INNOVATION CASE STUDY

November 2019

U-Report

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This case study report for U-Report is one of thirteen innovation case studies which were conducted as part of a global evaluation titled ‘Evaluation of innovation in UNICEF work’. The case study component of the evaluation was conducted by Deloitte LLC. The U-Report case study report was prepared by Edward Thomas, Katherine Arblaster, Ariel Kangasniemi, Laura Maxwell and Adarsh Desai. Beth Plowman, Senior Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Office, led and managed the overall evaluation process in close collaboration with Ukraine country office and the Global Innovation Centre.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of acronyms ........................................................................................................................................... 4

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................ 7

2. INNOVATION AT A GLANCE .................................................................................................................. 8

3. CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF U-REPORT .................................................................................... 9
   3.1 Development/humanitarian context ........................................................................................................ 10
   3.2 Innovation context .................................................................................................................................. 10
   3.3 UNICEF programme context .................................................................................................................. 11

4. THE INNOVATION JOURNEY FOR U-REPORT ..................................................................................... 12

5. U-REPORT FIELD TESTING .................................................................................................................. 24
   5.1 U-Report’s application globally ............................................................................................................. 25
   5.2 A glimpse into use cases for U-Report: Ukraine ................................................................................... 26

6. FINDINGS .................................................................................................................................................. 35
   6.1 Approach dimension .............................................................................................................................. 35
   6.2 Organization dimension ........................................................................................................................ 39
   6.3 Resources and capabilities dimension ................................................................................................. 45
   6.4 Incentives and outcomes ....................................................................................................................... 47

7. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS .......................................................................................... 50

Annex A: Methodology ................................................................................................................................. 56

Annex B: ARIDA stakeholders ..................................................................................................................... 58

Annex C: List of documents consulted ....................................................................................................... 60
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Artificial Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIESEC</td>
<td>International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Country Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Certified Public Accountant</td>
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<td>EMOPS</td>
<td>UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes</td>
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<td>GIC</td>
<td>Global Innovation Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information, Communication and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>LTA</td>
<td>Long-Term Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIT</td>
<td>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>MNO</td>
<td>Mobile Network Operator</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OI</td>
<td>Office of Innovation</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Programme Division</td>
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<td>RO</td>
<td>Regional Office</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
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<td>SMS</td>
<td>Short Message Service</td>
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<td>T4D</td>
<td>Technology for Development</td>
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<td>TOR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<td>UISR</td>
<td>Ukrainian Institute of Social Research</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNV</td>
<td>United Nations Volunteer Programme</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2014, UNICEF has embraced innovation as one of its key strategies to achieve results for children. That commitment is reaffirmed in its current Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and is evident in the organization’s programming and institutional architecture. Indeed, since 2014, significant progress has occurred in a relatively short period of time, backed by clear strategic intent and targeted investment. With the increased foothold of innovation in UNICEF, it is important and timely to take stock of these efforts through high quality evidence to inform decision-making, learning and accountability. In keeping with the need for this evidence, UNICEF conducted an global evaluation of innovation in 2018.

The objective of the global evaluation was to assess UNICEF’s ‘fitness for purpose’ to employ innovation as a key strategy to achieve the outcomes and goals defined in its strategic plans covering the period 2014-2021. A set of innovation case studies was a key element of this global evaluation, along with an organizational assessment and a synthesis project. The case studies were guided by three objectives:

- To provide detailed descriptions of a set of innovations across stages of the development continuum inclusive of contextual influences
- To assess the application of innovation principles or other standards for a set of innovations with particular attention to issues of ownership and scale
- To produce clear conclusions and considerations for policy, strategy and management decisions to further enhance innovation as key change strategy.

Case studies were conducted by Deloitte LLP over the period February 2018-January 2019. Mixed methods were utilized for data collection including key informant interviews, document review and observations in the field.

The innovation case examined in this report concerns U-Report which is a tool that allows UNICEF to directly achieve its strategic priorities, mission and mandate, demonstrating measurable outcomes for UNICEF programming and youth beneficiaries. Through U-Report, UNICEF is systematically, efficiently and effectively gaining an understanding of the challenges facing youth across a large number of priority sectors – including health; education; water, sanitation and hygiene; child protection; and emergency response – to inform, influence and shape UNICEF’s programmatic design and deployment. The leadership of the Global Innovation Centre (GIC) and its approach towards product development and management effectively create demand-driven solutions for youth.

Throughout the scale-up of U-Report, various levels of UNICEF leadership have demonstrated support for its adoption and use. A learning, however, is the importance of having country-level senior leadership support and demonstrating ownership of U-Report within the Country Office (CO) to enable success. These learnings point to the importance of including and integrating U-Report into the CO programme planning cycles and documentation, because while there is support for U-Report from senior leadership at headquarters, there is no requirement for a CO Representative or Deputy Representative to deploy U-Report in a CO, resulting in the risk that COs may not leverage an important institutional tool that has been proven to create outcomes aligned with UNICEF’s mandate.

The U-Report global leadership team is nimble. Despite the growth in the number of COs supported to adopt and implement U-Report, the support function enabled through the GIC has not changed. To ensure U-Report targets for scale are successfully reached, it is likely that the GIC will require additional staff and resources, particularly given U-Report’s alignment and role in achieving the Generation Unlimited initiative.

UNICEF COs are incentivized to adopt U-Report, as it has been proven to drive results and outcomes for the organization, including positively impacting youth and informing UNICEF, governments and external
stakeholders’ decision-making. COs with existing youth programming, and therefore the required architecture to engage with youth, are able to more quickly scale up the tool. Limited available resources, as well as the lack of a natural ‘home’ for U-Report within UNICEF’s existing structure, act as disincentives/barriers for CO adoption.

It should be encouraged to include U-Report in annual planning cycles and across all COs. Leadership can look to reinforce their commitment to U-Report through introducing new performance measurement targets associated with U-Report scale at the CO Representative level. To enable this, UNICEF should support the GIC’s role in providing global oversight, product management and continual product development through funding to expand their team, especially to enable the GIC to directly support COs to launch and scale the platform, as well as intensifying the organization’s focus on exploring the data created through U-Report. By consolidating poll results and through using a unique identifier to understand patterns in poll responses from each U-Reporter, U-Report data can be analysed to more deeply understand the context and challenges facing youth, and to inform programming or the selection of UPARtner to more effectively address challenging issues facing youth. Further, UNICEF should look to engage the private sector to enhance results created for youth, such as creating employment or internship opportunities through running contests for U-Reporters. Alongside this, UNICEF should look to actively build a community for U-Reporters through expanding the U-Report application, by offering access to educational resources that can enhance youth livelihoods and enable youth to engage with like-minded individuals.
1. INTRODUCTION

The world is changing faster than ever before, and so too are the challenges facing its most vulnerable. Conflict and displacement, disasters and climate change, urbanization and disease outbreaks are growing increasingly complex and inter-related, demanding new strategies and approaches. Innovation for development – exploring new ways of delivering programmes, with new partners and new technologies – is increasingly recognized as crucial to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Since 2014, UNICEF embraced innovation as one of its key strategies to achieve results for children. That commitment is reaffirmed in its current Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and is evident in the organization’s programming and institutional architecture. Indeed, since 2014, significant progress has occurred in a relatively short period of time, backed by clear strategic intent and targeted investment. A number of formal structures have evolved, and new milestones achieved.

With the increased foothold of innovation in UNICEF, it is important and timely to take stock of these efforts through high quality evidence to inform decision-making, learning and accountability. In keeping with the need for this evidence, UNICEF conducted an global evaluation of innovation in 2018. The evaluation comes at a time when the organization is considering how best to maximize its resources for innovation and is intended to inform those decisions in an impartial manner, backed by credible evidence.

The objective of the evaluation was to assess UNICEF’s ‘fitness for purpose’ to employ innovation as a key strategy to achieve the outcomes and goals defined in its strategic plans covering the period 2014-2021. It also sought to provide insights on how innovation contributes to UNICEF’s goals and objectives, as well as how innovation might contribute to increasingly effective organizational responses in the coming years. The global evaluation was designed with three core components including: an organizational assessment, a set of innovation case studies and a synthesis project.

The case studies are intended to serve organizational learning by unpacking and examining the multiple pathways and dynamics which underpin innovation within the organization. In addition, the case studies contribute to accountability by assessing the manner in which innovation work in practice reflects the strategies and principles which UNICEF has developed to guide these efforts.

Three objectives guided the work:

• To provide detailed descriptions of a set of innovations across stages of the development continuum inclusive of contextual influences
• To assess the application of innovation principles or other standards for a set of innovations with particular attention to issues of ownership and scale
• To produce clear conclusions and considerations for policy, strategy and management decisions to further enhance innovation as key change strategy.

Cases are defined as the processes an innovation was identified, developed, tested, implemented and taken to scale along with contextual factors such as underlying organizational and partnership arrangements. The primary audience for the case studies is internal to UNICEF including senior management and programme managers at HQ, regional and country level. Its uses include informing the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 particularly the change strategy focused on innovation. UNICEF commissioned Deloitte LLP to conduct thirteen case studies to examine innovation across the spectrum of innovation types, country contexts and internal (UNICEF) and external (partner, supplier) actors.

All case studies were structured around a modified version of the Deloitte Doblin Framework for Innovation. Within this
framework, four thematic dimensions (i.e. approach, organization, resources and capabilities and metrics and incentives) are seen as necessary to enable successful innovation. Case studies employed a mixed methods approach to build a complete picture of the innovation process and identify findings related to these four thematic dimensions. The evaluation team collected qualitative and quantitative data through desktop review, case study informant interviews and field visits. More information on the methods used appears in Annex A. A listing of stakeholders and interviewees appears in Annex B. Documents reviewed appear in Annex C.

The innovation case examined in this report concerns U-Report, a powerful tool that allows UNICEF to directly achieve its strategic priorities, mission and mandate, demonstrating measurable outcomes for UNICEF programming and youth beneficiaries. Through U-Report, UNICEF is systematically, efficiently and effectively gaining an understanding of the challenges facing youth across a large number of priority sectors – including health; education; water, sanitation and hygiene; child protection; and emergency response – to inform, influence and shape UNICEF’s programmatic design and deployment.

This report includes information on the context for the development of U-Report (Section 3), the innovation journey (Section 4), field testing (Section 5), findings (Section 6) and considerations for UNICEF and conclusions (Section 7).

2. INNOVATION AT A GLANCE

Description of the innovation

U-Report is a social messaging tool, in the form of a packaged product built on the RapidPro open source software that enables and empowers people to speak out and provide their perspective on a wide range of important issues in their communities. U-Report is a free, non-exclusive tool for community participation, but aims to empower young people to engage in citizen-led development and create positive change. U-Report is guided by its key principles, which is a document outlining the purpose, objectives and approach to run U-Report. As outlined in this document, the purpose of U-Report can be characterized by nine goals:

1. Empower young people to share opinions on issues that matter to them
2. Ensure U-Reporters get value from their participation
3. Provide valuable information to community members and government
4. Amplify voices for advocacy at local, national and global levels
5. Reduce the distance between government and constituents
6. Use citizen data to improve accountability and strengthen programmes
7. Influence positive behaviour change
8. Ensure that U-Reporters are given feedback on how data are used
9. Use the tools available to provide virtual health, education and protection services.

U-Report has three components: (1) polling which enables real-time data collection; (2) one-one-one communication (UPartners)\(^1\); and (3) access to important information on a regular basis through the use of ‘bots’ or artificial intelligence (AI). U-Report integrates with a variety of channels, releasing polls through SMS, Facebook Messenger, U-Report App, Telegram, Viber and the soon-to-be launched WhatsApp. To access, U-Reporters simply register (opt in) through one of the selected channels to either the U-Report and used to manage direct messaging between U-Reporters and UNICEF and/or partners.

\(^1\) UPartners is an open-source message management dashboard, built onto RapidPro (also known as CasePro)
Global network or a local U-Report network in a respective country. U-Report adheres to a strict data privacy policy, whereby individual messages are not associated with a user’s name or identifying feature (e.g., phone number) and not made public. Incoming messages are analysed by RapidPro and poll results are displayed on a dashboard (a public website that displays and manages the information collected).\(^2\) Dashboards allow incoming data to be visualized in real time, presenting trends (age, gender) and geographical patterns.

U-Report is youth-led for youth – relying on volunteer community members, UNICEF, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations to select and run polls; engage youth; and analyse and publish poll data through country-based steering committees and a global steering committee overseeing the global U-Report brand, polls and activities. U-Report is co-owned and managed by UNICEF and its partners. Issued polled have included topics such as health, education, WASH, youth unemployment, HIV/AIDS, disease outbreaks and other key issues relevant to youth in their local or global context.

**Intended innovation users and outcomes**

U-Report caters to young people, although it does not exclude any individual from joining. Young people are often defined as between the ages of 15 to 24; however, this may change based on the country context. U-Report follows the law on age minimums where a law exists, but also looks to support the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, article 13, which supports the right of a child to freedom of expression. The intended outcome of U-Report is to see the voices of youth considered and become a force of influence in all aspects of life that matter to them, including social, economic and political spheres. An illustrative example of this is the consideration of youth opinions solicited through a poll on a governmental policy.

3. CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF U-REPORT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key takeaways</th>
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<tr>
<td>With the release of Generation Unlimited, a multi-agency initiative to support young people globally, UNICEF continues to take a leading role in creating, identifying, scaling and implementing innovative youth-led and youth-centred solutions</td>
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<td>UNICEF documents its approach to the engagement of young people in the Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategic Framework, a key component of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021, which recognizes that with the largest generation of youth in history, young people will be important agents of change towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>With mobile penetration rapidly increasing and new digital channels enabling young people to speak out about issues in their communities that matter to them, UNICEF can play a key role in empowering and raising the voices of young people globally.</td>
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3.1 Development/humanitarian context

Today, there is the largest generation of youth in history, with more than 90 per cent of the 1.8 billion people between the ages of 10–24 living in developing countries. These numbers are expected to grow in the coming decades. For centuries, youth engagement and participation have been considered fundamental to enabling peace-building and sustainable development. However, rarely are youth consulted on issues of political, social or economic development. In an era of extremism, youth are most at risk to fall prey to extremist movements given that they target youth. Research from the African Development Bank, which examined youth unemployment across 24 developing countries throughout 30 years, showed that it is a driving factor to extremism and plays a role in the nation’s risk of political instability. The lack of engagement of young people leading to exclusion and a lack of recognition have led to frustration, distrust and acts of violence.

Young people represent a great potential to become agents of change and to shape their own futures. The SDGs articulate and integrate the importance of youth engagement throughout. Several important conferences leading up to the development of the SDGs focused on youth empowerment and engagement. For these reasons, United Nations agencies and other leading international development and humanitarian organizations have begun to prioritize youth engagement and empowerment to provide more and better opportunities for youth and to raise their voices to understand and speak out on the issues most important to them today. UNICEF, along with other agencies, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), have led the way in this area.

5 Ibid.

3.2 Innovation context

Mobile penetration in developing markets has been rapidly expanding since the mid-1990s. Across the African continent alone, mobile-phone subscribers have grown from 129 million in 1996 to nearly 1 billion in 2016. Mobile phone penetration is transforming industries globally and developing markets in particular, through offering new channels to reach customers and populations, many of whom were previously disconnected or hard to reach. Instant messaging, which dates back to the mid-1960s through the creation of the multi-user operating system, including the Compatible-Time Sharing System created at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), but became popularized through the 1990s alongside the spread of mobile phones, has played an important part in empowering and connecting people from across the world, including across social, economic, political and culture lines. Social media chats, in particular, took off with the release of Google Talk in 2005, followed by MySpaceIM in 2006 and Facebook Chat in 2008. The success of messaging apps is often attributed to the ability to create ecosystems around the platform which engage users to stay active. These ecosystems are often made possible through a critical mass of users. Today, the market of instant messaging is characterized by high-value mergers and acquisitions, including Facebook and WhatsApp for US$19 billion, Microsoft and Skype for US$9 billion and Rakuten and Viber for US$0.8 billion.

Social media and networking websites, such as Facebook and Twitter, founded in 2004 and 2006, respectively, are channels used to comment, share content (including opinions and perspectives on important community issues), and share news and media with friends and family. These websites have become a platform whereby users will express their opinions and perspectives on political, social

8 Ibid.
and economic issues and gain access to new information. Governments, the private sector and NGOs will use these platforms as a means to share messaging through advertisements to target audiences. However, few methods exist for these groups to collect the opinions of young people on select, important topics. Targeted research, including youth consultations, surveys and telephone polls exist as tools, often for governments, to gain an understanding of youth perspectives on policy. No social messaging tool or recurring data collection tool has been created or used to collect the opinions and perspectives of citizens to inform political, social or economic topics in an organized manner, such as U-Report. Moreover, as information becomes more accessible through the use of these websites, it is not always clear, specifically to young people, what information is accurate and can be trusted.

