



## POSTING - YOUNG PEOPLE (YP) PORTFOLIO EVALUATION CONSULTANT

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### OVERVIEW

The Elton John AIDS Foundation is seeking a qualified evaluation team/consultant to design and implement a comprehensive evaluation of its Young People (YP) Portfolio. The evaluation will assess the portfolio's performance, effectiveness, equity, sustainability, catalytic impact, and value for money across the 2022–2025 period.

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

#### About the Elton John AIDS Foundation

The Elton John AIDS Foundation was established in 1992 and is one of the leading independent AIDS organizations in the world. Our mission is simple: an end to the AIDS epidemic. We are committed to overcoming the stigma, discrimination, and neglect that keeps the world from ending AIDS. Through a network of generous supporters, we fund local experts across continents to challenge discrimination, prevent infections, and provide treatment while informing government strategies to end AIDS.

#### YP portfolio strategy and grantmaking focus

The YP portfolio addresses a critical gap: while notable progress has been made for adults and children, adolescents and young adults (10–24) are being left behind. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), young people make up 20% of the population but account for 33% of new HIV infections. Without urgent action, there will be 3.5 million new adolescent infections by 2030.

The Foundation's "Next Generation" strategy redresses the paradigm that requires youth to alter their lives to access care. Instead, we pilot modern, responsive platforms that meet young people where they are, utilizing digital ubiquity and self-care tools. The strategy focuses on two key pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Knowledge and demand creation:** Fundamentally changing the narrative around traditionally tabooed topics (sex, pleasure, mental health) via digital channels and influencers to empower informed choices.
- **Pillar 2: Decentralized and demedicalized supply:** Creating sustainable, scalable models—such as drone delivery and virtual services—that leapfrog traditional clinical barriers and bring care directly to youth.

The portfolio's "Big Win" is to demonstrate these decentralized models, increase adolescent engagement, and provide a blueprint to systematize and scale effective learnings.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The evaluation will observe how the portfolio has navigated the primary barriers faced by adolescents:

- **The HIV/mental health syndemic:** Mental health disorders increase HIV risk 4–10 fold; integration can reduce new infections by 16.5%.
- **Information and service deficits:** A vast majority of young people lack basic protection knowledge and face judgmental providers in traditional clinical settings that are not fit for purpose.
- **Siloed services:** Youth are expected to visit multiple locations and deal with numerous healthcare providers to service their health needs.
- **Restrictive norms and legal barriers:** Laws requiring parental consent for HIV testing deter youth from accessing vital services for fear of judgment or repercussion.
- **Gender disparities:** Adolescent girls face infection rates twice as high as boys, while young men often delay care due to gender norms that prize stoicism.

## EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The Elton John AIDS Foundation seeks an evaluation partner to design and implement a review of the YP portfolio (2022 – 2025) with a focus on:

### 3.1 Theory of Change (ToC) and strategic alignment

To assess the coherence, relevance, and continued validity of the YP Portfolio Theory of Change, including the extent to which portfolio design, grant selection, and implementation aligned with the Elton John AIDS Foundation's strategic intent and adapted to evolving epidemiological, social, legal, and funding contexts affecting adolescents and young people.

### 3.2 Effectiveness and contribution to outcomes

To assess the extent to which the YP Portfolio contributed to increased engagement of adolescents and young people in HIV prevention, treatment, and integrated mental health services, and to identify the most significant outcomes, innovations, and contributions toward the portfolio's "Big Win" of demonstrating youth-responsive, decentralized, and demedicalized delivery models.

### 3.3 Differential performance and equity

To examine variation in performance across grantee models, geographies, and sub-populations, and to assess how effectively portfolio interventions addressed inequities related to age, gender, geography, and other factors influencing access to and use of services.

### **3.4 Sustainability and scale pathways**

To assess the extent to which portfolio interventions demonstrated viable pathways to sustainability and scale, including integration into local or national systems, policies, or service delivery frameworks, and the strengthening of institutional, delivery, and data capacities necessary for sustained impact.

### **3.5 Leverage and catalytic impact**

To assess how effectively the Foundation's investment functioned as catalytic capital by leveraging additional financial, political, or institutional resources, and to determine the role of the Foundation's funding approach in enabling innovation, risk-taking, and subsequent scale.

### **3.6 Efficiency, coordination and value for money**

To assess how efficiently resources were deployed across the portfolio, including the effectiveness of coordination among grantees and with external actors, and to evaluate whether the portfolio's venture-inspired approach delivered value for money relative to alternative adolescent HIV investment strategies.

### **3.7 Learning, adaptation and Elton John AIDS Foundation value-add**

To capture portfolio-level learning and adaptive management over the evaluation period, and to articulate Elton John AIDS Foundation's distinctive value-add within the adolescent HIV funding ecosystem, including how the Foundation's strategic positioning influenced portfolio performance and outcomes.

## **EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

### **4.1 Theory of Change and strategic alignment**

- How well did grant selection and portfolio design align with the YP Portfolio Theory of Change and the Foundation's strategic intent?
- To what extent did the portfolio respond to evolving adolescent needs and address inequities among sub-populations in different epidemiological, social, (legal), and funding contexts?

### **4.2 Effectiveness and contribution to outcomes**

- To what extent has the portfolio achieved its intended outputs, outcomes, and overall impact in HIV prevention, treatment, and integrated mental health services for adolescents and young people?
- What were the portfolio's major achievements, innovations, and contributions toward demonstrating youth-responsive, decentralized, and demedicalized delivery models?
- What major structural, financial, social, or operational barriers did the portfolio encounter in delivering and sustaining services for adolescents?

