



Apotheker Health Access Initiative

Strengthening Public Private Partnerships

Bringing quality healthcare closer to communities



ANNUAL REPORT
2024

1 About Apotheker

Apotheker Health Access Initiative is a non-profit organization registered under the Tanzanian NGO Act of 2002. We combine expertise in **Public Health Research, project design, implementation, and evaluation** with a public-private approach to strengthening primary healthcare and pharmaceutical services. We work with the Ministry of Health, PO-RALG, pharmaceutical regulatory authorities, local and international partners, civil societies, and health training institutions.

Vision

A community where everyone has access to quality health care.

Mission

To strengthen the performance of pharmaceutical and health systems through innovative solutions and harnessed technology.

Core Values

Accountability | Integrity | Excellence | Collaboration | Transparency | Innovation.

Our Team

Our **team** includes experts in public health, maternal, child, and adolescent health, pharmaceutical services, monitoring, evaluation, and learning, and social science research. We are supported by finance and administration staff, program officers, and consultants, all dedicated to growing the organization.



1.2 Letter from the Executive Director, Dr. Romuald O.J. Mbwasi

Dear Team, Partners, and Stakeholders,

As we reflect on 2024, we are proud of the significant strides we've made in improving healthcare access, advancing digital health solutions, and strengthening primary healthcare systems across Tanzania. These milestones were achieved thanks to the unwavering support of our partners, stakeholders, and dedicated team. Together, we've proven that collaboration, innovation, and public-private partnerships can transform healthcare delivery.

A key highlight this year was the successful integration of Afya-Tek into the Unified Community System (UCS) under the Ministry of Health. This integration has streamlined connections between Community Health Workers, Accredited Drug Dispensing Outlets, and primary health facilities. It's a major step forward in making patient referrals, real-time data sharing, and healthcare coordination faster and more efficient, particularly for underserved communities.

Alongside our work in digital health, we've been actively involved in national policy development, strengthening antimicrobial stewardship, and improving pharmaceutical systems. By 2024, we registered over 283,000 individuals in Kibaha District, covering 73% of households, and facilitated more than 51,400 referrals to primary health facilities, leading to timely and life-saving interventions.

Our advocacy efforts at global and national health forums, including the World Health Assembly and the Tanzania Health Summit, have reinforced our leadership in driving healthcare innovation.

One of our proudest moments was the appointment of a team member as Chair of the Pharmacy Council Board, marking a significant milestone in our impact on health policy.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening primary healthcare as a cornerstone for achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Our focus will continue on expanding access to essential medicines, scaling digital health innovations, deepening policy engagement, and empowering healthcare workers with the tools and support they need to thrive.

By leveraging technology, building strong partnerships, and advocating for impactful policies, we are dedicated to ensuring that every individual no matter their location or background has access to quality, affordable healthcare. Strengthening primary healthcare is at the heart of our mission to create an equitable, resilient, and sustainable health system in Tanzania.

Thank you for your continued support as we move forward on this transformative journey.

Warm regards,
Dr. Romuald O.J. Mbwasi
Executive Director



1.3 Experience Working in Tanzania's Health Sector

Apotheker's experience is rooted in strengthening community access to healthcare, pharmaceutical services, and supply chains through public-private partnerships. Our team has played a key role in supporting the implementation of the **Accredited Drug Dispensing Outlets (ADDO) model in Tanzania**, working closely with Pharmaceutical Regulatory Authorities. Additionally, Apotheker has provided similar support in countries like Uganda, Liberia, Zambia, Madagascar, and Bangladesh, focusing on the development of regulatory frameworks, standards, training materials, and stakeholder engagement processes.



Our team has also led the design, development, and implementation of national complementary supply chain systems, such as the **Jazia Prime Vendor System (PVS)**, which integrates private supply systems with public systems at primary health facilities. We have been strong advocates for initiatives that focus on **strengthening Public-Private Partnerships in Primary Healthcare**, bringing together key stakeholders to improve access to healthcare.

The Afya-Tek program, launched in 2019, is our flagship digital health initiative, connecting private drug outlets, community health workers, and primary health facilities through digital platforms. The program has now been integrated into the Ministry of Health's Unified Community System.

