

A results assessment of Oky: a digital solution by and for adolescent girls

Oky is a digital menstruation education solution and digital public good, co-created by and for adolescent girls in low- and middle-income countries. Oky is designed to meet adolescent girls' needs and digital realities, providing evidence-based adolescent-friendly information and cycle tracking, to help them manage their periods, navigate puberty with confidence, and provide answers about adolescent health.

The Oky app is lightweight, works completely offline, is designed with highest privacy and data protection, and for users who share devices or those with older handsets and operating systems.

In several Oky deployment countries, including in Papua New Guinea, low-tech versions of Oky (radio shows for community listening, audio-only content or SMS versions for basic phones) and Oky peer-to-peer education serve un(der) connected adolescents without access to smartphones and/or connectivity.

Oky products have been localized in over 12 countries, where they are managed by local partners via a social franchise license and with support from UNICEF. Oky also works with organizations of people with disabilities to enhance Oky's relevance and accessibility for users with disabilities. Oky is promoted through schools, community events, partner and government programmes, peer-to-peer outreach, as well as social and traditional media.

In 2024, UNICEF commissioned BBC Media Action to conduct an independent results assessment of Oky deployments in Indonesia, the Philippines and Papua New Guinea to better understand Oky's outcomes for adolescent girls. This assessment focused on four intended outcomes: **(1) gaining knowledge, (2) changing perceptions, (3) links to services and (4) sharing information.**



Summary of findings:

- **Oky demonstrates causal contribution across three outcome areas: knowledge, perceptions, and sharing.**
- In unprompted interviews across Indonesia and the Philippines, 60% of participants spontaneously linked Oky to improved knowledge.
- One in three interviewed girls attributed changes in their menstrual health practices directly or indirectly to Oky.



Methodology

The results assessment involved:

- One Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) unit per country, consisting of 24 interviews and 8 focus group discussion with adolescent girls and young women (aged 10-19) in Indonesia and the Philippines.
- 49 stakeholder interviews (including teachers, NGO staff and government officials) and observations of Oky events in Indonesia and Philippines.
- Due to the early stage of Oky deployment in Papua New Guinea, exploratory interviews were conducted with Oky Papua New Guinea users (10) and stakeholders (9).

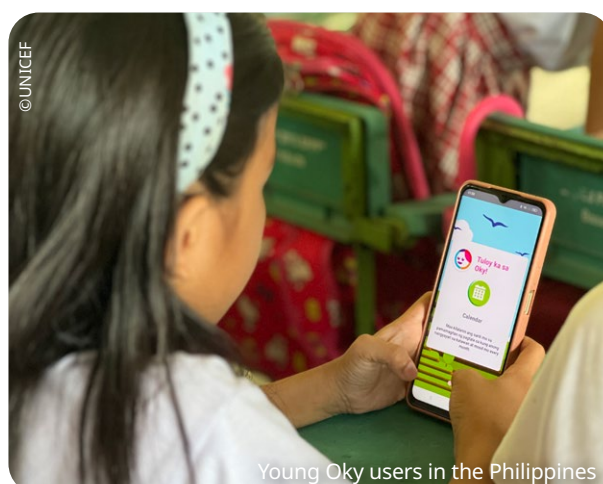
International and local ethical reviews were completed. Local female researchers conducted the research in each countries' local languages between October 2024 and February 2025.

For the Oky assessment, key to the QuIP methodology, interview and focus group participants were not informed from the start that the research was related to Oky ('unprompted'). They were asked to reflect on and share any life changes (related to intended outcomes), to understand whether Oky was mentioned by interviewed girls spontaneously as a driver of change. Later in the discussion, researchers explained that Oky was the focus of the research and asked participants direct questions about it.

Limitations: Findings are based on the qualitative methods outlined and are not statistically representative.

Summary of findings:

- QuIP is a methodology that offers valuable insights into whether outcomes are shifting and identifies the key factors driving these changes.
- The QuIP approach is recognized as a rigorous form of impact assessment.
- Developed by Bath Social & Development Research, QuIP is not intended to quantify impact, but aims to discover drivers of change, investigating assumptions and causal pathways behind outcomes.



