



# SUPPORTING THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA CONSULTATIONS USING U-REPORT

**PARTNERS: UNDP, UNICEF**  
**PROGRAMME AREA: POST-2015**



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## SUMMARY

A wide range of consultations has taken place in Uganda to review the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and developing the Post-2015 national development agenda. In support of the process, Pulse Lab Kampala has developed a technical toolkit to further incorporate the “voices of the people” into the planning process. Pulse Lab Kampala analysed a dataset comprising 3.1 million messages from UNICEF’s U-report platform to understand the views of Ugandan youth on Post-2015 development topics. The analysis revealed that ‘Better Health Care,’ ‘Good Education’ and ‘Better Job Opportunities’ are top priorities for the youth that participated in the digital surveys conducted by UNICEF.

## BACKGROUND

In July 2012, global consultations commenced to define the new international development framework that would follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda after 2015. The UN Secretary-General initiated these consultations, emphasising the need for an open, inclusive and transparent process in shaping the Post-2015 global development agenda. By including voices from civil society organizations, vulnerable groups, community leaders, and youth, in addition to governments and businesses, the Post-2015 process seeks to understand the development priorities of a broad range of local and national stakeholders.

Several tools have been developed to measure and understand public opinion around the Post-2015 development agenda, including a Twitter monitor developed by Global Pulse to measure how much people from different countries tweet about Post-2015 topics in everyday conversations.<sup>1</sup>

In 2011, UNICEF launched the U-report<sup>2</sup> social platform, a free SMS-based application to enable Ugandans to participate in policymaking and governance by sharing their experiences and opinions. Over 282,000 people (or ‘U-reporters’) use the platform, with an average age of 25 and 36 percent female users. Users receive weekly questions via SMS about development issues to which they respond with personal stories, concerns and opinions. U-report results are published monthly in national Ugandan media and shared with policymakers to help inform their decisions.

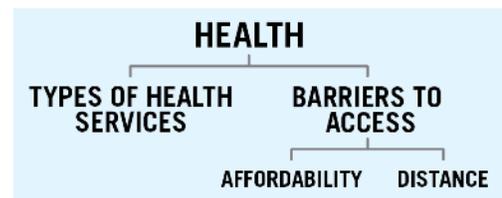
In this project, Pulse Lab Kampala worked with the Ugandan government, UNDP and UNICEF to explore insights related to the Post-2015 development agenda, specifically to understand the development priorities of Ugandan youth by analysing U-report messages.

## ANALYSING U-REPORT TO UNDERSTAND POST-2015 PRIORITIES

UNICEF provided a dataset of 3.1 million U-report messages from 2011 to 2014 for analysis. The messages were corrected for spelling and abbreviations, and stripped of punctuation. Common names were removed from the data using a list of over 8,500 Ugandan names compiled from the Makerere University graduation lists from recent years.

In order to categorize the U-report messages into the Post-2015 development topics, a comprehensive taxonomy of keywords and phrases was developed. For example, messages containing words related to healthcare (‘clinic’ or ‘disease’) were sorted into the health topic, while messages containing words like ‘crops’ or ‘harvest’ were sorted into ‘Affordable and Nutritious Food.’

Each category was further broken down into sub-categories for a more granular understanding of what issues are important to the U-reporters. Here is an example of how messages relevant to the ‘Better Healthcare’ topic were categorised:



Messages were also categorised into three priority levels:

1. **Urgent and Actionable** (e.g. “A 15 years old boy has died of measles in my village”)
2. **Normal Priority** (e.g. “Unemployment is a significant contributor to the rise of crime among youths in uganda”)
3. **Irrelevant** (e.g. “Happy christmas and new year”)

Finally, a gender analysis was conducted to reveal differences in priorities between male and female U-reporters.

<sup>1</sup> The Post-2015 Twitter monitor was a project of Global Pulse in partnership with the UN Millennium Campaign, and is accessible at <http://post2015.unglobalpulse.net/>

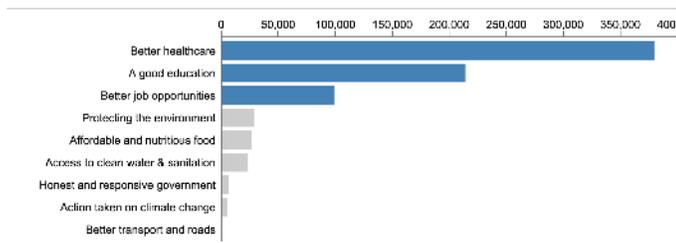
<sup>2</sup> U-report Uganda website <http://www.ureport.ug/>

The results of the analysis showed volumes of messages by development topic at district level and revealed regional differences.

