



# Piloting innovative technology in Kenya: increasing access to justice and security for women and girls

Final report: 1 June 2015 – 31 December 2017

## Summary

Thanks to your generous support we have had a significant impact on the lives of over 480 women and girls living in the Mukuru slum, Nairobi. We have increased awareness of the impact of violence on women and girls in communities, provided over 890 survivors of violence with access to medical, legal and psychological support through the use of mobile technology and increased the effectiveness and frequency of reporting cases of abuse. The project's huge success has led to ActionAid securing substantial additional funding from the UK Government to scale up the project across eight districts throughout Kenya.

### Key project successes

- An innovative and accessible mobile phone app has been developed to enable users to easily and quickly report instances of violence. By the end of the project, 481 people had used the app to report violence.
- A dedicated team of 26 trained volunteers is in place to receive reports and immediately get to work with linking those affected by violence with the support they need, from health care and psychosocial support to linking up with the police and legal services.
- A hugely successful awareness raising campaign has led to 11,000 community members knowing that the app and text messaging service exists, and hearing the message that violence against women and girls is unacceptable and must be stopped.

Objective one: Develop and pilot innovative mobile technology for raising awareness and reporting incidences of violence.

Work with the mobile phone network, Safaricom, to set up a dedicated phone number – operated by volunteers trained to respond sensitively to gender based violence - for women affected by violence

In 2016 we worked with Kenya's largest mobile phone provider, Safaricom, and communications company Databit, to set up a free text messaging helpline service offering support to women and girls who have been affected by violence in Mukuru, Nairobi. Women from these areas can now text 'HELP' to 21094, and their messages will be received by the appropriate person amongst a group of 27 volunteers who have been trained to respond in a sensitive and appropriate way. These volunteers include system operators, health workers, paralegals and counsellors, who link the women affected to law enforcement agencies and psychosocial and medical support services. The service was then rolled out across Kenya's three mobile network providers, Safaricom, Orange and Airtel, to ensure coverage across Mukuru.

The project has been hugely successful in engaging members of the community to use the service, and since the app became operational 481 cases of gender based violence have been reported, with all cases being followed up on to ensure survivors receive the holistic support they need. An average of 25 instances of violence are reported every month, and a dedicated team of volunteers is in place to ensure comprehensive and appropriate support is provided for each survivor. The breakdown of cases reported during the project is below:

Category	Number of cases reported
Domestic violence (including physical violence, emotional abuse, neglect and child abuse)	192
Sexual violence (including female genital mutilation, rape and child abuse)	118
Robbery	88
Searching for employment	26
Child custody	12
Relationship advice, divorce and sexual identity	8
Electoral related violence (including arson and stone throwing)	6
Physical assault outside of the home	3

Unspecified cases where we were unable to reach the survivor	9
Other (including reporting drug trafficking, advice on obtaining identity cards, land issues and support in paying hospital bills)	19
Total cases reported	481

Use SMS to share information with women and girls on where they can access security and justice services, dates for informal justice system meetings, legal aid advice and to re-enforce rights awareness

As well as allowing users to report instances of violence, the mobile app also allows system volunteers to send out information to help prevent violence and ensure those affected know how and where to access support. At least two text messages are sent out per week to the service's 5,148 registered users. In total, up to the end of the project period, 31 December 2017, 215,065 text messages were sent out through the platform with information about available support services, women's rights and practical advice. Here are some examples of the messages that have been sent:

Wangu Kanja Foundation & Makadara Law Courts will hold a legal aid clinic on 26/08/2016 from 9.00am at Ruben Centre, Mukuru. Come with all your inquiries.

Going for counselling after rape or sexual abuse is a critical stage in the healing process for the survivor. Send HELP to 21094 to report cases & be assisted.

Child sex abuse incidents are on the rise. Let us stop this abuse before it ruins our children's lives. Be on the look-out. Report the case. Send HELP to 21094.

Speak out and raise your voice for others. Survivors of gender based violence need your support. If you witness an incident send HELP to 21094 and report it.

