
15 May 2014

Dear Friends,

This week, we're sharing some of our recent research around mobile data collection. If you have experience using mobile M&E technology we'd like to hear from you! We are interested in hearing successes and challenges in using mobile technology in the field.

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

(Resource) Results from Firelight's Mobile Technology Survey

(Resource) Mobile Technology for M&E

(Call for Proposals) Europe Aid for Countering Harmful Practices that Legitimate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania

(Resource) Results from Firelight's Mobile Technology Survey

Firelight recently conducted a survey with our partners in Malawi, Zambia, and Tanzania to assess their use of mobile technology in their work. Here are some highlights from the results:

- All respondents use laptop computers and mobile phones on a fairly regular basis with fewer having access to smart phones and only one using a tablet. The majority of personal cell phones being used were various types of Nokia and Samsung feature phones, which have access to basic internet functions such as checking email and downloading simple forms.
- 85% of respondents experience occasional to frequent electricity outages, which means that data being stored on a dedicated server (not in the cloud) may be interrupted during the transfer process. Additionally, this limits the ability of staff and beneficiaries to charge their devices. Cellular service interruptions are less frequent than power outages, but occur often enough that any type of data transfer via cellular networks would need to take this into account.
- Partner and Beneficiary use of mobile phones indicates that while mobile devices are used primarily for making phone calls and texting, many users are also making mobile payments, taking photos, and using basic internet functions on their devices as well.
- Data collection activities are being conducted on either a weekly or a monthly basis for

77% of field partners, using a diverse range of methods. Partners have experience collecting data via surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation, and community mapping among other methods.

- The general consensus was that using mobile technology for data collection would reduce the amount of staff time spent going to the field to collect data as well as in digitization and organization of data once back at the office.

See pages 6-8 for the full report.

(Resource) Mobile Technology for M&E

A Firelight intern recently completed a guide to using Mobile Technology for M&E. The full guide is attached, here are some highlights:

The WHYs of Mobile Data Collection

The first question that should be asked when considering adopting mobile technology for data collection is Why? There are several dimensions of this question that each organization should ask itself before adopting any new tool or data collection methodologies. These questions should be raised while designing any monitoring and evaluation framework and especially when considering adding mobile technology into the mix. It is important to consider the following:

Why adopt ICTs for Monitoring and Evaluation at all?

Is mobile technology is right for this M&E framework, why or why not?

Why are you using ICTs in M&E?

Where is the drive for mobile data collection coming from, and why?

Why ICTs - could you innovate or strengthen existing methods/processes?

Why are you collecting this specific data and what will you do with it?

The WHOs of Mobile Data Collection

At this point you are clear on why you want to integrate mobile data collection into your M&E frameworks. Now you need to consider both who will be doing the data collection as well as who will be impacted by it. Who are the stakeholders?

Who will be affected and how?

Who will use the data?

From whom are you collecting data?

Who is collecting the data?

The WHEREs of Mobile Data Collection

Once you are clear on why you are adopting mobile technology for your M&E framework as well as which stakeholders will be affected and how, you have to consider the location where the mobile technology will be implemented. The specific geographical context as well as ICT limitations will ultimately affect which tools you are able to adopt and which will best meet your needs.

*What are the connectivity and power issues in your field locations?
To what extent should you adopt mobile technology for your specific context?*

The WHATs of Mobile Data Collection

At this point it is time to start asking more specific questions about the types of data you will be collecting, as well as the context in which you will be using this new mobile technology. In addition you will begin to think about existing capacities that can be strengthened and to what extent and level will you integrate mobile technology into your frameworks?

What context-specific information do you need to have before making a decision?

What type of data will you be collecting?

What kind of data might you be leaving out?

What existing skills or program should you capitalize on?

What is the most appropriate mobile technology level to support the process?

The HOWs of Mobile Data Collection

Now that you are clear on the reasons for using mobile technology as well as how it will affect your stakeholders and what their intended uses will be, you can consider how you plan to implement these technologies. What strategies will you use to ensure the successful adoption of mobile technology?

