KIWANJA.NET
MINDFUL SOCIAL CHANGE

MOBILE DATABASE · REPORT

MHEALTH FOR DEVELOPMENT REPORT

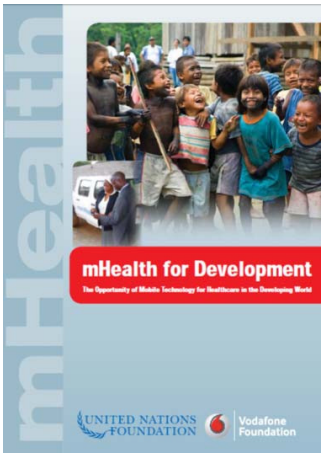
Author / organisation	UN Foundation and Vodafone Foundation
Year recorded	2009
Region	Global
Category	Health
Archive page	kiwanja.net/mobile-database/mhealth-for-development-report/

This document is part of the kiwanja.net Mobile Database, an archive of more than 700 articles, reports and projects on mobile technology for development, collected between 2003 and 2010. It is reproduced here for reference; the original author's rights are retained.

Explore more. Browse the full archive at kiwanja.net/mobile-database.
Looking for support with your own social change work? See kiwanja.net/work-with-me.
Ken Banks offers coaching, mentoring and strategy support.

Fact Sheet

mHEALTH FOR DEVELOPMENT: The Opportunity of Mobile Technology for Healthcare in the Developing World



The United Nations Foundation and Vodafone Foundation Technology Partnership's *mHealth for Development* report is one of the most extensive surveys of the use of mobile technology to advance public health in the developing world, with over 50 examples of projects providing health-related services via mobile technology.

The UN Millennium Development Goals identify clear targets for improving global health, yet in many parts of the world major health challenges coupled with a shortage of healthcare workers continue to present significant obstacles. For example, Sub-Saharan Africa has 11% of world's population and 24% of the global burden of disease, but only 3% of the world's health workers. In areas facing these odds, the explosive growth of mobile communications is paving the way for innovative mHealth solutions to help reach health goals.

mHealth for Development surveys the current landscape of mHealth, including profiles of over 50 mHealth programs across 26 developing countries. mHealth project application areas include:

- Education and awareness
  - **Project Masiluleke (South Africa):** An estimated 25% of South Africans are HIV positive, but only 3% know their status. "Project M" is a text messaging-based service designed to increase the number of South Africans who get tested and receive the country's free antiretroviral treatment. Ninety percent of South Africans have access to a mobile phone.

- Remote data collection
  - **EpiSurveyor (Sub-Saharan Africa):** In many developing countries, a lack of accurate health data is the largest barrier to overcoming health challenges. EpiSurveyor is a free, open source data collection tool for mobile devices being rolled out in over 20 Sub-Saharan African countries to track and contain disease outbreaks, monitor vaccine supply and identify immunization coverage rates.

- Remote monitoring
  - **Phoned Pill Reminders (Thailand)**: Deaths by tuberculosis—a leading cause of preventable mortality in the developing world—is frequently due to a failure of effective drug regimens. In the Chang Mai province in northern Thailand the public health department piloted a mobile phone-based program where patients received reminder calls to take their medication. The three-month program achieved a 90% drug adherence rate.

- Communication and training for healthcare workers
  - **ENACQKT (Caribbean)**: In the Caribbean, nurses often lack basic resources, work remotely, and are isolated from learning centers, making data-sharing challenging. Enhancing Nurses Access for Care Quality and Knowledge through Technology (ENACQKT) empowers nurses by providing remote training and support via PDAs.

- Disease and epidemic outbreak tracking

  FrontlineSMS (Global): FrontlineSMS, a PC-based software application used for sending and receiving group text messages, is used by NGOs in a variety of contexts. It has been used to transmit urgent health data, such as in Africa where it was used in reporting and monitoring avian flu outbreaks.

- Diagnostic and treatment support
  - **M-DOK (Philippines):** To overcome the limited access to medical specialists in remote communities, the M-DOK program uses text messaging to transfer diagnostic and treatment information to specialists in urban areas.

The report also provides a definition for the field of mHealth; outlines the potential for mobile phones to improve health in the developing world; identifies building blocks for successful, sustainable and scalable mHealth programs; demonstrates the incentives for multiple players in the 'mHealth value chain'; and issues a call for action—the creation of an independent global body to encourage multi-sector and pan-regional collaboration to leverage the transformational power of mobile networks and devices to improve healthcare delivery throughout the developing world.

###

For further information, to arrange an interview with a spokesperson from the UN Foundation and Vodafone Foundation Technology Partnership, or spokespersons from organizations profiled in the report, please contact:

In London
Michelle Curley/Philip Sorensen
Four Communications
+44 (0)870 626 9942 / 9084
michelle.curley@fourcommunications.com / Philip.sorensen@fourcommunications.com.

In Barcelona
Adele Waugaman
United Nations Foundation
+ 1 202 758 6943
awaugaman@unfoundation.org

In Washington, D.C.
Ingrid Madden
United Nations Foundation
+ 1 202 887 9040
imadden@unfoundation.org

About the UN Foundation and The Vodafone Foundation Partnership
The UN Foundation-Vodafone Foundation Partnership strives to be the leading public-private alliance using strategic technology programmes to strengthen the UN's humanitarian efforts worldwide. Created in October 2005, with a £10 million commitment from The Vodafone Foundation matched by £5 million from the UN Foundation, the Partnership has three core commitments: (1) to develop rapid response telecoms teams to aid disaster relief; (2) to develop health data systems that improve access to health data thereby helping to combat disease; and (3) to promote research and innovative initiatives using technology as an agent and tool for international development. Further information can be found at: www.unfoundation.org/vodafone.