Figure 1. Popular messaging apps by geography

3.3 UNICEF programme context

UNICEF defines adolescent and youth engagement as ‘the rights-based inclusion of adolescents\(^\text{10}\) and youth in areas that affect their lives and their communities, including dialogue, decisions, mechanisms, processes, events, campaigns, actions and programmes –

\(^{10}\) UNICEF defines adolescents as between the ages of 10 and 19 years, youth between 15-24 years, and young people between 10-24 years.
across all stages, from identification, analysis and design to implementation, mentoring and evaluation’. UNICEF’s mandate covers up to the age of 18. UNICEF documents its approach to the engagement of young people in the Adolescent and Youth Engagement Strategic Framework, a key component of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and Adolescent Strategy, which guides all parts of UNICEF as to how adolescent and youth engagement can be achieved within programming. While UNICEF has previously included adolescent participation as part of strategic plans, the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021 prioritizes and systematically embeds adolescent development and participation across every goal. Specifically, the Plan identifies adolescent empowerment as a key result area under Goal 5, ‘an equitable chance in life’. UNICEF has three objectives focused on young people’s engagement with which U-Report plays a key role:

With the release of Generation Unlimited, a multi-agency initiative to support young people globally, to be chaired by UNICEF’s Executive Director, and UNICEF’s endorsement and support of the forthcoming United Nations Youth Strategy, UNICEF continues to take a leading role in creating, identifying, scaling and implementing innovative youth-led and youth-centred solutions.

- Adolescents are engaged in platforms and mechanisms that elevate and amplify their voices, ideas and creativity
- Adolescents are engaged in positive, healthy practices and norms, and the design, promotion and monitoring of available services; and
- Adolescents are systematically engaged in the decision-making bodies of UNICEF, their schools and communities; and influencing services, policy, legislation and financing at subnational, national, regional and global levels.

4. THE INNOVATION JOURNEY FOR U-REPORT

Key takeaways

- The U-Report journey began in 2007, with the creation of RapidSMS and was first used as a communications platform for social mobilization and empowerment in Uganda in 2011
- The GIC has played an important role in enabling the scale of U-Report to more than 50 countries, including providing product management and development; testing and iteratively refining strategic tools for COs to adopt and scale the tool; creating systems of support by consolidating and sharing learning knowledge and expertise; and enabling South-South cooperation and the sharing of resources by identifying and cultivating important private sector and civil society partnerships
- U-Report continues to be a powerful tool for UNICEF programmes, government and civil society partners and young people themselves, with clear demand and demonstrated impact of U-Report data informing and creating youth-friendly policy and programmes.

12 Ibid., p. 2.
13 Ibid., p. 3.
The journey of U-Report began in 2007, with the creation of RapidSMS, an SMS-based platform that creates access to real-time data, despite the geographical remoteness of users, limited physical infrastructure (e.g., roads, electricity) and slow existing data collection processes. Using basic mobile phones to ensure access for the most remote and marginalized populations, the Ugandan CO and UNICEF Division of Communication collaborated to develop the RapidSMS open source platform, which was used for data collection and monitoring in health, nutrition and WASH sectors. In 2011, in Uganda, RapidSMS was first used as a communications technology for social mobilization.

Figure 2. Innovation process for U-Report

Needs identification

Launched in early 2011, U-Report was the idea of the Ugandan CO Representative in response to the demand for a tool that enabled youth to be heard on important issues facing the country. At the time, there were clear limitations and a lack of channels to engage young people and solicit their perspectives. Mass communications with young people were limited to ‘push messages’ through the traditional means of radio and working directly with youth councils and associations, which often excluded marginalized Ugandans. Young people do not feel heard or a part of civil and governmental processes. This feeling of being ignored and disengaged led to a pivotal moment of civil unrest, which sparked the idea for the need of the platform. The Ugandan Government had launched a new programme to support young people’s ventures. The announcement of this new initiative led to tens of thousands of youth rioting in the marketplace as a response to the programme. The dire situation was a clear demonstration for the need to more systematically and thoughtfully engage youth in decision-making in the country.

Through the use of mobile phones, which already had a high penetration rate in the country, including in many remote areas, the CO recognized that SMS could be a powerful tool to reach marginalized young people not currently being engaged or heard. Therefore, the CO hired James Powell, a consultant with a background in media and advertising, to build a small team to launch a mobile-based application that could communicate directly with youth on important topics. Using the UNICEF supported RapidSMS, the U-Report Project Manager and his small team created U-Report to crowdsource the perspectives, thoughts and opinions of young people in the country through SMS communication. The initial intention of U-Report would be to inform UNICEF programming; however, it was quickly recognized that the tool would be a powerful instrument with the potential to inform policy and civil society on young people’s needs. The CO began to build partnerships with the Government, including the Ministry of Social Development and Gender, as well as youth groups, Parliament through the Speaker of the House, and local NGOs.

Soon after the launch of U-Report, UNICEF ran a poll, in partnership with the Government, to seek to understand young people’s perspectives on policy related to youth programming, including those which caused previous unrest. Through U-Report, young people explained that there were preconditions to access the government funds, making it restrictive to many young people as they were ineligible. UNICEF informed the Government of the responses and the Government swiftly took corrective action. This was a galvanizing moment for UNICEF, demonstrating the potential of U-Report, through its rapid and flexible design, to raise the voices of youth and create positive change.

Recognition and exploration

After the proof of concept, the U-Report Project Manager began sensitizing programme staff in the CO on the use of U-Report to inform UNICEF’s full breadth of programming. At this same time, the CO aimed to scale the total number of U-Reporters, increasing its reach and potential for impact. To do so, the CO built
partnerships with the Girls’ Education Movement, Scouts and faith and non-faith-based organizations that were engaged with youth. An informal steering committee was created that met every two weeks to identify and review the polls. Intentionally, UNICEF did not brand U-Report as a ‘UNICEF’ programme as a way to develop a shared community around its use that could be managed through a community-based governance structure and led by youth, for youth, through continual engagement of youth to design polls and reach new U-Reporters. In order to sensitize and familiarize U-Report across CO programmes, the U-Report Project Manager worked with the Representative to create opportunities to socialize the tool to colleagues and to demonstrate senior leadership support and buy-in for the tool. The U-Report Project Manager presented on the capabilities and purpose of U-Report at an all-staff meeting, followed by mandatory meetings with programme leaders and the Project Manager to identify opportunities for use in each programmatic area.

As the use of U-Report grew, the tool was strengthened to enhance its value proposition for youth. The platform has been built initially with polling and real-time mapping functionality. At this time, RapidSMS could collect individual responses and would produce a pie chart and basic map showcasing the aggregated results. The individual response data could only be seen by those working in the back end, however, limiting the full potential of the data to be manipulated and analysed by the U-Report team. To improve the insights that could be achieved through U-Report, the U-Report team began grouping responses by attributes, including gender and geography. In addition, U-Reporters were made anonymous in the back end and connected to a unique identifier, in order to protect young people when sharing sensitive information.

U-Report continued to grow through partner mobilization, reaching 30,000 U-Reporters in mid-2011. The CO launched its first advocacy campaign and built the U-Report following through developing engaging and creative content, including a 10-episode television show featuring well-known Ugandans, including Members of Parliament, who answered questions from U-Reporters on-air. U-Report became recognized as a tool for the Government to solicit input from young people on political reform. The Members of Parliament began suggesting questions that would inform important laws; in one instance, influencing Parliament to change a law based on U-Report data. The Government recognized U-Report as a valuable tool, encouraging all 300 Members of Parliament to join the platform. At this same time, U-Report became recognized for its ability to communicate with youth on sensitive issues, including abuse and challenges facing the school system.

Development and implementation

In early 2012, the technical capabilities continued to be developed by the T4D developers working on U-Report, including the addition of partner dashboards and programming of manual flows. Media attention and country missions to Uganda by neighbouring UNICEF COs helped to provide exposure for the tool to other offices. Zambia was the first CO to express interest in U-Report outside of Uganda in 2012, followed by Burundi. The launch of U-Report in Zambia was challenging, taking more than six months and launching towards the end of that same year. At the time, U-Report was locally hosted and the Zambia CO did not have software developers to support the development of U-Report in-country. Therefore, the U-Report Uganda team sent their T4D engineer to support the Zambia CO on the technical deployment and the U-Report Project Manager in Uganda supported the development of the U-Report strategy, with the Zambia CO driving forward the initiative. Zambia soon hired a Programme Manager with the help of the Ugandan CO. The Zambia CO desired one-to-one interaction with U-Reporters, as they saw a need for direct support for youth. At the time, there was no system in U-Report to track and manage one-to-one interaction. The identification of this

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need became the inspiration for UPartner (also known as CasePro), a functionality that would be added to RapidPro and used by U-Report in 2013, with the first counselling session piloted early that year.

Launching U-Report in Burundi ran into its own unique challenges due to a lack of mobile network operator (MNO) aggregators, requiring the CO to negotiate with each MNO independently to deploy U-Report. Due to these challenges, the official launch of U-Report in Burundi did not take place until 2015.14

In 2013, there were important technical developments, including the functionality to detect key words. The following year proved to be an important year for U-Report, as, at this time, the limitations of the RapidSMS platform were realized. The RapidSMS platform had limited ability to scale quickly, including limitations on the total number of SMS messages that could be sent concurrently. In particular, local instalments of the RapidSMS platform limited the ability of the solution to scale in comparison to a cloud-hosted system. This resulted in the need for a more flexible solution. UNICEF identified Nyaruka, a Rwandan software engineering firm, to make open source an existing technology they had, known as TextIt, rebranding it as RapidPro. RapidPro is a similar platform to RapidSMS and built on the same underlying core (Django and Python), but cloud-hosted and designed to be a more scalable platform. The transition to RapidPro was particularly important, as it allowed COs to hire Nyaruka as a third-party service provider, rather than hire a developer on staff. COs were able to contract quickly through global Long-Term Agreements (LTAs), which would be negotiated by the GIC. LTAs would significantly reduce the barriers and time it required to contract Nyaruka directly by streamlining the process for COs.

With the outbreak of Marburg virus in Uganda and Ebola in Sierra Leone and West Africa in 2014, U-Report was used to share life-saving information, including informing at-risk and affected communities on how to respond and how to access essential resources, such as clean water and food.

The demand for U-Report continued to grow as demonstrated by the number of country visits and expressions of interest from COs and governments. By the end of 2014, there were 425,000 U-Reporters across 11 countries. Six more countries were pipelined to launch U-Report and 14 others were exploring its use. The GIC, at this time, launched a flagship partnership with Twitter, an important digital channel and communication tool commonly used by young people, creating a seamless experience for young people to engage with U-Report. As the number of countries using U-Report grew, so did the efficiency and effectiveness of launching the platform in new countries, demonstrated by Liberia’s launch of the tool in only four weeks at the end of the year.

Demand grew quickly from COs, spreading for the first time outside of the African continent. This growing demand required a more coordinated approach to support COs to adopt U-Report and to reach scale, including hands-on support and guidance, the facilitation of lessons learned, and deployment tools and templates. In 2014, the Global Innovation Centre (GIC) was born to curate the support, growth and scale of U-Report globally. To protect the values that U-Report had developed thus far in Uganda, including the objective for U-Report to be led by youth for youth, the Ugandan CO documented a statute of key doctrines to be followed by COs identified as the U-Report Key Principles, which remains a living document managed by the GIC and followed by all U-Report use cases.

With continued development, the use cases for U-Report expanded, including its applicability and value in emergency response as an important tool to provide real-time information.

Scaling up U-Report

With the creation of the GIC in 2014, a structured product management methodology was employed with the objective to serve COs through a demand-driven approach. GIC manages U-Report Global and facilitates the set-up and implementation of CO-specific U-Report programmes. The GIC’s support has consisted of a diverse set of activities focused on providing seamless CO deployment support, documenting and sharing of lessons learned, evolving the product as opportunities and demand for enhancement arise, creating global partnerships that will enable U-Report to quickly scale, ensuring a consistent branding and adherence to the U-Report Key Principles, and supporting COs to be successful in achieving their goals.

GIC’s role in achieving scale

Facilitating scale across UNICEF

Through applying a systematic project management approach, GIC provides the central management and coordination for COs across the full product life cycle. When a CO expresses interest, the GIC keeps track in a centralized project management tool called Trello. Trello allows the GIC to ensure that COs receive effective and efficient support from the launch through to scale of U-Report. In addition, this approach enables quality record-keeping to ensure that whenever the GIC interacts with a CO, a record of the interaction and progress made is logged, ensuring seamless support. Tracking progress also provides the GIC with a holistic view of the scale of U-Report at any moment, enabling the GIC to facilitate opportunities for COs in later stages of development to support COs entering their innovation journey. South-South cooperation, a key mandate of the GIC, is enabled through this coordinated approach. Further, the GIC has facilitated scale by driving down the price for set-up and hosting through creating the conditions for scale and by removing barriers. This has been done by expanding the number of LTAs with software development firms available to support COs with deployment (from one firm in 2014, to two in 2015 and three today), and a fourth vendor bidding for the development of the next LTA. Each new additions drives down the price for COs through the introduction of more competition rates and different cost models.

Figure 3. Trello dashboard used by GIC

Continual product development and enhancement

The GIC identifies opportunities to develop and enhance U-Report through providing leadership over a global product management vision, informed by CO needs. Using a ‘glocal’ approach – ‘invest once: multiple scale through impact’, the GIC provides central management and coordination to assess and prioritize opportunity and demand for new product features; identifies resources; develops and guides the product road map; and ensures consistent quality. These features enable the development to take place in a cost-effective and efficient manner, with results benefiting all COs. Further, as COs invest in their own product enhancements, benefits are multiplied and shared by all COs. An example of this is the development of UPartners. Through learnings generated from Uganda and Zambia and in collaboration with COs across Uganda, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Nigeria, the U-Report team in GIC led a two-phased design, creation and roll-out of UPartners, published open-source as CasePro. Today, more than 800,000 individual messages have been individually replied to by UNICEF and/or partners through UPartners. In 2017, the GIC began working with the UNICEF Ventures team and Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) on both creation and evolution to enable automatic responses to specific UPartner questions.
Global product management

The GIC provides leadership over the U-Report global brand and manages the product roadmap, which includes guiding the website, principles and coordination of ‘global actions’ in conjunction with the global steering committee. Global actions are global polls and optional for COs. They are often about important global issues and are required to follow the same process as local polls, including the articulation of the data use case. To date, the global steering committee of UNICEF, the Girl Guides and Scouts – U-Report’s global partners – have released 17 global actions.

Figure 4. U-Report brand design

The GIC provides a branding deployment toolkit that includes design layout templates and master brand guidelines to provide design options for COs. The headquarters design team will create the design assets, including logos and website materials based on CO selection, while the headquarters web development team will prepare and launch the website, with the CO providing content for the website. Alongside the brand toolkit, the GIC provides communication guidance and leads the development of external eminence and thought leadership. This has included guidelines on ethics for engaging in social media, published in partnership with Innocenti, while also providing internal guidance through the oversight of the U-Report Key Principles, which are continually updated based on CO input to incorporate learnings.

U-Report integrates with digital platforms that will make it more accessible and interesting for youth, while also enabling its sustainability through reducing SMS costs. The GIC has actively cultivated partnerships with leading social messaging platforms, including Facebook Messenger, Telegram, Viber and WhatsApp, which allow polls to be sent at no cost, while also representing the first time Viber and WhatsApp have partnered with a United Nations agency. Today, 46 COs use Facebook, 6 have been involved in the WhatsApp pilot. All of these countries are expected to integrate with WhatsApp within the year, except for a select few in Asia and eight COs using Viber. Platform integrations created for U-Report have also benefited RapidPro more broadly. Integration with digital channels has opened up new opportunities for the use of digital advertising to grow the total reach and scale of U-Report, while increasing efficiency and reducing costs. For example, through the use of WhatsApp, 9,700 new U-Reporters have joined with an 880 per cent increase in efficiency over campaign, resulting in a $0.08 cost per new registration at campaign end, which has proven to be 90 per cent lower than the Facebook channel average. Further, digital channels have in some cases accelerated scale, including in Mexico, whereby a Facebook campaign was able to recruit more new users to the platform in nine days than the previous 11 months.15

Further to these private sector partnerships, the GIC has developed strategic global partnerships with the Scouts and Girl Guides, in order to gain support and build momentum for scaling U-Report globally, as well as to encourage and facilitate country-based partnerships through organizational branches.

**Deployment and implementation support to COs**

A key part of the GIC’s role is supporting the set-up, deployment and implementation of U-Report when a CO expresses interest in the tool.

**Step 1: Concepting and strategizing:** A kick off call is held with the CO, in which deployment guidelines and support to develop a purpose and strategy for U-Report is provided. The CO then develops a concept note to explain the challenges facing young people in the country, asking COs to address how each of the U-Report objectives will be achieved. During this step, COs strategize on the internal sustainability (Representative and Deputy Representative support); channels desired (e.g., Facebook messenger); plan to work with telecommunication providers or aggregators; if SMS will be used; budget; monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan; and desired launch date. As COs had found budgeting to be a challenge in the past, the GIC created a budget planning tool in order to guide COs.

The scale team then works closely with the CO to iterate on the concept note through providing feedback and continual reviews until it is ready to be presented to and signed off by leadership at the CO. For complex cases, the GIC may provide mission support, in person.

