

Theme 2: Future Forward

Proposal/Abstract Title: U-Report for Humanitarian Action - Ebola Risk Communication and Referrals using U-Report

Session format: Oral presentation

Practice oriented proposal

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Summary Abstract

U-Report is a social monitoring tool for community participation, designed to address issues that people care about. SMS polls and alerts are sent out to U-Reporters, real-time response information is collected, and results are shared. Following the outbreak of EVD in the Democratic Republic of Congo in August 2018, the Uganda Ministry of Health (MOH) has used U-Report to reinforce key Ebola messages, provide feedback to communities in real time, and as a mechanism for accountability to affected populations.

Through the network of 98,635 U-Reporters in 22 Ebola high risk districts, the Ministry of Health used U-Report to share key Ebola messages with communities. The platform has also been used to respond to questions and issues from communities and provide real time referrals to available services in their communities. Communities also use the tool to share valuable information on Ebola and as part of Accountability to Affected Populations, communities provide feedback on service delivery.

The results indicate that U-Report can be used to reach large numbers of people in a short period of time during emergencies. The platform can be used to address myths, rumors and misconceptions through real time individual responses using the U-Partners dashboard, relieving the panic caused by mixed and erroneous messages. U-report provided linkages to surveillance components for Ebola preparedness and real-time feedback to the U-reporters.

In conclusion, U-Report is a tool that can be used to meet the high demand for information and urgent need to interact with affected populations during emergencies.

Background/Objectives

U-Report is a social monitoring tool for community participation, designed to address issues that people care about. SMS polls and alerts are sent out to U-Reporters, real-time response information is collected, and results are shared. Following the outbreak of EVD in the Democratic Republic of Congo in August 2018, the Uganda Ministry of Health (MOH) has used U-Report to reinforce key Ebola messages, provide feedback to communities in real time, and as a mechanism for accountability to affected populations.

Description of Intervention

Through the network of 98,635 U-Reporters in 22 Ebola high risk districts, the Ministry of Health used U-Report to share key Ebola messages with communities. The platform has also been used to respond to questions and issues from communities and provide real time referrals to available services in their communities. Communities also use the tool to share valuable information on Ebola such as reports of suspected cases of Ebola. Responses to individual questions and verification of reports is undertaken by the Ministry of Health Call Centre and Uganda Red Cross Society through individual U-Partners dashboards. As part of Accountability to Affected Populations, communities provide feedback on service delivery, which is used to assess the effectiveness of services and adjust communication content such as talking points for radio talk shows, frequently asked questions, and to identify rumors which inform risk communication interventions.

Results/lessons learned

U-Report can be used to reach large numbers of people in a short period of time during emergencies. U-Report reached 98,635 people with Ebola information. The platform can be used to address myths, rumors and misconceptions through real time individual responses using the U-Partners dashboard, relieving the panic caused by mixed and erroneous messages. We have responded to over 5,000 Ebola related issues across the country. U-report provided linkages to surveillance components for Ebola preparedness and response by providing alerts about suspected cases reported from communities. Another key aspect included real-time feedback to the U-reporters although cost related challenges were noted as a key hindering factor for wider use and scale up.

Discussion/Implications for the Field

U-Report is a tool that can be used to meet the high demand for information and urgent need to interact with affected populations during emergencies. The platform is fast, reaches many people at once and provides opportunities for direct communication with affected people.