



**HELP - LIFE - CHANGE**  
**Four Global Questions Survey**  
**Preliminary Findings**

*Report #1*

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## **Executive Summary**

In January of 2012, a group of individuals from 18 countries came together to form A Big Project. These organizers sought to gain clarity on where people agreed the world could be better – and to share that message in ways that could open people’s minds and hearts, through art and music. The first part of the project sought to gain more clarity on the places where we agree. This phase began on August 15<sup>th</sup> when people around the world were asked to respond to four questions:

*If the world as it currently exists were to radically shift tomorrow, and we had a chance to recreate the world:*

- *What would you NOT want to continue from this world?*
- *What WOULD you want to continue from this world?*
- *What could people do differently now to help us get to that better world?*
- *What is one thing that you will commit to do differently now to help us get to that better world?*

In the first month of this four-month long survey process 1274 people from 97 countries responded. This report represents the findings based on the first month’s responses.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

Much of the findings in this report confirm what many already believed a better world might look like. If we had the opportunity to recreate the world, most people would NOT want to continue things like **war, poverty, and corruption**. People would want to continue things like **love, peace, and nature**.

But when looking deeper into what people would continue into a new better world, a few more interesting ideas emerge. Included in the top ten things that people would like to ensure are kept from this world are: **technology, music, art, culture, education, diversity and freedom**.

When looking at gender-based differences, some very different specific viewpoints surface. When it comes to making the world a better place, men around the world say that **technology, democracy and language** are key ingredients. While women say that **love, food, care and community** are most critical.

Probably the most interesting aspects of the analysis focus on the regional differences. The top words for each of the defined regions surface what could be perceived as the top global priorities for people in that region; or what some would say have highest top-of-mind awareness. A few selected findings include:

- Corruption in Africa
- Power in North America
- Sustainability<sup>i</sup> in Scandinavia
- Religion in Middle East and South/Southeast Asia
- Nature in Western Europe and Central/South America

Arguably, the most surprising finding of the study emerges when looking at the top three words for all questions and all regions. In looking at the words which had the highest level of agreement across all parts of the world, the following three words emerged in order of importance (or level of recurrence):

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This report represents the first of a four-month long survey process. The four global questions will remain open until December and can be taken at [www.abigproject.org/myanswers](http://www.abigproject.org/myanswers). Art and music development are starting immediately.

# **Introduction**

In January of 2012, a group of individuals from 18 countries came together to form A Big Project. These organizers sought to gain clarity on where people agreed the world could be better – and to share that message in ways that could open people’s minds and hearts (through art and music). Since then the number of countries where people are supporting the project has grown to 97.

The core group of organizers includes ten teams, one of which is the data synthesis and research team who is responsible for the collection, analysis and reporting of the data. These individuals represent organizations which have an expertise in data synthesis and reporting (including Big ML, and Optimus Information, Inc.).

The first part of the project which sought to gain more clarity on the places where we all agree, began on August 15<sup>th</sup> when people around the world were asked to respond to four questions:

*If the world as it currently exists were to radically shift tomorrow, and we had a chance to recreate the world:*

- *What would you NOT want to continue from this world?*
- *What WOULD you want to continue from this world?*
- *What could people do differently now to help us get to that better world?*
- *What is one thing that you will commit to do differently now to help us get to that better world?*

In the first month of this four-month long survey process 1274 people from 97 countries responded. This report represents our preliminary analysis of the first month’s results.

# **Methods**

## **Types of surveys**

To get people to respond to the questions we offered two ways of answering, using Survey Monkey as the technology platform. The first was to answer the questions directly, on one’s own, by going to the online survey provided at [www.abigproject.org/myanswers](http://www.abigproject.org/myanswers). The second way was to answer the four questions in groups. One survey from each group would be then downloaded online at [www.abigproject.org/answers](http://www.abigproject.org/answers). Surveys were translated into 16 different languages. All surveys will continue to remain open until December 2012.

## **Types of outreach**

Outreach to engage people in taking the survey was done through a series of strategies including: parties, social media, personal outreach to friends and family, and street-based canvassing. The lion’s share of communication for this initiative has been Internet-based. Note: this has meant that there is a disproportionate number of people with high levels of access to the Internet in our sample. (See demographics on next page.) The project hopes to partner with groups which provide access to communities without high levels of access in the coming months.