**Step 2: Setting-up and deploying RapidPro:** There are several detailed steps required to deploy RapidPro in a country. The GIC has designed a deployment toolkit to support COs when deploying RapidPro for monitoring. For the use of RapidPro for U-Report, the same initial deployment steps are taken. COs access technical support of vendors on UNICEF LTAs to support in the scope and deployment of RapidPro. Steps include: expressing formal interest in using RapidPro through emailing <join@rapidpro.io>, which triggers the GIC (now, the ICT regional Business Analysts, as of 2017) to create access to a RapidPro workspace; prototyping and building CO familiarity and capabilities with the RapidPro platform; obtaining a shortcode and negotiating with MNOs; and contracting with a vendor for hosting arrangements. Specifically, the GIC will provide advice and will review Terms of Reference for telecommunication operators and/or aggregators and provide deployment support for national telecommunication operators.

**Step 3: Preparing for launch:** As the CO prepares to launch, they do the following activities:

- Connect digital channels (e.g., Facebook) using the online guidance provided by the GIC in a shared Knowledge Centre
- Complete the Brand Toolkit and Website Google form to create the logo and website; and
- Hire as required – best practice encourages each CO to have a U-Report Coordinator to work with stakeholders and steering committees, facilitate the poll development and data collection and analysis process, and ensure that a feedback loop is created to inform U-Reporters how their data are used. The GIC offers support to COs to hire, through providing Terms of Reference, as needed.

**Step 4: Launching U-Report:** Launching U-Report typically consists of a launch event that can build publicity among target youth, and bring together civil society organizations interested in youth development. Maintaining U-Report requires the CO to strive towards the three principle goals of U-Report: scale, engage and change (see section on Scale, Engage, Change). Launch activities include:

- Launch strategy for scaling and engaging youth
- Communicate launch through a launch event, leveraging the GIC’s communications guidance
- Join U-Report community and Google group for sharing, learning and evolving; and
- Set up and launch a monitoring and evaluation framework. Created by the
Office of Innovation in 2016, and piloted during 2017, an easy-to-use monitoring framework, including a global Theory of Change, which can be applied as ‘full’ or ‘light’ version, is available.

**Step 5: Ongoing implementation support:** The GIC provides curated support, such as:

- **U-Report partnership guidance:** The GIC will review Memorandums of Understanding and provide direct guidance for COs to ensure that the U-Report principles are being followed and that partnerships will be able to successfully support COs to achieve their goals.

- **Tools, templates and guidance for effective implementation:** The GIC has created a series of useful documentation that provides COs with guidance, including registration and messaging integration guidance, UPartner deployment direction and training, and a Knowledge Centre for digital channels, including video guides on how to set up a Facebook campaign, best practices of use, and how to create deep links for WhatsApp and Facebook, among other tools.

- **Media campaigns:** The GIC supports paid media campaigns for digital scale-up, requiring only a 10 per cent fee to cover overhead. The GIC also offers technical support for COs that have the desire to build their own expertise in this area. To date, the GIC has run more than 550 campaigns globally, reaching 20 million people in more than 100 countries.\(^1\)

**Facilitating lessons learned and building the UNICEF U-Report community**

The GIC builds and maintains the U-Report community, focused on enabling South-to-South collaboration and the sharing of lessons learned. Maintained by the GIC, the community consists of U-Report project managers and coordinators - more than 162 members to date - who share learnings, ask questions and participate in a monthly call to share updates. The GIC actively documents case studies that highlight good examples of where U-Report has been used to create positive change, as well as capture best practices in action.

The GIC has played a key role in scaling up U-Report across UNICEF COs and reaching important milestones (see Figure 5). Through the GIC’s support, U-Report has scaled to 50 countries, reaching more than 5.8 million youth since its launch, demonstrating the high demand and perceived value by COs. The GIC aims to reach 28 million youth by 2020.

**During 2017, the GIC supported COs to launch U-Report across five continents. U-Report experienced the highest period of membership growth in its history, including seeing the total number of countries with more than 100,000 U-Reporters grow from 4 countries to 10.** On average, in 2017, a new U-Reporter signed up every 30 seconds.

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\(^1\) U-Report Digital Update: How Digital is proving critical for UNICEF engagement.
Transition of RapidPro deployment support from GIC to ICT

In 2017, deployment and institutional support for RapidPro as an organizational tool was transitioned from the GIC to UNICEF’s ICT Division. This transition represents the widespread adoption of the tool and an organizational strategic shift towards the ICT Division taking on the role in supporting ICT programmatic tools and technologies for development across country offices. Prior to this transition, ICT Division was focused on providing back-office support, including managing servers and ensuring IT issues, such as managing and updating software licenses. Drivers for this transition included: ICT Division’s new leadership, Daniel Couture, and his vision to see ICT leverage its expertise to more holistically support COs in their technology journey; the increased availability of ICT CO support staff to take on new responsibilities, due to the migration of CO data from physical, locally managed servers to the cloud; and the identified opportunity to work through the existing structures of the ICT Division and ROs through strategically placed Business Analysts, and away from the GIC as the structure to support technology for development. The GIC continues to play a key role in providing global coordination and product management for U-Report. The ICT Division provides implementation support of RapidPro through RO Business Analysts.

Scale, engage, change

Scale for U-Report is defined as both scaling the number of countries with a U-Report platform, as well as scaling the number of total U-Reporters in a country and globally. Targets for scale have been set as reaching 28 million U-Reporters by 2020, pending the approval of resources. Three methodologies are used to scale U-Report, with key learnings related to these approaches documented in the U-Report Key Principles. Success to scale is often influenced by:

- Existing adolescent programming and therefore, awareness and practice in addressing challenges and issues facing youth
Partnerships with youth organizations and their reach both geographically and into youth communities
Strategy and approach to acquisition
The ability to create engaging polls and demonstrate the use of the data to create change
The socio-political culture in the country
Available resources.

Methodologies for recruiting U-Reporters include:

Advertising
Radio, print, television and the internet have all been used by COs and UNICEF global to recruit U-Reporters. Radio in sub-Saharan Africa to reach youth in rural areas and online advertisements through Facebook can be powerful tools.

Field recruitment
Partnering with global and local partners through Memorandums of Understanding has been one of the most effective ways to recruit U-Reporters. Global partnerships exist with Scouts and the Girl Guides. Local partnerships with these institutions and other youth-oriented and led organizations play an important role. Communication for Development units offer guidance and support in mapping existing partners. Programmes are encouraged to include budget and tasks for partners when in the field to recruit on behalf of UNICEF as part of existing programming. Recruitment codes can be provided to front-line workers to track and reward recruiters for their success. Key partners often participate on the steering committee.

Bulk import
Bulk import of pre-existing database available from partnerships or programming. This recruitment model is less common, as it requires a partnership with a civil society organization that has an existing database of youth mobile numbers.

Other key elements play an important role for U-Report’s scale in a country. These include engaging youth councils to review polls to ensure that they are relevant and interesting to youth. Moreover, including diverse topics keeps youth engaged. This may include involving polls that are leisure in topic. Some topics, such as employment, naturally receive higher response rates, as they are of concern and interest to youth. Some topics may prove to also be more interesting to one sex. Gender disparity remains an important challenge for COs. For example, in lower-income countries and regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, there is a pronounced digital divide, and women and girls are less likely to be empowered to voice their opinions on important matters. Challenges of reaching women and girls are often grounded in cultural, social and economic barriers, including the lack of ownership or control over cell phones by women and less access to educational opportunities, occasionally resulting in illiteracy. To address this, COs are encouraged to use radio stations with women DJs, associate with famous and empowered women, and discuss relevant women’s issues through ads and polls.

Emerging technologies: The GIC has been working with COs to identify successful use cases and applications of new and emerging technologies to enhance the services available to U-Reporters. One example of this is the application of U-Report bots, which originated and has been applied across multiple COs, including Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Côte d’Ivoire, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Latin American RO. These bots allow young people to navigate content and information on specific issues to ‘self-educate’. Therefore, unlike the traditional U-Report communication channels, whereby information is pushed out to U-Reporters, a bot enables U-Reporters to seek out information from U-Report on specific topics. Using artificial intelligence and applying similar messaging technology as used for U-Report polls, U-Report bots answer questions intelligently and sensitively. In addition, the bots have been designed to come with a personality, which are locally adaptable and relate to young people and communities. In particular, bots have been shown to be valuable during a crisis, whereby young people are seeking information quickly and there are standard data points or information that they seek. Further to this, there is application.

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potential on many issues for young people, including children’s rights, disaster risk reduction, health care, immunizations, nutrition, access to safe water and sanitation services, basic education and protection.

There have been six use cases to date for bots at UNICEF with regard to U-Report. Use cases include informing young people on data privacy and protection; girls on menstrual hygiene (‘Chutki bot’) created by the Pakistan CO in conjunction with their U-Report partners; offering advice to parents on important childhood development needs; informing young people on Zika, such as the use case created by the Latin American RO and scaled by the GIC, as well as cholera, including information on symptoms and prevention created by the Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone COs; and finally, providing youth-relevant content on violence against girls. The use of bots has demonstrated important outcomes for young people, aligned with the U-Report Theory of Change. Highlights include reaching 150,000 people in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Uganda at risk of cholera, providing knowledge on how to protect oneself. Knowledge increased in Sierra Leone by 20 per cent measured six months after the bot was used. Some 25,000 puberty-related questions were answered by Chutki to inform girls about menstrual hygiene, including in Côte d’Ivoire where 74 per cent of the U-Reporters found the information to be useful, 83 per cent trusted it and 55 per cent shared the information with others.  

**U-Report today and looking forward**

The GIC is undergoing several key initiatives to expand and strengthen U-Report as a tool for youth engagement. This is an important time for youth and youth engagement at UNICEF, where the organization and the United Nations system more broadly is seeing a widening and deepening of the mandate to support youth. The evolution of the youth agenda has been evidenced by the emphasis of youth programming under the new Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and subsequent programming strategies, such as the Adolescent Strategy. Further, the UNICEF Executive Director has shown important leadership across the United Nations in developing new and ambitious initiatives that support youth. The Executive Director will be chairing Generation Unlimited and has developed partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to identify, scale up and implement innovative youth-led and youth-centred solutions. UNICEF has identified U-Report as an important tool to underpin Generation Unlimited goals, identifying U-Report as the ‘most agile platform UNICEF has to engage with young people’. Generation Unlimited aims to ensure that every young person is in school, learning, training or employed by 2030. To do so, the Secretariat will bring to scale effective solutions that address critical issues for unreached adolescents and young people. There is a desire across the organization to strategically determine how U-Report can be systematically leveraged across the organization and how to frame U-Report internally to better communicate its value within Generation Unlimited. These strategic discussions led to the important recognition and identified next steps to enhance and prioritize the use of data to monitor and improve outcomes and impact for young people.

**Future product enhancements:** The GIC is working to incorporate the use of natural language processing to detect local languages and assess message intent, including, for example, to detect and triage slang, so that U-Report can more quickly match questions with appropriate UPartners. Aligned to this, the GIC with the Ventures and ICT team are further exploring the use of bots and AI. The GIC is supporting COs to adopt the use of successful bots to scale proven models. The GIC is looking to scale the use of the BotHub Ventures project with Ilhasoft, a vendor well-known to UNICEF, whereby the GIC will

look to test and scale the work of Ilhasoft to benefit the U-Report community, while continuing to investigate new funding and partnership opportunities, including Facebook’s AI services.

The GIC is also working on a data analytics initiative with ICT, which is piloting a secured dashboard that will provide enhanced analysis and insights into the data for COs. The data analytics dashboard will be piloted with COs in an opt-in method and will enable COs to look at data for U-Reporters overtime, as opposed to in siloed datasets on a per-poll basis. Dashboards will enable COs to track monitoring and evaluation indicators on a real-time basis and provide a perspective of trends over time. An important change that has created the infrastructure for enhanced data analytics has been the move towards the same data warehouse for data storage for all COs. Finally, the GIC is also undergoing a process to redevelop the U-Report site to ensure that it remains relevant and appealing to youth. The site is a resource for U-Reporters to access poll results, although typically other processes exist, based on the country context to provide poll results back to youth.

Alignment with UNICEF and United Nations agency programming: U-Report has been identified as an important tool for achieving this agenda both within UNICEF and across other United Nations agencies. Several internal initiatives are under way to collaborate between the U-Report team at the GIC and the Programme Division at UNICEF headquarters.

• **CO-led initiatives to use U-Report for Generation Unlimited:** COs are leading the way by developing proposals to use U-Report to underpin Generation Unlimited. In line with the recommendation from a past independent evaluation to scale U-Report globally, U-Report’s scale and reach is viewed as an important tool for the Secretariat and its partners to reach and engage 28 million young people by 2020. COs will propose ways to scale U-Report in 13 priority countries, with an investment of $2 million.20

• **U-Report as a tool in emergencies:** U-Report has been used as a tool for communication and to access important, life-saving information during emergencies. Through internal technical support, advice and advocacy, GIC and UNICEF’s Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) have formed a partnership to include U-Report in the workplan to improve accountability to affected populations in emergencies. The objective of this recently approved business case is to put affected families, children and adolescents at the centre of UNICEF’s work, as it holds the potential to improve the quality and effectiveness of UNICEF programming and the results created for children. U-Report will be used as a key mechanism to ensure that greater voices from affected communities are heard and considered and to engage communities actively in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and processes. A new position that is being recruited to work in the GIC alongside the U-Report team will build evidence and documentation and will support the use of U-Report in the humanitarian setting, while providing insight during this process as to how U-Report can be used as an effective tool for emergencies. The integration of U-Report as a tool for EMOPS and its use in the accountability to affected populations is an important shift for the organization towards the integration and mainstreaming of the use of U-Report across all program areas and as a tool for the organization to more effectively employ a human-centred design approach.

• **U-Report as a mechanism for child protection:** In response to a request from the Child Protection Division, the U-Report team developed a concept note for the use of the tool as a mechanism for the protection against sexual exploitation and abuse, through polling U-Reporters to understand how and when these offenses

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20 The YPA: Catalyzed by U-Report, Proposal, August 2018.
take place. U-Report has been piloted for this purpose in Côte d’Ivoire, with a clear view to scale up its application in this way. In addition, funds are being mobilized to pilot this in Jordan, Mali and potentially one other country.

- **U-Report as a resource for WASH & Gender:** Created in Pakistan, U-Report has tested and deployed a menstrual hygiene bot called Chutki, which is live and already supporting young women in gaining access to questions regarding these important issues. Chutki is able to screen, triage and answer incoming questions with standard responses. The UNICEF team will continue to build out the database of responses to enable more young women to get answers to their sensitive questions.

- **U-Report as a tool for early childhood development:** The GIC, together with the Nutrition and Early Childhood Development section, has created several bots that allow U-Reporters to easily access life-saving or improving information. The bots provide answers related to health, nutrition and development questions, learning as they go to provide the appropriate answers to U-Reporters based on their inquiries.

- **U-Report as a tool for UPSHIFT:** UNICEF’s UPSHIFT programme, created in 2014 in the Kosovo CO, aims to support the most disadvantaged young people through a human-centred design approach, to become social innovators. The programme uses social innovation workshops, partnered with mentorship and resources, including seed funding, to equip young people with the skills and resources required to identify problems and challenges in their communities and create innovative, business solutions that address these challenges. U-Report has become a tool for UPSHIFT through advertising to targeted youth that may be interested in solving community issues through social innovation.

### 5. U-REPORT FIELD TESTING

To date, U-Report has scaled across 50 countries. It has been used effectively to engage with youth on issues of health, nutrition, education, child protection, violence, employment and many more, including encouraging youth to speak out on issues that they care about, encouraging citizen-led development, and enabling youth voices to be drivers of positive change. Several global use cases are profiled below that demonstrate the positive change that has been created by U-Report.
5.1 U-Report’s application globally

Figure 7. U-Report global scale

U-Report in emergencies

On the brink of Hurricane Irma in 2015, at the request of the RO, the GIC stepped into action, working in conjunction with EMOPs, to provide critical, life-saving information through U-Report across the Caribbean. Within 24 hours of the hurricane’s detection, with content provided by the RO, U-Report was used to communicate with more than 2,500 U-Reporters important information on how to stay safe during the hurricane. Within two days, the number of citizens receiving life-saving information jumped to 8,500. Quickly, U-Report was able to provide citizens information about the hurricane on the spot, in English, French or Spanish, with a new U-Reporter accessing information about Hurricane Irma every 10 seconds. As the hurricane passed, UNICEF used U-Report to gather important information about the more than 10.5 million children affected to understand who required help and where. After the support, the CO sent a monitoring poll to understand the usefulness of U-Report’s support. Responses indicated that 51 per cent of U-Reporters said they shared the information received through U-Report with more than 5 people, and 33 per cent said they shared it with more than 10. Some 68 per cent of respondents said they trusted the information they received from U-Report more than other sources of information, with only 6 per cent having said they trusted it less. In addition, 67 per cent of respondents said they followed all of the advice U-Report provided, including securing their water tanks, turning off their gas, listening to the radio for official information and having a flashlight available and with them.

U-Report for gender equality

In Kosovo, UNICEF partnered with UNDP to understand how gender equality is present in the workplace and the lives of young women and girls. Through U-Report, women were polled about how they feel in their environment and in terms of opportunities for advancement. This poll represented one of the highest response rates from U-Reporters, at 64 per cent, demonstrating the importance of this topic to women. At the end of the poll, through UNDP’s private sector engagement programme, female U-Reporters were allowed to enter a contest to win the opportunity to job shadow private sector CEOs.
Figure 8. U-Report gender equality poll in Kosovo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think women face gender-based and sexual discrimination in their workplace?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of representation</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there a lack of representation of women in positions of power and leadership such as in the government?