How will you ensure that you are meeting ethical and security standards?

How will you test your mobile technology in an M&E context?

How will you clearly present the case for this new technology and make sure you have the adequate staffing capacity to use and maintain it?

How can you make sure that the new framework design is both robust and flexible?

How can you be certain that you have chosen the right tool(s) for the job?

The guide includes a comprehensive review of current mobile technologies available for M&E, with an evaluation of the benefits and challenges of each.

To view or download the guide, visit: <http://bit.ly/1miVDeU> (8.8 MB)

(Call for Proposals) Europe Aid for Countering Harmful Practices that Legitimate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Tanzania

The European Commission invites grant applications in the form of concept notes from eligible entities for the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Country Based Support Scheme (CBSS) Countering Harmful Practices that Legitimate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Tanzania. The major objective of this call is to contribute to the fight against Harmful Practices, notably female genital mutilation, child marriage and killings of elderly people due to witchcraft accusations in Tanzania.

Grant applications can be made in between €150,000 and €150,000 which can be 50% to 90% of the total eligible costs of the action. The initial planned duration of an action must not

be less than 12 months and more than 36 months.

Priorities:

- Promote civil society actions relating to adoption, ratification, and implementation of international human rights commitments, with specific reference to women and children rights
- Promote civil society action towards sensitization and advocacy of women and children rights and the fight against harmful practices
- Promote civil society action towards the implementation of national strategies to combat violence against women and children
- Promote research and data collection on harmful practices as well as collection of good practices to counter them
- Provide support and protection to women and children victims or potential victims of female genital mutilation, child marriage and/or killings due to witchcraft allegations
- Association with administrative authorities at national, regional and local level, academic institutions and local civil society organizations as well as religious authorities

Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicant must be legal person in non-profit making institution.
- Applicant must be specific type of organization – civil society organizations, including non-governmental non-profit organizations and independent political foundations, community-based organizations and private-sector non-profit agencies, institutions and organizations and networks thereof at local, national, regional and international level; public-sector non-profit agencies, institutions and organizations and networks at local, national, regional and international level; national, regional and international parliamentary bodies; and international (inter-governmental) organizations as defined by Article 43 of the Implementing Rules to the EC Financial Regulation.
- Applicant must be established in the United Republic of Tanzania or in a Member State of the European Union or in a Member State of the European Economic Area (EEA) or in an accession or official candidate country as recognized by the EU or of a developing country as specified by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC). This obligation does not apply to international organizations.
- Applicant must be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.
- Applicant must be able to demonstrate to have carried out activities in the field of development as described in this call, proving their capacity to manage activities of a scale corresponding with the size of grant requested.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate a track record of engagement on human rights issues in Tanzania.
- Actions must address two or more priorities stated above.

The deadline to apply is, **6 June, 2014**. For more information, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1g4ENR2>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

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Partner Mobile Technology Capacity

In an attempt to understand the technical capacity and context of Firelight's partner organizations in Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia, 27 organizations were surveyed about their use and opinions of mobile technology; beneficiary use; and information related to data collection methods, capabilities, and context. We received responses from six organizations in Malawi, sixteen in Tanzania, and five in Zambia. From these responses we are able to make limited inferences about mobile technology capacity and ways in which new tools might benefit the Monitoring and Evaluation activities already taking place in these organizations.

What technology and connectivity are available and widely used?

All respondents use laptop computers and mobile phones on a fairly regular basis with fewer having access to smart phones and only one using a tablet. The majority of personal cell phones being used were various types of Nokia and Samsung feature phones, which have access to basic internet functions such as checking email and downloading simple forms.