Train 26 volunteer members of the community to monitor the dedicated phone number and to respond to the calls appropriately. They will direct callers to the relevant services and will log the nature of the calls so the data can be used to present to relevant police and government officials to demonstrate the issue of violence in the slum and to advocate for improved services

We have recruited and trained 27 (one more than planned) dedicated community volunteers including paralegals, health workers, counsellors and members of the Women Action Group to monitor the dedicated phone number, respond to reports appropriately and follow up cases. Eight of the volunteers received training to become system operators and will be responsible for co-ordinating the cases and ensuring that records are kept up to date.

The involvement of local volunteers has contributed to the development of an SMS platform which is sustainable and managed by the local community. The volunteers will also share their skills and knowledge within the community, therefore further increasing the impact of the project. As well as delivering volunteer training, we trained five ActionAid Kenya and four Wangu Kanja Foundation (WKF) staff members who will provide ongoing support to the volunteers, ensuring continued support for survivors of violence as the project's legacy.



## Meet Irene – who helps manage the helpline

Irene has been volunteering for the helpline project for the last two years. She says:

“As soon as a case is reported, the platform sends an alert to the system operator’s phone. I can then immediately open the system and look at details of the case. I call them back, and explain the steps to follow. If he or she is nearby, I ask him or her to come to the office, but if they are further away, I refer them to the nearest place where they can get help.”

The system also has a google map that plots the geographical areas where the cases occur. It is then possible to know how many cases are reported from which area and use the information for policy advocacy on service provision with the county and national governments.

“After referring them,” Irene explains, “I’ll continue calling them to check how the case is going and updating the case progress on the system. If it’s a rape case, for example, we make sure they go to the hospital.

“Then we have paralegals in the office, who will look at the case. They make sure the case goes to the court and they help to do follow up. They help the survivor to get the dates on which he or she’s supposed to go to the courts. They help until they see a case is through. We also have a counsellor who counsels every Friday.”

Irene is herself a survivor of childhood sexual abuse – perpetrated by her family’s maid. “The maid used to threaten me, so I was scared. But I think if I had that knowledge, maybe I would have reported the case. Coming to the Wangu Kanja Foundation has helped me heal. I can talk about it freely.”

Reflecting on the helpline service, Irene says: “Through creating awareness, I think more people are now reporting cases. It has really helped people who are scared of the perpetrator or find it difficult to report the case because they fear being noticed, to get help. I think it has created a platform where people who are far away (we receive cases from Nakuru and Kisumu, which are several hours away) can feel free to report a case and get help.”

Photo: ActionAid



## Objective Two: Increase the communities’ understanding of women’s rights and empower women and girls to use reporting and justice mechanisms

Communicate the impact of violence against women and girls to 10,000 people through adverts, radio and events. This will take place during the internationally recognised 16 days of activism against gender violence campaign in partnership with local organisations

Throughout the project we have worked to communicate the impact of violence against women and girls to over 11,000 community members, and to an estimated 700,000 people indirectly through radio talk shows and listener phone-ins. The vast majority of people living in Mukuru have now heard about the text messaging service and our message that violence against women and girls is unacceptable and must stop. Throughout the project we communicated the message in the following ways:



Community members taking part in a march during 16 Days of Activism to raise awareness of the support available for survivors of violence.

Photo: ActionAid

- During the internationally recognised 16 days of activism we engaged young people from across Mukuru to put on creative street theatre performances to demonstrate the various types of violence against women and girls and the impact this has on their lives. Over 2,000

