80 + members
  - communicators from trial sponsors, networks, funders (+advocates, researchers and trial site staff for MMCI)
- Technology-specific conference calls; joint calls across groups to coordinate messages on emerging issues, share best practices
- Informational emails, news analysis
- Annual meetings, regional meetings, issues/messaging workshops

# Comms WG priorities

- Coordinated and accurate information about developments in the field (expected and unexpected) to media, other audiences
  - Key messages about the state of the field and the promise of HIV prevention research
  - Develop and maintain shared messages and accurate materials that reflect the reality of the field and explain the changes in the field
  - Work with WG members and partners to disseminate accurate messages and responding to changes in the field

# 2012 media outreach activities

- Media engagement in Africa
  - 2-day reporter/researcher training Johannesburg; reporters from Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia
  - Media round tables Kampala, Nairobi, Kisumu (June)
  - 2-day media training and conference support at AIDSVAX2012: reporters from Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, US, Latin America, Asia
  - Ongoing education and support of a cadre of reporters in key African countries
  - Additional round tables and reporter/researcher trainings

# Listening to reporters

"Some believe in the old traditional way – media has worked hard to break the barrier where you think the only way to do it is traditional."

– Ayanda, South Africa

"Hill & Boyle was a scandal. It played to stereotypes. That's why editors liked it." – Wycliffe, Kenya

"In the remote areas, there are no papers or radio. We have no reach. You need community leaders there."

-- Violet, Zambia

"We used to cover [VMMC] when the trials came and we got the results. That was exciting."

– Esther, Uganda

# We focus on the bad....

**The Standard**

**Zimbabwe: Is Circumcision Not a Costly Sideshow?**

**THE New Vision**  
UGANDA'S LEADING WEEKLY

**Uganda: Bishop Against Circumcision**

**DAILY  
MONITOR**

**Circumcision and HIV: are we being fed on half-truths?**

Posted by Agnes K. Namaganda

IN THE KNOW ON THE MOVE  
**Sowetan**  
**Foreskin clamp a horror**  
AUG 27, 2012 | CANAAN MDLETSHE | 10 COMMENTS

**Circumcision doesn't reduce HIV spread, study reveals**

# But the coverage is mostly good

## New Zimbabwe

NEWS

**MPs undergo HIV tests, circumcision**

21/06/2012 00:00:00

THE HERALD

**Zimbabwe: Male Circumcision Is the Way Forward**

**NewVision**

UGANDA'S LEADING DAILY

**Safe male circumcision kicks off in Ngora District** Publish Date: Apr 23, 2012

The Star (Nairobi)

**Kenya: New Medical Devices to Boost Circumcision**

**Nyanza residents warm up to infant male circumcision**



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# Discussing VMMC w/ reporters in JNB





# VMMC advocates in Kisumu



# NBO vmmc advocates





# VMMC advocates in Kampala

## June