## Analysis

On September 20, the surveys were analyzed to assess the results of the first month's responses to the four global questions. The process included:

1. Downloading all surveys from online platform
2. Translating surveys from other languages into English using machine translation\*
3. Working with partners to extract, sort, and analyze data based on two levels:
  - a. Popularity: words that were cited most often in the responses.
  - b. Distinctiveness: the level of distinctiveness words had to each region (as well as level of agreement across regions) \*\*
4. Creation of images that best depicted data (i.e. histograms, wordles, etc.)
5. Translation of data back into all languages on website (in progress)

\*It is important to note that machine translation is not ideal for many translation efforts – specifically because machines often use literal translations and cannot always determine the context of a word in a sentence. In all other elements of this project volunteer certified translators have been used to support translation. However, in the case of survey data translation it is believed that machine translation is most effective because a) the analysis focuses on a key word analysis (not concept or sentence analysis) so a literal translation of each word is most appropriate and b) because the size of the dataset, there would be no feasible way of translating all responses with the current capacity of volunteer translators.

We recognize that this is NOT a perfect process. We would like to acknowledge that some concepts may get lost in translation, and encourage others in similar efforts to find ways to make this process even more accurate in the future.

\*\*Level of distinctiveness and agreement were determined based on the following formulas:

Suppose we have words  $w$  and regions  $r$ . Also define a function  $f_r(w)$  that gives the total number of surveys in region  $r$  and a function  $f_w(r)$  gives the total number of times word  $w$  occurred over all surveys from region  $r$ . Given these, we can calculate a *unique importance score* for a word, given a region  $r$  and word  $w$  :

$$\frac{f_w(r) - \frac{f_w \cdot f_r}{n}}{f_w + f_r}$$

for which the value will be more positive when the given word is used more often in the given region than other regions and more negative otherwise.

We can also calculate an *agreement score* for a given word  $w$ , which is simply the sum of the absolute values of the unique importance scores over all regions:

so that a *lower* agreement score indicates more agreement about the importance of a word across all regions. Note that we perform this analysis using only the top 50 words by occurrence, so that words

that have very low importance across all regions are not considered, even though their agreement score as given here would be quite high.

## **Graphics**

The report uses graphics to explain much of the results. This is done because we believe it will make understanding about the information easier for people from different backgrounds and because we value graphic imagery as a method to express ideas in ways that sometimes numbers and words alone cannot.

There are three types of graphics provided: 1) 'Worldles' ([www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)) which present words in order of those most recurring based on size; 2) Venn diagram – a Microsoft Word chart which helps represent areas of distinction and areas of agreement; and 3) histograms from BigML, Inc. database ([www.bigml.com](http://www.bigml.com)). Histograms are interactive online and will be made available to the public soon.

## **Limitations of Study**

Because there are always competing ideas for which countries are included in various regions, as well as which countries are currently recognized as countries, some of our data may be specific to our organization of world areas. See Appendix B for our breakdown of countries by region. Further, the types of people who filled out the survey may not represent the 'typical' viewpoints of people from that country or region. In some cases we only have one or a few people filling out the survey from a specific country. Because of our small sample size in some areas, readers should not seek to generalize the results from any particular region with too much vigor. More confidence in the data will accrue as the number of people taking the survey continue to build.

Further, because this is a primarily Internet-based initiative (using low or no-cost social media platforms and other technologies to support global organizing efforts) there is a strong bias of respondents who have access to the Internet. Approximately 89% of respondents had good or very good access to the Internet, which compares to statistics which suggest only about a third of the world's population have good access. It is important to recognize that many people and communities without good access to the Internet often also have low access to other key economic resources such as food and safe housing. These findings are therefore not a representative sample of the global population in terms of economic or technology-based factors. Project leaders are making efforts to increase representation of these populations in the coming months.