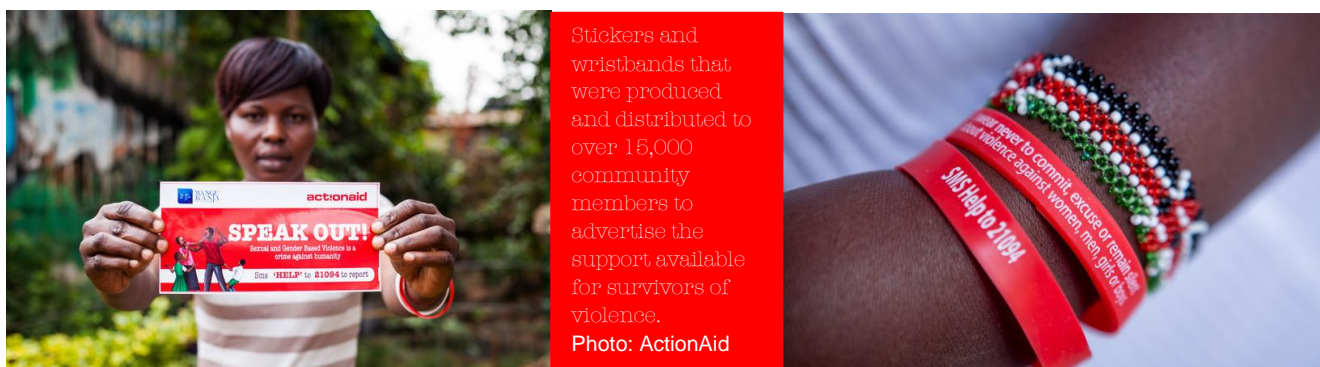
community members saw these performances. We also used the occasion to organise marches to raise awareness of the project.

- In December 2017, 3,500 people took part in the ‘Silent Protest’ march to raise awareness of rising instances of gender based violence in Kenya and to demand a stop to violence and better services to support survivors. The march was organised in collaboration with other non-governmental organisations in Kenya and received a high level of local media attention. During the march, we ran legal aid clinics, family planning consultations and psychosocial services for survivors.
- We took the opportunity to communicate the impact of violence to an audience of over 3,000 people at the annual Mukuru Awards, held in December 2016 and December 2017. The awards have been held annually, having been set up in 2013 by a group of young people from Mukuru determined to encourage and showcase positivity and progress in an area renowned for violence.
- The project has been promoted through social media channels, including a dedicated Facebook page, as well as through partners and other local organisations’ channels. The Access to Justice Facebook page now has 179 followers.

In addition, the SMS platform has received significant coverage and promotion on the local radio station, Ruben FM, as a result of our partner organisation, The Wangu Kanja Foundation, establishing a strong partnership with one of the station’s presenters, Thomas Ochieng. When Thomas first started at Ruben FM in 2016, there was no studio – just an office with a laptop. Now the station covers a 5km radius and has an estimated reach of over 700,000 people. Thomas lives just over a mile away from Mukuru slum, whilst another presenter, Daniel Mutet, was born there. They know the issues affecting the local community and this is reflected in the station’s programmes. “We agree as a team,” Thomas says, “Is this topic relevant to the community?” Thomas explains that “The partnership was very beneficial,” Thomas says. “The community opened up. They used to call in, send messages, interact with the presenter on Facebook and experts from Wangu Kanja Foundation.” He continues: “When you get one or two organisations coming on board to address the same issue, it means it really has to be addressed in the community. It’s really affecting people.” “You can just imagine,” Thomas explains. “When you say, ‘We have to stop sexual and gender-based violence’, in one minute the message has already reached 700,000 people in Mukuru.”

Disseminate simple brochures and leaflets with the dedicated phone number to 1,000 people explaining women’s rights and the services and support available for women and girls who have experienced violence

Throughout the project period we have produced and distributed a variety of promotional materials featuring the SMS platform number to raise awareness of the service and the various support mechanisms available for people who have experienced violence. We have distributed 15,000 stickers, flyers, wristbands and posters throughout Mukuru, including at police stations, health centres and hospitals, schools, shops, taxis and churches. The visual nature of this activity made it particularly effective and the promotional materials have had an estimated reach of at least 17,500 community members.



Hold community forums for 250 women, men, girls and boys to discuss violence against women and girls and the impact on girls, women, their families and communities. The community will work together to identify solutions and steps to prevent violence against women and girls

We are delighted to report that throughout the project we delivered eight community forums which were attended by a total of 306 community members. At these forums, participants learnt about the definition, types and consequences of gender based violence, as well as the protective mechanisms already in place such as existing legislation and policies.

