

# Programming for Peace: Sisi Ni Amani Kenya and the 2013 Elections

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# Programming for Peace: Sisi Ni Amani Kenya and the 2013 Elections

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## **The ICTs, Statebuilding, and Peacebuilding in Eastern Africa Project:**

This occasional paper series is part of a larger project run by the Center for Global Communication Studies (CGCS) at the University of Pennsylvania, conducted in partnership with the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy (PCMLP) at University of Oxford, and funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY). This project seeks to bring greater clarity about the expectations and the realities of the use of communication technologies in developing contexts. In media and development theory, policy, and practice, strong normative statements about the transformative power of ICTs have often clouded the understanding of how people and communities actually make sense of, and engage with, the old and new communication technologies that surround them. Under this framework, this two-year project explores the use of ICTs in Eastern Africa.

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## Executive Summary

In 2007-8, Kenya experienced protracted and widespread post-election violence. Mobile phones—and text messages in particular—were used to spread rumors and organize violence. Sisi ni Amani Kenya (SNA-K), a Kenyan non-governmental organization, utilized a combination of traditional and innovative communication and dialogue approaches in order to increase civic education and engagement, as well as to prevent violence in Kenyan communities before, during, and after Kenya's 2013 General Elections. SNA-K developed SMS-based programming that reached over 65,000 Kenyans with civic education, civic engagement, and violence prevention text messages throughout the 2013 election cycle. This paper analyzes data from qualitative and quantitative surveys distributed to samples from SNA-K's subscriber base. The paper draws insights and lessons learned that can inform future programming seeking to utilize mobile technology and ICT-based communication strategies for civic engagement and violence prevention.

### Key Findings:

**Overall, respondents indicated high levels of satisfaction with SNA-K programming. Specifically:**

- 96% of respondents said they found the civic education messages “useful” or “very useful.” The majority of these respondents cited the utility of the information related to voting and election day as the main reason for their satisfaction. (N=7,347)
- 92% of respondents said that the messages had a positive effect on keeping peace during elections. (N=7,347)
- Everyone who received an SMS about rumors found the messages useful. About 45% of these respondents indicated that the messages convinced them not to believe in the rumors. (N=76)
- More than half of the survey respondents who experienced violence and received an SMS indicated that the messages promoted peace and had a calming effect, and more than 40% of respondents said they felt the messages actively aided in preventing violence. (N=62)
- 45% of respondents said that they forwarded messages to other people often or very often, and 75% of respondents forwarded messages at least once. (N=7,347)
- 98% of respondents from the SMS survey said that they would tell a friend to subscribe to SNA-K. (N=7,347)

The survey reveals that, for the SNA-K programming subscriber base, this simple and accessible tool had a far-reaching impact. These results demonstrate the power of mobile text messaging. When wielded by trusted institutions, such tools could go a long way in reaching out to communities and reassuring them in times of need.

**Note:** The multiple choice and phone surveys referenced in this study were conducted by Sisi ni Amani Kenya (SNA-K). The multiple-choice survey was conducted via SNA-K's SMS platform. SNA-K Partnerships Manager Kevin Sudi, Programs Officer Caleb Njoroge Gichuhi, and independent research consultant Sheline Lugonzo conducted the qualitative phone survey. The results of these surveys were coded by an independent academic researcher, Dr. Seema Shah, and by Sun-Ha Hong, a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania. Shah designed the coding analysis in consultation with Penn.

The analysis and conclusions in this report are written by Seema Shah while the introduction and description of SNA-K's programming are written by SNA-K Founder and former CEO Rachel Brown.



## Introduction

Following Kenya's December 2007 Presidential Elections, the country experienced protracted post-election violence (PEV) that led to the death of over 1,000 individuals and the displacement of hundreds of thousands. The violence was ended with a power-sharing deal – brokered through international mediation by Kofi Annan – which was officially signed on February 28, 2008.

Election-related violence was not new in Kenya, occurring previously during the country's 1992 and 1997 elections; however, the scale and extent of the 2007 violence had never been seen before. In comparison to previous election-related violence, the violence in 2007-8 spread over a larger geographical area, lasted longer in a concentrated manner, and resulted in a greater number of deaths and displaced people.

During the post-election violence, violent actors effectively and strategically used new communication media including cell phones and especially SMS (Short Message Service, or text messages). Such media were employed to spread rumors and inflammatory speech, to encourage revenge, and even to plan attacks and the distribution of weapons.

Academic research has explored the power of SMS during Kenya's 2007-8 PEV. In her research on the role of rumors in the Kibera slum during the PEV, Michelle Osborn writes that: "Where rumours were once local, taking time to percolate outwards and onwards to a broader, national audience, the use of high-tech communication, such as mobile phones, email, internet websites and weblogs, has transformed the pace and range of rumour. Kenya's local rumours now go national in minutes..."<sup>1</sup> She further explains that, "The use of mobile phone Short Message Service (SMS) texts in the circulation of rumours gave them an instantaneous spread, contributing to increased anxiety, sometimes leading to panic, and, on occasion, motivating people to action," indicating the importance of SMS in particular.<sup>2</sup> Goldstein and Rotich also analyze the role that mobile phones played in spreading rumors and in urging

attacks, citing specific examples of messages used to do so.<sup>3</sup>

Using the 2007-8 PEV as a case study, the NGO Sisi Ni Amani Kenya (SNA-K) worked with local peacebuilders from Nairobi's Eastlands and from Narok to conduct a conflict dynamics analysis. With the hope of identifying ways to support and increase the effectiveness of local peacebuilders, this analysis focused specifically on the ways in which violent actors had successfully used communication to their advantage. From this analysis, the SNA-K team established where local peacebuilders had struggled to prevent and end the violence, and how communication via mass SMS could help them be more effective. Rumors and a general population without the necessary information and experience to question rumors (leading to high levels of vulnerability to rumors and manipulation) were identified as factors that enabled violent actors to be successful and as strategically important arenas in which peace actors would need to be able to compete.

This conflict dynamics analysis helped SNA-K identify strategic ways in which SMS could be deployed to build the capacity of local peace leaders and also reduce the population's vulnerability to rumors and misinformation. SNA-K's team identified SMS as a tool that was used particularly well by violent actors.<sup>4</sup> SMS was effective because it reached people quickly and effectively, especially at a time when it was difficult to access other forms of information. For example, SNA-K team members noted that:

- "The SMS [text messages] warned us...be vigilant...so everyone was prepared"
- "Some [messages] were inciting...I guess they were drafted by an organized lot of people, just to scare people"

3 Goldstein, J., and J. Rotich. "Digitally Networked Technology in Kenya's 2007–2008 Post-Election Crisis." *Berkman Center Research Publication* (2008), p.4

4 At its founding, SNA-K's team was made up of all volunteers. The initial discussion referenced here specifically took place with original SNA-K team members from Baba Dogo and Korogocho slums in Nairobi over a period of several months.

1 Michelle Osborn, "Fuelling the Flames: Rumour and Politics in Kibera," *Journal of East African Studies* 2, no. 2 (July 2008): 315-327, p.316.