Over a third of adolescent girls interviewed in Indonesia attributed positive changes in their lives to Oky

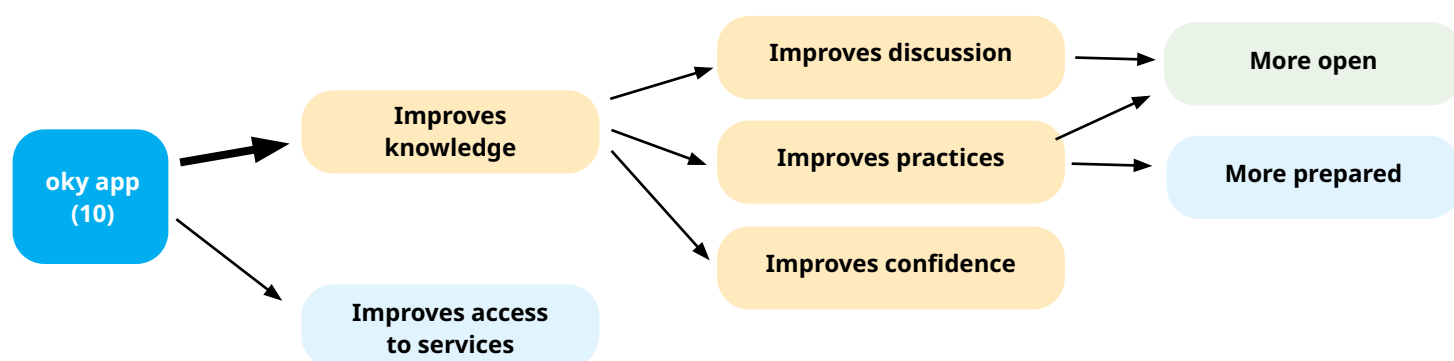


Figure 1: Oky Indonesia impact on adolescent girls, showing causal links (mentioned by 2 or more girls during QuIP interviews)

In ‘blindfolded’ interviews, 10 out of 24 girls in Indonesia spontaneously identified Oky as a contributor to positive changes in their knowledge or practices.

Adolescent girls in Indonesia mentioned Oky as a source of information that led to improving their knowledge on puberty, body changes and menstruation. Girls who had already started menstruating especially indicated Oky as one of their primary sources on these topics. Oky helps them to debunk menstruation myths, as sometimes female adults perpetuate misconceptions and myths from their youth. Oky also helps girls to track their cycles. Adolescent girls aged 15–19 particularly noted that Oky improved their menstrual preparedness, such as knowing when their period is due and having pads ready.

Across Indonesia and the Philippines combined, 16 out of 48 girls interviewed attributed improvements in menstrual practices to Oky, including preparedness, hygiene and symptom management.

“I usually use Oky to ask for the menstrual schedule and... how to maintain hygiene and health during menstruation.”

– Female Oky user aged 14–16, Semarang

“If I am curious about something that I can actually get the answer to on Google, but because I want to make sure the answer is correct, I look for it using Oky.”

– Female Oky user aged 17–19, Bali

Some adolescent girls’ awareness and attitudes around self-care and their individual cycle have improved because of Oky. Half of adolescent girls who mentioned Oky spontaneously said it had shifted their perceptions around menstruation, making them feel more open, comfortable, confident regarding their periods – particularly those aged 17–19.

“We are also more open to ourselves, especially since the information we get is also useful and effective for our lives.”

– Female Oky user aged 17–19, Bali

Oky has also boosted adolescent girls’ confidence in addressing menstrual taboos and myths and discussing menstruation and puberty with their peers. Some users mentioned sharing the Oky content with friends when it offered answers to their questions. When prompted, over a third of the adolescent girls said they have recommended Oky to friends, typically in relation to period tracking (including irregular cycles) and because it is user-friendly and provides information.



“On Oky there was also a discussion that... we don’t even need to cover [menstruation] up because it’s in our nature. Especially with my female friends, I feel like they’re going through the same thing. So, we can share stories.”

– Female Oky user aged 17–19, Semarang

Indonesian partner organizations highlighted appreciation for Oky’s standardized and detailed information about puberty and menstruation in an adolescent-friendly manner.

Stakeholders across Indonesia described Oky as filling an unmet need for trusted, adolescent-friendly digital information that complements existing paper-based materials.

Before Oky, the Indonesian Ministries of Education, Religion, and Women’s Affairs had (paper-based) information about menstruation and puberty. Oky is now integrated into the school counselling curriculum, alongside adolescent growth and development materials. Counselling teachers who deal with student adolescent health issues use Oky to initiate or continue discussions, and to explore solutions such as healthy behaviour in relationships and awareness of pregnancy risks.

