

# Africa's Voices & MediaINK

A partnership for a two-way radio project with UNICEF Somalia

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.

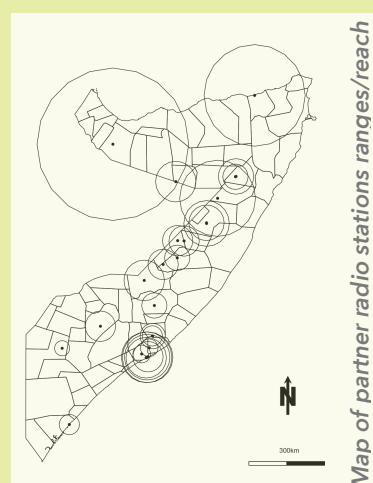
"I like the radio shows – twice I got to hear my comments [SMS] read on air. I liked how the doctors answer the questions. My advice is to increase the time we can listen!"  
- Male, Baydhabo

## METHOD

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?'*



Each show generates rich SMS data, which Africa's Voices analyses with tailored techniques that combine data science, social science, and an understanding of the Somali language and context.

Our hybrid approach reveals collective beliefs mapped against socio-demographics and over time.



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 practises, such as: *'Did your children receive the polio vaccination?'*

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

## RESULTS

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.**



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.

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



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.



AFRICA'S VOICES

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