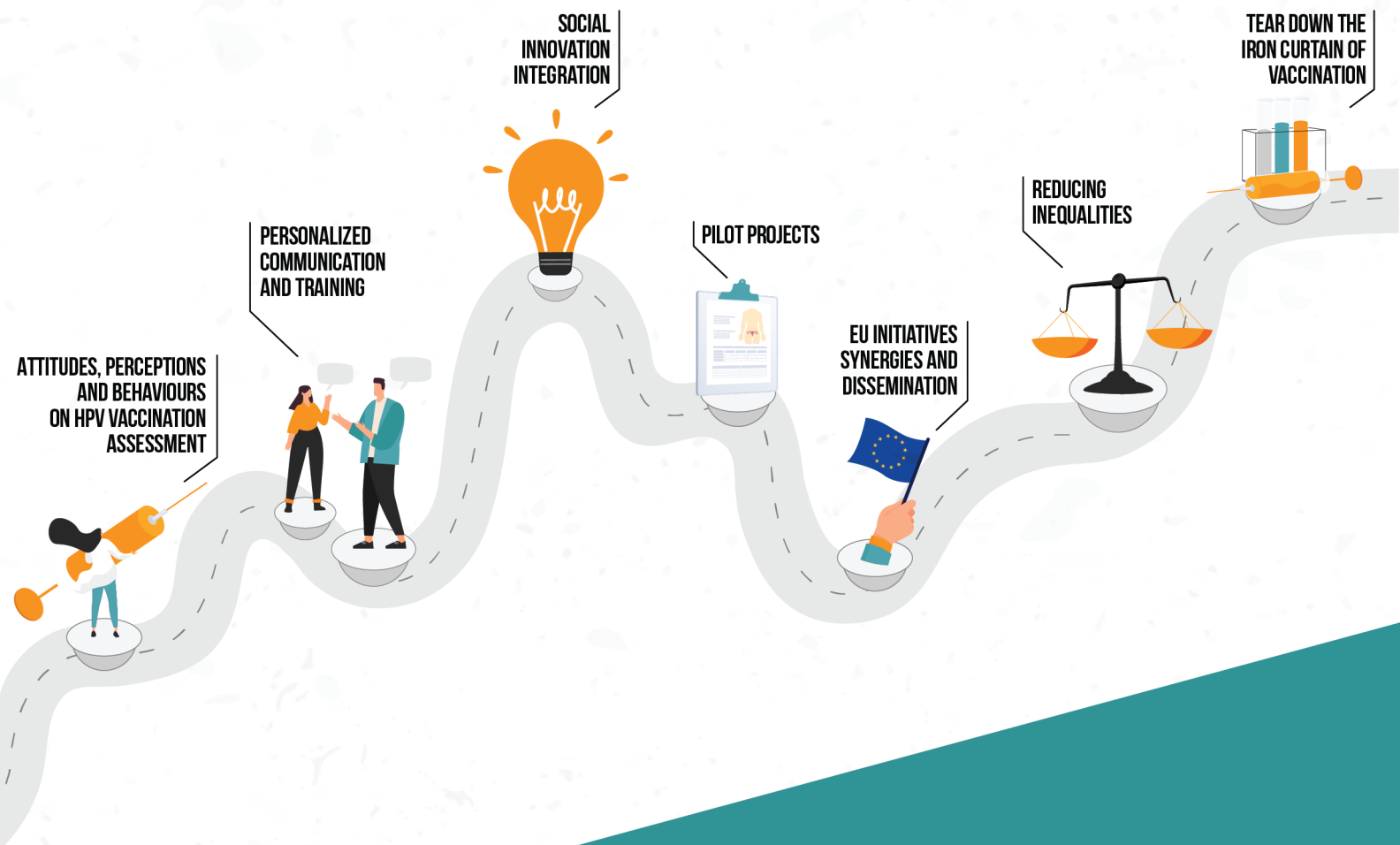


Rethink and Reduce inequalities in HPV vaccination through personalized communication and training, based on social innovation and behavioural determinants of health



