MET S WATCH

M&E Technical Support Program

Improving Data Management for Key Population Services in Uganda

Uganda's Key Population (KP) program has taken significant strides in improving data management and service delivery at Drop-in Centers (DICs) across the country. These centers serve as crucial safe spaces for key and priority populations, offering non-health social support services.

Recognizing the need for better data management, the Ministry of Health developed specific KP community data tools, which were subsequently computerized in the national KP-PREP tracker system. To support this digital transition, a comprehensive assessment of 82 DICs was conducted, identifying key infrastructure and skill gaps.

In response, a multi-sided approach was implemented:

1. Equipment Distribution: 50 desktop computers, 75 laptops, 60 internet routers, and 82 data backup devices were distributed to DICs through implementing partners.

2. Staff Training: 112 DIC staff from 85 centers underwent training in data management and security, with a 60-40 split between data and program staff.

3. Infrastructure Improvements: Efforts are underway to enhance physical security for the new equipment at DICs.

The assessment revealed several challenges, including inconsistent internet connectivity, lack of backup power solutions, and gaps in security measures. To address these issues, recommendations include providing reliable internet access, implementing backup power solutions, and strengthening security measures.

Going forward, DICs will fully computerize their data collection activities using the KP-tracker, with ongoing support from METS and implementing partners. This digital transformation is expected to improve patient tracking and enable more person-centered care, ultimately leading to better health outcomes for key populations.

The initiative demonstrates Uganda's commitment to use technology and data management to enhance the quality and effectiveness of services for key populations. As these improvements take root, the KP program is positioned to make a significant impact on the health and well-being of the communities it serves.

Piloting the DREAMS Mobile App

Winnie Mbabazi training the M&E team and DREAMS peers at Nansana Municipality safe space

The DREAMS program, a service delivery model based on HIV risk assessment, supports young people aged 10-24, adolescent girls/boys and young women/men (AGYW & ABYM).

The program is currently implemented in 24 districts countrywide. To facilitate improved tracking of the services offered AGYW & ABYM through this initiative, the program is going digital.

METS in partnership with IDI Wakiso-Masaka region and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a pilot project in Nansana Municipality that is expected to transform service delivery in monitoring and evaluation.

The change involves moving records from paper format to digital options. Data is accessed on tablets enabling a shift that makes it easier and safer to collect information and provide services to the now over 1.2 million young people receiving services.

The process is cost-saving as there is no need for printing and storing 20 different paper forms, as was the previous case. This offers better security and guarantees improved efficiency as information will now be updated instantly as services are provided.

Moving forward, an evaluation will be conducted to assess feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness before roll out of the system into all DREAMS districts and cities in Uganda.

How Does it Work?

› *Peer facilitators / providers use tablet computers with a special app called DHIS2 Capture*
› *Information is recorded on the spot in, the community, as services are provided*
› *Data is transmitted to facilities in real time using internet*
› *This replaces the old system of filling out paper forms*

2024 OpenMRS Implementer's Conference: Highlights from Nairobi, Kenya

The 2024 OpenMRS Implementers' Conference took place from 9th - 13th September in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing together a global community of software developers, health sector leaders, and implementers to enhance the OpenMRS platform and foster collaboration. OpenMRS, an electronic medical records system implemented in over 15 countries, plays a crucial role in improving healthcare delivery worldwide.

This year's conference focused on leveraging OpenMRS to deliver person-centered care, promoting interoperability, and encouraging collaboration among implementers. The event provided a valuable platform for participants to share experiences, network, and showcase achievements.

Uganda was well-represented with a delegation that included participants from the Ministry of Health (MOH), METS, Central Public Health Laboratories (CPHL), HISTAC, Reach Out Mbuya (ROM), and Baylor-Bunyoro. The team had several opportunities to highlight their work in digitizing Uganda's health sector and advancing the UgandaEMR system. Key presentations included:

- A panel discussion on "Open Innovation to Accelerate Universal Health Coverage (UHC)" featuring Mr. Paul Mbaka from the MOH.
- Lightning talks on the evolution of UgandaEMR by Jonathan Mpango, data validation by Derrick Baluku, and stock management by Jabar Jeremy and Samuel Lubwama.
- UgandaEMR+ implementation and data visualization insights shared by Baylor-Bunyoro's Emmanuel Tumwine and Isaac Akileng.

Mekom Solutions

delivers digital health solutions anywhere while contributing to open-source software and medical informatics standards.