5.2 A glimpse into use cases for U-Report: Ukraine

From design to scale: A history of U-Report in Ukraine

The UNICEF CO in Ukraine has been actively involved in developing and delivering programmes for youth as a cross-sectoral focus, including through health, education, WASH, communication for development and child protection programmes. In 2014, the regional office Adolescent Development Lead suggested that the Ukraine CO could pioneer the use of U-Report due to its potential to complement existing programming, and the expansive adoption of mobile phones in the country and the socio-political environment, which has created the demand for youth engagement. The Chief of Education had a conversation with the RO and thereafter, the GIC Global U-Report Coordinator, to understand the value and application of U-Report to engage young people. The Education unit worked closely with the cross-cutting Adolescent Development program team in the office to develop and refine a concept note for U-Report in the country. To launch U-Report, the Ukraine CO received support and funding from the RO and GIC. Support received from these offices included regular Skype calls with the GIC for technical support and to gain an understanding of the step-by-step process to launch U-Report. The RO and GIC reviewed the U-Report strategy developed by the Chief of Education and made connections to other COs which have successfully launched U-Report to facilitate the sharing of learnings. The U-Report Global Coordinator provided direct support to the Ukraine CO during implementation through visiting the CO and conducting meetings with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, thus developing buy-in and ownership for U-Report.

The Adolescent Development and Education divisions partnered and with the help of Nyaruka and the RO used a human-centred design approach to develop the initial structure and technical design for U-Report in the country. As this was the first implementation of RapidPro in the country, assistant from Nyaruka helped to identify hosting options, as well as obtain a short code from mobile operators. During this initial scoping, it was identified that working directly with the mobile aggregator would enable U-Report to launch quickly and be accessed through all mobile networks. This approach, however, did not allow for the negotiation of SMS pricing. The CO continues the negotiation process today directly with MNOs to reduce SMS costs. The deployment team identified that hosting U-Report data on the global UNICEF cloud, Azure, would leverage shared resources and reduce costs.

The armed conflict that started in eastern Ukraine in April 2014 intensified in early 2015, resulting in further civilian casualties, extensive suffering and significant displacement in both rural and densely populated urban areas. The UNICEF CO quickly transitioned into emergency response. The emergency response limited the capacity of the office to manage the daily tasks associated with
sourcing and sending polls and analysing and reporting on data. Therefore, the Ukraine CO identified a partner organization, the Ukrainian Institute of Social Research (UISR), to support in the ongoing management of U-Report. It was believed that the engagement of UISR in this role would also enhance local ownership and create a pathway for sustainability.

**Partnerships for success**

Partnerships are a key part of U-Report’s success in Ukraine, which have been formed across the youth and adolescent development sector, including with civil society, government and other United Nations agencies to harness U-Report as a national public good. The roles and responsibilities of the CO and its partners are outlined here:

**UNICEF** stewards the U-Report brand in Ukraine. As a part of this, UNICEF provides leadership over brand development, which is guided by UNICEF at a global level through the GIC. UNICEF initiated and manages the implementation of U-Report through a contract with UISR, which is the implementing partner of the technology and executed and deploys U-Report on a daily basis. UNICEF conducts the following activities:

- Engages and socializes U-Report with prospective partners (e.g., governments, United Nations, and civil society)
- Manages the global U-Report brand through guidance provided by HQ
- Coordinates stakeholders, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, to participate in steering committee meetings and provides leadership and facilitation during such meetings
- Engages and supports UNICEF programme sections to use U-Report to inform programming
- Engages with UNICEF global to submit global polls, when relevant
- Manages and funds the implementation of U-Report through a contract with UISR, reviews and approves all poll quarterly plans before being finalized and review polls before being released
- Publishes detailed analytics and infographics on the UNICEF Ukraine official website; and
- Manages the outreach to U-Reporters and new U-Reporter acquisition.

**UISR** is the primary implementing partner of U-Report in the country. A social research NGO, UISR has been contracted to support the provision of analytics and visualization of poll results to communicate the opinions of youth, enabling their integration into government decision-making and use by youth and adolescent development stakeholders. UISR contributes in the following ways to U-Report:

- Collects and reviews suggested polls and works with stakeholders to ensure there is a use case for the data and help formulate the questions ensuring appropriateness, ethics and youth friendliness
- Participates in quarterly steering committee meetings, including presenting polls conducted in the previous quarter and providing input into the formation of poll questions from an ethics perspective
- Manages the RapidPro platform including design and development of flows, running polls on a weekly basis, and managing inactive accounts by sending prompting messages every six months
- Monitors and manages poll responses, including aggregating rogue direct messages and providing responses, when possible; and
- Analyses poll results, typically within one to two weeks after the poll is released using SPSS to explore and visualize the opinions of young people and establish trends. Poll visualizations are then provided back to the steering committee, UNICEF and stakeholder whom requested the poll to be used to inform projects, policy-making and/or decision-making.

**Ministry of Youth and Sports** supports and promotes the use of U-Report through
demonstrated leadership on the steering committee, as an active user of U-Report through submitting polls and as an internal advocate for the use of U-Report by other government agencies. The Steering Committee is led and facilitated by the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, alongside the Chief of Education at UNICEF.

**U-Report Steering Committee** is an important part of U-Report’s success as it ensures the results of the data are directly heard by the Ministry of Youth and Sport and that relevant actors are engaged in the management and ownership of the tool. The meetings are used to adjust, refine and improve proposed polls, review results of previous polls; discuss any identified issues and potential solutions, including, for example, gender imbalances or the need to have more outreach in the conflict-affected zone; ensure that the purpose of the poll (use of data) is clearly defined and aligned with U-Report principles; as well as ensure that the language/wording of the polls is ethical. Steering committee members include: UNICEF (Chair), UISR, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Office of Ombudsman for Children, Office of Ombudsman of Parliament for Human Rights, two Youth Committee representatives, the International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences (AIESEC), Scouts, the United Nations Volunteer Programme (UNV), UNDP, the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and the National Youth Council of Ukraine.

**Youth-centred approach**

From the outset, the CO aimed to develop a community for youth, by youth. Therefore, UNICEF orchestrated the formation of a Youth Council of volunteers to review polls, ensure youth-appropriateness in terms of both framing polls and relevance, contribute ideas and volunteer in engagement activities, including presentations to youth. The Council has been a driver in enabling scale for U-Report through their dedication, time and effort, as well as the insight they provide into topics and themes most important to youth. Two youth committee team leaders provide leadership in the coordination and organization of activities, as well as communication and team-building within the Council, provided on a rotating basis. The poll, which received the highest response rate to date in Ukraine, was submitted by the Youth Council, and centred around literature, aiming to understand what youth were interested in reading. The purpose was to engage youth through a light-hearted poll to balance the traditionally more serious polls released.

**Communication and youth engagement strategy: Reaching scale**

On a monthly basis, the U-Report Coordinator participates on a global call. During these calls, COs share lessons learned and success stories, specifically around new ways to engage youth. The CO was provided principles and guidelines for ongoing communication, which helped to steer and inspire the direction and form of communication and outreach strategy. As challenges arise, UNICEF global has supported the CO to troubleshoot, including challenges that were faced with Facebook when data protection policies were changed.

The vision for U-Report in the Ukraine was to create a brand that represented a community of active and engaged youth that could feel united by the platform. In order to mobilize youth to join this community, the CO strategically developed a communication outreach and youth engagement strategy that was high-touch and involved in-person, event-based engagement opportunities. This approach has allowed the youth-led engagement and outreach team to build rapport with U-Reporters and develop an image for U-Report that conveys excitement and importance for youth activism, articulating the value for youth to contribute to important decisions taking place in the country. UNICEF has approached communication and youth engagement through a variety of methods, with an aim to increase the number of youth
using U-Report, specifically men and youth in rural and conflicted-affected Oblasts.

- **Launch event:** The U-Report launch event took place in Kiev in the city centre
- **Public presentations:** Presentations at relevant events and locations, including schools and universities. Initial public presentations were not successful, as they were believed to be too educational. U-Report engaged celebrities and musicians to promote U-Report, which was successful
- **Partnerships with public figures:** Following a similar strategy to UNICEF global, the CO aligned with several public entertainment figures to drive interest and generate more publicity among youth. The popular Ukrainian musician, Taras Topolya, has co-hosted events with the U-Report team, where he performed and then spoke about the importance of U-Report. This initial event drew 70 people. This partnership continues and has led to more than 40 co-hosted presentations drawing some 5,000 people. In 2017, U-Report signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the singer to exclusively work together
- **Music festival booths:** U-Report set up a white branded tent that had phone chargers, games and activities for youth to generate interest in U-Report. U-Report has been present at multiple festivals since its launch, resulting in more than 3,000 people signing up for U-Report in two years
- **Partnerships with youth organizations:** Partnerships with youth organizations, including AIESEC, Plast, FRI, Scouts and National Youth Council provided direct outreach to active youth in the country
- **U-Ambassadors:** In 2017, UNICEF began engaging youth ambassadors across different Oblasts to represent the brand and provide a cost-effective way to reach geographically disperse regions.

Currently, UNICEF has engaged 27 Ambassadors, provided them training on public speaking and U-Report, and has covered associated travels costs. Since its launch, U-Ambassadors have made more than 80 presentations, resulting in 3,200 new U-Reporters; and

- **Social media campaigns:** Through working with a local social media advertising company, U-Report has placed advertisements on Facebook, which gained 15,000 new U-Reporters, with 6,000 of them answering a poll.

Moving forward, the CO plans to engage with more sports clubs and famous athletes to encourage men to join U-Report. Continuing to employ many of the above approaches, U-Report will also be leveraged to support UNICEF’s Upshift project, focused on supporting youth entrepreneurship. In October 2018, U-Report will have its annual U-Report event where selected U-Reporters are invited to attend. At this event, projects will be pitched, where micro-grants will be rewarded to support the financing of socially oriented projects.

**U-Report topics**

Polls released in Ukraine have been diverse, spanning various topics that impact on youth. Polls have been suggested by a variety of stakeholders: the Government, such as the Ministry of Social Policy and Ministry of Youth and Sports; United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF, UNV, and other multilateral agencies including the International Organization for Migration (IOM); national public sector institutions including the police; and local NGOs, including La Strada and Teenergizer. Poll topics have addressed youth policy, social protection and human and child rights, education and youth employment, violence and bullying, WASH and ecology, HIV/AIDS and sexual education, gender norms and gender-based violence, emergency responses and displacement, health care, and social

21 The Ukraine CO has struggled to obtain a gender balance on U-Report, with traditionally more women using the tool than men (unlike many of the contexts in which UNICEF works, whereby there are more men active on U-Report). Stakeholders unanimously agree that women are more politically active and empowered in Ukraine and believe that U-Report is recognized as a channel of expression and voice for women, resulting in greater participation of women (at 60 per cent of users).
themes including lifestyle, entrepreneurship, sports, music and literature. Several use cases for data generated through U-Report are profiled in the Outcomes section.

Supporting conflict-affected youth

Based on the current political context in Ukraine, the CO aims to expand its reach to vulnerable youth, specifically those in conflict-affected areas, to ensure that their voices can be heard on important issues that impact their lives. Specifically, the CO will adopt the use of UPartners focused on conflict resolution in schools. Counselling has been effective to date to reach 2,000 children on this topic, which complements and augments existing programming by providing training for children and adolescents on how to solve conflicts inside of their communities. The U-Report App can be used to share successful stories between peers, while UPartners can be used to follow up after trainings.

UPartners would be a way to facilitate outreach to youth to be further engaged in these training programmes and provide online counselling. Further, U-Report will be used to provide useful information on key health, educational and recreational information, as well as life-saving information regarding safety and security in conflict-affected areas. U-Report will provide information on supplies, immunization campaigns, and access to services. One-on-one counselling for mental health, discrimination and violence through UPartners will be available. UPartners and UNICEF will train psychologists in schools assist with coping strategies to help youth who have witnessed violent acts.

Understanding water quality in conflict-affected zones (humanitarian use case): The UNICEF WASH team in Ukraine sought to understand the water quality of civilians living in the conflict-affected zone of Eastern Ukraine. Water quality is not currently something addressed in programming; however, it was a concern heard by many stakeholders. Therefore, using U-Report provided an opportunity to validate and better understand these concerns, the state of water quality in areas of geographical priority and provide evidence for funders to support UNICEF in addressing this issue. Prior to U-Report, information was sourced through humanitarian agencies active in the area; however, data were not available on water quality specifically. The poll asked U-Reporters about their access to safe drinking water, available washrooms and hygiene practices in public spaces, such as schools and hospitals, and how water is treated before use.

UPartners

U-Report polls often act as a one-way form of communication, in which the team is able to aggregate responses from U-Reporters. In order to enable two-way communication, U-Report has a function called UPartners, which enables one-to-one counselling through the same channel as U-Report messages. UPartners in Ukraine have consisted of international organizations, including IOM on safe migration, and NGOs that regularly provide services to youth, often times through phone lines, including La Strada on domestic violence. Typically, U-Report will run a related poll and then offer U-Reporters the opportunity to ask follow-up questions or share concerns to the UPartner. Questions are kept anonymous to ensure safety and make youth feel comfortable to ask them. The partners then have qualified staff address these questions. The UPartner dashboard enables UPartners to track U-Report incidences over time in the case that the individuals are at risk of harming themselves or others, and to provide enhanced assistance. UPartners unanimously agreed that demand for counselling services was high, often exceeding the support they were able to provide in a timely manner. Topics resonated with youth and the UPartners channel was an effective way to engage with youth, specifically on topics that were of a sensitive nature. For both of the aforementioned UPartners, U-Reporters were referred over to online resource repositories and available hotlines to address further questions. For all UPartners, the capacity of the organization to address the influx of questions from youth, as well as sustain their hotlines to run 24/7, is a limiting constraint.

In terms of back-end management, U-Reporters will be provided a short code/trigger word to use in order to initiate engagement with a UPartner. Once a question is sent
through the system, it will be emailed directly to the UPartner, or UISR will tag the question to the UPartner. Each UPartner has a respective portal where they can track and address questions.

**Funding and resources**

Within UNICEF Ukraine, a project team oversees partners and contractors for U-Report. The team includes the Head of the Education Section and Adolescent Development Officer, responsible for budgeting, strategic planning and management of the project; two Consultants – U-Report Coordinator and Youth Engagement Consultant – and one Communication for Development Officer, who provides support for communication activities. Two consultants work exclusively on U-Report Ukraine, including one Project Coordinator, involved in supervising all partners, developing strategies and key indicators, Terms of Reference, Memoranda of Understanding and other documents, working with celebrities, data collection, planning, communication and partnership activities, youth engagement through youth committee, correspondence with the GIC, and representing U-Report in public events and monitoring. One Youth Engagement and Partnership Consultant is responsible for the implementation of the scaling strategy, arranging U-Report presentations at the corresponding events, overseeing social media strategies, managing partnerships with youth organizations and the commercial sector to recruit more U-Reporters, organization of the events to increase the engagement of project participants, and drafting documents and official letters UISR team:

- **Two Directors**: Project supervision, expertise and consulting in analytics
- **One Project Manager**: Management of RapidPro, preparing polling plan and focal point
- **One Project Assistant**: Administration and documentation, basic analytics
- **One Social Media Specialist**: Social media pages, communications and writing articles; and
- **Part-time team members**: Content writers, translators, sociologists, youth committee team leaders.

First year operational budget: US$150,000, which included:

- SMS costs (free for the U-Reporter)
- Technology fees, e.g., hosting, website
- Short-code costs
- Communication and awareness-raising activities
- Partnership budgets: youth groups and UISR/staff (primarily at UISR); and
- Launch event for 1,500 young people.

**Key challenges and lessons learned**

*U-Report has strong brand recognition and generates trust among all partners and youth interviewed.* All youth interviewed expressed the importance of U-Report as a tool for self-expression and a channel to share opinions that are heard by policymakers and civil society. Youth identified UNICEF and the United Nations’ role as pivotal, considering them the steward of U-Report. Youth expressed concerns and distrust in the government, emphasizing that the ownership of U-Report should remain within the United Nations or among trusted partners.

![Figure 9. U-Report Ukraine budget breakdown](image-url)

U-Report provides access to information not previously accessible to government and civil society, representing a brand new and valuable channel for these organizations. Previously, organizations would have had to run a census or engage in costly manual data collection through phone or door-to-door polling.
There is opportunity for wider analysis of U-Report data, which could be used to inform programming through an enhanced understanding of the youth population, and youth perspectives and habits. Despite that the M&E plan being rolled out for U-Report globally identifies the ‘unit cost per registered user’ as a key indicator to measure and understand, the CO has not yet analysed outreach data to understand the cost-effectiveness of recruitment methods used and successful tactics for engaging first time U-Reporters, specifically those within targeted groups (e.g., vulnerable populations; Eastern Ukraine). Analysing the results of outreach campaigns based on associated campaign costs and the acquisition of new U-Reporters will provide insight into which methods are most effective in engaging targeted youth, as well as which method acquires youth that stay on the platform longer. Further, the CO does not currently analyse U-Report data in a consolidated database to understand U-Reporter data trends, including broader trends in youth perspectives and habits; however, it is set to begin this analysis since this case study. This analysis could help the CO to better understand their target clients and help to shape programming to be better tailored to support youth and enhance government and partner programming.