During the forums, participants pledged to play an active role in addressing and ending sexual violence against women and girls in Mukuru. Prior to the forums, many participants had unrealistic expectations for immediate solutions to violence and they now have a greater and more realistic understanding of the issues and their role in violence prevention. Participants made personal commitments to hold perpetrators to account by making use of reporting mechanisms and the forums are important in ensuring the development of community led solutions and processes to tackling violence against women and girls.

Set up legal aid clinics so 800 women and girls who have experienced violence can access advice

Eight legal aid clinics have been held throughout the course of the project, with a total of 897 people benefiting from these. During the clinics, government legal officers and partners of WKF such as Kituo Cha Sheria and Makadara Law Courts provided legal and practical advice to women and girls who have experienced sexual violence. In the clinics, women learn about their rights and are encouraged to report cases of abuse. A challenge in this area is that the P3 medical examination report used by the police to document medical evidence is difficult to acquire in some areas. Local legal organisations have been lobbying to make this document more readily available – we have already seen improvements and this will be an ongoing effort.



One of the legal aid clinics held to ensure women and girls who have experienced violence can access advice.  
Photo: ActionAid

Meet Anastasia – who volunteers as a paralegal

Anastasia volunteers for the project as a paralegal. “I know what to do in case a survivor comes to our office. The first thing for us to do is take the person to the health centre, where they get first aid and I go with them to give support.”

One girl Anastasia helped was just eight years old when a man raped her. Anastasia co-ordinated with organisations in Nairobi to ensure that the girl received the support she needed, including getting the perpetrator jailed and helping the girl go back to school.

“It has been a process for her but thank God the man is in jail to this day. So, for us that’s a success because there’s no way he will be coming out any time soon.”

Photo: ActionAid



Support at least 150 of these women and girls to access medical, psychosocial and legal support

Throughout the project we supported a total of 657 women and girls and six men to access medical, psychosocial and legal support. These are in addition to the 897 people who received legal support through the legal aid clinics mentioned above. Referrals were made to a variety of organisations and services including Nairobi Women’s Hospital, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), International Justice



Mission, Centre for Rights Education and Awareness, Ruben Centre Legal Clinic and Mama Mgina Children's Home. We worked closely with legal and medical organisations to co-ordinate and improve access to support and established partnerships with a range of organisations including MSF France, Mater Hospital, and Makadara Tumaini Centre. Volunteer psychologists from WKF continued to visit the Ruben Centre Legal Clinic to provide free counselling for case managers twice a week to reduce the impact of secondary trauma.

### Objective Three: Improve the medical, legal and psychosocial support available for women and girls who have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence

Support existing police staff to work sensitively with women and girls affected by violence to ensure they receive the best possible service by training 50 officers in women's rights and policies and legislation that exists to protect women and girls

28 police officers from stations across Mukuru have been trained to work sensitively with women and girls affected by violence. This is an extremely important element of the project, helping to ensure that survivors of violence feel comfortable and able to report what has happened to them, and that they are treated sensitively and without prejudice. The training for police officers included how to work with healthcare providers to gather physical evidence, as well as how to take statements and gather information from survivors after traumatic experiences. 50 police officers have also been involved in outreach work to get to know community members in their jurisdictions better, build trust, and ensure citizens are aware of how to report violence.



Support police officers and the phone line volunteers to participate in the court users' committee (a committee made up of judges, magistrates, prosecutors and advocates) and the country gender based violence working groups (formed of government line ministries and departments, charities and development workers working on gender based violence at county level). Attendees will feed into the relevant processes and report any issues that arise that could affect justice for women and girls affected by violence

During the project, we have supported 23 participants (12 female and 11 male) to attend three meetings with the Court User Committee (CUC). Participants included government representatives, teachers, and members of children's homes and religious institutions. This is a very positive step and a relationship which we hope will lead to more effective processes and systems for handling sexual abuse and GBV cases. Our partner organisation, WKF, will continue engaging with the conveners of the CUC in an attempt to strengthen this relationship.