The Palladium Group

works with governments, businesses, and investors to solve the world's most pressing challenges.

Partners In Health

collaborates with national governments to provide care and strengthen public health systems in areas including cancer and chronic disease, child health, emergency response, HIV/AIDS, maternal health, mental health, and tuberculosis.

ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross

helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything it can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering.

Brown University - Clinical & Global Health Informatics Evaluation Lab

focuses on clinical decision support, evaluation, and global health.

Digital Initiatives Group at ITECH University of Washington (DIGI)

partners with the OpenMRS community to identify, design, and develop, and bring back our expertise to all implementers.

METS - Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support program of Makerere University's School of Public Health

strengthens Uganda's health systems through capacity building and evidence-based HIV response.

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF)

works with policymakers in the U.S. and around the world to drive the support, leadership, and resources needed to end HIV and AIDS in children, youth, and families.

Recognitions:

METS was recognized as an 'Established Contributor' in the OpenMRS community for the active participation in the community in terms of providing solutions to health problems, an award that has since then elevated METS to become one of the OpenMRS Community Partners. See

https://open-mrs.org/who-we-are/open-mrs-partners/

Uganda Evaluates Integration of NCDs into HIV Care to Improve Health Outcomes for PLHIV

As Uganda faces the rising challenge of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among people living with HIV (PLHIV), an ongoing program evaluation seeks to address the burden of conditions like hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and mental health disorders within this population. Launched by the Ministry of Health (MoH) in April 2024, the evaluation, titled "Prevalence, Predictors, and Outcomes of Non-Communicable Diseases among Persons Living with HIV in Uganda," aims to provide critical insights into the integration of NCD care into HIV services.

With improved access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), PLHIV are living longer, but age-related NCDs are increasingly affecting their quality of life. At least one in five PLHIV in active care is over 50 years of age and therefore at increased risk of NCDs.

The Ministry of Health's 2022 move to integrate HIV and NCD care in national guidelines seeks to address this growing concern. This evaluation, covering 160 health facilities across 15 regions of Uganda, will assess the prevalence, predictors, and outcomes of NCDs among PLHIV in care while evaluating the readiness of the health system to manage these comorbid conditions.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support (METS) team, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is leading the technical aspects of the evaluation. METS contribution is towards protocol development, designing data collection tools, supporting data collection, analyzing the data and disseminating findings through reports, scientific meetings, and manuscripts.

The key evaluation milestones include:

- *Approval of the evaluation protocol by local and international research and ethics boards.*
- *Development and pilot testing of data collection tools, followed by rigorous training for research assistants.*
- *Completion of data collection across all participating facilities, with the team currently engaged in data cleaning.*

These efforts have laid the groundwork for comprehensive analysis and reporting on the prevalence and management of NCDs in HIV care settings.

The next phase of the project involves conducting detailed data analysis to highlight key issues, preparing and disseminating a comprehensive report to stakeholders and publishing findings in a scientific manuscript. Plans are underway to share the evaluation's

findings and engage stakeholders in developing targeted improvements.

This evaluation is a significant step in shaping Uganda's healthcare policy and enhancing the integration of HIV and NCD care. The findings are expected to inform targeted interventions, improve patient outcomes, and guide future strategies to optimize the care of PLHIV.

Gallery

NCD Evaluation training at Kabira Country club on 07/08/2024

Evelyn Akello, Program Manager METS, addressing the participants during the national training of trainers for EMRs at the Makerere University School of Public Health's Auditorium.

METS evaluation team meeting with the Director Mubende Hospital to discuss EMR usage and progress of NCD integration into HIV care as well as adherence to the service quality standards

Training of trainers for electronic medical records roll out in CDC regions. This partnership with MoH and CDC, is to achieve an integrated EMR system for the health sector. The training equipped national level support teams with knowledge to troubleshoot the EMR system

The METS team that participated in the Global OpenMRS Implementers' conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference was aimed at improving delivery of comprehensive health care

Naseef Mayanja takes participants through YAPS data extraction training at Hotel Africana on 18/09/2024

After conducting an IT infrastructure assessment, METS procured and delivered essential IT equipment to various Drop-in Centers (DICs) according to their specific needs to support Data Management.

Additionally, a four-day Data Management Training was organized for DIC staff. Implementing Partner (IP) representatives attended to ensure proper follow-up and the appropriate personnel from each DIC participated.

METS WATCH
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