UNICEF programmatic areas do not strategically build the use of U-Report into their programmes during strategic planning processes, which results in a missed opportunity to distribute U-Report costs across donors and existing programmatic funding, leading to a more sustainable U-Report programme. Standard processes around the integration and consideration of U-Report during these key planning cycles would need to be mandated, or at a minimum encouraged, by the CO Representative or Deputy Representative.

Global polls (also known as global actions) are perceived by the CO to typically not resonate well with the local context of youth in Ukraine. According to interviews, there have been instances where global polls typically do not translate well into the local language and context. These polls also tend to be broad and the topics do not always align to those most relevant or interesting to Ukrainian youth. Most often global polls are still run, as UNICEF staff feel that it is important to contribute to global action initiatives, despite that there is the option to ‘opt-out’.

UNICEF has effectively engaged important governmental and civil society organizations and enabled the effective use of U-Report to engage youth and gather information to inform programming. In some instances, partners and UNICEF personnel feel that U-Report remains a UNICEF-led innovation, despite the shared governance structure and objective for co-ownership among partners. Partners feel empowered to use U-Report to inform their organizational mandate; however, in some instances there are assumptions that due to UNICEF’s role and leadership of the platform, UNICEF-suggested polls will take priority.

The UPartners feature is perceived as highly valued for both youth and partners, based on interviews and response data. However, deploying the feature requires additional resources and, therefore, partners who have used the feature do not feel they would be able to participate as UPartners on a consistent or continuous basis. Partners identified the requirement for additional resources to respond to U-Report messages when deployed; therefore, a sustainable model has not yet been identified in-country.

Outcomes
This case study did not attempt to rigorously measure outcomes, but instead, focuses on identifying examples of outcomes and understanding how they have been considered during the innovation process. Outcomes created through the use of U-Report in Ukraine are highlighted below, including use cases showcasing the use of data to create positive change.

Monitoring and Evaluation Rapid Appraisal Results – Highlights

- Decision-makers and programme managers find U-Report a useful tool to ensure that youth are put at the centre of decision-making (youth-centred approach to decision-making)
• Eight interviewees among U-Report partners confirmed that U-Report data influenced their decisions and programme planning
• U-Report provides access to gaps in youth data not available to be gathered or not available at all; and
• Partners are confident in the data security and transparency of the collection process.

➢ Bullying and violence, May 2016: UNICEF ran a global poll that focused on youth bullying in school, to understand the prevalence of bullying and violence facing youth globally. In Ukraine, U-Reporters highlighted the seriousness of the issue. The Ministry of Education and Science shared the results and soon prioritized the issue in their education reform. For the Ministry, this was the only way to source this information. In particular, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, it would have been challenging to gain insight on bullying without U-Report. Later that year, in December 2016, La Strada, an NGO focused on ending youth violence, suggested a follow-up poll that identified what authority figures often resorted to violence, also gaining an understanding of what authorities’ youth felt most comfortable seeking assistance from when in a situation of violence.

➢ Sexual education, February 2017: Data collected through U-Report demonstrated that the quality of sexual education in schools from the perception of youth was weak and that youth lacked basic knowledge on sexual education issues. The data were used by Teenergizer, an NGO, to inform the Government on education policy, including facilitating round tables and conducting work groups related to education reform with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health.

➢ Gender stereotypes and gender-based violence, November 2016 and February 2017: U-Report data were utilized as references in the development of a UNFPA Country Programme Document to identify the needs regarding gender-based violence among youth and for the development of a programme intervention. UNFPA then led an awareness-raising video campaign about gender-based violence and made available a referral system through UPartners to support youth.
Dear UReporter. Do u know that taking ur child for marklate can prevent lots of childhood diseases? REPLY 1=Yes or 2=No

Please remember taking marklate PROTECTS infants and children from 10 killer diseases. Marklate is FREE at ALL HEALTH FACILITIES!
6. FINDINGS

Based on the evaluation framework developed for the innovation case studies, a number of findings have been identified that are relevant to the continued implementation and scale up of U-Report, as well as innovation more broadly, at UNICEF. This section outlines these findings.

### Key takeaways

- U-Report is a powerful tool that allows UNICEF to directly achieve its strategic priorities, mission and mandate, demonstrating measurable outcomes for UNICEF programming and youth beneficiaries.
- The GIC continues to play an instrumental role in the achievement of scale and outcomes, through its role in supporting COs and providing leadership for global product management and coordination.
- Heightened efforts and resources dedicated towards analysing U-Report data have been an important element that has contributed to the financial and non-financial sustainability of the tool, including enabling the tool to scale more rapidly and at a lower cost, intensifying the focus on data that have the potential to contribute even further to U-Report’s value proposition to young people and its financial sustainability as a tool for all United Nations agencies, and their partners.

### 6.1 Approach dimension

1. How does this innovation contribute to UNICEF country and global strategies?

U-Report complements and strengthens UNICEF CO and global strategies as an institutional tool that enables a true human-centred design approach. Through the use of U-Report, UNICEF is systematically, efficiently and effectively gaining an understanding of the challenges facing youth across a large number of priority sectors, including health, education, WASH, child protection and emergency response, to inform, influence and shape UNICEF’s programmatic design and deployment. Further, U-Report is a powerful tool to engage and empower youth, which is a stand-alone strategic priority for the organization. Therefore, U-Report is a proven tool that allows UNICEF to directly achieve an important strategic priority, as well as a cross-cutting tool used to bolster and strengthen the organization’s capabilities and success across all other sectors.

**Insights:** Recent collaborations between the GIC and programme divisions, including the development of an integrated plan to leverage U-Report as a tool to improve the delivery of humanitarian and emergency services, alongside EMOPS, and new initiatives in partnership with the Child Protection Division represent important milestones for the organization. These collaborations demonstrate an important model that can be replicated across other programme areas of focus, for the more strategic use of U-Report across programming. The organizational shift towards embedding U-Report into programme delivery will strengthen programme design and delivery through the integration of stronger human-centred design elements, as well as the heightened prioritization and support to youth specifically in targeted programmes. Despite the capability of U-Report to inform programme initiatives and strategy, U-Report is often not a tool that is strategically integrated into organizational planning processes, such as consideration of use and budgeting accordingly, during annual country programme strategy review and planning cycles. There is an opportunity that is not being seized to more meaningfully and strategically integrate U-Report as a tool to inform programme priorities, design and implementation across all programmes. This is the case at both the global level through a top-down approach and larger global initiatives, as seen in the Child Protection Division, for
example; and at the country level, whereby considering U-Report during strategic planning processes will positively contribute to programme design and delivery, as well as U-Report financial sustainability. U-Report has the potential to inform programme design well in advance of proposal development, as a tool to prioritize and inform challenges, as well as validate assumptions.

2. What is this innovation doing in terms of scaling up and out or working at greater efficiency and economy?

In the initial outset of the innovation, U-Report’s intention was to do something new, which entailed providing a channel for youth to raise their voices and be heard by civil society, the government and one another. U-Report is now scaling out, through replication and dissemination, across UNICEF COs, amplifying youth voices for advocacy at local, national and global levels.

**Insights:** U-Report is unique and powerful, with no known comparable solutions; therefore, truly innovating on the way youth stakeholders, including government, civil society and the United Nations, interact with youth globally. U-Report represents an effective and influential tool, gathering data and creating insights not previously available to stakeholders. Interviews with government informants and UNICEF COs emphasized limited availability of similar data and the costly and timely processes required for alternative methods, including collecting census data or conducting polls through telephone or door-to-door approaches. These existing approaches have inherent biases (e.g., often taking place in urban areas to reduce costs) and are significantly more costly and time-consuming. U-Report provides a first-ever approach to gathering youth perspectives, in a cost-effective manner, with the required flexibility to create value for a large number of diverse stakeholders.

3. How are end-user needs identified and considered and how did they shape the innovation?

U-Report has been continually evolving since its initial launch in 2012 in order to respond to changing user needs. The innovation, through leadership provided by the GIC in the form of global product management and product road map development, has grown from an SMS-based solution, towards integration with various communication channels in order to respond to the preferences of youth, while offering new services that answer youth needs, specifically that of the need for trusted information on important topics, including health, human rights, and issues of safety and security.

**Insights:** The GIC’s leadership and approach towards product development and management represents an effective way to create demand-driven solutions for youth. In particular, the tool’s integration with popular communication platforms, such as Facebook messenger, WhatsApp and Viber, demonstrate the understanding of ‘consumer’ (youth) habits and the flexibility of the GIC to respond to quickly changing trends, including the typically rapid adoption of new social messaging platforms. The GIC has taken an important leadership role to cultivate the relationships with these organizations and to transform the use case of these platforms into products for global good. The GIC, in collaboration with the UNICEF Futures team in San Francisco, has been altering the original intention of the technology platforms for young people and piloting these to inform the way in which these platforms evolve. For many of these organizations, this partnership represents the first and only partnership these technology companies have with the United Nations (e.g., Viber, WhatsApp).

The GIC’s development of UPartners, and more recently, the use of bots to provide answers to common questions for youth on a permanent basis, represents an evolution of U-Report towards an even more valuable and meaningful tool for youth and for UNICEF COs and its partners. Finally,
U-Report best practices, as documented and disseminated by the GIC, such as the use of youth councils to ensure that polls are developed by and for youth, ensure that youth needs are continually and naturally considered at every step of U-Reports implementation.

4. What challenges were faced during the innovation process and what strategies were used to overcome barriers?

Several challenges have been faced by UNICEF during the innovation process, including the following:

- Initial challenge in providing sufficient support to COs during U-Report’s initial scale-up in East Africa, resulting in the creation of the GIC as a response to ensure effective global support.
- Addressing concerns of sustainability due to the high cost for use of SMS, through integrating other communication channels that can be leveraged for free (digital channels include Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber, etc.); and
- Ongoing challenges with user acquisition, specifically reaching girls and rural youth, which are addressed through new techniques and approaches driven by COs and supported through the sharing of learnings and effective practices, which is enabled through the coordination by the GIC, such as through monthly calls. An example of a new and effective approach for reaching marginalized populations is the creation of U-Ambassadors.

Insights: The GIC has played an important role in facilitating the growth of U-Report globally and addressing challenges facing COs throughout the innovation journey. Through providing COs with a full suite of services required to launch RapidPro, designing a strategy for U-Report and best practices and campaign support to scale the tool across the country, U-Report has been enabled to scale rather seamlessly with few significant roadblocks. In particular, the GIC’s facilitation of global partnerships has played a pivotal role in achieving scale and developing avenues for sustainability, which would not otherwise have been possible. Through facilitating the sharing of lessons learned through documentation and the coordination of global calls, roadblocks faced by COs have been effectively addressed and South-South collaboration has been facilitated.

5. How was scale considered through the process, starting with the initial design of this innovation?

From its initial design, U-Report was built for scale. From a technological perspective, the GIC facilitated the transition from RapidSMS to RapidPro, which provided a flexible and scalable platform for U-Report. The use of an SMS-based platform would enable a larger reach, reducing barriers to access and making scale possible, based on user needs (e.g., through considering connectivity challenges in U-Report countries). Integration with digital channels enables scale from a financial perspective, aiming to reduce the cost of U-Report, while reaching users on their preferred communication channels.

Organizational support structures were created as a means to facilitate and enable scale, specifically through the creation and role of the GIC. GIC support systems and processes have effectively supported COs to adopt U-Report in a rapid manner through the creation of standardized, user-friendly, and demand-driven and responsive systems. Despite the lean team at the GIC, processes established and the support provided to COs is substantive and robust, effectively meeting the needs of COs globally and in a timely manner, enabling quick ‘scale’ to multiple countries. To enable scale and amplify the use of U-Report, the GIC has documented and shared learnings with COs in terms of best practices to engage and acquire new U-Reporters. The GIC also provides digital campaign support, building the capacity of COs to acquire U-Reporters through new means.

Finally, due to the inherent design of U-Report, it is a tool that becomes increasingly powerful, impactful and valuable to users with scale. With scale, governments, civil society and all other stakeholders are less able to ignore the perspectives and opinions of youth.
6. Was a proof of concept and business case developed for this innovation?

In Uganda, the CO developed a business case to understand the anticipated costs and viable value and impact that could be created through U-Report. As the innovation has been developed over the last seven years, the business case has been updated through an analysis of costs vs. impact for each product enhancement considered.

7. How does this innovation complement or build on existing knowledge and work conducted in the country and across programmes?

U-Report builds off of the existing institutional tool, RapidPro, and therefore, continues to leverage the institutional learning developed by GIC and RapidPro users, while also contributing to the institutional learning through its own scale.

**Insights:** Through leveraging RapidPro as the platform for U-Report, learnings developed through the use of U-Report have informed the greater use of RapidPro across the organization. Additional value is created for the organization by leveraging RapidPro. For example, it allows for product enhancements and investments towards U-Report to benefit the RapidPro community. An important example of this are the efforts invested by the U-Report team at the GIC to develop partnerships with digital communication channels for U-Report, which are now being used by RapidPro more broadly.

8. How have the local environment/market (including legal, regulatory and technological) considerations influenced the design of the innovation?

With each new country, the CO develops a concept note for the use of U-Report, which considers the environmental and market constraints and the relevant considerations and implications on U-Report. The U-Report concept note requires that COs consider the state of youth in their country as an initial first step in order to contextualize and enable the design of U-Report to be centred around a deep understanding of youth challenges and needs. Understanding this context has then enabled COs to further identify local partners and understand the best path to engage both partners and youth.

9. What value does UNICEF bring to this innovation and what makes UNICEF suitable to scale it?

UNICEF has been well suited to design, test, pilot and develop a proof of concept for U-Report due to the organization’s mandate to protect and serve children and adolescents, augmented by the organization’s strong local relationships with national actors, including those supporting youth development. U-Report’s unique value is grounded in its ability to be an unbiased and trusted source of information on important issues for youth. In particular, the work of UNICEF with children, as its primary mandate is relevant and complementary to the purpose of U-Report. Interviews with U-Reporters showed that UNICEF’s role as a United Nations agency steering U-Report was an important factor in generating the trust of youth. U-Reporters interviewed felt that they could trust U-Report, since it was led by UNICEF and they strongly believed that their responses would remain anonymous and information would be used for the benefit of youth in the country. As the mandate to support youth is cross-cutting across the United Nations, U-Report is increasingly becoming recognized as a tool for the United Nations as a whole. Therefore, an inter-agency effort to bring U-Report to scale would be appropriate, valuable and timely, as it would create access to new networks, unlock additional resources and further develop the U-Report brand at a time when the United Nations has heightened the prioritization and recognition of engaging and supporting youth within its larger mandate.

10. What principles or standards have been applied and how?

U-Report is a strong example for the application of the Principles for Digital Development at UNICEF. For example, a human-centred design approach was taken throughout the development of U-Report, whereby youth have been engaged and
integrated into the design and use of the tool, such that the tool is led by and for youth, enabling a deep understanding of the customer (youth) leading to a solution that effectively addresses their needs. Best practices of this approach include the involvement of youth councils to participate in the governance process and providing input to polls.

Additional principles applied: All applications of U-Report must be in line with the U-Report Key Principles, an organic document updated based on CO inputs and requests that GIC maintain. The Key Principles capture and highlight the best practices that enable the U-Report to stay true to its value proposition and remain a trusted application for youth, centred on youth, including providing guidance on youth involvement in governance and the engagement of the Government during the polling process, when appropriate. Finally, ethical guidelines have been created by UNICEF, in collaboration with Innocenti, which includes direction and guidelines for COs around how to ensure polls and social media practices remain moral and grounded in principle.

11. What are the steps taken or methods used to assess and mitigate risks to children, users, and markets?

The U-Report governance structure has built-in safeguards towards child protection, which emphasizes distance from the Government, as well as technological design features which automatically anonymize user information and protect data based on RapidPro data protection principles. As U-Reporters register, they are automatically associated with a user ID that cannot be traced back to their phone number, name or any other identifier that would expose or associate a youth to their answers. Anonymity of user data and responses is an important and valued feature by users, as expressed by interviews with U-Reporters and is a key component to the success of U-Report as a tool for advocacy. Further, RapidPro is designed to follow industry best practices for data protection and protection against cybersecurity.

12. For innovations where openness is relevant, how have steps been taken to adopt and expand existing open standards?

U-Report adheres to the principles of open source. RapidPro’s code is made available publicly through GitHub. All poll results are published and accessed on the respective U-Report country websites, contributing to the principles of open data. However, as open data requires that all data generated, and not just the aggregated data, are available, U-Report does not truly adopt the principles of open data. As stated on the U-Report website, “Individual messages are confidential but aggregated data is transparent. Information received can be disaggregated by age, gender and country in real time.”

6.2 Organization dimension

13. What type of support was received from the leadership to enable the innovation process?

Throughout the scale-up of U-Report, various levels of UNICEF leadership have demonstrated support for U-Report’s adoption and scale. This support is demonstrated at successful use cases by COs, and globally, through the recent recognition of U-Report as a key tool to support Generation Unlimited.

Insights: The creation of the GIC and its role in supporting U-Report to scale is a strong example of leadership’s support for the tool and the innovation process.