# D6.3 Consensus document on the strategy to rethink and restart HPV vaccination

## January, 2025



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## ***MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU) - ReThink HPV Vaccination***

### ***Consensus document on the strategy to rethink and restart HPV vaccination***

***November 7, 2024***

#### **Preamble:**

The Renasterea Foundation for Women's Health, in partnership with the Center for Innovation in Medicine (InoMed) and the Eurocommunication Association, is implementing the project "Rethinking and Reducing Inequalities in HPV Vaccination through Personalized Communication and Training, Based on Social Innovation and Behavioral Health Determinants" (ReThinkHPVaccination) from February 2023 to January 2025. This initiative is co-funded by the European Union through the EU4Health Program.

The goal of the RethinkHPV Vaccination project is to support EU member states and EU-widening countries in rethinking and relaunching their HPV vaccination campaigns, bringing them closer to achieving the goals of the European Beating Cancer Plan and the Cancer Mission objectives regarding HPV vaccination and cancer prevention.

Cervical cancer remains one of the most preventable forms of cancer, thanks to vaccination against the human papillomavirus (HPV). However, widespread HPV vaccination faces numerous barriers, ranging from lack of information and awareness to limited access, cultural or personal hesitations, and insufficient communication of vaccination benefits by the medical community.

To overcome these obstacles, a personalized and innovative approach is needed, integrating social, medical, and behavioral sciences to create effective tools for prevention and improved public health.

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## **A Vision for a World Without Cervical and Related Cancers**

Increasing HPV vaccination rates is crucial for preventing HPV-related cancers and other health complications. A comprehensive approach involves multiple strategies engaging different segments of society. Here's a detailed look at how this can be achieved:

1. **Public Campaigns:** Public education is fundamental to increasing HPV vaccination rates. Large-scale educational campaigns that provide clear and accurate information about the vaccine's safety, efficacy, and benefits are essential. These campaigns should address biases, skepticism, and common fears, highlighting the vaccine's role in preventing cancers and other diseases. By disseminating information through diverse media channels—including TV, radio, social networks, and print—campaigns can reach a wide audience.

2. **Involvement of Healthcare Professionals:** Healthcare professionals play a crucial role in promoting HPV vaccination. Engaging doctors, nurses, and pharmacists through training and educational materials can ensure they are well-informed and confident in recommending the vaccine. Professionals should be encouraged to initiate discussions about HPV vaccination during routine check-ups, especially with the parents of preteens and adolescents. When healthcare professionals are proactive, the likelihood of vaccination increases significantly.
3. **School Vaccination Programs:** Schools are an ideal setting for HPV vaccination initiatives, providing direct access to the target age group. Collaborating with educational institutions to incorporate HPV vaccine education into health programs can raise awareness among students and parents. Implementing on-site school vaccination programs also simplifies vaccination for students without the need for separate medical appointments.
4. **Community Partnerships:** Building partnerships with community organizations, including religious, cultural, and civic groups, can help increase HPV vaccination rates by leveraging the trust these groups have with their members. These partnerships can facilitate community events, information sessions, and vaccination campaigns, ensuring accurate information reaches diverse populations. Tailoring awareness efforts to meet the specific needs and concerns of different communities is essential for overcoming barriers.
5. **Leveraging Digital Media:** In today's digital age, social media platforms are powerful tools for promoting health initiatives. Creating engaging content, such as infographics, videos, and testimonials, can help raise awareness about the importance of HPV vaccination. Social media campaigns can target younger audiences, parents, and caregivers with personalized messages that resonate with their specific concerns and interests. Involving influencers and celebrities can also amplify the message and reach broader audiences.
6. **Advocacy for Public Policy:** Advocacy for policies that support HPV vaccination is vital for long-term success. This may include supporting school vaccination requirements, ensuring insurance coverage for the vaccine, and promoting public health policies that encourage vaccination. Policymakers and public health officials should be involved to create an environment that supports vaccination through legislative and regulatory measures.
7. **Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy and Anti-Vaccine Narratives:** Vaccine hesitancy remains a significant obstacle to increasing HPV vaccination rates. Understanding the root causes of hesitancy—such as safety concerns, religious beliefs, or misinformation—is necessary for developing messages that meet the population's needs. Surveys, focus groups, and community feedback can provide insights into these concerns. Once understood, targeted interventions, including education and dialogue, can be developed to address these issues, building trust and encouraging vaccination.
8. **Improving Vaccine Accessibility:** Facilitating access to the HPV vaccine is another relevant factor. Offering the vaccine in a variety of locations, such as pharmacies, community health centers, mobile clinics, and even home visits, can make vaccination more convenient for individuals and families. Expanding clinic hours and