2 Ibid, pp. 315, 317.

- “The SMS [text] message was used to actually mobilize people and collect them in the usual places of meetings. This is where they were given the weapons...”<sup>5</sup>

These three quotes demonstrate the power of SMS to incite fear, spread information, and organize action.

SNA-K developed and adapted its approach between September 2010 and the March 2013 elections. By the time of the March 2013 elections, SNA-K had partnered with over fifty local partner organizations and secured in-kind support from Kenya’s largest mobile network operator, as well as various other funders, to build and operate an SMS platform that reached over 65,000 subscribers in more than twenty locations. Community members were able to subscribe to the platform for free from their phones, and SNA-K’s staff recruited and trained local partners to conduct community-based subscription outreach in each target location.

Throughout the election cycle, SNA-K monitored the situation on the ground and sent voter education, peace promotion, and violence intervention messages over SMS. These messages provided information on how

community members could participate in the election process, encouraged positive behavior, and responded to tensions and small-scale violence that occurred in local communities.

Following the March 2013 elections, SNA-K gathered feedback from its end users – the more than 65,000 subscribers – by surveying a sample of subscribers via an SMS and a phone-based survey. The primary goal of these surveys was to understand the user experience and the impact of the programming. Additional goals included uncovering key lessons that could be carried forward concerning the potential of SNA-K’s approach to using text messages for civic education, engagement, and violence prevention; the ways in which this approach could be improved; and areas for further research and explanation.

## SNA-K’s SMS-based Programming

### Message Creation

SNA-K used a set of behavior chains as the basis for SMS creation. These behavior chains outlined a variety of scenarios and the steps from communication (i.e. a rumor) to violence. The behavior chains, which were created in

<sup>5</sup> These quotes are from SNA-K team members during initial discussions and analysis of the use of SMS during the 2007-8 post-election violence.

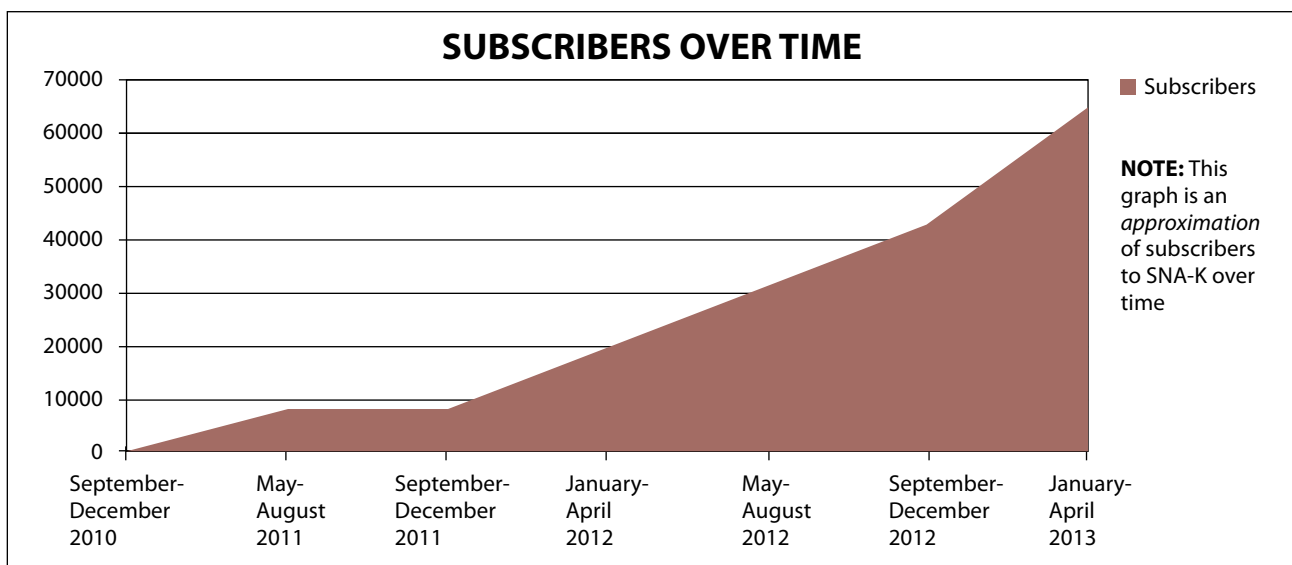


Figure 1



a series of workshops with SNA-K field teams, created a roadmap to identify which messages were needed. For example, a behavior chain focused on rumors about theft would begin with the initial dissemination of the rumor and describe the way in which that rumor could lead to violence. The behavior chains broke down each behavior or event in between initial dissemination and violence – for example the escalation and exaggeration of a rumor and people’s reaction throughout the day – and would identify the key actors. The chains focused on a variety of specific types of events such as cattle theft, rumors of an election being stolen, and “they are coming to get us”-type rumors.

The behavior chains enabled SNA-K to both identify highly specific types of situations in which messages could be useful, and, within these situations, identify different types of messages that should be disseminated. Each behavior chain was used to identify several points at which messages could be sent in the timeline between an event (including the start of a rumor), and potential violence.

SNA-K used behavior chains in combination with a variety of other tools. Prior to establishing the behavior chains, SNA-K conducted a broader conflict dynamics analysis as well as in-depth conflict hot spots analyses. The broader conflict dynamics analysis used a tool similar to behavior chains: local SNA-K teams mapped out strategies that led to peace and/or violence using the metaphor of a soccer game. This exercise enabled SNA-K to identify broad types of messaging (i.e. civic education messaging, or messages to counter a rumor).

Behavior chains were simple and easy to understand, making them useful tools for participatory focus groups. Using information discovered from the behavior chains, the SNA-K team formed and conducted focus groups with target demographic groups.<sup>6</sup> These focus groups allowed community members to co-create messages in response to specific situations and points on the event timelines. The behavior chains were used to prompt focus group participants to create messages based on a variety of factors including: when the rumor was started, how far it had spread through the community, whether groups were already reacting to the rumor, who was involved, whether there

was discussion of arming or violence, and when/if actual violence broke out. Based on the results from these focus groups, the SNA-K team developed template messages and guidelines to interrupt specific behaviors. A message, for example, could attempt to stop people in an outdoor market from continuing to spread a rumor or prompt them to ask questions about the rumor before spreading it.

### *Violence Prevention Messages*

SNA-K’s violence prevention messages were created through a participatory process with communities that drew upon expertise from the field of marketing. First, SNA-K utilized the behavior chains to identify relevant actors in the community who played key roles in the process of moving from information to violence. These included direct participants in violence, predominantly male youths, as well as a broader collection of players in the communication infrastructure in the community, such as female vendors, individuals in the transport business, opinion leaders, elders, and women.

SNA-K held focus groups in Nairobi and Narok targeting members of each key demographic group. In each focus group, participants reviewed the behavior chains for their area and made any corrections they believed were needed. They were then led in a participatory process to create messages that they would send to a peer or would want to be sent to them at each step of the behavior chain in order to encourage behavior that would prevent violence. For example, at the stage in which a rumor was spreading, a group might be asked what message would influence them or a peer not to spread the rumor, or at least to interrogate it.