A learning from the scale-up of U-Report is the importance of having country-level senior leadership support and demonstrated ownership of U-Report within the CO to enable success. There are examples where COs are not committed to U-Report demonstrated by a lack of resources invested in the tool, which has led to the CO being challenged to reach scale. The evaluation team has noted one

occurrence of a CO that had initiated U-Report but found it difficult to scale. The respective RO Business Analyst expressed that the necessary resources and buy-in at the senior leadership level were not available to support its success at the CO. The RO Business Analyst believes a national partner will continue to support U-Report.

In particular, it has been observed through this evaluation and shared through several interviews with COs and global stakeholders that U-Report is most successful when the following takes place at a CO (which occurs to a varying degree across COs):

- CO senior leadership generates office-wide buy-in through creating space and opportunity for the U-Report coordinator to work across programme teams to socialize U-Report and co-create polls and use cases for the use of U-Report with programme teams. The senior leader's role in advocacy, demonstrated by creating time for U-Report presentations at office-wide meetings, and mandating meetings with each programme team and the U-Report coordinator, is an important part in creating the right incentives for adoption and scale; and

- CO senior leadership encourages U-Report to be an institutional tool that is considered during annual planning (e.g., country programme strategy development), including the use of the tool and associated costs for polling being integrated into the budget for programme teams from the outset of the year as a way to share the costs for U-Report across the organization.

These learnings point also to the importance of including and integrating U-Report into the CO programme planning cycles and documentation. With the recent announcement of Generation Unlimited, UNICEF global senior leadership has emphasized the opportunity for U-Report to be used as a tool to fulfil UNICEF’s mission to better serve young people. This global recognition has encouraged and incentivized COs to dedicate further resources towards U-Report and further explore how U-Report can be scaled to better support programme objectives. Despite this support for U-Report from senior leadership at headquarters, there is still no actual requirement or mandate for a CO Representative or Deputy Representative to include the platform in their planning cycles. The lack of formalization risks that COs may not leverage an important institutional tool has been proven to create outcomes aligned with UNICEF’s mandate.

14. What type of support and leadership facilitated the enabling environment for innovation?

The enabling environment for innovation has been facilitated through UNICEF headquarters’ global leadership and role in providing a support function, through the GIC to enable the adoption and scale of U-Report. This led to, at a global level, the necessary architecture for innovation. However, challenges persist at the country level, whereby several structural policies and practices restrict and constrain the enabling environment for innovation to take hold.

**Insights:** Several stakeholders interviewed have identified that UNICEF practices and policies at the CO level may constrain innovation. Specific practices as it relates to U-Report include:

- **Positioning within the CO:** U-Report coordinators do not have a specific division in which they might inherently or naturally sit, as U-Report is considered a cross-cutting tool for the organization. Therefore, the U-Report coordinator may sit within a program vertical, such as Health, Child Protection, or WASH or may sit within a cross cutting section, such as communications. A small number of stakeholders emphasized that U-Report Coordinators are more successful if they sit in a cross-cutting sector and with support from leadership, work with programme vertical leaders to create polls and inform programmes. This structure allows U-Report to be truly available
and accessible to all programme teams, and will be less heavily influenced or weighted towards one programme area.

- **Coordinator hierarchy and status:** As the U-Report Coordinator is required to demonstrate leadership through engaging with government and civil society partners, demonstrating clout and influence both internally and externally, it is important that this position holds the necessary authority within the organization to be successful and effective in this role. In many cases, the U-Report Coordinator is a contract position, which restricts the individual from being able to represent UNICEF with senior leaders from external partners and creates challenges internally, as contracts discourage commitment to an organization and investment into that staff member. Further, the U-Report Coordinator is often a youth who leads to many coordinators being positioned at a lower seniority level within the organization, as they may not hold the traditional number of years of experience as more senior positions require. Without seniority, the U-Report Coordinator is often faced with challenges to move forward ideas and generate buy-in. Therefore, U-Report Coordinators may be more successful in their roles, should they be offered a full-time role once they demonstrate their capabilities through an initial contract, with a direct line of communication and reporting to a Deputy Representative who can support them in their mission.

15. **What role does leadership (internal and external) play in the innovation process globally? In-country?**

Leadership plays a key role in facilitating and encouraging buy-in for the use of U-Report. Specifically, with support from CO Representatives, the tool is more likely to be adopted by programme verticals and the U-Report Coordinator is empowered and enabled to work across programme teams and engage with external partners to ensure the success of the tool in-country.

16. **To what extent do/did innovators feel empowered to take risks and to innovate?**

Innovators in COs felt empowered to take risks and to create new solutions that would enable UNICEF to better fulfil its mandate. This is demonstrated by several innovative approaches that grew out of the Ugandan CO, for example. Now, the GIC, and in some ways the ICT Division through the Business Analyst positions, provide support from COs to source and grow innovative ideas. The GIC plays an important role in risk-sharing, as well as sharing or absorbing the financial burden of the innovation process. For example, the GIC responded to the idea and need expressed by COs and created UPartners and began experimenting with the use of bots. The GIC reduced the risk and cost of innovating by baring the risk and financial burden of developing new product features. Through continual engagement with COs, the GIC has been responsive to CO needs and able to move forward several innovative ideas quickly.

With this being said, there is no structured process for the documentation of failures by the GIC to disseminate learnings on what does not work as a way to launch and scale U-Report. On the Global U-Report Monthly Calls, COs are encouraged to share stories of failure, if applicable, when sharing about their U-Report process; however, due to time zones, not all COs are able to join this call. The documentation of failures, as a way to learn and create an open environment that removes ‘shame’ from failing as a part of the innovation process, is an important component towards empowering all COs to continue to experiment and innovate with U-Report.

Finally, a handful of interviews identified the disincentive created by hiring key positions at UNICEF, including U-Report Coordinators, on contract, as this will discourage risk-taking and ‘innovating’, as it may result in failure and, therefore, the replacement of the staff once the contract ends. As U-Report continues to scale and experiment with new approaches to reach marginalized populations, including girls and rural populations, it will be important that
U-Report Coordinators feel empowered by the GIC and COs to take risks and try new ways to reach these populations.

17. Who makes decisions with respect to the design and implementation of the innovation?

Decision-making is shared across several UNICEF functions and with partner organizations. UNICEF has engaged global partners (Scouts and Girl Guides) to provide the global oversight of U-Report through a steering committee. The GIC effectively manages the tool; however, it seeks guidance from the steering committee on topics such as branding, product development, global actions (polls) and strategies of engagement at the global level. At the country level, UNICEF is the effective manager of the implementation process and engages relevant local partner organizations to provide leadership and ownership through a steering committee governance structure modelled after the global structure. A youth council is engaged at the global and CO level to ensure that youth continue to drive U-Report forward.

**Insights**: Through observations and interviews with CO U-Report Coordinators, it was discovered that several COs, and in some select cases, partner organizations involved in the steering committee, believe that despite the shared governance structure, U-Report is considered to be ‘owned’ and ‘led’ by UNICEF. Several partners feel that UNICEF polls will automatically be approved solely because they were suggested by UNICEF. In particular, it has been observed that often Global Action polls receive the lowest response rates and occasionally may not resonate with youth councils at various COs, but are often still run. This is likely due to the reality that UNICEF funds U-Report and, therefore, partners do not feel comfortable preventing polls suggested by the organization.

By contrast, it is important to note that there have also been recent examples where partners are taking on a stronger role in the leadership of U-Report; for example, in Chile, where the Scouts are considering leading U-Report and the Chile CO is considering stepping back from the tool. In Mozambique, UNFPA co-funds U-Report and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been reported to co-fund U-Report in other locations. The evaluation team was not able to compare and contrast the perceptions of ownership between COs specifically with these co-funding structures, and therefore is unable to conclude if it has had an impact on the perception of partners or external stakeholders. However, these contrasting examples demonstrate a need for further investigation into the various ownership models that have formed and the potential enhanced engagement of other United Nations agencies and youth-led organizations to share ownership and costs.

Increased ownership by partners will also reduce reputational risk that is created by UNICEF being too closely associated with U-Report as the sole ‘owner’.

18. What factors were considered when making decisions about governance and ownership of the innovation?

From its initial creation, U-Report was designed to be a co-owned tool across the United Nations and youth-organizations, demonstrated by the engagement of these organizations in global and local steering committees. U-Report is not branded as UNICEF in order to ensure that partners, as well as young people themselves, develop ownership for the tool and recognize U-Report as a public good, led by youth, for youth. In 50 countries there are steering committees with a variety of partners, each with a youth council to inform and guide poll development and youth engagement.

19. How has the governance and ownership model influenced the innovation process?

From its initial creation, U-Report was designed to be a co-owned tool across the United Nations and youth-organizations, demonstrated by the engagement of these organizations in global and local steering committees. U-Report is not branded as UNICEF in order to ensure that partners, as well as young people themselves, develop ownership for the tool and recognize U-Report as a public good, led by youth, for youth.
for the tool and recognize U-Report as a public good, led by youth, for youth. In 50 countries there are steering committees with a variety of partners, each with a youth council to inform and guide poll development and youth engagement.

**Insights:** The evaluation team has observed that due to the governance and ownership model, there has been very limited engagement of the private sector. This approach was intentional, in order to ensure that U-Report was considered a trusted, public good; however, this has resulted in a key part of society and an important group for youth, as it relates to employment and economic growth, to be neglected. There are a limited number of examples where the private sector has been successfully engaged. One of these examples, however, was demonstrated in Kosovo as a way to engage women to speak out about equal opportunities in the workplace. Girls responded to questions regarding their perception on equal opportunity in the workplace and discrimination due to gender. Companies, following the poll, then offered the opportunity to be selected for an internship and job shadowing with leading CEOs. This example of private sector engagement was led by UNDP and represents an example as to how U-Report can offer practical solutions to challenges facing youth. Interviews with COs and stakeholders have indicated that there is hesitancy and some opposition towards engaging the private sector, as it is feared that it will pollute U-Report’s good will mission. However, it was observed that there is not a clear understanding of what engagement models may look like, and limited investigation or exploration to inform if a model that creates value for youth through private sector engagement could be created.

Finally, the U-Report Theory of Change does indicate that there may be value to the MNOs as a private sector organization, through increased use of other mobile services. There have not yet been data collected on this, nor a supporting study, to understand if this is the case.

20. To what extent was sustainability considered in the plan for the innovation?

**Relevant Findings:** The GIC has taken important steps towards reducing the cost of implementing U-Report, including:

- Reducing the monopoly associated with UNICEF RapidPro set-up support by engaging additional vendors through LTAs, reducing costs by 50 per cent in 18 months.

- Forming new partnerships with popular communication channels used by youth, including Facebook Messenger, Viber, WhatsApp, eliminating SMS costs if digital channel is used; digital channels grew substantially in 2017 with almost 20 per cent of U-Reporters joining digitally. It is expected that digital channels will increasingly become preferred as infrastructure improves and access to smart phones increases. Digital channels are often also less complex to operate.

- Increasing the efficiency of acquiring new U-Reporters through 1) introducing new ways to reach youth, especially outreach through digital channels, which has significantly driven down the cost to reach new U-Reporters through improving efficiency by 1,400 per cent, and 2) increasing the focus on data analytics to understand how users are finding out about U-Report (through which channels) and by understanding the best ways to engage users during registration to keep them engaged overtime. For example, it was determined that during registration, if a new user was given a poll before they registered, they would be more engaged after registration, as they were quickly showed the value of the tool. In addition, an indicator introduced in the newly launched global M&E plan measures the unit cost per registered user, which will provide important insight to each CO on the best and most cost-effective methods for engaging young people; and

- Launched a cloud hosting solution that makes it easier for interested countries and partners to access and test U-Report.
A survey run by the Office of Innovation at the end of 2017 showed that U-Report has over 300 partners around the world, including with governments, United Nations agencies, NGOs and private sector organizations. Some of these private sector partnerships are formalized and have resulted in revenue streams for U-Report and others are informal, without financial implications. There does not exist a strategy, nor has there been a more strategic evaluation around how the private sector may be engaged as a pathway towards financial sustainability.

21. Where does ownership of this innovation fit within and/or outside of UNICEF with respect to long-term sustainability?

U-Report’s path to long-term sustainability has not been clearly defined by UNICEF; however, several key factors will be important to ensure its sustained success, including:

- The continued guidance provided by UNICEF headquarters for product development and management, branding, capturing and sharing of lessons learned and support to COs to achieve scale
- Ownership of COs to continue to drive U-Report locally
- Increased engagement of United Nations agencies with shared programmatic mandates for youth
- The mobilization of additional funds to support implementation costs; and
- The continued development of a sense of community for youth to ensure continued interest of the youth population.

Insights: The long-term sustainability and associated product road map from both a financial and non-financial perspective have not fully been defined or articulated by UNICEF. Several observations from the evaluation team have been included here which relate to the future sustainability of the tool.

Sustained interest in U-Report and the development of a community to drive further engagement are important components to U-Report’s long-term sustainability. The evaluation team observed that the integration of U-Report with Facebook Messenger not only offers U-Reporters an additional communication channel, but also has contributed to the creation of a sense of community. This is because U-Reporters become linked to a pre-existing Facebook page about issues they care about, where poll results are also published. The Facebook page then offers an opportunity for U-Reporters to engage in conversation with one another directly, with these interactions making U-Reporters feel like they are part of a movement.23

This, however, may risk drawing U-Reporters away from using the U-Report application, which offers similar capability to encourage U-Reporters to engage with one another and build a sense of community. This aspect relates closely to the value and offering that U-Report can provide to youth, as the increased use of the U-Report application would result in more meaningful data being collected, enabling partners and UNICEF to more deeply understand youth and enhance programmes to better serve and support youth. The full value of the U-Report application has not yet been explored and, therefore, there may be opportunity to leverage the application to drive more users to U-Report and heighten engagement. Further, there are unexplored opportunities to create pathways to financial sustainability, as there has not yet been an exploratory study to inform UNICEF’s engagement of the private sector nor an assessment of the value of the data created through U-Report to external organizations.

The role of the GIC in its support to U-Report has been instrumental. The team at the GIC supporting the scale-up is lean, with

only three full-time staff dedicated to its support. The amount of support in terms of people-hours has not grown even though U-Report has scaled from 17 countries to 50. To ensure U-Report continues to meet its target growth rates, as well as continues to develop in a way that brings value to young people through new and innovative product features (e.g., through the use of bots: AI), the GIC should consider evaluating the requirements for resources, both from a people and product investment perspective. This will ensure that the GIC will have enough resources to successfully fulfill its mandate and reach U-Report objectives for 2020 and 2030.

22. When will this innovation become mainstream and no longer considered an innovation? What steps has UNICEF taken to move towards that point?

UNICEF has made significant strides towards mainstreaming RapidPro as an organizational tool, through the transition of implementation support from the GIC to the ICT Division. U-Report is becoming mainstreamed itself, as it becomes more strategically integrated into programme plans and becomes an adopted tool by COs and programme verticals at UNICEF global. With this mainstreaming of U-Report as an organizational tool, the GIC will continue to play an important role in its success through its continued product management leadership and global coordination.

23. How, if at all, has the innovation team worked across UNICEF offices and divisions to leverage internal and external knowledge/expertise and/or share learnings?

The GIC has been effective in working across different divisions within the organization both at the global and CO level, including working with Program Division to identify value propositions for various sectors, integration with EMOPS, and working closely with the Venture Fund to co-create product functionality for U-Report that leverages emerging technologies as a means to enhance its serve to youth (e.g., through the exploration of the use of AI and bots as a new feature/functionality for U-Report).

24. How has collaboration across UNICEF and/or with external stakeholders influenced the innovation process?

U-Report has amplified UNICEF’s work with youth across the organization, particularly through collaboration with the Programme Division. In this same way, collaboration with the Program Division and units including EMOPS has encouraged and enabled U-Report to reach scale more rapidly. For example, through its use in emergency situations, U-Reporters joined rapidly in order to receive lifesaving information. It is not yet clear how engagement with U-Reporters who join during an emergency will need to be approached differently by the UNICEF U-Report team, if at all. For example, traditional poll topics may not be of interest to those who joined during the emergency, as they may not be as politically or socially active as traditional U-Reporters. Therefore, UNICEF may need to analyse drop-off rates and create new approaches to keeping these new sets of U-Reporters engaged, such as only sharing selected polls of interest to this group.

6.3 Resources and capabilities dimension

25. How is the innovation funded?

U-Report has received funding through various sources, including regular resources, which is considered a discretionary budget that the office receives from UNICEF core funding. This funding contributes to U-Report’s base funding, as well as funding through individual investments. Individual investments would come through approved and funded proposals which may look to develop a new product feature or use U-Report in a specific programme. In the past, COs used to be able to apply for Venture funding to support the launch of U-Report in-country. However, the fund stopped funding U-Report in 2016. GIC now has no funds for initial deployments aside from the staff time dedicated to supporting.

COs seek funding independently based on how they planned to use U-Report and the donor landscape unique to the country. United Nations collaborations, such as with UNFPA in South Africa, have resulted in some cost-sharing at a country level. A past study conducted by GIC on CO investment levels
into U-Report, as a total of the country’s budget, identified that large countries spend on average less than .025 per cent of the total UNICEF CO budget on U-Report. Small countries may spend up to 2 per cent. This study, however, would not have considered the recently declining rate of U-Report to implement, based on the use of new digital channels and the reduced hosting costs created through increased competition for LTAs. In the past, UNICEF has seen donors, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development, make CO-specific and global investments into the tool. The GIC had a number of donors contribute to funding and participating on the global steering committee, with which this funding is set to end in 2018.

