

Improvement of Maternal Health through Media's Innovative Tools Women's Media Centre of Cambodia (WMC)



An automated hotline providing Cambodian women with access to information on maternal health and family planning.

About WMC

The Women Media Centre of Cambodia (WMC) is a Cambodian non-profit media organization, whose mission is to deliver national awareness and information programs on a diverse range of issues affecting contemporary Cambodian women. WMC grew out of the Cambodian Women's Committee for Non Violence and the Election and has been active since 1995.

The Problem

Cambodia has one of the highest maternal mortality rate in Asia. According to the 2010 Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (CDHS), 206 women out of 100,000 Cambodian women die while, or as a result of, giving birth. Although much progress has been achieved in the area of maternal health over the last decade, 59% of women continue to receive less than the recommended four antenatal care visits; 45% of births continue to take place outside of health facilities; 29% of births remain unassisted and 25% of women continue to not be provided with a postnatal checkup. The situation is even worse in rural areas, where 51% of birth still take place at home, and 33% remain unassisted.

The Challenge

Many Cambodians have misconceptions about childbirth. These misconceptions negatively affect their willingness and ability to access adequate health services prior, during and after giving birth. In order to improve maternal health, WMC has been working on a multi-media campaign to better inform Cambodian women of how they should deal with their health while pregnant and after delivery as well as to increase awareness around family planning. With mobile-phone coverage rapidly expanding in Cambodia, including in rural areas, mobile technology was identified as a good complement to WMC's existing message dissemination tools (radio and TV programs, community-based

Technical Profile

- Design Elements**

Family planning awareness
Maternal health
- Call Direction**

Incoming call
- Verboice Features**

Call flow designer
Play recorded audio
Record comments
Menu option/input option

listener clubs). Given the low education levels in rural Cambodia and the fact that many inexpensive phones are not compatible with the Khmer font, however, WMC needed to find an alternative to SMS in order to be able to effectively use mobile as part of its campaign.

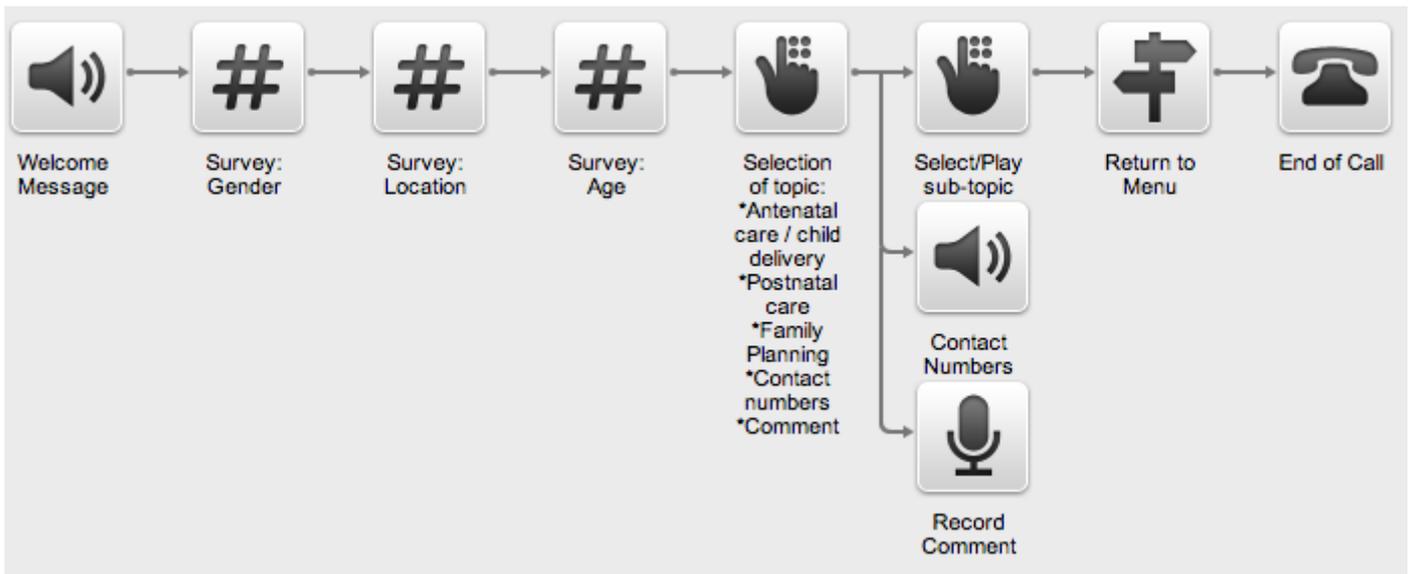
The Solution

WMC turned to the Verboice software to design an automated hotline that counters common misconceptions and relays important information on maternal health and family planning. The Verboice-hotline is accessed by dialling in a number and does not requires any particular reading or technical literacy skills. As it relies on pre-recorded messages and on a user-driven call flow, it is accessible 24/7, and does not require any intensive staff input.

For more on the Women Media Centre of Cambodia, please visit www.wmc.org.kh



“Having a hotline is a great way for us to reach those that can not listen to us on TV or on the radio. It is also more convenient as women do not have to wait for our program - they can just call anytime.”



The Design

When dialing the WMC maternal health hotline, callers are taken through a short set of survey questions.

Having answered these questions, they are provided with a choice of topics which they can navigate using their keypad.

The hotline includes antenatal care related topics such as ‘What not to do during pregnancy’, ‘Signs of Miscarriage’ or ‘Signs of labor’; postnatal care related topics such as ‘abnormal symptoms after giving birth’, ‘Breast feeding’, or ‘compulsory vaccinations’; and topics related to family planning.

Besides these messages, the hotline offers access to key contact informations or provides callers with the possibility to leave a question or comment.

Results

In its first 5 months of existence, WMC’s maternal health hotline received over 5,000 calls. According to the call log included in the Verboice software, the majority of callers listened to at least one of the information segments provided, with the segment related to pregnancy being the highest rated.

Next Steps

Building on its successful experience with the maternal health hotline, WMC is looking at integrating Verboice as a complementary tool within some of its other awareness and information programs.

In particular, the WMC team is exploring the possibility of integrating Verboice within its ongoing Transparency program as well as its upcoming Good Governance program.



Verboice is a free and open-source platform that enables non-programmers to design and run a variety of interactive and automated voice-based applications (hotlines, alerts, reminders, quizzes, surveys, ...). Everything is done through a drag and drop interface which lets users combine Verboice’s several features into a multitude of different applications.

Open source; easy to use; highly customizable and scalable

For more information, please visit www.verboice.com