Additionally, this research report is based on an initiative seeking to gain clarity on how people feel the world could be better, and then to share this data in ways that opens people's hearts and minds – through art and music. It also seeks to build buy-in and engagement around the results by inviting as many people to participate as possible. There is a tension which exists between communicating the results with the utmost scientific rigor while also garnering interest in the project and making the information accessible to artists, musicians (and aspiring artists and musicians) who want to create projects based on the data. The authors have done as best as they could in meeting all of these goals while maintaining the integrity of the data by using scientific methods wherever feasible, and being as transparent about the process as possible.

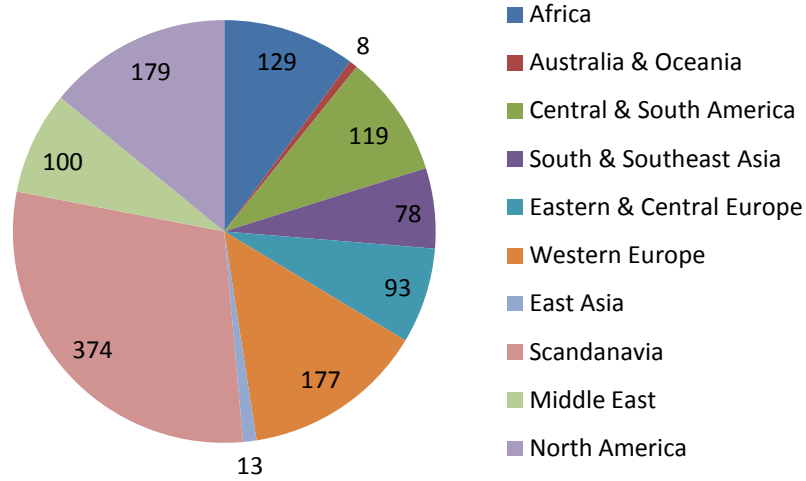
The authors acknowledge that this report – as well as this project – is imperfect process. It is hoped that the data support the process of communication and collaboration, rather than the outcome of it. And it is hoped that future endeavors which seek to engage the globe in conversations will build on our work, and find improved ways to do this work.

# Respondent Demographics

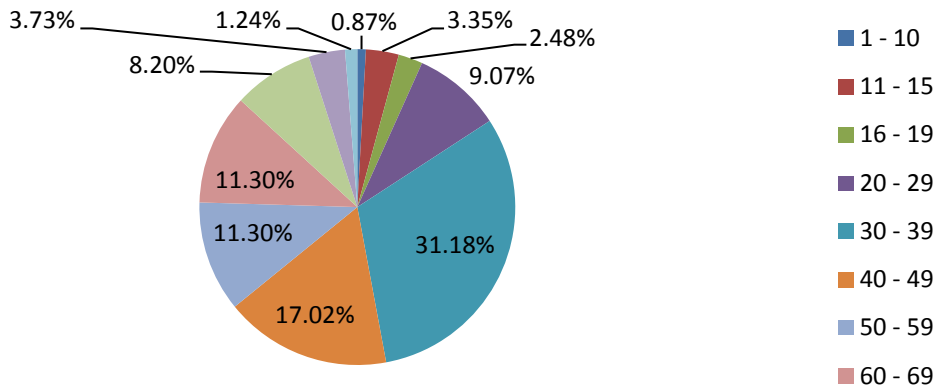
Number of total responses for first month's preliminary analysis: 1274

Number countries represented in first month's preliminary analysis: 97

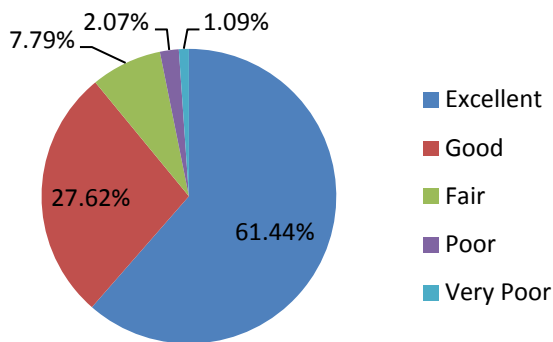
## Number of responses by Region<sup>ii</sup>