Past evaluations have assessed U-Report’s cost-effectiveness and have indicated that U-Report is already cost-effective and getting increasingly more so, identifying it as the “most cost effective tool of any of those evaluated - for example, for every person UNICEF has working on U-Report they had 99,593 young people engaged.”24 As the total number of GIC support staff has not increased, despite the nearly tripled number of COs requiring support, and an increased emphasis on U-Report’s need to scale to support the United Nations inter-agency Generation Unlimited initiative, this ratio of person-to-youth support will drastically increase and the total amount of resources required to enable U-Report to be successful will naturally grow.

26. How much time and how many resources were invested at different points in the innovation process?

Exact budgetary information was not provided for U-Report at the global level based on various stage-gates or product milestones.

27. What ongoing resources (human, physical, and financial) are required from UNICEF to manage this innovation?

The U-Report global leadership team is nimble, with three key staff members, including a global U-Report Coordinator, a supporting Assistant Coordinator and a Digital Strategist who provides insight into youth digital engagement strategies. At each CO, a U-Report Coordinator provides local ownership, guidance and direction. In addition to this, it has been identified that having an ICT or T4D specialist in the CO to support in the management of RapidPro can be helpful in ensuring U-Report’s technical success.

Insights: A detailed analysis on the projected demand for resources was not possible during this evaluation based on the limited financial information available. However, through several stakeholder interviews, it was indicated to the evaluation team that the total number of support staff that was supporting 17 COs has not changed, despite the fact that total number of countries has grown to 50. To ensure that U-Report targets for scale are successfully reached, it is likely that the GIC will require additional staff to provide support to the growing number of COs, as well as to ensure that the target 13 COs in relation to Generation Unlimited are provided additional support, as required.

28. How, if at all, have partners external to UNICEF contributed to the innovation process?

External partners have been a key success factor for U-Report’s adoption and scale. In particular, youth organizations in a country that are closely engaged with youth have been one of the most successful ways to engage youth onto the platform. In the same way, if the UNICEF CO does not have extensive existing programming focused on youth, partners have provided a way to quickly engage with youth and understand the context and challenges facing them.

29. How are partnerships designed to provide value to partners?

External partners have been a key success factor for U-Report’s adoption and scale. In particular, youth organizations in a country that are closely engaged with youth have been one of the most successful ways to engage youth onto the platform. In the same way, if the UNICEF CO does not have extensive existing programming focused on youth, partners have provided a way to quickly engage with youth and understand the context and challenges facing them.

30. What methods, approaches or tools are used throughout the innovation process?

A human-centred design approach has been used throughout the design, development and deployment of U-Report, including the engagement of a youth council at the global and CO level. Structurally, the GIC provides ongoing support to COs in the form of documentation, dissemination of lessons learned, one-on-one support, global coordination calls, and product development and management leadership, as described in the Innovation in Concept section.

6.4 Incentives and outcomes

31. What incentives are encouraging/driving and discouraging/deterring adoption of the innovation by end users?

End users are incentivized to adopt U-Report due to their desire to be heard by policymakers, civil society and other youth, with U-Report as the only channel available to facilitate this. U-Reporters are empowered to continue to use U-Report through demonstrated evidence provided back by COs showing how their opinions have created a positive change.

32. What incentives are encouraging/discouraging scaling of the innovation by UNICEF staff?

UNICEF COs are incentivized to adopt U-Report, as there has been demonstration of its ability to positively impact youth and inform UNICEF, government and external stakeholders’ decision-making. COs with existing youth programming, and therefore the required architecture to engage with youth (including existing partnerships with youth organizations and an understanding of the context of youth in the country), enables the CO to quickly and more effectively scale up the tool.

Limited available resources at the CO level and competition for funds, as well as the lack of a natural ‘home’ for U-Report within UNICEF’s existing structure (e.g., U-Report Coordinators may report to either programme division, including in Health, Education or Child Protection; or be a cross-cutting position, reporting to Adolescent Development or Communication) acts as disincentive for COs. Senior leadership support, or lack thereof, can act as either an incentive or disincentive for adoption. With recent Global UNICEF support and the prioritization of Generation Unlimited’ CO leadership is becoming increasingly interested and incentivized to leverage U-Report as a programming tool.

33. How were metrics designed and used to inform the development and scaling of the innovation?

In the initial stages of the innovation, the innovation team measured the following metrics: number of countries using U-Report; number of U-Reporters engaged in each country; and response rate of U-Reporters. Measuring the pace at which U-Report was adopted and the response rate of U-Reporters were good indicators to understand the level of youth engagement. The team also sought feedback from U-Reporters to understand how to enhance youth engagement, which was also a function of the youth committee. These metrics were effectively used to scale the innovation, as it provided insight into what was relevant to U-Reporters and how to make the tool more interesting and relevant to youth.

34. At what point were metrics considered? How was impact measured before scaling (or how is it intended to be measured)?

Metrics were measured and considered throughout the innovation process on an ongoing basis to continue to iterate and...
develop learnings around what worked well to scale U-Report. Measuring impact took place initially in an ad hoc manner through the CO documenting examples where data were collected through U-Report and was created to make positive change. These were shared with or documented collaboratively with the GIC. A more systematic approach has been developed in 2016, with the creation of an M&E strategy for COs by the GIC.

35. How has data generated through the innovation process created value for UNICEF and partners?

Significant data has been generated through U-Report due to its inherent design and focus on crowd-sourcing opinions and perspectives of use. Poll data is used to inform decision-making of UNICEF, governments and partners and brings value to those submitting polls and engaged with youth development in the country. However, the full breadth of data has not yet been explored or leveraged by UNICEF, as limited analysis was done to understand trends within the data and to understand a detailed profile of the types of U-Reporters through correlating user profiles and poll results. Therefore, in comparison to the potential of the data available, the total value delivered to UNICEF and its partners has only just begun to be explored.

*Insights:* Through investigation in Ukraine, it was identified that the RapidPro system is not able to track one user’s use of U-Report across multiple communication channels. Therefore, U-Reporters are being double-counted within the system, which brings into question the accuracy of the total number of U-Reporters in existence. Further, RapidPro requires that after each poll, the poll results are exported from the system and saved as an individual excel file, often analysed in SPSS. This process limits the type of analysis possible, as it does not allow UNICEF or partners to understand trends in the poll responses for individual U-Reporters. Therefore, UNICEF is not able to get a holistic picture or understanding of a U-Reporter and identify important correlations between answers that may help to better understand how and why challenges are faced by some youth more than others. Significant data exist within U-Report and there is currently limited analysis taking place at the CO and headquarters levels.

36. How were workplans, processes, learnings and practices monitored, documented and shared within UNICEF and beyond?

The GIC has played an instrumental role in documenting processes, learnings and practices throughout the lifespan of U-Report, storing these on a Google drive accessible to interested COs and UNICEF partners. COs interviewed identified that this documentation has been an important tool as they decide to launch and scale U-Report, with many of them mentioning their regular use of these resources.

37. When will it become clear that this innovation has been a ‘success’?

U-Report can be considered a success based on the Theory of Change for Innovation at UNICEF. In this Theory of Change, ‘impact’ is described as the “use of new technologies to more effectively and efficiently serve children, especially the most disadvantaged.” U-Report has been adopted as a tool for not only UNICEF, but governments and partner organizations to more effectively and efficiently serve children through understanding their perspectives and informing decision-making in a way that creates positive outcomes for youth. The innovation continues to work towards engaging the most disadvantaged, and has demonstrated its ability to reach marginalized populations, albeit to a lesser extent than those with economic and social means.

Moreover, U-Report has reached scale (50 active countries; 6 million young people) and is providing a unique service to youth, while observing all of the Principles for Digital Development.

38. What does the ideal future state of this innovation ‘at scale’ look like?

The ideal future state of this innovation has not yet been identified by the innovation team.
Insights: Based off informant interviews, ‘at scale’ would involve the following characteristics:

- Adopted by every CO
- Being leveraged as a tool to engage 28 million youth globally by 2020
- Strategic integration of U-Report as a tool for humanitarian and development programming, including its use as a tool to prioritize, design, implement and monitor UNICEF programmes
- Continued use of U-Report data to inform decision-making of government and partners globally; and
- Data used to provide insight into ways that programming can create positive changes for youth.

Scale has not been defined by each CO. Therefore, measuring the total number of U-Reporters globally may not be representative of reach, as it may be such that ‘scale’ has only been achieved in a few countries. For example, with UNICEF’s ambitious target to scale, but with the focus on 13 countries, U-Report is at risk of only scaling in select countries. For example, setting targets at each CO based on the total per cent of youth may be a more useful target to truly understand the scale of U-Report.

39. How has this innovation considered and demonstrated development outcome/impact objectives? To what extent does the innovation contribute (or have the potential to contribute) to equitable results for children?

The Theory of Change for U-Report identifies the anticipated impacts as the following: 25, 26

- Impact 4.1: Behaviour change among users
- Impact 4.2: Use of U-Reporter data and opinions to inform policy and programmes
- Impact 4.3: Business case for the private sector.

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning global strategy was created and piloted in 2017 and is now being expanded to all COs using U-Report. Exhaustive data have not yet been collected against the impact and outcome indicators (see above) globally; however, anecdotal data have been collected through interviews, including stories providing illustrative examples. The Ukraine rapid appraisal that was conducted to create a benchmark before rolling out the full M&E plan suggests that U-Report is achieving many of the above indicators.

For example, several government, civil society and United Nations agencies during the Ukraine country mission highlighted their use of the U-Report data and their influence on their decision-making and programming, contributing to the achievement of Impact Objective 4.2. Several illustrative examples, including the global poll on bullying, as well as polls on sexual health and education, highlight that U-Report is a trusted channel that has been used to speak out and share sensitive information often not discussed openly or on other platforms. This contributes to the achievement of Outcome Indicator 3.3: Engaged users are more empowered to voice opinions. Finally, interviews with several COs have confirmed that a breadth of external stakeholders, including policymakers and civil society leaders, are engaged and interested in the U-Report data. Many have cited that it is an important channel, if not the only channel, for gathering insights to youth opinions, contributing to the achievement of Outcome Indicator 3.4 User opinions and data are shared with key influencers and decision makers.

The Theory of Change highlights the value and business case U-Report aims to create for the private sector. Little data have been collected on this thus far; however, a recent demonstration by Viber to conduct a massive, first-ever promotional campaign for the West Balkan subregion which enabled the CO to send an outreach message to all Viber users,


shows that U-Report being used on other platforms is a detriment to Viber’s business.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

U-Report is a powerful tool that allows UNICEF to directly achieve its strategic priorities, mission and mandate, demonstrating measurable outcomes for UNICEF programming and youth beneficiaries. Through U-Report, UNICEF is systematically, efficiently and effectively gaining an understanding of the challenges facing youth across a large number of priority sectors, including health, education, WASH, child protection and emergency response, to inform, influence and shape UNICEF’s programmatic design and deployment. The GIC has played an instrumental role in the scale-up of U-Report, particularly through its organizational leadership in product development and management, partnerships development, support to COs and facilitation of South-to-South collaboration. The GIC’s role will continue to be instrumental in ensuring a common roadmap for U-Report, to continue to work alongside partners to share ownership and to identify new ways to create value for young people across the globe.

Moving forward, UNICEF has the opportunity to continue to enhance and transform U-Report as an even stronger tool for youth engagement and to create new features that drive value for young people, the United Nations and U-Report partners. Through increasing investments into the tool and its supporting functions, including the U-Report team apart of the GIC as the global support function, analysis of U-Report data can be intensified to better understand correlations in poll responses to generate a deeper understanding of U-Reporter and youth profiles. By consolidating poll results and through using a unique identifier to understand patterns in poll responses from each U-Reporter, U-Report data can be analysed to more deeply understand the context and challenges facing youth, resulting in more effective programming. Statistical analyses, predictive analytics and other methodologies and approaches leveraged in data science should be explored to understand the potential value and use cases for their application with U-Report data.

Alongside this, through building a community for U-Reporters through enhancing the functionality and use of the U-Report application, UNICEF can increase the value provided to users and expand the breadth of data being collected by U-Report to inform the United Nations and its partners’ youth interventions. For example, U-Report can begin to augment, complement and fill the gaps identified in local education sectors, by providing access to open source resources through the U-Report App as it transitions from a communication channel to that of a resource hub for young people globally. Through global partnerships, and leveraging and building upon the growing trend toward accessible and free online curriculums, including of top-tier educational institutions, such as MIT, UNICEF can create access to these important resources for youth.

In addition, the GIC could consider further investigating ways to engage with the private sector to contribute to the sustainability of U-Report. Through developing a broader private sector strategy and guidelines for COs to enable private sector partnerships, there is opportunity to create solutions to and inform issues facing youth, while creating value for the private sector. This may include engaging private sector partners to endorse polls, and creating employment or internship opportunities through running contests for U-Reporters. In a similar way, the GIC could explore the demand and business model for a non-profit, social enterprise or in-house team with strong data analytic service offerings, grounded in the data science practice that could mine U-Report data for market research insights on youth populations. This approach may enable U-Report to become self-sufficient in the long-term through identifying insights for private sector organizations on consumer
behaviours and preferences, while keeping U-Reporters anonymous.

As a tested and proven innovation, it should be encouraged that U-Report be adopted across all COs with new performance measurement targets associated with U-Report introduced for Representatives. To support this mandate globally, UNICEF should look to support the GIC’s role in providing global oversight, product management and continual product development through increased resources.

### Table 1. Practical considerations for U-Report going forward

The following section includes a series of considerations for UNICEF to enable the continued scale-up of U-Report across the organization as a preferred and widely-adopted tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consideration</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explore and leverage the full-breadth of data collected through U-Report</strong></td>
<td>The GIC has launched several data initiatives that will consolidate and draw insights from U-Report data. These initiatives include analysing more than 17.8 million individual messages that have been sent on primary health care in order to generate statistically accurate findings that can inform UNICEF’s go-forward strategy. Further, ICT and the GIC are collaborating to identify software that will visualize U-Report monitoring and evaluation data, with four COs volunteering to begin working with the selected platform. To build on these initiatives, UNICEF should look to further draw insights from U-Report data, specifically correlations in poll responses, to generate a deeper understanding of U-Reporter and youth profiles. By consolidating poll results and using a unique identifier to understand patterns in poll responses from each U-Reporter, U-Report data can be analysed to more deeply understand the context and challenges facing youth, and create programming, or inform the selection of UPartners that can support youth to address challenging issues. As a simple illustrative example using polls run in Ukraine, UNICEF could look to identify correlations between U-Reporters who responded ‘yes’ to being bullied at school during one poll, to those who responded ‘yes’ to desiring to migrate outside of the country. These data would help to provide insight into underlying motivations for moving abroad. Similarly, by understanding if U-Reporters responding ‘yes’ to being bullied also responded ‘yes’ to having migrated into the country as a refugee, UNICEF could identify underlying causes for bullying in the country, including anti-immigration sentiments, which could be addressed through UNICEF-led education campaigns in schools. Statistical analyses, predictive analytics and other methodologies and approaches leveraged in data science should be explored to understand the potential value and use cases for their application with U-Report data.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct a deep-dive study to inform a business case for partnerships with MNOs</strong></td>
<td>To inform the Theory of Change and create a business case for partnerships with MNOs globally, the GIC should consider conducting a deep-dive study across selected countries with established U-Report networks to understand indirect commercial benefits, including spillover, increased ARPU, churn, acquisition for MNOs, brand value and user satisfaction. While conducting this study, UNICEF could also look to gather general feedback from users regarding U-Report to inform U-Report’s global development strategy.</td>
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The GIC could consider further investigating ways to engage with the private sector for better sustainability of the U-Report. Through developing a broader private sector strategy and guidelines for COs to enable private sector partnerships, including illustrative examples, there is opportunity to create solutions to and inform issues facing youth, while creating value for the private sector. Examples of private sector engagement opportunities may include:

- Engaging private sector partners to endorse polls, such as those related to lifestyle choices, eating habits, preferences and perspectives and sports and athletics, which would provide important insights for private sector organizations and would also engage youth through relevant subject matter. All polls would be required to undergo the standard review process (e.g., review by the steering committee and youth council). Local private sector organizations would likely have a stronger interest, as it will be challenging to identify global partners with a focus on emerging markets. Therefore, the GIC, working alongside UNICEF’s Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division, can provide guidelines for engaging the private sector, as well as a ‘rapid evaluation toolkit’ to enable COs to provide an initial screen of companies to ensure they are qualified from a reputational and children’s rights perspective to work with UNICEF. Illustrative examples of this include the need for a food retailer or global food business, particularly one associated with supporting healthy eating habits to understand eating habits and preferences of youth as they enter into a new market; or a local banking institution to understand how and why youth save. Some examples of this exist already, including the engagement of Barclays in Uganda; however, this could be further explored or replicated when successful.