offering walk-in appointments can also help accommodate those with busy schedules. Ensuring the vaccine is affordable or free through insurance coverage or government programs can remove additional barriers. It is also relevant to ensure the HPV vaccine reaches disadvantaged environments, such as rural areas, ethnic communities, and areas with high levels of poverty and social exclusion.

9. **Engaging Parents and Guardians:** Parents and guardians are the primary decision-makers regarding the vaccination of minors. Engaging them with clear, evidence-based information about the benefits of HPV vaccination is both helpful and necessary to increase the likelihood that they will become allies in the fight to eliminate cervical cancer. This can be achieved through direct communication from healthcare professionals, as well as informational materials distributed in schools, clinics, and community centers. Emphasizing the vaccine’s role in protecting their child’s long-term health can motivate parents to take action.
10. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Continuous monitoring of HPV vaccination promotion efforts is essential. Tracking vaccination rates, analyzing feedback from communities and healthcare professionals, and evaluating the impact of educational campaigns can help identify areas needing improvement. By periodically evaluating strategies and making adjustments, the initiative can remain responsive to changing needs and challenges, ensuring sustainable progress in increasing HPV vaccination rates.

**This initiative aims to create an effective, comprehensive approach to HPV vaccination, contributing significantly to reducing the incidence of HPV-related cancers across Europe.**

We sign this consensus paper in recognition of the need to address inequalities in HPV vaccination access and uptake. Our perspective is rooted in a commitment to equitable healthcare for all, and we believe that overcoming barriers to HPV vaccination requires a unified, strategic approach that integrates personalized communication, social innovation, and a deep understanding of behavioral health determinants. By joining this initiative, we collectively commit to supporting member states and communities in their efforts to prevent HPV-related cancers. Together, we endorse this approach as a step towards realizing a future where cervical cancer and other HPV-associated diseases can be prevented for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic or geographic boundaries.

Signed by,

<b>Renasterea Foundation</b>	November 7, 2024
<b>Asociatia Centrul pentru Inovatie in Medicina (INOMED)</b>	November 11, 2024
<b>Asociația EUROCOMUNICARE</b>	November 11, 2024
<b>FEMINA M Association for Help and Support of Patients with Gynecological Diseases</b>	November 13, 2024
<b>Dnipro State Medical University (DSMU)</b>	November, 13, 2024

<b>Plovdivski Universitet Paisiy Hilendarski</b>	November 13, 2024
<b>Montenegrin Society of Medical Oncology (CUMO)</b>	November 13, 2024
<b>Hellenic Cancer Federation - ELLOK</b>	November 13, 2024
<b>WIN OVER CANCER FOUNDATION</b>	January 23, 2025
<b>Community Health Association Romania</b>	January 23, 2025
<b>Centre Medical Prince d'Orange - Dr Bernard Nicola</b>	January 23, 2025
<b>Run Pink Moldova</b>	January 23, 2025
<b>Think Pink Europe</b>	January 28, 2025