



## PRESS RELEASE

### Using Beauty to Fight HIV/AIDS

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**Mbeya:** The ongoing battle against HIV/AIDS received a further boost this week with the graduation of 50 Jipende! Hair Saloon beauticians who have qualified as peer educators on HIV/AIDS and family planning.

Drawn from 25 beauty saloons across Mbeya town, the new set of graduates brings to 140 the total number of saloon attendants that have so far graduated from the Jipende! Hair Saloons programme that aims to turn beauty spots in Tanzania into resource centres for women's health.

'These new graduates from Mbeya join the 48 who graduated in Dar es Salaam earlier this year and the 42 that graduated in the first wave held last year,' Prisca Rwezahura, T-MARC Tanzania's Technical Director, revealed.

T-MARC is a local NGO that developed and is implementing the innovative behaviour change communication approach that introduces more women to the female condom and improves condom availability at the community level, specifically in the kind of locations where women commonly meet. Normally, women spend long hours in beauty saloons. This idle time is now being utilized to transmit HIV/AIDS messages aimed at building women's negotiating skills and boosting confidence in product usage.

T-MARC trains two beauticians from each of the selected saloons. In addition to stocking and selling both male and female condoms, the trained beauticians also

provide advice on family planning and reproductive health with knowledge gained through their training. The four day training curriculum for the beauticians is spread over one month and concentrates on; preventing HIV, understanding and avoiding sexually transmitted infections, promoting the female condom; educating about family planning, cervical cancer, breast cancer and building entrepreneurial skills.

Thus far, 70 salons located in the HIV 'hot-spot' areas of Dar es Salaam and Mbeya have been enrolled in the program where the new peer educators are expected to reach over 3,000 of their regular clients with one on one infection, prevention and control (IPC) messages and female condom demonstrations. During the 12 week course of the program, over 5,000 pieces of HIV prevention, information, education and communication (IEC) materials will also be distributed to the Jipende! Saloon clients, together with the distribution of 150,000 pieces of *Lady Pepeta* female condoms through the Jipende! Saloons. Another 600,000 condoms will be distributed through other channels.

'The overriding perception of hair salons is areas where women go to pursue beauty and engage in gossip. This innovative program is using the discreet, secure and friendly atmosphere within the saloons as an environment where women can now learn important matters pertaining to sexuality and family planning including the correct and consistent use condoms,' T-MARC's Marketing Manager for HIV/AIDS, Lilian Silingi noted.

The intervention will also increase the percentage of women engaged in high risk sexual behaviour who use female condoms and also increase the percentage of women engaged in high risk sexual behaviour who recommend the female condoms to their friends (trial). Research has found out that effective HIV Aids prevention is higher among peer groups that encourage each other to use protection.

Supported by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and with the technical support of Population Services

International (PSI) through the Tanzania Social Marketing Programme (TSMP), the expansion of the Jipende! Hair Salons programme will further T-MARC's goal of increasing the use of female condoms, especially among women engaging in high risk sex, thereby helping to reduce the national HIV prevalence rate in Tanzania.

According to the Tanzania National Health and --- census of -----, the rate of HIV infection among women in Tanzania is higher than that of men, with 6% of women currently infected, compared to only

This makes the prevention of new infections amongst women an urgent priority in the ongoing struggle to stop new infections.

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