- Create employment or internship opportunities through running contests for U-Reporters. For example, for organizations looking for politically active youth, those passionate about certain topics, or those with strong social media skillsets, U-Report could connect youth with opportunities. The UPartners application could also be used to enable youth to communicate with for-profit companies that may be looking to expand in a country in order to inform youth on the in-demand skills required by the organization. UNICEF may also look to expand the private sector engagement programme piloted in Kosovo in partnership with UNDP, focused on engaging women and addressing gender-based barriers in employment and career growth.

- Explore the demand and business model for a non-profit, social enterprise or in-house team with strong data analysis service offerings, grounded in the data science practice that could mine U-Report data for market research insights on youth populations. Through deeper analysis enabled through the application of data science analytical techniques, as discussed above, UNICEF and partners could identify insights that enable U-Reporters to remain anonymous, but also create important information for private sector organizations around consumer behaviours and preferences. The enterprise could serve for-profit, public sector or non-profit companies, through a fee-for-service model which would augment the core funding for U-Report provided by UNICEF, contributing to the overall sustainability of the tool. Data that are analysed will have already been collected through polls. The model will adhere to strict ethical guidelines, provided by the GIC, on continued anonymity of user data and responses.

As building a community for U-Reporters is an important component to keep young people engaged on social messaging platforms, UNICEF should consider further developing the U-Report application features, offering youth useful resources that can enhance their livelihoods while also providing them...
with a positive community where they can engage with like-minded individuals. For example, as U-Report will be used as a tool to underpin Generation Unlimited, it has already been highlighted that the tool can play an important role in the area of education, through gathering data and knowledge on what is happening in the local education sector which informs government ministries and enables them to make decisions based on this input. Further to this, U-Report can begin to augment, complement and fill the gaps identified in the education sector, by providing access to open source resources through the U-Report App as it transitions from a communication channel to that of a resource hub for young people globally. Through global partnerships, and leveraging and building upon the growing trend toward accessible and free online curriculums, including of top-tier educational institutions, such as MIT, UNICEF can create access to these important resources to youth, especially young girls who can often be kept out of school or marginalized. This can mitigate against restricted access to important educational opportunities and a lack of social and economic opportunities as an adult.

Further to U-Report’s role in augmenting access to education, U-Report will underpin the Generation Unlimited objective to develop the skills of young people and enable access to training. U-Report can build upon this by offering opportunities for skills development directly through the U-Report application itself through gamification of digital skills development training programmes. For example, as digital skills such as coding and data analytics grow in demand, the U-Report application could offer user-friendly gamified learning programmes through a learning portal available on the App’s resource hub that would allow young people to develop in-demand skills in a fun, youth-friendly way. Open-source games can be leveraged, or UNICEF can look to partner with leading academic institutions to develop the needed resources. Educational and skills-development games can be designed by levels from basic literacy and numeracy skills to in-depth skills development in analytics, programming and engineering. Through working in partnerships with national governments, the App could be leveraged to fill gaps in existing educational programming, as needed.

The resource portal could also act as an incentive to encourage young people to respond to polls and share their opinions. For example, access to the educational resources would be made available to youth who actively respond to polls (e.g., with a 40 per cent response rate). Additional benefits from the resource hub will result as use of the resource hub by U-Reporters will lead to the creation of important data points for UNICEF, governments and civil society organizations. Such benefits could include: identifying knowledge gaps among youth (e.g., what educational concepts youth most struggle to understand); providing insight into the landscape of available skillsets in a country, to inform government policy and education reform, pinpointing where governments should focus future programming to upskill youth and where skill gaps will exist to inform immigration policies; and serving as an input towards employment matching services, where youth who have demonstrated top skills could be identified for career opportunities with the private or public sector. This could be offered as a paid or free service for the private sector, potentially leading to additional revenue streams to support R&D of the resource hub and would be an ‘opt-in’ option for youth, to ensure young people remain anonymous, if desired.

| Incentivize COs to pilot new strategies for engaging girls and marginalized populations |
| The GIC could look to capitalize a small U-Report outreach program innovation fund that would be used to provide seed funding for innovative ways to reach marginalized populations, such as girls in rural communities. The GIC would provide advisory support and document lessons learned and successful methods to reach these populations, disseminating learnings across all U-Report COs. For example, COs may design a programme that creates community U-Report representatives in rural regions or schools that |
have access to a phone or create weekly youth group meetings that let youth vote together to submit polls as a group when access to a mobile device is a constraint.

Several interviews with stakeholders identified challenges with U-Report coordinators sitting within a specific program vertical as it limits the ability of the Coordinator to engage with other program verticals and/or limits the ability of the tool to be used across the entire organization in a meaningful way, and instead heavily weights its use towards a specific programmatic focus. Therefore, the GIC could provide guidance to standardize the CO structure for the adoption of U-Report, and encourage COs to hire a U-Report Coordinator who holds the authority required to make decisions and lead U-Report effectively with partners and internally (e.g., reporting to Deputy Representative); sits in a cross-cutting position; and is hired as a full-time employee, rather than a consultant to ensure that the right incentives are in place and U-Report is set up for success and longevity.

Further to this, U-Report, for its proven value and ability to generate outcomes aligned with UNICEF’s mandate, should be included in annual planning cycles for all COs that have adopted the tool. Those COs that have not adopted U-Report, should see messaging from leadership and relevant performance measurement targets to encourage and accelerate adoption. To support this mandate globally, UNICEF should support the GIC’s role in providing oversight, product management, and continual product development through adequate funds.

**Table 2. Innovation at UNICEF**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encourage that U-Report be positioned structurally as a cross-cutting position, empowered to work hand-in-hand with program verticals and integrated into annual planning cycles for all COs</th>
<th>Continue to leverage successful models that were used to support the scale-up of U-Report</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The GIC played an instrumental role in the scale-up of U-Report, particularly through its organizational leadership in product development and management, partnerships development (including generating partnerships that have enabled access to new digital channels), support to COs towards the launch, scale-up and dissemination of learnings and facilitation of South-to-South collaboration, and the GIC’s ability to take on risk to experiment and invest in innovative product enhancements that will further U-Report’s capability to positively create change for youth. The GIC’s role will continue to be instrumental in ensuring a common road map for U-Report globally and to work alongside partners to share ownership. UNICEF should look to replicate this model and leverage the GIC’s positioning within the organization to continue to support future emerging technologies, specifically those that require a consistent product brand and management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The GIC has played an important role in documenting successful use cases of innovations, sharing these with COs to encourage and enable the replication of success. There has been, however, limited documentation of failures in detail, which risks losing the insights and contextualizing the lessons learned generated from these failures. To encourage risk-taking by COs through removing the shame associated with failure and to further document important learnings that will inform the go-forward strategy for the organization, UNICEF is encouraged to document and share failures with humility internally, highlighting these on calls and to be made available on internal repositories. The GIC has documented some failures, making the learnings public. This is a good practice to build on and will help to enable an environment where risk-taking is encouraged and failure is accepted across the organization, including leadership, as a stepping stone towards innovation. Further, as identified in the Findings section, due to the regular United Nations practice of using contract-based employees, employees are not incentivized to take the needed risks to innovate. As seen through this</td>
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Document failures to capture lessons learned and demonstrate an organizational appetite for risk-taking
analysis of U-Report, U-Report coordinators are not empowered to work with the necessary seniority levels internally and with partners and government counterparts, and are not enabled to explore and try new things with U-Report implementation due to the risk of contract termination. To enable risk taking and encourage more innovative practices, employees should be rewarded with full-time permanent positions once they have proven their capabilities through an initial short-term contract.
ANNEX A: METHODOLOGY

Case study objectives

UNICEF views innovation as a strategy to tackle complex challenges faced by children around the world. For this reason, UNICEF identifies, tests and uses innovations to accelerate results that reduce inequities for children and to foster high-quality evidence for decision-making, learning and accountability.

UNICEF engaged Deloitte LLP to conduct case studies to examine innovation across the spectrum of innovation types, country contexts, and internal (UNICEF) and external (partner) actors. Cases are descriptive and explanatory, identifying how the innovation process has played out in specific instances and surfacing key issues, lessons, challenges and successes. During scoping and development of the Terms of Reference for this evaluation, the UNICEF Evaluation Office selected cases through a multi-step approach. The primary focus of this case is to understand the process of innovation for U-Report.

Evaluation framework

Evaluation questions were structured around a modified version of the Doblin (Deloitte) Framework for Innovation. According to this framework, innovation is seen through four dimensions – approach, organization, resources and capabilities, and metrics and incentives. The four dimensions highlight the elements that must be considered in order to enable successful innovation. They are complementary to UNICEF’s Design Principles, which are intended to guide the innovation process for all innovation work at the organization.

Data collection approach

Deloitte employed a mixed methods approach to build a complete picture of the innovation process and identify findings related to the four thematic dimensions from the evaluation framework. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through desktop review, case study informant interviews, and observations of U-Report in action. Data were then reviewed and summarized, and key findings were mapped against the evaluation framework questions. Findings for each question were then triangulated for validation and testing. Any gaps or contradictory findings were clarified through follow-up conversations with case owners or key stakeholders.

- **Primary and secondary sources.** Conducted review of country specific (Ukraine) and global documentation, including RapidPro technical documentation, U-Report deployment materials, presentations and case studies, along with business case and project narratives provided by UNICEF headquarters. The evaluation team conducted a review of external documentation available that has been published on the U-Report website, including a review of <https://ureport.in/>.

- **Interviews.** Conducted semi-structured interviews, guided by interview protocols, with Ukraine CO, GIC U-Report focal points, PD team members using U-Report, Technology for Development (T4D) Specialists and Regional Office (RO) Business Analysts, other UNICEF COs and relevant external stakeholders, including Ukrainian governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and youth.

- **Observations.** Field visit to Ukraine to meet with key UNICEF stakeholders and observe the use of U-Report and U-Report processes.
Description of field visit activities

A field visit to Ukraine was conducted as a part of this evaluation to gain an understanding of U-Report’s application at the CO and with UNICEF partners. Scheduling of the visit was carried out in coordination and with the assistance of the CO, based on guidance documents reviewed by the evaluation team. Key activities conducted in Ukraine included:

- Interviews with internal UNICEF CO U-Report stakeholders, including those from the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Health, Education and Child Protection programmes; and
- Interviews with external in-country U-Report stakeholders, including a visit to government, implementing and non-governmental youth-related partners.

Limitations of this case study

- **This case does not evaluate the technology itself through a review of comparable technology capabilities or total cost of ownership methodologies.** Rather, the case is intended to review and evaluate the approach that UNICEF took towards growing and scaling the innovation, as well as the organization’s application of the design principles.

- **This case does not systematically assess the impacts or outcomes of innovation.** The case has captured perspectives on potential outcomes and impacts of innovations, when appropriate and feasible. However, given the scope of engagement and rapid approach to conducting these cases, the evaluation does not make objective conclusions on outcomes or impacts related to this case.

- **A single case is not representative of the total population of innovations at UNICEF.** The sampling methodology for selection of cases (including the number, type, and field visit locations) is not randomized and, due to the highly qualitative and contextual nature of case studies, findings from this case are not generalizable to innovation at UNICEF as a whole. In addition, as U-Report has been adopted and employed in more than 50 countries, this case study is not able to capture the full account of the innovation across all applications, but rather seeks to understand a variety of perspectives across stakeholders and country contexts to provide a picture of U-Report’s innovation journey at UNICEF.

- **Due to the nature of innovation, it is expected that some innovations will continue to evolve during case study implementation.** This case presents a reconstruction of the innovation process up to July 2018. Future activities and priorities shared by stakeholders will be captured, but cases will not strive to make forward-looking statements or conclusions.
# ANNEX B: ARIDA STAKEHOLDERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Powell</td>
<td>Global Coordinator</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanya Accone</td>
<td>Senior Adviser on Innovation</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucha Sotomayor</td>
<td>Global Associate Coordinator</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben-Albert Smith</td>
<td>U-Report Coordinator, South Africa</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hira Hafeez-Ur-Rehman</td>
<td>Global Associate Coordinator</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky Maskell</td>
<td>LACRO C4D</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cary McCormick</td>
<td>ICT ROSA</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barlet Gojani</td>
<td>U-Report Coordinator, West Balkans</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Kasedde</td>
<td>U-Report Coordinator, Belize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Rivero</td>
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<td>Carol Muhwezi</td>
<td>U-Report Coordinator, Nigeria</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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<td>Norman Muhwezi</td>
<td>U-Report Coordinator, Cote D'Ivoire</td>
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<td>World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Sukhodolska</td>
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<td>Serhiy Prokhorov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Postivolova</td>
<td>U-Report coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Herts</td>
<td>Youth Engagement and Partnership Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nina Ferencic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alina Tsykalo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viktoriai Lupan</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oleksandr Yarema</td>
<td>Deputy Minister</td>
<td>Ministry of Youth and Sports</td>
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<td>Mariya Karchevych</td>
<td>Program support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olga Balakirieva</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>UISR</td>
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<td>Tetiana Bondar</td>
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<td>Svitozar Nitspol</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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<td>Tetiana Bakun</td>
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<td>Mobile phone operators</td>
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<td>Natalia Koshovska</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olena Remen</td>
<td>Steering Committee Representative</td>
<td>Office of Ombudsman for Children</td>
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<td>Volodymyr Vovk</td>
<td>Steering Committee Representative</td>
<td>Office of Ombudsman of Parliament for Human Rights</td>
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<td>Olena Ursu</td>
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<td>Victoria Pagano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andriy Kolobov</td>
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<td>Yelyzaveta Blinova</td>
<td>UNICEF Point of Contact</td>
<td>IOM</td>
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<td>Alyona Kryvuliak</td>
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<td>Yana Panfilova</td>
<td>UNICEF Point of Contact</td>
<td>Teenergerizer, local NGO</td>
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<td>Liza Fedorovska</td>
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<td>UN Youth Advisory Panel in Ukraine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oleksandr Tkachynskyi</td>
<td>UNICEF Point of Contact</td>
<td>NGO “Foundation of Regional Initiatives”</td>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shane O’Connor</td>
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<td>Jessie</td>
<td>WASH Adviser, Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryam</td>
<td>Social protection, Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musa</td>
<td>U-Report Coordinator, Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>Steering Committee Member</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie Hartono Lie</td>
<td>U-Report Manager, Malawi</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex C: List of Documents Consulted

Documents provided to the evaluation team by UNICEF

- U-Report Key Principles
- 180321 UREPORT Strategy_Draft
- U-Report Strategy (PPT)
- Concept Note Guideline
- Set up Process
- Roles & Responsibilities V2
- UNICEF Strategic Plan and Results Framework
- UNICEF U-report - DI Dec 1 2017
- Cash Transfer Survey Report FINAL low res
- OI ICT_RapidPro Ecosystem Presentation_Amman_May2017
- Qualitative Assessment report FINAL low res
- Civic Tech in the Global South
- Zambia UNICEF U-Report SMS pilot MR260813 (Case study)
- Revolutionizing HIV_Response_Among_Adolescents_and_Young_People_in_Zambia-March2014 (Case study)
- UNGA-Protection Children from Bullying (Case study)
- U-Report Nigeria (Case study)

Ukraine documents

- U-Report Basic Coms Plan.docx
- U-report Communication_Strategy 2017 02.03 revised.doc
- 02_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 2_18_L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 03_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report.doc
- 3_18_L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 04_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 05-06_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 07_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 08_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 09_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 10_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- 11_17_U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report
- U-Report Consultants Report December
- U-Report Consultants Report November
- U-Report Consultants Report October
- U-Report Consultants Report September
- U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report February
- U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report April-May
- U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report June
- U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report March
- U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report November-December
- U-Report L_Lyu Consultant Report September-October
- M+E_Report_U-Report Ukraine_ Q4_2017_OCT-DEC_comments_AT_7thMarch
- Agenda mission from GIC_LLyu v1
- Agenda_Lucha_LLyu 23_11_fin JP
- Agenda_Lucha+Ilaria_30.11
- Example TOR Safe Schools 20160801 revised1
- ToR mission GIC
• ToR mission GIC_Osa
• ToR mission GIC_upd16_10
• TOR 2017_Youth Engagement + Partnership Consultant
• TOR 2017_Youth_Projects Coordinator
• ToR-UR-consultancy vacancy
• Brand Deployment Form_U-Report_3.0
• Concept Note Ukraine 2017_final
• UNICEF Monitoring Toolkit case study UReport Ukraine 092017
• Survey on Migration and HT in Ukraine
• UReport Concept Note-Ukraine-Aug 2015
• U-Report Ukraine Results; Timeline: February 2015-November 2016
• Youth Engagement plan 2018

**Indonesia documents**

• 180321_U-Report Strategy_DRAFT
• U-Report Strategy.PPT

**West Balkan documents**

• U-Report Standard Operating Procedures
• U-Strategy Kosovo
• U-Report Digital Campaign

**Malawi documents**

• Press Release: 9 out of 10 U-Reporters know how to prevent cholera
• U-Report WASH Cholera Polling

**Sierra Leone documents**

• Sierra Leone RapidPro Nutrition Response 2017 Final

**Additional documents consulted**

• Steiner, A., ‘Generation Unlimited’, United Nations Development Programme, 2018
• The Economist, ‘Continental Disconnect: Mobile phones are transforming Africa’, *The Economist*, 2016
• United Nations, ‘Youth and the SDGs’, Sustainable Development Goals, 2018