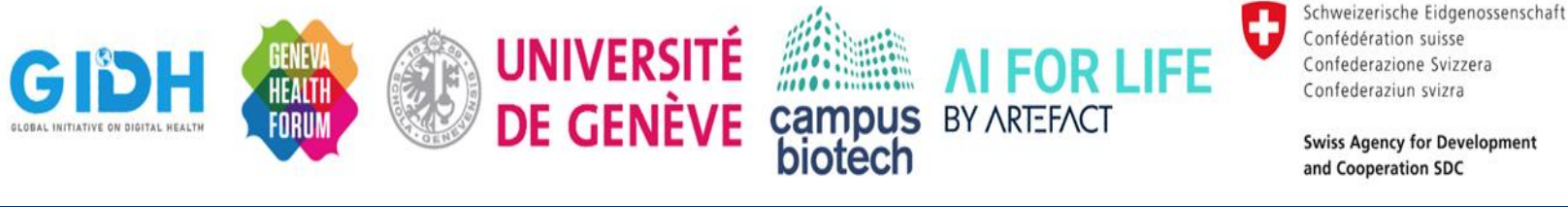


Acceptability of the use of a digital application by traditional birth attendants in the management of pregnancies in Central African Republic



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1 INTRODUCTION

In Central African Republic

- High maternal death rate: 835/100,000 live births in 2018 (1)
- Only 41% pregnant women achieved <4 antenatal care
- Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) play an important role with 40% deliveries handled by TBAs (MISCA 2018-2019).

Wakobo ti kodro research project (sept 2023 – Dec 2024) aimed to evaluate whether an intervention integrating TBAs, including their training (2), use of an application on tablets (3) and collaboration with health system (2) is effective to increase the proportion of deliveries for women with high-risk pregnancies in health facilities.

For better understanding of the implementation of this intervention, we conducted a **sub study to assess the feasibility and acceptability of tablet use by TBAs**.

2 METHODS

Conceptual framework (to design study tools and guide the analysis)

- *Louart's framework* to evaluate the acceptability of technological health innovations (*Louart, 2023*).
- *Conceptual Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)* to ensure the identification of key facilitators and barriers of the intervention implementations at different levels (*Darmrshroder, 2022*).

Study population and data collection

- Qualitative interviews 3 months after the beginning of the project (n=35) and at the end (n=43) with several stakeholders (TBAs, community members, healthcare professionals...)
- Quantitative questionnaire administered to all TBAs (n=35) at the end.

Analysis

- Qualitative data: rapid framework analysis
- Quantitative data: descriptive analysis of Likert questions

3 RESULTS

The Wako application is perceived as usable with pictograms, voice messages and alerts to improve pregnancies management by TBAs in community...

The **pictograms and voice messages used** were clear and understandable.

31%	51%	11%	6%
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Using the application helped me **better detect high-risk pregnancies**

54%	34%	6%	3%
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The **application improved the quality of my work: I felt more credible.**

46%	49%	6%
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...provided regular training and supervision as at the beginning, older TBAs had difficulties to use the tablet

The use of tablets by TBAs was initially a source of rumors because TBAs had to take a picture of the women's house to register them, which could fuel beliefs surrounding magic resulting in some women who were hesitant before accepting to be included in the project...

The women in the community accepted/respected my new role

80%	17%	3%
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...before being fully accepted by the community and enhancing the value of work and trust in TBAs thanks to the involvement of community leaders, the immediate visible effects of monitoring women's pregnancies and the support of husbands.

Persistent contextual and logistical barriers challenged the optimal use of the tablet including with power outages. This made it difficult to charge the tablets, even though solar lamps were provided, as they were not completely efficient. As a result, some TBAs were unable to use a tablet for several days.

Sustainability

There is a high willingness to sustain the use of tablets by TBAs for management of pregnancies for all interviewees.....

If possible, I would like to continue monitoring pregnancies in the community using the tablet, in collaboration with the healthcare workers.

71%	29%
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Monitoring pregnant women by TBAs, using a digital application and in collaboration with healthcare workers, **should be continued and more widely implemented by the government.**

83%	17%
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The tablet is perceived as a relevant tool for connecting the community with the healthcare system

- For healthcare professionals, digital records make their work easier and save time.
- All interviewees had an overall perception of increase of access to healthcare facilities for pregnancy follow-up and delivery

Compared to before Wakobo, **pregnant women are more likely to go to a health center... for their prenatal care.**

60%	31%	9%
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... and for their delivery

74%	23%	3%
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Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree No opinion

4 CONCLUSION

The use of digital tablets by TBAs, which contributes to their integration into the management of pregnancies within the health system, was well accepted and feasible in the Central African Republic. Ensuring the sustainability of this technological innovation will require: regular training for TBAs, anticipating and addressing logistical challenges and involving community leaders to engage the community.

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Partner Organizations



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