Strategic integration into education systems has strengthened institutional ownership and long-term sustainability of Oky in Indonesia.

“The Oky app is very useful for following up on what we’ve discussed. It also makes learning about menstruation and its relationship easier for [students].”

– Teacher , Bali



In the Philippines, adolescent girls attribute greater openness and normalization of menstruation to Oky

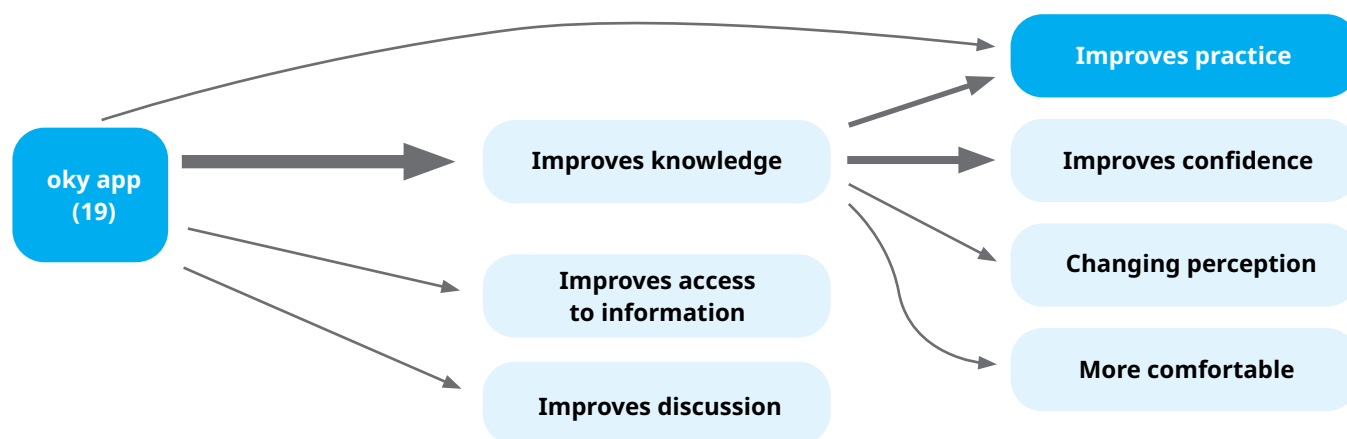


Figure 2: Causal map of Oky outcomes in the Philippines (from QuIP interviews).

Most girls interviewed in the Philippines spontaneously attributed improvements in knowledge to Oky during ‘unprompted’ interviews

“When I have questions about why my period isn’t normal, I can read up on possible reasons in [Oky’s] encyclopedia.”

– Female Oky user aged 17–19, Cotabato

Most Oky Philippines users said Oky improved their knowledge. Adolescent girls particularly use Oky to track their menstrual cycle or find answers to specific questions related to menstruation.

“I downloaded Oky, and I just learned that all those superstitions are not true. In fact, they can be bad for your health.”

– Female Oky user aged 10–13, Malangas

This knowledge has contributed to their improved menstrual hygiene and preparedness.

Knowledge emerged as the strongest and most consistent causal pathway to improved confidence, comfort and practice.

Users identified Oky as a reliable, trusted information source on periods and puberty which helps them to identify misinformation about menstrual health. When prompted, they explained that they trust the app because it is developed by experts, includes content from government agencies and is recommended by teachers.

As a result of knowledge gained from Oky, many adolescent girls now use sanitary pads (when going out/ to school) instead of pieces of cloth during their periods. New habits like carrying extra pads can help adolescent girls to participate in school activities.

“There were times when I would accidentally stain my clothes during my period. But after using [Oky] app, I’ve become more prepared.”

– Female Oky user aged 17–19, Malangas

Improved knowledge from Oky is a key pathway to changing perceptions. Most girls said they had changed their perceptions and attitudes about puberty and menstruation, become more open or comfortable, or improved their confidence in this area as a result of Oky.



"After the Oky rollout, I'm no longer shy to talk about menstruation. The way I talk has improved, my conversations are better."

– Female Oky user aged 14–16, Cotabato

"I feel more confident now. I tell others that having a period is nothing to be ashamed of because it's normal for girls."