Apotheker is actively involved in national efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR). We collaborate with the government and partners to develop key national strategies, frameworks, action plans, guidelines, and training materials for antimicrobial stewardship. Our team also contributes to the Technical Working Group on AMR and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) under the Multisectoral Coordination Committee (MCC) and participates in annual reports on antimicrobial consumption in Tanzania.



2 Major Achievements for 2024

2.1 The integration of the Afya-Tek system into the Unified Community Health System (UCS) supports the government's goal of streamlining digital health platforms and improving service delivery

A key success for Apotheker this year was integrating private sector community pharmaceutical outlets into the public sector's community digital health system. Apotheker led numerous meetings and working sessions with government technical teams and implementing partners to incorporate the Afya-Tek digital system, particularly the Community Pharmaceutical Premises module, into the Ministry of Health's UCS.

In October and November, Apotheker organized capacity-building sessions for Community Health Workers (CHWs), Drug outlets dispensers, pharmacy dispensers, and health facility staff to ensure they could deliver services through the UCS, fully incorporating the Afya-Tek system.



2.2 Launching of Afya-Tek into the UCS



On December 10th, Apotheker hosted an event for the Afya-Tek operations within the MOH-UCS at Kibaha Municipal, Pwani Region. The event, officiated by Hon. Dr. Godwin Mollel, Deputy Minister for Health, brought together over 500 attendees, including government officials from the Ministry of Health, PORALG, regional and district authorities, health teams, implementing partners, and service providers, such as Community Health Workers (CHWs), Drug outlets dispensers, and health facility teams.

Dr. Mollel expressed his admiration for Apotheker and its partners, highlighting the groundbreaking achievement of integrating private drug shops into the Primary Healthcare pathway.

2.3 Reaching Mothers, Children Under Five, and Adolescents in Kibaha

Since the Afya-Tek program's launch in 2019, Apotheker and its partners have made significant strides in Kibaha Municipal. By December 2024, the program, which started as a pilot, successfully transitioned into an integrated part of the National Unified Community System. One of the key achievements has been the program's ability to connect mothers, children under five, and adolescents, ensuring they smoothly navigate through healthcare pathways.

Here are some of the key results that demonstrate the success of this connectivity for clients within the healthcare system.

Registration of households and household members

76.000

households

283.000

household members registered

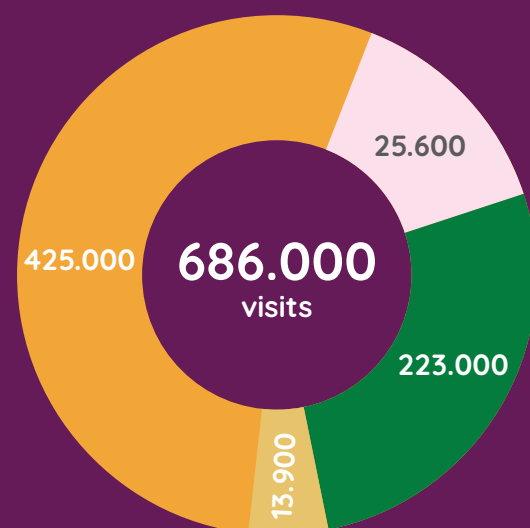
Household repeated visits for screening, counselling and health education

PNC visits

ANC visits

Child visits

Adolescent visits



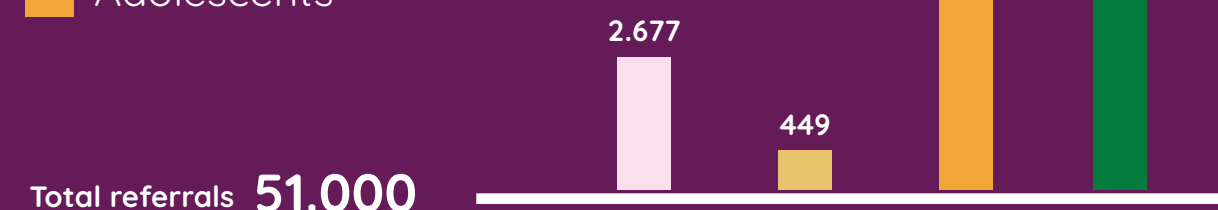
Clients' referrals made by CHW and ADDOs to Health facilities for those identified with dangers signs