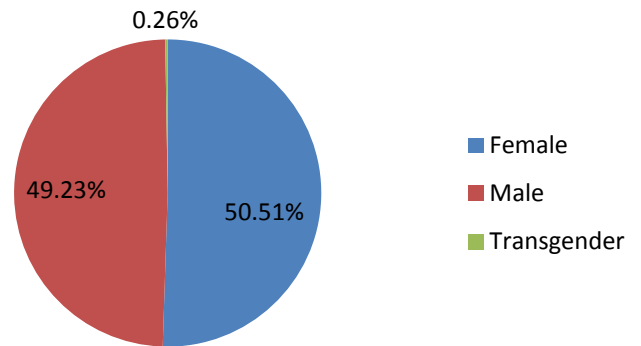
## Age of Respondents



## Access to Technology



## Gender





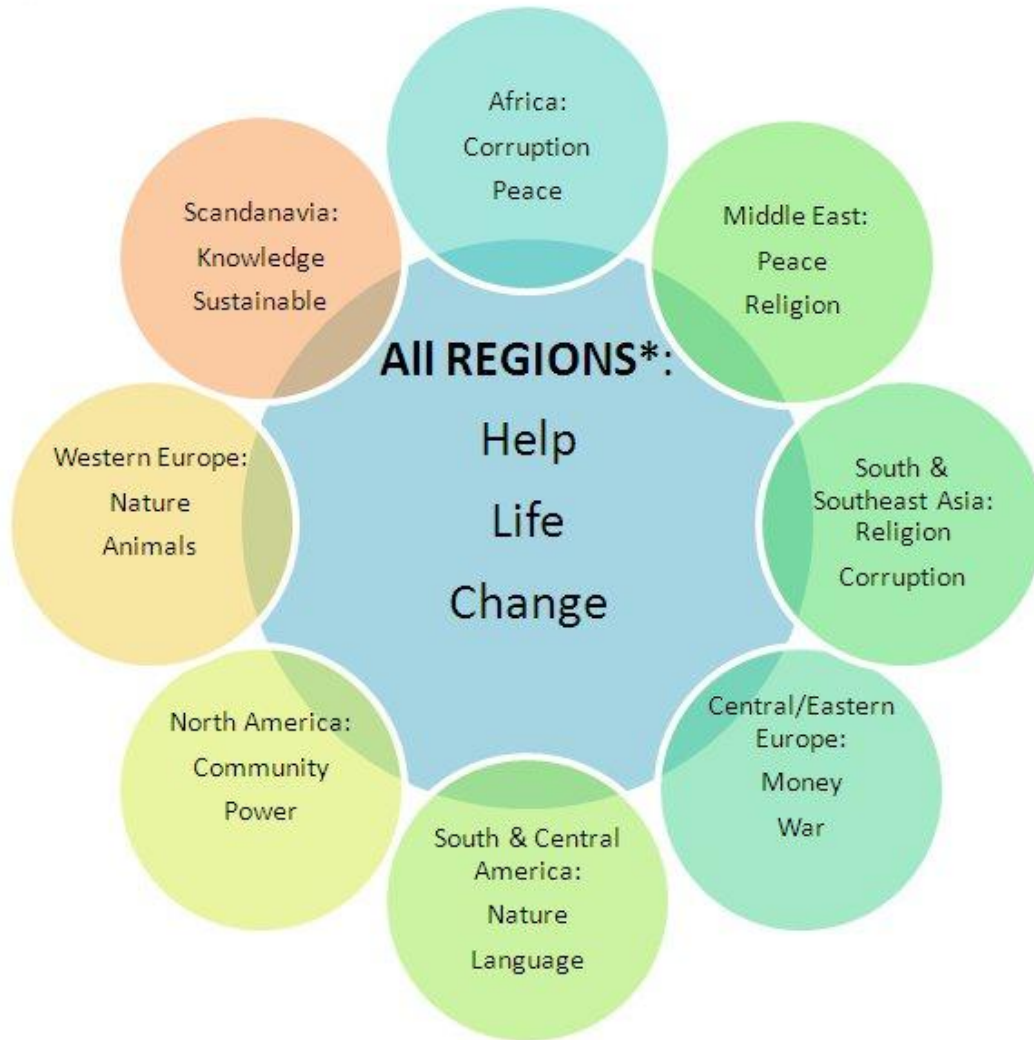






## Responses Based on Region

Below represents findings base on the most popular words which emerged when combining the answers to all four questions. The content in the outer circles are based on the words that came up most often within a region, and were most distinct to that region. The words which appear in the middle represent the words which reoccurred consistently at high levels across all regions - what this project terms the “Sweet Spot”.



