Creative Brief:  
Older Men to go for Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision (VMMC)

I. Strategy

a. Purpose

(Why are we creating the communication?)

We want this audience (older men) to access VMMC to reduce their risk of HIV and remove the barriers to accessing the service.

b. Objectives

(What are we asking the audience to do/think/ or feel?)

THINK
- Know and understand detailed facts regarding and process and benefits of VMMC
- Think they are susceptible to HIV and VMMC could help reduce their risk
- Think that they are able to go for VMMC
- Think their partners have a role to play throughout the process

DO
- Abstain from sex and masturbation for 6 weeks after surgery  KEY
- Talk to your sexual partner about VMMC
- Access VMMC services TOGETHER (supports acting as a couple)
- Go for VMMC, including HTC
- Talk to YOUR partner on how YOU can effectively abstain from sex together while the wound is healing  SUPPORT
- Go for all check-ups, or return to the clinic for any complications ASAP
- Use condoms consistently with all partners  KEY
- Reduce your number sexual partners  SUPPORT
- Support and encourage peers to take up VMMC for HIV prevention and other broader male reproductive health benefits  SUPPORT

FEEL
- That VMMC is safe and beneficial for adults for HIV prevention (and better family health?)
- Confident that they (husband and wife) can undertake the process together
- That involvement of their partner is very important throughout
- Confident that they can abstain for 6 weeks and go for all check-ups
- Comfortable that they can share the benefits and experience of VMMC with others (friends, peers)
### c. Competition

(What behaviors/attitudes are competing with ours?)

- 50% of adult men in Malawi have concurrent partners
- Condom use is very low with non-spousal partners—only 35% of men and 25% of women use a condom always, with non-regular partners.
- Low uptake of HTC by older men
- Low awareness of the facts regarding and benefits of VMMC
- Little knowledge about the difference between traditional circumcision and VMMC
- Misconceptions around VMMC (sexual performance, infertility)
- Fear of pain related to the procedure
- Fear of complications (bleeding and infection)
- Perception that religion and/or culture determines who undergoes VMMC
- Few role models or champions for VMMC at this stage
- Norms that encourage MCP that could impact on post-surgical abstinence and long term partner reduction.
- Decision to undergo VMMC could reinforce lack of trust between men and women

### d. Audience

(To whom do we wish to speak?)

Males aged 25 – 49 in non-circumcising communities

### II. Creative

#### a. Key Issue or Fact

(What is the most important challenge to achieving our objectives? What is the best opportunity to achieve our objectives?)

**Challenge:** Males aged 25 - 49 have a low risk perception about HIV; they’re not convinced of the appropriateness of VMMC as a preventive measure; and they lack the self-efficacy to discuss or go for VMMC with their partners. Even if they did agree with VMMC, they do not want to join a queue for VMMC with young boys and adolescents

**Opportunities:** The existence of community outreach by increasing number of partners for information about VMMC, increase in the availability of VMMC services, government and donor support for VMMC, increasing number of men who have been circumcised and are willing to talk about the experience. Increased approach of couple communication in other health issues—PMTCT, testing, TB, safe motherhood, etc.
### b. Key Promise or Benefit

(What is the single most important benefit/choice to the audience so that they will adopt the behavior?)

- VMMC is a safe, clean, quick, free, effective way of reducing your risk of contracting HIV.
- Cleanliness
- Cervical cancer
- Other non-HIV benefits

### c. Support

(Why should the audience believe the key promise?)

- Extensive trials have shown that it provides partial protection against HIV
- (put together data)
- Testimonials from older men circumcised and their partners
- Leaders and decision makers support the efforts

### d. Message Statements

(Having been exposed to the message, what is the do able action that the audience should take? Combine the elements above to create a benefit oriented action)

If you go for VMMC, you will reduce the risk of HIV and STIs for you, your partner, and better protect the family (other larger benefits??) Need more emphasis on non-HIV benefits: cleaner, smarter, reduces cervical and penile cancer risks for women and men

- Be smart. Be clean. Be safer.
- Start of a new life for you and your partner
- New man, new model, new energy, new protection

### COMMUNITY LEADERS MESSAGES

- Promote VMMC, talk about benefits of VMMC
- Encourage the subjects (Males 25-49yrs of age) to go for VMMC services
- Communicate to their subjects on sites, dates, for VMMC services
- Assist on dispelling rumors and myths on VMMC
- Take an active role in informing service providers on any feedback from the community on VMMC
- As leaders, act as exemplars and go for VMMC

### PROVIDER KEY MESSAGES
• Inform and remind the man of all the required checkups (2 days, 7 days, 6 weeks)
• Inform and remind them of abstinence and the reason for it
• Necessity of regular condom use on continuing basis
• Encourage couple communication, testing, and VMMC (support from partner)
• Assuring client that VMMC is a very safe, clean procedure
• However, to report immediately if there are any adverse effects (spell them out)
• Explain all the benefits and responsibilities (be serious about it?)
• Providers need to be sensitive to clients, need a code of conduct