

POLIO ERADICATION



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PAKISTAN

UNICEF is tasked with communicating the importance of polio vaccination to at-risk communities. Its social mobilizers are at the frontlines, going door to door to speak with caregivers about polio and other child health issues. They are working to overcome individual caregiver vaccination refusal because of lack of knowledge, and negotiating access to communities where vaccinators are prohibited from going. Many of the communities they work in are remote, lack basic health services and infrastructure, and struggle with insecurity. Therefore, UNICEF's social mobilizers need all of the support they can get, from skills and training to tools and technology. Currently, UNICEF does not have an automated system for conducting two way communication with frontline workers. Such a system would enable frontline staff to send real time updates to UNICEF as well as get immediate assistance from UNICEF or their supervisors.

The Polio Unit is currently developing three applications:

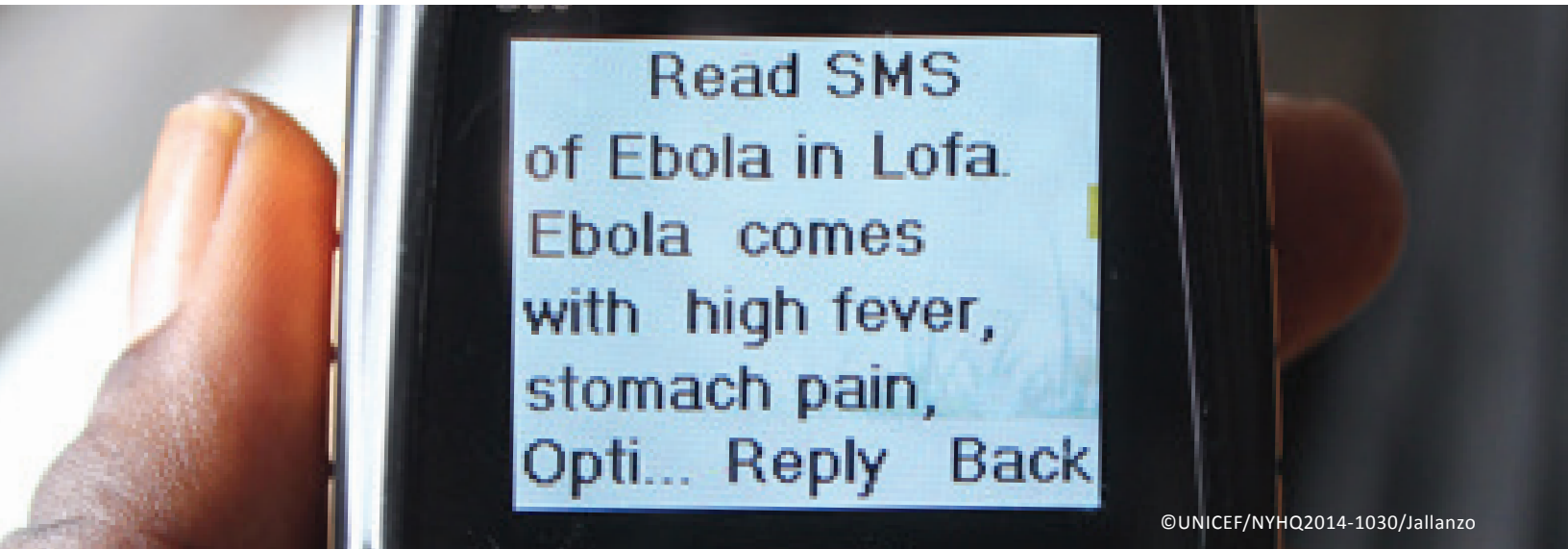
1. surveys of frontline staff to streamline data collection for better decision making;
2. procedural reminders and motivational messages to provide direct job-related support in preparation for polio campaigns and;
3. incident reporting and notification applications to help ensure the safety of frontline staff.

RapidPro is a unique tool for building and managing SMS and IVR applications. RapidPro's flow builder is user friendly and simple, its relay makes rapid prototyping easy, and it provides advanced functionality that allows for constructing complex applications without external support. A major advantage of RapidPro is the ability to solicit feedback. Every message can request a response and all responses can then be analysed in the form of graphs and charts.

