



Evaluation Brief

The role of Tiko in improving the performance of Young People and Adolescent Peer Supporters (YAPS) in enrolling and retaining young people on the Tiko platform

Tiko, with support from the Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF) and ELMA Philanthropies, aimed to improve access to integrated Family Planning (FP), HIV, and Mental Health (MH) services for Adolescents and Young People (AYP) aged 15-24 years in Kampala, Uganda. With implementation in Kampala starting in 2023, the program focused on empowering AYP through a multifaceted approach that included training of health providers and community mobilisers, accessing services through a digital platform and providing incentives to encourage access of health services. One critical group engaged in the programme is the Young People and Adolescent Peer Supporters (YAPS). YAPS have played a critical role in bridging the gap between service providers and AYP, creating a youth-friendly environment for accessing HIV related services. YAPS use a peer-to-peer support system where young people living with HIV are trained to support each other in navigating their diagnosis and treatment.

This evaluation brief focuses on the performance of YAPS within the Tiko platform. It assesses how Tiko's engagement, training, and incentives have influenced YAPS' ability to engage, retain, and support AYP in accessing FP, HIV, and MH services. By comparing endline findings with baseline data, this brief provides insights into the progress made, persistent gaps, and areas for further enhancement.



Evaluation Question

The following question guided the evaluation:

To what extent does the Tiko approach improve performance of the YAPS to enrol young people into the programme and to be sustained on the Tiko platform?

Methodology

Study Design: The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, targeting participants in Kampala. This evaluation brief presents insights from a bigger evaluation and we focus on the piece on YAPS' performance, their engagement with AYP, and their ability to influence the uptake of FP, HIV, and MH services through the Tiko platform.

Qualitative Data Collection: This aimed to gather deeper insights into the motivations, challenges, and effectiveness of YAPS' involvement in the Tiko platform. This was achieved through:

- **Focus Group Discussions:** Conducted with YAPS and AYP to gather insights into their experiences with the Tiko platform, as well as the effectiveness of the Tiko platform and their consequent engagement with it.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** Provided perspectives on YAPS' contribution to service uptake from the health system viewpoint.
- **In-depth Interviews:** Explored YAPS' individual experiences, motivations, and the influence of incentives like Tiko miles.
- **Secondary Data Collection:** Data from the Tiko platform tracked AYP enrollment, service uptake and retention on the platform, providing additional insights to understand YAPS' performance.

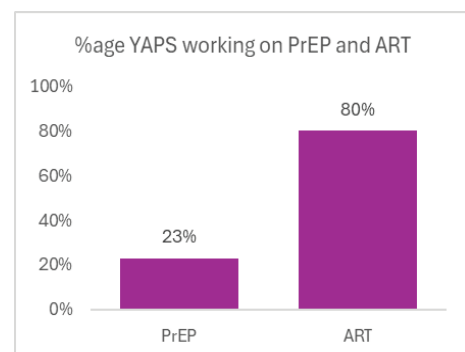
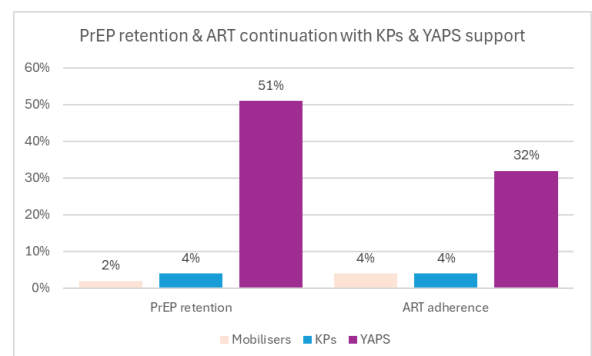
Quantitative Methods: Surveys, conducted face-to-face and via telephone, assessed YAPS' training, engagement, satisfaction, and retention. The study tracked 21 YAPS.