– Female Oky user aged 10–13, Cotabato

Younger girls (10–13) mentioned no longer being embarrassed about adolescent health topics. Better awareness about self-care enables girls at the onset of puberty to be mentally prepared to manage their periods. Oky Philippines has supported adolescent girls of all ages to be more comfortable discussing puberty and menstruation with their peers, friends, classmates and cousins. Since the Oky rollout in Malangas, adolescent girls regularly discuss periods in school. Some observed that boys have become more open about the issue, learning to be respectful and empathetic towards girls during their period.

"If I get my period, I know what to do. And when my classmate gets hers, I can talk to her about it... Because at school, it's normal to talk about it. Boys don't make fun of it anymore, and it's more open now."

– Female Oky user aged 17–19, Malangas

Oky Philippines is integrated into the school curriculum and is a valuable tool for caregivers, teachers and healthcare workers. Several teachers observed a shift in attitudes because of Oky, leading to girls' increased confidence, normalizing their physical changes and becoming less embarrassed to discuss menstruation and puberty. Stakeholders consistently highlighted Oky's positive influence on adolescents' knowledge of menstrual health and puberty, its effectiveness in debunking myths and misconceptions, and its culturally relevant guidance aligned with religious teachings.

"We've seen an increase in service access due to the dissemination of accurate information... [Oky] is part of [this change]."

– Senior Philippines DepEd official in his perception of Oky



In Papua New Guinea, adolescent girls and stakeholders see the need for Oky and its potential for scale

Oky was at an earlier stage of deployment in Papua New Guinea, with scaling efforts not yet started at the time of the assessment.

While findings in Papua New Guinea are exploratory and based on qualitative interviews, they indicate strong perceived value and demand.

Adolescent girls see Oky as a valuable resource for expanding their knowledge regarding menstrual health and self-care practices. Oky has provided insights that helped them understand their menstrual cycles and manage their emotional well-being. Adolescent girls reported a boost in confidence after using the app. Having private access to information helped them feel more secure, less ashamed and more in control of their bodies.

“Oky app has taught me to own being a woman. These changes are normal.”

– Female Oky user aged 16, Port Moresby

Stakeholders from education, healthcare, government, community and disability services say Oky has potential to significantly increased menstrual and adolescent health knowledge which adolescents may not receive from families, schools or communities due to taboos. Teachers observed Oky’s role in supplementing the existing personal development lessons. Parents and disability service providers acknowledged how Oky empowered adolescent girls, including those with disabilities, to ask questions and understand menstruation independently and with confidence.

“Previously, girls didn’t know much about why their bodies are changing. After using the app, they know what to expect.”

– Disability services provider, Port Moresby

Stakeholders emphasized Oky’s potential to address persistent information gaps where cultural taboos limit open discussion.



Mother and daughter learning about Oky, Indonesia

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Conclusions

Where Oky has scaled, it is a well-used and trusted information source. Adolescent girls in the Philippines and Indonesia identified Oky as a source that improves knowledge, helps track cycles, and debunks menstruation myths.

Using Oky to track periods and gain knowledge leads to better menstrual health practices. Users in Indonesia and the Philippines attributed changes in their menstrual health practices to Oky, including switching to appropriate hygiene products, knowing when their period is due, having pads ready and better symptom management.

Adolescent girls link learning through Oky to improved confidence and comfort with the topic and experience of menstruation. Some girls in Indonesia and most in the Philippines said Oky made them feel more open, confident, comfortable and prepared for their periods. In the Philippines, participants noted menstruation being normalised due to Oky.

Oky sparks discussion and is shared among peers and in schools through its integration into curricula. Oky complements and sometimes corrects existing information sources including family members, school and the internet or media, helping to tackle menstrual myths and misinformation.

Oky is an accepted digital use case. It provides an entry point for adolescent girls to safely engage with digital platforms, helping to reduce access and digital literacy gaps.

Across the countries studied, Oky enjoys widespread support among local implementers and government partners, who play a crucial role in ensuring local ownership and long-term sustainability. Aligning Oky with existing programmes with strategic integration into education or health systems drives scale and deepens impact.

The assessment provides credible qualitative evidence that Oky contributes to meaningful improvements in knowledge, confidence and practices, where it is embedded within supportive institutional environments.

For further information, please contact:

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