The Polio Unit anticipates that these applications will motivate and empower frontline staff to perform their job more effectively and with greater confidence. It should also contribute to improving their feeling of safety.

mHERO

Health Worker Electronic Response & Outreach



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LIBERIA

The 2014 Ebola outbreak is one of the largest outbreaks in history. Shortages of health workers have exacerbated already weak health systems in mobilizing sufficient diagnosis, care and treatment of patients. Supporting communication efforts between health workers and supervisors has been a major challenge, as well as gathering real time data. Many health workers lack sufficient training to diagnosis cases, treat patients and protect themselves from contracting the disease. Furthermore, there are few reliable channels for community members to access information on Ebola and report suspected cases, and misinformation is rife. However, an initial study showed that 97% of Health Workers in Liberia own a basic mobile phone.

Through the UNICEF Global Centre for Innovations, a consortium of partners including USAID, WHO, CDC, IntraHealth, Praekelt Foundation and ThoughtWorks have been working on a number of tools to strengthen health systems, enhance communications and C4D activities, and improve M&E and programme monitoring. With the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, the UNICEF Global Centre for Innovations has offered to support immediate short-term technical assistance to UNICEF and government partners in affected countries where and as requested.

One of the tools this group has come up with is mHero (Health Worker Electronic Response & Outreach). It is a RapidPro-based application that provides a two-way SMS based mobile phone based communications system between MoH staff, health care providers, and community health workers. It is built on top of the USAID supported iHRIS (Integrated Human Resource Information System)—the primary government approved workforce management tool in Africa.

By linking iHRIS and RapidPro together, UNICEF and partners can immediately use the health workforce data from iHRIS to target specific communications to health workers personal phones. Communications, which can be triggered both centrally and remotely, go far beyond traditional “message blasts” offered by many software applications. mHero provides the ability to quickly set up systems to report new suspected cases or stock-outs of key medicines, participate in surveys or polling, and receive behavioral change communications, health tips and updates on the outbreak.

U-report



NIGERIA

U-report is a free SMS platform designed to address the issues communities in Nigeria care about by giving them a voice to influence decision making processes and create change in their communities. The issues discussed on U-report range from education, to health, child protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, and several others.

The application seeks to empower communities, giving them a voice and ensuring their voices are heard in matters that concern their social welfare. This is a timely innovation for Nigeria currently with a rapidly growing population of over 170 million people. Users participate in weekly polls and receive feedback via sms and through different media channels. Signing up for U-report is free, and 60,000 U-reporters are currently registered.

UNICEF Health Section with the full support of the Country Senior Management chose RapidPro because of its ability to poll a very large number of users on multiple issues in one flow, and systematically gather feedback in real time. Using U-report on RapidPro has had significant impact since the application took off in Nigeria, with registered users, both rural and urban, having access to important information on various issues via SMS which they would ordinarily not easily access.

UNICEF Nigeria has high hopes in the potential of U-report Nigeria to set a new record, the country being the continent's largest mobile market with now more than 165 million subscribers and a market penetration of around 75% and given the great enthusiasm of the citizens to create positive change.

With a target of 5 million registered U-reporters by the end of the year, UNICEF Nigeria is working closely with the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), the media, the Nigerian Scouts Association, Boys Brigade and Girl Guides, Religious and traditional leaders and the media in the country to scale up U-report.

UNICEF Nigeria's vision for UReport is a platform that will make visible the need in Health, Education, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Social Welfare, to duty bearers, ensuring that the resources which are specifically allocated to the sectors are properly allocated to address the needs as highlighted by the U-reporters.

EduTrac



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AFGHANISTAN

Many adolescents have had limited opportunities for learning when they were younger. UNICEF supports accelerated learning centres (ALC) where formerly out-of-school adolescents can learn basic numeracy and literacy in a condensed curriculum. It is difficult to reach ALC teachers in remote areas, so we use SMS to reach out, understand needs, and amplify the voices of ALC teachers and our NGO partner, and eventually the students.

In Afghanistan, EduTrac—an education monitoring system built from RapidPro - supports polls and chat for 70 teachers in Kandahar. Teachers report their needs, either in structured or unstructured SMS and learn from one another using group chat.

The program in Afghanistan needed the ability to prototype with partners in the field. RapidPro enabled rapid testing requiring software programming so that UNICEF program experts can focus on the user experience, not the technology.

The program has been surprised by the use of group chat for coordination and peer learning and of course real time reporting. Given the success of the pilot, EduTrac will be used for other community-based education activities going forward.