The SNA-K team then worked with a marketing strategist from Ogilvy & Mather to analyze the messages that were created during these focus groups.<sup>7</sup> The marketing strategist

<sup>6</sup> SNA-K’s staff conducted these focus groups with a variety of demographic groups, including young men, young women, older men, older women, community leaders, and “information spreaders” (e.g. people working in transport or selling things on the side of the road).

<sup>7</sup> The collaboration between Sisi ni Amani Kenya and Ogilvy & Mather was unique and provides an example of unusual cross-sectoral collaboration between the peacebuilding field and the private sector. The partnership built on the expertise of the marketing industry in understanding how to create powerful speakers (brands) and influence behavior by understanding the behavior and incentives of target audiences. At the same time, the work with SNA-K was able to provide the Ogilvy & Mather strategist the opportunity to apply his skills to a new challenge. The collaboration was facilitated with support from PopTech through the PeaceTXT initiative.

This type of cross-sector collaboration can bring high level expertise into peacebuilding projects if project implementers are able to identify sectors that have needed areas of expertise and make compelling arguments about why pro bono or discounted work will

showed the SNA-K team how to analyze perceptual, behavioral, and contextual drivers and barriers influencing the decisions of key target groups. The strategist then worked with SNA-K to revise the messages and aided in the development of language criteria to manage the risk of messages' unintended effects, as well as to maintain the SNA-K brand identity throughout. After this process, SNA-K had a spreadsheet of templates and examples based on a variety of situations, target groups, and conflict threat levels to support messaging development. SNA-K created actionable message guidelines on tone, message framing, risk management, and relevant drivers and barriers for specific target groups and geographic areas. While violence and rumor prevention messages were developed for all possible anticipated situations, they were sent only in response to events reported through SNA-K's monitoring efforts.

### *Civic Education Messages*

Civic education messages, with a focus on voter education, were created based on the need to reduce communities' vulnerability to misinformation and rumors about the election process itself. These messages were created through joint workshops with community leaders and civic educators, such as representatives from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). Civic educators would provide accurate information to common questions and areas of confusion about the upcoming elections that community members identified. The community leaders would then break into groups to create SMSs based on the accurate information. These SMSs were phrased in language that community members knew their community would easily understand.

The relevant experts, specifically IEBC, then vetted the voter education messages before they were sent. While IEBC never rejected a message, they vetted the messages for accuracy and, when necessary, corrected inaccuracies. This was particularly important during the year running up to the elections, as there were numerous changes in the way the elections would be run. The IEBC was the institution

with the most up to date information about the regulations and election preparations.

The timing of the messages was based on input from the community members at the workshop, who would note when in the election cycle messages should be sent (i.e. that a certain message should be sent the afternoon before voting) and how frequently in order to maintain the attention of the community. Civic education messages were sent prior to the election with frequency ranging from twice a day to weekly and at times even less frequently depending on the proximity of the election.

## **Implementation**

### *Implementation Strategy*

Prior to the elections, SNA-K trained its teams on SMS creation based on the frameworks developed by the SNA-K field team with support from Ogilvy & Mather. SNA-K's eight field coordinators in Nairobi and nine team members in Narok conducted the original focus groups, then each spent a full day with the Ogilvy & Mather consultant to review the focus group analyses. The teams were then re-trained on messaging development in a two-day training. Approximately 130 SNA-K outreach workers in six target locations were given a basic half-day training during their SNA-K outreach trainings. SNA-K's field team and partners in the Rift Valley were also given basic training on monitoring, verification of information, message creation, testing, sending, and feedback.

SNA-K's field team (eight full-time staff and ten volunteers) was responsible for monitoring and gathering information from partners on the ground. Through regular check-ins with a headquarters team, SNA-K monitored tensions on the ground in the weeks leading up to the election and throughout the election period.

When field team members reported issues of concern, they were asked to verify the information, which was then reported to relevant authorities for response as needed.<sup>8</sup>

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be beneficial. Grant Tudor, the strategist with whom SNA-K worked, has since founded Populist Group, a new non-profit organization dedicated to connecting marketers with social enterprises to bring new knowledge, expertise, and create space for innovation into both the marketing and social enterprise sectors. Grant's founding of Populist speaks to the potential for cross-sector collaboration to spark new long-term collaboration and ideas.

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<sup>8</sup> SNA-K collaborated closely with the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC), the Kenyan government body responsible for early warning and response. The NSC had representatives in each County and was connected to the security forces for response. When SNA-K received reports that needed intervention from security forces or could benefit from the involvement of the local NSC Peace Monitor, SNA-K reported to the NSC. For example, when SNA-K verified that people were arming in Dandora (a



Additionally, the field teams would identify whether or not an SMS was needed. If it was, the field teams would propose a message based on the message templates and guidelines. The message would be tested with community members representing different sides of the conflict and vetted to ensure that it could not be interpreted as partisan or alarmist. Messages would then be approved and sent by the headquarters team. This process's implementation time varied. Most messages took only about fifteen minutes to be sent, while messages sent in response to highly complicated situations took additional time to ensure risk management. The headquarters team managed a situation room throughout the elections and the following court petition.

## Data and Methodology

After the 2013 Kenyan election period, SNA-K conducted a two-phased survey of its subscribers to evaluate how useful the messages were and how subscribers used the messages in their daily lives. SNA-K designed and conducted both phases of the survey, and both phases targeted SNA-K subscribers specifically. There was no survey of community members who had not subscribed to SNA-K, as both phases were conducted by mobile phone in order to reduce costs. Additionally SNA-K did not have access to a random sample of phone numbers of individuals who had not subscribed to SNA-K in each of the target areas. The fact that SNA-K designed and implemented the survey and that the respondents were all subscribers to SNA-K means that there is the potential for response bias in the respondents' feedback. The survey, however, specifically sought to understand the experience and feedback of SNA-K subscribers in order to evaluate this approach. The response bias therefore does not compromise an impact evaluation.

The survey results were coded by an independent researcher, Dr. Seema Shah, and by Sun-Ha Hong, a doctoral student from the University of Pennsylvania. The coding analysis was designed by Shah in consultation with Penn.

In the first phase survey, conducted in April 2013, all of SNA-K's subscribers received a message inviting them to take a free SMS-based survey with the chance to win 250 KES in mobile phone usage (to be applied to data, SMS, and/or phone calls) upon completion. 7,350 subscribers

completed the SMS-based multiple-choice survey before it was closed. Of those, 7,347 completed the questionnaire in full and are included in this analysis.

In the second phase, conducted in June-July 2013, approximately 340 subscribers were surveyed through telephone calls. These subscribers were selected through a structured random sample drawn from subscribers who had not taken the SMS-based multiple choice survey. SNA-K structured the random sample based on gender and location, randomly selecting male and female subscribers from each location to create a sample that was representative of the gender and location make-up of the entire subscriber database. Subscribers were then randomly selected from a spreadsheet.<sup>9</sup>

This second phase evaluation included open-ended questions meant to give respondents a chance to elaborate on their opinions. The final dataset contains the 282 respondents who were willing to answer questions and who did so in full.

