Assessing and enhancing sustainable VMMC services for HIV prevention in East and Southern Africa: Preliminary findings, 2021

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Background and rationale

Sustaining VMMC services

New guidelines
2020 guidelines with chapter and framework on sustainability

Vertical vs routine
Moving from vertical towards more integrated, routine services

Durability
Providing VMMC into the foreseeable future as relevant

Snapshot
Having a snapshot on sustainability

Current gap: To move towards sustainability, implementing countries need to understand where they stand in various facets of sustainability, to facilitate experience-sharing between countries and measure progress over time.
**Methods**

- WHO developed a set of 6 self-assessment tools, each based on one of the key health systems building blocks (left).
- Each building block further assessed by the 3-4 components
- Each component broken into 2+ “key component considerations” (KCCs) with one question each, e.g.:
  - 1. Support and supervision systems
  - 2. Active TWG
  - 4-8 KCCs per tool, 37 total

- Each KCC gave criteria for “early”, “intermediate” and “advanced” stages: a **defined vision** of the trajectory. These were KCC-specific, but broadly:
  - Early = essentially very minimal sustainable features
  - Intermediate = some sustainable features, but much to do
  - Advanced = Key sustainable features in place; the work needed is to sustain them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building block</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Finance        | • Resource allocation and mobilization  
|                | • Purchasing of services  
|                | • Financial risk protection |
| Health workforce | • Health workforce planning  
|                | • Pre-service and continuing education  
|                | • Management, support and supervision |
| Strategic Information | • Data collection and management  
|                | • Data quality  
|                | • Data analysis and use  
|                | • Safety monitoring |
| Supplies and equipment | • Norms and standards  
|                | • Procurement, supply and distribution  
|                | • Quality of VMMC supplies and equipment |
| Leadership and governance | • Programme leadership and coordination  
|                | • Accountability, oversight and regulation  
|                | • Inter-sectoral coordination  
|                | • Health sector plans and policies |
| Service delivery | • Access (strategic planning of health services)  
|                | • Reorienting service delivery models  
|                | • Empowering and engaging people  
|                | • Safety and quality |

- Distributed early 2021 to VMMC coordinators in 15 VMMC priority countries.
- Asked to fill with “representatives from VMMC national program management, health workers, patient groups, implementing partners, donors, other relevant intersectoral partners of the MOH and others…”
Analysis and data completeness

- Cleaned data, including clarifying answers with respondents
- **Prespecified rules to classify its overall stage on each building block.** In general:
  - “early” if more than two answers were “early”
  - otherwise, “intermediate” unless all answers were “advanced” (making “intermediate” the most likely overall score)
- Performed descriptive analyses:
  - **Which building blocks and KCCs were most often “early” and which “advanced”**
  - Comparisons of number “advanced” between country groups:
    - by region (southern vs. eastern)
    - by program age (launched pre-2008 vs. not)
    - by volume (>1 million done in 2020 vs. not)
    - by program scope (national vs. subnational only)

- **13/15 countries** able to return completed tools by time of analysis
  - South Sudan and Namibia to be added in future
- **12/15 ultimately answered all KCCs**
- Denominators based on the 13 participating countries:
  - 6 blocks*13 countries = 78 potential building blocks
  - 37 KCCs*13 countries = 481 potential KCCs
- In total, **77/78 building blocks** and **473/481 KCCs** were answered and staged
Key numbers

- Building block breakdown:
  - **Only 17%** “advanced” (13/77)
  - 57 “intermediate” (74%)
  - 7 “early” (9%)

- More countries “advanced” in Supplies

- More countries “early” in Finance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Service Delivery</th>
<th>Strategic Information</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Early</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Not staged</td>
<td>Early</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Colors indicate the level of sustainability:
- **Red** very minimal sustainable features
- **Yellow** some sustainable features, but much to do
- **Green** Key sustainable features in place; work needed to sustain them
Findings: Comparing numbers of “advanced” blocks between countries using various groupings