Key Findings

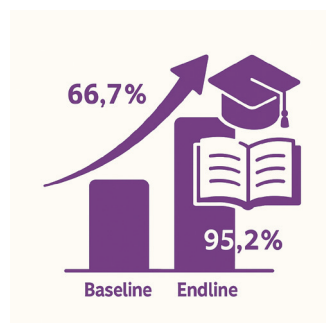
Performance of YAPS

Between January 1st and April 9th, 2025, YAPS in Kampala outperformed all other mobiliser groups on the Tiko platform. They registered the highest number of young people and services per mobiliser—228 services and 169 young people on average—demonstrating stronger reach and engagement than general mobilisers, KP navigators, or Village Health Teams (VHTs). Despite similar levels of productivity by Kampala general mobilisers, YAPS maintain a notable lead in service delivery volume. Their contribution to retention and adherence was particularly notable, PrEP retention stood at 51% and ART adherence at 32%, significantly outperforming other mobilizer groups, whose rates ranged between 2% and 4% during the same period.

However, despite these encouraging outcomes, important gaps remain. Only 23% of YAPS were actively involved in supporting PrEP services, compared to 80% engaged in ART support. This highlights a clear opportunity for Tiko to re-engage and build YAPS capacity around PrEP service delivery.



Training Coverage and Capacity Building



The study found that 95.2% of YAPS had received training on HIV prevention, testing, treatment, family planning, and MH services, compared to 66.7% at baseline ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating a significant improvement in training efforts.

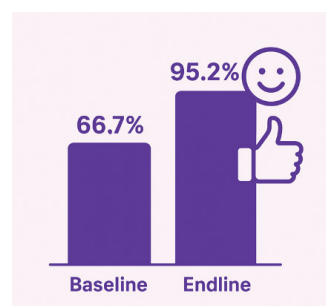
However, training coverage for FP (61.9%) and MH (71.4%) remained lower than desired, indicating areas for further improvement. Also, while YAPS identified training materials as the most valuable resource, some highlighted ongoing gaps in their availability.

YAPS Engagement and Motivators



YAPS identified passion for community work and Tiko rewards (Tiko miles) as key motivators for their work. The YAPS reported the nudges and incentives received to be critical enhancement factors in their engaging AYP. Despite the effectiveness of incentives, 76.2% of YAPS reported low satisfaction with Pay for Performance (P4P) nudges, suggesting that additional or more personalized rewards may be needed.

Satisfaction and Retention



YAPS' satisfaction with the Tiko platform increased from 66.7% at baseline to 95.2% at endline. The integration of YAPS into the Tiko platform was highly approved by 90.5% of YAPS at the endline. However, some YAPS reiterated the need for improved feedback mechanisms and expanded digital engagement beyond WhatsApp and SMS. YAPS' baseline recommendations for a structured feedback system and improved access to mobilization materials remained relevant at the endline.

85.7% of YAPS expressed a strong likelihood to continue engaging with the Tiko platform, indicating high retention and ongoing engagement. The majority of YAPS had been engaged for at least six months (93.3% at baseline; 90.5% at endline), indicating sustained participation. Key resources cited as most helpful included training modules (66.7%), peer learning groups (76.2%), online guides (38.1%), and call centre support (23.8%).

Key Gaps and Areas for Improvement

FP and MH Training: Training coverage for FP and MH services remained lower than for HIV services. Further investments in these areas are necessary.

Incentives: Although incentives such as Tiko miles were successful in enhancing engagement, the effectiveness of P4P nudges could be further optimized with personalized or non-monetary rewards.

Digital Engagement: While YAPS appreciated the digital tools, there is a need to expand engagement beyond WhatsApp and SMS to include other platforms preferred by AYPs.

Conclusion

This evaluation highlights the critical role of YAPS in enrolling and retaining AYP on the Tiko platform. The YAPS have improved AYP engagement with HIV related services, significantly boosting ART and PrEP retention rates. However, despite these successes, key gaps remain, particularly in FP and MH training. Additionally, while incentives like Tiko miles are effective, there is room for improvement in P4P strategies, with YAPS seeking more personalized rewards.

Recommendations

To build on this success, Tiko should expand support for more YAPS, enhance digital engagement, and invest further in training and incentives. Strengthening these areas will ensure continued growth and sustainability, further improving access to youth-friendly healthcare services in Uganda.

For further information or assistance, please write to evidence@tiko.org