\* Words are presented in order of popularity/recurrence in the dataset.

### *Note on regional representation:*

Australia/Oceania and East Asia regions were not analyzed for this section due to low sample size. Scandinavia was separated from Western Europe because of a disproportionately high sample size, and its uniqueness of cultural practices relative to the rest of the region.

## Responses Based on Gender

The data were sorted to determine trends by gender. Some words came up at high levels for one gender, and low levels for the opposite gender.

Words reported at high levels by men, and low levels by women:

- Technology
- Language
- Democracy



Words reported at high levels by women, and low levels by men:

- Love
- Food
- Care
- Community



An interactive version of these histograms at BigML will be made public soon at [www.bigml.com](http://www.bigml.com).

## Trend Analysis

Much of the findings in this report confirm what many already believed about what a better world might look like. If we had the opportunity to recreate the world, most people would NOT want to continue things like **war, poverty, and corruption**. People would want to continue **love, peace, and nature**.

But when looking deeper into what people would continue into a new better world, a few more interesting ideas emerge. Included in the top ten things that people would like to continue from this world are: **technology, music, art, culture, education, diversity and freedom**.

When looking at gender-based differences, some specific viewpoints surface. When it comes to making the world a better place, men around the world say that **technology, democracy and language** are key ingredients. While women say that **love, food, care and community** are most critical.

Probably the most interesting aspects of the analysis focus on the regional differences. The top words for each of the defined regions surface what could be perceived as the top global priorities for people in that region; or what some would say have highest top-of-mind awareness. These, of course, do not represent the entire region's perspective – but might be able to provide a light on some of the things that people in the region view as important. A few selected findings include:

- **Corruption** in Africa
- **Power** in North America
- **Sustainability** in Scandinavia
- **Religion** in the Middle East and South Asia
- **Nature** in South America
- **Animals** in Western Europe
- **Money** in Eastern Europe

Arguably, the most surprising finding of the study emerges when looking at the top three words for all questions and all regions. This was the most critical component of the study thus far – as it represents the project's "Sweet Spot" – the place where all of our ideas for a better world connect. This is the space where artists and musicians around the globe will seek to create projects to inspire a better world on December 20<sup>th</sup> (the day before the Mayan calendar predicts a change in our current way of living, to a more humane society). In looking at the words which had the highest level of agreement across all parts of the world, the following three words emerged in order of importance (or level of recurrence in the dataset):

HELP  
LIFE  
CHANGE

From a research standpoint, these words represent a set of words, which would most accurately be viewed as independent of one another. However, when the three words are read in order as a sentence, there is a sentiment that exists which is well-aligned with the goals of the project. Some might consider these words emerging in this particular order as a coincidence, while others might believe it could represent the collective consciousness of people from around the world. There is no scientific data to support or deny

either claim. However, it will be interesting to note the interpretation of the results through the creative aspects of the project (through art and music) and the additional results which will emerge in the coming months as more people continue to take the survey.

### **Final comments**

The four global questions survey will remain open until December and can be taken at [www.abigproject.org/myanswers](http://www.abigproject.org/myanswers). The results may change based on new survey responses. A second report is scheduled for November 2012 and final results of all findings will be announced on December 20, 2012.

The creation of art and music to help express the key themes from these findings is beginning immediately, and will culminate on December 20, 2012. For more information go to [www.abigproject.org](http://www.abigproject.org).