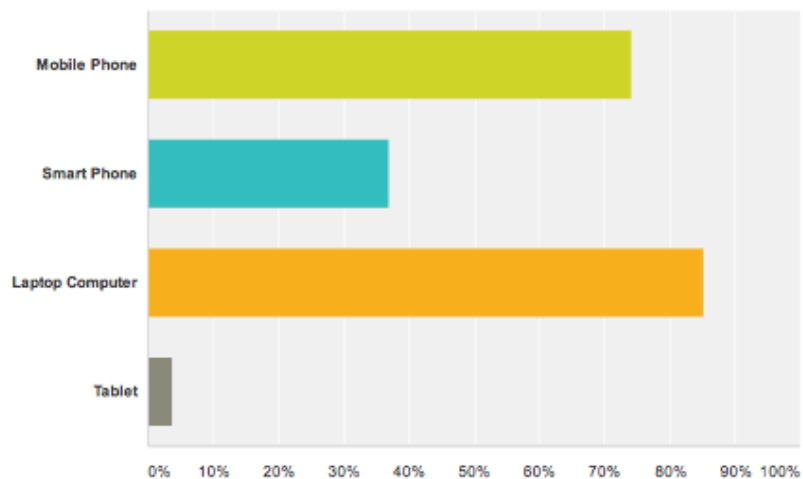
Each country has 1-4 network providers, so in the event that large quantities of SMS messages were to be utilized for data collection, it would be a simple process to get quotes from each company as to costs and reduced rates for bulk SMS purchases.

Cellular 3G connections are most widely available, though in more remote communities there may be very limited services, and smartphones/tablets will probably not be able to send or receive data from the field. Wireless connections are available in many of the offices, but other basic internet connections (LAN and Dial-up) are still widely used. Importantly, **85% of respondents** experience occasional to frequent electricity outages, which means that data being

stored on a dedicated server (not in the cloud) may be interrupted during the transfer process. Additionally, this limits the ability of staff and beneficiaries to charge their devices. Cellular service interruptions are less frequent than power outages, but occur often enough that any type of data transfer via cellular networks would need to take this into account.

Q2 What kinds of mobile technologies do you use on a regular basis?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



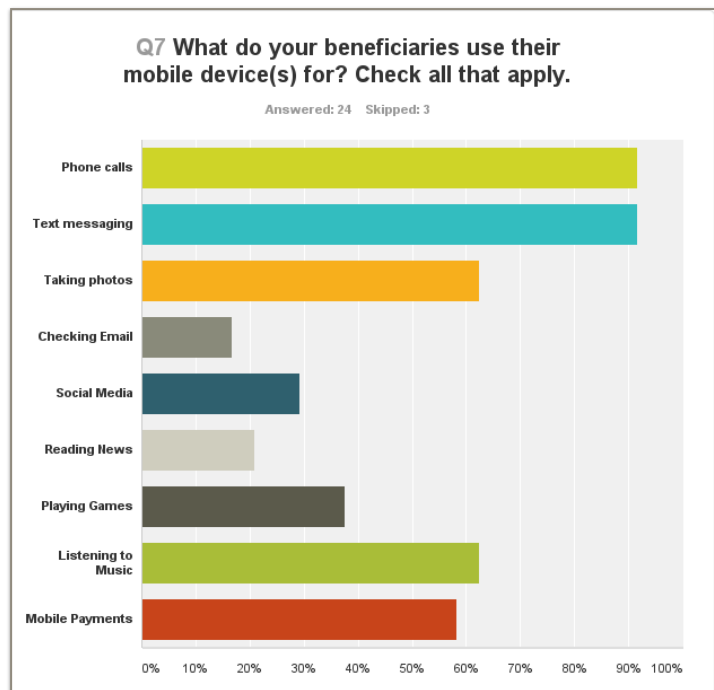
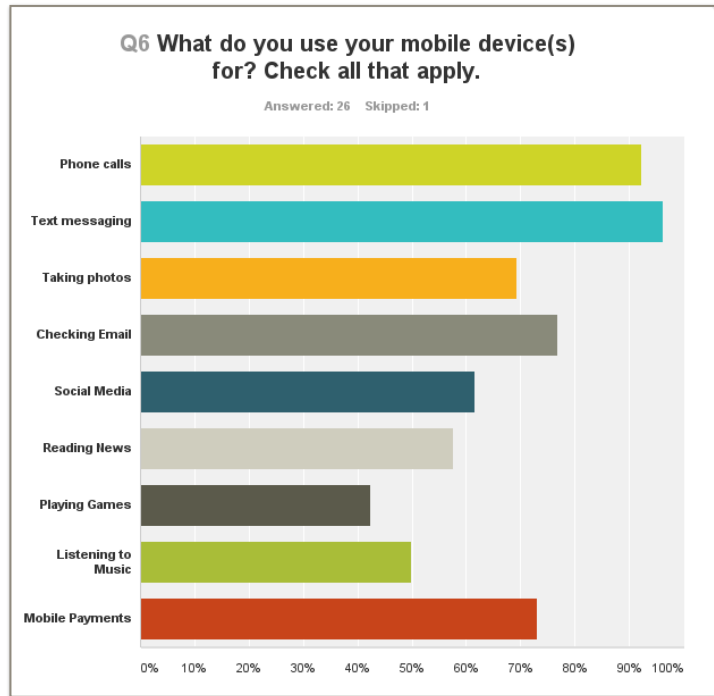
How are Partners and Beneficiaries using their mobile devices?