PNC clients

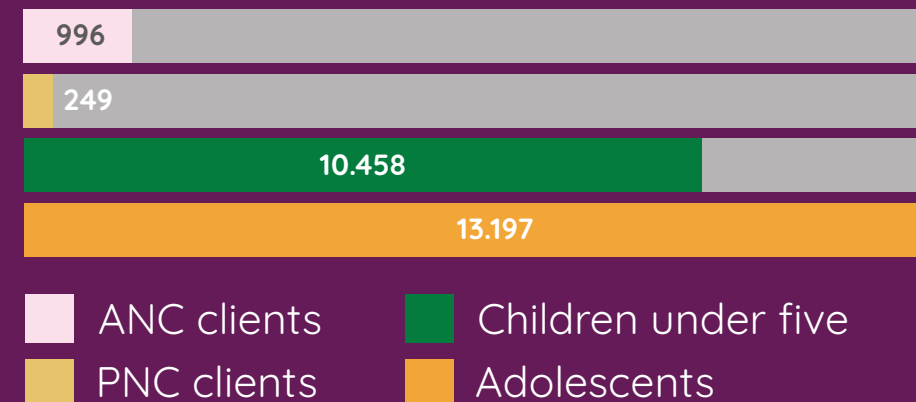
ANC clients

Children under five

Adolescents



Clients linked to ADDOs by CHW for management of minor ailments or in need of health commodities



12% of adolescents visited ADDOs received FP pills

19% of adolescents visited ADDO received condom

2.4 Adolescent Health

In 2024, Apotheker, in partnership with SkyConnect, made significant progress in advancing adolescent health by placing strong emphasis on privacy and confidentiality, an essential component in building trust and ensuring effective service delivery. We established two adolescent advisory committees in Kibaha Municipal and Kibaha District, bringing together 18 members from Regional and Council Health Teams, Education officers, Community Health Workers, Local Government officials and religious leaders to guide adolescent health interventions in the district.

We also created 41 adolescent clubs, 28 for out-of-school and 13 for in-school youth. These clubs, with nearly equal participation from males and females, offer a platform for discussions on vital health issues, including HIV prevention, teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, mental health, and nutrition.

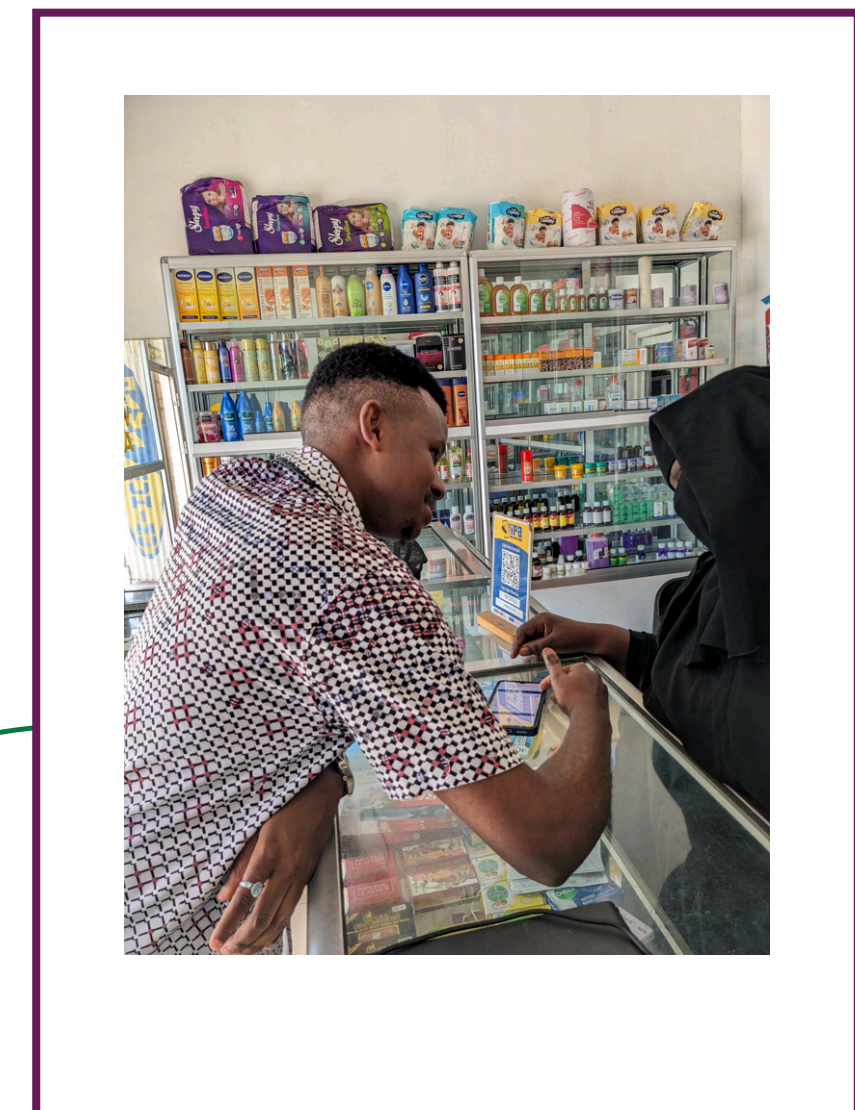
Additionally, Apotheker and SkyConnect are developing the Digital Adolescent Drive (DAD-AI), an AI-powered platform providing a chatbot to offer health advice and engage adolescents on key health topics.



