

Media Update

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UNICEF

Press Release

UNICEF launches U-Report: PakAvaz in Pakistan

Islamabad, 4 February 2016 – The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) launched its flagship innovation programme **U-Report: PakAvaz** in Pakistan, here today. The programme is an innovative mobile-based social monitoring tool designed for young people and communities to further strengthen the process of community development by acquiring direct feedback on social issues.

“UNICEF strongly believes that innovation is vital to ensure the wellbeing of the world’s children and adolescents,” said Cris Munduate, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Pakistan. “UNICEF has made significant progress in developing and implementing a Short Messaging Service (SMS) based communication platform to collect data and raise awareness on key social issues.”

Ms. Munduate further said, “As a result of this initiative, nearly two million people in the world have already joined hands to become agents of social change in their communities through the U-Report messaging system. We firmly believe that U-Report: PakAvaz can become a very strong platform for young people in Pakistan to express their opinion on social issues and bring about a positive change in improving the standards of service delivery to the communities.”

U-Report: PakAvaz is now live in Pakistan with over 6000 young people registered on the network. It works by allowing citizens to respond to polls asking for their opinion and feedback on a variety of social and governance issues through free text messages.



The growing ubiquity of mobile phones in the developing world is unlocking tremendous opportunities to amplify voices of young people via information and communication technologies. UNICEF believes that mobile phones can empower local communities to participate in policy-making, governance and access to information on key social issues. This global initiative is called U-Report and as of October 2015 it has nearly two million active users in over 19 countries globally.

In Pakistan, UNICEF is working with its partners including Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, Mobilink, Telenor, Ufone, Warid, Zong and the School of Leadership which is implementing the programme at the field level to create a network of U-Reporters in Pakistan. The platform relies on volunteer community members, mostly young people - primarily between the ages of 10-29 years serving as U-Reporters. Members join the programme by sending a free SMS “join” to a short-code 8623 or U-Report twitter handle @PakAvaz. Various nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), youth-led networks, educational institutions, media and young people are also supporting the programme.

Weekly SMS messages and polls are sent out to the community of U-reporters, who respond to the polls and exchange views on a wide range of subjects. The data is mapped and analysed in real-time, to each district/union council and compiled on a national level giving government and development partners an insight into the needs of their citizens. The results are then shared on a public website www.ureport.pk and are explored further with additional questions and responses continuing the dialogue.

For more information about UReport: PakAvaz visit: www.ureport.pk

About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: www.unicef.org

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For further information, please contact:

A. Sami Malik, UNICEF Pakistan, Phone: 0300 8556654, Email: asmalik@unicef.org

