



EXPANDING HEALTH EDUCATION REACH TO IMPROVE HYGIENE AT MAHAMA CAMP

UNICEF RWANDA'S TALKING BOOK PILOT

PARTNERS: UNICEF Rwanda and the Global Humanitarian Development Foundation

FUNDING: Government of Japan, Paul and Cathy Cotton Family

DURATION: July–December 2017



TALKING BOOKS REACHED **50,000** REFUGEES

Sensitizing Refugees on Hygiene

At Mahama Refugee Camp, UNICEF worked with the Government of Rwanda, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and others to establish health, immunization, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities. But they needed a way to reach and sensitize over 50,000 Burundian refugees on proper hygiene and essential services. Challenges included high population density, language barriers, low literacy rates, and refugees' lack of exposure to modern amenities.

In 2017, UNICEF conducted a six-month Talking Book pilot to help community health workers (CHWs) deliver health education on key family practices, with a focus on hygiene and sanitation. The project was implemented by Global Humanitarian Development Foundation (GHDF).

Using Talking Books to Deliver Messages

To support UNICEF Rwanda's Communication for Development programming at Mahama Camp, GHDF distributed Talking Book audio devices and conducted training for more than 300 CHWs and 25 Early Childhood Development centers.

Talking Book content was recorded in Kirundi, a Bantu language spoken by Burundian refugees, and produced in the form of songs, dramas, and interviews. In addition to hygiene information, messaging included topics such as breastfeeding, birth registration, immunizations, menstrual hygiene, HIV prevention, malaria, and more. Talking Books also included content from *Itetero*, an educational children's radio program produced by UNICEF and Rwanda Broadcasting Agency.



With Talking Books, community health workers at Mahama Camp increased the number of door-to-door visits, reaching

110%
more homes



CHW home visits
before and during pilot

BEFORE PILOT

8,511

WITH TALKING BOOKS

17,869

Expanding Reach With Talking Books

CHWs used Talking Books to deliver health education during door-to-door home visits, group discussions, and community events. Families also listened to Talking Books at Child Welfare Centers. The Talking Book's built-in speaker allows for groups of about 20 to listen and learn together. CHWs also used megaphones to amplify messages for larger audiences.

CHWs also used Talking Books to record community feedback to share with program managers. The combination of usage data and user feedback helped program managers monitor program delivery and see what messages performed well and where updates or improvements were needed.

When the pilot came to a close, GHDF's analysis showed that CHWs with Talking Books reached 2.75 times more men, 2.5 times more women, and 1.5 times more children than through their routine door-to-door efforts. CHWs were able to share consistent, quality health messages more efficiently and effectively during home visits, as well as community events.

Key takeaways from the pilot:

- CHWs reported that Talking Books helped them deliver health messages more efficiently and reliably. They were able to increase the number of home visits by **110%**.
- Recorded community feedback helped inform content updates. For example, messaging instructed people not to share drinking cups. However, user feedback revealed that most households didn't have enough cups to go around.
- Because Talking Books included Itetero songs and stories, children were especially interested in listening. Dramas and interviews kept listeners engaged. Group listening sessions encouraged discussion on hygiene within the communities.
- Overall, community members gave positive reviews of the efficiency of the messaging. Many requested more information about diarrhea prevention and breastfeeding.

An Inclusive Digital Solution

The Amplio Talking Book is a rugged, battery-powered audio device for low-literate adults and youth. Users can select and play messages on demand and record their feedback. A built-in speaker lets families and groups listen and learn together.