2.5 Strengthening Private Sector Pharmaceutical Services with Innovative Tools

Apotheker in partnership with the stakeholders has developed digital tools to empower ADDO owners and dispensers. Two key tools, **Duka la Dawa** by HEBET Technologies and **Elsa-DOTS** by Inspired Ideas Research Foundation, help with business management, inventory, sales, and reporting.

Elsa-DOTS is also testing features to detect drug interactions, ensuring patient safety across different ADDOs. Meanwhile, Duka la Dawa will be integrated with Afya-Tek/UCS to enhance service delivery.



2.6 Research, Publications and Consultancy Services

Apotheker uses implementation research to guide decision-making and policy advocacy in health systems. With funding from Fondation Botnar, we partnered with the government to publish findings from the Afya-Tek program in the BMC Health Services Research journal. The publication, titled **"Using digital technology as a platform to strengthen the continuum of care at the community level for maternal, child, and adolescent health in Tanzania: introducing the Afya-Tek program,"** showcases the impact of Afya-Tek.



With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Apotheker also released the DISF Afya-Tek Learnings Report (June 2023 - June 2024), based on research in Kibaha, Pwani region. This report combines data from the enhanced Afya-Tek system and surveys from community members using ADDO and health facilities.

Additionally, Apotheker completed a consultancy for the Madagascar Ministry of Public Health and the National Drug Authority through Management Sciences for Health (MSH) under the USAID-IMPACT project, offering technical expertise to implement a drug outlet accreditation program and scale-up plan, drawing from Tanzania's ADDO program experience.



2.7 Celebrating Apotheker Team Achievements

At Apotheker, we take great pride in celebrating the achievements of our team, which reflect our collective dedication to advancing knowledge and professional growth.

In March, we were thrilled to see Pharmacist Jafary H. Liana appointed as a Chairman of the Pharmacy Council of Tanzania by the former Minister for Health, Hon. Ummu Mwalimu. This appointment is a well-deserved recognition of his long-standing dedication to the pharmacy profession in Tanzania.



In December, Dr. Haroun Yassin received his Ph.D. from the University of Dar es Salaam, supported by the Afya-Tek Program. His research on the role of digital technology in healthcare, approached from an anthropological perspective, provides valuable insights into the social aspects of technology in health. Dr. Haroun's work emphasizes the importance of including users' perspectives in program design to ensure meaningful, sustainable healthcare outcomes.

These achievements not only showcase the exceptional talents of our team but also highlight Apotheker's commitment to fostering excellence and advancing healthcare and professional development.

3 Strategic Advocacy for Visibility/ Strengthening Public and Private Partnership

3.1 Participation in the World Health Assembly

In May-June, Apotheker staff attended the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, where the theme was "All for Health and Health for All." During the event, our team participated in the main conference as well as side activities, including the "Walk the Talk" marathon and the Tanzania Government's side event on strengthening primary healthcare through an integrated community health workers program.

