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**DELIVERING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE SERVICES
IN AN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENT**

**Use of mobile phones to promote hygiene and sanitation
in northern Uganda**

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The paper presents the use of mobile telephones to creating awareness to change the behaviors of people in the selected towns of northern Uganda in water, hygiene, sanitation promotion. It also includes HIV/AIDS as one of the cross cutting issues being mainstreamed by the ministry of Water and Environment. Water and Sanitation Development Facility-North in partnership with German Development Cooperation (GIZ) is piloting Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) campaign through cell phones in what we term short messaging service (SMS). The objective of this campaign is to relates to the implementation of an SMS-based Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) campaign on Water, Sanitation and HIV/AIDS-related aspects in select urban centers in Northern Uganda to gage communities Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) campaign on Water, Sanitation and HIV/AIDS-related aspects in select urban centres in Northern Uganda. The approach radio talk shows and spots, call center and short messages.

Introduction

Water and Sanitation Development Facility - North (WSDF-N) is an implementing arm of ministry of Water and Environment of the Directorate of Water Development under the Ministry of Water and Environment. It is a new mechanism for funding water and sanitation investments at community level through demand responsive approach. Arrangements are underway to transform it into a Fund by an Act of Parliament, which will make it an established institution that can raise its own funds for water and sanitation development. Water and sanitation development facility is charged with the responsibility of develop fully functional piped water supply systems and sanitation facilities in 51 small towns or rural growth centres and 73 former IDP camps across the 23 districts in the West Nile, Lango, and Acholi Sub Regions.

The GIZ/RUWASS is a German Development Cooperation-funded programme that supports the implementation of the Ugandan government's reform of the urban water and sanitation sector. The programme strives to strengthen the institutional, regulatory and managerial competences, as well as the efficiency of the partner institutions. The objective is to promote a higher degree of sustainability and more equitable access to water supply and sanitation.

Text to Change (TTC) is a Dutch non-profit organization founded in 2006 that seeks to develop Information Communication Technology systems to inform and educate about health issues. TTC is a complementary service provider using mobile telephony as a medium to communicate about health related issues to support (existing) health communication campaigns.

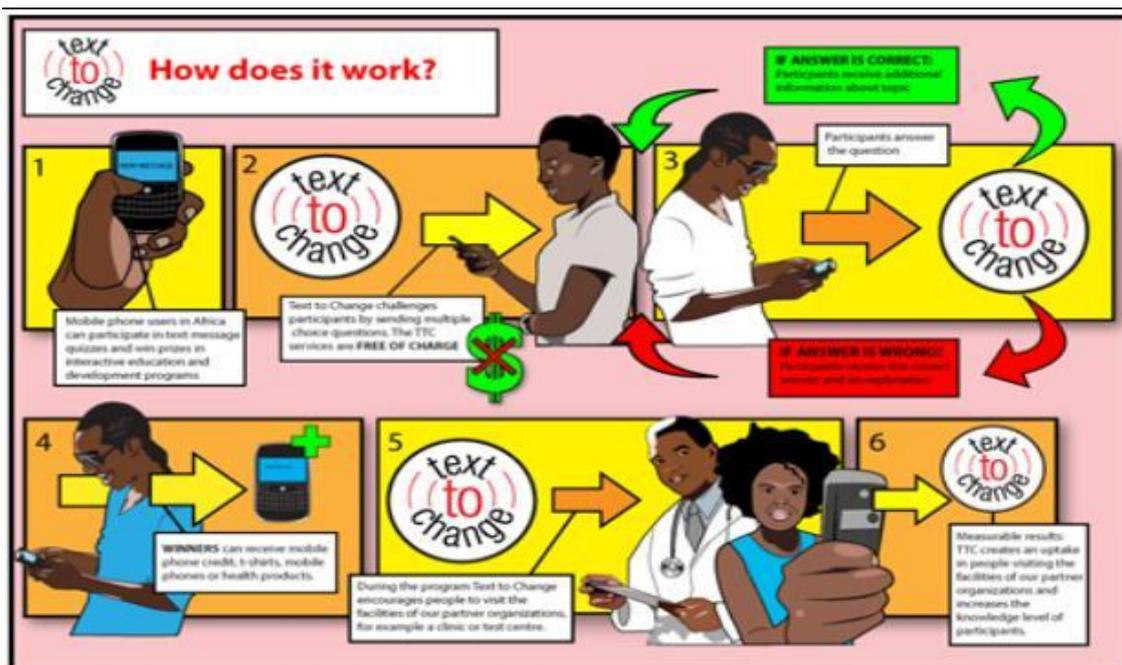
Through partnership with WSDF-N, GIZ/RUWASS supported implementation of the incentive-based SMS campaign on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issues. The campaign was implemented by Text to Change through their SMS platform. The innovation came about due a recent venture between the NGO Text to Change (<http://www.texttochange.com/>) and the AIDS Information Centre of Uganda (<http://www.aicug.org/>) conducted a month-long program using SMS-text messaging in the district of Arua to inform and encourage the public to seek HIV counseling and testing services.