OLS regression analysis was conducted using the SMS-based survey dataset. The dependent variables were the respondents' answers to the five questions, each of which was scaled as follows:

- *Did you ever have a conversation about a message you got from SNA-K?*
  - 0=Never
  - 1=Once
  - 2=Sometimes
  - 3=Often
  - 4=Very Often
- *Did you ever forward a message you got from SNA-K?*
  - 0=Never
  - 1=Once
  - 2=Sometimes
  - 3=Often
  - 4=Very Often

slum area in Nairobi), SNA-K reported this to NSC who communicated directly to the head of the police force.

<sup>9</sup> The number of total subscribers in a spreadsheet (i.e. women from a certain location or men from a certain location) was divided by the number of subscribers that needed to be randomly selected. The number resulting from that division was then used and every subscriber whose row was a multiple of that number in the spreadsheet was selected as part of the sample.

- *Did SNA-K's SMS have a positive, negative or no impact on keeping peace during the election?*
  - 1=Positive
  - 0=No Impact
  - -1=Negative
- *Would you tell a friend to subscribe to SNA-K? (logit regression used for this question)*
  - 1=Yes
  - 0=No
- *Were SNA-K's messages useful to help you better understand how to vote?*
  - 2=Very Useful
  - 1=Useful
  - 0=Neither
  - -1=Useless
  - -2=Very Useless

The independent and dummy variables included gender, employment status, and region.

Responses from the telephone survey were also coded and analyzed. Two data analysts coded responses to the questions as follows:

1. *If you received a civic education SMS from SNA-K and found it useful (or not useful), please explain why.* Answers were coded as dummy variables if they fell into one of the following categories:

- General comments about how the messages provided electoral process knowledge/made things easier/helped me by providing information
- Messages were helpful in educating me about ballot box colors/ballot procedures, etc
- Messages were helpful because they enabled peaceful voting
- Messages were useful because they could be shared with others and/or used to teach others
- Messages were helpful because they were always on my phone so I could check the information when I needed it, even at the polling station
- Messages were not helpful because I already knew the information provided
- Other

2. *If you heard rumors and received a SNA-K SMS, please*

*explain why you believe/do not believe it had an impact.* Answers were coded as dummy variables if they fell into one of the following categories:

- Messages calmed people down (who were anxious or who were inclined towards getting angry/agitated/suspicious)/encouraged people to remain calm AND messages helped me be peaceful
- Messages encouraged us to have faith in the electoral commission
- Messages convinced people not to believe the rumors
- Messages were useful because I could forward them to others
- Other

3. *If you did not hear rumors but you did receive a SNA-K SMS, please explain why you believe/do not believe it had an impact.* Answers were coded as dummy variables if they fell into one of the following categories:

- Messages calmed people down/reduced anxiety/encouraged people to remain calm
- Messages encouraged peace/promoted peace/reminded us to be peaceful
- Messages convinced people not to believe the rumors
- Messages were useful because I could forward them to others/could use them to preach to or teach others
- Messages were not useful
- Other

4. *If there was conflict in your area and you received a SMS from SNA-K, please explain why you believe/do not believe it had an impact.* Answers were coded as dummy variables if they fell into one of the following categories:

- Messages made people feel like they were being watched so they were less likely to commit violence/made people feel like someone was "monitoring" or "watching" or "in charge," which helped create feeling of safety/security
- Messages encouraged people to stay calm/to calm down if they were scared/to be peaceful/remember to be peaceful/helped maintain peace
- Messages were forwarded to others/shared with others
- Messages **prevented** people from joining violence (they should say explicitly that they didn't join or stopped thinking of joining because of the messages)
- Other

5. *If you did not experience conflict but you received a SMS from SNA-K, please explain why you believe/do not believe it had an impact* Answers were coded as dummy variables if they fell into one of the following categories:

- Messages helped keep people calm/encouraged peace/promoted peace/maintained peace
- Messages prevented the escalation of tension into violence/prevented violence
- Messages were forwarded to others/shared with others/used to preach or teach others
- Messages reminded us that we can live together in peace/reminded us we are all Kenyan/reminded us to think of our communities and value our communities
- Messages were helpful during times when there was nowhere else to turn for answers
- Other

6. *Do you think SNA-K SMSs contributed anything during elections?* Answers were coded as dummy variables if they fell into one of the following categories:

- Unsure/Don't Know
- Messages contributed to peace/made people remain calm/promoted peace/encouraged peace
- Messages provided education/information about elections
- Messages were nonpartisan and embraced everything/messages were trusted
- Messages were forwarded/shared and helped more people
- Messages helped to prevent/contain violence (only use this if they explicitly say that it helped prevent violence – if they say something that could be interpreted as messages calmed people, put it in the above “calm” category. In other words, don't infer that being made calm prevented violence)
- Other
- No Explanation Given: for those who said messages contributed something but didn't specify what that something was.

7. *Would you want to be receiving more SNA-K messages in the future? Why or why not?* Answers were coded as dummy variables if they fell into one of the following categories:

- Provides useful education on elections (related to civic education, voter education)
- Peace is a good thing and the messages bring peace

- Messages were helpful (in a general sense) (references to messages providing unspecified information should go here)
- I can forward the messages
- I want to learn about peace
- I am a peacebuilder/I want to promote peace (as in this is a tool I can use for my work)
- I want to know about my country
- I want to receive messages on other issues
- Don't Know
- Other

If no, why not:

- Elections are over so I don't need the SMS messages anymore
- There is peace now

These two datasets provide the basis for the following analysis.

### *SMS and Phone Survey Data*

The SMS-based survey revealed that SNA-K was active in the following regions:

**Table 1: Regional Breakdown of SMS Survey**

Region	Percent in Survey
Central Province	3.2%
Coast	2.0%
Eastern Province	1.4%
Nairobi	25.1%
Northeastern Province	.2%
Nyanza Province	12.9%
Rift Valley Province	44.5%
Western Province	1.7%
Unidentified region	9.0%

Additionally, this set of respondents consisted of 31.2% women, 58.9% men and 9.9% unidentified gender. Respondents' employment status was also recorded, but many users did not respond. The breakdown is 4.2% employed, 8.0% unemployed, 1.8% students, and 87.7% of unknown employment status.

The demographic breakdown of the telephone survey is as follows:

**Table 2: Regional Breakdown of Telephone Survey**

Region	Percent in Survey
Central Province	0
Coast	0
Eastern Province	.7%
Nairobi	75.5%
Northeastern Province	1.1%
Nyanza Province	0
Rift Valley Province	17.7%
Western Province	.7%
Unidentified region	4.3%

52.5% of these respondents were male and 35.5% were female; 12.1% were of unidentified gender. As in the SMS survey, many of the telephone survey respondents did not respond to questions about employment. 35.4% of the users were employed, 12.4% were unemployed, 5.0% were students, and 46.8% did not respond.

The database of both SMS and phone survey respondents also included age, but because of changes in the USSD-based subscription process, which was changed over time to adapt to the response from the community, the age brackets changed several times. As such, the inconsistent age categories make it impossible to use this age data in a meaningful way.