We also took part in a BBC side event, where the Afya-Tek program was featured as part of a documentary session. These engagements were invaluable, allowing us to strengthen partnerships, showcase our work, and reaffirm our commitment to advancing global health.



3.2 Participation in National Health Forums

In October, Apotheker joined over 1,500 health sector stakeholders at the 11th Tanzania Health Summit in Zanzibar, officiated by Dr. Hussein Ally Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar. During the summit, Apotheker showcased its work through three major events:

1 Afya-Tek Forum

Apotheker hosted a session to share the successes of the Afya-Tek program and gather feedback for future improvements.

2 Apotheker Booth

A space where key stakeholders engaged in meaningful discussions and explored collaboration opportunities.

3 Abstract Presentation

Highlighting barriers to accessing medicine for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH).



4th MUHAS Digital Health Innovation Week



We participated in a panel discussion at this event about how PPPs assist in Advancing Tanzania's Digital Health Transformation, and shared how private drug shops can enhance the delivery and effectiveness of primary health care (PHC).

54th AGM of the Pharmaceutical Society of Tanzania (PST)



Apotheker as among the digital health initiative stakeholder, sponsored and participated the AGM PST summit which focused on Innovation for the future of healthcare in Tanzania.

Mkapa Legacy Summit: Mkapa Foundation, July 29th to 31st, 2024



Apotheke participated in this event and contributed to the discussions about health workforce as a cornerstone to resilient and sustainable development agenda.

Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Stakeholders Forum Dodoma, November 31st, 2024



Apotheke participated in this forum as a valuable contributor in supporting adolescent health and wellbeing through its initiative in health information access including mental health support.

International Primary Healthcare Conference (IPHC) - Dodoma, March 24th to 25th, 2024



Apotheke attended this event by showcasing its work in support to government efforts in strengthening universal health coverage in Tanzania.

3.3

Contributions to National Health Strategies in Tanzania

Apotheke has been instrumental in supporting Tanzania's national health policies and strategies aimed at improving healthcare quality. Key contributions include:

- Active involvement in developing the **National Action Plans on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)** for 2017–2022 and 2023–2027.
- Conducting a comprehensive **2023 analysis of antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) policies** and supply chain systems across the human and animal health sectors.
- Creating the **AMS participant training manual** for healthcare professionals.
- Contributing to the **National Framework on Antifungal Medication Use and Resistance Surveillance (2021)**.
- Leading efforts in **national antimicrobial consumption quantification** since 2016, with related publications from 2017 to 2022.

Our Contribution to the Mid-Term Review of HSSP V

Apotheke provided technical support to the Ifakara Health Institute, the lead consultant for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Health Sector Strategic Plan V (HSSP V). Apotheke led the community engagement component of the review, which assessed the progress and challenges in implementing HSSP V. Key findings indicate that Tanzania is advancing community health through stronger policies, including the formalization of Community Health Workers (CHWs), enhanced local governance structures, and the integration of digital tools such as the Unified Community System (UCS). Additionally, national guidelines launched between 2021 and 2024 have contributed to improved coordination, service delivery, and community participation. The comprehensive MTR report will be officially published by the Ministry of Health.

3.4

Support for Government Officials' Visit to Apotheker Activities in Kibaha

On December 20th, Dr. Mohamed Janabi, Director General of Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH), visited the Community Health Worker (CHW) program in Kibaha Municipal. The visit, coordinated by the Ministry of Health's Health Promotion Unit, aimed to appreciate and promote the Integrated CHWs program.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Pwani Region, and Kibaha Municipal Authorities, Apotheker organized a meeting with CHW trainees under the new training program. Dr. Janabi also toured Mwendapole Dispensary, where CHWs and ADDO dispensers demonstrated their work under the Afya-Tek program. During his visit, Dr. Janabi emphasized the vital role of CHWs in community health education, particularly in addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs).



