

Empowering CBOs to conduct Home-based HIV testing services in Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga Provinces in South Africa

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BACKGROUND

The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) contracted 20 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to provide high yield Community Based HIV Testing Services (CBHTS) in the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces. The aim of the programme is to identify People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in their homes and link them to HIV and TB care, treatment and prevention programmes and involve CBOs in the implementation of the programme.

METHODS

Action research was conducted from April 2018 to October 2018 to empower CBOs to provide Home-based HIV testing services (HBHTS) clients in communities. CBO Testers were trained in HTS, Rapid Testing Quality Improvement Initiative, Index client trailing, Proficiency Testing and linkage to care, treatment and prevention services.

CBOs implemented three HIV recruitment and testing modalities, namely HBHTS, Index client trailing and twilight HIV testing. The project also screened for TB, STIs, hypertension and diabetes.

Clients who tested HIV positive were referred to Primary Health Care facilities for linkage to HIV treatment and care.

HTS registers, screening and referral tools were utilised for recording, data collection and reporting. Descriptive analysis was conducted to assess HIV uptake, positivity and linkage to care.

RESULTS

- 105 113 clients tested for HIV and 93 419 (96.8%) were aged between 15 – 49 years.
- More than half were (53.5%) were Female.
- More than 4 in 5 (83.8%) tested through HBHTS.
- **Fig 1** shows HIV testing by age and sex.

Fig 1: HIV testing distribution by Sex & Age, April-October 2018

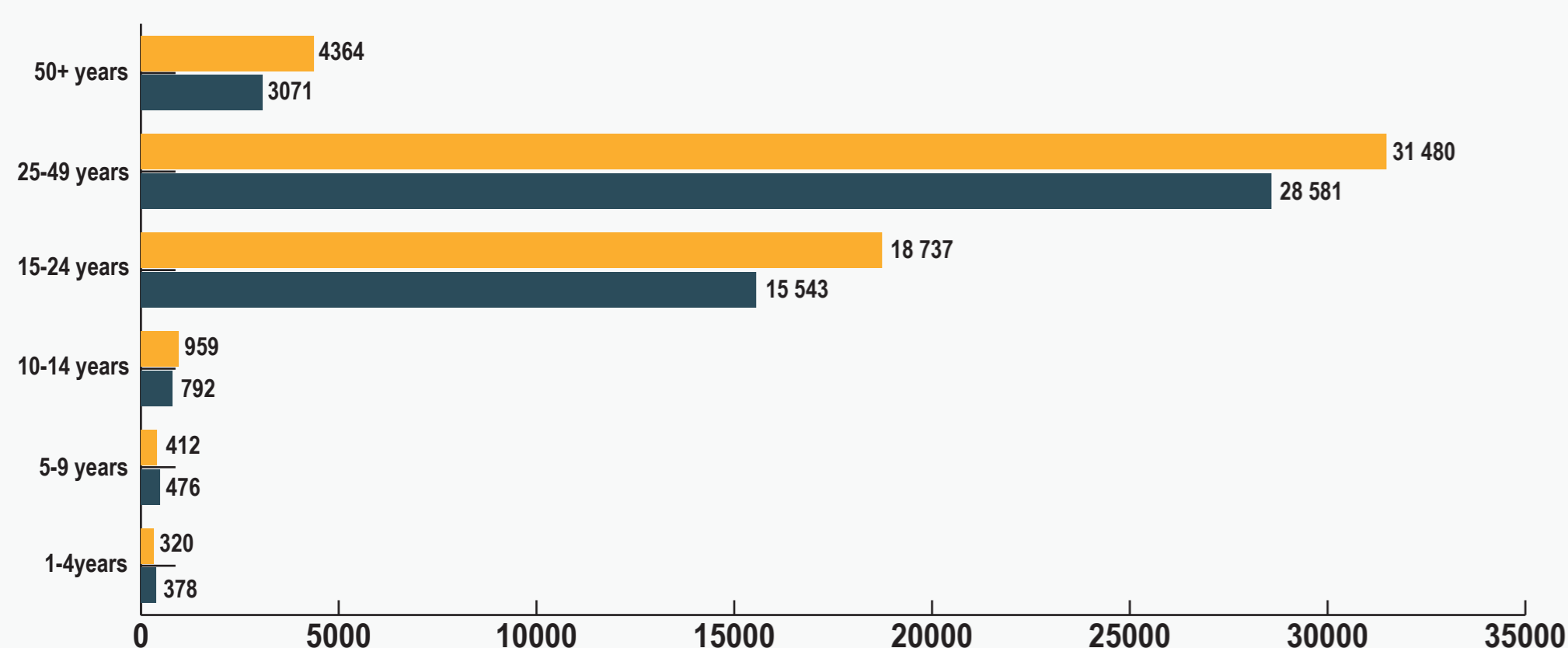


Fig 2 shows HIV yield by age and sex:

- Overall, 4.8% tested HIV positive
- CBOs found the highest positivity among adults aged 25 - 49 years (6%) followed by young people aged 15 - 24 years. (3%)
- More females (5.7%) tested positive than males (3.9%) in all age groups.

CBOs managed to distribute 1164 708 male condoms and 72 582 female condoms.

Fig 2: HIV positive distribution by Sex & Age, April-October 2018

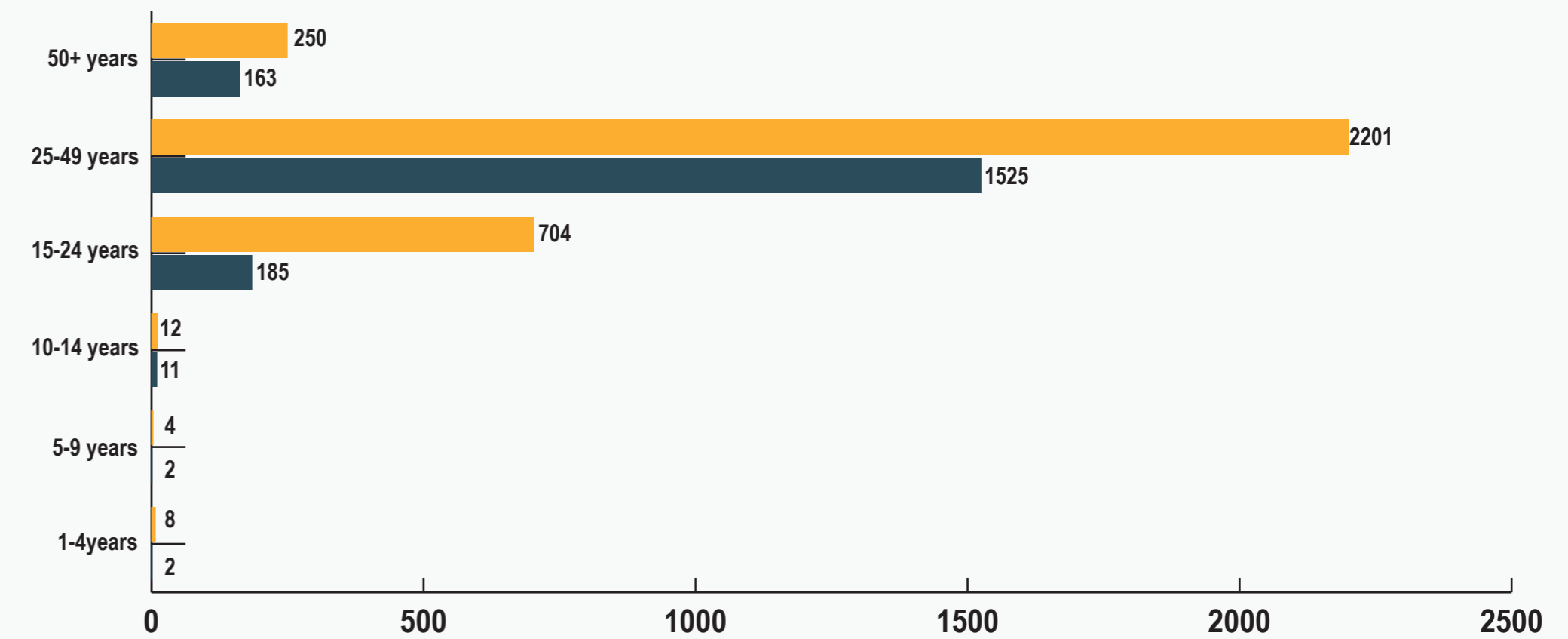
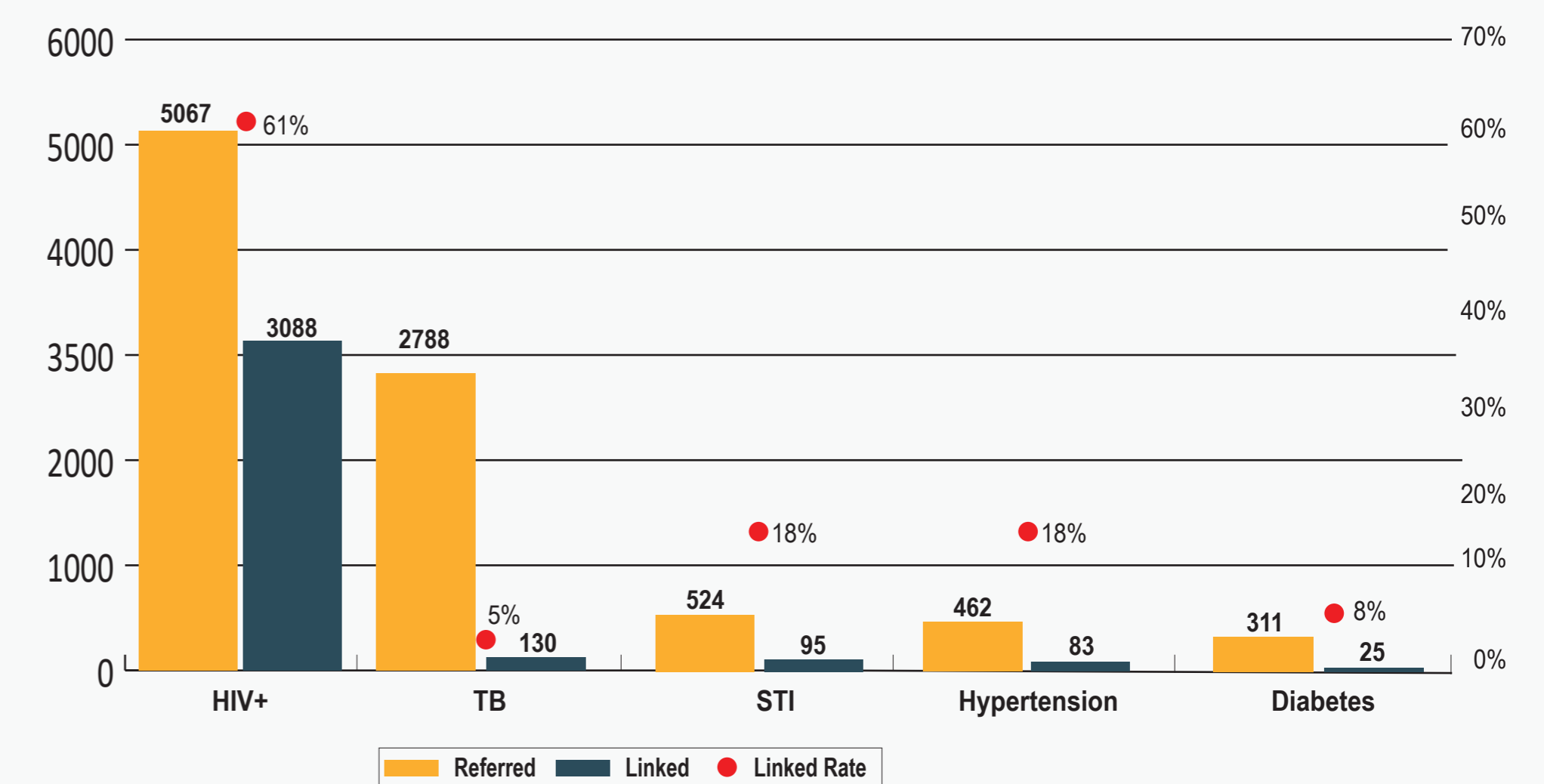


Fig 3 shows proportion of clients linked to care by CBOs:

All clients who screened positive to any screening (communicable or non-communicable) test were referred to primary health care for further care and were followed up to check if they were successfully linked to care.

- 61% of the HIV positive clients were successfully linked to HIV care and treatment.
- One in five of those who tested positive to STI and hypertension were successfully linked to STI and hypertensive care respectively.

Fig 3: Referrals & Linkage to Care services Apr - Oct 2018



CONCLUSION

HBHTS increased HIV Testing Services and identification of PLHIV, thus contributing to the first 90 of the 90-90-90 strategy. Empowering of local CBOs improves uptake of HTS. This strategy, has potential to improve HTS uptake and increase linkage to care of PLHIV, if rolled out to other provinces.