The dashboard can be viewed online at: <http://pulselabkampala.ug/post2015/categories/>

## INSIGHTS & OUTCOMES

This analysis revealed the top priorities as expressed by U-report users from 2011 to 2014 were 'Better Healthcare' with approximately 375,000 relevant messages, 'Good Education' with about 210,000 messages, and 'Better Job Opportunities' with almost 100,000 messages.



The graph above shows the volume of U-report messages of each Post-2015 topic. The top three topics are in blue: healthcare, education and job opportunities.

Healthcare was the most reported topic in the U-report messages analysed. The sentiments around healthcare showed concerns around barriers to access, such as transport and affordability, and disease management. In Uganda, healthcare facilities in rural areas often face the widest resource gaps, including both medicine and healthcare workers.

### EXAMPLE MESSAGES ABOUT 'BETTER HEALTHCARE':

- "help them by fighting hiv aids stigma in west Nile region"
- "long distances to access health facilities from health centres"

The Post-2015 development topic with the second highest volume of relevant U-report messages was education. Within this topic, users discussed concerns related to dropout rates and teacher quality. Education was seen as key to better job opportunities, the third highest category.

### EXAMPLE MESSAGES ABOUT 'GOOD EDUCATION':

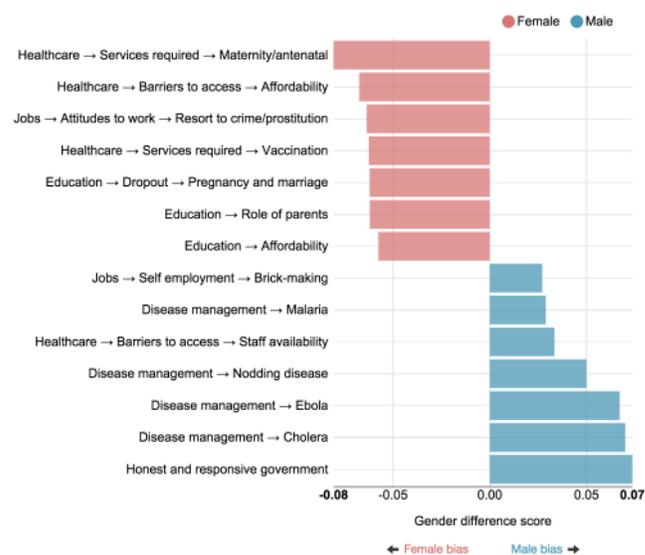
- "retain school age going girls at school"
- "teachers must be fully motivated by govt by increasing their salary"

According to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, only 20 per cent of graduates from tertiary schools in Uganda are employed annually. The average national unemployment rate was 35 per cent and 80 per cent for new graduates. Youth unemployment in Uganda is a key area of work for the UN in Uganda under the Delivering as One process. In the U-report messages, sub-topics included attitudes to work, employer corruption, job creation measures such as vocational training, and self-employment opportunities.

### EXAMPLE MESSAGES ABOUT 'BETTER JOB OPPORTUNITIES':

- "government shd promote girl child edn and ensure dat women hav equal opportunities in getting any kind job"
- "unemployment caused by government rampant corruption tribalism in job recruitment"

These were the three most discussed topics across the country, despite some regional differences. For example, the frequency of health-related messages tended to be slightly higher in rural areas such as Karamoja, whereas job opportunities were discussed more in urban areas such as Kampala and Mbarara.



The graph above shows the gender analysis of U-report messages about Post-2015 topics. Messages about vaccination, the role of parents and affordable healthcare were mentioned more frequently by young women, whereas messages about government and diseases such as cholera and malaria were mentioned more frequently by young men.

## CONCLUSIONS

This project demonstrates that U-report data can provide valuable insights on the development priorities of Ugandan youth. Continuous monitoring of the opinions expressed in U-report can support the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP) for 2016 to 2020.

## IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- This project analysed 3.1 million U-report messages, revealing the Post-2015 development priorities of Ugandan youth and demonstrating how big data analytics could enhance the utility of mobile SMS-based applications.
- Monitoring public opinion as expressed in different social platforms could be used to support policymaking and governance processes.

## REFERENCES

Government of Uganda Ministry of Health, Health Sector Strategic Plan for Uganda 2010/11-2014/15 (2010) [http://www.health.go.ug/docs/HSSP\\_III\\_2010.pdf](http://www.health.go.ug/docs/HSSP_III_2010.pdf)

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Youth Livelihood Programme (2014) <http://ylp.mglsd.go.ug/>