4

Our Media Footprint

In 2024, media played a pivotal role in spotlighting Apotheker's contributions to improving healthcare access through research and public-private partnerships (PPP). Through newspapers, online articles, and social media, we raised awareness, sparked meaningful conversations, and engaged key stakeholders. This section showcases how our media coverage, including press features and digital content, helped amplify our mission, drive discussions within the health sector, and reach a broader audience.



Bridging the gaps; the role of digital technology in strengthening healthcare provision in Tanzania

Mfumo wa Afya-Tek unaboresha Huduma za Afya ya Msingi katika Manispaa ya Kibaha, Mkoani Pwani (Jarida la Kinga, Wizaraa Afya, Toleo la 2024)

Online and social media:



Uzinduzi wa mfumo wa Afya Tek ndani ya UCS, Daily News Digital



Serikali Yazindua Mfumo Jumuishi Kuboresha Sekta ya Afya, Mwananchi Digital



Uzinduzi wa mfumo wa Afya Tek ndani ya UCS, Naibu Waziri Afya, Ayo TV

5 What people Say About Apotheker and its Initiatives

We believe in the power of effective collaboration with government, partners, service providers, and beneficiaries at all levels. Here, we share the voices of our collaborators, reflecting the impact of our work in improving the health and wellbeing of communities.

Government engagement

I emphasize the need to scale up Afya-Tek nationwide as the initiative aligns with President Samia Suluhu Hassan's directive to ensure that digital systems across the country are unified.

Dr. Godwin Mollel,
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health

Integration of Afya-Tek and UCS

I commend Afya-Tek for responding to President Samia Suluhu Hassan's call to integrate ICT systems. The successful elements of Afya-Tek would be incorporated into the UCS to further enhance the effectiveness of Ministry of Health digital health solutions.

Mr. Silvanus Ilomo,
Director of ICT, Ministry of Health

Integration of Afya-Tek CPP component to UCS

Integrating Afya-Tek into the UCS would streamline operational systems, saving time and improving overall coordination.

Mr Boniface Magige,
Registrar, Pharmacy Council

Working with primary health care services providers

The system provides direct guidance on how to screen a patient for danger signs and be able to give a referral to a health facility.

Steven Bwire,
ADDO Owner, Kibaha

Now we are using digital systems, which are making things easier for us.

Ms. Batuli Maero,
WAJA Chairperson, Kibaha

The Afya-Tek project has helped me learn about drug abuse, teenage pregnancy prevention, proper nutrition, and recognizing gender-based violence. I recommend expanding this project across Tanzania so more young people can benefit.

Cesilia Agustino Mhando -
Member - Mtongani Adolescent Club

6 Success Stories

Afya-Tek program with the support from Fondation Botnar gained significant attention with its documentary featured on the BBC Story Works.

Afya-Tek (Healthcare Technology) - BBC StoryWorks & Fondation Botnar, ReWild Africa



[Click here to watch](#)

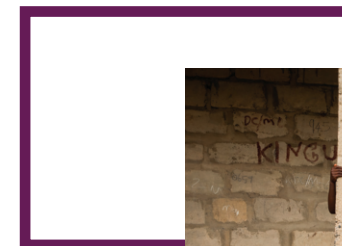


Afya-Tek: A Digital Shift That's Saving Lives

When we think about progress in healthcare, we often envision large systems and hospitals. But sometimes, real change begins with something as simple as a smartphone in the hands of a Community Health Worker.

Afya-Tek has changed how health is delivered in communities like Kibaha. What once relied on paper often lost or damaged in the rain, is now managed through a digital platform, empowering health workers and speeding up patient care.

“Before Afya-Tek, it was difficult to keep our records safe, especially during the rainy season when papers would get wet or lost. Now, everything is stored securely on our phones. It's much easier to retrieve records and follow up on referrals.”



It's not just about convenience, it's about saving lives. During one visit, Amuko met Helena, a young woman who had been feeling unwell but hadn't visited the clinic. Using the Afya-Tek app, Amuko identified danger signs and issued a referral.

“When the CHW came to my home and used the Afya-Tek system to assess me, he noticed serious symptoms and referred me to the health facility. That’s where I was diagnosed with TB and started treatment.”



For Helena, that early detection changed everything.

Before that, I was very weak and thought I might never be able to have children. But after getting proper care, I recovered and gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

Helena



Stories like Helena's are becoming the new reality in areas where Afya-Tek operates: faster care, safer records, and more lives saved.