#### 4.3 Differential performance and equity

- How did performance vary across grantee models, geographies, and adolescent sub-populations (e.g., by age, gender, geography)?
- To what extent did portfolio interventions mitigate or perpetuate inequities in access to and utilization of services?

#### 4.4 Sustainability and scale

- To what degree have portfolio interventions demonstrated viable pathways to sustainability and scale through integration into local systems, policies, or service delivery frameworks?
- How effectively did interventions strengthen grantee and partner capacities, influence national priorities, and demonstrate responsiveness and learning in the face of evolving constraints?
- To what extent did specific models (e.g., Zipline, Tiko) demonstrate credible pathways to scale through government adoption or diversified funding?

#### 4.5 Leverage and catalytic impact

- How successful was the portfolio in leveraging additional financial resources from governments and other philanthropic or private capital (e.g., co-funding, impact bonds)?
- What role did the Foundation's funding approach play in enabling innovation, risk-taking, and subsequent scale?
- Given the portfolio venture-capital-inspired approach, how can we characterize the balance of risks taken versus the reward achieved?

#### 4.6 Efficiency, coordination, and value for money

- How efficiently were financial and non-financial resources utilized across the portfolio?
- How effective was coordination within the portfolio and with external actors (e.g., governments, multilaterals, other funders) in maximizing synergies, managing risk, and delivering value for money compared to alternative adolescent HIV investment approaches?

#### 4.7 Learning, adaptation and Elton John AIDS Foundation value-add

- How effectively did the portfolio adapt to shifting epidemiological trends, legal constraints, and changes in the funding environment?
- What portfolio-level learning emerged over the evaluation period, and how was it used to inform adaptive management?
- What was the Foundation's distinctive value-add within the adolescent HIV funding ecosystem, and how did this influence portfolio performance and outcomes?

## METHODOLOGY AND TIMELINE

This evaluation will adopt a **mixed-methods approach and utilization-focused principles**, combining primary and secondary sources to ensure a robust, triangulated analysis across all dimensions of the portfolio review. The evaluation will also assess progress against the portfolio theory of change, where a theory-based analysis is suggested. For the Theory-based approach, the adolescent strategic framework will be used as the main document, together with predefined

“big wins” for the portfolio. **All final deliverables are due by October 31, 2026.** Examples of data sources are as follows:

#### **Desk review (secondary data)**

- Internal sources: Grant proposals, progress reports, monitoring & evaluation (M&E) frameworks and data, financial reports, prior evaluations, and strategic documents from the Foundation and grantees.
- External sources: Peer-reviewed literature, policy papers, UNAIDS/WHO/UNICEF reports, government strategic plans, and evaluations from other funding bodies working in adolescent HIV prevention.
- Comparative baselines: Where feasible, compile retrospective data on adolescent HIV outcomes in relevant geographies to approximate a baseline scenario. This will support counterfactual analysis (“What if the Elton John AIDS Foundation didn’t step in?”).

#### **Key informant interviews (primary data)**

- Stakeholders: Elton John AIDS Foundation staff, implementing partners, government officials (national and local), where relevant.
- Any other relevant sources of information

Phase	Key Activities	Date	Deliverables
1. Inception	Document review, project planning, and inception report	Mar-Apr 2026	Inception Report
2. Analysis	Secondary data synthesis and tool design	Apr–Jun 2026	Interim Findings
3. Fieldwork	Primary data collection (KIs/Focus Groups)	Jul–Sep 2026	Data Summaries
4. Reporting	Synthesize findings, draft report and validation session	Sep–Oct 2026	Draft Report
5. Completion	Final report and executive presentation	Oct 31, 2026	Final Deliverables

## PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Strong experience in designing, implementing, and delivering evaluations at the portfolio level
- Extensive experience working in the African context
- Relevant program and M&E experience in SRH/HIV and mental health sector
- Experience working on innovative, Direct-to-consumer (DTC) solutions within the public health sector
- Experience working in philanthropic/grant-making space

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants should submit a full technical proposal of no more than 10 pages (excluding timeline, Annexes, and Appendices) in English along with a detailed financial proposal in USD. The following are the minimum requirements that should be included in the application:

- Overall Approach and Methodology
- Ethical considerations and risk management
- Evaluation team and delineation of responsibilities
- Financial proposal in USD (Annex or Appendix)
- Timeline (Annex)
- CVs of external team (Annex)
- Declaration of Conflict of Interest, with mitigation strategy if applicable (Annex)
- One sample report of a previous similar work (Appendix)

There is no set template for the technical proposal; however, we do not require a Background section. Instead, it should begin with your proposed approach for addressing the objectives and evaluation questions. The financial proposal should reflect a realistic and cost-efficient budget that enables delivery of a high-quality evaluation whilst demonstrating value for money. Applicants should ensure that the proposed costs are aligned with the methodology, level of effort, scope, risks, and geographic spread of the assignment. A succinct narrative must be included in the budget table to explain assumptions behind each line. **Total budget must not exceed \$75,000 USD.**

## SUBMISSION

Please submit your application by **25th February 2026, 23:59 GMT** using “Application: YP Portfolio Evaluation” as the subject line to [luis.espinal@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org](mailto:luis.espinal@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org). Applicants are responsible for all costs associated with preparing their proposal. All enquiries will be treated confidentially.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Foundation reserves the right to request revisions of deliverables if they do not meet the Foundation standards. Performance of the consultant(s) will be assessed on timeliness, quality of work, ethical conduct, and responsiveness to the Foundation.