## Civic Education

One of SNA-K's roles in the 2013 electoral cycle was to assist in the provision of voter education. Voter education was especially critical in this election cycle, because the new constitution and host of legal reforms in the lead-up to the General Election meant that voters would be exposed to a number of new procedures at the polling station. New procedures included electronic voter identification and simultaneous voting for six elective offices (four of which were newly created under the 2010 constitution). Voter education also included important new information about what voters would need to show for identification at the polling station and how to find polling stations. Given

the late roll out<sup>10</sup> of IEBC's voter education program and the commissions delayed preparations,<sup>11</sup> efforts made by SNA-K and other civil society organizations were especially important. In fact, observers from the European Union noted the low impact of the IEBC's efforts in this regard: "High quality civic education manuals were produced but, at such a late stage of election preparations, this was not likely to have achieved any significant impact on levels of awareness about governance and the elected posts."<sup>12</sup>

It is thus not surprising that SNA-K's SMS survey respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with voter education messages. 96% of respondents said they found the messages "useful" or "very useful," while only 2% of respondents said that they found the messages "useless" or "very useless" (see figure 2).

These sentiments were echoed in the telephone survey. 96% of those respondents who did receive a voter education SMS said that they found the messages useful. Of those who said the messages were useful, 66.8% said the reason was the utility of the information related to voting and election day. Almost 15% of respondents specifically cited the SNA-K's information explaining the color coding of ballots and ballot boxes (see figure 3). Of those who said the messages were not useful, more than 80% said it was because they already had the information that was provided in the SMS. Overall, people clearly appreciated SNA-K's voter education information. One respondent said that he "didn't have any idea how to mark the ballot papers" before the SMS, and many respondents indicated that the messages helped clarify points about which they were unsure. Another respondent said, "[The messages] enabled me to vote wisely since I felt empowered with the information and am proud that I kept peace. [I] am a youth and I felt enlightened on what was going on and am thankful." Given these positive responses, the IEBC and civil society organizations that carry out civic/voter education might consider the use of mobile text messages as a low-cost and effective way of providing critical election-related information to the public.<sup>13</sup>

10 The Carter Center. 2013. "Observing Kenya's March 2013 National Elections," 29.

11 For details on the multiple pre-election delays, see The Carter Center's and the European Union's final election observation reports.

12 European Union Election Observation Mission to Kenya. 2013. "Final Report," 13.

13 The IEBC sent a small number of SMS to all Safaricom mobile subscribers around the most key voter education issues, but it was not

### Were SNA-K's messages useful to help you better understand how to vote? (N=7,347)

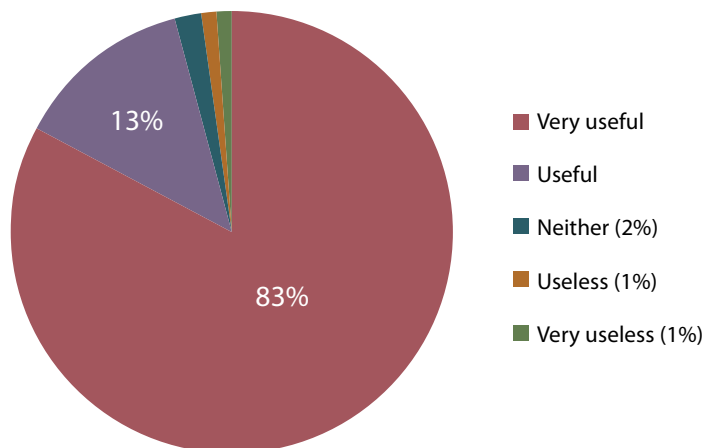


Figure 2

### In what ways were the civic education messages useful? (N=256)

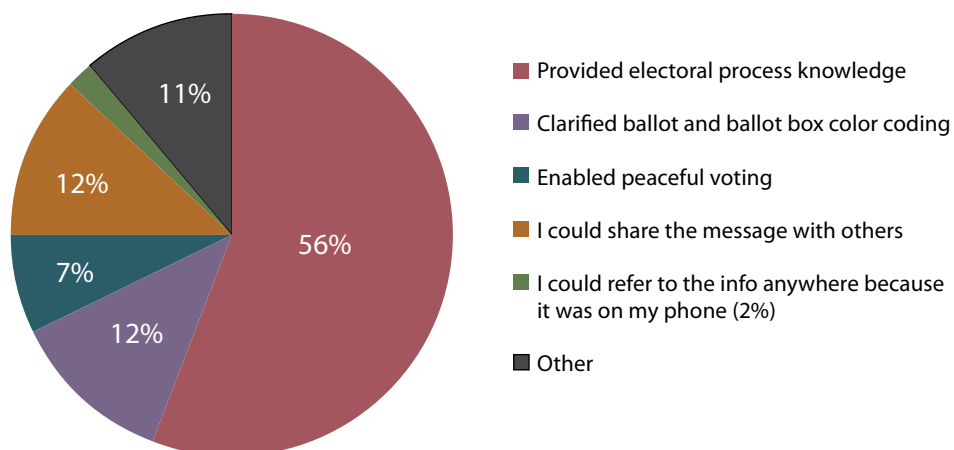


Figure 3

Results also show that there is a statistically significant correlation between Kenyans in Nairobi and Rift Valley and the perceived level of the messages' utility. That is, those in Nairobi and the Rift Valley were statistically more likely to find the messages useful in understanding how to vote. This is not to say that respondents elsewhere did not find the

messages useful. There was a positive correlation between all regions and message utility, but statistical significance existed only for Nairobi and Rift Valley. More research is needed to explore the reasons behind the correlation, but it could be that residents in these areas were less exposed to other voter education programs and were therefore more in need of information.

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an opt-in service and the number of messages that could be sent was limited.

**Table 3: Impact of Gender, Employment and Region on Respondents' Opinions Regarding SNA-K Programming**

	Frequency of Conversation
Central Province	.256*** (.092)
	Frequency of Conversation
Rift Valley Province	.075** (.033)
	Frequency of Forwarding Messages
Gender	.116***(.039)
	Frequency of Forwarding Messages
Employment	.211** (.107)
	Frequency of Forwarding Messages
Central Province	.303*** (.100)
	Belief in Impact of Messages
Nyanza Province	-.047*** (.015)
	Belief in Impact of Messages
Rift Valley Province	.056*** (.010)
	Belief in Utility of Messages
Nairobi Province	.057*** (.016)
	Belief in Utility of Messages
Rift Valley Province	.032** (.014)

\*\* 95% Confidence

\*\*\* 99% Confidence

## Keeping Peace

SNA-K's second primary role in the 2013 Kenyan election cycle was to promote peace and prevent violence. In fact, SNA-K joined a large number of civil society groups, businesses, politicians, political institutions, and others in advocating for peace in the lead-up to the polls. Unlike many players in this "peace industry," as it came to be known, SNA-K used its expertise to craft specifically targeted and timely messages, which interacted with and responded to conditions on the ground. This approach helped SNA-K stand out from the crowd, as many other organizations either engaged in self-censorship or used much more vague messaging to urge all Kenyans to "vote peacefully." In Nairobi, for instance, the paint company known as Duracoat issued advertisements that read, "Vote for Peace." The IEBC aired similar advertisements, urging Kenyans to "vote peacefully." One analyst noted the following:

One of Kenya's paint manufacturers ran ads calling for brightly colored "peace, love, unity." Graffiti artists used lots of paint to spray peace murals on public walls in Nairobi. Religious leaders appealed for peace and prayer, on huge billboards and on the radio. Kenyan journalists conducted no exit polls, chose not to air Odinga's first post-election news conference live (in case he made inflammatory remarks), repeatedly urged the public to remain calm and patient, and showed so much of their own patience with the hapless electoral commission that they have since been criticized for being too gentle...<sup>14</sup>

The well-known international journalist Michela Wrong described the Kenyan media's preoccupation with keeping peace in this way:

It sometimes feels as though a zombie army has taken up position where Kenya's feisty media used to be, with local reporters going glaze-eyed through the motions... The Kenyan media's self-restraint reveals a society terrified by its own capacity for violence... Shortly before handing Uhuru his winner's certificate, the chairman of the election commission congratulated the Kenyan media on their "exemplary behavior." As he did, the screen above his head was showing figures that did not add up.<sup>15</sup>

It does appear that SNA-K's approach struck a chord with respondents. When asked whether they thought SNA-K's messages had a positive or negative impact on keeping peace, respondents to the SMS survey overwhelmingly indicated that the messages had a positive effect. 92% of the SMS survey respondents said that the messages had a positive impact on keeping peace during elections, while 4% said the messages had a negative impact, and 4% said they had no impact at all (see figure 4).

## Fighting Rumors to Keep the Peace

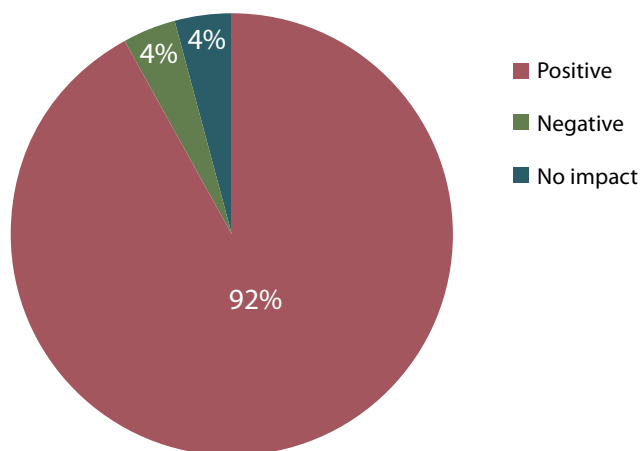
The telephone survey also showed largely positive results in regards to keeping the peace.

14 Benesch, Susan. 2013. "The Kenyan Elections: Peace Happened." *Huffington Post*. Available at < [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/susan-benesch/kenya-elections\\_b\\_2921096.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/susan-benesch/kenya-elections_b_2921096.html)>.

15 Wrong, Michela. 2013. "To be Prudent is to be Partial." *The New York Times*. Available at <<http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/14/erring-on-the-side-of-caution-kenyas-media-undercovered-the-election/>>.



### What was SNA-K's impact on keeping peace during the elections? (N=7,347)



**Figure 4**

First, SNA-K sent messages to counter election-related rumors. Some of these rumors had the potential to incite suspicion and possibly violence. For example, respondents described hearing rumors of stolen votes, BVR machines being used to rig results, celebrations in certain areas *before* results had even been announced, and of people arming themselves. One respondent said,

On the culmination of [the] election, the Kikuyus were spreading rumors that CORD will win but won't be given the presidency, just like 2007.

Other respondents said they heard that:

If Kenyatta won we will have to move from the houses and rent will increase, and if Raila loses there will be war.

The Luos were moving from the community in the fear that they [would] be beaten by the Kikuyus after the elections.

SNA-K's efforts to counter rumors were effective. All of those who received messages related to rumors found them to be useful. More than half said they were useful because they promoted calm and peace. One respondent said, "When I heard about the people arming themselves, I was very afraid because I am not of the same tribe as they are; but when I got the messages telling me not to listen to rumors I was calm, at least for a while." Strikingly, about 45% of respondents who heard rumors and received an SMS said they were useful because it convinced them not to believe in the rumors

that were in circulation. This is an important finding, as it demonstrates the power of SNA-K to effectively counter the kind of fear- and hate-inciting rumors that fed previous cycles of election violence. It is also interesting to note that 18% of respondents said the messages were useful, because they promoted faith in the IEBC. In fact, some respondents specifically said that the messages encouraged them to wait for the IEBC to announce final results before jumping to conclusions. This indicates the power of the constitutional reforms that were implemented in the lead-up to the 2013 election. In particular, it shows how critical the new election commission was and how Kenyans believed in the credibility of that institution.

### *Spreading Peace Messages to Conflict-Impacted Areas*

Perhaps the most important indicator of the impact of SNA-K's peace promotion efforts is the opinion of those who actually experienced election-related conflict.

This group was not large (23.4% of the phone sample), but 100% of those who witnessed conflict and received a SNA-K message reported that the messages had an impact (see figure 6a). More than half of the phone sample respondents (51.6%) said that the messages promoted peace and had a calming effect, and 40.3% of respondents said they believed the messages actually prevented violence. This is a critical finding, as it indicates that people believe that such tactics can actually stop the escalation of tensions into violence and proactively dissuade people from participating in acts of violence. Civil society organizations, political institutions

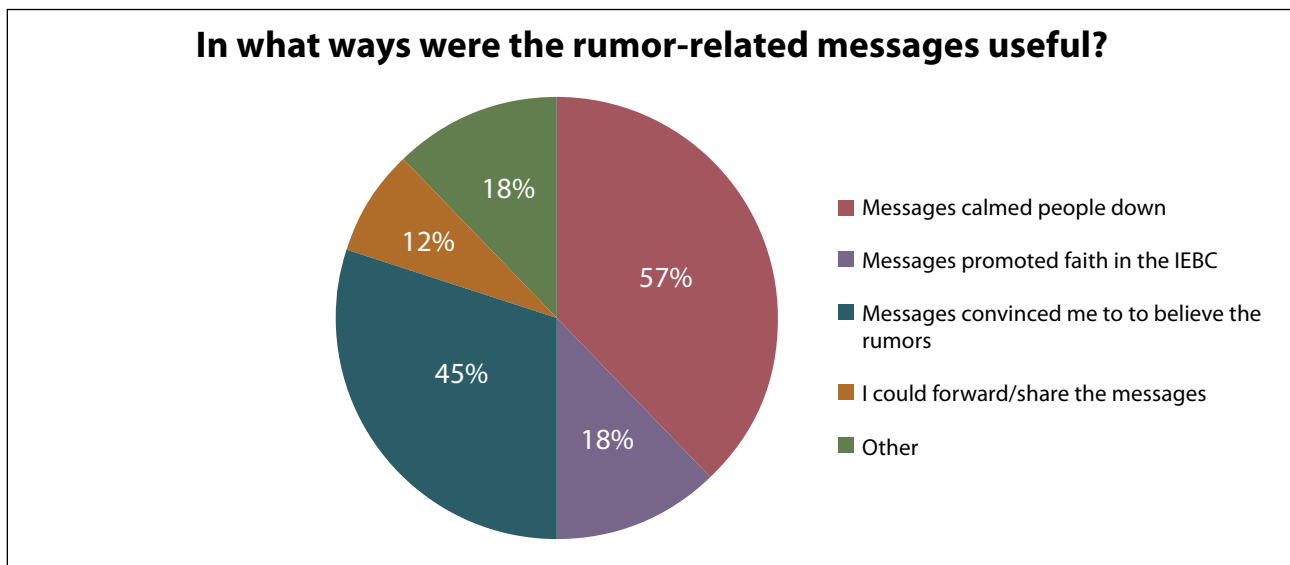


Figure 5

and even security forces could consider using similar messages for violence prevention in future elections.