### Train 50 case managers in trauma counselling to provide support to women and girls who have experienced violence

We delivered three training sessions in trauma counselling in partnership with Kituo Cha Sheria, Nairobi Women's Hospital, Gender Violence Recovery Centre and Men for Gender Equality Now. The sessions were attended by 121 case managers (95 female and 26 male). This training will have a huge impact within the local community, not only now but long into the future and it is crucial in ensuring the development of a community led counselling service for women and girls who have experienced violence. Dealing with trauma is an important aspect of the healing process and there are now 121 community members in Mukuru who have been equipped with the skills to provide guidance and support to women and girls.

Support the operation of a working group comprised of health providers, police, local women groups, UN agencies, community organisations, and local authorities. The working group will be

a platform for consultation, coordination, policy development, technical advice and oversight of prevention and response to violence

To improve access to existing support services, we established a Gender Based Violence working group consisting of representatives from relevant legal and health organisations including MSF France and local medical clinics such as Ujamaa Family Centre. Six GBV working group meetings have now taken place and were attended by health providers, local women’s groups, police officers, Court Users Committee representatives and local partner organisations. The working group is an important aspect in ensuring that we can have a strong technical platform which can challenge violence against women and girls at a national level. The group meet on a quarterly basis and will continue to do so past the end of the project period.

Support case conferencing whereby all the service providers, including health workers, legal team, the children service department and the police, meet to discuss appropriate ways to handle specific cases of violence

Four consultative forums among service providers and four case conferences with justice providers took place during the project. Participants in these events included health workers, legal officers, representatives from the Children’s Department, police officers and paralegals. 724 people participated in the case conferencing and consultative sessions and the events are contributing to the building of effective community support mechanisms for survivors. The sessions identified a number of challenges faced in the area such as accessing safe spaces and shelters when rescuing children from situations of violence. Plans are currently underway to identify and map out available homes to refer the children to.

## Real lives

### Grace’s story

36-year-old mother Olive is one of many women who have been supported as a result of this project. While Olive’s eight-year-old daughter, Grace, was out playing, she was raped by a 65-year-old man. When neighbours heard noises, they broke into the man’s house and rescued Grace.

Mum Olive remembers: “When I heard my daughter had been raped I was so scared I couldn’t move. I felt a horrible pain in my stomach.”

“My daughter cannot speak or hear,” Olive continues, “and I think that is why the man targeted her – because she could not tell anyone what happened. My neighbours called a local Gender Defender, named Alice. She took us to hospital and reported everything to the police.”



Olive holding her daughter, Grace, now 13, who has learning difficulties and a hearing impairment. This image has been pixelated to protect Grace’s identity. Photo: ActionAid

Thanks to Alice, the perpetrator was arrested and has received a sentence of life imprisonment for his crimes.

Alice remembers: “We got the man who raped the young girl jailed for good, so that is one of our success stories.”

Grace, now 13, is deeply traumatised by her experience, often suffering with convulsions when she recalls the rape. However, she is doing well at a specialised unit at school and receives regular counselling from the Wangu Kanja Foundation.

“I am very grateful to Wangu Kanja and ActionAid for supporting my family,” Olive says. “Through them I have met other mothers whose children have been attacked. Now I do not feel alone.



Alice, 45, volunteers with ActionAid and the Wangu Kanja Foundation as a Gender Defender. Alice supported Olive and Grace after their neighbours reported the situation. Photo: ActionAid



## Sustainability and project impact

Thanks to your generous support, we have established a sustainable reporting mechanism and support system for women and girls experiencing violence in the Mukuru slum. This has benefitted over 890 women and girls in the project period, and will benefit the lives of thousands more in the years to come. The impact of your support will be felt across Kenya, as thanks to showcasing the transformative benefits of this pilot project, we have been able to secure funding to scale up this work across the country. We are currently establishing the app, building teams of volunteers to monitor the phone number, training police officers, setting up legal aid clinics and supporting women and girls to access support in Machakos, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Bungoma, Bisia and Garissa. None of this would have been possible without your initial investment in Mukuru.

Thank you so much for supporting this project. With your help we have been able to provide valuable support to women and girls who have experienced violence.