



How T-MARC's *Jipende!* Program is turning more beauty salons into centers for women health

Women normally spend long hours in beauty salons. Most of this time spent at the salon can however be considered as idle time, which can be better utilized to transmit pertinent family health and HIV/AIDS messages aimed at building women's knowledge, negotiating skills, advocating for correct and consistent condom usage and boosting women's confidence in product usage, especially for female condoms.

In a study conducted in 2008, the Tanzania Marketing and Communications (T-MARC Tanzania), a local NGO, discovered the potential of using hair and beauty salons as resource centres for women. The study involved salons located in a hot zone of Kinondoni district in Tanzania's commercial capital of Dar es Salaam. It was made possible with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Presidents Emergency Fund for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) .

The study examined the interaction between hair dressers and their clients as an avenue to disseminate health education materials and to increase awareness of HIV and other reproductive health issues. This study also discovered the possibility of selling affordable family planning methods to salon clients. With

these encouraging findings, T-MARC developed a strategy that would utilize the salons to provide peer education to women.

T-MARC employs a dynamic approach that brings together public and private stakeholders to design and implement health and social communication campaigns that increase the adoption of healthy behaviors and support the sustainable growth of health products, social services and society as a whole.

Starting 2009, T-MARC developed the Jipende Grants Program. *Jipende* is a Swahili word meaning “love yourself”. The program aims were to increase male and female condom use among sex workers and women engaged in transactional sex. To help achieve this goal, the program helped sex workers and women engaged in transactional sex to improve their negotiation skills for using condoms, referred them to clinics for testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and worked with owners of areas classified as “hot spots” to provide a safe environment and advocate for 100% condom use.

During the process, T-MARC worked with nine organizations across eight regions of Dar es Salaam, Mara, Morogoro, Kagera, Kigoma, Ruvuma, Shinyanga and Tabora to implement peer education and outreach programs.

Implementation of the Jipende Grants Program wasn't without its own challenges. One of the key learnings was that cultural attitudes and stigma discourage women from attending training and being referred to as sex workers or women engaged in transactional sex.

“Although we classified a number of women in our area as WETS (women working in transactional sex), they bolt as soon as we mention the purpose and content of our training. Therefore we are relieved that the programme uses

approaches that are culturally sensitive to engage the communities we serve,” said Pascal Kilaguala from the Tabora NGO’s clusters that implemented the program in the region.

In February 2010, T-MARC decided to expand the *Jipende!* (sex worker grants) concept by building on the existing training methodology and curriculum. The aim of the pilot was to introduce more women to the female condom and to improve condom availability at a community level, specifically in the kind of locations where women commonly meet.

A feasibility study was conducted and based on the results; twenty-one (21) beauty salons were selected to become *Jipende!* Centers for Womens’ Health. The salons are situated around Dar es Salaam city, in five neighbourhoods of Sinza, Manzese, Buguruni, Namanga and Kinondoni which lie within two of the city’s administrative districts of Ilala and Kinondoni. All the selected salons are close to HIV hot-spots and in areas of known high-risk behavior.

T-MARC trained two beauticians from each of the selected 21 salons. In addition to stocking and selling both male Dume and female Lady Pepeta brand of condoms, the trained beauticians were expected to provide advice on family planning and reproductive health using the knowledge gained through their training. The four day training curriculum for the beauticians was spread over one month and concentrated on: preventing HIV, understanding and avoiding sexually transmitted infections, promoting the female condom; educating about family planning as well as cervical and breast cancer and building entrepreneurial skills. The module also intended to give incentives to the beauticians to attend the sessions, empower them to grow their businesses and to understand the financial incentives inherent in the initiative.

All graduates of the course received a certificate and the salons were branded as “*Jipende!* Resource Centers for Women’s Health. Each was provided with startup stock of male and female condoms as well as a pelvic model for demonstrating the female condom. By July 2010, the pilot was up and running in the 21 salons in Dar es Salaam.

“Besides recruiting 21 salons to become *Jipende!* Centres for Women Health, other successes of this first wave included the training of 42 hairdressers, beauticians and salon owners to become health educators. Over 750 female clients to the saloons were also educated on the use of the female condom,” revealed T-MARC’s Public Relations and Communication’s Manager, Maurice Chirimi.

Speaking to The Guardian recently, Chirimi said that the *Jipende* program closed in 2010 after achieving its goal of giving in depth peer education focussing on correct and consistent use of Lady Pepeta female condoms to 1,500 sex workers and women engaged in transactional sex.

“T-MARC evaluates all programs and draws key learnings to inform and improve future projects. One of the learnings from the pilot phase of the *Jipende* program was that many women who receive education from the *Jipende* salons are reluctant to purchase the female condoms because they are afraid that their partners will think they are promiscuous.”

T-MARC has now used the learnings obtained from the pilot program to refine the training curriculum and the implementation strategy to scale up the *Jipende!* Centres for Womens’ Health.

The new wave targets an additional 25 salons located in priority hot spot areas of Dar es Salaam and 25 new salons located in hot spot areas in urban areas of

Mbeya region. The project which has the blessings of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) will contribute to the reduction of national HIV prevalence rate of men and women age 15-49 years in Tanzania from 5.7% to 4% by September 2015.

“Training of the new salon attendants has already started and we aim to enlist at least 100 new peer educators,” Chirimi revealed. T-MARC will also invite the current trained attendants to one of the training workshops to refresh their knowledge and to share their experiences and challenges.

The project aims to increase the percentage of women engaged in high risk sexual behaviour who use female condoms and who recommend the female condoms to their friends. It will also allow Lady Pepeta female condoms to have at least 50 new accessibility points that are convenient to the target groups living in the hot spot areas.

“The secure and friendly atmosphere within the saloons provides women with a conducive environment where they can now learn important matters pertaining to sexuality, correct and consistent condom use and can now even pick up Lady Pepeta condoms for private use. We expect to reach over 3,000 Jipende! Hair salon clients in the main 12 week period of the project,” Chirimi said.

Furthermore the trained peer educators will continue to identify and educate other women about the consistent and correct use of condoms to reduce the risk of sexual transmission of HIV, sexually transmitted infection (STI) and unwanted pregnancies.

The Jipende! Resource Centers for Women’s are in line with T-MARC’s involvement in public health advocacy by developing and implementing

evidence-based, evaluated programs for social impact and leveraging private/public resources for these initiatives. The organisation engages relevant private-sector companies and businesses in win-win partnerships for social programs.

T-MARC works with Tanzanian businesses to develop and/or expand markets for health products in HIV/AIDS prevention and care, family planning, child survival, water and sanitation and infectious diseases that achieve a demonstrable and sustainable health impact. The Organization forms commercial partnerships on a “joint risk, joint investment” approach, that is in many ways evident within the Jipende hair and beauty saloons project.

T-MARC has been socially marketing female condoms since 2005 through commercial networks and NGOs. To date, over 3.4 million Lady Pepeta brand of female condoms have been sold and distributed across the country especially in areas with disproportionately high rates of female HIV prevalence, and/or high migration of seasonal sex work activities.

T-MARC Tanzania is an independent, Tanzanian, not for profit, non governmental organization (NGO) working in Tanzania, for the benefit of Tanzanians. The organization originated from the T-MARC project that was managed by the Academy for Educational Development (AED) and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

END