Of those who did not experience election-related conflict but did receive a SNA-K message about conflict, 100% believed that the message had an impact (see figure 6b). The most commonly cited reason (72%) why people believed in the messages' impact was their ability to calm people down and encourage people to keep the peace. 17% of respondents said that the messages actively prevented violence, and 18% said that the messages reminded subscribers that it was possible to live together as one community.

SNA-K messages were clearly able to help SNA-K subscribers to avoid conflict and remain calm.

## Kenyans' Interactions with SNA-K Messages

The SMS survey responses show that SNA-K users did much more than simply consume messages. In fact, a clear majority of respondents in the SMS-based survey sample (56%) indicated that they had conversations about the messages often or very often (see figure 7). 45% of respondents said that they forwarded messages to other people often or very often with 75% of respondents forwarded messages at least once. (see figure 8) These actions indicate that SNA-K's reach was potentially much larger than its >65,000-strong

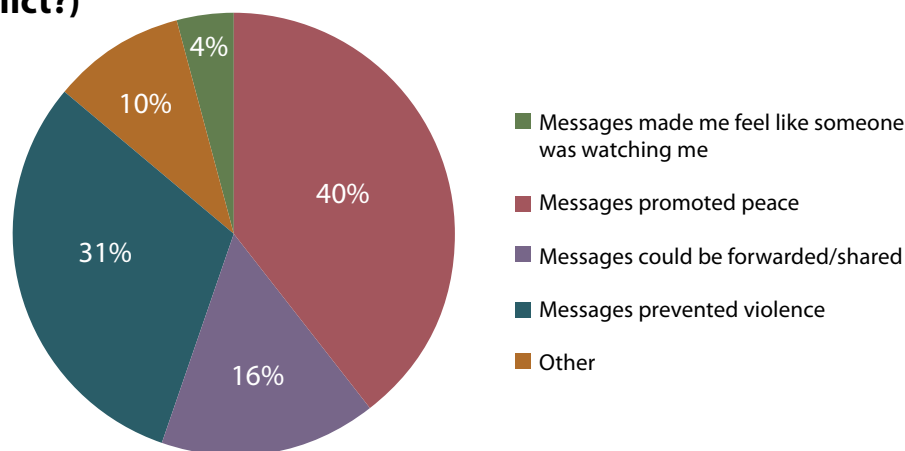
subscriber base. It is probable that SNA-K messages were consumed by members of many subscribers' personal networks. These responses also suggest that Kenyans believe in the value of the messages. It is reasonable to assume that people would only forward messages (especially at a cost) if they believed in the inherent value of the content. The respondents' willingness to share and converse about the messages might also indicate that Kenyans are hungry for this type of information and education.

Statistical analysis revealed that Kenyans in Central province were more likely to have conversations about the SNA-K messages and forward those messages to others. Interestingly, there is no statistically significant relationship between Kenyans in Central province and their rating of how useful SNA-K was. Residents in the Rift Valley were also more inclined to have conversations about SNA-K messages, believe that the messages had an impact, and that SNA-K programming was useful. Given that Rift Valley experienced some of the worst violence in 2008 and that tensions were high there in the lead-up to the 2013 poll, this finding is not surprising.

## Overall Impact of SNA-K

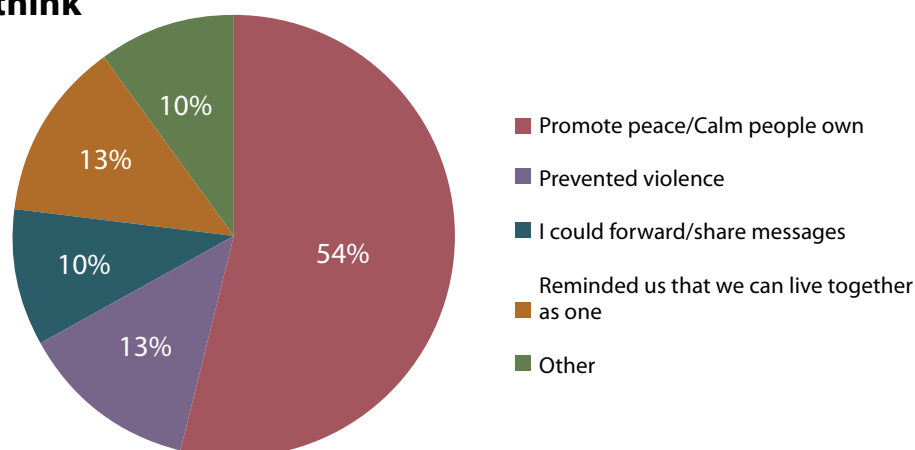
Results from both datasets indicate that SNA-K programming mattered to those who subscribed and that subscribers would like to continue to benefit from it. 98% of respondents from the SMS survey said that they would tell a friend to subscribe to SNA-K.

**In what ways did SNA-K messages make an impact (for those who experienced conflict?)  
(N=62)**



A

**If you did not experience conflict but you did receive a SNA-K SMS, please explain why you think it had an impact  
(N=162)**



B

Figure 6

A similar proportion of respondents from the telephone survey (97%) said that they felt the messages made a contribution, and they provided a range of reasons (see figure 9). More than 40% said that they felt SNA-K messages promoted peace and were effective in calming people down. A further 6% said they believed the messages prevented violence or prevented the escalation of tension into violence. 7% said that they felt the messages were useful because they provided civic education and related information on voting.

When asked whether they would like to continue to receive SNA-K messages, 93% of respondents replied in the

affirmative. Almost one quarter of the respondents (24%) said it was because they believed the messages brought peace/encouraged peace. 16% said they wanted more messages because they were generally helpful, and the same proportion said it was because they could forward and/or share the messages with others (see figure 10). Of those who did not want to keep receiving SNA-K messages (7%), respondents said either that the elections were over or that there was now peace. This indicates that people who wish to stop receiving the messages were not necessarily dissatisfied with them. Rather, they believe that the messages are only relevant during elections and/or times of conflict.