# APPENDIX

## **Appendix A**

### WORDS OMITTED IN THE ANALYSIS

There were a number of words which were omitted from the analysis based on the following criteria:

- Small words/Stop words: “A” “The” etc.
- Words that repeat parts of the four questions asked (i.e. “*World*” “*People*” “*Continue*” “*Create*”)
- Words that have little value on their own for conceptual purposes: (i.e. “*Stop*” “*Start*”)
- Words that have double meanings that would confuse concept: (i.e. “Own” - my own sense of community vs. I want to own more property.)
- Words that were registered in dataset which are not actual words in the English language (i.e. “Don”)

The following represents the full list of words omitted from the analysis:

*World, Continue, Shift, Create, Commit, Stop, Start, People, , Don, Own, Human, Better, Person*

## Appendix B

### Countries Alphabetically and Corresponding Region\*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>
Burundi	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Cameroon	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Cote d'Ivoire	Africa (Sub-saharan)
DR Congo	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Eritrea	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Ethiopia	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Gambia	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Ghana	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Guinea	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Kenya	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Liberia	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Malawi	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Mauritius	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Mozambique	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Nigeria	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Rwanda	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Sierra Leone	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Somalia	Africa (Sub-saharan)
South Africa	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Tanzania	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Uganda	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Zimbabwe	Africa (Sub-saharan)
Australia	Australia & Oceania
Kiribati	Australia & Oceania
New Zealand	Australia & Oceania
Argentina	Central & South America
Bolivia	Central & South America
Brazil	Central & South America
Chile	Central & South America



Columbia	Central & South America
Dominican Republic	Central & South America
Guatemala	Central & South America
Guyana	Central & South America
Honduras	Central & South America
Mexico	Central & South America
Nicaragua	Central & South America
Suriname	Central & South America
Venezuala	Central & South America
Cambodia	East Asia
China	East Asia
Japan	East Asia
Laos	East Asia
South Korea	East Asia
Vietnam	East Asia
Armenia	Eastern & Central Europe
Bosnia	Eastern & Central Europe
Bulgaria	Eastern & Central Europe
Croatia	Eastern & Central Europe
Georgia	Eastern & Central Europe
Hungary	Eastern & Central Europe
Kazakhstan	Eastern & Central Europe
Lithuania	Eastern & Central Europe
Poland	Eastern & Central Europe
Romania	Eastern & Central Europe
Russia	Eastern & Central Europe
Serbia	Eastern & Central Europe
Slovakia	Eastern & Central Europe
Slovenia	Eastern & Central Europe
Ukrain	Eastern & Central Europe
Belgium	Europe
France	Europe
Germany	Europe
Greece	Europe

Ireland	Europe
Italy	Europe
Portugal	Europe
Spain	Europe
Switzerland	Europe
United Kingdom	Europe
Denmark	Europe - Scandinavia
Finland	Europe - Scandinavia
Iceland	Europe - Scandinavia
Netherlands	Europe - Scandinavia
Norway	Europe - Scandinavia
Sweden	Europe - Scandinavia
Algeria	Middle East/Northern Africa
Djibouti	Middle East/Northern Africa
Egypt	Middle East/Northern Africa
Iran	Middle East/Northern Africa
Israel	Middle East/Northern Africa
Jordan	Middle East/Northern Africa
Lebanon	Middle East/Northern Africa
Libya	Middle East/Northern Africa
Morocco	Middle East/Northern Africa
Palestine	Middle East/Northern Africa
Syria	Middle East/Northern Africa
Tunisia	Middle East/Northern Africa
Turkey	Middle East/Northern Africa
Canada	North America
United States	North America
India	South & Southeast Asia
Indonesia	South & Southeast Asia
Malaysia	South & Southeast Asia
Pakistan	South & Southeast Asia
Phillipines	South & Southeast Asia
Sri Lanka	South & Southeast Asia
Other (I don not see my country)	Unknown

\*We recognize that there are some arguments about which regions countries belong to. We did our best to honor these arguments, while still seeking to ensure that countries were included in regions which best matched with their cultural, geographic and historical perspectives. We acknowledge these lines are blurry sometimes and this is an imperfect process.

## **End Notes**

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<sup>i</sup> The word that came up was ‘sustainable’. The word was modified to ‘sustainability’ to make the concept easier to understand.

<sup>ii</sup> See Appendix B for list countries by region. (Note, 1 person suggested their country as “not listed” which is why figures for country are 1 survey short of total number of responses.)

<sup>iii</sup> In the graphic for Question #1, some responses received were phrased as double-negatives. This led to some words occurring often which had a different or opposite context. For example: if two people responded that they would NOT want to continue “lack of access to education” and “poor education facilities”, the word “education” would come up as most highly recurring.