Approaches

The current WASH campaign is designed to target 30,000 mobile subscribers from the northern region of three sub region of Lango Acholi and West Nile the campaign is to take place for a period of 6 months. Participants received 10 interactive text messages - over a period of 10 weeks - in the form of multiple choice questions on their mobile phones. If answered correctly, a participant would automatically be guaranteed free communication services and at the same time qualify to enter into weekly competition for prizes such as mobile phones credits and t-shirt. The project also incorporated 8 radios stations and also spot messages that will be running twice a day in this campaign. Others included poster/stickers, flyers and t-shirts. The TTC ensures to create buzz about the campaign and to deter people from disregarding the messages.

The procedure to enter in the campaign

During the radio talk shows, the listeners are informed that the campaign is free of charge. All the charges are paid thus to enter opt in one goes to the mobile phone, text message depending on the location of the radio station for example Unity Radio fm, Water1 (key word) and send to 8181. Thereafter, you get instant text message welcoming you to text to a campaign on water, hygiene, sanitation and HIV/AIDS. Immediately the first quiz comes and you are required to answer correctly using the options available and send to 8181. If you answer is correct or not reply comes shortly telling you the right or the wrong answer. See the picture below.



The crucial lesson from the project was that such a campaign must be coupled with using other media formats such as radio messages, Disco Joker mentions, announcements, more than one radio talk show, instant give away of prizes and testimonies from those who have accessed the services offered. According to the TTC, as per April 2013 final report, the numbers of people who opted in the campaigns were promising as indicated below.

Table 1. Radio stations and the number of people participating in TTC			
Location/key word	Radio station	Town	Number of participants opted in
Water1	Unity FM	Lira	8,268
Water2	Mega FM	Gulu	2,375
Water3	Pacis FM	Arua	1,526
Water4	Voice of Lango FM	Lira	510
Water5	Amani FM	Adjumani	1,701
Water6	Spirit FM	Koboko	468
Water7	Lou FM	Pader	464
Water8	Mighty Fire FM	Kitgum	361
Water9	Stickers/flyers	All towns	530

Source: Text to Change campaign report, Feb 2013

The above table shows the extent to which mobile phones can be a power of attitude change of the rural and urban populations. Currently many people have shown interest in the hygiene and sanitation promotion due to informative, educative and the incentives given.

The impacts of the campaign are evident in the call centre and feedback activities where 100 people are randomly selected per radio station. Responses from the participants on how the campaign is changing the life of people and probably what has to be improved for future plans.

Sample of the quizzes sent to the participants of the WASH campaign using mobile phones

Message 1: What is the advantage of using Ecosan toilets?
A. It uses a lot of water
B. Groundwater is not polluted
C. Products can be used in gardens immediately
SMS right answer to 8181, use *A,B,C#
Characters: 180
Message 2: Why should every household have a toilet?
A. Prevent spread of diarrhoea
B. Ugandan government wants it
C. For collecting rubbish
SMS the right answer to xxx, use *(A,B,C)#
Characters: 166

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Photograph 1. The sticker/flyer use for sms showing toilet and prepaid meter



Photograph 2. The shirt to be given to lucky winners

Acknowledgements

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References

1. Report-Text to Change/AIDS Information Centre". Text to Change. May 2009
2. Text to Change Campaign report, Feb 2013

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