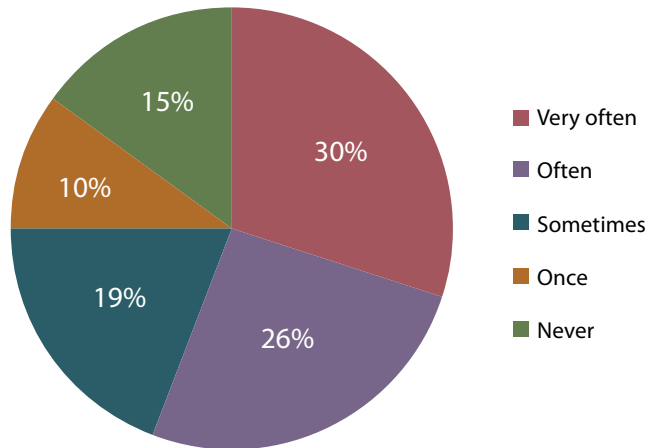
**Did you ever have a conversation about a message you received from SNA-K?**

Figure 7

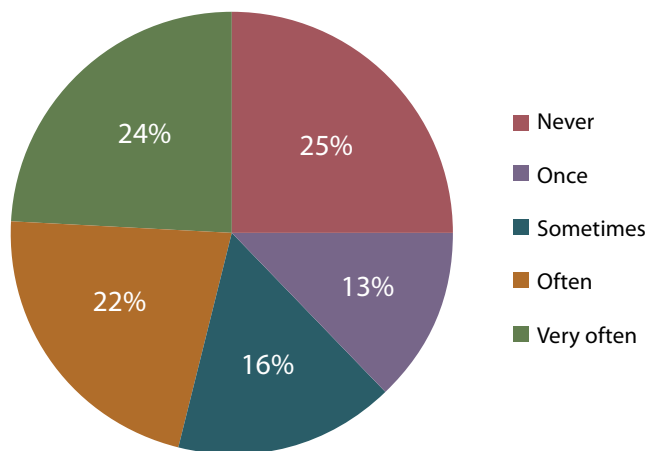
**Did you ever forward a message you received from SNA-K? (N=7,347)**

Figure 8

### In what ways did SNA-K messages make a contribution? (N=273)

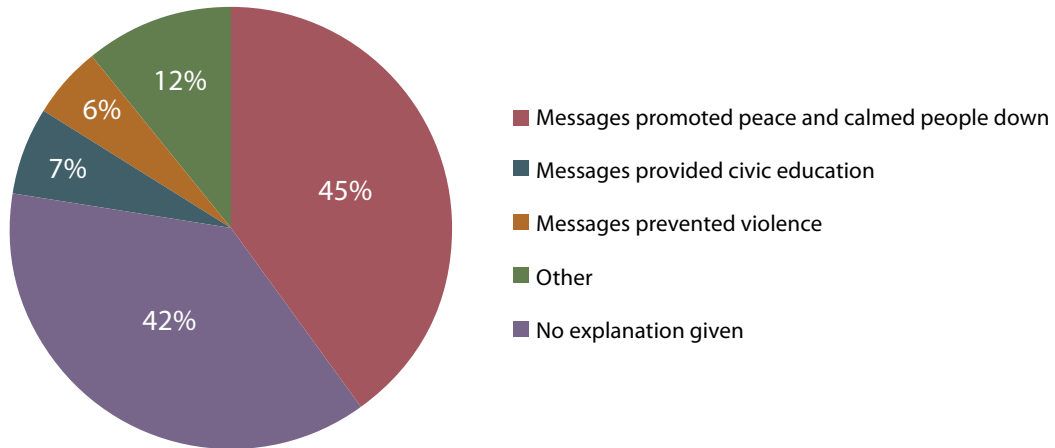


Figure 9

### Why would you like to keep receiveing SNA-K messages? (N=263)

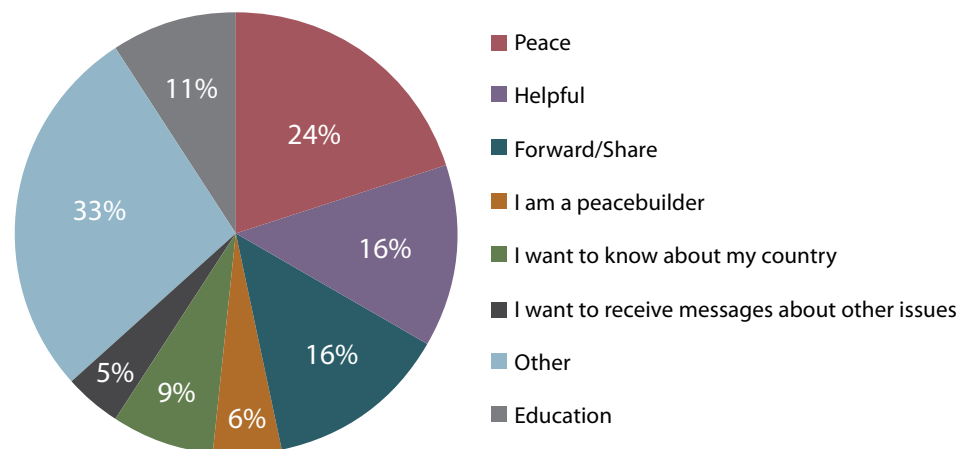


Figure 10



## Conclusion

SNA-K's survey aimed to understand users' experiences and identify what aspects of SNA-K's approach could be carried forward..

Based on evidence from subscriber feedback, SNA-K programming was an effective tool for voter education and peacebuilding in the 2013 Kenyan election cycle. Subscribers indicated that SNA-K messages helped to provide critical election-related information, promote peace, and even helped to prevent acts of violence. For some, SNA-K was the sole source of voter information, and for others it was the only actor encouraging communities to ignore rumors and remain calm.

Two conclusions and results of SNA-K's efforts are particularly strong and could be useful for future election cycles. First, it is clear that SNA-K's voter education messages were useful, timely, and appreciated by subscribers. Such messaging throughout the electoral cycle could go a long way in providing education and helping to create a more knowledgeable and engaged citizenry. Second, it is clear that users feel that one of the most useful aspects of the messages is their ability (or their perceived ability) to prevent violence and maintain calm. Given this, it would be worth thinking about how other institutions and organizations could use mobile phone messaging to spread calm and peace during times of tension. Kenya's new constitutional dispensation creates several new institutions tasked with monitoring hate speech and promoting diversity. These bodies could use a

platform similar to that of SNA-K to disseminate their own messages and findings.

It is remarkable that such a simple and accessible tool had such a far-reaching impact. In fact, the results demonstrate the power of mobile text messaging. When wielded by trusted institutions, such tools could go a long way in reaching out to communities and reassuring them in times of need.

It is important to remember that the opinions reflected in this report are drawn solely from the SNA-K subscriber database. In the future, it would be helpful to conduct a randomly controlled study in order to determine just how effective such messaging is when sampling both subscribers and non-subscribers. It would also be useful to investigate the mechanism(s) that appear to have promoted feelings of calm and peace. Were SNA-K's messages effective because SNA was seen to be an impartial source of information? How were SNA messages different from other peace messaging, and why were they more or less useful? Perhaps most critically, it would be useful to delve more deeply into the reasoning behind statements that indicated that the messages prevented violence. What was it about these types of messages that could convince people on the ground to actively turn away from violence? More detail about the circumstances around these responses could illuminate important pathways of behavior change and such findings could be useful well beyond the world of Kenyan elections.