- Building block breakdown:
  - **Only 17% “advanced”** (13/77)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Eastern vs. Southern</td>
<td>12/13 building blocks self-scored as advanced were in a southern African country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>reporting &lt; or &gt; 1 million VMMCs conducted in 2020</td>
<td>10/13 building blocks self-scored as advanced were in a high-volume country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of program</td>
<td>started before vs. after 2008</td>
<td>No notable difference by age (6 advanced blocks in 5 “early” countries; 7 in 8 “late” countries)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scope of program</td>
<td>National vs. primarily subnational (= Kenya and Ethiopia)</td>
<td>No notable difference by scope (1 “advanced” block among two subnational programs; 12 among 11 national programs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Most “advanced” and most “early” KCCs by building block (1/2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Block</th>
<th>KCCs most often “advanced” (# countries/13 total)</th>
<th>KCCs most often “early” (# countries/13 total)</th>
<th>Countries with most “advanced” KCCs (#/total KCCs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>• MC part of national essential package (8/13)</td>
<td>• No diverse mix of funding mechanisms and sources (9/13)</td>
<td>• South Africa (8/8)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• No remuneration of providers for quality MC (6/13)</td>
<td>• Zambia (5/8)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• No harmonization of donor-financed elements with national budget (5/13)</td>
<td>• Botswana (4/8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Workforce</td>
<td>• Clear mechanisms for provider ongoing training and education (8/13)</td>
<td>• VMMC not a national requirement for pre-service training (5/13)</td>
<td>• South Africa (4/4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• National system for supportive supervision (8/13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mozambique (4/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Information</td>
<td>• Full country-led safety monitoring system in place (9/13)</td>
<td>• No standard data disaggregation by geography (3/13)</td>
<td>• Zimbabwe (4/5)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Country-owned, high-quality data management/reporting system (8/13)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Mozambique (3/5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Most “advanced” and most “early” KCCs by building block (2/2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Block</th>
<th>KCCs most often “advanced” (# countries/13 total)</th>
<th>KCCs most often “early” (# countries/13 total)</th>
<th>Countries with most “advanced” KCCs (#/total KCCs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Supplies and Equipment          | • Waste management system (11/13)  
• Requirements and specifications for MC equipment/supplies (9/13)                                          | • Procurement and distribution of supplies is still vertical (4/13)                                              | • Botswana, Ethiopia, 3 others (5/5 KCCs)          |
| Leadership and Governance       | • MC part of national essential package (12/13)  
• Clear mechanisms for partner coordination (12/13)                                                              | • No national VMMC sustainability document, officially launched, fully operational (4/13)                       | • Zambia (7/7)  
• South Africa (7/7)                                      |
| Service Delivery                | • National quality standards and safety systems in line with WHO/UNAIDS (12/13)  
• Clear referral systems from VMMC to other services (10/13)  
• Comprehensive assessment (10/13) | • (no KCC had more than 2/13 countries staged “early”)                                                            | • Zambia (7/7)  
• Mozambique (7/7)                                      |
Findings: Other visualization types in full report
Block-level data can hide substantial differences on the KCC level

+ Nearly identical distributions on building block level, but more yellow above vs. more green below on KCC level
+ This arises largely because the block-level criteria for “intermediate” are so broad
Top 4 key messages

• Countries are very geared and motivated to work on sustaining VMMC services

• There is a lot of work, support that remains to be done

• The path to sustainability will differ from country to country with common denominators being health systems and building blocks.

• Moving towards sustainability is a long game. Sustainable funding remains the weakest link and countries will still need support
Next steps

• Early 2022: more detailed data validation calls with countries

• Full report using validated data will also include country-specific two-pagers, and general and country-specific recommendations

• Experience-sharing forums and work on next phase of:
  • Developing and prioritizing actions and joint follow up plans

In other news...

• Newly released WHO technical brief on reaching those at higher risk for HIV with VMMC

• Online at https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240039797

• Grateful thanks to all who contributed!

• Please disseminate in your programs and countries