

Mlinda Game: Enjoy your health – and protect hers

Teaching young men about HIV/AIDS through gamification

BACKGROUND

Approximately 17,000 adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in Tanzania are newly infected with HIV each year. In Tanzania, efforts to combat the spread of HIV, including among AGYW, have largely been advanced through public outreach using mass media such as radio and TV programs. However, these efforts reach only a limited audience, and many Tanzanians, especially young men, remain insufficiently informed about behaviors that increase risk for HIV infection among themselves and their female partners.



Photo Credit: Iroko Muhidini and Leyla Liana

PROBLEM

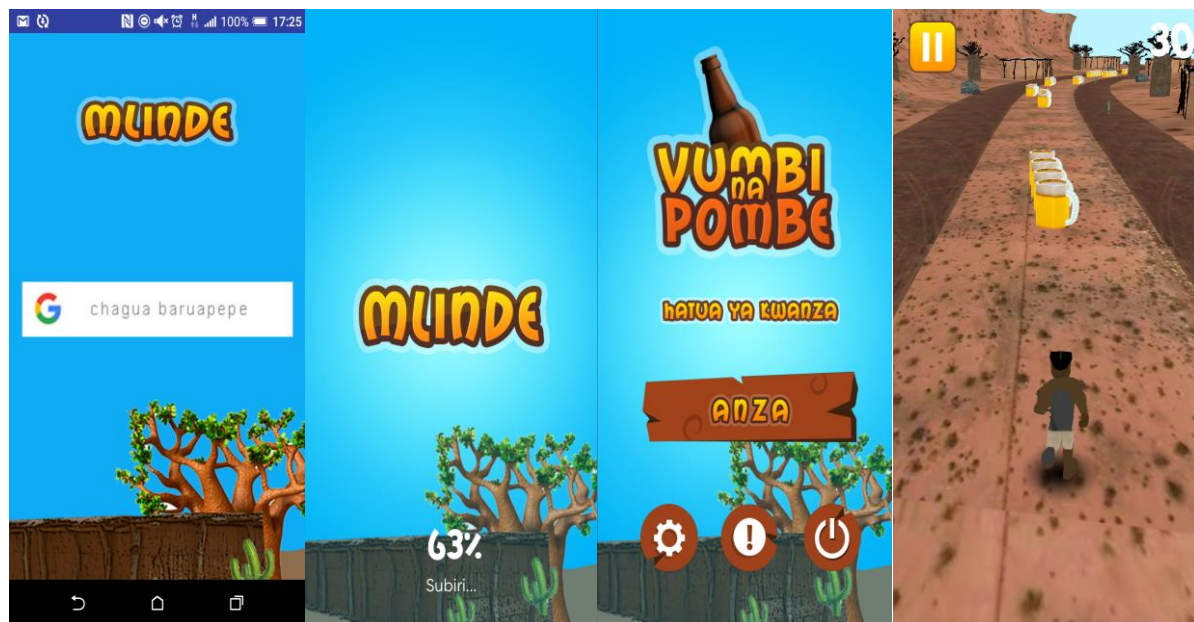
Insufficient knowledge among young men about HIV/AIDS and a lack of behavior-change programs targeting young men - especially regarding specific behaviors that can protect AGYW from HIV/AIDS - are significant challenges in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS. By using current data to identify gaps in HIV/AIDS knowledge and high-risk practices among young men aged 15 to 24 in Dodoma's colleges and universities, Leyla Liana and her team hope to tackle this issue. Thinking beyond traditional media, the team is developing a game that will educate these male partners, encourage behavior change, and collect data about behavior preferences that can inform outreach efforts.

SOLUTION

Gamification has been demonstrated to be a powerful tool in changing a person's behavior, and applying it to the fight against HIV/AIDS presents an innovative approach to supplementing the reach of traditional media. Mlinda is a mobile game application that will improve players' knowledge of HIV/AIDS and generate data about players' decisions that can be used to target behavior change solutions to this population.

PROCESS

In order to understand the needs of the target audience, the Mlinda team conducted a needs analysis as part of an HIV/AIDS Regional Stakeholders Workshop. Collecting requirements from the target audience - young men aged 15 to 24 at the University of Dodoma and Mipango Institute - the team was able to analyze the knowledge and practices of the target population relating to HIV/AIDS. The team drafted preliminary designs based on this information and is now working to develop the first prototype of the Mlinda game.



Screenshots showing the Mlinde Game Start Screens, Level 1 and Level 1 Game Play

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

The primary impacts anticipated from the Mlinde game are increased awareness of behaviors that augment the risk of HIV infection for the players (young men) and their female sexual partners. Gamification to change these risky behaviors should lead to a reduction in the spread of HIV. As a secondary benefit, data collected from the game will be shared with other stakeholders in the health sector to help them target their own interventions.

KEY COLLABORATOR

Leyla Hamis Liana is a computer scientist and instructor at the University of Dodoma, College of Informatics and Virtual Education. As a winner of the Data for Local Impact Innovation Challenge (DLIIC), Leyla received a grant of USD 25,000 to implement the Mlinde Game, which bridges the gap in HIV/AIDS knowledge and practices among male partners to protect their female partners.



DLIIC aims to engage, support, and connect Tanzanian innovators, developers, and solution providers to each other and to opportunities to make a difference in people's lives. To learn more, visit <http://www.dliinnovationchallenge.or.tz>.