Afya-Tek truly saves lives by helping people get help in time.

Helena

At Apotheker, we don't just see data or dashboards, we see people. Through Afya-Tek, we are empowering Community Health Workers like Amuko and giving community members like Helena a second chance at life.

7 Recognitions

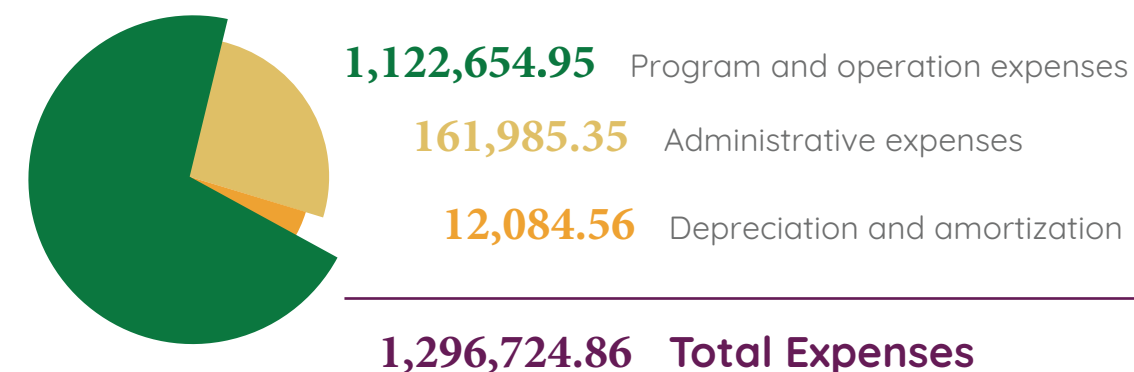
Through active participation in national health forums, Apotheker has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to collaboration, innovation, and impact in improving access to quality healthcare. In recognition of these efforts, Apotheker received multiple certificates and accolades. Notably, the Tanzania Health Summit awarded Apotheker for its outstanding role as one of the key implementers of community health interventions in Tanzania, particularly for the successful implementation of the Afya-Tek program, which leverages digital technology to strengthen community health systems.



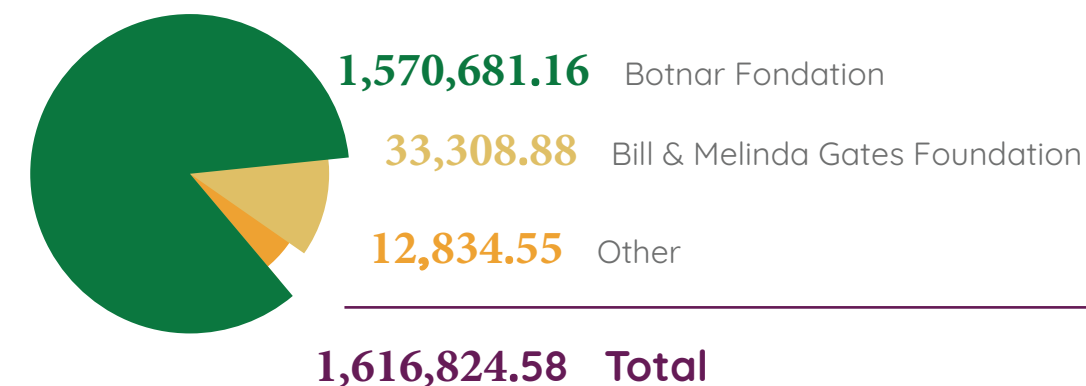
8 Financial Review

In 2024, Apotheker received USD 1,616,824.58 to support the organization's administration and project activities. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, nearly 71% of expenditures were allocated to Afya-Tek Phase II project activities, while administrative costs made up 10% of the total, covering expenses and related costs.

Expenses 2024



Revenue by Source 2024



9 Our Partners

Apotheker sincerely appreciates all our partners for their invaluable collaboration and contribution in 2024. Our activities were made possible through the close partnership with those who contributed both financially and technically to help us achieve our goals.

Partners



Funder

foundation
BOTNAR

Co-Funder

BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation*