Information regarding Partner and Beneficiary use of mobile phones indicates that while mobile devices are used primarily for making phone calls and texting, many users are also making mobile payments, taking photos, and using basic internet functions on their devices as well. Respondents did indicate, however, that most beneficiaries and communities primary use for their phones was for texting. Because of this, field staff have found that sending informational texts to beneficiaries regarding meeting times and follow up requests has been very useful and can reduce the amount of effort and time required to make contact and communicate these messages. Texting is also used by staff in the main offices to communicate with staff in the field.

Though some program beneficiaries do not have regular access to mobile phones, there is usually some one in their family or close network of friends who does. Additionally, while illiteracy could inhibit text communications for some beneficiaries, in most cases, a literate friend or family member would likely be available to convey the necessary information to the beneficiary.

Data Collection Capacity and Methods

Data collection activities are being conduct on either a weekly or a monthly basis for 77% of field partners, using a diverse range of methods. Partners have experience collecting data via surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observation, and community mapping among other methods with 53% of partners deploying up to 10 staff members or volunteers in data collection efforts and 27% between 11 and 20. These staff members sometimes have to travel over 130 km in order to collect data, though the average reported distance was around 25 km.



Where is all of this data being stored? Every respondent reported storing data on paper forms in their offices, with 65% also storing data electronically on a computer, though only 46% organized this data in a database.

What do partners want Firelight to know?

Most partners indicated that they would be very interested in using mobile technology to enhance their data collection capacity (in fact, some are already doing so), but expressed that they will need some training on how to use new tools. In addition to adding to their skill set with new technologies, many partners expressed a need for capacity building in monitoring and evaluation practices and methods in general. Several respondents enthusiastically supported the addition of mobile technology to M&E frameworks on the condition that adequate training be provided.

The general consensus was that using mobile technology for data collection would reduce the amount of staff time spent going to the field to collect data as well as in digitization and organization of data once back at the office. They felt that this would reduce costs and improve accuracy and accessibility of data as well, with several respondents noting that current data collection and storage methods were not conducive to accessing data from the past to inform current and future programming (going through paper files and locating the appropriate information would be too time consuming at this point). Beyond creating avenues for simpler and faster access to data, several partners expressed a desire to be able to share data among their network of organizations and feel that mobile tools could help facilitate this process.

Specifically, two respondents indicated that they would like to use mobile technology to aid in tracking of HIV clients' records and sending out health reminders as well as for use in women's micro-finance groups.

Conclusions

There is a clear interest in improving partner M&E capacities, and the vast majority of partners believe that adding some form of mobile data collection methods would improve the quality of data being collected, their ability to access and utilize previously collected data, and the efficiency of future data collection efforts -all with the hope that this will help improve programming. Current limitations to infrastructure and availability of affordable mobile devices, as well as issues related to literacy and beneficiary access, need to be taken into account when considering what types of mobile technology may be appropriate within this context.