Africa’s Voices develops a tailored research design to answer questions such as: ‘What are the differences between parents who vaccinate their children and those who do not?’ Collaboratively, we transform the research questions into engaging radio scripts. MediaINK then produces and records the radio shows in Somali.

Radio shows air on up to 26 partner radio stations, and ask listeners a different health-related question each week. E.g. ‘Do you think children in your community are at risk of polio?’ Listeners respond to the radio question by sending a free SMS. They then receive an SMS survey that asks questions about socio-demographics and health practices, such as: Did your children receive the polio vaccination?

Some audience text messages are read out in the following weeks’ radio show.

Since 2015, Africa’s Voices Foundation and MediaINK have delivered interactive radio shows that amplify Somali citizens’ voices. Our aim is to gather and analyse SMS data to help UNICEF Somalia gain insight into the barriers to good health for women and children.

RESULTS

Africa’s Voices & MediaINK
A partnership for a two-way radio project with UNICEF Somalia

Insights include that perceived risk of polio is the most important factor for vaccination uptake. Barriers to perceiving risk include beliefs that polio can be prevented through cleanliness – hygiene and spiritual. The word used for polio (’dabayl’ which means wind in Somali) contributes to reinforcing an idea that polio can be spread by the wind and possible to be cured spiritually.

In a region with insecure and inaccessible areas, our two-way radio project is a valuable remote monitoring tool that can amplify the voices of hard-to-reach communities. Following the success of our pilot, we’re working in partnership to deliver more health-related interactive radio shows for UNICEF Somalia.

In our first 8-week pilot we received

19,000 SMS from 8000 people and every province.

55% parents and 86% 15-29 years old.

44% women

Do you think that people in your community are at risk of polio?

YES

NO

Polio is a dangerous and deadly disease.

Because it has been a recurrent phenomenon.

Because I have seen children who have been disabled by the disease.

There are a lot of risks in the region and this caused a lot of mud and dirt.

This is a fake disease. Westerners have many faces. Lestus alone, the children are fine.

There is nothing called polio, it is something that needs to be treated with Koran and prayers.

Whether you have never seen somebody who has been hit by polio.

No because I have never seen anybody who has been hit by polio.

No because that is for the non-Muslims.

No because our area is clean and does not have any problems.

Because there can be a child among the children who is not vaccinated.

Because I have seen children who have been disabled by the disease.

Because it has been a recurrent phenomenon.

Likelihood of vaccination

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